

Madison County is fortunate to be home to three exceptional institutions of higher education located in the rural downtown villages of Cazenovia, Morrisville, and Hamilton. Cazenovia College, SUNY Morrisville, and Colgate University represent three schools that provide a broad array of educational opportunities for college students. Included are a small liberal arts college, a state university offering innovative, applied education, and a leading American university. All three campuses are vital drivers of the economies in the rural villages where they are located.

Each campus contributes tremendously to community vitality through employment and continuing education opportunities, arts and cultural events, and use of recreational and other facilities. Their students, faculty, and staff bring significant economic activity to local businesses.

With college student enrollment in decline nationally, it is more important than ever for college towns to enhance offerings that attract students. In addition, these communities must provide goods, services, and quality of life features that will attract and retain faculty and staff as well as encourage graduates to stay.

The Madison County higher education partnership has a vision to create an interconnected corridor of “college towns”. The geography of our three villages make this an ideal partnership. Working together, we will enhance the visibility of Madison County and Central New York as a hub for higher education. Rather than working in silos, we will enhance our downtowns and demonstrate that together we offer a critical mass of world class arts and culture, recreation, shopping, dining, and employment opportunities. These quality of life features are necessary to continue to attract students and employees to this area. In addition, the desirability of college town life, even for those not affiliated with the college, is well documented and our villages can capitalize on this in attracting residents and businesses. Although each of our communities are small and rural in nature, when combined and viewed as a corridor and enhanced through downtown revitalization, we will offer everything that is valued in larger college towns.

The projects proposed in this Downtown Revitalization Initiative plan will fill the gaps that have been identified through a holistic analysis of the corridor. These projects were designed to provide the additional goods, services, and opportunities that our college students, faculty, and staff have indicated are desired.

Enhancement of the college corridor downtowns will be the needed catalyst to transform this part of Central New York into a nationally recognized hub for higher education.