

# Saratoga County *New York*



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## **SARATOGA COUNTY INITIATES NEW FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH SCPP AND SEDC UNITY COMMITTEE GUIDANCE**

*Reforms to include new strategic partnerships, increased coordination between partner organizations and Saratoga County, additional oversight, and increased assistance to individual municipalities*

The Economic Development Committee of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors today approved the establishment of a new framework for economic development efforts in Saratoga County on a bipartisan basis. The reforms will now be considered by the Law and Finance Committee on June 12, 2019. If approved by Law and Finance, the legislation will then be considered by the full Board of Supervisors at their regularly scheduled meeting on June 18, 2019.

The new structure for economic development activities in Saratoga County will further solidify Saratoga County as the most attractive place in New York State to retain and attract private sector investment, expand the tax base, while maintaining very low-level taxes and a wonderful quality of life.

Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) has a long track record of success as a private sector led organization and partner to Saratoga County in leading economic development efforts. The organization will lead, strategically plan and manage the marketing efforts and business retention and attraction activities for the economic development efforts in Saratoga County. Elements of this effort will include advertising, prospect communication, site selector visits, recruitment and trade shows. Any project team seeking to pursue expansion or new project development, will be referred to SEDC for project support and to handle all engagements with the Saratoga County IDA and other local IDAs to attract appropriate incentives. Entrepreneurs and emerging growth businesses will be referred to its Spark Saratoga incubator and accelerator coordinating the County's only innovation center providing support to grow next generation companies and jobs. It is an affiliate with the region's Innovate 518 network of accelerators and eligible to provide state tax incentives for new businesses.

The Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership (SCPP) will continue to play an essential and valuable role as a resource to the County and individual municipalities. The SCPP will focus its work on the Next Wave Communities Initiative providing community economic development planning services by working with individual municipalities. The group will also lead, plan and manage marketing efforts for individual

municipality's community and economic development. The semiconductor industry is a priority for Saratoga County. The SCPP will continue its work in the marketing and promotion of the County with the semiconductor industry, including the SEMI ASMC event and its relationship with GSA.

There will also be a renewed effort to assist local municipalities to identify specific needs in their communities. Infrastructure, marketing, aesthetic improvements, planning studies or any other local improvement associated with current or future economic development will be prioritized working with local government officials. The SCPP will assist the municipalities in achieving their priorities, including researching grant opportunities and assisting with the completion of grant applications. The Economic Development Committee is also researching the option of establishing an Economic Development Planning Fund to aid individual municipalities' improvement efforts. The fund would be administered by the SCPP Board and would provide seed funding for grant applications, planning studies and other related priorities established by local officials. Investing funds directly in our local governments will strengthen the individual municipalities and therefore make our entire County stronger.

Funding levels for the economic development program in Saratoga County will ultimately be established by the Board of Supervisors. The goal of the new structure is to ensure all County partners have an adequate level of funding and to direct more funding to local municipalities. Additionally, it is the goal of this new framework that the level of funding for the full economic development program remain at the same level as previous years. Funding for the purposes of economic development and tourism is derived from the County's Bed Tax receipts and NYS's I Love NY Program. Per the legislation that created the SCPP, the organization receives 50% of the total amount of money collected through the County Bed Tax. Funding will remain at that level, which would have totaled \$543,000 for 2019. The service agreement between Saratoga County and the SCPP states the relationship between the two entities must be approved annually. SEDC is recommended to receive \$150,000 annually, which will be reviewed on an annual basis. The proposed Economic Development Planning Fund is recommended to begin at \$150,000.

The proposed new structure will also provide increased oversight by the Board of Supervisors and ensure collaboration between SEDC and the SCPP. A minimum of one meeting per month will be mandatory and include the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Chair of Economic Development Committee, Chair of Board and President of SEDC and Chair of the Board and President of SCPP. The meetings will provide oversight by the Board, guidance on economic development events, sharing of information regarding active economic development leads, active assistance required by the two organizations or any other matter of importance to the County and the people we serve.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Kevin Tollisen, was pleased with the new framework clearing the first step in the process. *"In conversations with my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and people in the business community over the past year there was a strong, growing frustration with the economic development structure in Saratoga County and change was necessary",* said Tollisen. *"The important reforms and new structure for economic development in Saratoga County presented today has majority support of my colleagues and the business community and we will work to present a unified and collective approach for economic development in Saratoga County."*

*"The SCPP Board has been working to fulfill our mission and more recently work cooperatively with SEDC to explore opportunities for the two organizations to work cooperatively in the future,"* said Kevin Hedley, Chairman of the Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership. *"The SCPP Board has already voted to approve the new structure presented by the County today and we will continuously work to ensure the SCPP has a valuable role in the future success of Saratoga County."*

SEDC Board Director John Munter stated, *“As longtime supporters of economic development benefiting Saratoga County and its residents, we are pleased to have worked out a fair set of complementary roles and responsibilities for SEDC and SCPP. We worked well with an equal group of three counterparts from SCPP's Board and received the support of SEDC's full Board for this reasonable resolution. We are grateful for strong County leadership bringing needed clarity to the public-private responsibilities for keeping Saratoga an economic growth engine.”*

Economic Development Chairman Phil Barrett explained the results of the positive steps taken by the Economic Development Committee today. *“The new economic development reforms and structure for Saratoga County will use allocated funding more efficiently, institute additional oversight and increase cooperation between the County, SCPP and SEDC,”* said Barrett. *“A clear definition of roles and responsibilities for SCPP and SEDC, now approved by both organizations, eliminates duplicative efforts and establishes clear goals for everyone involved.”*

Board of Supervisors Chairman Kevin Tollisen commended the efforts of the Board Members of the SCPP and SEDC as well as the Unity Committee. *“The SCPP and SEDC Boards each appointed three board members to serve as representatives on the Unity Committee, along with the involvement of the Presidents of each organization. The Unity Committee invested a great deal of time and effort collaborating toward a solution to move Saratoga County forward.”*

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