2025-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Collaborate

Innovate

Re-purpose

Revitalize

July 2025

Hudson Valley Regional Council

June 30, 2025

To Our Mid-Hudson Community:

The Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) is delighted to present the July 2025 – June 2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the HVRC Economic Development District.

As the regional planning organization responsible for developing the CEDS with funding from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), our goals are to build on work done in previous CEDS, improve communication and collaboration within all of HVRC's programmatic work, and expand on robust economic development strategy implementation efforts already completed in the Region from organizations such as the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council. We have aimed to create a CEDS that considers the importance of protecting the tremendous natural assets of this Region and builds on our strengths, while finding ways to improve upon our weaknesses.

A lot has changed in the Mid-Hudson Region since the last CEDS was completed. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the Region, highlighting the areas where greater resilience is needed to better withstand future shocks. Regional planning plays a vital role in strengthening these efforts.

We are especially proud of the stakeholder outreach completed as part of this planning process. The team received comprehensive feedback from 120 people, including 57 one-on-one interviews. In addition, we held multiple meetings with HVRC's Board of Directors to receive their feedback on initial drafts of the CEDS SWOT and data analysis. We aimed to ensure the CEDS reflected perspectives from every part of this complex Region — from the major cities in lower Westchester to the most rural areas of Sullivan County.

It is our intention that this CEDS sets the stage for additional EDA funding for projects across the Region. We have incorporated a list of projects that the County governments consider priorities to aid in that endeavor. We are grateful for the EDA's continued support of our planning efforts in the Mid-Hudson Region, and we look forward to continuing to work with all of you to make this magnificent place we call home even better in the future.

Thank you,

Bridget Gibbons
Board Chair

Carla Castillo
Executive Director

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Acknowledgements

Completing the Hudson Valley Regional Council's (HVRC) July 2025 – June 2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was a true team effort. HVRC is grateful to our Board of Directors (Board) for their contributions and commitment to this planning process. The Board served as the Strategy Committee for the CEDS. HVRC extends a special thanks to a sub-committee of the Board, which was formed for the RFP selection process. The HVRC Board and CEDS Strategy Committee included:

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HVRC staff who worked closely on this project included:

- Carla Castillo, Executive Director
- Eleanor Peck, Deputy Executive Director
- Caleb Fine, Economic Resilience Coordinator

Additional support was provided by additional HVRC staff: Lauren Bunce, Ryan Corbett, Elizabeth Sun, and Meenakshi Viswanathan.

HVRC recognizes our consultants for this planning process, Lynn Knight and Scott Sattler of NOVACES INC. NOVACES' experienced and certified economic developers and workforce specialists assisted HVRC with research and analyzing data, conducting interviews, and helping to develop key strategies for the CEDS.

HVRC is grateful to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) for their funding that supported this effort, without which none of this would be possible. EDA Economic Development Representative Lucas Martin's guidance was invaluable.

Lastly, HVRC would like to thank the Board members noted above and external stakeholders listed below who gave their time for either a one-on-one interview and/or provided public input during the public input period. Please find the list of partners engaged below:

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Jennifer Flad, Executive Director, County of Sullivan Industrial Development Agency

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Hudson River Watershed Alliance

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I. Executive Summary

The **Mid-Hudson Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for July 2025 – June 2030** is a product of the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC), an Economic Development District that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). This plan is intended to help align thinking on key issues for the Region, and to find and justify investments in clusters of industries, infrastructure, resilience, and other economic initiatives going forward. HVRC develops and updates its CEDS to help guide the organization's work and inform the Mid-Hudson Region, which spans seven counties – Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester, on common issues.

For this CEDS, HVRC collected and analyzed extensive data on the Region's population and economy, which can be found in section II. Economic Overview. Putting this information together with the views of the more than 100 stakeholders from throughout the Region who gave interviews, completed surveys, and helped review strategic content was an essential and meaningful part of the work. Community leaders provided different perspectives—from county and municipal leadership, economic development, workforce and industrial development, to resilience. A highlight of this plan is the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, which helped inform HVRC of the key issues to be addressed. This discussion appears in section III. SWOT.

HVRC recognized that housing is the top issue and a hindrance to growth in section IV. Regional Issues, which is a discussion of some of the most pressing issues for the Region. In the housing section, we provide examples of promising and best practices from around the nation and New York State to help give inspiration in addressing the urgent issue of shortages and the costs of housing development. This section also discusses the need to upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the Region to meet today's needs and alleviate problems of outdated systems.

HVRC also addressed resilience in section IV. Regional Issues, which continues from our work begun in 2022 on how to prepare for both natural and human-caused issues. Our strategy for this section is to continue to promote and highlight the importance of "resilience thinking" in planning and making this a core value for our communities. To achieve this goal, HVRC will continue to weave the study and benefits of resilience actions throughout our research, publications and outreach, and special events.

In section V. Targeted Industries, we discuss targeted industry clusters highlighted by leaders from the Region who are thinking strategically about ways to direct and ensure future prosperity. These include new forms of technology-assisted agriculture, construction trades, education, healthcare, energy infrastructure, science and technology industries, tourism, and film. Following the description of aspirations in each cluster, HVRC gives examples of promising work that is already being undertaken by Mid-Hudson counties and communities. Additionally, there are examples of resources that can be used to help in pursuing targeted clusters.

Section VI. County Initiatives begins with an overview of each county. It is then followed by areas identified as initiatives. Initiatives are areas requiring attention for the county to maintain its

economic well-being. Any currently identified specific projects are listed within each initiative. A discussion of county-specific SWOTs analyses is included where applicable.

Finally, throughout this CEDS, we addressed the role of HVRC in providing opportunities for collaboration, strategy, and action on key issues. While the counties and municipalities must take on implementation, HVRC strives to help inform them by gathering data and making information available in an efficient and meaningful way. In the future, one of our objectives is to play a greater role in creating forums for collaboration on issues affecting economic growth. Through our research, the publication of our newsletter and informative events, we will also continue to highlight resources that can be used to leverage work being done in our Region to promote and protect our outstanding quality of life and prosperity for all.

As a companion to this CEDS, HVRC has assembled additional data and a review of many other plans that have been undertaken by the counties and cities within Mid-Hudson. This is presented as separate appendices to the CEDS.

Our Vision

Mid-Hudson communities will work together to foster a resilient and prosperous Region that enhances the quality of life for all. We will prepare a future-ready workforce and support industries with the greatest potential for long-term growth. We will promote the development of affordable, appropriate housing for people of all ages and incomes, backed by infrastructure that meets the Region's needs and drives economic vitality.

Action Plan

The goals of the 2019-2023 CEDS were broad to meet the strategy of "building connections for regional competitiveness, resiliency, and prosperity". HVRC still agrees with the goals and strategy listed in the prior CEDS. However, our strategy with this plan is to focus more specific attention on addressing the issues of housing supply and affordability, as well as water/wastewater infrastructure to the extent these are preventing growth, and to foster resilience planning. All Mid-Hudson counties pointed out that they would like to address these challenges and recognized that they require urgent attention, sound planning and investment. HVRC's strategy to help will therefore be to continue to identify promising and best practice examples and resources to alleviate these challenges. We will track how our member counties use the resources and what they are able to achieve in terms of development of housing and water/wastewater infrastructure.

Another major emphasis of this CEDS is to expand industries based on clusters that are already present and showing some potential for growth in the Region. This CEDS listed those industries that were cited by stakeholders and discussed them in terms of clusters, or like industries, that complement one another. To help with this strategy, HVRC gave examples from around the nation and listed both State and Federal sources that can be used to leverage local resources. Each industry is identified in section V. Targeted Industries.

The Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Framework associated with the 2025-2030 Action Plan follow. The full Action Plan narrative appears in VIII. Action Plan.

Goal 1: Housing

The Mid-Hudson Region needs to develop more housing that people of all ages and walks of life can afford. This is especially important for the Region to grow businesses and the economy.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 1: Housing

HVRC recognizes that housing is an urgent issue that must be addressed for the growth of the Region. We also recognize that numerous highly qualified and specialized organizations at the local, state, and national levels are working on the issue of affordable housing. To this end,

- 1-A. HVRC will continue to monitor progress on this issue, to research and identify innovative solutions.
- 1-B. HVRC will share promising and best practice information among our member counties to support the growth of step-up housing at prices affordable to the Region's residents.
- 1-C. HVRC will work to promote development and housing initiatives in the Region that support the preservation of natural resources.
- 1-D. While we will advocate for the positive work of others, HVRC will not duplicate the functions of the local or regional organizations nor efforts.

HVRC Evaluation Framework under Goal 1: Housing

- HVRC will host three events with partner organizations to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them and can collaborate to increase housing in a way that does not undermine the natural assets of the Region.
- HVRC will publish data-driven updates annually on the change to the cost of housing and the amount of housing being built.

Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

The Mid-Hudson needs to bring its water and wastewater infrastructure up to today's standards. This is critical to ensure:

- Safe and reliable drinking water
- Resilient economic development
- Weather-smart stormwater and wastewater management
- Further opportunity for population and business prosperity

HVRC Objectives under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

- 2-A. Infrastructure projects will continue to be the responsibility of the counties and municipalities to plan and implement. HVRC will support the Region in upgrading water system infrastructure by continuing to identify funding opportunities and technical assistance where needed. Where applicable, HVRC shall also seek funding to support local municipalities as needed.
- 2-B. HVRC will provide in-depth planning and mapping technical assistance to municipalities to support their drinking water source protection planning efforts.
- 2-C. HVRC will provide letters of support for projects that support the Region's ability to grow the economy and provide the quality of life needed by all residents.

- 2-D. HVRC will convene research and funding support on its Wastewater Program Hub website and through events to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them and can collaborate on efforts to improve infrastructure.

HVRC Evaluation Framework under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

- In partnership with local governments, HVRC will develop up to five drinking water source protection program plans. The plans will be in alignment with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water Source Protection Program Framework.
- HVRC will distribute current funding opportunities that include water and wastewater infrastructure grants and loans a minimum of 10 times a year.
- Through its Wastewater Program, HVRC will provide 10 municipalities with in-depth technical assistance related to funding for wastewater projects.
- HVRC will host the Wastewater Program Hub website.
- HVRC will host three events focused on wastewater funding and technical assistance.

Goal 3: Resilience

HVRC should continue to support the Region's municipalities with their goal of being better protected from natural hazards and economic shocks. The Region will also work to increase and foster its economic resilience through a varied economy.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 3: Resilience

- 3-A. Related planning and projects will continue to be the responsibility of the counties and municipalities to plan and implement. HVRC will support municipalities seeking funding opportunities and provide technical assistance where needed, including through supporting hazard vulnerability assessments and planning efforts.
- 3-B. In addition, HVRC will support the Region in supporting economic diversification to support resilience. HVRC will monitor the issue, and where requested, will provide endorsements for projects that support the Region's ability to grow the economy and provide the quality of life needed by all residents.

HVRC Evaluation Framework for Goal 3: Resilience

- HVRC will support five grant applications related to increasing economic variety.
- HVRC will support 30 risk assessments and associated plans, including two County-wide.
- HVRC will identify case studies and projects that have the potential to increase economic resilience by hosting webinars and events to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them.

Goal 4: Targeted Industries

HVRC should continue to support the Region's municipalities with their goal of expanding into growing clusters and industries identified in this CEDS. In keeping with EDA goals, HVRC will work to reduce within-Region competition for businesses, the beneficiaries in EDA investment opportunities.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 4: Targeted Industries

- 4-A. While implementation will be the purview of the counties and municipalities, HVRC will continue to identify promising and best practice examples and resources to grow those industry clusters.
- 4-B. HVRC will track member counties' use of resources and successes.
- 4-C. HVRC will research disseminate best workforce development practices with the Region.
- 4-D. HVRC will support public-private partnerships as part of grant application technical assistance on prospective EDA investments.
- 4-E. HVRC will further explore the availability of brownfields.

HVRC Evaluation Framework for Goal 4-Targeted Industries

- HVRC will support three grant applications.
- HVRC will track the number of companies in the targeted clusters and industries attracted.
- HVRC will track the number of jobs in the targeted clusters and industries attracted.
- HVRC will track the revenue each sector contributes to the regional economy.
- HVRC will create an updated listing of brownfields available for redevelopment.

II. Introduction & Overview

What is HVRC?

The Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) is an Economic Development District (EDD) designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). It is an organization of county governments established in 1977 comprised of representatives from Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester counties. HVRC is one of nine EDA-recognized EDDs and two Tribal districts in New York State (NYS).

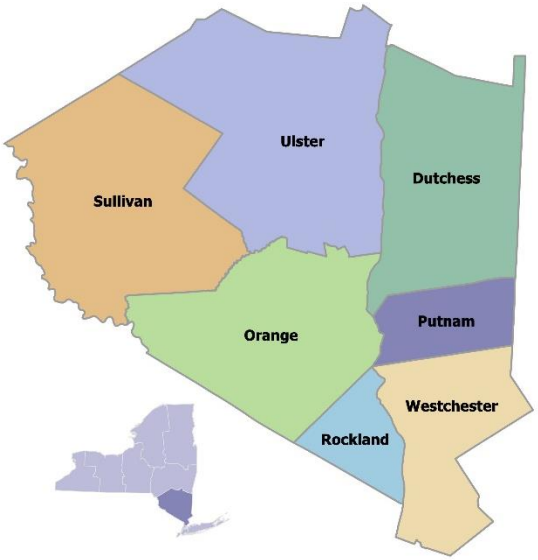
In addition to providing a regional perspective, HVRC offers education and outreach, technical assistance, and advocacy to the communities we serve. We strive to help municipalities access and understand information about the economy and grants from the State and Federal levels. HVRC provides assistance on economic development, water resources, resilience programs, and materials management.

HVRC delivers services to its member counties as well as local governments through several Federal and State grant programs: EDA's Partnership Planning Program, NYSDEC 604(b) Water Quality Planning Program, EPA Wastewater Program, EPA Landfill Project, NYSERDA CEC Program, and NYSDEC CSC Coordinator Program. Additionally, HVRC also provides regional platforms to our counties through the Materials Management Working Group and Resilience Working Group. HVRC participates in a regional forum through the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Coalition.

Our Vision

Mid-Hudson communities will work together to foster a resilient and prosperous Region that enhances the quality of life for all. We will prepare a future-ready workforce and support industries with the greatest potential for long-term growth. We will promote the development of affordable, appropriate housing for people of all ages and incomes, backed by infrastructure that meets the Region's needs and drives economic vitality.

The Mid-Hudson Region



With its outstanding quality of life and proximity to New York City, the Mid-Hudson is a vibrant, historically rich, and economically complex region in southeastern New York State. With a population of just over 2.4 million people, it is known for its scenic landscapes, thriving small cities, and growing economic sectors. It serves as both a commuter hub and a cultural destination.

Key Cities and Towns

- Kingston – a growing arts, tourism, and tech community
- Newburgh – an industrial and waterfront revitalization area
- Peekskill, Beacon, Middletown, Monticello – small cities and towns that are experiencing considerable revitalization
- Poughkeepsie – a regional hub for education and transportation
- Town of Ramapo – an historic, and strategically located suburban town framed by scenic mountains
- White Plains – a major commercial and government center for Westchester County
- Yonkers – bounded by the Hudson River (west), Bronx River (east), and close to the Bronx, it serves as a major suburban yet urban hub

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Natural and Cultural Assets

- Hudson River
- Catskill Mountains
- Shawangunk Ridge
- Cultural sites: Historic estates, artists' enclaves, festivals, and the Culinary Institute of America.
- Tourism is strong in Beacon, Cold Spring, New Paltz, Westchester, and the Hudson Highlands.

What is a CEDS and how is it used?

The goal of HVRC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to create a common framework and thinking for regional leaders to collaborate on key initiatives for economic prosperity. A CEDS is the result of a "regionally-owned" planning process designed to guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.

According to the EDA, EDDs help lead the locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration. The strategic blueprint, CEDS, is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development.

This plan is intended to be useful not only in aligning thinking on key issues, but also in identifying and justifying investments in specific industries, infrastructure, resilience, and other economic initiatives going forward. This is the fourth time that HVRC has developed and updated our CEDS, which is made public on our website at https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/regional-initiatives/economic-development/.

Methodology

The HVRC CEDS involved the collection, review, and analysis of a wide range of data, including demographics of the population, educational attainment, incomes and housing, business and workforce data, commuting patterns and weather conditions. To help illustrate key points in this CEDS, relevant charts and graphs are included. There are also extensive data references and more examples in Appendix data.

In addition to the data, the CEDS team reviewed numerous past plans to learn from other planning efforts, and to ensure continuity with the thoughtful and knowledgeable work of others. HVRC has provided references to the plans with summaries of key points in Appendix. Plans & Summaries.

Stakeholder Engagement

The cornerstone of this study was extensive stakeholder engagement to gather a wide variety of perspectives and viewpoints. Fifty-seven people generously gave their time for interviews by the CEDS team to discuss their views on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the region. They also discussed key initiatives that are still in the needs or concept phases, as well as those that are in various stages of planning or implementation in their jurisdictions.

Types of stakeholders interviewed represented the breadth of economic development players in the Region:

- Agriculture
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development
- Elected Officials
- Hazard Mitigation
- Housing
- HVRC Board Members

- Industrial Development Authorities
- Land Trusts
- Municipal Staff
- Planning
- Resilience Organizations
- Tourism and Film
- Unions
- Workforce Development

For those stakeholders who preferred to provide their views through a survey, HVRC offered an online questionnaire. Fifty-two people responded to the survey. Whether through interviews or the survey, responses were aggregated to help determine trends and to provide the respondents with an opportunity for confidentiality of candid responses.

In addition to the interviews and survey, HVRC held two meetings of the CEDS Strategy Committee, made up of its Board of Directors. In these meetings, the team reviewed the SWOT analysis, regional issues, industries, and data to receive feedback and address concerns. There were representatives from all seven counties present at these meetings with 17 unique attendees and, with 12 attendees present at each meeting, in addition to HVRC staff and consultants working on the CEDS.

Supporting HVRC in this effort were experienced, independent consultants from NOVACES, a consulting firm that has done business in the Region and nationally. The consultants have certifications in economic development, workforce development, and public finance of economic development programs.

The draft CEDS was made available for public comment on June 30, 2025, for one month, through July 31, 2025. The draft was circulated to HVRC's mailing list of more than 3,000 regional stakeholders, including elected officials, municipal staff, partner organizations, and relevant State officials. It was also made available on HVRC's website.

III. Economic Overview of the Mid-Hudson Region

This section presents an economic overview of the Mid-Hudson Region, covering demographics, employment, and industries. The section begins with an overview for each factor and is followed by the data from which the overview is drawn in the form of charts and narratives.

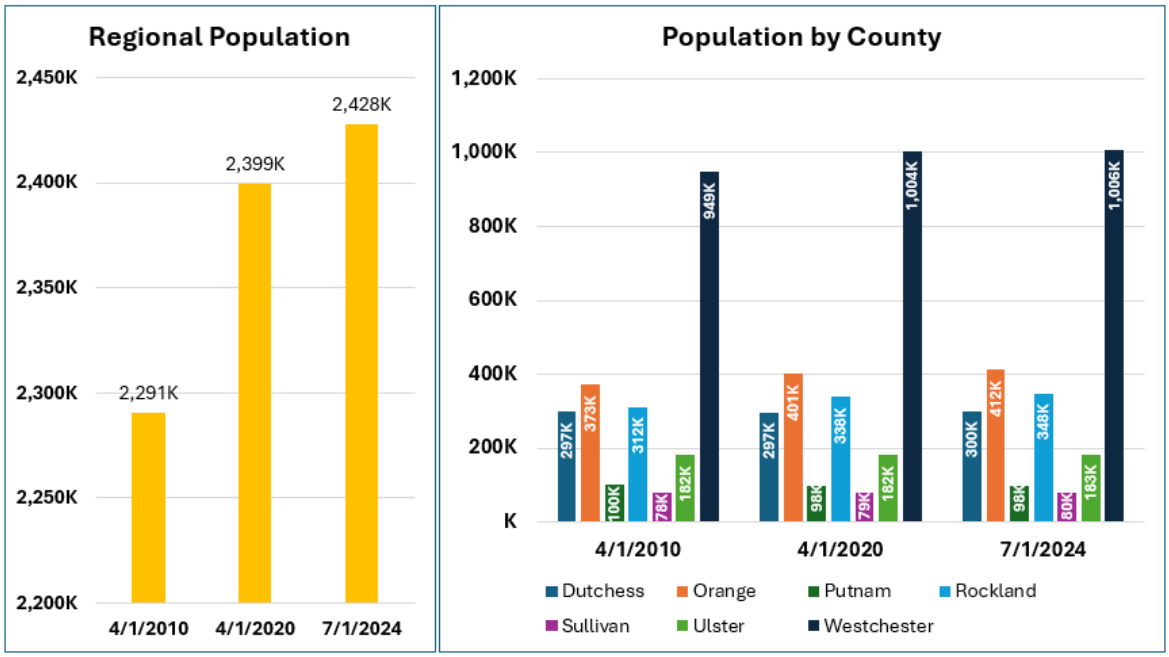
At a high level, the Region's economy has steadily grown over more than a decade, with jobs growing and unemployment remaining low. The Region's varied set of traditional and emerging industries have allowed the maintenance of a healthy GDP. Alternatively, however, the Mid-Hudson is starting to feel the effects of a workforce shortage that is likely to worsen in the coming decades, making it a defining challenge for the Region.

Demographics Data

Although the population is still growing, the Mid-Hudson Region is on a trajectory for population decline due to lower birth rates and outward migration. Annual births over the past 25 years are down by about 3,000, with some counties seeing their annual births drop by approximately 25-35% during that time. Additionally, the Region has lost a net of 138,071 people to outward domestic migration from 1996-2021. In recent years, most people leaving the Region are moving just over the border to neighboring states, or to southern states such as Florida and the Carolinas where the cost of housing is lower.

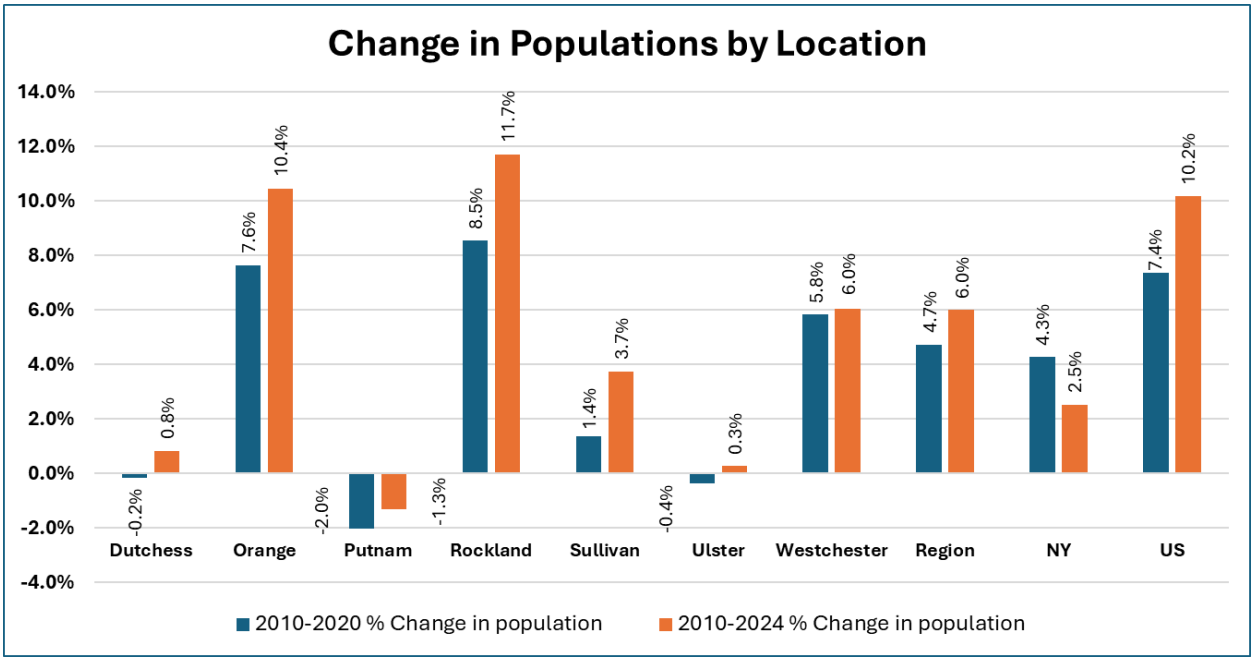
Population

Regional Population and Population by County: The graphs show the regional population and how it changed from 2010 to 2024. The population grew over 100K from the 2010 U.S. Census to the 2020 Census and then about 29K more between the 2020 Census and the 2024 Census.



Source: U.S. Census (2010, 2020, &2024)

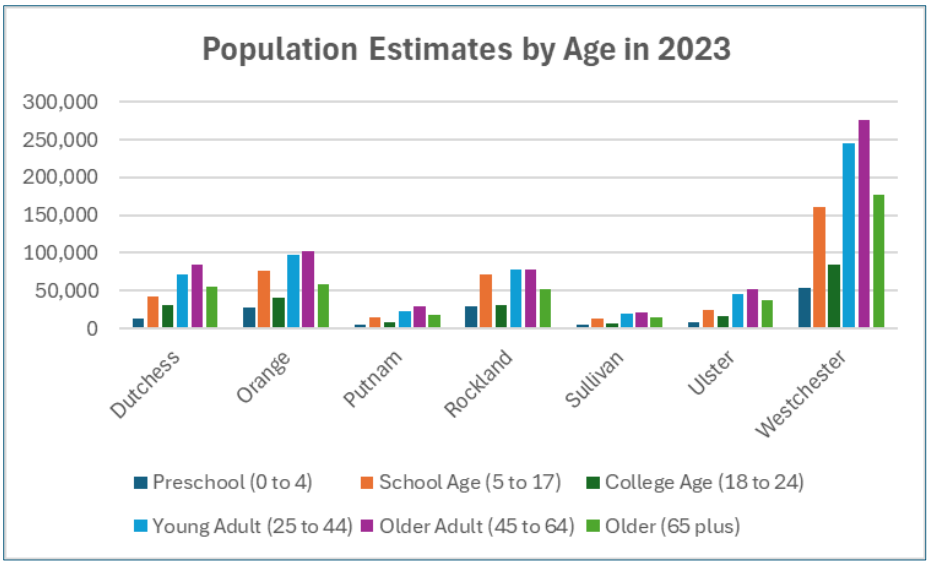
Change in Populations by Location: This graph shows the percentage change in population from 2010-2020 and 2010-2024 for each Mid-Hudson county, the Region as a whole, the State, and the country. The Region outpaced the State in both timeframes but was below the country's rate of growth in both timeframes. Since 2010, all but one county has increased in population. Rockland experienced the largest growth at just under 12%.



Source: U.S. Census (2010, 2020, & 2024)

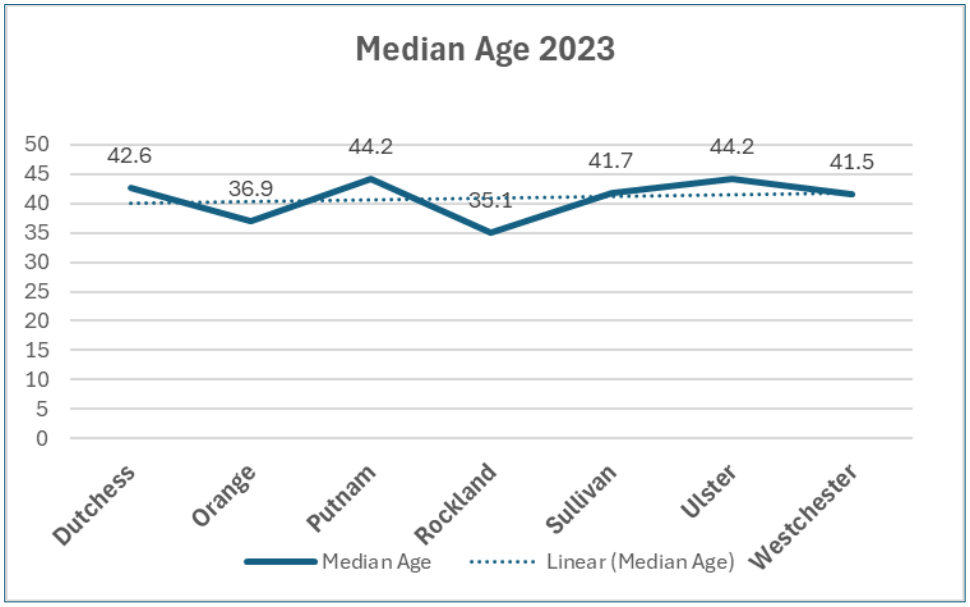
Population by Age

Population Estimates by Age in 2023: For all counties, the graph shows the majority of the population above the age of 25. All the counties show a positive increase in school age (5 to 17); however, preschool (0-4) shows a drastic decline for future population.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023)

Median Age 2023: The graph displays the median age for the Region by county. Except for Orange and Rockland, all counties have a median age above the U.S. median age of 38.5. The median age for the Mid-Hudson Region is 40.8, indicating that the population in the Region is aging more rapidly than the national average.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023), Median age calculated by the IBRC

The U.S. Census Bureau for 2023 shows the State and U.S. averages for 65+ populations at 18.6% and 17.5%, respectively. The Region, by comparison, falls on the higher end with an average of 18.2%. Only Orange (15.0%) and Rockland (Counties fall below the State and U.S. average. The Mid-Hudson Counties range from 15.0% up to 21.9% (Ulster). (Charts related to these population figures will be available on a county-by-county basis in a companion data publication on HVRC's website.)

By the U.S. Census 2023 numbers, the regional population aged 25-44 includes 581,150 individuals, while those aged 45-64 comprise 628,376 individuals. The older segment of the potential labor force surpasses the younger segment by 47,226 people. Consequently, for every retiree who exits the workforce, there is less than one individual available to replace them from the younger population. The population aged 5-24 totals 611,376 individuals, suggesting a temporary positive outlook. However, the number of infants and children aged 0-4 stands at 140,585, which represents a reduction of more than 470,791 people. This suggests that workforce deficiencies are likely to worsen in the coming decades unless there are significant changes in birth rates, domestic migration, or immigration.

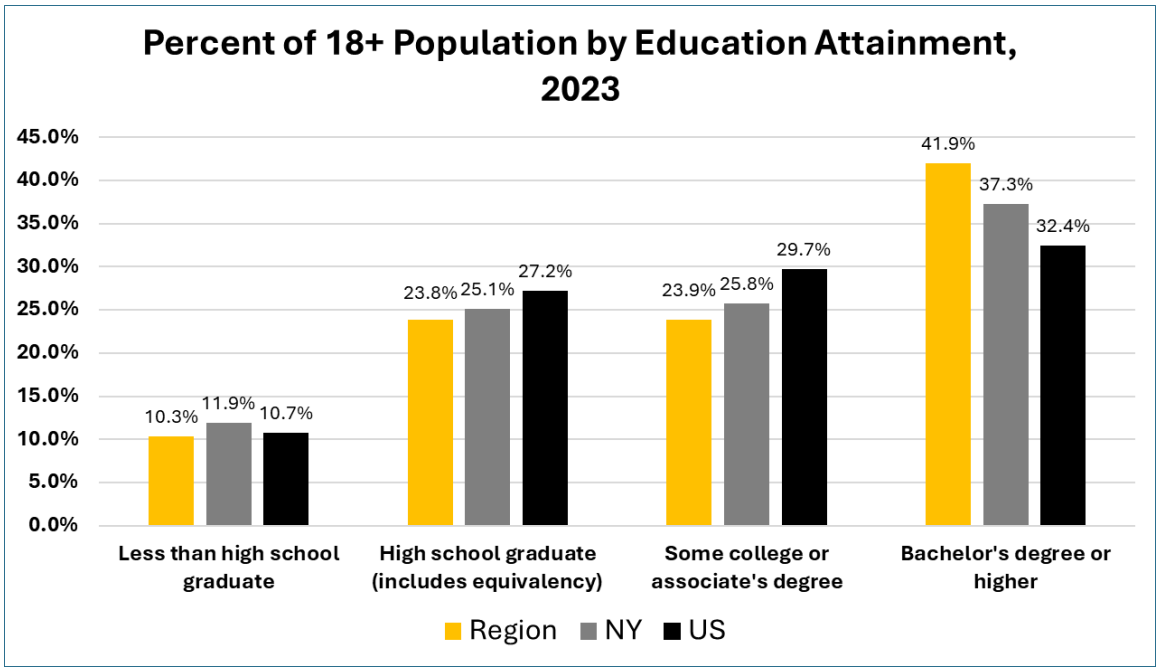
Population by Educational Attainment

The Mid-Hudson Region has nearly double the percent of residents with bachelor's degrees compared to the State as a whole. The workforce is highly educated – more than 21.2% of the population has earned a graduate degree.

Educational Attainment in the Mid-Hudson 2023			
	Number	Percent Mid-Hudson Population 25+	Percent New York Population 25+
Total Population 25 and Older	1,637,043	100.0%	11.8%
Less than 9th Grade	74,387	4.5%	9.2%
9th to 12th, No Diploma	92,268	5.6%	11.4%
High School Graduate (includes equiv.)	367,370	22.4%	28.7%
Some College, No Degree	251,037	15.3%	12.5%
Associate degree	133,358	8.1%	10.7%
Bachelor's Degree	375,553	22.9%	11.9%
Graduate, Professional or Doctorate Degree	343,553	21.2%	13.7%

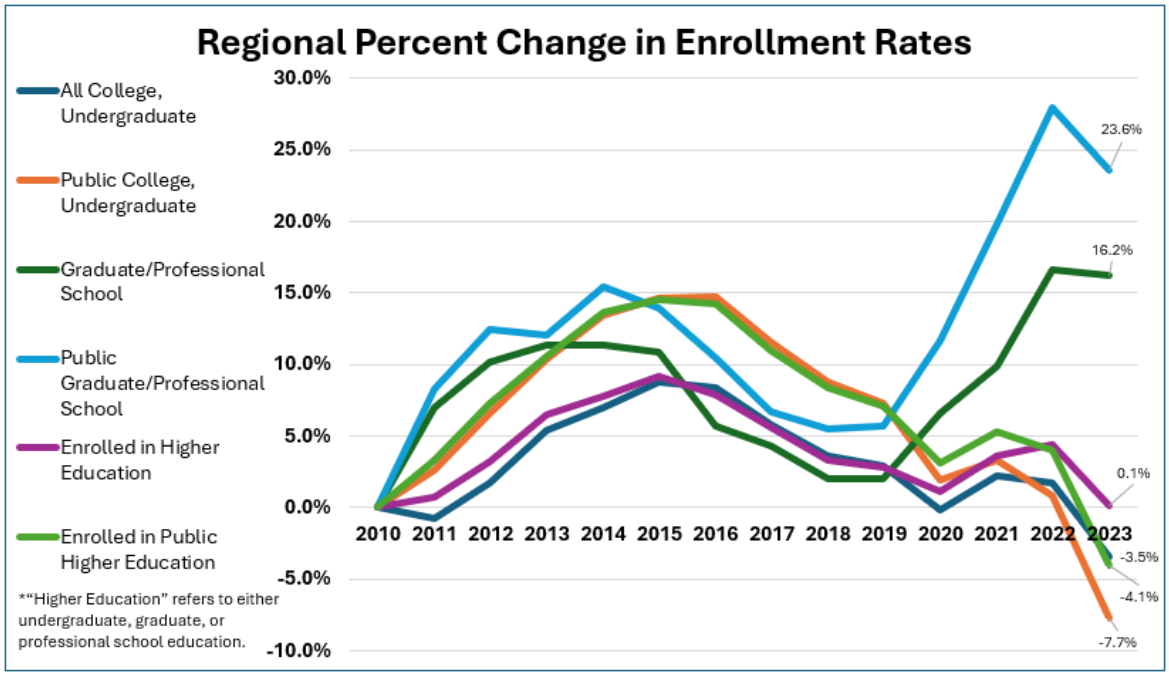
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2023)

Percent of 18+ Population by Education Attainment, 2023: This graph shows educational attainment of the 18 and older population for the Region, State, and country for 2023. The Region has a higher percentage of the population that has a bachelor's degree or higher than the State and the country.



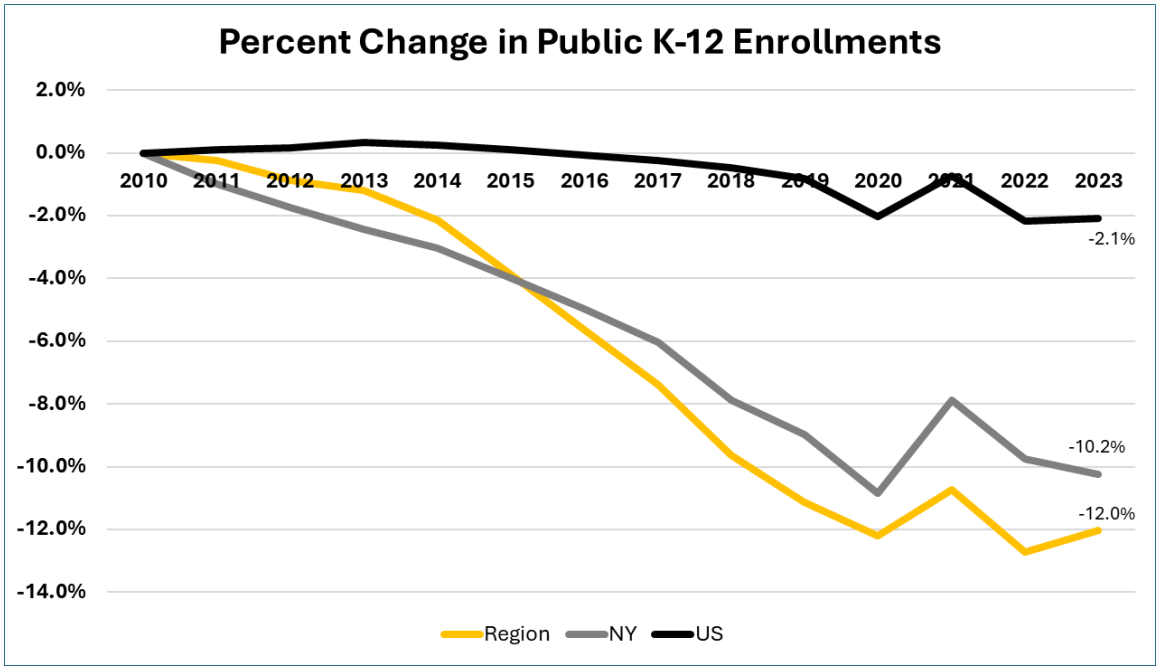
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2023)

Regional Percent Change in Enrollment Rates: The graph shows the enrollment rates for higher education in the Region since 2010. Overall, the enrollment rate in higher education has remained flat since 2010. Enrollment in higher education from public institutions and in college (both overall and public enrollment) decreased since 2010. Enrollment in graduate or professional schools has increased significantly since 2010, growing by 16%, almost 24% in public graduate or professional schools. The decrease in undergraduate attainment is mirrored in K-12 school enrollment.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2023)

Percent Change in Public K-12 Enrollments: The graph shows the percentage change in the number of enrollments in public K-12 education. While the nation reported some minimal losses since 2010, both NYS and the Mid-Hudson saw larger decreases in enrollments, with the State decreasing 10% and the Region decreasing 12%.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2023)

The Region's lower birth rate has been negatively affecting school enrollment trends. The Region has seen more than 30 public school buildings closed or repurposed over the last 25 years due to declining enrollments and financial distress in K-12 districts.[1] A 2024 Pattern for Progress Study, "Closed Schools, Open Minds" mapped the closures and described the impact these closures and declining enrollment has had on the Region. Schools have closed in each of the Mid-Hudson's seven counties. Some have been repurposed, such as the Amenia Elementary School's conversion to Amenia Town Hall in Dutchess County. Others are still used by the school district, including for new Universal Pre-K programs, such as Mt. Marion Elementary School in Saugerties, Ulster County and the Gerald F. Neary School in Haverstraw, Rockland County.

Employment Data

The growing wave of retirements from the baby boomer population represents a significant succession planning challenge for the Region. This challenge is in addition to the challenge of ensuring there is an ample quantity of workers to fill jobs to meet the demand for goods and services throughout Mid-Hudson.

The three-pronged challenge – lower birth rates, outward migration, and a growing wave of retirements – has exerted significant stress on the regional workforce that is being felt by practically every industry sector in the Region. This has forced employers to cut services, hire contract workers from outside the Region, or pay signing bonuses to attract higher-wage employees.

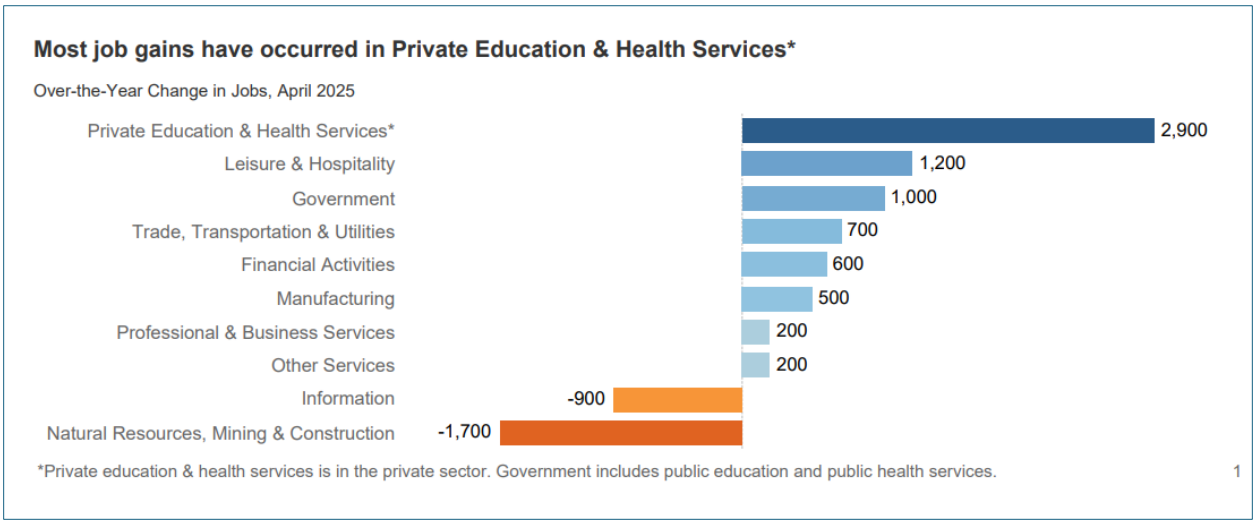
[1] Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, "Closed Schools, Open Minds", https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e29e3bbf8d3442f99e1ae3570b52af9c.

Workforce shortages often put upward pressure on wages because employers are competing for labor from a shrinking pool of candidates.

Regional Labor Force

Most job gains have occurred in Private Education & Health Services: Private sector jobs in the Hudson Valley rose by 3,700 or 0.4%, to 829,200 over the year in April 2025. This represented a record high for the month, dating back to 2000. Job growth was centered in private Education & Health Services (+2,900); Leisure & Hospitality (+1,200); Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (+700); Financial Activities (+600); Manufacturing (+500); Professional & Business Services (200); and Other Services (+200). Losses were greatest in Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction (-1,700) and Information (-900).

Aided by strength in its health care component, the Region's private Education & Health Services sector remained as its leading jobs generator. Year-over-year in April 2025, the sector climbed 1.2%, adding 2,900 jobs – accounting for nearly 80% of total private sector net gains.



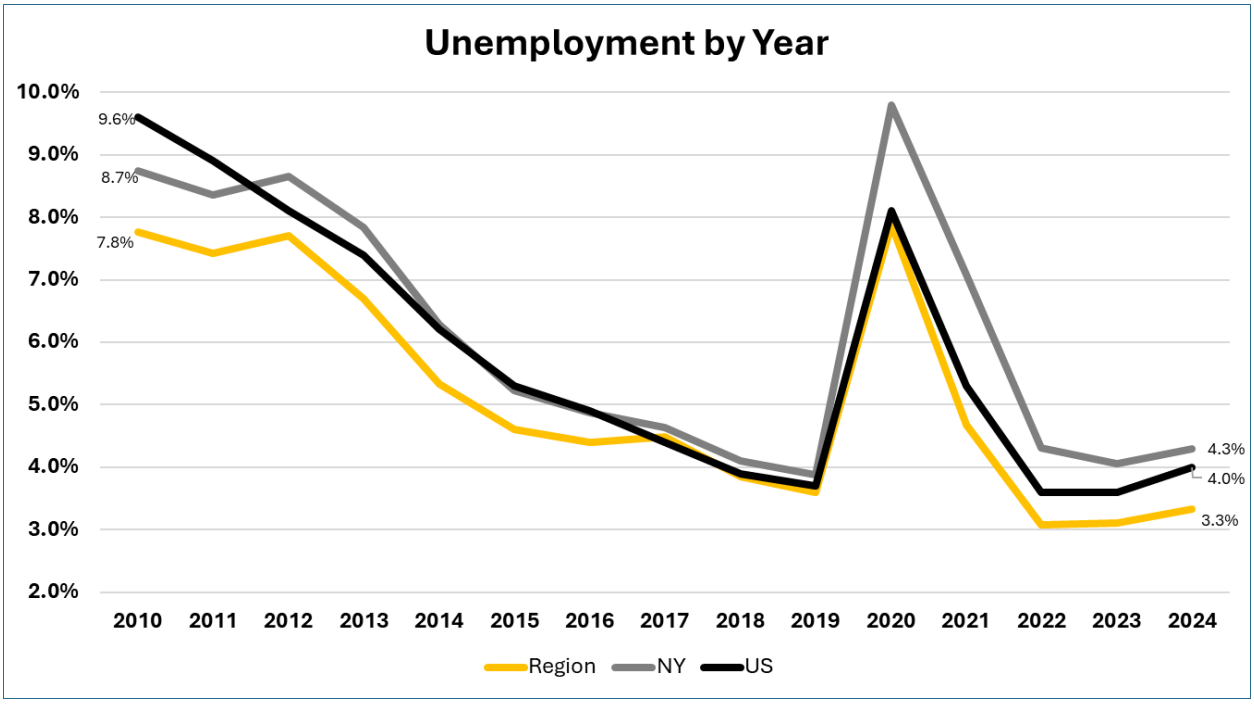
Source: NY DOL Labor Market Briefing April 2025[2]

According to the New York Department of Labor in April 2025, private sector job growth was spread throughout most of the Region. Year-over-year, Sullivan County grew the fastest – up 2.9%. The second fastest growth was recorded in the Kingston MSA (+1.7%), followed by Westchester County (+0.5%), Rockland County (+0.2%), and the Kiryas Joel-Poughkeepsie-Newburgh MSA (+0.1%). Putnam County was the only area that declined over the period – down 1.3%.

Mid-Hudson Region gained 3,700 jobs in April 2025, representing a 0.4% increase, in the first quarter of 2025 over the same quarter of 2024. Private Education & Health Services gained the highest number of jobs at 2,900 jobs, followed by Leisure & Hospitality, which gained 1,200 jobs, Trade, Transportation & Utilities, which gained 700 jobs. The Government sector added 1,000 jobs in the quarter.

[2] New York State Department of Labor, Labor Market Briefing Hudson Valley, April 2025, https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/06/hudson-valley.pdf.

Unemployment by Year: The graph shows the unemployment rate for the Region, State, and country since 2010. Throughout almost the entire timespan, the Region's unemployment rate was below the nation. For the entire timespan, the Mid-Hudson's unemployment rate was lower than the State's.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010-2024)

Top Employers by County

The Top Employers by County table below was developed with input from the CEDS Strategy Committee. The list is a mixture of public and private sector employers, using employment headcount as the metric. The listing is presented in non-ranked alphabetical order and is read left to right by row. Sources appear at the end.

Top Employers by County			
Dutchess	• Bard College • Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. • Culinary Institute of America • Gap, Inc. • International Business Machine Corp. • Marist College • Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital • Northwell Health • Onsemi • Vassar College	**Orange**	• Access: Supports for Living • Amscan, Inc. • Cardinal Healthcare Crystal Run Health • Elant, Inc. • Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield • Garnet Health Medical Center • KDC-One • Legoland • Spectrum Enterprise • Stewart Air National Guard Base • St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital • United States Military Academy at West Point

Putnam	• Ace Endico Corp. • Brewster Central School District • Carmel Central School District • Green Chimneys • Mahopac Central School District • Putnam County • Putnam Valley Central School District • Putnam Hospital Center • Putnam Precision Products Inc. • The ARC of Mid-Hudson	**Rockland**	• County of Rockland • Good Samaritan Regional Hospital • Helen Hayes Hospital • Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory • Montefiore Nyack Hospital • Orange & Rockland Utilities • Pfizer • Rockland BOCES • Rockland Community College • Rockland Psychiatric Center • State to State Hardwood Floors • Trans Group LLC
Sullivan	• Center for Discovery • Garnett Health • Kohls Corp • Monticello Central School • New Hope Community • NYSARC Inc. • Resorts World Catskills • Rolling V Bus Corporation Sullivan County Government • Woodbourne Correctional Facility	**Ulster**	• City of Kingston • Emerson Resort & Spa • Kingston Consolidated School District • Mohonk Mountain House • Northeast Center for Special Care • SUNY New Paltz • SUNY Ulster • HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley • Ulster County Government • Ulster Savings Bank • Wal-Mart
Westchester	• Con Edison / Orange & Rockland Utilities • Danone North America • Heineken USA • IBM • Mastercard • Morgan Stanley • Regeneron Pharmaceuticals • PepsiCo • Westchester Medical Center Health Network • White Plains Hospital		

Sources: Dutchess County Planning & Development; Orange County Partnership; Putnam County Department of Planning, Development, & Public Transportation; Rockland County Economic Development & Tourism; Sullivan County; Ulster County Department of Economic Development; Westchester County Department of Economic Development.

Commuting Patterns

Mid-Hudson Commuting Patterns (2016-2020): A significant amount of commuting takes place in the Region. The lowest commuting out rate is 33%, shared by Orange, Sullivan, and Rockland Counties. The highest is seen in Putnam County at 67%. Surprisingly, for a region of Mid–Hudson's size, there is an insignificant difference in the average commuting time for each county, with a low of 28.4 minutes to a high of 39.3 minutes – about a 10-minute difference. Manhattan (New York County) remains the #1 destination for Orange, Rockland, and Westchester commuters. For Dutchess, Putnam, Sullivan, and Ulster commuters, other regional counties represent their top destinations. As the Region's workforce grows, congestion will increase commute times unless efforts are made to grow local jobs.

County	Total Workforce	Live & Work in County	Commute In	Commute Out	Net Inflow / Outflow	% Commuting Out	Avg. Time	Top Destination (% of Commuters/% of Workforce)
Dutchess	143,623	93,959	25,368	49,664	-24,296	35%	32.8	1) Westchester County (30.3% / 10.5%) 2) New York County (15.0% / 5.2%) 3) Putnam County (12.1% / 4.2%) 4) Orange County (11.6% / 4.0%)
Orange	175,734	117,798	34,971	57,936	-22,965	33%	33.3	1) New York County (18.4% / 6.1%) 2) Rockland County (15.4% / 5.1%) 3) Westchester County (12.0% / 3.9%) 4) Bergen County, NJ (10.1% / 3.3%)
Putnam	49,590	16,322	13,525	33,268	-19,743	**67%**	39.3	1) Westchester County (58.8% / 39.4%) 2) New York County (14.1% / 9.5%) 3) Western Connecticut (7.9% / 5.3%) 4) Bronx County (6.3% / 4.2%)
Rockland	142,968	88,217	32,043	54,751	-22,708	38%	31.8	1) New York County (25.4% / 9.7%) 2) Westchester County (22.8% / 8.7%) 3) Bergen County, NJ (18.0% / 6.9%) 4) Bronx County (9.2% / 3.5%)
Sullivan	32,051	21,582	5,206	10,469	-5,263	33%	30.6	1) Orange County (55.4% / 18.1%) 2) Ulster County (9.0% / 2.9%) 3) New York County (7.9% / 2.6%) 4) Rockland County (5.0% / 1.6%)
Ulster	83,539	56,234	13,285	27,305	-14,020	33%	28.4	1) Dutchess County (34.1% / 11.1%) 2) Orange County (33.8% / 11.1%) 3) New York County (7.7% / 2.5%) 4) Westchester County (3.8% / 1.2%)
Westchester	469,568	294,788	157,125	174,780	-17,655	37%	34.6	1) New York County (52.6% / 19.6%) 2) Bronx County (18.9% / 7.1%) 3) Western Connecticut (8.5% / 3.1%) 4) Queens County (3.5% / 1.3%)
Explanations	Working population living in county and working anywhere	Total population living AND working in county	Total working population living elsewhere BUT working in county	Total working population living in county, BUT working elsewhere	Difference between "Commute In" population and "Commute Out" population	Percentage of working population that is "Commuting Out"	Average time for workers to get to their work	The top 4 destinations outside the county where the "Commute Out" population goes to work. In parenthesis are 1) the percent of the "Commute Out" population that work in those locations and 2) the percent of the "Total Workforce" population that work in those locations

Source: NY Department of Labor with Census data from the American Community Survey 2016-2020[3]

Workforce Trends

One of the objectives of the workforce development system is to encourage local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to plan strategically and focus their resources on priority industries, and eventually on priority occupations within those industries. As the economy continues to move forward, many businesses are finding it difficult to fill open positions. Now more than ever it is imperative that the workforce development system understand the changes that have occurred in the labor market and develop effective strategies to match people to careers. LWIBs support the

[3] New York State Department of Labor, with Census Data from the American Community Survey, 2016-2020, https://dol.ny.gov/commuting-flows.

Region's workforce by taking steps to attract and retain people, providing them with affordable access to education, training, and wraparound services, as well as by exposing them to regional workforce opportunities at an earlier age.

Jobs have grown, and unemployment is low, but the Mid-Hudson Region faces a worsening workforce shortage. This issue stems from demographic trends that threaten the Region's economic development as companies seek areas with a sufficient supply of skilled workers. The Region's investment in workforce development continues to foster collaboration among State agency partners, as well as with industry, employers, institutions of higher education, and workforce trainers. This holistic approach to workforce development helps the Mid-Hudson achieve key programmatic goals, including:

- Expanding access to training and placement support for communities that have traditionally faced employment challenges.
- Ensuring New York's workforce is equipped with skills required to meet the needs of businesses in high-growth, tradable sectors across the State.
- Creating pathways for the unemployed and underemployed to access good jobs that provide economic security and opportunities for career growth.
- Sustaining talent pipelines for essential industries experiencing growing needs and high attrition rates, such health care, education, and civil service.

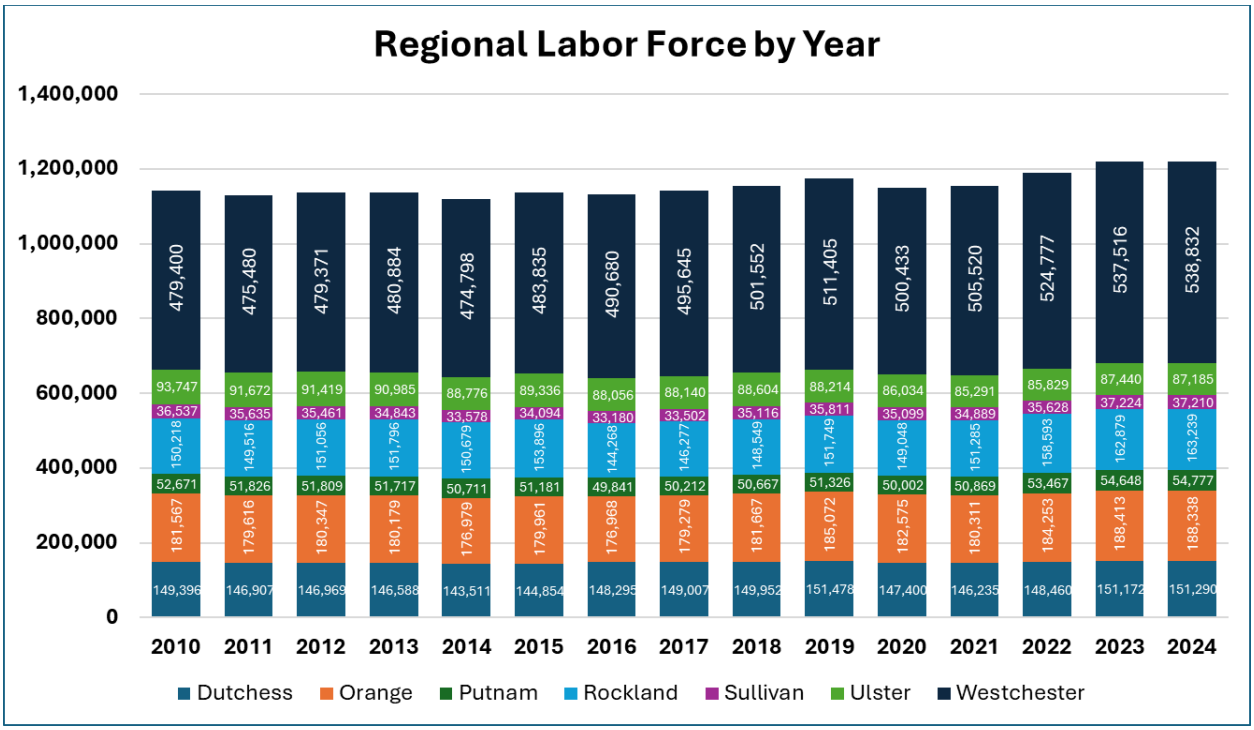
Some examples of ongoing workforce development initiatives include:

Dutchess County: The County is a leader in innovative workforce development initiatives, creating aviation, manufacturing, and logistics pipelines to jobs programs in partnership with the State University of New York (SUNY) for the Region. Their recently opened Mechatronics Lab and programs support more than 150 manufacturers in the Region, including semiconductor and quantum computing facilities in Dutchess County.

Orange County: The County will repurpose an old school building in the Village of Chester into a center for advanced manufacturing training to help diversify the economic basis.

Workforce Statistics

Regional Labor Force by Year: The Region's labor force grew by over 77K from 2010 to 2024. Every county except Ulster experienced growth. The graph below shows the annual labor force count by county.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010-2024)

Median Household Income in Mid-Hudson: Median household income (MHI) in the Region increased by over 60% in all counties, with Ulster experiencing the highest growth at 100.9%.

Median Household Income in the Mid-Hudson				
	2000	**2023**	**Percent Change 2000-2023**	**Percent of US MHI in 2023***
Dutchess	$53,879	$96,374	78.9%	124.0%
Orange	$53,415	$93,492	75.0%	120.3%
Putnam	$71,732	$120,930	68.6%	155.6%
Rockland	$65,575	$105,923	61.5%	136.3%
Sullivan	$36,535	$68,063	86.3%	87.6%
Ulster	$42,108	$84,593	100.9%	108.8%
Westchester	$64,230	$114,020	77.5%	146.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

*Median Household Income for the U.S. in 2023 was $77,719.

Annual Sector Distribution of Jobs in 2023 (NAICS) by County, Mid-Hudson Region: The top sectors for job distribution in the Region are 62 - Health Care and Social Assistance, 44-45 Retail Trade, and 72 – Accommodation and Food Services. Health Care and Social Assistance is the leading sector in all counties, followed by Retail Trade.

Annual Sector Distribution of Jobs in 2023 (NAICS) by County, Mid-Hudson Region

NAICS Code	Region	Dutchess	Orange	Putnam	Rockland	Sullivan	Ulster	Westchester
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	*	*	1.6%	1.6%	0.1%
21 - Mining	0.1%	0.2%	*	*	*	0.3%	0.2%	*
22 - Utilities	0.4%	*	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	*	0.4%
23 - Construction	6.3%	5.1%	5.0%	10.7%	6.9%	4.5%	5.0%	6.8%
31-33 - Manufacturing	5.3%	6.2%	5.7%	4.5%	5.7%	6.6%	5.9%	2.7%
42 - Wholesale Trade	3.0%	*	5.2%	5.1%	3.8%	1.7%	2.5%	2.8%
44-45 - Retail Trade	11.5%	12.2%	13.8%	10.8%	10.2%	8.9%	13.8%	10.9%
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	3.3%	3.4%	7.1%	2.2%	2.8%	4.0%	0.7%	3.2%
51 - Information	1.4%	1.3%	1.6%	1.9%	1.1%	0.6%	1.5%	1.7%
52 - Finance and Insurance	2.3%	2.3%	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	2.2%	4.0%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.4%	1.4%	1.1%	1.0%	1.7%	1.2%	1.0%	2.4%
54 - Professional and Technical Services	4.2%	3.3%	4.0%	5.3%	5.4%	1.3%	2.9%	7.1%
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	2.2%	0.8%	2.1%
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	4.7%	4.9%	5.9%	3.9%	5.9%	3.3%	4.0%	5.3%
61 - Educational Services	5.9%	7.5%	2.6%	12.5%	3.5%	1.2%	9.9%	3.8%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	18.8%	18.3%	15.7%	16.3%	23.8%	24.8%	14.0%	18.4%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	2.7%	1.3%	2.0%	1.4%	2.6%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	8.9%	9.5%	7.7%	7.4%	6.4%	11.4%	12.9%	6.9%
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	4.2%	3.5%	4.3%	5.1%	5.0%	3.4%	3.7%	4.6%
92- Public Administration	5.6%	6.4%	4.3%	0.6%	3.1%	9.7%	9.9%	5.4%
99 - Unclassified	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
*Percent change could not be computed due to suppression of data to avoid disclosure.								

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023)

Significant Industries, Hudson Valley Region, 2024: The New York State Department of Labor has identified fourteen subsectors that are designated as "significant" in the Hudson Valley. Ten of these industries experienced an increase in employment between 2018 and 2023, which reflects the overall employment trends in the regional job market. Employment count in these ten subsectors increased by 20,000 over the period. Meanwhile, employment count in the four subsectors that declined over that period amounted to a total loss of 3,600 jobs.

All significant subsectors shared one or more of the following characteristics: rapid growth (percentage basis); large growth (absolute basis); high wages (average annual wage above the regional average of $76,000); or strong expected growth through 2030.

Significant Industries, Hudson Valley Region, 2024

NAICS Industry Code	Industry Name	Average Employment, 2018*	Average Employment, 2023*	Net Change in Jobs, 2018-2023	% Change in Jobs, 2018-2023	Average Annual Wage, 2023	Projected % Change in Jobs, 2020-2030	Why Industry is Significant**
	Total, all industries (all ownerships)	**929,100**	**933,800**	**4,700**	**0.5%**	**$76,000**	**26.1%**	**NA**
236	Construction of buildings	13,200	13,600	400	3.0%	$78,600	26.1%	G, J, P, W
238	Specialty trade contractors	35,400	39,700	4,300	12.1%	$77,700	24.0%	G, J, W
311	Food manufacturing	7,300	7,900	600	8.2%	$66,000	26.0%	G
325	Chemical manufacturing	4,200	4,100	-100	-2.4%	$110,100	23.4%	W
334	Computer and electronic product manufacturing	8,700	7,900	-800	-9.2%	$185,300	15.1%	W
484	Truck transportation	4,600	5,100	500	10.9%	$67,500	22.4%	G
493	Warehousing and storage	4,100	6,100	2,000	48.8%	$59,700	38.6%	G, P
512	Motion picture and sound recording industries	1,800	2,100	300	16.7%	$59,700	15.8%	G
541	Professional, scientific, and technical services	45,500	50,800	5,300	11.6%	$141,800	12.4%	G, J, W
611	Educational services	102,300	103,200	900	0.9%	$75,100	14.1%	G, J
621	Ambulatory health care services	59,200	66,300	7,100	12.0%	$82,400	25.5%	G, J, W
622	Hospitals	42,200	42,300	100	0.2%	$92,300	14.7%	J, W
713	Amusements, gambling, and recreation	16,000	15,700	-300	-1.9%	$40,000	112.5%	J, P
721	Accommodation	11,200	8,800	-2,400	-21.4%	$44,400	98.3%	J, P

NA – Not Applicable
*Represents both private and public sector jobs
**Key:
G: Industry experienced above-average job growth; can be net or percentage growth
J: Industry employs a significant number of jobs (>8,500)
P: Above-average growth projected for 2020-2030
W: Industry pays above-average wages

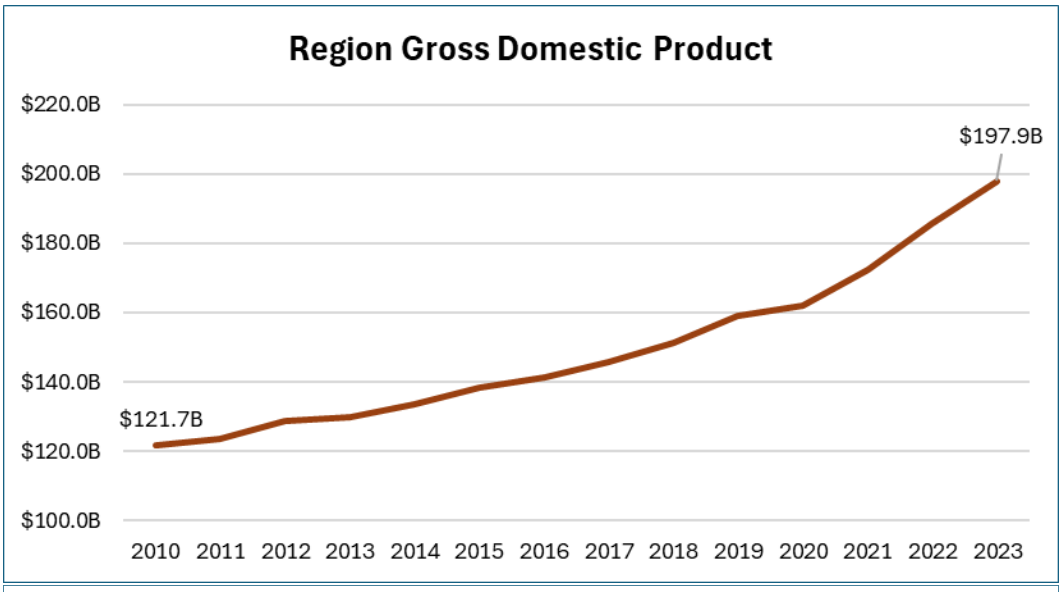
Source: 2024 Hudson Valley Significant Industries "A Report to the Workforce Development System", New York State Department of Labor

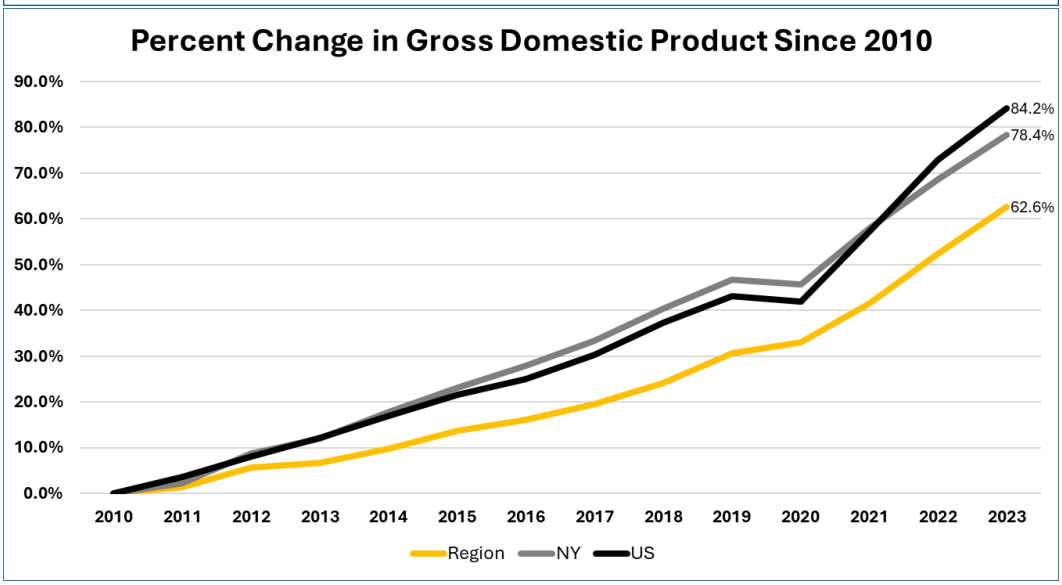
Industries Data

The Mid-Hudson Region's economy has steadily grown over more than a decade, with just a relatively small and temporary dip during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Region's economic development and targeted promotional efforts have been successful in growing clusters of industries that have been supported by natural assets, corporate anchors, and the workforce.

Gross Domestic Product

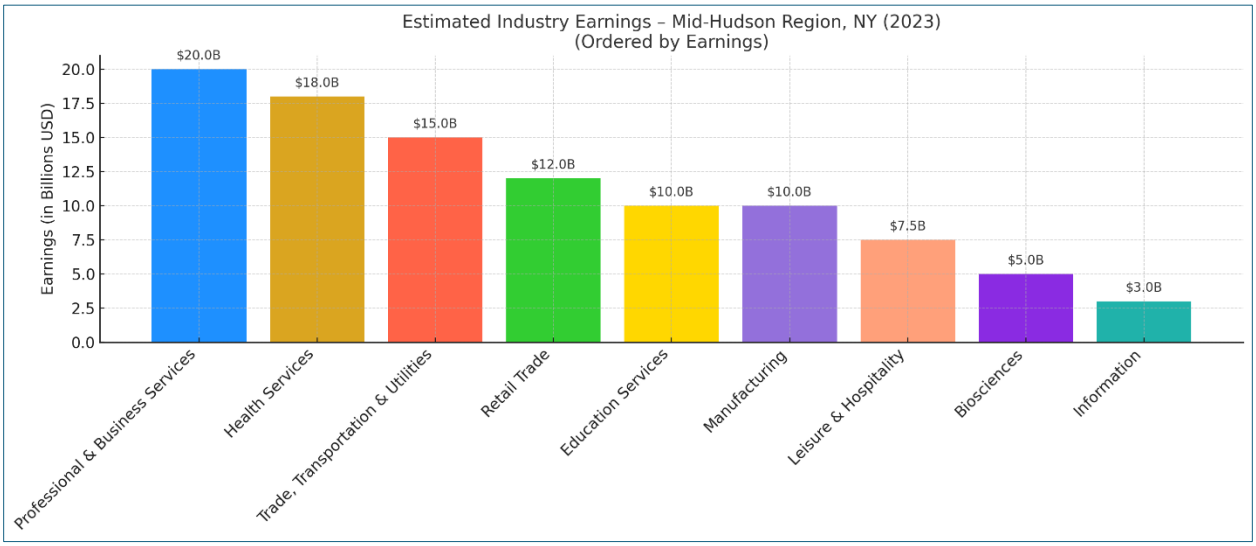
Region Gross Domestic Product and Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product Since 2010: The Region generated an estimated GDP exceeding $197.9 billion in 2023 through a variety of traditional and emerging industries. Although the Region's GDP increased by 62.6% since 2010, its growth rate was below that of the State (78.4%) and the country (84.2%). (Additional breakdowns by county will be available in a companion data document on HVRC's website.)





Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (2010-2023)

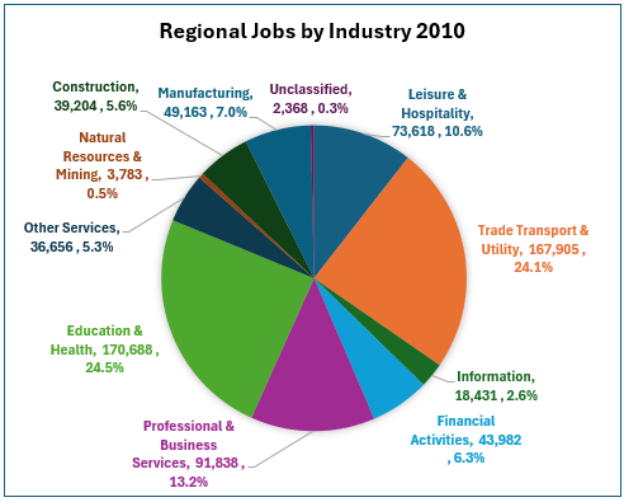
Estimated Industry Earnings – Mid-Hudson Region, NY (2023): The Professional & Business Services sector has led in growth and employment, reflecting tech and corporate spillover effects from NYC. Health Services ranked second in the Region's economy, offering substantial stability and employment. Logistics/warehousing is increasingly significant, especially in Orange and Dutchess Counties where there is a concentration of warehouse space. Manufacturing is smaller and lost most jobs, while niche high-tech sectors like biotech are rising. This has been backed by targeted marketing by economic developers, investments in workforce training, and R&D investments of companies. Tourism, film, and agriculture continue to provide stable income in rural/suburban counties. Film is a growing opportunity recognized by numerous counties in the Region. Those working in the industry have expressed caution about the continued growth of the film industry infrastructure, noting the increasingly competitive nature of the industry that is now has well-trained with often lower-cost labor available internationally.

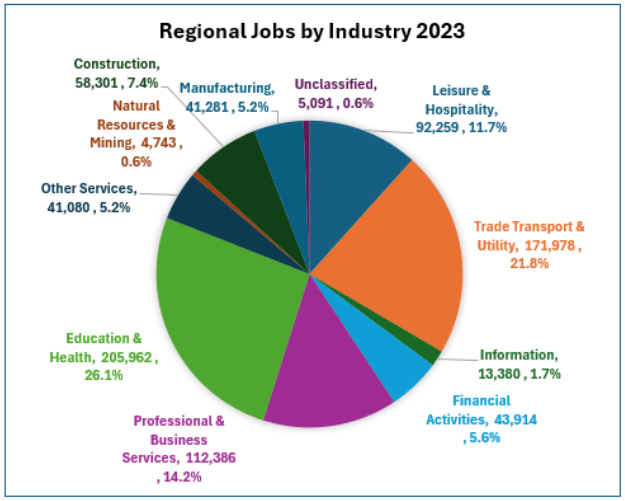


Source: New York State Department of Labor (2023).

Regional Jobs by Industry

From 2010 to 2023, the share of jobs across all industry sectors has remained relatively stable. The greatest increase was seen in education & health, which saw an increase in over 35K jobs, followed by Professional & Business Services, which saw an increase in over 20K jobs. The most significant job losses were seen in Manufacturing (over 7K lost) and Information (over 5K lost).





Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010 & 2023)

Professional & Business Services

The Professional & Business Services sector has seen dramatic growth in the Mid-Hudson Region, increasing jobs by approximately 91% since 2001 according to the New York Department of Labor. This growth is driven by a combination of economic restructuring, population growth, and shifting business practices including:

- Suburbanization of Professional Services: As firms and residents relocated from NYC, there has been a rise in legal, accounting, engineering, HR, IT, and consulting services in Mid-Hudson. The growth of remote and hybrid work post-COVID further accelerated this trend.
- Increase in Back-Office & Support Services: Many companies have moved non-customer-facing roles (HR, payroll, data analysis) to more affordable locations like Dutchess and Orange Counties. Shared services centers and third-party business process providers (e.g., payroll, call centers) have also expanded into Westchester.
- Growth in Construction & Real Estate Support: Regional development of housing, healthcare facilities, and industrial parks has increased demand for architecture, engineering, permitting, and environmental consulting.
- Professional Services: Such services tend to scale with development, where local planning and compliance are needed.
- Small Business & Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Growth of startups and small businesses in sectors like tech, wellness, design, and consulting creates more demand for legal, marketing, accounting, and IT services.
- Incubators: Local colleges and incubators including the SUNY New Paltz Hudson Valley Venture Hub and Westchester's Element 46 incubator support these entrepreneurs.
- NYS Professional: Many former NYC professionals have moved to suburban areas of Mid-Hudson and are running consulting, legal, and freelance practices locally.

Education & Health Services

Often lumped together in government data, these sectors combine to create 236,200 jobs (approx. 28% of the Region's private sector) according to the NY Department of Labor. This is consistently the Region's largest employment sector with strong income and continued growth potential. Statewide trends can guide individual estimates. A plausible current split estimated by the NY State Department of Labor is:

- Education Services: ~100,000 jobs
- Health Services: ~136,200 jobs

In December 2024, Education & Health Services accounted for 23.6% of all nonfarm jobs across Mid-Hudson. Within that combined category, Educational Services grew 52% between 2001–2022 while Health Care & Social Assistance saw a smaller but steady growth of about 28% in that same period.

The Mid-Hudson benefits from a higher education ecosystem with great depth, which includes renowned liberal arts and private universities, the robust SUNY system for career and transfer education, specialty institutions boosting sectors like culinary arts and aerospace mechanics, specialty institutions boosting sectors like culinary arts and aerospace mechanics.

Colleges & Universities include:

- Marist University (Poughkeepsie): A private institution offering liberal arts, business, STEM, mass communications & tech infrastructure.
- Vassar College (Poughkeepsie): Elite liberal arts college.
- Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson): Liberal arts and conservatory programs.
- Dutchess Community College (SUNY): Offers direct workforce training.
- Culinary Institute of America (Hyde Park): Offers renowned culinary instruction.
- Orange County Community College (SUNY): Career-focused training.
- Mount Saint Mary College (Newburgh): Private college for liberal arts.
- Rockland Community College (SUNY): STEM and healthcare focus.
- Dominican College, Iona College (Rockland campus), St. Thomas Aquinas College
- SUNY New Paltz: bachelor's and master's degrees in arts, Education, STEM.
- Ulster County Community College (SUNY): Community and workforce development.
- Westchester Community College (SUNY): Vocational, associate degrees.
- Purchase College (SUNY): Arts, design, music, and liberal arts.
- Sullivan County Community College (SUNY): Associate degrees and continuing education.

Private higher education institutions in the Region include:

- New York Medical College
- Manhattanville College
- Mercy College (multiple campuses)
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Fordham University - Westchester campus, Iona College, Pace University

Leisure & Hospitality

Leisure & Hospitality, which is an easily tracked sector of tourism, gained 1,400 jobs following the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. While tourism is often discounted as a low-paying industry, it provides for significant export revenue by bringing money into the Region. Tourism is a cluster that goes beyond hotels to also include pieces of other industries – from retail and wholesale, to finance, insurance, transportation, arts, and culture, and more. There are a wide range of jobs in the industry, and tourism is also a major driver for small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Tourism is a significant economic engine for the Region, generating $2.5 billion in total labor income in 2023 according to NYESD and Tourism Economics. The multiplier consistently exceeds 1.5, reinforcing tourism as a strong generator of local economic activity and income. In fact, it is estimated that every $1 of direct tourism income in Mid-Hudson generates an additional $0.55 of earned income through supply-chain spending and re-spending. This reflects tourism's ability to boost local supply chains (suppliers, maintenance, services) and support induced spending (by employees).

The development of rail trails, redevelopment of historic resorts and hotels, and promotion of nature-based outdoor recreation have contributed to growth. Significant untapped opportunity is seen in developing more Hudson River recreation and sightseeing opportunities, as well as waterfront attractions, including dining and shopping in scenic settings. Several of the counties are also taking advantage of the opportunity to promote their historic sites, including special events in connection with the 250th Commemoration of the Revolutionary War. Several communities have received grants from the State to help develop and promote these activities.

Trade, Transportation, & Utilities

This sector is up more than 200 jobs across the Region between 2022 and 2023, including logistics and warehousing. Note: In economic and labor market terms, "Trade" typically refers to both Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade, which are distinct but related sectors under NAICS codes. This modest growth reflects a shift toward logistics-oriented roles and transportation services driven by e-commerce growth. Local economies benefit from full-time warehousing and transportation jobs; many are supported through Federal and local infrastructure investment.

Major warehouse expansions are occurring in Orange County's Town of Montgomery, where Amazon is constructing a massive 1,015,740 square foot distribution center with the capacity to create 300 construction jobs and 800 permanent logistics positions. Medline Industries is building a 1.2 million square foot warehouse, relocating 340 existing jobs, and adding up to 200 new full-time jobs. The massive scale of these facilities positions Orange County as a regional distribution hub, enhancing supply chain resiliency. These expansions are not only already contributing to the net job gain recorded by NYSDOL, but also support supply-chain networks in distribution, trucking, and warehouse operations. It should also be noted that the expansion of warehouses and distribution centers has raised concerns related to traffic congestion and the impact on local forests, issues that are yet to be adequately addressed.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing remains a vital, though evolving, part of the regional economy. The Manufacturing sector has shifted from traditional industries toward advanced and specialty industries like biotechnology, electronics, food processing, and energy infrastructure sources. The sector added a modest 600 jobs, signaling slow recovery and diversification rather than large-scale regrowth.

There are an estimated total manufacturing jobs in the Region ranging from 24,000 to 26,000, which represents 5% to 6% of the workforce. Manufacturing's GDP estimate by the State is $3 billion to $4 billion annually. This sector is still down 33% since 2001.[4]

Advantages for manufacturing in the Region are the proximity to NYC and Albany logistics corridors, shovel-ready sites in Orange, Dutchess, and Ulster Counties (supported by the FAST NY Shovel-Ready Grant Program), access to a growing tech-savvy workforce, and energy infrastructure and semiconductor sector investments gaining traction. Challenges to growth include aging infrastructure, limited industrial-zoned land in high-demand counties, and the need for regional collaboration on supply chains and workforce training.

Key Manufacturing Segments	
Pharmaceuticals & Biotech	Led by Regeneron in Westchester and biotech firms in Dutchess & Ulster
Food & Beverage	Including specialty food production and packaging in Orange & Ulster
Electronics & Semiconductors	onsemi (formerly GlobalFoundries) in East Fishkill, plus AMD expansions
Energy Technology & Manufacturing	Components and lighting innovations
Advanced Materials & 3D Printing	Supported by SUNY New Paltz's Advanced Manufacturing Center

Information

This sector has declined 25% since 2001 due to national trends. Many of the jobs transferred to other sectors rather than remaining stand-alone.[5] Trends include:

- Structural Shift in Media & Publishing: The Region historically had a strong presence in newspaper publishing, print media, and broadcasting. With the rise of digital media, many local outlets and leading national legacy publishers that operated in the Region downsized or closed. Jobs in printing and traditional journalism have been particularly affected in counties like Westchester, Dutchess, and Ulster.
- Consolidation & Outsourcing: Media and telecom firms increasingly centralized operations in major metro areas, reducing demand for regional offices. IT services and tech support roles have often been offshored overseas. In some areas, corporate IT departments that once supported large manufacturers have closed.
- Loss of Legacy Employers: The decline or relocation of telecom and publishing headquarters in the early 2000s led to significant job losses (e.g., Reader's Digest moved from Chappaqua; IBM scaled down certain operations).
- Growth in Other Sectors Diverting Talent: While there have been no new information companies coming into the area, talent and resources shifted to higher-growth sectors, leaving the Information sector less competitive regionally. Biosciences, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing have grown, attracting investment, workers, and infrastructure attention.

[4] https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state and New York State Department of Labor newsletter https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYDOL/bulletins/3878ac0.
[5] New York State Department of Labor (May 2025).

Agriculture

Not shown in the Estimated Industry Earnings chart due to the much smaller dollar value of the sector, Agriculture is a traditional and important sector in the Region for several counties. Dutchess County hosts some 650 farms, the most in the Region. Ulster County has approximately 500 farms and is ranked second in New York State for apple acreage and 10th in the nation. Orange County is known for large-scale vegetable production and a major agricultural corridor along the Wallkill River covering 69,300 acres. Sullivan County and other parts of the Region are home to poultry farms that contribute significantly to local employment, food production, and economic output. Some notable statistics about agriculture from the USDA's Census of Agriculture[6] provide insights into current trends:

Online maps to guide visitors in finding farms and agritourism attractions are listed below.

Dutchess County
Interactive GIS map highlighting parcels within Ag. District 21 (https://gis.dutchessny.gov/ag-districts/).

Dutchess Tourism "Farm Map": List of local farms, pick-your-own sites, and farm businesses https://destinationdutchess.com/farm-map.

Orange County
Interactive GIS platform offers spatial tools and farmland layers with agricultural districts and soil/land-value data: https://gis.orangecountygov.com/orange/.

CUGIR Ag Districts (2021): GIS boundary data for protected farmland; is available for download and mapping https://cugir.library.cornell.edu/catalog/cugir-007978.

- According to the NY State Comptroller's analysis, New York State farms contributed $2.7 billion in GDP in 2022. Mid-Hudson farms account for estimated farm sales of $301 million out of statewide $8 billion total farm income, with a rough GDP impact for the Region is $102 million.
- Between 2017–2022, the Region added 2% more farms (2,280 in total), despite NY declines.
- Acreage fell 3% since 2017 (307,848 acres), but Ulster County grew 24%.
- Regional plans set targets to increase farmland from 323,000 acres (2020) to 353,000 acres by 2050, alongside a rise in farm numbers.
- Agritourism, such as U-pick farms, farm stays, and event venues, are growing, with revenue up 78% statewide between 2012–2022.
- Following a national trend, farmers are aging. In 2022, the average age of a farmer in the Region was 58.1 years, up from 57.5 years in 2017.

[6] USDA Census of Agriculture, https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus.

IV. SWOT Stakeholder Analysis

An important part of HVRC's planning process, a SWOT analysis was conducted to help identify and evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in the Mid-Hudson Region. The input came from interviews and surveys with stakeholders, analyzing the key words and descriptions of what it is like to live and do business in the Region. The SWOT helps prioritize decision-making with a view of internal and external factors, which are weaknesses or threats that need to be addressed. It also informs us about strengths, trends, or gaps that can be turned into opportunities.

The SWOT listings were developed from more than 100 regional leaders engaged via interviews and surveys. To help determine the relative weight of comments, word clouds were created to emphasize how often certain key words, phrases, and issues were cited to describe the experience of living and working in the Region. The aggregated listing was presented to the HVRC Board of Directors in its capacity as CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee as a framework for discussion, refinement, and finalization. The finalized SWOT selections can be seen in the finalized listing in each SWOT section as well as illustrated through word clouds that appear at the end of each SWOT section.

Of note in a regional SWOT development process is the variety that arises in a seven-county region. This variety is integrated into this CEDS Plan by including some additional information on the county differences within each SWOT section. In this way this regional planning process reflects the varied nature of our Region — what is a strength in one county, for example, may be seen as an opportunity or weakness in other counties. A full listing of individual county assessments of their county SWOTS is presented in the County Initiatives section by individual county.

Strengths

Agriculture Assets
Agritourism
Aircraft Mechanic Training
Arts & Culture
Broadband
Business-Friendly
Clean Water
Culinary Institute of America
DRI Designations
Educated Workforce
Educational Opportunities
Emergency Response Coordination
Entertainment
Film Locations
Heterogeneous Populations
Historic Sites
Hospitals
Hudson River Access
Land Availability
Mechatronics Lab
Natural Assets
Outdoor Recreation
Parks
Preserved Land
Proximity to NYC
Quality of Life
Rail Lines
Regeneron
Regional Airports
Roadway Infrastructure
Suburban Lifestyle
Tourism Assets
Trail System
Transportation Access
Vibrant Mixed-Use Centers
Warehouse Space
West Point Military Academy

A key advantage cited by all counties is the **proximity to New York City**, which is the premier financial center for the nation and a place many residents of the Mid-Hudson Region commute to for work. To this end, **transportation access**, **rail lines, and roadway infrastructure** were seen by different counties as advantages or disadvantages, depending on where people live.

As noted in the overview to this section, some regional strengths were identified as weaknesses or threats in specific counties. For instance, **broadband access** is unevenly distributed throughout the Region and some counties listed it as a Weakness rather than a Strength.

Quality of life features such as **suburban living, outdoor recreation, historic sites of interest, Hudson River access,** and the experiences offered by complex Region were just some of the highlights. The **availability of higher education opportunities** from numerous community colleges, trade schools and universities, **highly educated workforce**, and **business-friendly attitudes** of local governments all positively impact the success of firms operating in the Region.

That being said, many of the counties cited examples of **funding support from New York State,** which is very helpful to local economic development, workforce development, tourism promotion, and infrastructure improvement efforts. An example of this is the **Downtown Revitalization Initiative** (DRI) program designation, part of the State's assistance to support the revitalization of downtown areas. It is a competitive grant program led by New York State's Department of State, Empire State Development, and other agencies. Each year, selected communities, one from each of the 10 Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), receives support for:

- Downtown infrastructure
- Public spaces
- Housing and mixed-use development
- Small business growth
- Cultural and recreational assets
- Transportation and walkability

The CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee also discussed strengths related to certain industries / sectors and an **educated workforce.** The advantage of having a major employer such as Regeneron in Tarrytown is a major draw for nearly 5,000 workers and creates significant tax revenues. It also creates supply chain opportunities for the growing **biosciences and life sciences industry clusters**, as well as related research across Westchester and other counties in the HVRC Economic Development District. **Educational opportunities** are a key asset in the Region, with specific institutions like the Culinary Institute of America and United States Military Academy at West Point highlighted as regional strengths.

The Aviation Education Center by Dutchess Community College at Dutchess's Hudson Valley Regional Airport in Wappingers Falls was cited for its offering of certified maintenance technician programs, a trade school model that can provide a good model for other professions to increase other workforce development opportunities. Similarly, the Mechatronics Lab in the Town of Fishkill, also a Dutchess Community College effort, is an innovative model focused on increasing opportunities for residents of the Region in the areas of mechanical systems, control systems, and computers.

Tourism and agriculture go hand-in-hand in the Region, offering an abundance of attractions that are enjoyed by visitors and residents. For the **film and tourism** industries, the Region offers many picturesque sites of interest, and exposure that brings millions of dollars and thousands of jobs to the Mid-Hudson.

Word cloud representing the frequency of Strengths identified during the CEDS engagement process via one-on-one interviews and surveys.

Weaknesses

Aging Infrastructure
Aging Population
Availability of Capital
Brain Drain
Broadband
Building Costs
Childcare
Cost of Living
Digital Literacy
Energy Shortage and Cost
Expensive Land
Federal Funding
Healthcare
High Taxes
Housing
Land Costs
Land Preservation
Living Wages
Manufacturing Decline
Meeting Space
NIMBY
No Meat Processing
Pedestrian Safety
Silos
Solid waste
Sprawl
Stagnant Economy
Transportation
Wastewater
Water Infrastructure
Workforce Shortages
Zoning & Permitting

The weaknesses or disadvantages identified in doing business in the Region largely focused on the **shortage and cost of housing**, including the need for a full range of "step up" and "scale down" housing for people at various stages of life. Other weaknesses include **aging and outdated water**

and wastewater infrastructure that do not meet current needs, let alone the opportunity to expand new business or housing areas.

The **lack of ample power generation capacity** and **broadband Internet** in certain locations impacts both businesses and residences, limiting opportunities for growth and where it can occur. The **cost of energy** was also noted to have increased. Workforce challenges included the **lack of childcare**, some **transportation issues,** such as poor maintenance of state highways, **brain drain,** and an **aging population**. A general comment about development was the attitude of some residents who do not want to see change in their suburban lifestyle, called "**NIMBY**" or the "not-in-my-backyard objections" towards development. While NIMBYism can be a rejection to change, it is also sometimes simply a call for more thoughtful proposals that reflect the local contexts at all levels.

While there was agreement on the above listed regional Weaknesses, the varied nature of the Region resulted in Board members viewing the weaknesses differently. For example, **digital literacy** was seen by some as a Strength by some, and the **availability of capital**, **health care**, and **land preservation** were listed as Opportunities for other counties.

Word cloud representing the frequency of Weaknesses identified during the CEDS engagement process via one-on-one interviews and surveys.

Opportunities

Adaptive Re-use
Advanced Manufacturing Training
Agritech Research & Innovation
AI
Amazon Distribution Center
Land Banking
Medical Pharma
Mixed Use Development
Offshore Wind
On Demand Transportation

Apprenticeships
Arts & Culture
Available Land
Battery Storage Innovation
Biochar[7]
Bioeconomy[8]
Biotech Research Center
Brownfield Redevelopment
Build Out Rail Trails
Controlled Environment Agriculture
Cooperative Regional Planning
Co-working Spaces
Datacenters
Develop Meeting Space
Develop Passenger Rail
Downtown Revitalization
Ecotourism
Energy Infrastructure Sites
Film
Food Processing
Grow Tourism Seasons
Healthcare Facilities
IBM Campus Redevelopment
Incubators
Lab Space Development
Land Availability
Quantum Computing
Rail Trail Development
Recreation Management Education
Regional Planning
Regional Wildfire Planning
Regional Workforce Development Center
Resilience Industries
Revolutionary War 250th
River Cruises on Hudson
Route 17 Corridor Redevelopment
Scenic Byway Promotion
Semiconductor Industry
Shipbuildling
Smart Planning Initiatives
Sound Stage Development
Special Event Venue Development
Sports Complex
Tourism Development
Trades Education
Transit-oriented Development
Transportation Connectivity
Urban Farming
Vacant Retail
Warehouse Space
Water Tours & Boating
Waterfront Development

The wide range of Opportunities raised during this planning process highlights the creativity of the Region's local leaders and economic developers from a complimentary array of stakeholder perspectives. Many people cited the opportunities to **redevelop and adaptively re-use** existing buildings, including vacant retail, industrial, warehouse and even school facilities. Former historical hotels and resorts also offer numerous opportunities. Some are already being converted to housing and other uses.

Adaptive re-use is an efficient way to deal with vacant facilities, including the former IBM headquarters and as many as five shopping malls throughout the Region that have closed in recent years. It also speeds up permitting and zoning approvals, eliminating some construction time and costs. High interest was shown in **mixed-use developments** that will incorporate housing, walkable shopping, and transportation hubs, which is ideal for those without cars.

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[7] The USDA Agriculture Research Service defines biochar as a "black carbon produced from biomass sources [i.e., wood chips, plant residues, manure or other agricultural waste products] for the purpose of transforming the biomass carbon into a more stable form…." One of its primary uses is to revitalize nutrient-impoverished soils. https://www.ars.usda.gov/midwest-area/stpaul/swmr/people/kurt-spokas/biochar/

[8] According to a CRS report from the US Library of Congress, "The term bioeconomy refers to the share of the economy based on products, services, and processes derived from biological resources (e.g., plants and microorganisms). The bioeconomy is crosscutting, encompassing multiple sectors, in whole or in part (e.g., agriculture, textiles, chemicals, and energy)." https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46881

Downtown revitalization and **maximizing the Hudson River** for waterfront development and recreation were also frequently cited as Opportunities. Revitalizing streetscapes and adding landscaping, lighting and pedestrian walkways not only improves the appearance of downtowns, but such investments can also help revitalize businesses and increase retail sales by encouraging people to spend more time on main streets.

Local stakeholders also had ideas for industries they want to grow further and investments they want to make in entrepreneurs and start-ups. To this end, several locations have made **revolving loan funds available for downtown businesses** to undertake façade improvements, which complement the local government investments. Others, like the City of Peekskill, are investing in **incubators** for food entrepreneurs and a retail and maker space planned for downtown. Investments in technology business incubators and accelerators have also been seen at the Westchester County level as well as local efforts in counties like Ulster.

The Hudson Valley Venture Hub at SUNY New Paltz in Ulster County is a regional accelerator that works with regional partners and stakeholders. They identify the strongest startups with technology-forward solutions. The HV Venture Hub accelerator program gives startups access to offerings like Paid Advisement, Micro Grants, NYS Tax Incentives, Student Contractors, and Introductions to Private Capital.

Feedback from HVRC's Board of Directors revealed that Opportunities such as the **IBM Campus Redevelopment** and **Advanced Manufacturing Training** could already be seen as Strengths in their counties. Alternatively, some Opportunities like **Sports Complexes** and **On-Demand Transportation** were seen as weaknesses by certain Board members due to insufficient local progress within their counties.

Word cloud representing the frequency of Opportunities identified during the CEDS engagement process via one-on-one interviews and surveys.

Threats

Aquifer Depletion
Casino Competition
Cyber Security
Dam Capacity
Extreme Weather
Flooding
Housing Crisis
Ice Storms
Infrastructure Capacity
Invasive Pests to Agriculture
Low Birth Rate
Outdated Infrastructure
Tourism Competition
Uncertainty of Government Policies
Waste management
Wastewater Overflow
Water Contamination
Water Shortages
Wildfire Risk

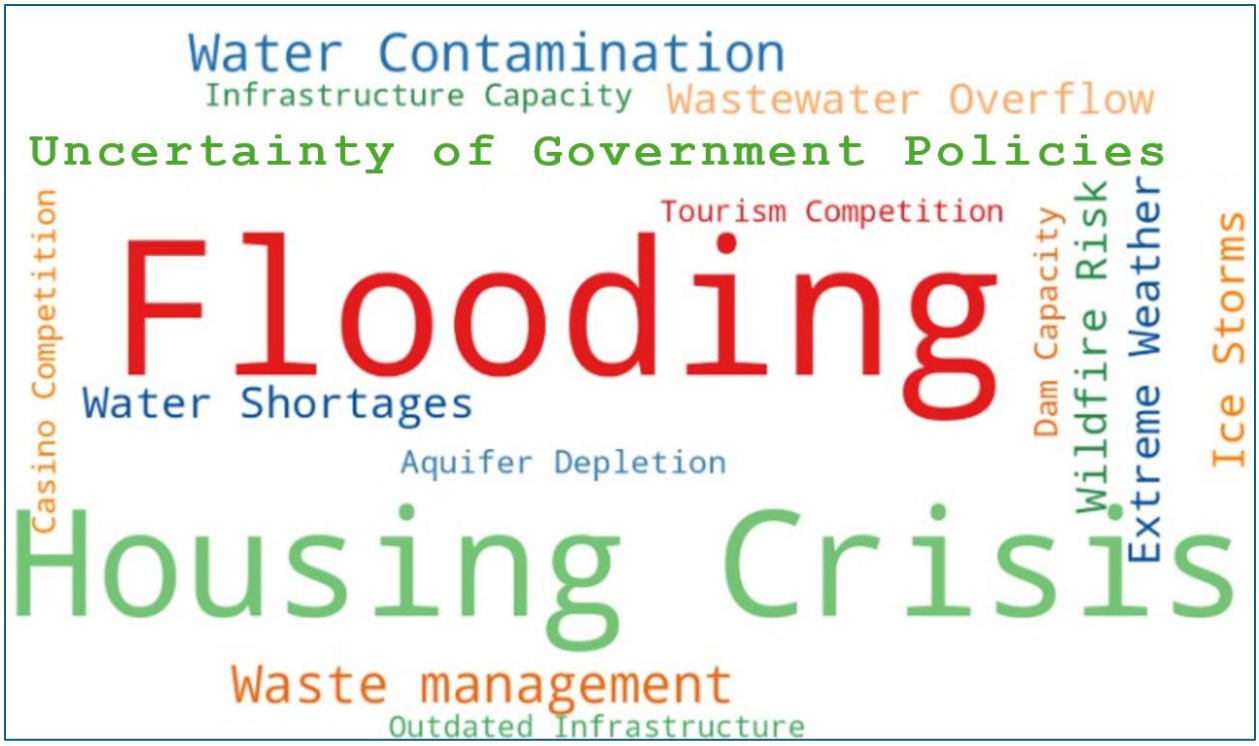
The most prominent theme among the Threats identified was the **crisis in housing affordability and availability** as well as numerous impacts of **extreme weather**, which causes flooding throughout most of the Region. Weather patterns also affect the agriculture, outdoor recreation, and tourism industries. While stakeholders noted that these weather-related threats are the focus of hazard mitigation planning undertaken by counties, their inclusion in this CEDS highlights their detrimental impact on regional economic resilience. There is high potential for **wastewater contamination** in some parts of the Region. Where there are **water shortages**, some communities are concerned with **aquifer depletion**, which may result in less water availability in the future. Contamination of lakes, streams, and the Hudson River were cited in some locations, with linkages made to the resulting impact on their tourism offerings.

Competition for tourism and casinos is a continuing concern that tourism offices monitor and address**.** In the case of casinos, it was noted that there are new potential licenses elsewhere in the State that fear could draw customers elsewhere. Developing coordinated regional and statewide tour packages for venues such as casinos could reduce the impact of future competition.

Many stakeholders also cited concerns regarding the **uncertainty of changing Federal policies**, which may impact the availability of Federal funding to support the creation or retention of the types of high-paying jobs the Region hopes to continue attracting

On the topic of **waste management**, it was noted by several people that the current practice in some counties of trucking municipal solid waste to other locations in the northern part of the State may be discontinued in the future as those sites are expected to close. Therefore, the Mid-Hudson Region needs to identify new locations and/or methods of solid waste disposal. Some suggestions have been made about exploring technologies such as waste-to-energy and intensive recycling of building materials. Additional waste management technological solutions, such as composting, anaerobic digestion, chemical recycling, and pyrolysis,[9] are also being implemented and considered by the Region's solid waste managers. The Region is urged to address this problem proactively while there is still time to plan costs and effective solutions. (Some counties already burn their waste and do not truck it to landfills.)

[9] Pyrolysis is a high-temperature anaerobic process that can create highly stable carbon-based materials. It is a potential disposal pathway for plastics. It produces biochar, a soil amendment with beneficial environmental outcomes. See: https://csanr.wsu.edu/publications-library/energy/biochar/.For more information, please see Appendix. Public Input under the materials management section.



Word cloud representing the frequency of Threats identified during the CEDS engagement process via one-on-one interviews and surveys.

V. Regional Issues

One of the objectives of this CEDS is to identify key issues affecting economic vitality and prosperity of the Mid-Hudson Region and ways for municipalities, counties, HVRC, and partners to address those issues. HVRC strives to help the seven counties and municipalities think about the big picture of the Region and collaborate on shared issues for the sake of efficiency and synergy, leading to greater success. As part of this process, HVRC identified ways it can have a positive impact on the issues and support resolutions to the common challenges faced by its member counties.

While most interviewees or survey respondents wanted some growth, there was a strong desire for balance — in other words, to preserve the quality of life and the natural environment of the Region. For various reasons, including the lack of infrastructure and a desire to maintain green spaces, local governments indicated a desire to maximize opportunities for adaptive re-use of old or vacant buildings and to become more resilient to such issues as extreme weather. There is also strong interest in expanding clusters of industries that show good potential for growth in today's modern world and creating new workforce development opportunities to prepare people for gainful employment in the industries of the future.

The Challenge of Housing

Of the many issues discussed, the universal constraint faced by the seven counties — if not also a problem for communities around New York State and the nation — is the challenge of providing enough housing at price points affordable to people of all ages. From entry level apartments to senior living and step-up housing in between, the Region is undersupplying housing relative to population growth, wages, and affordability. As Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress reports in its 2024 Out of Reach Report, the considerable shortfall is fueling high rents and home prices, putting strain on commuters, impacting homelessness, and community stress.[10] The problem of "brain drain" and attracting workers needed to support businesses will continue to be a challenge until the housing challenge is addressed.

According to a 2022 report by the New York State Housing Conference, there is a statewide shortage of approximately 650,000 housing units that are affordable to very low-income renters — many of which is concentrated outside New York City in Downstate and Mid-Hudson counties.[11] Updated HUD CHAS data (2016–2020) showed that in the Mid-Hudson Region 37% of all households are cost burdened-- renting at more than 30% of income, including nearly 50% of renter households.[12]

The Regional Plan Association's (RPA) Impact analysis of Housing Undersupply in the Tri-State Region shows a potential shortfall of 920,000 housing units by 2035, if the Region adds housing at

[10] https://www.pattern-for-progress.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024-Out-of-Reach-2.pdf
[11] https://thenyhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Housing-Needs-and-Policy-Solutions-Report-1-7-2022.pdf
[12] https://www.osc.ny.gov/reports/new-yorkers-need-housing-insecurity-crisis

the rate of current projections. The report found that to fully close the gap between demand and supply, the Tri-State Region would need to build at the rate it did in the post-World War II period.[13]

It is believed that the housing shortfall in the Mid-Hudson Region, especially for very low-income renters and middle-income households, is due to stagnant construction of missing-middle housing. Studies by the State and housing organizations have identified that the root issues include restrictive zoning and a post-recession slowdown in homebuilding — particularly affecting developing towns.[14] Through the Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund, the State is seeking to invest $150 million to invest in mixed-use housing and infrastructure projects throughout the Mid-Hudson Region to address the recent population increase to the area.[15]

Table 1 below demonstrates the cost burden of housing ownership compared to incomes in Mid-Hudson communities.[16] The standard used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assess housing affordability is 30%. For renters, the calculation is monthly rent plus utilities while for homeowners it is mortgage payments plus property taxes and insurance. Utilities are an additional $300 to $400 per month, depending upon the season, location, and size of the home, adding an additional 2% to 4% of the housing burden listed in the last column below.

Table 1: Housing Affordability in the Mid-Hudson Region

County	2023 Median Income	2023 Median Home Sales Price	Loan Amount	Monthly Mortgage	Monthly Property Tax & Insurance	Monthly Housing Cost	Monthly Income	Housing Cost Burden (%)
Dutchess	$97,273	$420,000	$336,000	$ 2,235	$ 630	$ 2,865	$8,106	35%
Orange	$96,497	$420,490	$336,392	$ 2,238	$ 631	$ 2,869	$8,041	36%
Putnam	$134,659	$485,000	$388,000	$ 2,581	$ 728	$ 3,309	$11,222	29%
Rockland	$110,631	$670,000	$536,000	$ 3,566	$ 1,005	$ 4,571	$9,219	50%
Sullivan	$69,826	$250,000	$200,000	$ 1,331	$ 375	$ 1,706	$5,819	29%
Ulster	$81,804	$376,500	$301,200	$ 2,004	$ 565	$ 2,569	$6,817	38%
Westchester	$201,935	$810,000	$648,000	$ 4,311	$ 1,215	$ 5,526	$16,828	33%

What are some innovative ways communities are dealing with housing shortages?

Communities across the U.S. are implementing innovative strategies to tackle housing shortages and rising costs. These approaches span policy, finance, zoning, and construction, often

[13] https://rpa.org/work/reports/impacts-ny-housing-crisis
[14] https://nyassembly.gov/write/upload/publichearing/001411/005543.pdf
[15] https://esd.ny.gov/momentum#objective
[16] Sources: U.S. Census Bureau median incomes from the 2019-2023 Census in 2023 dollars. 2023 Median Home Sales Price by the New York Department of Taxation & Finance. Mortgage estimates based on 7% fixed mortgage for 30 years.

combining public-private partnerships with regulatory reform. Here are some examples which may be relevant to Mid-Hudson communities.

1. **Adaptive Reuse of Commercial Properties** utilizes existing infrastructure, cutting down on land acquisition costs and can provide housing more rapidly than new construction. Numerous counties in the Mid-Hudson Region expressed their interest in converting vacant or underutilized buildings to housing. Many projects are in the concept phases or underway, including conversions of old shopping malls, schools, hotels, office buildings, and even a former jail. Other examples of adaptive reuse of commercial or industrial properties into housing showcase how historic and underutilized buildings are transformed into modern residences:

- Ponce City Market, Atlanta, Georgia. Originally built in 1926 as the Sears, Roebuck & Co. Mail-Order Warehouse, the five building, 3 million square foot community hub served as a regional distribution center and later City Hall East. After redevelopment , it reopened as a vibrant mixed-use destination with 821 residential units. The redevelopment also includes 327,000 square feet of retail and restaurants, and 638,000 feet of office space which now serves startups, creative firms and tech companies.[17]
- Sibley's Department Store, Rochester, NY. Once a retail center, the store then became vacant for decades. A private developer turned it into a 1.1 million square foot mixed use development with 246 residential units, a mix of market-rate and affordable housing, with street-level retail, creating a vibrant mixed-use community. The historic facade was maintained to preserve the building's cultural identity.[18]
- McCarthy Building , Troy, NY. A 1904 Beaux-Arts commercial building was repurposed as luxury apartments in 2020. This downtown redevelopment restored a historic facade while creating new housing.[19]
- NYC has launched initiatives targeting underused offices—such as 5 Times Square, for conversion into residential units. The city budget includes tax breaks (up to 90% exemption) for projects including at least 25% affordable units.[20] [21]
- Buffalo Adaptive Reuse Program. Administered by the Erie County Industrial Development Agency the Program offers tax incentives for developers with qualified redevelopment plans for historic commercial buildings, has redeveloped millions of square feet including creating thousands of housing units in former factories and commercial buildings in the City of Buffalo. A successful example is the former Trico windshield wiper factory in the City of Buffalo, now home to 242 apartments and some commercial space.[22]

2. **Zoning Reform & Upzoning** helps increase housing supply and diversity without major infrastructure expansion. These reforms focus on **zoning flexibility** — allowing more housing units "where they already belong" — instead of costly infrastructure investments. They are tailored to

[17] https://www.jamestownlp.com/properties/ponce-city-market
[18] https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/money/business/2022/04/18/sibleys-prestigious-department-store-rochester-ny/7228652001/
[19] https://www.mccarthylofts.com
[20] https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/tax-incentives-467-m.page
[21] https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-and-mayor-adams-announce-major-office-housing-transformation-5-times-square
[22] https://www.ecidany.com/adaptive-reuse

ease affordability pressures, boost rental supply, and encourage neighborhood growth meeting housing life-cycle needs. Some examples include:

- Minneapolis, Minnesota became the first U.S. city to abolish single-family-only zoning with implementation starting in 2020, allowing duplexes and triplexes citywide, and higher-density buildings near transit. This reform supports growth by enabling more varied housing without expanding infrastructure.[23]
- Passed in 2019, Oregon's House Bill 2001 requires cities over 10,000 residents to allow duplexes—and those over 25,000 to allow up to fourplexes, cottage clusters, and townhouses—on formerly single-family lots. In Portland, the Residential Infill Project went further—automatically permitting up to four units per lot—and led to the creation of over 1,400 new units by 2022, targeting missing middle needs.[24] [25]
- Beginning in 2021, Raleigh, North Carolina reformed zoning to allow townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and ADUs by right in single-family neighborhoods. Since then, more than 2,800 new units have been approved or are under review—units that wouldn't have been possible under the old code.[26]
- NYC's "City of Yes for Housing Opportunity." Citywide zoning reform (Dec 2024) allows incremental development across every neighborhood, raising limits on floor area, relaxing bulk, and parking rules, and permitting ADUs, basement apartments, and office-to-residential conversions. This initiative is projected to enable over 82,000 new homes citywide, fueled by a $5 billion City for All housing plan. The reform legislates legal construction of ADUs, basement units, and above-store living spaces within single- and two-family homes—unlocking what the city calls "small infill housing" [27]
- Brooklyn & Queens Rezoning Initiatives. Past rezonings, including Greenpoint–Williamsburg (2005), transformed industrial lands into mixed-use neighborhoods with thousands of apartments and affordable housing tied to height and Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) increases. These rezonings did not require extensive new roads or utilities, delivering density through smart land use.[28]

3. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**. New York State and several counties in the Mid-Hudson are changing rules to allow housing within existing neighborhoods, helping seniors, caregivers, and renters. The practice also helps provide additional income to homeowners when they charge rent for ADUs.

- Seattle, Washington: Since 2019 in suburbs, new residential zones allow up to two ADUs per lot (one attached, one detached) in single-family zones, with no parking requirements and clear size limits. The code update removed many barriers, triggering a surge in ADU permits—even in traditional suburban neighborhoods.[29]

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[23] https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/land-use-regulations/
[24] https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Documents/HB2001OverviewPublic.pdf
[25] https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/rip/about
[26] https://www.axios.com/local/raleigh/2024/06/21/raleigh-sees-increase-in-townhouses-and-adus-from-zoning-reform
[27] https://arielpa.nyc/investor-relations/city-of-yes
[28] https://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/03/nyregion/city-is-backing-makeover-for-decaying-brooklyn-waterfront.html
[29] https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/common-projects/accessory-dwelling-units

- Fairfax, Virginia: In, this Washington DC suburb, attached ADUs are now allowed as long as they are ≤35% of the home's size, max 2 bedrooms, and either the main or ADU unit is owner-occupied. This policy enables ADUs in single-family zones, offering income opportunities and multigenerational housing without layoffs or new services.[30]

Some local examples include:

- Westchester County: Habitat Plus One ADU. Habitat for Humanity NYC & Westchester serves as a program administrator—helping homeowners in Cortlandt, Yorktown, Croton-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, and Irvington with incomes at or below 120% the area median income build ADUs. The support includes up to $125 thousand in soft and hard costs to create or legalize ADUs. This is a program that is part of the Statewide Plus One ADU Program. [31]
- Dutchess County: Hudson River Housing helps homeowners in Amenia, Beacon, Clinton, North East, Pine Plains, Pleasant Valley Poughkeepsie (Town), Rhinebeck (Village), Stanford, and Union Vale with incomes at or below 120% the area median income build ADUs. This is a program that is part of the Statewide Plus One ADU Program.[32]
- Ulster County: Ulster County passed a law granting property tax exemptions (up to $200 thousand assessed value for 10 years) to incentivize ADU building.[33]

4. **Modular & Prefabricated Housing** is increasingly being used to reduce construction time and labor costs, especially where land constraints are major factors. Examples include:

- Denver: Tiny homes are being used to rapidly build workforce housing.[34]
- Austin, TX & San Jose, CA: Pilot modular communities are being built for transitional housing or quick-deploy workforce units.[35]
- New York City: Supports modular construction in infill sites to lower development time and costs. An example includes Carmel Place (Kips Bay) – NYC's first modular micro-apartment building.[36]

5. **Public Land for Affordable Housing and Land Banking** leverages underutilized properties. Public and previously neglected land is being reclaimed for affordable housing, not left vacant or sold at market rates. These programs are often supported by statewide grants and technical assistance.

- Urban Land Conservancy (ULC), Denver, Colorado. This nonprofit strategically land banks and holds sites for affordable housing and community development. It also has revolving

[30] https://engage.fairfaxva.gov/zoning-standards-for-accessory-dwelling-units
[31] https://habitatnycwc.org/plus-one-adu/
[32] https://beaconny.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/HRH-ADU-Plus-One-Flyer.pdf
[33] https://www.wamc.org/news/2025-04-17/ulster-county-executive-signs-law-granting-tax-incentives-for-adus-but-expects-changes
[34] https://doh.colorado.gov/tiny-homes
[35] https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-opens-first-modular-housing-site-for-homeless-families/
[36] https://hml-prod.imgix.net/news/150219_Carmel-Place-Case-Study-Report.pdf

loan funds like the TOD Fund, used to acquire land near transit for future affordable housing, reducing initial land costs and ensuring long-term affordability.[37]

- Created in 2019 as New Jersey's first land bank, operated by Invest Newark, a nonprofit economic development corporation in Parsippany strategically acquires vacant, tax-delinquent, and foreclosed properties, especially those automatically transferred from municipal tax foreclosures.[38]
- The New York State Land Bank Program is a statewide Initiative enabled under Article 16 (2011). Up to 35 municipal or county land banks operate in the state. NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) has awarded funds for Land Bank operations and non-capital expenses as well as activities including property acquisition, building rehabilitation, development, stabilization, demolition, pre-development, and technical assistance.[39]
- A local example is Newburgh Community Land Bank in Newburgh (Orange County) which has an active municipal land bank. Since 2012, the Newburgh Community Land Bank has acquired 125 properties and brought 118 of them back to productive use. [40]

6. **Local Housing Trust Funds & Bonds** provide local capital for affordable housing without waiting for State or Federal funds. Trust funds provide flexible funding with long-term availability for multi-income affordable housing projects. Pairing trust fund grants with low-cost bond financing brings deeper affordability and extends unit lifespans. Below find local and out-of-state examples:

- The Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund (HTF) was established in 2022 in response to long-standing housing availability and affordability challenges throughout the county. The HTF provides a flexible and nimble funding source to aid the implementation of a variety of affordable housing efforts as outlined in the 2022 Dutchess County Housing Needs Assessment[41]. In 2023 the first funding round of the HTF's Housing Creation and Preservation Program distributed $8,996,134 to six projects. A second round was announced in April 2025 with up to $3 million available.
- Sullivan County enabled a Housing Trust Fund in July 2025. The currently proposed framework will include two grant programs supporting new rental construction and rehabilitation of existing rental units.[42]
- As of 2021, the Charlotte, North Carolina Housing Trust Fund provided more than $218 million in gap financing for 10,869 affordable housing units and 888 shelter beds.[43]
- Bloomington, Minnesota established a $15 million Affordable Housing Trust Fund via a 2019 municipal ordinance with a goal to develop 842 affordable rental units by 2030.[44]

7. **Employer & University-Supported Housing** directly targets workforce needs in tight housing markets. This supports retention & recruitment, helping to secure essential personnel in

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[37] https://umanitoba.ca/architecture/sites/architecture/files/2023-02/CP_cip2018_Menjivar.pdf
[38] https://investnewark.org/land-bank/
[39] https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/new-york-state-land-bank-program
[40] https://www.newburghcommunitylandbank.org/
[41] https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Planning/docs/DCHousingNeedsAssessment-FINAL-PrinterFriendly.pdf
[42] https://riverreporter.com/stories/sullivan-county-authorizes-housing-trust-fund-framework,209043
[43] https://www.charlottenc.gov/files/sharedassets/city/v/1/streets-and-neighborhoods/housing/documents/htf_20_year_anniversary_booklet-webversion.pdf
[44] https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/hr/bloomington-affordable-housing-trust-fund

competitive and high-cost areas. It offers housing options for mid- to higher-income professionals facing market pressure. It also helps improve economic stability near job centers and strengthens institutional ties with neighborhoods. Here are some examples in New York:

- East Hampton, New York: The Town is considering a mechanism in the Town Code for business to house employees in multi-unit developments.[45]
- NYU Langone Health (NYC) offers dedicated housing for eligible employees and faculty, including nurses, house staff, clinical fellows, and postdoctoral researchers on a first-come, first-serve basis with a structured waiting list. [46]
- Adelphi University (Long Island) partners with Long Island Housing Partnership (LIHP) to provide down payments and home repair assistance to full-time staff after three years of service. Employees may receive $5,000 grants for eligible purchases in Nassau or Suffolk Counties.][47]
- Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) / Brookhaven Science Associates collaborates with LIHP to support employees through a grant-based home purchase assistance program. Employees can receive up to $5,000 in down-payment support for homes on Long Island, provided they stay in place for 5–10 years. [48]

Summary of Effective Housing Innovations

Strategy	Key Benefit
Zoning Reform	Unlocks low-density neighborhoods
ADU Expansion	Adds infill housing in walkable areas
Modular Construction	Faster, less expensive housing delivery
Public Land Use	Reduces costs for affordable projects
Local Housing Funds	Stable financing for housing pipeline
Employer / University Housing	Targets workforce or student shortages
Adaptive Reuse	Converts vacant buildings to housing

Organizations working on the housing issue

From policy advocacy, project development, and data analysis, to tenant legal aid, land banking, and emergency housing support, there is an active ecosystem working toward alleviating housing challenges in the Mid-Hudson Region. These include:

- Housing Action Council works across Westchester, Rockland, and Orange to support the creation of affordable units locally through advocacy, planning, and funding partnerships.[49]
- Hudson River Housing (Dutchess County and broader Hudson) produces and manages over 800 affordable units, operates emergency shelters, and provides housing education and tenant advocacy.[50]

[45] https://ehamptonny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22696/Employer-Sponsored-Affordable-Housing-Proposal-ppt
[46] https://med.nyu.edu/our-community/life-nyu-grossman-school-medicine/housing/eligible-employee-faculty-housing
[47] https://www.adelphi.edu/benefits/employer-assisted-housing/
[48] https://www.bnl.gov/hr/benefits/assisted-housing.php
[49] https://housingactioncouncil.org/
[50] https://www.hudsonriverhousing.org/

- Center for Housing Solutions (Pattern for Progress) (regional) provides data, trends, and policy insights; hosts annual forums; and supports planning and zoning solutions.[51]
- Newburgh Community Land Bank (Orange County) stabilizes and revitalizes abandoned properties in order to sustain and stimulate a community that meets the needs of its population.[52]
- Legal Services of the Hudson Valley offers eviction prevention, tenant rights guidance, and homeless advocacy.[53]
- NAMI Mid-Hudson helps people with mental health conditions secure stable housing, emphasizing affordability as a key part of recovery.[54]
- RUPCO creates homes, supports people, and improves communities through a variety of programs to support first time homebuyers, create affordable housing, and more.

Water System Challenges

Water is a right as well as a necessity for a prosperous economy. The Mid-Hudson Region's water and wastewater systems pose significant challenges to serve a growing population and businesses. Much of the water infrastructure — including pipes, sewers, and treatment plants — dates back 50 to 100 years (Table 2). In the research for this CEDS, stakeholders discussed the fact that these systems are increasingly inadequate in that they are outdated, capacity-constrained, and in some places environmentally unsound.

- Aging Pipes and Systems - Many communities rely on cast iron or cement pipes that are prone to breaks, leaks, and inefficiencies, which increase costs and reduce reliability.
- Insufficient Capacity - Outdated infrastructure often cannot meet growing residential and commercial demand. New housing and economic development are frequently stalled or downsized because the water supply or sewer infrastructure is at capacity.
- Water Quality Risks – Contamination from chemicals like PFAS is a problem in some municipalities. Newburgh, for example, declared a water emergency in 2016 after contamination was detected in its reservoir.[55]
- Stormwater and Wastewater Overlap - Several municipalities operate combined sewer systems that carry stormwater and sewage in the same pipes. There are 34 combined sewer overflow outfalls in the Region.[56] During heavy rains, these systems can overflow, leading to raw sewage discharges into the Hudson River and its tributaries.[57]

[51] https://www.pattern-for-progress.org/the-center-for-housing-solutions/
[52] https://www.newburghcommunitylandbank.org/
[53] https://lshv.org/
[54] https://namimidhudson.org/resources/finding-stable-housing/
[55] https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/site-cleanup/regional-remediation-project-information/region-3/newburgh
[56] https://dec.ny.gov/maps/interactive-maps/decinfo-locator
[57] https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quality/combined-sewer-overflow

Table 2: Age of Water Treatment Plants[58]

COUNTY	Average Year Built	Average Age
Dutchess	1969	55
Orange	1968	56
Putnam	1977	47
Rockland	1963	62
Sullivan	1967	57
Ulster	1968	57
Westchester	1962	62

What is needed to bring water systems current?

Sound planning, a combination of State, local and Federal grants and low-cost financing are all needed to bring water systems up to date to avoid system failures and potential contamination. In 2023, the EPA's Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment[59] estimated that drinking water systems across the country will collectively need $625 billion in improvements over the next 20 years to ensure public health, security, and economic well-being.

The New York State Clean Water Infrastructure Act allocated $325 million statewide, including grants to Mid-Hudson municipalities for pipe replacement, filtration against human-caused chemicals, and wastewater treatment plant upgrades. These Water Infrastructure Improvement & Intermunicipal Grants were announced by the State in June 2025, enabling up to 70% funding for contamination treatment, sewer upgrades, and lead service replacements. Grants from NY's Clean Water[60] & Drinking Water Revolving Fund[61] were recently approved, including the following projects in Mid-Hudson.

- Town of Hurley (Ulster) - A $1.3 million grant for engineering site investigations and preparation of a feasibility study to address groundwater contamination caused by contaminants at the town's closed landfill.
- City of Peekskill (Westchester) - $3 million grant for the replacement of 5,250 linear feet of drinking water main and replacement of an existing structurally deficient storage tank with a new 400,000-gallon tank.
- Village of Red Hook (Dutchess) - $915,028 low-cost financing for the decommissioning of Well No. 4, replacement of 2,400 feet of existing water main, hydrants, and lead service connections on Graves and Cherry Street, rehabilitation of the interior of the existing 225,000-gallon water tower located at the end of Tower Street, and replacement of the control system at the water treatment plant.

[58] *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:* "Current Descriptive Data of Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants" (2019)
[59] https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf/epas-7th-drinking-water-infrastructure-needs-survey-and-assessment
[60] https://efc.ny.gov/iup
[61] https://health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/water.htm

- Village of Warwick (Orange) - $1.1 million grant and interest-free financing for exploratory work required to create a drinking water service line material inventory.
- Port Jervis (Orange) - $20 million grant and interest-free financing for water meter replacement and sewer rehabilitation.
- Town of Thompson (Sullivan) - Two awards of $3.2 million for pump station upgrades in Emerald Green/Rock Hill Sewer District; $2.2 million for improvements in Sackett Lake Sewer District.[62] [63]

While these projects will improve water quality in the municipalities awarded funds, a review of data listed on the New York State Clean Water State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plans from 2020 to 2025 shows that the total amount of funding listed on the multi-year and annual lists for the Region has increased annually, with the need far greater than funding available. The yearly totals in the table below show a high need for funds, but are also conservative figures because municipal need for funding could only be verified through the Intended Use Plan listed amounts and does not include funding needs unsubmitted through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund process.

Table 3. NY Clean Water State Revolving Fund Requests 2020-2025

Year	IUP Estimated Funds for Federal Fiscal Year:	Region 3 Listing Amount	Region 3 Need Compared to total available:
2020	$1,254,846,374	$759,526,617	60.5%
2021	$1,229,975,993	$984,526,086	80.0%
2022	$1,302,934,764	$1,001,030,888	76.8%
2023	$1,724,938,159	$1,267,540,999	73.5%
2024	$2,820,907,749	$2,177,142,472	77.2%
2025	$3.211,877,461	$2,646,055,126	82.4%

Other regional efforts include:

- Nyack (Rockland) received $2.7 million for granular activated carbon filtration at its water plant.
- Dutchess County earned $4.55 million to interconnect local water systems (Greenfields Interconnection Project). [64]

From the Federal government, ARPA, and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds have been used by Mid-Hudson Counties for water system improvements.

The Hudson River Estuary Program supports local governments with technical assistance and funding for infrastructure and flood-resilient systems. It is designed to protect, conserve, and restore the Hudson River Estuary and its watershed, from Troy Dam to New York Harbor. It is

[62] https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-over-37-million-make-local-water-infrastructure-projects-affordable
[63] https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-over-175-million-make-local-water-infrastructure-projects-affordable
[64] https://efc.ny.gov/wiia-2022-region

managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in partnership with local governments, nonprofits, scientists, and community groups. The program helps communities:

- Adapt to risks like flooding and sea-level rise
- Improve water infrastructure and stormwater systems
- Restore degraded habitats
- Increase recreational access and education around river health

Building More Economically Resilient Communities

What is Economic Resilience and Why Does it Matter?

Natural and manmade shocks can set local economies back years. Economic resilience programs are efforts that seek to retain businesses and bolster a community's ability to avoid, withstand, and minimize the duration of shocks to your economy. For HVRC, promoting resilience is also about planning and measuring our Region's ability to prepare for anticipated threats, help small businesses recover rapidly, and adapt to changing conditions. Resilience is also about ensuring industries are also prepared for disasters. For example, health care delivery is critical to resilience, but so is ensuring a secure Regional supply chain of medication, and hospital necessities to ensure adequate delivery of services; fostering local agriculture should include year-round hothouse agriculture, but not at the expense of traditional soil-based agriculture that provides ecosystem services. In short, resilience is a term that applies in different ways to individuals and families, businesses, industries, infrastructure, and governments.

In 2022 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration using COVID-19 CARES Act funds, HVRC sought to address increasing concerns about exposure to natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted the Region's communities by considering how to increase our Region's resiliency. The purpose of the resilience project was to identify and address how resiliency is defined and determine how communities can use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from public health emergencies due to COVID-19 and other adverse events. The project also evaluated and provided a basis for future education in promoting resilience thinking and increasing community capacity to build relationships before, during, and after disasters at the community level to mitigate the current and disruptive events that may occur in the future.

HVRC evaluated the weaknesses of communities in the Region and identified regional responses, including a set of technical resources for use by communities and a framework for coordinating a regional response. Local governments were encouraged to use the recommendations and best practices to help build "resilience" as a core value, and to prepare for vulnerabilities due to emergencies – whether natural or manmade.

The result of that effort included the publication of a resiliency guide, titled, "Managing Economic Recovery During Local Disasters"[65], a publication titled, Towards a Regional Resiliency Network[66], and the below-listed series of HVRC-hosted webinars, all of which are featured on the website.[67]. HVRC made recommendations to strengthen resilience, engage in collaborative discussions regarding hazard mitigation, and track progress towards a state of readiness to improve the Region's ability to bounce back from emergencies.

- Resilience & Economic Development Recording | Presentation
- Retaining Small Businesses After a Crisis Recording | Presentation
- The Role of Economic Developers in Crisis Communications Recording | Presentation

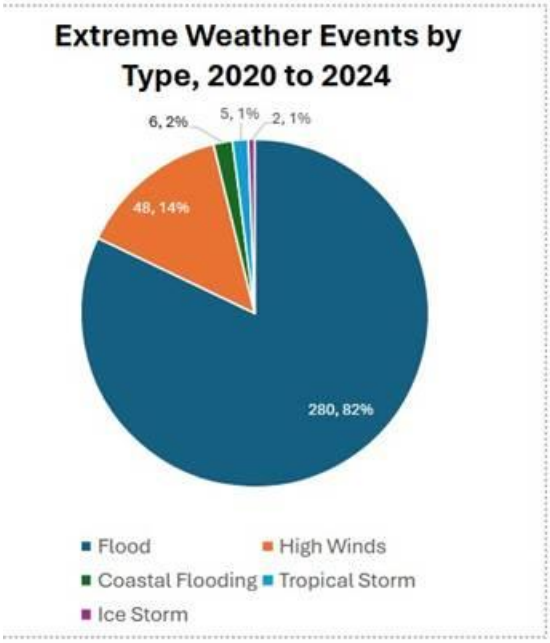
Through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 604(b) Water Quality Planning Program, HVRC is able to help municipalities assess and prepare for risks to their drinking water sources. Through delineation of source water supply areas and discussion with local stakeholders regarding potential risks, a municipality is able proactively build the resilience of their drinking water. In a EPA study, it was found that for every $1 spent on source water protection, an average of $27 is saved in water treatment costs.[68]

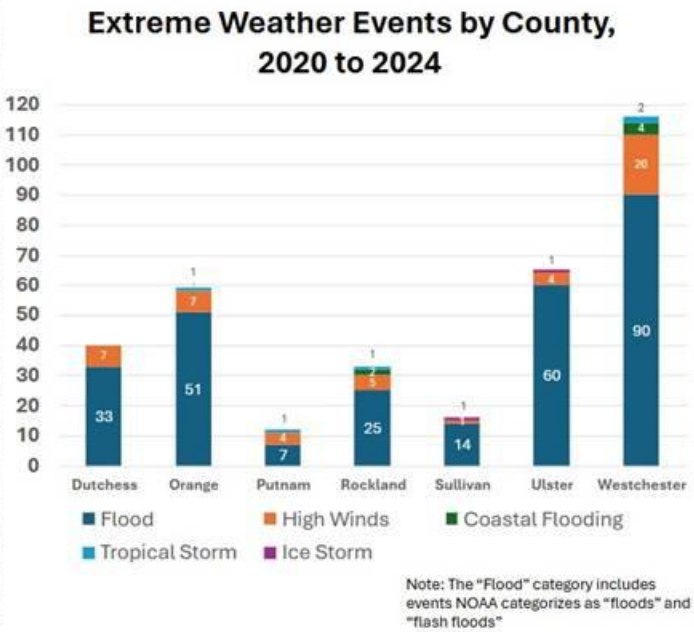
Regional Risks

As noted in the SWOT Analysis, the HVRC Economic Development District is prone to flooding – both flash floods during heavy rains and coastal flooding from storm surge – as well as other impacts of extreme weather, including ice storms, droughts, rising temperatures, and increasingly, wildfires. The primary factor underlying many of these risks and threats of natural disasters is water. The Region rises from just above sea level at Rye in Westchester County along the shores of the Long Island Sound to 4,108 feet above sea level at the top of Slide Mountain in Shandaken in Ulster County.

The seven counties that comprise the Mid-Hudson Region supply drinking water to more than 20 million people in the New York metropolitan area, Philadelphia, and Trenton, as well as providing for our own communities. There have been five major FEMA declarations in the Region since 2020.[69]

[65] https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/EconomicResilienceRecoveryGuide-2023-03-30.pdf
[66] https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/HVRC-Towards_A_Regional_Resiliency_Network-2022-12-31f.pdf
[67] https://hudsonvalleyregionalcouncil.org/regional-initiatives/economic-development/#special-cares-project
[68] https://www.cbf.org/document-library/cbf-reports/2012-Economic-Report3788.pdf
[69] https://www.fema.gov/disaster/





Source: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's Storm Events Database

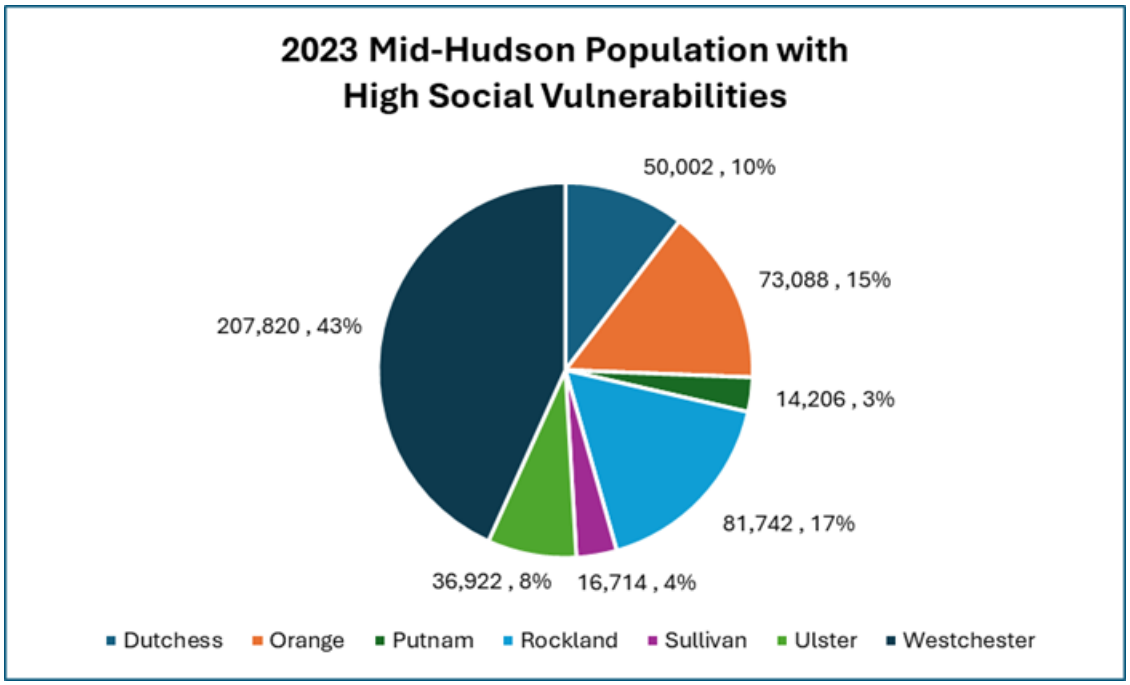
As part of the resilience study, HVRC conducted a deeper analysis of population and businesses from a resilience perspective. In terms of the population, we reviewed the U.S. Census Bureau's Community Resilience Estimates (CRE)[70], which track how socially susceptible "...every neighborhood in the United States is to the impacts of a disaster." CRE uses "...American Community Survey microdata and Population Estimates Program data to measure the capacity of individuals and households to absorb the external stresses of the impacts of a disaster."

Specifically, using restricted microdata from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) and small area modeling, the CRE creates population estimates based on ten individual/household level components of social distress, including:

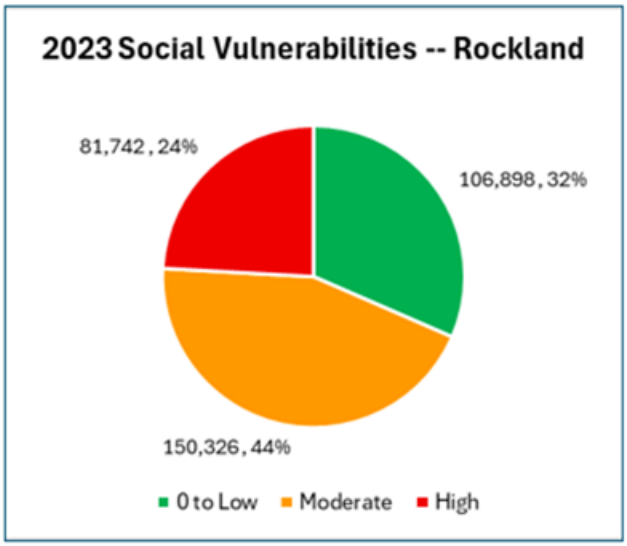
- Poverty Status
- Number of Caregiver in Households
- Unit-Level Crowding
- Communication Barrier
- Employment
- Disability Status
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Age (65+)
- Vehicle Access
- Broadband Internet Access

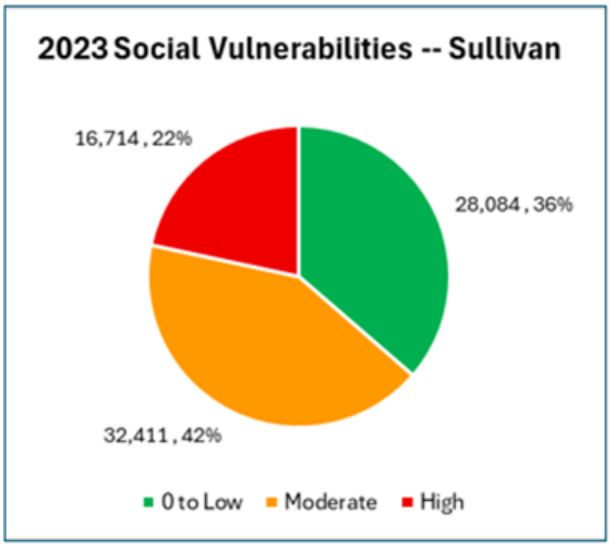
Using the CRE Datasets for 2023 estimates for populations region-wide with high social distress (three or more), Westchester and Rockland counties have the highest percentages.

[70] https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/community-resilience-estimates.html



Within individual counties, Rockland and Sullivan Counties have the highest percentage of populations with high social distress, 24% and 22%, respectively.





The Federal Reserve Bank did a study in 2017 that performed a credit analysis of businesses and how they are impacted after disasters.[71] They found that business vulnerabilities are most felt by those firms that are:

- Young
- Ownership Type
- Businesses that lease, versus own location
- Tourism, retail, wholesale businesses

[71] https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/smallbusiness/2017/SBCS-Report-on-Disaster-Affected-Firms.pdf

- Manufacturing businesses that face disrupted supply chains
- Those that rely on the local market or have little heterogeneity
- Located where other businesses do not re-open
- Located in a distressed downtown
- Near a major anchor that is closed
- In highly competitive industries
- Cannot adjust to changing situations

Several critical factors need to be considered in business vulnerability after a crisis:

- Access to capital
- Capacity constraints of small businesses and the inability to use trust lands as collateral
- Insufficient workforce development, financial management, and business education
- Regulatory constraints on land held in trust or with restricted use
- Underdeveloped physical infrastructure
- Lack of diversity of industries, with over-reliance on just one or two industries

The Importance of Hazard Mitigation & Regional Coordination

As of this writing, all seven counties in the Mid-Hudson have FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans, often structured as multi-jurisdictional plans. These plans help maintain eligibility for Federal mitigation funding and guide coordinated disaster risk reduction efforts across municipalities.

The counties collaborate with their municipalities on disaster preparedness and hazard mitigation through regional planning bodies, shared resources, and multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans. Each county's HMP includes towns, cities, villages, and school districts. Although plans are county-led, they often reference shared infrastructure, watersheds (the Hudson and Delaware Rivers), and regional weaknesses. As natural disasters become more numerous and costly, these plans should adapt accordingly. Additional planning and guidance are necessary for counties to support resiliency. HVRC supports this additional planning through other New York State programs. Counties share data and sometimes equipment, especially through:

- Emergency Management Mutual Aid Agreements
- Hudson Valley Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition
- Regional Task Forces on Flooding, Resilience, and Infrastructure

Examples of collaboration include flood planning along the Hudson River and its tributaries, where upstream and downstream counties have worked in coordination. Infrastructure vulnerability assessments (transportation and water systems) often involve joint planning.

Economic Diversification as a Strategy for Resilience

Many communities across the nation, including some in the Mid-Hudson, struggle without varied businesses and industries. This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even during normal times, communities that rely on just one large and dominant employer, or seasonal industries such as tourism and agriculture, can suffer if these are disrupted. Throughout this CEDS planning process, discussions took place on how to expand into new industries or strengthen

existing ones through cluster development. A discussion of targeted industries is discussed in Section V of this plan.

Expanding Tourism Opportunities

Several communities in Mid-Hudson rely heavily on tourism as the leading industry that provides export revenue. To this end, stakeholders noted the need for the extension of seasons through special events and new experiences or for the development of new attractions, and the redevelopment of underutilized properties. Stakeholders recognized that the film industry is highly complementary to tourism as it draws attention to unique sites and attractions of the Region. Some of the same communities were promoting agritourism and ecotourism, featuring farm and nature-based experiences.

All the counties mentioned expanding tourism along the Hudson River for more river experiences waterfront activities as an opportunity for growth. It is well known to those in the tourism industry that water is "gold" in terms of providing outdoor recreation and scenic views that can attract businesses and visitors.

Expanding Agricultural Opportunities

In agriculture, suggestions were made about how to promote new forms of agriculture technology or "agritech" including year-round climate controlled indoor agriculture, research, and development of more value-added products featuring locally grown items. Afforestation can contribute to resilience by reducing impacts from floods and draughts as well as support forestry jobs. It was also recommended that some farm sites be used for agrivoltaics.

Expanding Research & Science Opportunities

In other parts of the region, county governments are promoting research and science, technology, and advanced manufacturing for industry diversification. There have been extensive efforts to strengthen supply chains in the bioscience industry, both as a means of growing the economy and protecting the industry from international competition.

VI. Industries Targeted for Growth

Each county has specific industries that have been targeted for growth. While the targets vary by county, clusters tend to be regional. This section discusses the industry clusters stakeholders from more than one county stated they would most like to grow. They include: Agriculture; Construction Trades; Energy; Education; Healthcare; Manufacturing; Retail & Services; Science, Research & Development, and Technology; Tourism, Hospitality, & Film.

Agriculture

Agriculture

- Agritech
- Agritourism
- Climate-controlled Agriculture
- Value-Added Food Processing

Despite the ongoing loss of farmland to development, **agriculture** was identified as a strength in the SWOT analysis. It is the traditional economic foundation of Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster Counties, with growing interest in those and other counties to see its expansion. Discussions with stakeholders centered around ways that local farmers are diversifying and innovating, moving towards resilient, high-value, and experimental farming. While rising costs and land loss persist, the implementation of policy support, regenerative methods, availability of financing and grants, and agritourism offer pathways, among others, to resilience. Local businesses have moved toward more specialized farming — increased fruits, vegetables, and specialty operations like honey, bison, and equine. Breweries, distilleries, and wineries are also growing throughout the Region.

Targets to grow the agriculture industry center around investments in agritech and climate-controlled agriculture, which can produce harvests year-round. Value-added food processing, using local products, offers opportunities to capture more revenue in this sector and increase exports.

While not specifically agricultural, forestry is an important natural resource-based industry that coexists alongside agriculture, particularly in Sullivan County. Native timber products are a valuable feedstock for the Region's furniture and building materials industries. Growing these industries has the potential to support the Region's goals on housing.

What will it take for agriculture to meet its goals for growth?

The health of the industry is impacted by obvious factors, such as the predictability of weather and soil conditions. Extreme weather, such as flooding, droughts, heat waves, and late frosts, can have major impacts on crops and are unpredictable and introduce greater risk. Other risk factors include the costs of doing business, market availability, and acceptance of the products grown in the Region. National and international factors, such as tariffs, that are beyond the control of local businesses, will also impact the cost of doing business. Farms are also subject to policy decisions, such as policies impacting the preservation of land for agricultural uses, the availability of

subsidies and grants through entities such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as policies impacting the availability of labor and housing for the workforce.

The agriculture industry is also challenged by aging infrastructure that limits productivity, efficiency, and resilience. To address these challenges, the Region requires funding and technical assistance for:

- Water and irrigation systems to improve drought resilience and water efficiency.
- Expanding access to education on regenerative practices, soil health, and adaptive farm management strategies.
- High tunnels and hothouses to extend growing seasons and protect crops from extreme weather.
- Cold storage and post-harvest handling facilities to reduce food loss and improve market access.
- On-farm energy systems and upgrades to reduce costs.
- Shared equipment cooperatives and mobile infrastructure units to support small and mid-sized farms that cannot afford large capital investments individually.
- Digital infrastructure, including broadband, Wi-Fi and smart sensors, to enable precision agriculture and remote monitoring.

Support is needed for existing farms to upgrade aging infrastructure, not just new or expanding operations, including the expansion of meat and poultry processing. Preserving the viability of current farms is essential to maintaining the region's agricultural base and rural economy. Support for new farmers is critical for this sector's success in the Region. Continued investment in land access strategies, capital access and equipment sharing, and peer learning network will ensure the next generation of farmers is prepared to meet the Region's food and economic needs.

Local zoning and land use policies should reinforce New York State's Agricultural Districts Law and Right to Farm Law through:

- Farm-friendly zoning codes that allow for diversified uses such as agritourism, on-farm processing, and seasonal events.
- Streamlined permitting processes for agricultural structures and infrastructure improvements.
- Local planning board education on the importance of agriculture and the legal protections afforded to farms under state law.

Additionally, access to a reliable, skilled, and adequately housed workforce is a growing challenge in the Region. Supporting agricultural operations should include farm labor housing development, such as funding and zoning support for on-farm and off-site housing that meets health and safety standards; workforce training programs in partnership with BOCES, community colleges, and Cornell Cooperative Extensions (CCE) to build a pipeline of skilled workers; and transportation solutions in areas with limited public transportation. Incentives such as apprenticeships and school-to-farm pathways for youth employment in agriculture can also encourage the Region's youth to enter the agricultural sector.

Finally, the industry is also subject to the availability of capital. An advantage for the Region is the presence of the Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation (HVADC), which has revolving loan funds, grants, and technical assistance for farmers.[72] NYS Department of Agriculture has also been supportive in prioritizing agribusiness, along with other sectors discussed in this CEDS, through several targeted initiatives aimed at protecting farmland, supporting farm viability, and expanding market access. Dutchess County instituted an Agriculture Navigator that serves as the primary point of contact for in-county agricultural inquiries. The Navigator is a conduit for farmers, municipal officials, and economic development specialists to provide impartial information and advice when local regulations/actions that may impact agriculture, farmland, or agricultural businesses are proposed. They work to facilitate the development of solutions to the needs and concerns of the agricultural community.

What are some resources to support the growth of agriculture?

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a wide variety of programs that are announced throughout the year. To stay current and informed of new opportunities, farmers are recommended to sign up for USDA newsletters through their website and through the regional office located in Syracuse.[73]
- Farmland Protection Implementation Grants: Through the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets (Ag&Markets), grants are available to help counties, municipalities, conservation districts, and land trusts purchase development rights on working farms, preserving them from development pressure. In 2023–24, New York awarded $33 million, protecting 12,356 acres across 33 farms, including within the Mid-Hudson.[74]
- Farmland Protection Planning Grants: These Ag&Markets grants allocate up to $50,000 per county to develop or update farmland protection plans that guide zoning and land-use policy.
- Farm-to-School Program + NYS 30% Initiative: Operated by Agr&Markets to connect farms with schools, boosting local food procurement, this program incentivizes schools to source 30% of meal ingredients from NY farms, strengthening local farm markets.
- Ulster County Farm Viability & Sustainability Grants (via HVADC): This program offers technical and financial support for equipment upgrades and weather resiliency for mid-sized farms, supporting competitiveness and stewardship farmlands.[75]
- Food Access Expansion Grants: Administered by Agr&Markets, these $10 million grants incentivize supermarkets, co-ops, farm stands, and mobile markets in underserved zones, improving farm product access and local sales. This grant typically accepts applications in December.
- Technical Assistance & Farm Business Support: Cornell Cooperative Extension staff throughout the Region work directly with farmers, landowners, and agricultural businesses to provide agricultural technical assistance, business development support, and agriculture education tailored to local needs. Organizations like the Hudson Valley Farm Hub and Glynwood Center offer farm training, demonstration projects, and business incubation.[76] The NY Farm Transition Advisors support feasibility analysis, management, and capital access for regional farms.

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[72] Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation, https://www.hvadc.org.
[73] https://www.usda.gov/farming and https://www.rd.usda.gov/ny/new-york-contacts#:~:text=441%20South%20Salina%20Street%2C%20Suite,PUBLIC%20AFFAIRS
[74] https://agriculture.ny.gov/land-and-water/farmland-protection-planning-grants-program
[75] https://www.hvadc.org/ulster-county-farm-grants
[76] https://hvfarmhub.org/

Construction Trades

As the Mid-Hudson seeks to build more housing, upgrade infrastructure, re-purpose old buildings and developments, and revitalize downtowns through streetscape and façade improvements, it has a continuing need for **construction and skilled tradespeople**. These skilled workers include HVAC technicians, plumbers, and electricians. In addition, fixing roads, water, and wastewater infrastructure will require engineers. To ensure the availability of skilled workers, continuous training is needed in the construction trades as well as innovative opportunities for their employment.

Construction Trades

- Construction
- Engineering
- Trades Education
- Building deconstruction

What are some innovative programs to grow the construction workforce and provide training in the trades?

A shortage of skilled construction workers in many parts of the country have led communities across the U.S. to develop innovative, locally tailored approaches to support and grow workforce development in the construction trades. These programs address labor shortages, build pipelines, and modernize training. Here are some examples:

- Pre-Apprenticeship & Registered Apprenticeship Expansion. Innovation: Partnerships between community colleges, unions, and nonprofits to create "earn-while-you-learn" pathways and reduce entry barriers. Examples:
  - Chicago Women in Trades – Offers pre-apprenticeship training.
  - Helmets to Hardhats – Supports veterans transitioning to skilled construction careers.
  - ApprenticeshipNC (North Carolina) – Public-private model linking schools and employers.
- Mobile Training Labs. Innovation. Trailers or buses outfitted with equipment simulate job-site conditions and deliver training in underserved or rural areas. Example:
  - Texas State Technical College and Alabama's AIDT deploy mobile labs for welding, HVAC, and carpentry skills.
- High School CTE (Career & Technical Education) Integration. Innovation: Embedding construction trade curricula into high schools, often with dual enrollment or credentials. Examples:
  - Colorado's CareerWise – Youth apprenticeship model with credit-bearing CTE.
  - P-Tech schools in New York – Include construction management and civil engineering pathways. The City Polytechnic High School of Engineering, Architecture & Technology in Brooklyn lists Construction Management Technology and Civil Engineering Technology as core associate degree pathways, in partnership with City Tech and MTA NYC Transit.[77]
- Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) & Local Hire Mandates. Innovation: Tie large infrastructure or development projects to job training, local hiring, and career pipelines. Examples:

[77] https://nycptechschools.org/site/our-schools

    - Los Angeles Metro's Project Labor Agreement – Guarantees local hires and apprentices.
    - Baltimore's CBAs – Require community hiring and union training partnerships on major developments.
- Re-entry and Second-Chance Training Programs. Innovation: Offer construction skill training and credentials to formerly incarcerated individuals. Examples:
    - Homeboy Industries (LA) and Constructing Hope (Portland) – Combine job training, life skills, and wraparound support.
    - YouthBuild (national) – Supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, this program serves low-income 16–24-year-olds with construction and GED training.[78]
- Digital Tools & Simulation-Based Training. Innovation: Use of VR/AR and simulation to train workers in safe, cost-effective environments. Examples:
    - Trimble Technology Labs (at universities and trade schools around the country) – Use augmented reality to teach layout and design.[79]
    - Black & Veatch's CONSTRUCT platform – Delivers 360-degree virtual project-based learning and inspections of construction sites. This was originally developed during the COVID 19 pandemic.[80]
- Construction & Energy Infrastructure Training. Innovation: Train workers in installation, energy retrofits, and appropriate materials to meet demand from energy projects. Examples:
    - Philadelphia's Green Retrofit Immersive Training (GRIT) program – Focuses on low-income trainees.
    - New York's Energy Workforce Development Program – Offers building training.[81]
- Construction Cooperatives and Worker-Owned Enterprises. Innovation: Support for minority- or worker-owned construction firms that also train their workforce. Examples:
    - Cooperation Jackson (MS) – Builds affordable housing with a worker-owned model.[82]
    - The Working World (NYC, Chicago) – Offers capital and training to cooperative construction businesses.[83]

Building deconstruction was raised as a potential regional opportunity cited by several Mid-Hudson stakeholders. Building deconstruction consists of the systematic dismantling of a structure to salvage reusable materials. Instead of traditional demolition where buildings are knocked down quickly and debris is often discarded, filling up landfills. Deconstruction involves manual or mechanical disassembly, sorting, and salvaging of valuable components like wood, brick, stone, fixtures, appliances, and hardware. This is followed by the recycling or repurposing of materials for future construction, resale, or artistic/architectural uses.

Benefits of deconstruction are that it reduces landfill waste, conserves resources, and creates resale value for salvaged materials. It can also preserve architectural heritage through preserved wood and ornamental features. Commonly salvaged materials include lumber and hardwood flooring, bricks and architectural stone, windows, doors, and copper wiring.

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[78] https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/youth/youthbuild
[79] https://www.trimble.com/en/our-commitment/education-and-outreach/technology-labs
[80] https://www.bv.com/en-US/news/black-and-veatch-selects-avatour-to-optimize-remote-project-collaboration
[81] https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Clean-Energy-Workforce-Development-and-Training
[82] https://cooperationjackson.org/blog/2019/10/10/building-a-solidarity-economy-in-jackson-mississippi
[83] https://www.theworkingworld.org/us/our-mission/

What information and grant resources are available to support building deconstruction?

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC): The DEC promotes deconstruction techniques, including salvage of flooring, structural wood, bricks, and fixtures.[84]
- NYC Economic Development Corporation's Circular Design and Construction Guidelines: The guidelines promote deconstructing buildings and reusing existing materials. A demonstration project at the SPARC Kips Bay education facilities and public open space will serve as an example for other large public and private projects.[85]
- Cornell University Circular Construction Lab: The Lab released the white paper *"Constructing a Circular Economy in NYS,"* promoting NYS-wide deconstruction adoption. It estimated converting 50–75% of residential demolitions to deconstruction could generate 8,000–12,600 jobs and reclaim 270,000–420,000 tons of materials.[86]
- Preservation League of New York State: The League organized the State's first Deconstruction Summit, showcasing best practices and stakeholder collaboration on reuse.[87]
- Restore New York Communities Initiative: A program of NYS Empire State Development, it offers funding for municipalities to choose deconstruction over demolition for blighted or abandoned properties. It supports community redevelopment and local housing enhancement.[88]
- Build Reuse Program: This U.S. Environmental Protection Agency program supported the NY-based nonprofit Build Reuse received Federal grants to develop Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for reclaimed materials. It aims to standardize impact metrics and boost reuse material adoption.[89]
- NYSAR^3 College Council Grant: This grant provides up to $10,000 for NY educational institutions to fund source-reduction and material-reuse projects and can be used for training and demonstration sites.[90]
- Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA): UCRRA is pursuing the implementation of its "Reuse Pathway for Zero Waste and Economic Resilience" (RePOWER) project. The project seeks to establish a network of sites throughout the County to collect reusable goods and materials as well as a central hub facility to serve as a warehouse, retail store, and incubator for reuse businesses to repair, refurbish, or upcycle unused materials.[91]

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[84] https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recycling-composting/waste-reduction/building-material-reuse-and-deconstruction
[85] https://edc.nyc/press-release/nycedc-announces-skanska-construction-manager-sparc-kips-bay-first-its-kind-life
[86] https://labs.aap.cornell.edu/ccl/whitepaper
[87] https://www.preservenys.org/blog/new-yorks-first-statewide-deconstruction-summit
[88] https://esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york
[89] https://www.buildreuse.org/epa
[90] https://www.nysar3.org/page/grant-program-for-ny-colleges-28.html
[91] https://ucrra.org/reuse-center-aka-repower-project/

Energy

The changing energy landscape is both a challenge and opportunity for communities across the country, and the Mid-Hudson is no exception. There are locations in the Region that do not have enough power generated to support growth. Others expressed the desire to explore the development of new energy facilities. Concerns over air pollution and persistent community feedback where waste-to-energy facilities are currently sited should be taken into account as the Region plans for additional facilities. Mid-Hudson counties and municipalities are exploring ideas to promote local energy resilience. (The shortage and cost of energy were identified as a weakness in the SWOT analysis.)

Energy

- Recycling
- Energy Infrastructure
- Waste-to-Energy

Geothermal Energy

There are several **geothermal energy** developments in and around the Mid-Hudson, which are pilot utility-scale district geothermal, and thousands across Dutchess, Orange, Ulster, Westchester via local firms. Rebates and tax credits are making adoption more viable. Institutional projects are occurring involving several commercial public buildings.

- Community Geothermal Pilot: . Central Hudson is developing a district-scale geothermal loop system in downtown Poughkeepsie (Dutchess County) to serve a cluster of 14 commercial and five residential buildings. Engineering is underway with construction expected to start in 2025, with utility operations launching by 2027. The Public Service Commission's Order for Pilot Utility Thermal Energy Network Projects has mandated each of the Joint Utilities to create pilot projects.[92] Con Ed is planning similar projects in Westchester County and Orange & Rockland Utilities is planning a project in Haverstraw.[93] NYSERDA is supporting these projects through its Large-Scale Thermal Program, offering funding support for projects for large buildings and groups of buildings.[94] While this technology has been proven in campus settings, the goal is that the technology will scale to meet greater heating and cooling needs in the Region.
- Residential Geothermal Installations: Local HVAC firms are actively installing ground-source heat pumps in homes throughout the Region. Geothermal is especially cost-efficient in new construction where drilling is less disruptive. The Region's high electricity costs make geothermal a good alternative to air-source heat pumps, although they are still expensive to install.

What are some resources to help with geothermal energy development?

- NYS Clean Heat Program: This joint NYSERDA utility program provides rebates and financing for geothermal heat pumps across electric and gas utility territories.[95] Up to $5,000 in tax credits are available, boosting affordability for homeowners.

[92] https://www.upgradeny.org/nine-utility-thermal-energy-network-pilot-projects-advance
[93] documents.dps.ny.gov
[94] https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Large-Scale-Thermal/Large-Scale-Thermal-Program
[95] https://cleanheat.ny.gov/

- Building Cleaner Communities Competition: This NYSERDA program is currently active. In 2024 it projects in the Mid-Hudson like Port Jervis's Tunnel and Ulster County's communications building, both featuring ground-source heat pumps. These demonstrate a growing trend toward heat pump-driven retrofits and new construction using geothermal products.
- The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) had several funding opportunities that are now closed. If funding becomes available, they will be listed on their website, which also lists state partnerships.[96]

Education

Higher Education already has a significant presence and is considered a strong asset for the Region's economic development. Not only is higher education an attraction for residents, but also an assurance to businesses that there will be a pipeline of employees in specific industries.

Education

- Culinary Arts
- Aircraft Mechanics
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Robotics

Section this CED section on Regional Issues there is a list of the many organizations, both public and private, that offer higher education and workforce development opportunities in the Region. Emerging trends include the Integration of advanced labs in community colleges to support high-tech manufacturing and automation, pathways from high school to trades via BOCES and apprenticeship models, and public-private collaboration, including industry advisory councils and workforce grants. There is a focus on living-wage, middle-skill jobs with national demand—especially in trades and tech-adjacent sectors.

Based on the success of several industry-specific trade schools, including culinary arts and aviation mechanics, a desire was expressed by some communities to create more trade schools focused on advanced manufacturing and logistics. The existing trade schools offer models for how to attract both local students and people from outside the immediate Region who will come for certifications. Along with providing these educational opportunities, it will be important to create housing and connections to local jobs in order to retain the people who are being trained.

Trades: Aircraft Mechanics, Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics

There are several targeted trade-school initiatives in the Mid-Hudson designed to prepare students for specific industry sectors and close workforce gaps. They are listed below.

- Applied Technology Education Center (ATEC): This Hudson Valley Community College center located in Troy (Capital Region) is the flagship facility serves the broader Hudson Valley. It offers programs in a variety of vehicles (e.g., autonomous), HVAC, mechatronics,

[96] https://www.energy.gov/eere/geothermal/geothermal-technologies-office-open-funding-opportunities

welding, pipefitting, semiconductor technology, electrical construction, and more. Goals include training 5,000 skilled technicians over the next decade and ramping up enrollment by 200%.[97]

- Aviation Technician Program: This Dutchess Community College program located at the Hudson Valley Regional Airport is a 32,000 square foot educational hangar built in 2021. It was funded by $16 million in State support, including Mid-Hudson Upstate Revitalization Initiative grants.
- Mechatronics Lab: This Town of Fishkill lab at Dutchess Community College is a $3 million, 6,000 square foot hands-on facility training students in automation, robotics, HVAC, and electronics. The Lab is supported in part by SUNY, NYSESD, and local industries. Programs include advanced certifications and apprenticeships feeding into sectors like semiconductor manufacturing.[98]
- Career & Technical Education Center: This Ulster BOCES center offers high school and adult vocational programs in construction, transportation & logistics, health sciences, IT, and manufacturing. There is an emphasis on work-based learning with internships and college credits earned through partnerships with local businesses and SUNY.[99]
- Construction Career Day & Trade Associations: Regional apprenticeships hosted by the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, as well as unions like IBEW, Plumbers & Pipefitters, Laborers, Carpenters, showcase registered learn-while-you-earn apprenticeships in trades like welding, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and ironwork.[100]
- "Learn a Trade" & Tech Transfer Programs: These SUNY-wide trades programs in the trades promotes non-credit workforce training and certificate programs in HVAC, welding, electrical, and more. SUNY-wide collaboration with industries supports rapid upskilling aligned with regional economic needs.[101]

Trades: Culinary Arts

There are three culinary arts programs in the Mid-Hudson:

- Culinary Institute of America (CIA): The CIA in the Town of Hyde Park in Dutchess County is one of the premier culinary education programs in the country. It features teaching kitchens, student-run restaurants, bakeshops, brewing and beverage labs, plus conference and library resources. It offers programs from associate degrees to master's degrees, including business and hospitality management.
- Hospitality & Culinary Arts Center: This Rockland Community College center in the Village of Nyack offers programs in the culinary arts and a hospitality track with hands-on training in a commercial-grade kitchen. Certificates and non-credit options also bolster local artisans, agritourism, and craft beverage initiatives.
- Culinary Arts Training: This Hudson Valley Community College program in Troy serves Mid-Hudson students, providing workforce-ready certificate courses with training at the on-site cafeteria "SPOONS" and culinary workshops.

[97] https://www.hvcc.edu/about/projects/atec/index.html
[98] sunydutchess.edu+5sunydutchess.edu+5wamc.org+5. en.wikipedia.org+2ulsterboces.org+2ulsterboces.org+2.
[99] https://www.ulsterboces.org/students-of-all-ages/career-education-for-high-school
[100] https://cicbca.org/
[101] https://www.suny.edu/trades/

Trades: Energy Infrastructure

The most robust support for the energy workforce in New York is provided by NYSERDA. NYSERDA's Current Solicitations and Funding Opportunities webpage listing opportunities related to on-the-job training, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training, payment for interns, as well as training for existing workers in formal training programs and career pathways support.[102] Other programs include:

- Communities for Local Power: Offers a jobs apprenticeship program that pairs trainees with contractors on construction trades, like geothermal, HVAC, and energy auditing.
- Orange & Rockland, Inc.: As part of Con Edison, Inc., energy workforce development programming is provided in partnership with the NY Institute of Technology, CUNY Building Performance Lab, and SUNY Sullivan.

Healthcare

Especially given the Region's aging population, the **Healthcare** industry is vitally important to attracting businesses and retaining residents. While this industry and the clusters it supports has grown and provides good paying jobs, there are certain issues that have made it difficult to thrive and provide all that the Mid-Hudson needs.

Healthcare

- Laboratories
- Medical Facilities
- Social Services

Healthcare Industry Constraints

The Mid-Hudson healthcare landscape is undergoing significant shifts and is currently balancing numerous constraints.

- Growing demand (aging population, mental health needs)
- Resource constraints (staffing, bed capacity)
- Scale-up investments via capital and system partnerships
- Labor dynamics including union negotiations and wage hikes
- Digital transformation through tele-health expansion
- Workforce challenges, consolidation, capital investments, and evolving service needs.

Workforce Shortages & Role Realignment: A pressing national problem and the biggest challenge is the shortage of workers. Post-pandemic retention issues intensified staffing shortages, especially with registered nurses (RNs), home health aides, and nursing assistants. To address RN gaps, hospitals are increasing reliance on licensed practical nurses (LPNs), reshaping clinical team structures. Here are some examples from around the country:

- New York – Expanded Scope for LPNs & Home Health Aides: NY State Department of Health has supported greater delegation of tasks from RNs to LPNs and aides, especially in

[102] NYSERDA, Current Solicitations and Funding Opportunities, https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Funding-Opportunities/Current-Funding-Opportunities.

long-term care and home health settings. LPNs are increasingly used in triage, chronic care management, and care planning roles under RN oversight.

- Mayo Clinic (Minnesota & Arizona) – Team Nursing Model: Mayo has implemented team-based care that pairs fewer RNs with more LPNs and medical assistants. LPNs take on routine clinical tasks (e.g., vitals, documentation), while RNs focus on assessments, care plans, and complex interventions.
- Massachusetts – Assisted Living Workforce Innovations: Facilities are redesigning care teams to include "resident care assistants", a blended role that bridges tasks between nursing aides and hospitality. Policy support: State grants fund cross-training and pipeline programs targeting high school graduates and immigrants.
- North Carolina – Cross-Training LPNs in Behavioral Health: Community hospitals are cross-training LPNs and CNAs to support mental health units amid psychiatric nurse shortages. Non-RN staff receive on-site mentorship and certifications in trauma-informed care, under an RN's supervision.
- University of Utah Health – Task Shifting with Medical Assistants: RNs supervise medical assistants who take on expanded roles (e.g., care coordination, immunizations), freeing nurses for higher acuity patients.
- Chicago Cook County Health – Bridging LPNs into RN Roles: County hospitals launched LPN-to-RN bridge programs with tuition support and guaranteed placement to help alleviate the RN shortage while offering career advancement for existing staff.

Major Capital Investment & Facility Reconfiguration: In 2023–2024, the State Health Care Facility Transformation Program awarded $83.6 million to 17 Mid-Hudson hospitals for expansion, upgrades, and debt restructuring. Affiliation trends are growing: Northwell Health's planned $1 billion investment in Nuvance hospitals suggests deeper system integration and potential service enhancements.[103]

Unionization & Compensation Adjustments: Healthcare workers in Columbia Memorial Hospital reached a tentative contract for 24.2% wage increases over four years, driven by high turnover and reliance on costly traveling nurses. Optum Health employees in Crystal Run voted to unionize (~%553 in February 2025), signaling increased labor activism; their certification faces review.[104]

Hospital Utilization & Efficiency Challenges: Average bed occupancy in Hudson Valley hospitals sits at approximately 61%, below the national target (~66%), creating financial strain and prompting discussion around resource optimization.

Telehealth & Access Trends: Uptake of tele-health peaked during COVID and remains high post-pandemic, though access barriers, like inadequate internet connectivity, continue to impact rural and low-income communities. Some examples include:

- North Carolina – Broadband + Telehealth Bundling: NC Department of Health & Human Services worked with broadband agencies to co-locate new fiber networks with rural clinics. Bundled Federal funding from the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and HRSA's Telehealth Network Grant Program has enabled small rural hospitals and FQHCs to

[103] https://cicbca.org/202302-mid-hudson-health-care-institutions-nab-83-million-for-capital-projects-debt-aid/
[104] https://www.albanymed.org/news/columbia-memorial-health-reaches-agreement-with-1199seiu/

maintain high telehealth volume for behavioral health and primary care. Barrier overcome: Lack of on-site counselors and long travel times.

- Veterans Health Administration – Sustained Telehealth Use: The VA, one of the largest telehealth networks in the country, maintained over 40% of outpatient care via telehealth in rural regions post-COVID. Tools used: Remote patient monitoring (RPM), virtual triage, and mental health video visits. Challenge: Some veterans in remote areas still require telehealth access points (e.g., local libraries, community centers).

What are some resources that can be used to help develop the healthcare industry?

Below is a curated list of resources and programs that support the healthcare industry in the Mid-Hudson Region —spanning workforce development, capital investment, training, and small business support.

- NY State Health Care Workforce Investment. Overseen by NYSDOL, this program funds direct caregiver training centers, caregiver support hubs, stackable credentials for roles like certified nursing assistants (CNA), home health aides (HHA), and personal care aides (PCA). 2025 grants are now closed with an anticipated re-opening in mid-Summer.[105]
- Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation: This NYSDOH administers grants and programs specifically designed to address healthcare staffing shortages with targeted training and support.[106]
- Mother Cabrini Health Foundation: In May 2025 the Foundation launched a $51 million Nursing Initiative grant program that offers $1million –$5 million per hospital to support nurse residency and retention as well as advance organizational excellence (e.g., ANCC Magnet status).[107]
- Health WorkForce New York (HWNY): is a nonprofit offering employer engagement strategies workforce data and recruiting platforms, training and retention solutions tailored for healthcare across urban, rural, and underserved areas.[108]
- NYSDOH Grants for Healthcare Providers has funding for capital projects, operating support, and innovative pilot models aimed at improving regional healthcare access.[109]
- Workforce Development Institute (WDI): WDI is a regional office serving the Mid-Hudson and the larger Hudson Valley region. It provides grants for training programs, employer-driven solutions in healthcare staffing, and focused investments in middle-skill occupations.[110]
- NY Small Business Development Centers (SBDC): SBDC offers no-cost consulting and training in startup planning, financial management, access to capital, and compliance.[111]

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[105] https://esd.ny.gov/office-strategic-workforce-development?utm_medium=301&utm_source=workforcedevelopment.ny.gov
[106] New York State Department of Health, Office of Healthcare Workforce innovation, https://www.health.ny.gov/facilities/healthcare_workforce_innovation/.
[107] https://initiatives.cabrinihealth.org/
[108] https://hwcollab.org/listing/health-workforce-new-york-hwny/
[109] https://www.midhudsonregional.org/corporations-and-foundations
[110] Workforce Development Institute, https://wdiny.org/.
[111] New York Small Business Development Centers, https://nysbdc.org/.

As of June 2025, several healthcare development programs remain active.

- HRSA Health Workforce Grants: HRSA offers more than 60 funding opportunities for healthcare workforce training, education, and retention.[112]
- ARPA-H (Advanced Research Projects Agency–Health): ARPA-H maintains multiple active mechanisms, including program-specific ISOs, mission-office rolling ISOs, small-business SBIR/STTR opportunities, and prize challenges like those for women's health innovations.[113]
- NIH & SBIR/STTR, BARDA, CMS: SBIR/STTR programs are a staple for small-business biotech and med-tech funding through NIH, HHS, and other agencies. BARDA, CMS discretionary awards, and AHEC initiatives are also available under the umbrella of ongoing public health and workforce support.[114]

Manufacturing

Since 2001, **Manufacturing** jobs in the Mid-Hudson Region have fallen by approximately 33%, as the economy shifted toward services. Despite this decline, recent years have brought some stability, and modest growth, with +600 jobs added recently, signaling resilience.

Manufacturing

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Light Manufacturing
- Pharma Manufacturing
- Semiconductors

There has been a shift toward advanced and specialty manufacturing, for example in semiconductors. Dutchess County is emerging as a semiconductor hub, while Westchester has focused on bioscience products.

High-Tech Manufacturing

Electronics, aerospace, and semiconductors are supported by focused workforce training[115] and investments by both the private sector and government. Manufacturing in the Mid-Hudson is no longer dominated by large legacy plants but is rebounding through innovation, niche production, and public-private partnerships. The Region is leaning into its strengths in biosciences, advanced manufacturing, and innovative tech to shape a modern, resilient manufacturing base.

- AMD Design Center: Opening soon in Dutchess County, with plans for 165 new high-paying jobs.[116]
- onsemi East Fishkill fab: $1.3 billion in investment in this Dutchess County facility resulted in over 1,000 tech positions.
- Ceres Technology: At the former IBM facility in Ulster County is expanding with clean-room-equipped buildings, injecting over $2 million into high-tech fabricating space.
- Hudson Valley Advanced Manufacturing Center: Hosted by SUNY New Paltz in Ulster County, the Center offers hands-on training in 3D printing and mechatronics.

[112] https://bhw.hrsa.gov/funding/apply-health-workforce-grant
[113] https://arpa-h.gov/explore-funding/open-funding-opportunities
[114] https://seed.nih.gov/small-business-funding/find-funding/sbir-sttr-funding-opportunities
[115] esd.ny.gov
[116] https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-establishment-world-class-amd-design-centers-new-york-state

- Mechatronics Lab: This Dutchess Community College lab in Fishkill provides workforce development in automation, robotics, and smart systems.
- Hudson Valley Venture Hub: This SUNY New Paltz effort is accelerating high-growth startups that are anticipated to generate over $4.5 million in investment returns.[117]
- Tech Valley (including parts of Mid-Hudson) is recognized for its semiconductor and energy-tech industries, supported by SUNY and State initiatives.[118]

What are some examples of support for manufacturing?

New York manufacturing faces constraints from rising input prices and tariffs, evidenced by the NY Fed's plunge in factory activity, making efficiency and innovation essential.[119] However, industry leaders remain optimistic due to infrastructure investment and resilient local demand in construction, life sciences, and logistics-related manufacturing.[120]

For example, there is a strong regional support ecosystem for manufacturing supported by the NY Manufacturing Extension Partnership. The Mid-Hudson Manufacturing & Technology Enterprise Center (MTEC). MTEC helps businesses grow by bringing a network of experienced engineers, scientists, programmers, and business and manufacturing professionals to a business's team - supporting the region's priority industry clusters.[121] The organization provides assistance with process improvement, prototyping, quality control, and resource efficiency.[122] FAST-NY provided $32.6 million in funding to Orange and Dutchess to support industrial site preparation to lure innovative technology and their manufacturing companies.[123]

Resources to help manufacturing may be subject to change due to budget availability; however, as of June 2025, several programs offer direct funding, tax incentives, workforce training, and innovation initiatives.

- Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) helps small and mid-sized manufacturers improve productivity, implement lean processes, adopt technology, and expand exports. It has public-private partnerships in all 50 states, including the FuzeHub in New York.[124]
- Defense Production Act (DPA) & DPA Title III ensures domestic production of critical goods (e.g., medical supplies, microelectronics, batteries) used U.S. Department of Defense, USDOE, and others. The program provides grants and contracts to ramp up manufacturing capacity.[125]
- Advanced Manufacturing Office (AMO) – USDOE focuses on energy tech manufacturing. Its programs support Industrial Assessment Centers, R&D partnerships, and demonstration projects. DOE issues funding opportunity announcements for pilot and commercial-scale projects.[126]

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[117] Hudson Valley Venture Hub at Suny New Paltz: https://www.newpaltz.edu/schoolofbusiness/hvventurehub/.
[118] https://esd.ny.gov/regions/capital?utm
[119] Reuters, "New York State factory activity plunges in March, NY Fed says", reuters.com.
[120] CIC BCA, "Industry Leaders Forecast a Busy 2025 Despite Tariffs, Economic Uncertainty", https://cicbca.org/industry-leaders-forecast-a-busy-2025-despite-tariffs-economic-uncertainty/.
[121] Mid-Hudson Manufacturing & Technology Enterprise Center, https://mfgtec.org/.
[122] For additional background on New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership services, see https://newyorkmep.org/.
[123] Government Market News, "New York pledges $32.6 million to develop industrial sites for high-tech manufacturing", https://govmarketnews.com/new-york-pledges-32-6-million-to-develop-industrial-sites-for-high-tech-manufacturing/.
[124] https://fuzehub.com/
[125] https://www.businessdefense.gov/ibr/mceip/dpai/dpat3/index.html
[126] https://www.energy.gov/eere/ammto/ammto-funding-opportunities

- Manufacturing USA Institutes are public-private innovation hubs (e.g., ARM, CESMII, IACMI, AIM Photonics) for the purpose of promoting R&D, prototyping, and workforce development in advanced manufacturing fields like robotics, photonics, smart manufacturing. The 2025 Manufacturing USA Network Meeting, held in May 2025, convened over 80 representatives from 18 innovation institutes across the country, including ARM, AIM Photonics, CESMII, IACMI, among others.[127]

Retail & Services

Numerous counties discussed interest in supporting **entrepreneurship** through various programs, including **incubators and accelerators**. For purposes of this discussion, this cluster has been identified as also including growing **services sector, retail, warehousing, and distribution**. These industries are taking advantage of vacant spaces that will be redeveloped for new tenants.

Retail & Services

- Entrepreneurship development through incubators & accelerators
- Business & financial services
- IT
- Retail
- Warehousing & distribution

An incubator or accelerator offers significant advantages for startups and early-stage businesses by providing structured support, resources, and strategic connections that dramatically increase the chances of success. The key difference is that incubators provide support over time, normally 6 to 24 months in early-stage idea development, while accelerators offer intensive, fast-tracked growth over 8 to 16 weeks for startups that are ready to scale quickly.

Below are notable incubators and accelerators in the Mid-Hudson Region that actively support development and growth of entrepreneurs.

- Hudson Valley Business Accelerator: This program of the Hudson Community Incubator is a 6-month cohort-based accelerator assisting established small businesses and mission-driven startups across the Hudson Valley. It focuses on scalable processes, customer-first strategy, and mentorship-driven project management.[128]
- Hudson Valley Venture Hub Accelerator: This program of the SUNY New Paltz Hudson Valley Venture Hub is a year-round early-stage accelerator hosted by the School of Business. It supports around 20 tech-forward startups annually, with tailored services for business planning, e-commerce, and funding strategies.[129]
- Hudson Valley Center for Innovation (HVCI): This nonprofit growth incubator assisting entrepreneurs with foundation-building and scale-up support has served over 400 entrepreneurs, facilitating business development, partnerships, and access to markets.[130]

[127] https://www.manufacturingusa.com/
[128] Hudson Community Incubator, Hudson Valley Business Accelerator, https://www.hudsonincubator.com/accelerator.
[129] Hudson Valley Venture Hub Accellerator Program, https://www.newpaltz.edu/schoolofbusiness/hvventurehub/the-hudson-valley-accelerator-program/.
[130] Hudson Valley Center for Innovation, https://www.hvci.org/.

- Orange County Business Accelerator (OCBA): OCBA's accelerator is operated by the Orange County IDA, offering Class-A high-tech research and development space. It is designed to attract new entrepreneurial investment by providing businesses with below-market occupancy costs, mentoring programs and a high-tech plug-and-play office environment. OCBA an officially certified New York State Incubator.[131].
- Element[46] Tech Accelerator: Westchester County's official startup accelerator, located in the City of White Plains, focuses on seed to early-stage tech startups, offering a 10-week cohort with workspace, mentorship, professional services (legal/accounting/marketing), and a Demo Day.[132]
- Westchester County Biosciences Accelerator (WCBA): This 6-month, competitive-entry accelerator is designed for bioscience founders and early-stage ventures. It provides personalized entrepreneurial education, mentoring, and support. Alumni have raised $33 million, created 159 jobs, and earned 7 Small Business Innovation Research awards.[133]
- Launch1000: This Westchester County program is a free entrepreneur training program helping residents test and validate business ideas. Over 450 people participated, launching resilient for-profit, social, or nonprofit ventures.[134]
- RPI Programs for Westchester County: This new collaboration between Westchester County and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is the next stage in the County's efforts to ensure its workforce and employers are receiving the multidisciplinary engineering, science, business, continuing education, and professional development programs to they need.[135]

What are some resources to assist with the development of incubators and accelerators?

- U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA): Specific opportunities include the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, which can leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities.[136]
- Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA): The U.S. Department of Commerce's MBDA[137] Capital Readiness Program offers $125 million nationally to help incubators and accelerators better serve minority and underserved entrepreneurs.[138]
- New York State Empire State Development (NYSESD): Through its Division of Science, Technology & Innovation (NYSTAR), NYSESD funds Certified Business Incubators and Innovation Hot Spots across the State. Incubator operators gain access to shared workspace, mentoring, prototyping, and tax benefits. This competitive program funds

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[131] https://www.ocpartnership.org/news/details.aspx?id=0897d675-542e-4c5e-940d-1b565e61b166&utm
[132] Element[46], The Official Accelerator of Westchester County, www.element46.org. All of Westchester County's economic development programs fall under the umbrella of its The Catalyst branding.
[133] Westchester Catalyst, Westchester County Biosciences Accelerator, https://wcbaccelerator.com/.
[134] Westchester Catalyst, Westchester County Launch1000 Program, westchestercatalyst.com.
[135] Westchester Catalyst, Westchester County Partners with RPI, https://westchestercatalyst.com/rpi/.
[136] U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, EDA Program List, https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs.
[137] U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, https://www.mbda.gov/.
[138] U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, Capital Readiness Program, https://www.mbda.gov/financial-resources/capital-readiness-program.

equity investments of $50 thousand – $1 million, plus mentor access and scale-up support.[139] The regional incubators include The Open Kitchen[140], currently in Poughkeepsie and Wappingers Falls in Dutchess County, and the Hudson Valley Innovation Hot Spot[141] in SUNY New Paltz's Hudson Valley Venture Hub.

- FuzeHub & New York MEP: FuzeHub is the host for the statewide Manufacturing Extension Partnership. FuzeHub provides guidance and partnership opportunities to regional incubators serving manufacturing and tech-based startups.[142] FuzeHub offers annual funding opportunities, including Commercialization Competition, manufacturing grants, and an Innovation Challenge. NY MEP connects incubators to prototyping, quality improvement, and workforce resources.[143]
- APEX Accelerators: APEX provides training and education connecting businesses with federal, state, and local government contracts. This is accomplished by offering no-cost government contracting readiness support, which is ideal for incubator clients targeting these markets.[144]

Science, R&D, Technology

Showing promise for regional growth is a cluster of STEM industries and businesses, in the **science, research and development, and technology** sector. It is critical to ensure a balanced approach to energy- and water-intensive industries.

There are several initiatives developing science and tech industries in the Mid-Hudson:

Science, R&D, Technology

- Biosciences
- Biotech
- Data Centers
- Alternative Tech
- Environmental Sciences
- Life Sciences
- Quantum Computing

- BioInc@NYMC Biotech Incubator:
  This Valhalla, Westchester incubator is the Region's only fully equipped biotech incubator located on a health science college campus of New York Medical College. It provides wet/dry lab space, startup support, business services, and network connections for early-stage life science companies.[145]
- Hudson Valley Additive Manufacturing Center: This SUNY New Paltz center advises the Hudson Valley business community and SUNY New Paltz students on 3D printing processes and materials as well as designing for additive manufacturing.[146]

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[139] New York State Empire State Development, New York State Certified Business Incubators and innovation Hot Spots, https://esd.ny.gov/certified-business-incubator.
[140] Hudson River Housing, Inc., The Open Kitchen, https://www.hudsonriverhousing.org/openkitchen.
[141] SUNY New Paltz, Hudson Valley Venture Hub, The Hudson Valley Innovation Hot Spot, https://www.newpaltz.edu/schoolofbusiness/hvventurehub/.
[142] FuzeHub, About Us, https://fuzehub.com/about-us/.
[143] New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership, https://newyorkmep.org/.
[144] APEX Accelerators, https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/.
[145] BioInc@NYMC, https://www.bioincny.com/
[146] SUNY New Paltz, Hudson Valley Additive Manufacturing Center, https://www.newpaltz.edu/hvamc/.

Biosciences & Biotech

Biosciences and biotech saw targeted investments and rapid wage growth of approximately 78% since 2011 and 90% over the past decade. They employ approximately 8,000 people in Westchester County, representing about 20% of New York State's bioscience employment. Regionwide, over 9,000 people are employed in life sciences.

The biosciences sector is anchored by Regeneron, which is expanding operations and actively building the **biosciences ecosystem** in the Mid-Hudson, generating jobs, investment, and innovation that benefit both Region and State. To help meet the growth objectives, Westchester County developed a biosciences industry plan in 2022, which was funded in part by an EDA grant. Westchester County is also developing a major biotech hub near Valhalla Medical Center, supported by over $1 billion in private investment.

What are some resources to grow the science and technology cluster?

- National Science Foundation: The Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships envisions supporting multiple flourishing regional innovation ecosystems across the U.S., spurring economic growth in regions that have not fully participated in the technology boom of the past few decades.[147]
- EDA Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Offers funding for feasibility studies, incubator buildouts, and strategic regional economic development efforts.
- Empire State Development (NYSESD) / NYSTAR: Funds Certified Business Incubators and Innovation Hot Spots (like BioInc@NYMC). Provides grants through Entrepreneurship Navigator, enabling incubators to offer mentoring, prototyping, and business services.[148]
- NYS Life Science Initiative: New York's $620 million Life Science Initiative includes tax credits, capital grants, and operating support aimed at fostering biotech and life sciences statewide, directly benefiting the Mid-Hudson region.[149] The Mid-Hudson is highlighted by NYSESD as a top region for biotech and life sciences investment, research, and workforce development.[150] The State's continued support for biotech an the life sciences has positioned it #2 in the country for NIH funding and #3 for the highest number of bioscience patents issued.
- Regional CFA (Mid-Hudson REDC): Via Consolidated Funding Application, incubator projects like PACE University's MedTech labs and BioInc expansions have received ESD grants.
- FuzeHub / NY MEP: Offers manufacturing prototyping grants, supports incubators with advanced manufacturing focus, and fosters regional tech ecosystems.[151]

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[147] https://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/regional-innovation-engines
[148] New York State Empire State Development, Entrepreneurship Navigator, https://esd.ny.gov/entrepreneurship-navigator#overview.
[149] New York State Empire State Development, Biotech and Life Sciences, https://esd.ny.gov/industries/biotech-and-life-sciences.
[150] New York State Empire State Development, Mid-Hudson, https://esd.ny.gov/regions/mid-hudson.
[151] FuzeHub, FuzeHub Announces First Round of Manufacturing Grants Awards for 2024, https://fuzehub.com/fuzehub-announces-first-round-of-manufacturing-grants-awards-for-2024/.

- NYSERDA Programs: The Current Solicitations and Funding Opportunities webpage listing opportunities provide commercialization funding and technical support for incubator manufacturing startups.[152]

Tourism, Hospitality, Film

Tourism, Hospitality, & Film have contributed to growth in the Mid-Hudson, especially agritourism and outdoor recreation. The Region is working to grow tourism through various events and tourism product development around themes of arts & culture, gaming, ecotourism, outdoor recreation, river-based tourism and waterfront attractions, and film. **Film & TV Production** initiatives have gained prominence, bolstered by leveraging scenic sites.

Tourism, Hospitality, & Film

- Arts & Culture
- Casinos
- Ecotourism
- Film
- Hospitality
- Outdoor Recreation
- River-based Tourism
- Waterfront Attractions

Based on the latest Economic Impact of Visitors in New York study, it is natural for the Region to want to pursue tourism: visitor spending reached an estimated $5.0 billion by travelers in the Region (up 8% from 2022).[153] Region-wide there are approximately 53,479 tourism-related jobs, equal to about 6.2% of all jobs in the Mid-Hudson. Labor income is $1.603 billion earned directly by tourism workers. Including indirect and induced effects, total income rises to $2.489 billion

To help grow the tourism and film industries, the Region has seven tourism offices, one for each county. All are part of the Hudson Valley/Catskills Welcome Center network and work collaboratively through Hudson Valley Tourism, Inc., the 10-county promotional consortium.[154] Each county's tourism office typically operates under a formal tourism or marketing plan, aligning with broader regional strategies.

[152]NYSERDA, Current Solicitations and Funding Opportunities, https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Funding-Opportunities/Current-Funding-Opportunities.
[153] Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Visitors in New York 2023, https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Hudson-Valley-New-York-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2023.pdf.
[154] Hudson Valley – Make it Yours, https://travelhudsonvalley.com/. The 10-county consortium includes Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland Ulster, and Westchester.

What are some resources to help grow tourism?

A best practice in growing tourism around the world is not just to think of increasing marketing, but to think of product development and tourism master planning which has lasting benefits in making better destinations. In fact, many of the programs that are provided in New York are designed to provide capital for improvements.

- Market New York Grant Program: A NYSESD grant program, Market New York[155] offers annual marketing and capital grants (e.g., festivals, agritourism, events, conferences). For Fiscal Year 2025–26, up to $7 million is available, 50% match required for marketing projects. Tourism capital projects are funded through the NYSESD's Regional Council Capital Funds Program.[156]
- New York State Hudson River Valley Greenway: The Greenway distributes funding for trail development, heritage interpretation, and recreation to strengthen tourism infrastructure.[157]
- New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) - Supports downtown projects that attract tourists.[158] The City of Poughkeepsie was recently awarded $10 million for streetscapes, signage, and cultural venues. Past recipients include the Cities of Kingston, Middletown, New Rochelle, Port Jervis, and White Plains; and the Villages of Haverstraw and Ossining,
- County-Level Grants & Support: Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Ulster, Westchester Counties provide grant navigation, technical assistance, and incentives for tourism infrastructure.
- New York State Council on the Arts Funding (NYSCA): NYSCA offers project and capital grants for programming that boosts cultural tourism.[159]
- New York State Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation Grants: Grants are offered for the acquisition, development, or planning of parks and recreational facilities; the acquisition, improvement, protection, preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of properties listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places; the maintenance and restoration of trails or development of new recreation trails.
- Parks & Trails New York (PTNY): PTNY offers State parks trails support via capacity-building, volunteer support, and trail marketing tools to enhance outdoor tourism offerings.[160]

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[155] New York State Empire State Development, Market new York – Tourism Grant Program, https://esd.ny.gov/market-new-york-tourism-grant-program#resources-and-faq.
[156] New York State Empire State Development, Regional Council Capital Fund Program, https://esd.ny.gov/regional-council-capital-fund-program.
[157] New York State Hudson River Valley Greenway, Grants & Funding, https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/grants-funding.
[158] New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative, https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative.
[159] New York State Council on the Arts, FY2026 NYSCA Opportunity Guidelines, https://arts.ny.gov/FY2026OpportunityGuidelines.
[160] Parks & Trails New York, https://www.ptny.org/our-work.

VII. Strategic Direction / Action Plan

HVRC provides a forum for discussion and integration for the purpose of collaboration on regional issues. We continually update a library of data on the Region, its residents, and businesses. We analyze this data as a service to the seven counties in HVRC's membership. Information is shared through quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors, bi-annual newsletters, and publications like this CEDS. We have also researched and published special studies, such as the paper and accompanying webinar series on resilience, which was funded by EDA in 2022. HVRC's monthly grants guide disseminates information to the counties along with advice to help with grant applications. One of our objectives is to continue to track progress on various initiatives and projects that are discussed throughout this CEDS.

The three major regional issues identified during the SWOT analysis and planning process were *housing, water/wastewater, and resilience*. These three issues form the backbone for the Strategic Direction/Action Plan of the CEDS and support efforts to achieve the Vision Statement identified for the CEDS. Below we have identified goals, objectives, and evaluation framework for each of those issues.

Alignment with Prior CEDS

In the 2019-2023 CEDS, HVRC outlined the goals and objectives for the Mid-Hudson Region and provided an evaluation framework for assessing the effectiveness in implementing strategies. The goals and objectives were direct outgrowths of the regional strategy of "building connections for regional competitiveness, resiliency and prosperity." They are listed below:

- Goal 1. Improve Economic Competitiveness through Physical Infrastructure Connections
- Goal 2. Improve Resiliency and Economic Competitiveness through connections to support the capacity for regional planning for municipal sewer and water infrastructure as a template for other types of regional infrastructure planning.
- Goal 3. Improve Economic Competitiveness through connections to Strengthen the Availability of a Skilled Workforce.
- Goal 4. Support Connectivity for Regional Prosperity

To a great extent, this CEDS continues to support the broad aspirations and goals of the prior plan. However, our strategy with this plan is to focus more specific attention on addressing the issues of housing supply and affordability, as well as water infrastructure to the extent these are preventing growth. All Mid-Hudson counties pointed out that they would like to address these two challenges and recognized that they require urgent attention, sound planning and investment. A third goal is to focus on resilience, which continues our work begun in 2022 on how to prepare for both natural and economic shocks.

Goals, Objectives, & Evaluation Framework

To fulfill the goals related to housing supply and affordability and water infrastructure, HVRC will continue to identify promising and best practice examples and resources to alleviate these challenges. We will step up our efforts and track how our member counties use the resources and what they are able to achieve in terms of development of housing and water infrastructure.

To build economic resilience in the Mid-Hudson Region, HVRC will continue to promote and highlight the importance of "resilience thinking" in planning and making this a core value for our communities. To achieve this goal, HVRC will continue to weave the study and benefits of resilience actions throughout our research, publications and outreach, and special events.

Our Vision

Mid-Hudson communities will work together to foster a resilient and prosperous Region that enhances the quality of life for all. We will prepare a future-ready workforce and support industries with the greatest potential for long-term growth. We will promote the development of affordable, appropriate housing for people of all ages and incomes, backed by infrastructure that meets the Region's needs and drives economic vitality.

Key individuals and institutions that will be responsible for supporting HVRC in implementing these steps are County and municipal staff and elected officials as well as IDA staff. The role of the counties and municipalities in implementing this CEDS is to identify and articulate key needs of their communities. Based on their priorities and policy frameworks, they plan initiatives and are the implementors of projects. HVRC relies on the county representatives to identify people to participate with our organization and report progress. Broad-based participation from regional stakeholders is critical to ensure the success of this CEDS.

Goal 1: Housing

The Mid-Hudson Region needs to develop more housing that people of all ages and walks of life can afford. This is especially important for the Region to grow businesses and the economy.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 1: Housing

HVRC recognizes that housing is an urgent issue that must be addressed for the growth of the Region. We also recognize that numerous highly qualified and specialized organizations at the local, state, and national levels are working on the issue of affordable housing. To this end:

- 1-A. HVRC will continue to monitor progress on this issue, to research and identify innovative solutions.
- 1-B. HVRC will share promising and best practice information among our member counties to support the growth of step-up housing at prices affordable to the Region's residents.
- 1-C. HVRC will work to promote development and housing initiatives in the Region that support the preservation of natural resources.
- 1-D. While we will advocate for the positive work of others, HVRC will not duplicate the functions of the local or regional organizations nor efforts.

HVRC Evaluation Framework under Goal 1: Housing

- HVRC will host three events with partner organizations to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them and can collaborate to increase housing in a way that does not undermine the natural assets of the Region.
- HVRC will publish data-driven updates annually on the change to the cost of housing and the amount of housing being built.

The cost of achieving HVRC's objectives includes HVRC staff time and can be accomplished under HVRC's EDA Partnership Planning grant. The tasks associated with this goal will be completed as needed throughout the timeline of this CEDS: July 2025-June 2030.

Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

The Mid-Hudson needs to bring its water and wastewater infrastructure up to today's standards. This is critical to ensure:

- Safe and reliable drinking water
- Resilient economic development
- Weather-smart stormwater and wastewater management
- Further opportunity for population and business prosperity

HVRC Objectives under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

- 2-A. Infrastructure projects will continue to be the responsibility of the counties and municipalities to plan and implement. HVRC will support the Region in upgrading water system infrastructure by continuing to identify funding opportunities and technical assistance where needed. Where applicable, HVRC shall also seek funding to support local municipalities as needed.
- 2-B. HVRC will provide in-depth planning and mapping technical assistance to municipalities to support their drinking water source protection planning efforts.
- 2-C. HVRC will provide letters of support for projects that support the Region's ability to grow the economy and provide the quality of life needed by all residents.
- 2-D. HVRC will convene research and funding support on its Wastewater Program Hub website and through events to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them and can collaborate on efforts to improve infrastructure.

HVRC Evaluation Framework under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater

- In partnership with local governments, HVRC will develop up to five drinking water source protection program plans. The plans will be in alignment with the NYSDEC Drinking Water Source Protection Program Framework.
- HVRC will distribute current funding opportunities that include water and wastewater infrastructure grants and loans a minimum of 10 times a year.
- Through its Wastewater Program, HVRC will provide 10 municipalities with in-depth technical assistance related to funding for wastewater projects.
- HVRC will host the Wastewater Program Hub website.
- HVRC will host three events focused on wastewater funding and technical assistance.

The cost for implementation of these objectives includes HVRC staff time. These projects can be funded through HVRC's NYSDEC 604(b) Water Quality Planning Program grant and EPA Wastewater grant. The tasks associated with this goal will be completed as needed throughout the timeline of this CEDS: July 2025-June 2030.

Goal 3: Resilience

HVRC should continue to support the Region's municipalities with their goal of being better protected from natural hazards and economic shocks. The Region will also work to increase and foster its economic resilience through a varied economy.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 3: Resilience

- 3-A. Related planning and projects will continue to be the responsibility of the counties and municipalities to plan and implement. HVRC will support municipalities seeking funding opportunities and provide technical assistance where needed, including through supporting hazard vulnerability assessments and planning efforts.
- 3-B. In addition, HVRC will support the Region in supporting economic diversification to support resilience. HVRC will monitor the issue, and where requested, will provide endorsements for projects that support the Region's ability to grow the economy and provide the quality of life needed by all residents.

HVRC Evaluation Framework for Goal 3: Resilience

- HVRC will support five grant applications related to increasing economic variety.
- HVRC will support 30 risk assessments and associated plans, including two County-wide.
- HVRC will identify case studies and projects that have the potential to increase economic resilience by hosting webinars and events to ensure municipalities understand the resources available to them.

HVRC will implement these objectives through the EDA Partnership Planning grant and NYSDEC 604(b) Water Quality Planning Program grant. HVRC will pursue other funding opportunities as necessary to complete this goal. The tasks associated with this goal will be completed as needed throughout the timeline of this CEDS: July 2025-June 2030.

Goal 4: Targeted Industries

HVRC should continue to support the Region's municipalities with their goal of expanding into growing clusters and industries identified in this CEDS. In keeping with EDA goals, HVRC will work to reduce within-Region competition for businesses, the beneficiaries in EDA investment opportunities.

HVRC Objectives under Goal 4: Targeted Industries

- 4-A. While implementation will be the purview of the counties and municipalities, HVRC's will continue to identify promising and best practice examples and resources to grow those industry clusters.
- 4-B. HVRC will track member counties' use of resources and successes.
- 4-C. HVRC will research disseminate best workforce development practices with the Region.

- 4-D. HVRC will support public-private partnerships as part of grant application technical assistance on prospective EDA investments.
- 4-E. HVRC will further explore the availability of brownfields.

HVRC Evaluation Framework for Goal 4-Targeted Industries

- HVRC will support three grant applications related to expanding the Region's growing clusters and industries.
- HVRC will track the number of companies in the targeted clusters and industries attracted.
- HVRC will track the number of jobs in the targeted clusters and industries attracted.
- HVRC will track the revenue each sector contributes to the regional economy.
- HVRC will create an updated listing of brownfields available for redevelopment.

While HVRC will begin implementing this goal through the EDA Partnership Planning funding, additional funding sources may be required to fulfill this goal as the cost may be higher than the grant supports. The tasks associated with this goal will be completed annually and presented to HVRC's Board of Directors annually throughout the timeline of this CEDS: July 2025-June 2030.

VIII. County Initiatives

For each of the seven Mid-Hudson counties, this County Initiatives section begins with an overview of each county. It is then followed by initiatives requiring attention in order for a county to maintain its economic well-being. Any specific projects currently identified are listed within each initiative. Projects are listed with estimated time frames and estimated costs in Appendix. Project Prioritization List. A discussion of county-specific SWOTs analyses is included where applicable. The hyperlinks in the below table will go to each county's initiatives section.

Initiatives by County			
Dutchess	Putnam	Sullivan	Westchester
Orange	Rockland	Ulster	

Dutchess County

Overview

Dutchess County is known for its suburban vitality with rural charm. It is anchored by the County seat, Poughkeepsie, with its educational and cultural institutions, strong tourism assets, transportation links, and a stable economic base. It faces challenges common to commuter regions, including demographic shifts and infrastructure demands, but remains a strategic and appealing part of the Mid-Hudson.

The County spans approximately 825 square miles, consisting of 796 square miles of land area and 30 of water, bordered by the Hudson River to the west and the Connecticut state line to the east. Its population was estimated at 299,963 in July 2024 U.S. Census Bureau.[161] An additional 30 local governments are contained with the County boundaries.

Poughkeepsie is a key commuter hub within the Metro-North rail system. The County has its own regional airport, the Hudson Valley Regional Airport located in the Town of Wappinger. Dutchess' key employers include Culinary Institute of America, Dutchess Community College, IBM, Marist College, Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, and retail sectors. Tourism spending generates an estimated $756 million per year,[162] generating 5.2–5.3% of all labor income in the County. Scenic attractions include Walkway Over the Hudson, and the Dutchess Rail Trail, which is a 13-mile recreational facility. Historic estates include the former homes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Vanderbilt family in Hyde Park.

Population growth has slowed; an aging population and potential decline in working-age groups are projected through 2040. Challenges include balancing suburban expansion, rural preservation, affordability, and infrastructure upgrades. Housing is the limiting factor for economic growth, as there is both a shortage and an affordability problem. Workforce housing for young people is lacking, as is housing for seniors. Rather than moving up as people grow their families and income,

[161] United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/.
[162] Destination Dutchess, https://destinationdutchess.com/economic-impact-of-tourism.

owners have invested in adding onto and renovating older housing, limiting the availability of inventory for people at entry level to buy.

Initiatives

The initiatives identified by the County include housing availability, water availability, wastewater treatment constraints, workforce development, and transportation by air.

- **Housing:** The issue of housing supply has been identified as the greatest obstacle to economic growth in the County. Despite ongoing single and multifamily housing development, a shortage of affordable, market rate, and luxury housing, combined with cost pressures, are pushing young and older residents out. This situation is stifling efforts to maintain and/or expand a workforce for businesses.
    - **Project:** Housing Trust Fund. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** The Dutchess County Housing Trust Fund (HTF) was established in 2022 in response to long-standing housing availability and affordability challenges throughout the county. The HTF provides a flexible and nimble funding source to aid the implementation of a variety of affordable housing efforts as outlined in the 2022 Dutchess County Housing Needs Assessment. **Status:** The County established a $12.3 million Fund and has committed $9 million to six projects.[163]
- **Water:** Water infrastructure is essential for drinking, fire suppression, agriculture, manufacturing, and the tourism and hospitality industry. The County is seeking an EDA grant to construct a centrally located water storage tank that will allow aviation related development at Hudson Valley Regional Airport and serve as a fail-safe for the semiconductor manufacturing operations at iPark in the Town of East Fishkill. Aside from creating a Water and Wastewater Authority, the County has committed funding for local municipal water infrastructure projects through its Partnership for Manageable Growth (PMG) program.
    - **Project:** Central Dutchess Water Storage Tank. **Location:** Town of Poughkeepsie / Central Dutchess. **Description:** Construction of a water storage facility with a capacity of 1 to 3 million gallons near the Dutchess County waterline Pump Station to support economic expansion at key facilities along the Central Dutchess Utility corridor, improve fire protection, expand domestic water capacity, and enhance system reliability. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Municipal Water Infrastructure Fund. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Established Fund for municipal infrastructure projects through its Partnership for Manageable Growth (PMG) program. **Status:** In progress.
- **Wastewater:** Many villages, and three of the largest municipalities in the County, do not have central sewers that extend throughout their commercial corridors. This limits development opportunities and creates sprawl.
- **Workforce Development:** The County has been a leader in innovative workforce development initiatives, from creating aviation, manufacturing, and logistics pipelines to jobs programs in partnership with the State University of New York for the region (SUNY). The recently opened Mechatronics Lab and programs support more than 150 manufacturers in the Region, including semiconductor and quantum computing facilities in Dutchess County.

[163] https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Planning/Dutchess-County-Housing-Trust-Fund.htm

- **Project:** Workforce Development Lab Expansion. **Location:** Town of Fishkill. **Description:** Expand the Lab and launch two new pipelines for HVAC and the automotive industries. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.

- **Transportation:** The County's geography and population distribution make connectivity difficult without access to a vehicle. While there is a bus service, the establishment of routes is focused on access to jobs and services. Routes do not cater to transporting visitors to all tourism opportunities, especially on weekends and to agritourism locations in the County's eastern and northern portions.
    - **Project:** Hudson Valley Regional Airport (formerly Dutchess County Airport). **Location:** Town of Wappinger. **Description:** Upstate Airport Economic Development and Revitalization initiative to transform a portion of the existing terminal at Hudson Valley Regional Airport (KPOU) into a 21st century, fixed-based operations facility plus hangar addition to accommodate the Northeast demand. **Status:** Pursuing funding opportunities from the EDA and FAA.
    - **Project:** Public Transit for Tourism. **Location:** Various points; tourism locations. **Description:** Conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the expansion of bus routes to connect visitors with Dutchess's highest drawing tourism attractions. **Status:** Under consideration.

SWOT

This revised listing represents Dutchess County's adaptation of the regional SWOT to the County perspective. Dutchess County Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats are presented below in table format.

Dutchess County Strengths			
Adaptive Re-use	Downtown Revitalization	Mechatronics Lab	Scenic Byway Promotion
Advanced Manufacturing Training	Ecotourism	Mixed Use Development	Semiconductor Industry
Apprenticeships	Film	Quantum Computing	Smart Planning Initiatives
Arts & Culture	Grow Tourism Seasons	Rail Trail Development	Special Event Venue Development
Biochar	Healthcare Facilities	Regeneron	Tourism Development
Brownfield Redevelopment	IBM Campus Redevelopment	Regional Planning	Transportation Connectivity
Build Out Rail Trails	Incubators	Regional Workforce Development Center	Warehouse Space
Cooperative Regional Planning	Land Availability	Revolutionary War 250th	Waterfront Development
Digital Literacy	Land Banking	River Cruises on Hudson	United States Military Academy at West Point

Dutchess County Weakness			
Agritech Research & Innovation	Develop Meeting Space	Roadway Infrastructure	Urban Farming
Available Land	Food Processing	Sports Complex	Water Tours & Boating
Broadband	On Demand Transportation	Transportation Access	

Dutchess County Opportunities			
Agriculture Assets	Culinary Institute of America	Hospitals	Quality of Life
Agritourism	Datacenters	Hudson River Access	Rail Lines
AI	Develop Passenger Rail	Lab Space Development	Recreation Management Education
Aircraft Mechanic Training	Heterogenous Population	Land Availability	Regional Airports
Amazon Distribution Center	DRI Designations	Land Preservation	Regional Wildfire Planning
Arts & Culture	Economic diversification	Medical Pharma	Resilience Industries
Availability of Capital	Educated Workforce	Mechatronics Lab	Shipbuilding
Battery Storage Innovation	Educational Opportunities	Natural Assets	Sound Stage Development
Bioeconomy	Emergency Response Coordination	Offshore Wind	Suburban Lifestyle
Biotech Research Center	Energy Infrastructure Sites	Our Workforce	Tourism Assets
Business-Friendly	Entertainment	Outdoor Recreation	Trades Education
Clean Water	Film locations	Parks	Trail System
Controlled Environment Agriculture	Healthcare	Preserved Land	Transit-oriented Development
Co-working Spaces	Historic Sites	Proximity to NYC	Warehouse Space

Dutchess County Threats			
Aging infrastructure	Expensive Land	NIMBY	Vacant Retail
Aging population	Federal Funding	No Meat Processing	Wastewater
Brain Drain	High taxes	Pedestrian safety	Water Infrastructure
Broadband	Housing	Silos	Workforce Shortages
Building Costs	Land costs	Solid waste	Zoning & Permitting
Childcare	Living wages	Sprawl	
Cost of living	Manufacturing decline	Stagnant economy	
Energy shortage	Meeting space	Transportation	

Orange County

Overview

Bordered by the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Orange County blends rich historical heritage, natural beauty, and strong transportation infrastructure with a varied economy and growing cultural profile. It is a regional tourism hub, with key transit and educational institutions. The County covers 840 square miles, consisting of 812 square miles for land and 27 square miles for water. Its population is estimated at 411,767 in 2024.

The County seat is in the Village of Goshen and the largest municipalities are the Town of Palm Tree, Cities of Middletown and Newburgh, and Town of Monroe. A total of 43 local governments are located within the county. Major highways include I-84, I-87, I-287, NY17/Interstate 86, Palisades Parkway and others. It is served by MNR's Port Jervis Line, NJ Transit, Shortline, and Transit Orange. Air transportation is provided by Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, which offers commercial flights.

Educational institutions include SUNY Orange, Mount Saint Mary College, and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, natural and cultural assets include a number of parks: Goosepond Mountain, Harriman, Schunnemunk, and Sterling Forest, State Parks; part of the Upper Delaware Scenic River and the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge; as well as privately owned parks like Black Rock Forest. Other significant assets include Brotherhood Winery, Orange County Fair Speedway, and rich historical sites: Paramount Theatre, Museum Village, and Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site.

The County is popular for film locations, including those used in productions like The Pale Blue Eye and The Whale. Estimated 2023 Visitor Spending was approximately $1.2 billion.[164]

Initiatives

- **Housing:** To address housing shortages and unaffordability, the County has created legislation to form a Housing Task Force Committee. The Orange County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) has newly implemented incentives if developers build housing where 10% of the units are available at 60% of the area's medium income.
    - **Project:** Orange County IDA Housing Incentive. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Incorporate housing incentive pitch into every applicable IDA deal. Compile listing of challenges stated in order to adjust current incentive program. **Status:** In roll-out phase.
- **Workforce Development:** Expansion of advanced manufacturing facilities will bring good paying jobs to the County. Local workforce training will support a steady supply a trained workforce for this industry.
    - **Project:** Advanced Manufacturing Training Center. **Location:** Village of Chester. **Description:** Repurpose existing structure into a center for advanced manufacturing

[164] Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Visitors in New York in 2023 – Hudson Valley Focus, August 2024, https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Hudson-Valley-New-York-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2023.pdf.

training to help expand the County's economic base. **Status:** Old school building purchased. Planning in progress.

- **Resilience – Flooding:** In 2023, the County adopted a resilience plan to address the flooding experienced by commercial and residential areas.
    - **Project:** Flood Resilience Plan Implementation. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Address areas subject to flooding. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Water and Wastewater:** Water and wastewater infrastructure is insufficient in many areas of the County to meet economic development needs.
    - **Project:** Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Project. **Location:** City of Middletown, Town of Wawayanda, others TBD. **Description:** Upgrade and expand existing water & wastewater infrastructure. **Status:** $1 million water supply and needs study completed. Exploring funding opportunities for implementation of improvements identified.
- **Adaptive Reuse**: The County is committed to exploring adaptive reuse of existing structures, including those that are currently designated as brownfields. It will be using a $500 thousand Brownfields Assessment Grant from the EPA to conduct an analysis of contaminated sites to determine their re-use potential post remediation.
- **Jobs Retention & Expansion:** The closure of manufacturing facilities is of great concern to the County. In just one area alone, up to 700 jobs will be lost without the retention of existing jobs and replacement of jobs already lost. The area is also in need of conference centers.
    - **Project:** Wallkill Reinvestment Corridor. **Location:** Town of Wallkill. **Description:** Support the retention and attraction of jobs at four former and current manufacturing facilities. Create a world class, mixed-use corridor that will attract manufacturers interested in complete packages: jobs, residential, hotel, outdoor recreation. **Status:** The proposed project is conceptualizing potential redevelopment that will take advantage of infrastructure and adaptive re-use. The IDA housing incentive will be strongly encouraged.
    - **Project:** Regional Conference Centers. **Location:** TBD **Description:** The County's recently completed conference center feasibility study showed Orange County can accommodate multiple conference center locations. The County is actively pursuing this project. **Status:** In conceptual stage.
- **Shovel-Ready Sites:** A recent County study identified over 300 potential sites for development. A prioritization process for shovel-readiness yielded a top 10 sites list – some of which include adaptive reuse. The Orange County IDA will invest in the sites utilizing two $500 thousand grants from FAST NY for high end projects.
    - **Project:** Roseton Powerplant Shovel-Readiness. **Location:** Town of Newburgh. **Description:** Make existing location and structure shovel-ready for energy infrastructure opportunities. **Status:** In progress.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Several firms have plans for new facilities that are likely to require infrastructure upgrades to support operations in the future. In addition to the below projects, a major developer has expressed interest in creating a high-end conference center / resort.
    - **Project:** Garonit Pharmaceutical. **Location:** Orange County. **Description:** Infrastructure for a new construction pharmaceutical manufacturing facility. **Status:** In planning phase.

- **Project:** Balchem Facility. **Location:** Town of Wallkill. **Description:** Infrastructure for a new production facility for nutraceutical manufacturing. **Status:** Facility has made it through the IDA process and will soon begin construction.
- **Project:** Amazon Facility. **Location:** Orange County. **Description:** Infrastructure for a new 3.2 million square foot fulfillment center that will feature robotics and create 750 jobs. **Status:** In planning phase.

- **City of Port Jervis Projects:** In addition to the below location-specific proposed projects, the City is exploring the redevelopment of 12 empty buildings in the downtown area. Those projects without a specific Status listing are exploring funding opportunities.
  - **Project:** Shovel-Ready Light Industry Development. **Description:** Private/public partnership for the development of a 68-acre site. **Status:** In exploration phase.
  - **Project:** Hotel and Conference Center. **Description:** Develop a 26-acre site on top of a mountain for a hotel and conference center to continue the City's upward tourism trajectory from receiving NYS DRI funding. **Status:** In exploration phase.
  - **Project:** Water Plant Upgrades. **Description:** Implement upgrades to bring plant currently operating at 50% capacity to full capacity. **Status:** Funding secured. Awaiting contracts.
  - **Project:** Dam Renovation and Water Main Replacement. **Description:** Current dam is undersized by 50%. Dam and spillway require upgrading to prevent complete collapse. Replace adjacent 100-year-old 24-inch water main. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities via NYS RIS grant for $15 million minimum project.
  - **Project:** Wastewater Treatment Line Upgrades. **Description:** Implement much needed upgrades to bring 100-year-old lines to reduce inflow and infiltration.
  - **Project:** Brownfields Redevelopment Project. **Description:** Redevelop existing brownfields for productive reuse. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities from NYS and the EPA.
  - **Project:** Firefighting Building Consolidation. **Description:** Consolidate five firefighting buildings into one center to improve efficiency and resilience. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
  - **Project:** Flooding Mitigation through Green Infrastructure. **Description:** Use green infrastructure or potential natural solutions to create holding ponds to address an ongoing flooding problem and increase height of Delaware River dike. **Status:** In exploration phase.
  - **Project:** Pedestrian Railroad Crossing. **Description:** Join downtown to 40-acre Riverside Park DRI rehab project. **Status:** Phase 1 of 3 (planning).
    Project: Community Center. **Description:** Construct new community center at Church Street Park. **Status:** In exploration phase.
- **City of Newburgh Projects:**
  - **Project:** Brookfield Properties 700 South Street. **Description:** Redevelop this longstanding brownfield to productive reuse. **Status:** Under construction.
  - **Project:** Newburgh Landing Reconstruction. **Description:** Build upon and expand the Newburgh waterfront's economic potential. The waterfront offers opportunities for economic development, boating, recreation, and more. For example, a beneficial public-private partnership with American Cruise Line for river cruises would require the construction of a new pier. **Status:** In permitting.

- **Project:** Long-Term Control Plan. **Description:** The City is in the process of improving water and wastewater systems. The total project cost is greater than $100 million. **Status:** Under construction (phased).
- **Project:** Hillside Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan. **Description:** In 2025, the City completed the nomination study for the Hillside Brownfield Opportunity Area for designation by the Secretary of State. **Status:** Planning Stages.
- The City identified additional projects that will continue to improve the City's economic potential and quality of life for businesses and residents. They are currently in the ideation phase and will be pursuing funding opportunities.
  - Address contamination of Lake Washington, a former drinking water source for the City.
  - Return blighted properties to productive reuse.
  - Improve the City's main street, Broadway, through landscaping and medians, bike lanes and other features important to visitors.
  - Create business friendly streets, improve the City's quality of life, and reduce flooding through tree plantings. Incorporate workforce development elements.

- **Town of Cornwall Projects:**
  - **Project:** Black Rock Forest Flooding Reduction. **Description:** Upgrades to increase culvert capacity will reduce flooding impacts to downstream residents of Town. **Status:** In exploration phase.
  - **Project:** Regional Education and Innovation Hub. **Description:** The revitalization and repositioning of a strategically located 88-acre private educational campus and an adjacent 35-acre mixed-use development zone into a dynamic regional hub for research and development, education, housing, and economic growth. The project will transform underutilized assets into a thriving center for learning, innovation, and workforce development, serving as a catalyst for long-term regional resilience and prosperity. The revitalization of the educational campus and mixed-use development zone will include infrastructure upgrades, construction of new buildings, facilities, and residential housing units, along with open space and parkland. **Status:** In planning phase.

SWOT

Orange County identified an additional county-specific Weakness: the poor maintenance of State highways.

Putnam

Overview

Putnam County is an affluent, suburban-agrarian county with strong environmental assets and a focus on balancing development with conservation. Located about 50 miles north of New York City, Putnam is bordered by Dutchess and Westchester Counties, with Orange County across the River. Putnam covers approximately 230 square miles of rolling hills, lakes, and wooded areas, including parts of the Hudson River, with an additional 16 square miles consisting of waterbodies. It encompasses six towns and three villages, including Carmel (County seat), Philipstown (including the Villages of Cold Spring and Nelsonville), Putnam Valley, Kent, Patterson, and Southeast (including the Village of Brewster).

The estimated population is approximately 98,409 residents in 2024. Natural and recreational assets include Clarence Fahnestock State Park (15,600 acres), which offers lakes, trails, and environmental education, and the Great Swamp wetland, which provides flood control and biodiversity over 6,000 acres. Lake Oscawana is a 386-acre recreation spot with boating, fishing, and scenic shoreline homes.

Initiatives

- **Housing:** As with the Region at large, the County is currently experiencing an extreme shortage of housing, particularly in rentals. A mixed-use redevelopment project, in progress for 10 years, has the potential to address the housing shortage while checking the boxes of other successful mixed-use redevelopment projects: bringing significant revenue to local governments, expanding a community's economic base, and improving the quality of life through the redevelopment of underused, already developed areas.
    - **Project:** Brewster Crossing. **Location:** Village of Brewster. **Description:** Revitalization of downtown Brewster through the development of street level retail, multifamily rental units, municipal office space, and parking garage. **Status:** Seed funding ($2MM) from the New York State Empire State Development Property in place. Purchase of additional project properties in progress.
- **Infrastructure:** In addition to the below listed projects, the County identified energy substation improvements to meeting existing and future commercial and residential energy needs.
    - **Project:** Water & Wastewater Capacity Improvements. **Location:** Town of Patterson and others. **Description:** Water and wastewater treatment facilities are needed to address existing needs and economic development opportunities in downtown hamlet. **Status:** Pursuing additional funding to supplant partial funding already received for water and sewer.
- **Transportation:** The County is exploring much needed public transportation improvements that also serve to reduce transit costs from fixed bus routes systems.
    - **Project:** Micro Transit On-Demand Program. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** The County is currently piloting a public ride-share program to replace a fixed bus route. They are looking to expand into areas without transit service in 2027.. **Status:** Exploring State and Federal funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Mahopac Bypass Road. **Location:** Town of Carmel's Mahopac hamlet. **Description:** The Town is planning to create a bypass road for traffic mitigation at Baldwin place road and Rt. 6. This would enable the creation of mixed-use development and improve economic development in the downtown hamlet area. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Cold Spring Roadway Improvements. **Location:** Village of Cold Spring. **Description:** The Village of Cold Spring is overburdened by tourism. They are seeking roadway improvements and sidewalks along the 9D corridor towards Little Stony Point as well as improvement to the Rt. 301, 9D intersection. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Film:** Putnam is deepening its film industry economic activity given many county locations serving as popular film locations, like Glynwood Center Regional Food and Farming.
    - **Project:** Simplified Permitting for Film Locations. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** The County is interested in supporting film industry expansion by

simplifying the permitting process in each municipality. The development of qualified production facilities may also be explored should location demands increase. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.

Rockland

Overview

Located on the west side of the Hudson River on New York City's northern border, Rockland is the State's smallest County, spanning about 199 square miles of land area, which includes 26 square miles of water. Notable natural areas include the Palisades cliffs, Bear Mountain and Harriman State Parks. Nearly one-third of the County is protected parklands. The estimated population in 2024 was 348,144 in 2024 and the County is growing. Key transportation routes include the Mario Cuomo Bridge (formerly Tappan Zee) carrying I-87/I-287, and the Palisades Interstate Parkway. Public transit is provided by the NY Waterway ferry, Metro-North Railroad operated by NJ Transit, and numerous bus routes. Air service is provided by major airports in New York City and northern New Jersey. Additional outdoor features include Rockland Lake, Nyack Beach, and High Tor State Park. Over 30% of land is reserved as public open space. Higher education institutions include Rockland Community College, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Dominican University, multiple Yeshivas, and Columbia's Lamont–Doherty Observatory.

Initiatives

- **Housing:** The County conducted a housing study to address its housing crisis, which revealed a shortfall of 14,000 housing units county-wide. To address the shortfall, the County pursued a gap-filling approach by creating a $13.5 million housing fund to incentivize the development of housing at different price points. Addressing the housing crisis will also be reflected in the County's Comprehensive Plan, Envision Rockland, currently in development. Communities within Rockland are pursuing other avenues to address their housing shortfalls, such as the Town of Ramapo.
    - **Project:** Water and Wastewater Upgrades for New Housing. **Location:** Town of Ramapo. **Description:** The Town is updating zoning to accommodate more housing. The Town seeks to incentivize construction of smaller units for young people and seniors, particularly around higher density downtown areas. Additional housing will require addressing outdated water and wastewater systems to meet the growing needs. **Status:** Exploration phase.
- **Transportation:**
    - County transportation routes have the capacity to support the local economy. Some transportation routes built before the advent of heavy trucks are under strain, requiring repairs and drainage work. Others are flooding more frequently, resulting in increased traffic along routes not intended for such traffic.
    - Public transportation options support the local economy by providing workers with alternative routes to their workplace destinations. Rail transportation for Rockland commuters is not as convenient given that lack of one-seat commute to NYC; for the rail lines, capital projects such as these have a long commitment timeframe.

    - At the local community level, pedestrian safety improvements, such as at intersections, have been prioritized. Safe Main Streets improve the user experience, increasing shopping at local retail stores.
    - **Project:** Energy Infrastructure Installations. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Expand energy infrastructure installations to meet demand. Technician training will be important to maintenance. **Status:** Exploration phase.
- **Waterfront Development & Resilience**: Villages and towns on the eastern side of Rockland are pursuing funding to reduce the impact of flooding from their proximity to the Hudson River shoreline, an important tourism opportunity for these communities.
    - **Project:** Waterfront Development & Resilience. **Location:** Villages and Towns on Eastern side of Hudson River. **Description:** These municipalities are seeking funding to reduce impact of flooding on their shoreline, thereby improving tourism and economic development options. **Status:** Pursuing funding.
- **Local Economic Development:** The New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding seeks to revitalize downtown areas into vibrant centers for redevelopment, business, and job creation by developing walkable communities that attract residents, businesses, and visitors. The County has identified sites that would benefit from the DRI program and will work with those local governments that are ready to pursue this funding; in 2021 the Village of Haverstraw was selected as a DRI recipient. For smaller communities, a NY Forward grant may allow them to meet their goals.

Sullivan

Overview

Sullivan County is a rural-suburban blend marked by its Catskill landscapes, historic resorts and destination tourism, and research. Though grappling with housing affordability and availability, the County remains a popular getaway with an attractive lifestyle and solid base in recreation, healthcare, and education.

The County seat is Monticello, and there are 15 towns, 6 villages, and numerous hamlets. The County is served by Route 17/I-86, I-84, County roads, and Sullivan County International Airport in Bethel. Regional bus service is provided by ShortLine and County transit systems. The County is about 70 miles northwest of New York City along the Delaware River and partly within the Catskill Mountains; Sullivan County spans approximately 968 square miles of land area plus 29 square miles of water. The 2024 population estimate is 80,450. Historically built around Borscht Belt resorts and tourism through the mid-20th century, key industries include tourism, featuring resorts, historic sites, outdoor recreation (hiking, fishing) and casinos; education & research at SUNY Sullivan Community College; and healthcare & specialty services, such as the Center for Discovery. Cultural venues include the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts (home of Woodstock 1969), Rivoli Theatre, and galleries.

Initiatives

- **Housing:** The County has a housing crisis. The shortage has been compounded by an increase in short-term rentals by people from New York City who have bought vacation homes and driven up costs for residents and those wanting to relocate for work. Brain drain is a problem, as is

finding housing for seasonal workers in the tourism industry. The hospital has decreased services because staff are unable to afford housing. As a result, they are sending testing to laboratories in New Jersey, which delays results and treatments. There are two pathways to address the housing crisis: the Sullivan County Land Bank[165] and the recently adopted Sullivan County Housing Trust Fund[166]

- **Energy:** Improvements and increased capacity are needed for the electric system. Power use is currently capped, with new customers unable to connect to the grid in some locations and creating significant roadblocks for larger developments. There is a major energy infrastructure project in the Town of Thompson under development that is going through the permitting process with the State.
- **Water and Wastewater:** The inadequacy of these systems is palpable to the County, which, amongst other steps, is conducting an aquifer study to determine water availability. In addition to the projects outlined below, the water availability is impacting existing structures, such as the new jail that has had problems tapping into the water system. On the wastewater side, the inadequacy of the system is particularly problematic at certain locations: Elwood Avenue streetscape improvements and insufficiency capacity at summer camps. The County is also challenged by the insufficient number of County workers to oversee sewer maintenance and improvements.
    - **Project:** Water Capacity Improvements. **Location:** Town of Fallsburg. **Description:** The Town seeks to increase its water capacity as it is currently trucking in water at a high cost; the Town has run out of water. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Old Route 17 Corridor Revitalization. **Location:** Various jurisdictions. **Description:** The Revitalization project has seen $20 million in investments from FAST NY thus far to run water and sewer lines and improve power capacity to accommodate new business growth for of 10 or more sites. The water shortage has stalled the project. **Status:** Exploring additional funding opportunities.
- **Communications:** The County has made significant strides with broadband, which is lacking in rural areas.[167] The County received a $30 million New York State ConnectALL Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program, which will "…serve over 22,000 homes and businesses, leveraging the County's existing towers and Archtop's capabilities in fiber optic construction." The project will fund 253 miles of fiber and 12 towers for wireless service to reach 56% of the population in underserved areas.
- **Solid Waste Management:** Along with the Region's other county waste management managers, Sullivan County attends the HVRC-hosted Materials Management Working Group (MMWG); HVRC provides research technical assistance on specific topics and serves as meeting coordinator in partnership with the MMWG chair. As with the other waste management manager, Sullivan County is concerned about the impact the closure of Seneca Meadows landfill, where almost all of the Region's solid waste is sent. There is an urgent need to develop next steps, including new sites, more recycling, and other waste reduction programs.

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[165] Sullivan County Land Bank, https://sullivancountylandbank.org/. Members of the County Legislature and Planning office sit on the Board of Directors.
[166] Sullivan County Trust Fund, https://www.sullivanny.gov/news/legislature-adopts-2025-county-budget. The Adopted 2025 County Budget includes "$2 million for a Housing Trust Fund to address the housing crisis in the County, plus $250,000 to supplement a State program that provides local renters with first/last months' rent and security deposits to ease the emergency housing crunch".
[167] Appendix. Data outlines the broadband needs and status by county.

- **Transportation:** The two projects below exemplify the County's pursuit of expansion to its transportation availability.
    - **Project:** Aircraft Service Portable Power Units. **Location:** Town of Bethel. **Description:** The Sullivan County International Airport is owned by the County and operated by the County's Division of Public Works. Airport has a new terminal opening and an adjacent industrial park, which will help spur growth. The portable power units will service planes that are on the ground. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Sullivan Passenger Rail. **Location:** Various. **Description:** The County has an existing rail system that has been approved for use for passenger rail, but station stops are need. If the stops are approved, rail service is expected to provide job opportunities and enhance the overall economic growth of the County. **Status:** Seeking approval for station stop creation. Will then explore funding opportunities.
- **Business Sites & Industries:** The County is seeking to grow business sites and industries in order to create a broader economic mix.
    - **Project:** Sports Complex. **Location:** TBD. **Description:** The County is conducting a feasibility study for a new sports complex. It is anticipated that such a complex would be an attraction for visiting sports teams. A successful complex will also necessitate the development of hotels, restaurants, and retail stores. **Status:** Completing feasibility study. Will then explore funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Apollo Mall Redevelopment. **Location:** Village of Monticello. **Description:** Redevelopment of the Apollo Mall would retain retail tax revenue in County. Currently, too many Sullivan residents travel to Orange County stores to meet their retail needs. **Status:** Seeking an anchor tenant. Will then explore funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Year-Round Tourism Expansion. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** With the reduction in snowfall over the years, the County has seen a negative economic impact to its cold weather-based economy. The County seeks to add more year-round activity, unique events and restaurants that stay open all year, particularly on the Delaware River. **Status:** In exploration phase.
    - **Project:** Manufacturing Revitalization. **Location:** Village of Liberty. **Description:** In February of this year, PepsiCo announced the closure of its food manufacturing facility, which will result in the loss of approximately 300 jobs.[168] County economic development entities seek to attract new businesses, which may require infrastructure work and a potential public-private partnership. **Status:** In exploration phase.
    - **Project:** Tech Headquarters. **Location:** Town of Bethel. **Description:** An innovative technology company is interested in constructing its headquarters. Water, wastewater, and power infrastructure are likely to be needed to accommodate this development. This is another opportunity for a public-private partnership. **Status:** In exploration phase.

[168] Radio Catskill, "PepsiCo to Close Liberty Plant", 19 Feb 2025, https://wjffradio.org/pepsico-to-close-liberty-plant/.

Ulster

Overview

Ulster County blends rural charm and scenic landscapes with active small-city centers. Situated along the Hudson River just south of Albany, Ulster County spans 1,124 square miles of land area and 37 square miles of water. It is a major outdoor- and nature-rich destination featuring more than 40 miles of rail trails, including the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, the Walkway Over the Hudson, and various parks for hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing, and skiing. Two-thirds are part of the Catskill Mountains and Shawangunk Ridge, featuring Minnewaska, Mohonk Preserve, and Slide Mountain State Parks. The population is estimated at 182,977 for 2024. Major employers and sectors include SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Ulster, tourism, healthcare, and small manufacturing, which features creative arts. Its county seat, largest municipality, and only city is Kingston. The County includes an additional 20 towns and three villages.

Initiatives

- **Housing:** With a growing population, particularly from an increase in residents from New York City, the County is experiencing an extreme housing crisis with ever-increasing costs. Approximately 50% of the renter population is cost burdened, and much of the existing housing is old. Sufficient, affordable housing for farmers is also lacking, an especially important issue considering the importance of the industry to the County. The City of Kingston's goal has been to develop 1000 new units by 2030. The County instituted the Ulster County Housing Action Fund to "....encourage innovative housing solutions, such as supportive housing, adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing, tiny home communities, and accessory dwelling units."[169] Housing focused projects are listed below. Mixed-used concepts that include housing are included in the section on Mixed-use Development Projects.
    - **Project:** Panelized-Manufactured Housing Manufacturing Facility. **Location:** TBD. **Description:** This County project proposes to bring innovative manufacturing to help address the housing crisis. The first step is to conduct a study, which will include an assessment of workforce development through trade skills training. Potential partnerships include BOCES and non-profit housing organizations that would provide vertical integration from training to use of the material produced to reduce building costs. **Status:** Establishing study parameters.
    - **Project:** Emergency Housing. **Location:** TBD. **Description:** A County priority is to develop viable emergency housing. The homeless problem is currently being solved by hotels and there is no good emergency housing system. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Water and Wastewater:** The County's Capital Program recognizes the need to partner with municipalities for water and sewer improvements related to housing or economic development projects. For example, the County applied for State funding to provide water and sewer improvements related to housing projects in the Village of New Paltz. Stormwater and sewer projects, which have been documented in the County's 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan, also need to be implemented in order to address regular overflow.

[169] Participate Ulster County, Housing Action Fund (HAF), https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/housing-action-fund.

- **Tourism:** The County's tourism industry is hugely successful, generating up to $1 billion per year in direct economic activity. Efforts are needed to make this tourism more resilient, distributed, and rewarding for those that visit. Connectivity is needed to get visitors from transit to tourism venues and lodging as well as to improve wayfinding within communities and for events. The Empire State Trail, which passes through the County using the local trail network, can serve as a transit option for tourists. Ensuring that all sections of this continue to remain available is a priority as the Ulster County Tourism efforts are focused on active transportation.
- **Waste Management:** For the future, new locations and technology are needed on a regional basis. Priorities are to reduce waste and movement towards a cradle-to-cradle economy. For example, creative reuse of old materials through deconstruction of buildings expands the construction industry base and reduces waste going to the landfill.
- **Energy:** Grid updates are needed to accommodate various forms of power generation. The County would like to attract technology centers for the fabrication of next generation energy.
- **Transportation Infrastructure:** The County is taking a multifaceted approach to address its transportation infrastructure.
    - Deferred maintenance, insufficiency of improvement funds coupled with the impacts of increased frequency of flooding events have resulted in the need for improvements to roads and bridges. The County is pursuing BUILD Grant Program funds to improve mobility and access as well as to raise roads in flood-prone locations.[170]
    - The County is also eyeing transit-oriented development for higher density development.
    - The County plans to fix gaps and connections on its existing infrastructure of 75 miles of interconnected rail trails to increase non-motorized transportation. Funding is needed to close gaps and complete sections now under design.
    - **Project:** Rail trail connections. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** There are several projects throughout the county to fix gaps and build rail trail connections. Approximately $3 million will be needed. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Broadband:**
    - **Project:** Rural Broadband Expansion. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Expansion of broadband to rural areas where services are lacking. **Status:** In exploration phase.
- **Mixed-use Development Projects:** The County is prioritizing mixed use projects that provide housing and create jobs. Approximately 2,500 units are going through the approval process, but building costs and rents are making it challenging to develop affordable housing. The County hopes to benefit from the State's Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund opportunity, which invests in mixed-use housing and infrastructure projects.[171] The County is seeing the impact of declining birth rates through school closures, presenting opportunities to repurpose these buildings for housing or alternative public uses. The same approaches can be taken with large stores. In addition to the below-listed mixed-use development projects, the mixed-use projects are also viable at the former Granite Hotel in the Town of Rochester.
    - **Project:** iPark 87 Mixed-Use Technology Campus. **Location:** Town of Ulster. **Description:** Repurposing of the former IBM location into spaces for light tech and food manufacturing, warehouse logistics / distribution, educational, and media & content

[170] U.S. Department of Transportation, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program, https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants.
[171] NYSESD, Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund, https://esd.ny.gov/momentum.

creation is expected to bring in excess of 1,000 jobs. Additionally, the Technology Campus will include the development of up to 880 multifamily, mid-range rental housing units.[172] The State provided $10 million in cleanup funds to begin repurposing of the site. With water, sewer, and excellent transportation access, the site is well suited for a variety of uses. **Status:** The Campus has one tech occupant and has filled the educational component, which is anticipated to include the development of a workforce innovation center. Funding needs may arise as new private businesses consider the Campus.

- **Project:** Winston Farms Mixed-Use Development. **Location:** Town of Saugerties. **Description:** Located just off the southbound NYS Thruway, the 800-acre greenfield site is envisioned to include light industrial, retail space and housing coupled with preservation of open space. **Status:** A DGEIS analysis was completed and is now undergoing public comment. Funding needs may arise as private businesses are identified.
- **Project:** The Winery Mixed-Use Redevelopment. **Location:** Town of Lloyd. **Description:** Formerly an old hotel and winery overlooking the Hudson River, this 437 acre site is envisioned for light industrial manufacturing (450,000 square feet), commercial / office space (155,000 square feet), 140-room hotel with a conference center, and roughly 800 two-family and multi-family homes. **Status:** Rezoning has been approved, and the site awaits a developer. Funding needs may arise as private businesses are identified.
- **Project:** Summerset Redevelopment Project. **Location:** Town of Wawarsing. **Description:** The project concept includes a small upscale hotel, restaurants, recreational facilities, townhouses, luxury cottages, and workforce housing. **Status:** The project has Town approval and State permits are being sought. Funding opportunities are being explored.
- **Project:** Wellington Hotel Redevelopment. **Location:** Town of Shandaken. **Description:** This historic 1822 hotel will be redeveloped into a café, food market, and 10 affordable housing units. **Status:** The County received a $1.6 million Restore New York grant for its restoration and adaptive reuse.
- **Project:** Marlborough Resort Project. **Location:** Town of Marlborough. **Description:** This hospitality and agritourism redevelopment of an old hunting lodge is projected to bring 125 new jobs on completion. **Status:** Conceptual stage.
- **Project:** Reimagining SUNY Ulster Campus. **Location:** TBD. **Description:** Community college in Ulster County is public infrastructure at end of its useful life. The County is currently deciding how to best use the space moving forward. **Status:** Conceptual stage.

- **Business Accelerators:** Support for entrepreneurs and small business owners via business accelerator development is being explored.
- **Main Street Revitalization:** The County has established a Revolving Loan Fund for upgrades to facades, safety crossings, and landscaping. More seed funding is needed for this purpose and to assist other types of businesses, including agricultural businesses.

[172] iPark 87, Think iPark 87, https://ipark87.com/think-about.html.

- **Waterfront Development:** To maintain the tourism benefit of Ulster waterfronts, infrastructure work will be needed to harden the waterfronts from increased flooding.
    - **Project:** Waterfront Development. **Location:** City of Kingston. **Description:** The project consists of the demolition of two buildings for a public park and kayaking launch. The project will also include dock replacement and ADA access. **Status:** Funded by NYSDOS.
- **Film:** The County is interested in expanding cooperative locations, facilities, and permitting to grow the film industry.
- **Arts:** The County created a master plan targeted to growing the arts as an economic driver and tourist attraction.[173] The plan recommends the creation of a position within the Tourism Department to implement recommendations and seek grant funding and partners to move the recommendations forward.
- **Agriculture:** The County completed a draft Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan that identified the need for farmworker housing and meat processing capability in the area; both efforts will require Federal and State support. A County agriculture coordinator is now on staff to support the implementation of the plan.
- **Emergency Services:**_The County will seek funding to ensure that adequate EMS service remains available and to attract volunteer fire fighters.

Westchester

Overview

Westchester County blends suburban prosperity, urban infrastructure, and natural beauty. Its history and culture as well as recreational opportunities make it a popular tourism and film destination. Just north of NYC along the Hudson River, Westchester covers approximately 500 square miles, including 69 square miles of water. It is home to significant natural features, including Croton Reservoir, Palisades Ridge, Rockefeller State Park, and extensive preserved open space. As the largest county in the Region, its population was estimated at 1,006,447 people in 2024. The County has a dense commercial base and significant employment in healthcare, education, finance, the sciences, and government. Its transportation is well-connected via I-87, I-287, the Mario Cuomo (formerly Tappan Zee) Bridge, the Westchester County Airport in the City of White Plains with commercial service, and an extensive network of Metro-North train stops, buses, and ferries. The County has numerous top-ranking school districts and 32,000+ college students across public and private institutions. Recreational opportunities include more than 40 miles of multi-use trails, including the Sawmill River Trail and Old Croton Aqueduct, and parks, Rockefeller State Park, Croton Gorge, and scenic reservoirs.

Initiatives

- **Housing:** There is an urgent need to build affordable rental units. There are thousands of apartments under development, but tariffs are increasing the cost of development. The availability of affordable rental units may be further reduced with potential changes to the Section 8 housing program.

[173] Participate Ulster County, Imagine Ulster – Ulster County Arts & Culture Plan, https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/arts-culture-plan.

- **Wastewater:** Stormwater management and flooding are frequent and growing problems for the County that require significant funding address. Municipalities along the Long Island Sound (Sound) are particularly exposed. There are seven wastewater treatment plants that sit along the Hudson River and the Sound that require infrastructure work. At present, the County is undertaking a sewer consolidation project that will replace the wastewater systems of four Sound communities. The County is completing a study on this work for the development of a pilot program.
- **Energy:** A coalition developed by the Business Council of Westchester is assessing the County's energy needs. Potential avenues include retrofitting of older buildings among others. Workforce development programs will be needed.
- **Incubators:** As a priority for the County's economic development, incubators are needed to help stimulate entrepreneurship and small business development. These should have training programs for small businesses, non-profits, and business retention programs.
- **Priority Sectors:**
    - The Office of Economic Development, in partnership with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, established a Quantum Consortium in 2023. More than 100 members, representing more than 50 organizations across New York, have joined this group to help develop and implement a strategy for quantum information, science, and technology (QIST) job growth.
        - **Project:** Quantum Consortium Strategy. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** The Quantum Consortium is currently undertaking a strategy focused on Quantum. **Status:** Underway.
        - **Project:** Quantum Consortium Projects. **Location:** County-wide. **Description:** Westchester County is applying for a grant from EDA Disaster Supplemental to build up to three quantum related projects involving construction of incubator/accelerator in the Mid-Hudson Region. **Status:** Exploring Funding Opportunities.
        - **Project:** Life Sciences & Technology Accelerator Program. **Location:** TBD. **Description:** Funding will be required for the program, including laboratory space. There is an opportunity for the County to lease existing lab space in the City of Yonkers, but grant funds will be needed to bring the lab back online and for ongoing operations. **Status:** In conceptual phase.
    - Regeneron is a large corporation that is an anchor for the growing biosciences industry. It has substantial workforce needs that the County is working to support through various workforce initiatives.
- **Transportation:** Public transportation with more frequent express schedules is needed for people who do not have cars. Airport enhancements to the Westchester County Airport are needed to maintain its business competitiveness.
    - **Project:** Westchester County Airport Runway Rehabilitation. **Location:** Westchester County Airport. **Description:** The County received FY25 FAA grants for three distinct components to a runway rehabilitation project that enhances safety at Westchester County Airport. **Status:** Funding Received.

- **Mixed-Use Redevelopment:**
    - **Project:** White Plains Mall Redevelopment. **Location:** City of White Plains. **Description:** A mixed-use redevelopment approach is being considered for the Mall. **Status:** In conceptual phase; zoning update needed. Final EIS in process; for rezoning.
- **Shipbuilding:** A public-private partnership with Derecktor Shipyards (Village of Mamaroneck) for workforce training can support the shipbuilding industry. Derecktor Shipyards is pursuing both State and Federal funds.
- **Tourism:** Strengthening Westchester's tourism requires a few areas of focus: connectivity to get visitors from trains to tourist destinations, waterfront infrastructure to activate waterfront attractions and provide greater access to the waterfront, wayfinding signage, and meeting space. Activating the waterfront is not a new idea, but it is expensive. There have been pilots but there need to be tie-ins with local businesses to make tourism along the river more regular and for longer seasons.
- **Film:** Is both a stand-alone industry and it also helps promote tourism. The County's annual economic impact report identified the film and television sector as contributing $924 million to County's local economy in 2024.[174] The County has nine pre-qualified production facilities that provide customers with film tax credits. Zoning and fees differ from one municipality to another, which can be frustrating to customers. Standardization of zoning / fees should be instituted and communicated to promote the industry. More studio campuses are in development in Yonkers, which has good train access, but more are needed
- **City of Mount Vernon:** The City's proposed projects are all designed to strengthen the City's economy; they include stormwater and sanitation infrastructure work, downtown revitalization, mixed use developments, and workforce development.
    - **Project:** Stormwater and Sanitation Infrastructure Overhaul. **Location:** City of Mount Vernon. **Description:** Aging pipes and cross-connections pose preventable risks to potable water. State regulations require installation and periodic testing of backflow prevention devices, yet compliance is uneven due to cost, fragmented records, and limited homeowner awareness. Our program closes these gaps by pairing incentives with an end-to-end permitting, tracking, and enforcement workflow—protecting public health and the State's prior infrastructure investments while lowering out-of-pocket costs for residents and small businesses. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Downtown Revitalization. **Location:** City of Mount Vernon. **Description:** Mount Vernon is undertaking a corridor retail-mix study and launching durable delivery tools—a Business Improvement District (BID) and an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) with a revolving loan fund—to position Mount Vernon for a competitive 2026 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) application and implementation. Contract with Economic Development Consultant, via RFI/RFP, to perform study in collaboration with City and IDA. This project will focus on South Fourth Avenue, Gramatan Avenue, and Sandford Boulevard. In 2025, Fun City Adventure Park and Floor & Décor open on Sandford Boulevard, creating near-term foot-traffic and co-tenancy opportunities. This program advances Envision Mount Vernon (Phase I Comprehensive Plan, adopted 2024/2025)—walkable districts, well-rounded

[174] Westchester County, https://www.westchestergov.com/home/all-press-releases/10450-westchester-county-film-and-television-industry-generates-924-million-economic-impact-in-2024.

small-business growth, and vibrant public spaces into actionable projects and permanent institutions. **Status:** Conceptual stage.

  - **Project:** Workforce Trades Education Collaboration. **Location:** City of Mount Vernon. **Description:** The City will launch a city-based workforce pipeline that prepares middle- and high-school youth for high-demand careers in the skilled trades, healthcare exposure pathways, and technology. The program combines hands-on labs, industry-recognized credentials, and paid work-based learning tied directly to local employer needs. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.

- **City of New Rochelle Projects:** The City's proposed projects are all designed to strengthen the City's economy and include connectivity, downtown revitalization, complete streets, and aging stormwater infrastructure.
  - **Project:** LINC. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The project creates a multi-modal connection between the Lincoln Avenue corridor and downtown New Rochelle by repurposing the north/south and east/west Memorial Highway connection to I-95 as a linear park and local street. The elevated east/west section of Memorial Highway from I-95 will be brought down to grade at North Avenue via a signal-controlled intersection with enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian signals, push buttons, and countdown timers. The project incorporates runoff and stormwater facilities, adds bicycle paths along key roadway corridors and connecting to the park, and enhances pedestrian mobility using streetscape improvements and traffic calming measures. The project received NYSESD DRI, NYSDEC CSC and USDOT RAISE funding for design and construction. Further construction funding is required. **Status:** Design underway; exploring funding opportunities.
  - **Project:** New Rochelle Transit Center Redesign. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The project reimagines New Rochelle's Transit Center to incorporate new landscaping, stormwater management, signage/wayfinding and lighting to help promote economic development and serve intercity passenger rail and bus travelers in the area. **Status:** Design underway; exploring funding opportunities.
  - **Project:** NR Forward Workforce Development. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The NR Forward program equips residents with career skills in construction and energy fields, supporting workforce development and economic mobility. Currently, the program serves three cohorts of 20–25 students annually. Participants receive hands-on training, industry-recognized credentials, and job placement support, with an emphasis on preparing residents for high-demand local labor markets. The initiative is designed to increase access for underserved populations, strengthen the pipeline of skilled workers, and ensure prevailing-wage opportunities. By scaling NR Forward, New Rochelle will create a broader impact on both individual livelihoods and the regional economy. **Status:** Implementation underway; exploring funding opportunities.
  - **Project:** Community Center at 11 Garden Street. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The City proposes to complete the interior fit-out of an 8,000-square-foot community center located at 11 Garden Street, within a new 219-unit affordable housing development downtown. The community center will provide flexible space for workforce development, entrepreneurship, youth and senior programming, and arts and wellness initiatives. Designed with durable, accessible, and inspiring materials, the

center will include multipurpose rooms, open collaborative offices, a demonstration kitchen, gallery space, and technology hubs. Programming will be co-designed with residents and community partners to ensure measurable outcomes. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.

- **Project:** Downtown Retail Strategy & Vanguard District. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The City of New Rochelle's Downtown Retail Strategy, adopted in 2022, provided a comprehensive framework to strengthen the local retail ecosystem, attract investment, and enhance the pedestrian experience in the downtown core. Building on this plan, the City Council formally established the Vanguard District in 2024, designating a high-activity retail and cultural zone at the heart of Downtown. The Vanguard District has since become a focal point for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and cultural programming, driving significant growth in storefront occupancy, pedestrian traffic, and retail activation. The strategy includes implementing a tactical urbanism safety demonstration project in the Vanguard District. The District is poised for expansion following its early success, with City Council advancing proposals in 2025 to enlarge its boundaries and attract more retail, cultural, and dining activity. Moving forward, the District will remain central to New Rochelle's efforts to build a vibrant, inclusive, and walkable downtown, serving as a scalable model for neighborhood-based economic development across the City. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Project:** Residential Rehabilitation Financing Program Implementation Plan & Pilot Program. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** The City is advancing a Residential Rehabilitation Financing Program to preserve and improve the quality of the City's existing housing stock. The program will provide financial assistance to eligible homeowners and property owners for critical repairs, accessibility modifications, and code compliance improvements. By addressing deferred maintenance and supporting resilient housing conditions, the program extends the useful life of existing homes and strengthens neighborhood stability. This initiative directly supports the City's housing goals. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Project:** Downtown Revitalization (Downtown Overlay Zone). **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** Downtown Revitalization is underway. Of 11,000 housing units approved, 6,200 are under construction. The revitalization effort and train station improvements will support the overall revitalization effort. Funding is needed. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Project:** Citywide Complete Streets. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** A proposed complete streets initiative will develop greater pedestrian access and improved sidewalks, bike lanes, and vegetative buffers to better connect neighborhoods to downtown New Rochelle. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **Project:** Stormwater Improvement Program. **Location:** City of New Rochelle. **Description:** In an effort to address and reduce flooding issues due to more frequent rain events and an aging stormwater infrastructure, the City established a programmatic approach that includes an enhanced stormwater maintenance program, resources for homeowners, design and construction of localized flood mitigation projects, and a 10-year implementation plan of $300 million in capital mitigation projects throughout the City. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.

- **City of Peekskill Projects:** Incubators are seen as vital economic development infrastructure.
    - **Project:** Peekskill Firehouse Kitchen Incubator. **Location:** City of Peekskill. **Description:** The Peekskill Firehouse Kitchen Incubator is currently underway, with approximately $5 million for redevelopment. It is an adaptive re-use of a former firehouse building that will result in 5 new kitchen spaces, a service area and storage for food trucks, and classroom space. The project is proceeding with EDA and NY State grants, and local match funding. Costs have risen and the project will require more funding in the future. **Status:** Underway with additional funding needed.
    - **Project:** Peekskill Retail Incubator and Maker Space. **Location:** City of Peekskill. **Description:** The City would like to develop a retail incubator and maker space downtown to spur entrepreneurship and provide a new tourist attraction. **Status:** Conceptual stage.
    - **Project:** Mixed-Use Development Infrastructure Project. **Location:** City of Peekskill. **Description:** Begun with a $10 million Momentum Grant from the State, Peekskill is putting in place infrastructure to support new housing and mixed-use development. Projects will include water and sewer upgrades, parking decks and resiliency projects for the waterfront that frequently experience flooding and other infrastructure to support 10 housing developments. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
    - **Project:** Sewer and Water Line Upgrades. **Location:** City of Peekskill. **Description:** With a NY RISE grant, Peekskill is raising streets along its waterfront to avoid repeated flooding. Sewer and water line upgrades are also needed. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- **City of Yonkers Projects:** As the largest city in Westchester County, Yonkers' proposed projects promote transformative initiatives to modernize infrastructure, revitalize neighborhoods, expand housing options, encourage economic development, and enhance resilience through smart planning, all while branding Yonkers as the Northeast's premier film production hub: "Hollywood on Hudson". Through strategic zoning reforms, extreme weather resilience initiatives, creative industry expansion, and ground-breaking investments like the redevelopment of Empire City Casino, Yonkers is charting a path toward a more connected and vibrant future.
    - The City of Yonkers is rapidly emerging as the top film and television production center in the Northeast through its "Hollywood on Hudson" campaign, attracting major studios, expanding purpose-built infrastructure, and partnering with institutions like Vive School, Halmi Academy, and SUNY Westchester to fuel a robust creative workforce. With 10 soundstages currently in operation and 6 more under construction, and over 1 million square feet of post-production, office, and logistics space, Yonkers now boasts the largest dedicated production infrastructure in the Northeast outside New York City supporting a burgeoning cluster industry that generates tens of millions in annual revenue and drives sustained job growth.
    - Yonkers is leveraging its status as a regional transit hub to drive economic growth through strategic zoning reforms, infrastructure investment, and housing development. As part of this effort, the City is preparing to launch the South Broadway Area Plan initiative to study opportunities for modernizing outdated zoning and evaluating the feasibility of as-of-right, higher-density mixed-use and residential projects.

- **Project:** South Broadway Area (SBA) Plan Initiative. **Location:** City of Yonkers. **Description:** Through the proposed South Broadway Area Plan initiative, the city is looking to examine how unlocking underutilized sites along the SBA Corridor could stimulate private investment and support long-term revitalization goals. With excellent transit access and significant public realm assets, the South Broadway corridor will be analyzed for potential improvements to walkability, parking requirements, and strategies to encourage affordable and workforce housing choices. These planning considerations are designed to strengthen small business vitality, attract new employers, and expand housing choices near key job centers, including the rapidly growing film industry. Guided by Smart Growth principles, the revitalization strategy focuses on increasing foot traffic, strengthening the local economy, and positioning the corridor as a vibrant, connected gateway to the city. S**tatus:** Conceptual Stage.

- In addition, Yonkers is considering launching a separate study for the Central Park Avenue (CPA) Corridor, a major regional commercial hub on the East Side of Yonkers.
  - **Project:** Central Park Avenue Corridor. **Location:** City of Yonkers. **Description:** This effort would focus on evaluating how current zoning aligns with today's commercial and mixed-use market trends, and whether targeted updates could support long-term economic growth and redevelopment opportunities. To help advance the SBA Area Plan, the city is applying for funding through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Together, these planning efforts reflect a forward-looking approach to shaping growth, mobility, and opportunity across key corridors in Yonkers. **Status:** Conceptual stage.
- To combat chronic flooding and aging stormwater systems, Yonkers has launched the Storm SAFE (Strategic Action for Flood Emergencies) initiative. This includes major capital investments in areas most impacted by stormwater, riverine, and overland flooding.
  - **Project:** Storm SAFE (Strategic Action for Flood Emergencies) Initiative **Location:** City of Yonkers. **Description:** Storm SAFE will be a new, comprehensive flood mitigation network throughout Southwest Yonkers stretching from McLean Avenue to the Hudson River. This critical infrastructure will protect schools, housing developments, and public facilities from flash floods and combined sewer overflows. Additional flood mitigation efforts target the Longvale and Troublesome Brook areas, where improvements such as culvert expansions, floodwalls, check valves, channel dredging, and bridge reconstructions are being planned to defend residential neighborhoods within the City of Hills from repetitive flood damage. These projects are designed to increase stormwater capacity, protect infrastructure, and create a more resilient City. **Status:** Exploring funding opportunities.
- Yonkers has 4.5 miles of beautiful Hudson River waterfront and has experienced a remarkable revitalization along its waterfront with new housing, vibrant events, dining, and shops, and creating a more walkable community. At the Hudson River end of Main Street, Esplanade Park and the historic City Pier offer scenic strolls with views of the Palisades, George Washington Bridge, and the Manhattan skyline. At the northern edge of the City, John F. Kennedy Park is located next to the Hudson River Museum features fishing piers and a public boat launch, providing unique river access. Looking ahead, the city is exploring plans to extend the Esplanade southward by creating a new waterfront

park at the southernmost point of the city near the Ludlow Metro North stop. With a strong commitment to transforming the waterfront into a dynamic public destination, the city aims to create a place where people can work, play, dock, and dine.

IX. Listing of Appendices

A. Appendix. Acronyms
B. Appendix. Mid-Hudson Counties' Projects
C. Appendix. CEDS Data
D. Appendix. Mid-Hudson Brownfields & EDA Distress Criteria Census Tracts
E. Appendix. Summary of Existing Plans
F. Appendix. Public Input

Appendix. Acronyms

Below is a listing of acronyms used in the 2025-2030 HVRC CEDS Plan.

ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
Ag&Markets	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
ATEC	Applied Technology Education Center
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CFA	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
CRE	Community Resilience Estimates
DGEIS	Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement
DRI	NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative
EDA	U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
EDD	Economic Development District
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FAR	Floor-Area Ratio
FPIG	Farmland Protection Implementation Grants
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HUD CDBG	Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant
HVADC	Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation
HVRC	Hudson Valley Regional Council
HVVH	Hudson Valley Venture Hub
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
LWDB	local workforce development boards
MMWG	Materials Management Working Group
MTA/MNR	Metropolitan Transit Authority/Metro-North Railroad
NYC	New York City
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOH	New York State Department of Health
NYSDOL	New York State Department of Labor
NYSESD	New York State Empire State Development
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
QIST	Quantum Science and Technology
REDC	Regional Economic Development Council
SUNY	State University of New York
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
USDOE	U.S. Department of Energy

Appendix. Mid-Hudson Counties' Projects

The Projects appendix appears as a separate document that is available on HVRC's Economic Development webpage. While all projects listed in IX. County Initiatives are included, the appendix indicates those that, in their current conceptualization, may be viable EDA investment opportunities.

Appendix. CEDS Data

The CEDS Data appendix appears as a separate document that is available on HVRC's Economic Development webpage. This appendix provides background data that informed the development of the CEDS.

Appendix. Mid-Hudson Brownfields & EDA Distress Criteria Census Tracts

The CEDS Brownfields & EDA Distress Criteria Maps appendix appears as a separate document that is available on HVRC's Economic Development webpage. This appendix provides regional and county maps showing the locations of Brownfields, based on NYS data, and Census Tracts demonstrating economic and income distress as defined by the EDA.

Appendix. Summary of Existing Plans

The Summary of Existing Plans appendix appears as a separate document that is available on HVRC's Economic Development webpage. This appendix provides a summary of key plans prepared by other entities on topics of importance to the Region, which informed the development of the CEDS.

Appendix. Public Input

HVRC received substantive comments during the month-long public input period from five individuals. Nine additional individuals provided edits to the CEDS narrative, such as noting typos and clarifying projects. The substantive comments are provided below by topic: Agriculture, Energy, Materials Management, Resilience, and Water. Preceding each comment is a brief description of the comment and where it was noted in the CEDS narrative. HVRC sincerely thanks all who made time available to review the CEDS and provide public input as it has improved the final CEDS. Formatting of comments has been adjusted to align with the style of this appendix; HVRC may have edited comments received for clarity, spelling, and punctuation, but made no substantive changes to any comments.

Agriculture

1. **Commenter #1 argued for inclusion of forestry in the agriculture section. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   Overall, the industry clusters identified in the CEDS make sense in terms of the SWOT and the Region's existing assets. These industries are credibly proposed to advance the work of building a more resilient economy and communities. However, in a number of cases, details in definition and scoping of the opportunities really matter. Preserving, adapting and growing agriculture is an important centerpiece of the CEDS. It is baffling, though, why forestry is not mentioned in conjunction with the natural resource based industries that work together to make our Region what it is. Intact, healthy forests contribute to resilience of settlements and water supplies as well, with benefits including cooling, water retention, and forest product related industries. Native timber products are a low-carbon structural material and valuable feedstock for the region's furniture and building materials industries.

2. **Commenter #1 argued for inclusion of locally produced natural building materials in the agriculture section. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   The CEDS themes of bioeconomy and construction have an obvious connection: in the use of natural, regionally-sourced building and structural materials. Native timber is a resilient choice for building framing. Biomass is also a versatile source of building materials including paper sludge, hemp fiber, hempcrete, cellulose batt and panels, recycled cardboard studs, wood fiber batt and board, engineered wood, chopped straw insulation and more. In the semi-rural economies of the Hudson Valley, crops could be grown and materials reclaimed for nearby use, relating back to the CEDS' recommendations on housing.[175]

[175] RMI (2025) Building with Biomass: A New American Harvest https://rmi.org/insight/building-with-biomass-a-new-american-harvest/

3. **Commenter #2 found the omission of the poultry industry in the agricultural sector to be an oversight. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   Omission of Poultry Industry in Agriculture Sector: The agriculture section of the draft CEDS overlooks a critical component of the Mid-Hudson Region's agricultural economy: the poultry industry. Sullivan County and other parts of the Region are home to large-scale poultry operations that contribute significantly to local employment, food production, and economic output. These farms not only provide a stable source of protein for regional and State markets but also support a wide range of ancillary jobs in processing, distribution, and farm services. Given the scale and economic importance of poultry production in Sullivan County and New York State, we strongly recommend that the final plan explicitly acknowledge the poultry industry as a major agricultural sector and include it in discussions of infrastructure needs, workforce development, and agricultural resilience.

4. **Commenter #2 provided additional strategies for supporting and improving the agricultural industry. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   Agriculture Priorities and Local Alignment: While the draft CEDS outlines forward-looking strategies for agriculture – such as agritech, climate-controlled agriculture, and value-added processing – it does not fully reflect the current priorities and realities at the local level, particularly in counties like Sullivan. The plan would benefit from a more grounded understanding of what is driving the agricultural economy today.

   Through our work with the agricultural community in Sullivan County, we have provided feedback and insights based on direct experience with farmers, farm businesses, and agricultural stakeholders. Local priorities often center on supporting existing infrastructure, addressing labor and housing shortages, and maintaining viable farmland – issues that are foundational to sustaining agriculture in the Region. While innovation is important, it must be balanced with support for the core sectors and practical needs that farmers face every day.

   We encourage the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council to ensure that regional strategies are informed by county-level agricultural plans and stakeholder input, and that they include support for both emerging innovations and the foundational sectors that currently sustain rural economies. The following recommended priorities reflect practical, community-informed strategies that would meaningfully support the continued growth of the agriculture industry and its contributions to the Mid-Hudson Region's economic vitality

   a. Ag Infrastructure: Sullivan County's agricultural sector is challenged by aging infrastructure that limits productivity, efficiency, and resilience. We recommend that the plan prioritize funding and technical assistance for:
      i. Water and irrigation systems to improve drought resilience and water efficiency.
      ii. High tunnels and hothouses to extend growing seasons and protect crops from extreme weather.
      iii. Cold storage and post-harvest handling facilities to reduce food loss and improve market access.
      iv. On-farm renewable energy systems (e.g., solar, wind) and energy-efficient upgrades to reduce costs and environmental impact.

v. Shared equipment cooperatives and mobile infrastructure units to support small and mid-sized farms that cannot afford large capital investments individually.
vi. Digital infrastructure, including Wi-Fi and smart sensors, to enable precision agriculture and remote monitoring.
vii. The plan should explicitly prioritize support for existing farms to upgrade aging infrastructure, not just focus on new or expanding operations, including the expansion of meat and poultry processing. Preserving the viability of current farms is essential to maintaining the Region's agricultural base and rural economy.

b. Beginner Farmer Development: CCE Sullivan's Beginner Farmer Program provides hands-on training, mentorship, and business planning support to new and transitioning farmers. Continued investment in land access strategies, capital access and equipment sharing, and peer learning networks, will ensure that the next generation of farmers is prepared to meet the Region's food and economic needs.

c. Climate Resilience Through Education and Infrastructure: Climate resilience must be treated as a core priority for the future of agriculture in the Mid-Hudson Region. Farmers are already experiencing the impacts of extreme weather, shifting growing seasons, and water management challenges. To support long-term viability, the plan should prioritize:
    i. Investment in climate-smart infrastructure, such as water-efficient irrigation systems, high tunnels, and renewable energy technologies.
    ii. Expanded access to technical assistance and education on regenerative practices, soil health, and adaptive farm management strategies.

d. Policy and Zoning Recommendations: Local zoning and land use policies play a critical role in supporting or restricting agricultural viability. While New York State's Agricultural Districts Law and Right to Farm Law provide essential protections for farmers, these policies must be reinforced at the municipal level through:
    i. Farm-friendly zoning codes that allow for diversified uses, such as agritourism, on-farm processing, and seasonal events.
    ii. Streamlined permitting processes for agricultural structures and infrastructure improvements.
    iii. Local planning board education on the importance of agriculture and the legal protections afforded to farms under State law.

    We encourage the plan to support technical assistance for municipalities to review and revise zoning codes to align with State protections and promote agricultural innovation. This alignment will reduce regulatory barriers, protect farmland, and empower farmers to fully utilize their land for evolving business models.

e. Agritourism and Farm Diversification: Agritourism is a growing and vital component of Sullivan County's agricultural economy. It provides farmers with an additional revenue stream, helps diversify farm operations, and strengthens the connection between consumers and local food systems. CCE Sullivan supports the development of infrastructure and zoning policies that enable agritourism, including signage, parking, ADA-compliant facilities, and food safety upgrades. We

recommend that the plan recognize agritourism as a strategic economic driver and support its expansion through funding, training, and regulatory guidance.

f. Farm Labor and Housing: Access to a reliable, skilled, and adequately housed workforce is a growing challenge for farms in Sullivan County and across the Mid-Hudson Region. Labor shortages – especially for seasonal and physically demanding work – threaten the viability of many operations. To address this, we recommend the plan include strategies to support:
    i. Farm labor housing development, including funding and zoning support for on-farm and off-site housing that meets health and safety standards.
    ii. Workforce training programs in partnership with local BOCES, community colleges, and CCE to build a pipeline of trained agricultural workers with skills in equipment operation, animal care, food safety, and climate-smart practices.
    iii. Transportation solutions for farm workers, especially in rural areas with limited public transit.
    iv. Incentives for local youth employment in agriculture, including summer internships, apprenticeships, and school-to-farm career pathways.

We are committed to supporting both farmers and workers through education, outreach, and collaboration with workforce development partners. We urge the Council to recognize farm labor and housing as essential infrastructure for a resilient agricultural economy.

5. **Commenter #2 saw the omission of Cornell Cooperative Extension as an oversight from the agricultural section. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

Omission of Cornell Cooperative Extension as a Key Agricultural Resource: The draft CEDS does not reflect input from Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) offices, NY agriculture's link to the national land grant university system, which have been deeply embedded in the agricultural communities of every county in the Mid-Hudson Region for more than a century. CCE staff work directly with farmers, landowners, and agricultural businesses, providing technical assistance, business development support, and education tailored to local needs. Their absence from the plan is a significant oversight.

Furthermore, the section titled "Technical Assistance & Farm Business Support" references organizations like the Hudson Valley Farm Hub and Glynwood Center, but fails to recognize CCE as a primary provider of these services. CCE delivers critical support in areas such as farm business viability, agricultural best management and production practices, including integrated pest management, climate resilience, beginning farmer training, food safety, value added production, wholesale readiness, farmland protection, regulatory compliance, and facilitating connections across the food system to ensure ag economic vitality and identifying and addressing gaps in food security across the Region. Their programs are trusted, accessible, and responsive to the evolving challenges faced by the agricultural sector. We strongly recommend that the final plan:

a. Acknowledge CCE as a core resource for agricultural technical assistance and business development.
b. Engage CCE offices in future planning processes to ensure regional strategies are informed by those with direct, ongoing relationships with the farming community.

6. **Commenter #3 also found the omission of the poultry industry in the agricultural sector to be an oversight. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   The CEDS omits mention of the poultry industry, which is a significant component of Sullivan County's agricultural economy. Large-scale poultry operations contribute substantially to employment, food production, and economic output. We urge the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council to include poultry as a key sector in the regional agricultural profile.

7. **Commenter #3 also provided additional strategies for supporting and improving the agricultural industry. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   Agricultural Priorities and Local Alignment: While the plan emphasizes agritech and climate-controlled agriculture, it does not fully align with the needs identified through direct engagement with local farmers and stakeholders. We recommend the following priority areas:

   a. Agricultural Infrastructure: Support for upgrading aging infrastructure is critical for both new and existing farms. Recommended investments include:
      i. Water and irrigation systems
      ii. High tunnels and hothouses
      iii. Cold storage and post-harvest facilities
      iv. On-farm renewable energy systems
      v. Shared equipment cooperatives
      vi. Broadband and digital infrastructure
      vii. Meat and poultry processing equipment and facilities
   b. Beginner Farmer Development: Strategies should include:
      i. Land access programs
      ii. Capital access (microloans, grants)
      iii. Mentorship and peer learning networks
   c. Climate Resilience: Actions should include:
      i. Investment in climate-smart infrastructure
      ii. Education on regenerative agriculture and adaptive management
   d. Policy and Zoning: Recommendations:
      i. Farm-friendly zoning codes and streamlined permitting for ag structures
      ii. Training for municipal boards on NYS Agricultural Districts Law
   e. Agritourism and Farm Diversification: Support should include:
      i. Infrastructure (signage, ADA-compliant facilities)
      ii. Regulatory guidance and training
      iii. Marketing and regional coordination
   f. Farm Labor and Housing: Actions should include:
      i. Development of farmworker housing
      ii. Workforce training programs
      iii. Youth employment pathways

8. **Commenter #3 also saw the omission of Cornell Cooperative Extension as an oversight from the agricultural section. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Agriculture.**

   Omission of Cornell Cooperative Extension: Cornell Cooperative Extension is a vital partner in agricultural development across the region. The plan should:

   a. Acknowledge CCE's role in technical assistance, education, and business development
   b. Include CCE in future planning and stakeholder engagement

   We thank the Hudson Valley Regional Council for considering these comments and look forward to continued collaboration to support a resilient and inclusive agricultural economy in the region.

Energy

1. **Commenter #1 suggested corrections and additions to the section on Solarize programs. This comment was noted in the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Energy.**

   Solarize is mentioned on p. 67 as an Orange County program. In fact, Solarize is a widely used term for consumer education, group purchase, and related market aggregation campaigns that have been run in several New England states and around New York. Introduced in our Region in 2015 – 18, Sustainable Hudson Valley's (SHV) 3-year NYSERDA funded program in partnership with Catskill Mountainkeeper, SHV used public education and group purchasing programs with ten municipal partners to achieve 400 new solar contracts and open up the marketplace. Solarize Ulster followed with a focus on community solar aggregation, an approach also ongoing in Westchester. In today's climate with reduced financial incentives for residential solar, a renewed round of Solarize campaigns to serve the entire Region could be recommended to help to stabilize this industry.

2. **Commenter #1 provided more context to the CEDS conversation on Thermal Energy Networks. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Energy.**

   Thermal energy networks are also an excellent recommendation. Note that the pilots involving utilities are part of a NYSERDA strategy to demonstrate not just the tech but the administrative and financial underpinnings such as billing and the allocation of benefits and costs. They are expected to become much more standardized and therefore scalable in the next 2 – 3 years, well within the timeframe of this CEDS to encourage scalability and strategic use, such as district thermal energy networks in conjunction with adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and in the urban cores of disadvantaged communities where energy affordability is the greatest issue, rental housing limits residents' choices, and reaching the public one home at a time is a challenge.[176]

[176] Source: Emma Lagle, Pace Energy and Climate Center, panel presentation, Hudson Valley Climate Solutions Summit 2025.

Materials Management

1. **Commenter #1 identified biochar and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) as an industry to include in the CEDS. The commenter also addressed broadening the CEDS discussion of waste-to-energy to include other technologies. This comment was noted in the CEDS in V. SWOT Stakeholder Analysis under Threats.**

   Biochar, as a contributor to soil health, is a good starting point as an example of a larger cluster of useful materials and practices that represent emerging, scalable subsectors in agriculture – collectively known as carbon-dioxide removal or CDR. Different from carbon capture and sequestration from point sources such as power plants and industrial processes, CDR refers to drawing CO2 from the atmosphere (e.g., into solvents or sorbents that can then be chemically processed to create stable carbon-based materials that can be safely stored for centuries). Another appropriate example of CDR for our agricultural economy is enhanced rock weathering – applying rock dust from nearby quarries to soil as a replacement for liming agents. Many common rocks absorb CO2 at a very slow pace, but when ground to increase surface area, they become meaningful carbon sinks. There are ways to do these things right with nearby feedstocks, sustainable scale, renewable or low-emissions energy, etc.[177],[178]

   To take full advantage of CDR and deal with the full spectrum of technology opportunities in the waste sector, the CEDS discussion of "waste-to-energy" should be broadened to include other processing technologies for waste or surplus materials. Choices among these are very real, current, and challenging for materials managers, economic developers, environmental regulators, and investors. The discussion should also include these equally useful approaches:

   a. Pyrolysis: A high-temperature anaerobic process that can create highly stable, carbon-based materials but is also advocated by some industries as appropriate disposal for single-use consumer materials such as plastics.
   b. Chemical recycling: The process of decomposing materials into component molecules that can then serve as the basis for remanufacturing. For example, the ability to separate out spandex from cotton and other valuable fibers is a breakthrough in textile remanufacturing. But chemical recycling, like pyrolysis, is also advocated for municipal solid waste processing, where its value, risks, and costs should be thoughtfully compared to higher-value approaches, such as source reduction and reuse.
   c. Anaerobic digestion: The relatively low-temperature breakdown of organics into biogas. This can be fed into existing gas pipelines, arguably stabilizing fossil-fuel-based systems; or it can be brought to bear in hard-to-electrify uses, like farm equipment.
   d. And of course there's good old composting.

   These waste processing solutions should be addressed as a matter of regional guiding policy as much as possible to avoid the threat of NIMBY responses and ease regulatory reviews.

   Some of these technologies qualify as "waste-to-energy" while others are "waste-to-material." Hybrid systems also exist where materials, such as biosolids, are gasified to

[177] RMI Insight (2023): Applied CDR Roadmap https://rmi.org/insight/the-applied-innovation-roadmap-for-cdr/.
[178] Jennifer Wilcox, Ben Kolosz and Jeremy Freeman (eds), CDR Primer (2021) https://cdrprimer.org/.

create fuel for the system itself, and then remaining feedstocks are captured and pyrolyzed into biochar for long-term sequestration.[179]

Biochar is produced by pyrolysis, an anaerobic high-temperature process which produces little or no emissions or particulates (though if a contaminated feedstock is used, some residues may remain). Regulators and environmental advocates are divided with regard to these technologies, as shown by the strong opposition that stopped creation of a centralized biochar production facility in Saratoga. CDR industry groups have made strides in developing standards and methods for verifying removals, and best practices for deploying technologies. Decentralized systems using locally available feedstocks are increasingly favored in the industry as a way to maximize efficiency and minimize any negative environmental impacts. In the Mid-Hudson, promising feedstocks for biochar production include forest biomass damaged by storms, farm and vineyard trimmings, invasive plants, and disaster debris. Relying on these feedstocks – all outside the municipal solid waste stream – is recommended as a way of anticipating and addressing environmental concerns.

2. **Commenter #1 also suggested broader inclusion of reuse of materials in the CEDS as an industry to grow. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Construction Trades.**

   The CEDS also wisely endorses building deconstruction and salvage as a strategy for resilience as it maximizes the value of materials already in the Region and minimizes the energy burden of sourcing new materials. It should be stressed that deconstruction can be economically competitive with demolition, as its greater labor intensiveness can be offset through the resale value of the salvaged materials. This strategy is being advanced in New York City by the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), which is conducting a demonstration project taking apart a full city block at CUNY Medical College to create SPARC (Science Park and Research Center) Kips Bay. NYCEDC has had circular design and construction guidelines in place since 2019, but deconstruction is still an outlier as a practice. The ReClaimNYC Allaince published four principles for scaling up deconstruction in July 2025:

   a. Generate demand for reclaimed materials;
   b. Facilitate supply of reclaimed materials;
   c. Connect supply and demand;
   d. Spur innovation.

   Ulster County is launching Project RE-POWER, an ecosystem of innovative businesses, as a catalytic project to scale up building deconstruction and other reuse-based industries. It is also providing seed funding for creation of a Circular Economy Strategic Plan that focuses on Ulster County but can be adapted to the entire Region.

[179] https://www.bioforcetech.com

Resilience

1. **Commenter #1 argued for a broader interpretation of resilience beyond economic activities. This comment was noted in the CEDS in VI. Regional Issues under Building More Resilient Communities.**

   The CEDS draft defines resilience as the ability to respond to – and survive through – disasters, whether natural or human-caused. The traits of preparedness and resourcefulness that contribute to resilient emergency response are also valuable as a source of day-to-day well-being and resistance to the many stresses that our communities and businesses face. I stress this point to suggest that resilience is not just a consequence of having the right kinds of industries and economic activities, but thoughtful interpretation of the ways they can contribute. For example:

   a. Health care is discussed as a cluster, and certainly the delivery of services to the Region's population is important. Also important, and not discussed, is a secure regional supply chain of medication, hospital necessities, etc., so that sector is prepared to help the wider communities to withstand emergencies.
   b. Local agricultural systems are also raised up as a foundation for resilience, appropriately. But the example of controlled environment, year-round agriculture should be discussed in the context of its obvious benefits and possibly less obvious risks. While hothouse-based agriculture can help promote food security, only soil-based agriculture achieves the industry's potential for sequestering carbon, supporting pollinators, and providing a host of ecosystem services.

2. **Commenter #3 argued for more robust explanation of how climate change is impacting communities and argued that hazard mitigation plans are not adequate to prepare communities for climate impacts. This comment was noted in the CEDS in VI. Regional Issues under Regional Risks.**

   There was no mention of climate change in the report, and climate change is already having increased impacts on the regional economy. Hazard Mitigation plans do not adequately prepare communities for unprecedented climate impacts already underway. See:

   a. Integrating Climate Change into Hazard Mitigation Planning: A Survey of State Hazard Mitigation Officers
   b. Integrating climate change into hazard mitigation planning: Opportunities and examples in practice - ScienceDirect
   c. Integrating climate change into state hazard mitigation plans: A five-year follow-up survey of state hazard mitigation officers | PLOS Climate
   d. Adler Gosliner 2019-09 SHMP Report Update ed.docx

   For a review of climate impacts on the Region, please see:

   a. Adler Gosliner 2019-09 SHMP Report Update ed - Columbia University
   b. Climate Impact Spotlight: The South Hudson Region – New York State Climate Impacts Assessment
   c. Climate Impact Spotlight: The Catskills Region – New York State Climate Impacts Assessment
   d. Climate projections for the Hudson Valley | CALS
   e. Climate projections for the Hudson Valley - Cornell CALS
   f. ccinthehvms.pdf

g. Climate - Scenic Hudson

Water

1. **Commenter #1 suggested expanding the water management section to include other aspects, such as afforestation, to improve water resources and resilience. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VI. Regional Issues under Regional Risks.**

   Water management is rightly identified as an area of priority for resilience and public health. This topic should be considered more expansively to include a major missed opportunity: the civil engineering, landscape design, horticulture, silviculture, and related fields that are involved in making the landscape more resilient in the face of storms, floods, droughts and other weather extremes driven by changing water cycles. From Saratoga to Black Rock Forest, significant enterprises are developing a supply chain for afforestation that will certainly contribute to regional resilience as well as creating trade jobs, an industry that should be considered for mention in the CEDS. In 2009, Hudson Valley leaders conducted an exchange with counterparts in The Netherlands (H209) to explore water management technologies in use there, with relevance for our Region; the Hudson River Foundation is a likely source of archives opening up these opportunities.

2. **Commenter #5 provided significant context around wastewater infrastructure needs in the Region. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VI. Regional Issues under Water System Challenges.**

   Wastewater Infrastructure Needs: The age and condition of wastewater infrastructure was assessed in a DEC Hudson River Estuary Program report drafted in 2016.[180] The report, which covered the 10-county region that is largely overlapping with HVRC's, included these facts:

   a. There are 140 municipal wastewater treatment plants (also called Publicly Owned Treatment Works or "POTWs") and 52 satellite sewer systems (also called publicly owned sewer systems or POSSs), which discharge to 13 of the wastewater treatment facilities. A POSS is a sewer system owned by a municipality that discharges to a POTW owned by another municipality.
   b. As of the Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") 2012 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey report, 42 of these facilities had identified $602 million in investment needs. These figures could be updated by analyzing EPA's 2022 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey Report, available at https://www.epa.gov/cwns/clean-watersheds-needs-survey-cwns-2022-report-and-data. As of New York State Environmental Facility Corp's ("EFC") 2017 Intended Use Plan ("IUP"), 50 of 140 facilities had identified $662 million in needs. This figure could be updated by analyzing the EFC's 2025 IUP, available at https://efc.ny.gov/iup. Because only a fraction of facilities had identified needs, these figures are identified as "conservative" estimates.
   c. Nine Combined Sewer Overflow ("CSO") systems serve 11 municipalities. These systems together have 111 outfalls that discharge into the Hudson River.

[180] NYSDEC, "Characterizing Municipal Wastewater Infrastructure in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed: For Clean Water, Resilient Communities and a Swimmable River," 2016 (draft).

d. There were 104 wastewater treatment plants (74%) that have had at least one Discharge Monitoring Report ("DMR") effluent limit violation in the five years preceding the report's drafting.
e. Nine wastewater treatment plants had exceeded 90% of their designed treatment capacity within the five years preceding the report's drafting.
f. There are about 2,612 total miles of documented sanitary sewer line in the study area - a "conservative" number, because POSSs are not included.
g. The average age of lines was more than 100 years old for five of the 140 facilities. About 11% of sanitary sewer pipes in the study area were installed before 1925. Approximately 26% were over 65 years old at the time of the report's drafting.
h. Eight facilities of the 140 studied (6%) have a significant portion of their footprint in the floodway, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The floodway is the river or stream channel and the immediately adjacent land that is the natural conduit for flood flows. It is a component of the larger floodplain. Thirteen (13) facilities (9%) have footprints entirely within the 100-year floodplain, and 38 facilities (27%) have footprints entirely within the 500-year floodplain. While not necessarily detailed in the DEC report, Riverkeeper notes that FEMA floodplain maps often reflect a conservative floodplain area due to the long periods of time between floodplain map updates, despite rapidly changing real floodplain conditions due to climate change (i.e., they are often out of date). Additionally, 100- and 500-year storms are becoming much more frequent and, thus, flood risk is often underestimated.
i. Of the 44 facilities that discharge to the Hudson River or a tidal portion of a tributary, 12 (27%) would have a portion of their building footprints inundated by two feet of sea-level rise, and 24 (57%) would have a portion of their footprints inundated by six feet of sea-level rise, including two facilities that would be completely inundated.

3. **Commenter #5 suggested clarifying how HVRC would support investments in drinking water infrastructure and drinking water source protection. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in I. Executive Summary under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater, VI. Regional Issues under Water System Challenges, and VIII. Strategic Direction/Action Plan Goal 2: Water/Wastewater.**

   Drinking Water Infrastructure and Source Water Protection Needs: The Strategy states that drinking water infrastructure and quality are important to the Region's economic development, and that the Region faces risks related to quantity, quality, and cost of providing safe drinking water. However, the Strategy seems to focus on supporting wastewater investments, without clarity on how the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council would support investments in drinking water infrastructure and drinking water source protection. Riverkeeper urges the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council to clarify this.

4. **Commenter #5 provided a data source on the needs for drinking water infrastructure improvements. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in VI. Regional Issues under Water System Challenges.**

   Drinking Water Infrastructure: The data on the needs for infrastructure investments can be obtained from the EPA's 2023 Drinking Water Needs Survey and Assessment[181], and the

[181] See www.epa.gov/dwsrf/epas-7th-drinking-water-infrastructure-needs-survey-and-assessment.

EFC's IUP[182]. These should be considered conservative estimates, given the likelihood of updated State or Federal standards, which will require new and welcome treatment upgrades to improve water quality for many communities, and emerging risks that result from climate extremes exacerbating underlying pollution burdens.

5. **Commenter #5 gave a description of risks to drinking water sources and suggested prioritizing the protection of public drinking water supplies for resilience. This comment was incorporated into the CEDS in I. Executive Summary under Goal 2: Water/Wastewater, VI. Regional Issues under Water System Challenges, and VIII. Strategic Direction/Action Plan Goal 2: Water/Wastewater.**

   Drinking Water Source Risks and Priorities: The Region's public water supplies are inadequately protected, and showing signs of stress from development patterns, contamination sources, and climate change. There are several other contaminants that are of growing concern for public drinking water supplies in the Region that exemplify these risks. The Strategy should make clear that investments in economic development should not contribute to acute or cumulative risks to drinking water sources, and the Strategy should clearly prioritize the protection of public drinking water supplies as a foundation of resilience for the Region in every sense, including from a narrow economic development perspective. The Strategy should also identify and reinforce the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council's role in supporting Drinking Water Source Protection planning. The need for this focus is exemplified by several facts described below.

   Riverkeeper's analysis of 2024 Annual Water Quality Reports ("AWQR") for 120 public water supplies in the Hudson River Watershed, which is inclusive of most of the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council's region, found that several contaminants are widespread and of growing concern:

   - Road salt (Na and Cl): Nearly 60% of communities (50 water systems) reported sodium values exceeding the State/Federal health guideline for those on very low sodium diets of 20 mg/L. Increased chloride levels can also lead to profound changes in water chemistry, resulting in mobilization of contaminants, including heavy metals from source waters and lead from distribution pipes.
   - Disinfection byproducts (TTHM and HAA5, and their precursors, Total and Dissolved Organic Carbon): A substantial proportion of communities exceeded disinfection byproduct Maximum Contaminant Levels ("MCL"): 25% of communities (21 systems) reported TTHM over 80 ppb, and 18% (15 systems) reported HAA5 over 60 ug/L. Climate change and new disinfection rules under consideration by EPA will likely result in increasing concentrations and/or exceedances of both TTHM and HAA5 over time.
   - PFAS: Nearly half (44%, 53 systems) detected at least one PFAS. Of these, 5% (3 systems) reported exceedances of New York State's MCLs for PFOA or PFOS, and an additional 11% (13 systems) reported PFAS at levels that would exceed EPA's pending PFAS regulations. PFAS detections and violations of MCL have been widespread, as indicated by NYS Department of Health's ("DOH") Drinking Water Contaminants data.[183] As recently adopted or proposed Federal and State

[182] See https://efc.ny.gov/iup.

[183] See Drinking Water Contaminants maps and data, available at https://apps.health.ny.gov/statistics/environmental/public_health_tracking/tracker/index.html#/waterMaps.

standards come into effect, more of the communities that have detected PFAS will be in violation and require treatment.

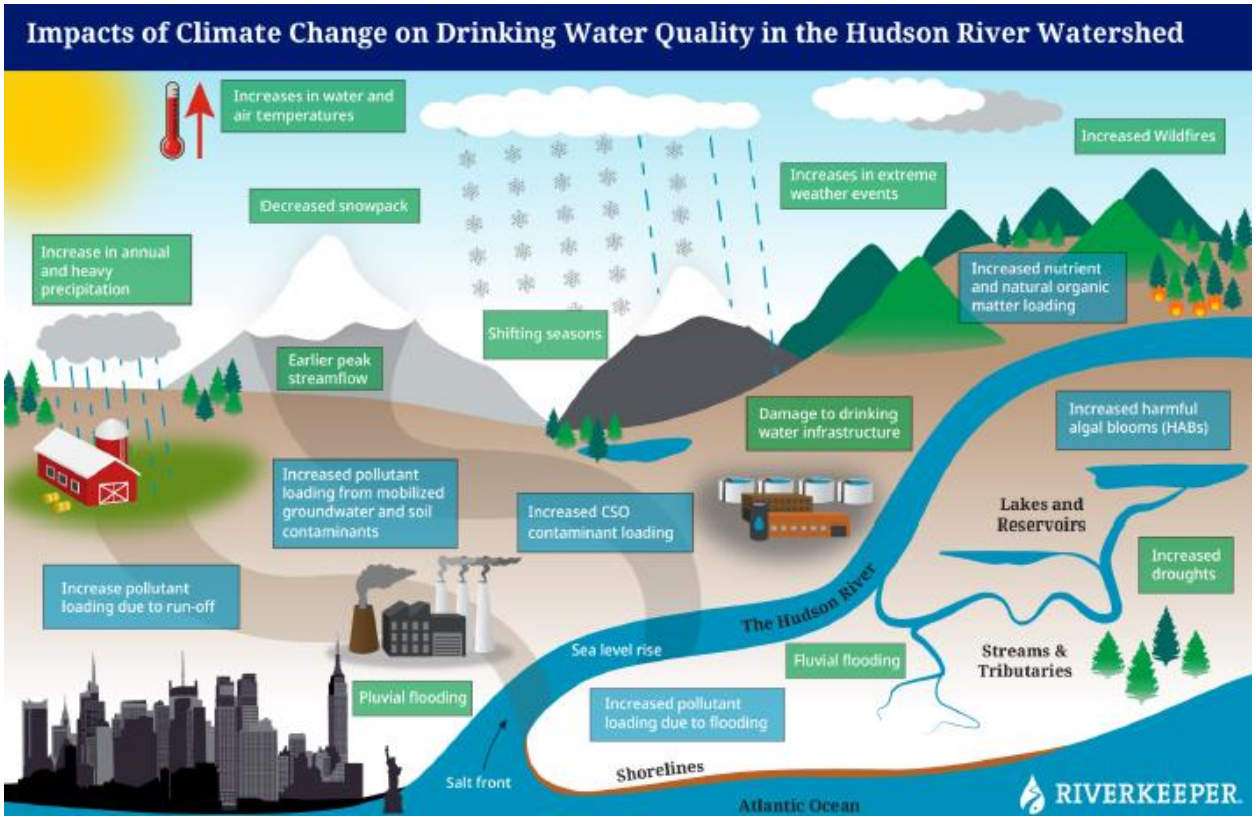
- Excess nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen compounds): While not reported in AWQRs, excess nutrients can be a key pollutant associated with Harmful Algal Blooms ("HABs") and disinfection byproducts.
- Cyanotoxins: While not reported in AWQRs, cyanotoxins formed by HABs are a contaminant of concern, particularly as climate change increases the risk of HABs. Several public water supplies in the Region have repeatedly reported the presence of HABs in recent years.[184]
- Water temperature: While not a health risk directly, increased temperature can speed the rate of various chemical reactions and increase the likelihood of algal growth and other water quality concerns.

Riverkeeper plans to publish later this year a report, "Climate Impacts to Drinking Water: Water Quality Challenges for Surface Supplies in the Hudson River Watershed," which adapted and built on the New York State Climate Impacts Assessments to illustrate key drinking water quality challenges likely to arise as climate change progresses. This work was funded in part by the NYS Environmental Protection Fund through the NYSDEC's Hudson River Estuary Management Program. As of this writing, we are incorporating edits from the Estuary Program and DEC, and anticipate publicizing the final report by Fall 2025, including by posting it to riverkeeper.org. While the content is focused on the Hudson River Watershed, as a consequence of Riverkeeper's and the Hudson River Estuary Program's mission areas, nearly all its content is relevant to any surface water supply in New York State. Some of the key concerns for climate impacts to drinking water include the following (which includes language from New York State's draft Drinking Water Source Protection Program ("DWSP2" or "Program") Framework 2025, with Riverkeeper additions.

- Increasing frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme precipitation events causing increased sewer overflows, urban and agricultural stormwater run-off, nutrient loading, and likelihood of HAB events and formation of disinfection byproducts.
- Increased air and water temperatures, resulting in greater risk of HABs, disinfection byproduct formation, and potential treatment and distribution issues over a longer season.
- Increasingly frequent and severe flooding events, causing overwhelmed wastewater treatment plants and combined sewer overflow discharges into source waters, as well as mobilization of contaminants from polluted sites and certain land uses.
- Sea level rise increasing the possibility of saltwater contamination of Long Island aquifers and Hudson River drinking water intake facilities, and increasing the potential for infrastructure damage in coastal areas that may be affected by sea-level rise or storm surge flooding.
- Increasing frequency and intensity of warm season droughts, especially as development intensifies, cause a decrease in groundwater recharge, as well as the concentration of groundwater pollutants in streams during base-flow conditions.

[184] See "HABS Archive" available at https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quality/harmful-algal-blooms related quantity concerns.

- Multivariable and cascading events resulting from multiple stresses. For instance, underlying road salt contamination in streams will be more concentrated in low-flow conditions during drought, when water temperatures will also be higher. This can result in changes to water chemistry that can mobilize heavy metals from soils into source waters (a multivariable cascading impact). These higher concentrations of salt during low-flow conditions can also lead to increased lead leaching from distribution system pipes (a second multivariable cascading event).
- Feedback loops may worsen water quality problems. For example, hotter temperatures can decrease dissolved oxygen (DO) in waterbodies. This reduced DO leads to the release of nutrients from sediment, spurring HABs. HABs, themselves, also reduce DO and increase water temperature, further entrenching this cycle (a feedback loop).



6. **Commenter #5 highlighted industries that pose potential risk to water resources in the Region as those that should not be prioritized in the CEDS. This comment was noted in the CEDS in VII. Industries Targeted for Growth under Energy and Manufacturing.**

   Industries Targeted for Growth: Riverkeeper urges the [Hudson Valley Regional] Council to specifically state that energy- and water-intensive industries should not be prioritized, and to exclude certain specific industries from the clusters of those targeted for growth. Specifically, data centers (including cryptomining) should not be prioritized because of intensive energy and water demands, and waste-to-energy facilities should not be prioritized due to concerns over air pollution and persistent community concerns in places where existing facilities are sited. Riverkeeper supports a deliberate approach to battery storage projects; the risks associated with battery storage must be understood, mitigated, and minimized as part of the State's renewable energy transition.