

Draft Vision Statement for the Town and Village of Seneca Falls (May 2005)

Overall Theme:

In 2015, the Town and Village of Seneca Falls is a thriving community where citizens collaborate with responsive community leaders to create an exceptional quality of life. Seneca Falls is a leader in economic diversification, education, historic preservation, the arts, civic life, and environmental quality. Other communities use our blueprint for success as a model for their own planning efforts.

Our strong business climate provides meaningful employment opportunities and offers retail and service options for both residents and visitors. Our pro-business policies and programs are coupled with high environmental and civic standards. The downtown business district, along with the canal, lakefront and wine trail, is a focal point for tourism and small business development.

Seneca Falls celebrates and builds on its close proximity to Rochester, Ithaca and Syracuse, its community character and its unique historical role in women's rights, industry, and transportation as it grows and develops. Our neighborhoods are safe, offer a mix of housing opportunities that serve all income levels, and have well-maintained pedestrian and traffic networks. Seneca Falls' diverse population supports a culturally rich environment that promotes quality educational and recreational opportunities. Our natural environment is enjoyed and nurtured by current and future generations.

The Steering Committee encourages everyone to comment on this draft statement by emailing to vision@senecafalls.com by May 23, 2005

Economic Security: We understand that quality of life is *the* critical factor in attracting, retaining and growing businesses. Seneca Falls aggressively markets this aspect of itself to new residents, visitors and businesses. Our economy is diverse and includes industrial and small business development, tourism, and neighborhood-oriented local businesses.

Seneca Falls is a primary regional tourist destination and a gateway to the Finger Lakes Region and to Seneca County. Tourism in Seneca Falls has grown with increased emphasis on marketing cultural and recreational venues related to the canal and lake, the Women's Rights National Historical Park and the National Women's Hall of Fame, wine country, rural driving, and outdoor recreation. Seneca Falls' economic development programs build on the strong educational resources and technology opportunities offered in Central New York.

Downtown serves as the retail, cultural and financial center while agricultural entrepreneurs take advantage of the active farmlands found outside the village. The Town and Village support these economic development activities by providing economic development staff and support, improved technology and public service infrastructure for businesses and residences, enhanced downtown buildings and facades, and through enactment of a business-friendly environment policies and procedures. Businesses participate in and invest in our education system, our health and environmental programs, and our cultural programs.

Social Well-being and Community Services: Efficient Town and Village services will be efficient and will support new development while protecting our environment and historical character. Our streets and pedestrian networks are safe. Property tax and other revenue sources have been invested wisely and used efficiently. Services are unified and consolidated in order to promote this efficiency.

The health of our citizens continues to be a priority. We work with our New York Chiropractic College and quality regional hospitals to find ways to provide excellent health care options through coordination of new care models, technology, and transportation.

We have quality schools and educational institutions that provide students of all ages with the skills necessary to be successful and productive. Educational programs look for ways to generate future leaders, and to create citizens engaged in civic life. This has resulted in a high degree of involvement of individuals and organizations in our community and our decision making process is open, accessible and a model for other small towns.

Natural Resources, Open Space and Agriculture: Natural resources are protected for the benefit of all and also play an important role in our tourism economy. Significant environmental features and open spaces are preserved and contribute to our quality of life by maintaining our area's scenic beauty, quality environment, and outdoor recreational opportunities. We continually invest to both protect the environment and bring it closer to everyday life. New trails, parking areas, sidewalks, interpretive programs, camping areas, and children-friendly parks make it easier for every person in Seneca Falls to access, enjoy, and benefit from the natural environment.

Farms remain profitable and active farmlands contribute to diversity of our landscape and our small town and rural character. Our Seneca Farms effort has opened channels for regional vineyard and farm products into a wide range of markets.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources: The Seneca Falls Community Center is a significant recreational and cultural location with enhanced uses for teens and senior citizens. Additional state-of-the-art recreational facilities are also available within the community. The Cayuga Lake State Park is a major destination for both local residents and visitors. Seneca Falls also offers a diversity of cultural and entertainment opportunities in performing and visual arts.

Community Character and Historic Preservation: We respect and build on our heritage. Whether it is women's rights, industry, the Cayuga/Seneca Canal system, or our farming heritage/economy, we have made a variety of creative efforts to protect these qualities and integrate them into our daily lives. New residential and commercial development is consistent with our historical, architectural, and small town rural character while meeting the demands of modern businesses and industries.

Housing and Neighborhoods: People of all income levels have access to safe, decent and affordable housing. The Village offers higher density, mixed uses while the town remains largely rural with low density residential development creatively designed to protect open spaces and farms. Tree-lined streets, well maintained properties and enhanced landscaping contribute to our quality neighborhoods. A system of linked cycling and walking trails and paths provide increased access from our neighborhoods to parks, open spaces, and cultural areas.