

Seneca Falls SWOT Analysis

A valuable exercise in the comprehensive planning process is the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the town. Strengths are those available and valuable assets that should be preserved or improved on. Weaknesses are drawbacks or short-term challenges that need to be addressed so that they do not cause long-term problems to the viability of either the quality of life or the economy of the area. Opportunities are the long-range positive trends affecting the Town as well as the positive paths that we might follow. Threats are long-term weaknesses that can undermine attempts to meeting the goals established by Seneca Falls.

The SWOT analysis was developed from data derived from public opinion as well as interpretation of other inventory and profile information about Seneca Falls. This analysis is the basis for the development of goals and future strategies, and will be used to help identify opportunities that offer Seneca Falls a set of realistic, tangible, and affordable actions for the community to pursue.

Strengths:

- Attractive downtown/Main Street
- Many tourist draws and historic places
- Wineries
- Rich cultural history, birthplace of women's rights movement
- High quality of life, a good place to raise a family
- Proximity to amenities
- Community Center Building
- Town parks and ball fields
- New library
- Museums
- Canal and Lakes
- Small town atmosphere
- Skill and diversity of residents
- Beautiful area/scenery
- National and State Parks and Wildlife refuge
- Chiropractic college
- Comprehensive planning strategy in place for the region by G-FLRPC
- Quality schools are not near capacity

- Infrastructure (water & sewer) in good shape with room to expand
- Emphasis on the Village as the center of the community
- Good Fire protection service

Weaknesses:

- Lack of job opportunities
- Disconnected economically from the rest of the region
- Low attendance rates at existing tourist attractions
- Private and public properties need maintenance and improvements
- Little attention to landscaping and design along major transportation routes, entrances to Town
- Some neighborhoods degrading
- Low activity levels downtown
- Overlapping governments
- Not enough government communication with the public
- Inability of Town to share revenues with Village
- High taxes
- Prominence of landfill
- Few community events and programs
- Illegal activity downtown
- No multi-residential housing or senior housing
- Seneca Falls Historical Museum lacks space for displays, events, and storage, and has no handicapped access
- Dwindling fire and emergency volunteers
- Lack of ambulance service
- Distant health care access
- Town parks are at capacity
- Age of County DPW garage (60 years)
- Not enough after school and daycare programs
- Zoning and building code enforcement
- Little flexibility in historic district

Opportunities:

- Take advantage of downtown historic area
- Location is good for becoming a gateway to the region
- Improvements to canal and lake boating facilities
- Take advantage of National reputation as the birthplace of the women's rights movement
- Room for growth
- Industrial parks
- Room to add uses that are lacking in surrounding town's and villages, such as movie theater, restaurants
- Coordinate activities and programs among the many recreational and historic resources in the area
- Increasing attendance rates at the new library
- Increasing attendance rates at the Seneca Falls Historical Society
- More adult and senior activities at the Community Center
- Revitalization of Sackett business district
- Take advantage of Chiropractic College
- Revitalization of Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Weskot Rule Church
- Adaptive reuse of the Knitting mill along the canal
- Development of multi-residential housing
- Strengthening connections to the past (rail and canal roles in town's growth)
- Improvements to outdoor recreation programs
- Town and Village continue to work on joint ventures
- Town continue to invest in projects within the Village
- Innovative future uses for the Seneca Meadows landfill
- The Town can use it's significant and stable source of revenue to fund projects
- Local needs can compliment tourist needs in order to grow the local economy
- Strong support for improving small town atmosphere, scenic views, and open space
- Residents are open to consolidating services to save costs

Threats:

- Inability to diversify our economy
- Continuing change over to a global economy
- Loss of larger employers, such as Gould's Pumps
- The Native American Indian Issue
- Apathy of residents towards possible improvements
- Fear of pollution from landfill
- Increasing congestion problem when new tourist traffic is added to existing truck traffic
- Surrounding municipalities not participating in regional plan for growth
- Expense to maintain expanded water and sewer infrastructure
- Youth and young adults continue to leave the area
- Lack of consensus about benefits of growth among town/village residents and officials
- Development encroachment onto farmland
- Lack of space at the Seneca Falls Historical Museum
- The seasonal lull that all businesses face
- Increasing housing costs
- Aging population
- Loss of small town feel
- Continuing illegal drug activity, and the negative perceptions that accompany it