

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONSERVATION and PLANNING

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## MISSION

The mission of the Department is to support sustainable progress that blends the County's environmental, economic and institutional needs and those of generations to come. We aim to find innovative opportunities that will simultaneously reinforce economic development and promote a healthy environment for our daily operations and for the County in general. In promoting the quality of our natural and economic resources, we strive to create and maintain vibrant, sustainable communities where people are empowered with the tools and services necessary to improve their overall quality of life.

## ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

The Department carries out its mission in the following program areas:

**Economic Development** focuses on growing the local economy by empowering people and businesses with the tools and services necessary to promote equity and our quality of life. Our work with the Albany County Empire Zone, the County's Community Development Block Grant programs and area businesses, municipalities and organizations helps expand businesses and attract and retain jobs.

The **Office of Natural Resource Conservation** is charged with preserving our valuable natural resources for the benefit of our present and future residents. This program administers environmental regulatory compliance on behalf of the County, coordinates the County's open space conservation, biodiversity and farmland protection activities and represents the County on several conservation-related committees.

**Planning and Land Use programs** include mandatory reviews of municipal zoning and planning referrals to the County Planning Board, technical assistance to local government agencies and studies and projects related to land use planning.

**Stormwater Management** staff is responsible for the County's compliance with Federal and State regulations to protect the quality of our surface and ground water resources and to enhance public awareness about the importance of stormwater issues to the health and quality of our environment.

The **GIS and Computer Graphics** function provides County agencies with GIS capability, both in terms of ongoing development and maintenance of the County's GIS data base and our participation in the NYS GIS Data Clearinghouse. This program area provides graphic, cartographic and related technical assistance to County and municipal agencies.

## OUTCOMES

- Albany County will implement an economic development strategy that fosters diversity and growth in the business sector, creates job opportunities for residents and respects existing community character and quality of life.
- Albany County will value and conserve its natural and cultural resources, which include unique natural areas such as the Pine Bush and Helderberg Escarpment, as well as significant historic and archaeological sites.
- Albany County comply with all applicable environmental and land use laws and regulations in carrying out its mission.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## 2009 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- The department will spearhead the County's participation in The Climate Registry by aiding in rigorous data collection and analysis. As an official Reporter, we will aggressively search for ways to mitigate our carbon footprint and energy costs.
- As the County Empire Zone continues to grow, the department will remain focused on promoting the highest standards of accountability and performance measurements for participants.
- The department will continue to support the County's housing initiatives to ensure adequate, safe and accessible housing for the workforce and the elderly.
- The support for the Rail Trail project will continue as years of negotiations become reality.
- The goals of the Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan will be emphasized by promoting locally grown products, agri-business and agri-tourism.
- The department will promote the responsible management of open spaces while encouraging smart growth.

## 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

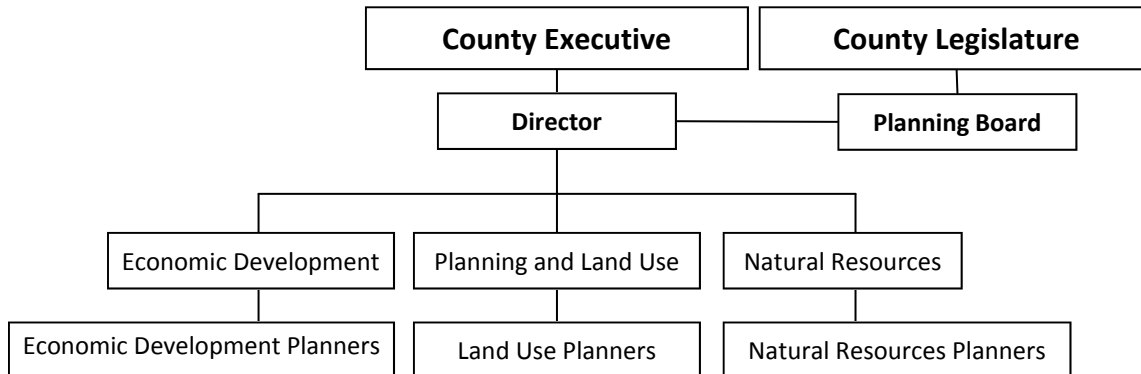
- The Technology Acceleration Fund (TAF) was created as a subset of the AI Tech Loan Fund. It has been designated \$1,500,000 to afford Albany County the opportunity to foster emerging technology ventures that have a high probability of creating new employment opportunities and increasing the standard of living in the region. The fund was established to assist both start-up and fledgling technology business in securing capital that would otherwise be unavailable to them due to the high-risk nature of their business.
- The AI Tech Loan Fund loaned \$4,070,000 to 15 businesses which demonstrated strong possibilities for growth, real property improvement, increased employment and retention of employment in the community.
- Five area businesses became certified in the Empire Zone Program and nine are currently pending certification.
- The department collaborated with numerous organizations, Columbia and Rensselaer Counties and 23 Albany County restaurants to host the annual Farm to Restaurant week.
- The Albany County Bounty Map, an exhaustive database of County farmers markets and farm stores and stands, was made available to the public via the department's website.
- The mandatory eight year review of Agricultural District No. 2 and the annual review of all Districts in the County added 516 acres to Albany County Agricultural Districts, bringing the total to 70,931 acres.
- The department completed the assessment of the Onesquethaw Creek-Coeymans Creek Watershed.
- The airport area County-owned property inventory was completed as a first step of the comprehensive assessment.
- Mapping services were provided in support of the Albany County District Attorney, Sheriff, Health Department and the Real Property Tax Service Agency in addition to the City of Cohoes and local tax assessors.
- Staff reviewed 277 County-owned properties proposed for public auction to determine potential preservation value.

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- A new senior economic development position is included in this budget. A high-profile, full time position will be needed to manage the County's role in an increasingly active economic development environment.
- The Department's budget includes the addition of a new A.8021 Stormwater Coalition Account totaling \$120,000 in total appropriations for 2009 implementing a municipal agreement between Albany County and local governments.
- The 2009 Executive Budget reflects a total appropriations decrease of \$2,148,652 to the department across all accounts. This decrease is due to various grant expenses and prior year encumbrances which were a part of the department's 2008 budget but will not be carried forward to 2009.
- The Executive Budget also includes an overall year to year decrease of \$84,998 in revenues across all accounts for the department.

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Account	Description	2007 Expended	2008 Adjusted	2009 Proposed	2008-09 Change	2008-09 Percent Change
<b>Appropriations</b>						
Control of Animals-(3510)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 0	0.0%
Control of Animals-(3510)		\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 0	0.0%
Econ. Develop. Conserv. & Planni-(8020)	Personnel Services	\$ 372,028	\$ 409,066	\$ 411,666	\$ 2,600	0.6%
	Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	0.0%
	Contractual Expenses	\$ 192,684	\$ 1,252,279	\$ 162,524	\$(1,089,755)	(87.0%)
	Fringe Benefits	\$ 209,842	\$ 126,356	\$ 135,268	\$ 8,912	7.1%
Econ. Develop. Conserv. & Planni-(8020)		\$ 774,554	\$ 1,787,701	\$ 709,458	\$(1,078,243)	(60.3%)
Economic Development-(6421)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 15,100	\$ 211	\$ 0	\$(211)	(100.0%)
Economic Development-(6421)		\$ 15,100	\$ 211	\$ 0	\$(211)	(100.0%)
Economic Opportunity Developme-(6989)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 6,257,145	\$ 6,127,197	\$ 6,052,000	\$(75,197)	(1.2%)
Economic Opportunity Developme-(6989)		\$ 6,257,145	\$ 6,127,197	\$ 6,052,000	\$(75,197)	(1.2%)
Stormwater Coalition-(8021)	Personnel Services	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 75,895	\$ 75,895	100.0%
	Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	100.0%
	Contractual Expenses	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 35,205	\$ 35,205	100.0%
	Fringe Benefits	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 7,700	\$ 7,700	100.0%
Stormwater Coalition-(8021)		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	100.0%

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Account	Description	2007 Expended	2008 Adjusted	2009 Proposed	2008-09 Change	2008-09 Percent Change
Strategic Economic Development-(6422)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 15,000	\$ 1,115,000	\$ 0	\$(1,115,000)	(100.0%)
Strategic Economic Development-(6422)		\$ 15,000	\$ 1,115,000	\$ 0	\$(1,115,000)	(100.0%)
<b>Total Appropriations</b>		\$ 7,067,299	\$ 9,035,610	\$ 6,886,958	\$(2,148,652)	(23.8%)
<b>Revenue</b>						
Econ. Develop. Conserv. & Planni-(8020)		\$ 7,058	\$(116,800)	\$(30,000)	\$ 86,800	(74.3%)
Economic Opportunity Developme-(6989)		\$(6,814,145)	\$(6,227,197)	\$(6,116,999)	\$ 110,198	(1.8%)
Stormwater Coalition-(8021)		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$(112,000)	\$(112,000)	100.0%
<b>Total Revenue</b>		\$(6,807,087)	\$(6,343,997)	\$(6,258,999)	\$ 84,998	(1.3%)
<b>County Share</b>		\$ 260,212	\$ 2,691,613	\$ 627,959	\$(2,063,654)	(76.7%)

	2008 Adjusted	2009 Requested	2009 Proposed	2008-09 Changes	2008-09 Percent Change
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	8	7	8	0	0.0%
	8	7	8	0	0.0%