LCLGRPB Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan: Infrastructure Inventory

In preliminary conversations with Working Group members, the importance of addressing infrastructure needs was repeatedly raised as a priority needed for the region's long-term economic growth. Specifically, child care, broadband, and cellular were all cited as infrastructure that were lacking before the pandemic, and that the pandemic has put a greater spotlight on their inadequacy, with increased and more diverse needs for child care, broadband, and cellular than ever before. Water and sewer infrastructure have always been key drivers to economic development, but with lagging infrastructure and pandemic-exacerbated strains on local economies, improving and expanding water and sewer infrastructure has become increasingly more difficult.

The Chazen Companies undertook a preliminary infrastructure inventory to identify next steps and focus areas for stakeholder outreach. As outlined below, it is clear that child care capacity has been continually decreasing in recent years, but a greater understanding of the reasons for this decline is needed. For water and sewer infrastructure, the publicly available data on "needs" that is available is not comprehensive; additional outreach is needed to refine the region's water and sewer infrastructure needs. For broadband and cellular, there is generally a lack of comprehensive data; presenting publicly available data on this topic area does not provide an accurate picture and, due to this fact, was not included in the preliminary infrastructure inventory. With several more comprehensive inventories and initiatives underway at the county level, Chazen will compile and present this information once available.

Child Care

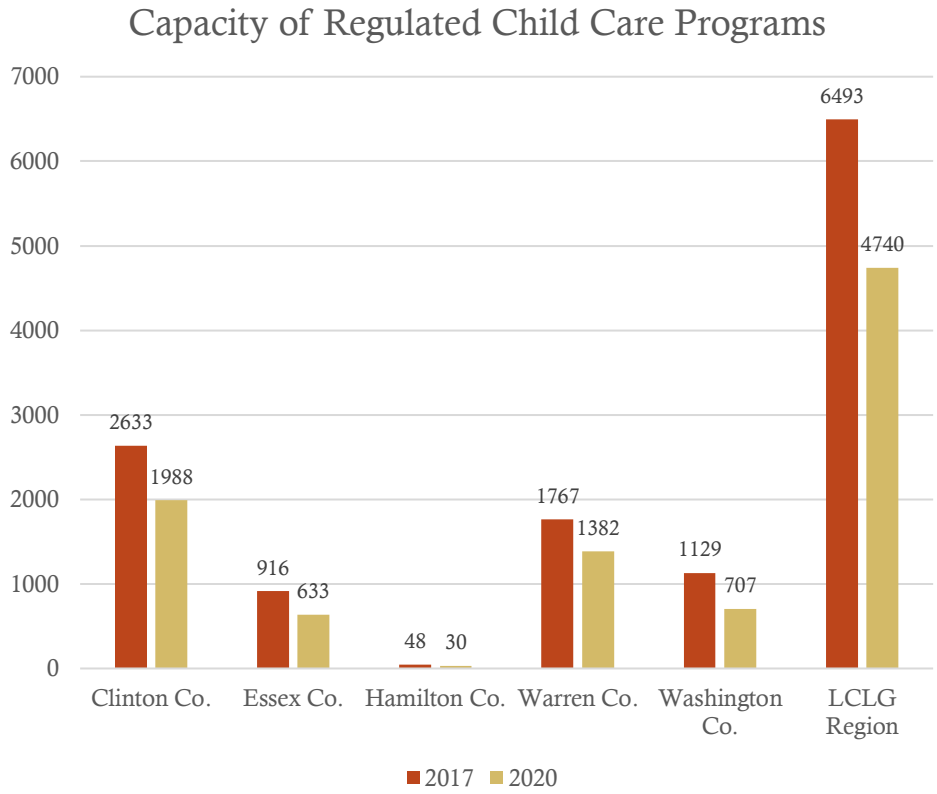
Child care continues to be a critical need to maintain and grow our workforce. The LCLG region did not have adequate child care to meet residents' needs prior to the pandemic. Stay at home mandates and the closure of schools and adapting to remote learning created unprecedented demands on child care, which, coupled with the additional restrictions and regulations on child care facilities and associated financial hardships, have led to the child care crisis the region is facing today.

The Southern Adirondack Child Care Network's (SACCN's) 2019 *Child Care Community Needs Assessment* found that the supply of child care in Warren, Washington, and Hamilton Counties declined by 30% over the 2012-2019 period, a trend occurring throughout New York and nationally. With the pandemic forcing the closure of many child care centers and school closures resulting in an increased need for child care services, this need has been further exacerbated.

"Economic development begins at birth. Investing in quality child care is an economic plan for the future growth of our communities." - SACCN

In 2017, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services released the *New York State Child Care Demographics* report, which identified, among other things, child care availability and need, by County. This report was cited in 2019 REDC Strategic Plans, highlighting the Governor prioritizing child care for the 2019 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) cycle. We reviewed current (January 2021) NYS Division of Child Care Services data to identify the changes that have occurred since 2017. Notably:

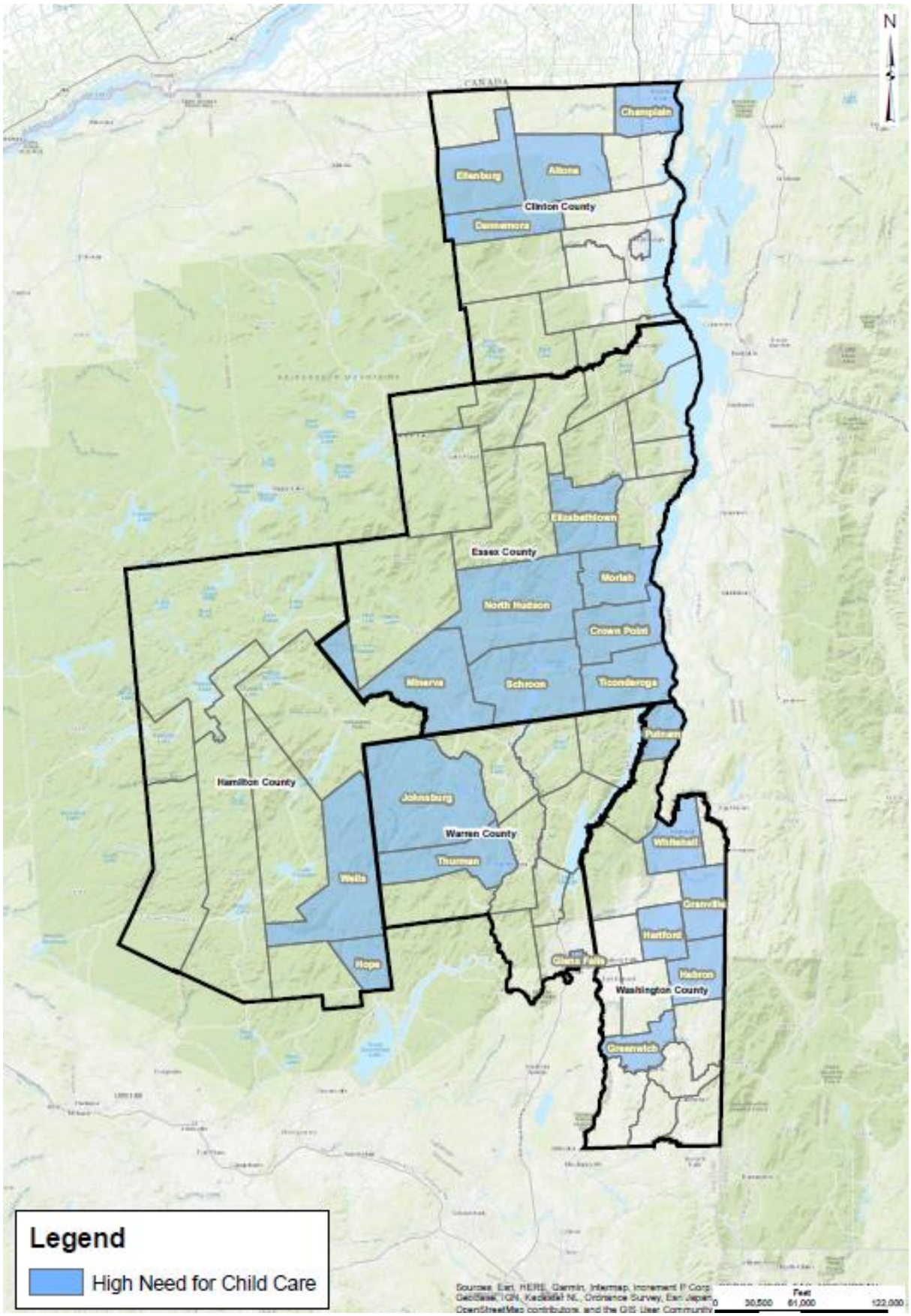
- The number of regulated child care programs in the five-county region has decreased from 295 to 239 (a 19% decrease) between 2017 and 2021. With the exception of Clinton County (which only had the number of programs decrease by 8%), each county lost more than 25% of its child care facilities.
- The capacity of regulated child care programs for the region decreased 27 % from 6,493 to 4,740 children. Hamilton and Washington counties had the most significant decreases (38% and 39%, respectively). It is also worth noting that these 2021 numbers may not be painting the full picture, as many programs are not currently operating at their full capacity due to additional COVID-related restrictions.
- In 2017, 15 cities/towns in the five-county region were considered "high need"; defined as having 3 or more children for every one child care slot and 25% or more of the population at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Level. This number increased to 22 cities/town in 2021 (a 50% increase). *Refer to map of high need communities on the following page.*
- Thirty-one towns in the region have no regulated child care facilities. This compares to 23 in 2017.



Also a critical shortfall is child care options for non-traditional hours of care; almost one-third of the SACCN's child care requests in 2019 were for some version of non-traditional hours of care. Based on January 2021 child care data, only two child care providers in the entire five-county LCLG region offer weekend or evening care.

Next Steps

As part of stakeholder outreach, The Chazen Companies will reach out to regional child care networks, child care providers, businesses, and employees to better understand the changing needs, the challenges that may be contributing to the decrease in providers, and alternate (non-traditional) child care.

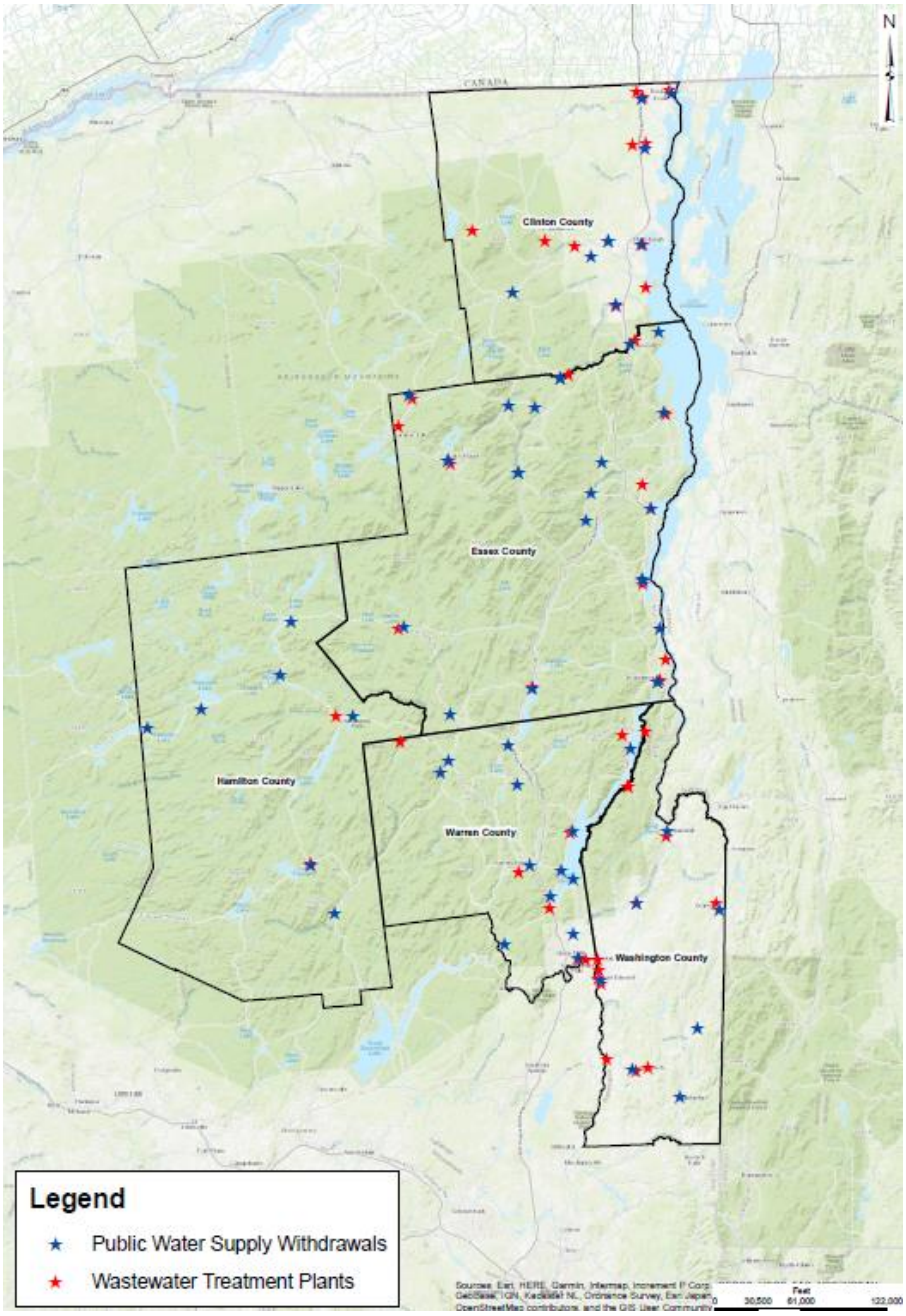

N
Champlain
Ellenburg
Altona
Clinton County
Dannemora
Elizabethtown
Essex County
Moriah
North Hudson
Crown Point
Minerva
Schroon
Ticonderoga
Putnam
Hamilton County
Johnsburg
Warren County
Thurman
Wells
Hope
Whitehall
Granville
Hartford
Glens Falls
Hebron
Washington County
Greenwich
Legend
High Need for Child Care
Feet
0
30,500
61,000
122,000

Water & Sewer Infrastructure

Access to water and sewer infrastructure is an important consideration for development within the region's population centers. The LCLGRPB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) historically has included an inventory of local capital project needs, with particular focus on water and sewer needs. A summary of capital project needs is generally not available on a county by county basis. To develop a baseline understanding of the region's infrastructure needs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC) data were reviewed, in addition to a review of relevant planning documents in the region.

Wastewater

There are 46 permitted wastewater treatment plants in the five-county region, including 36 municipal facilities and ten facilities serving industrial uses. Treatment facilities are spread throughout the region, with locations corresponding to higher population densities associated cities, denser hamlets, and settled areas. Facilities with the highest permitted capacity are the City of Plattsburgh Water Pollution Control Plant, which has a permitted discharge design flow of 16 million gallons per day (MGD), and the Glens Falls Sewer Treatment Plan, which has a permitted discharge design flow of 9.5 MGD. Twenty-six of the 36 permitted municipal facilities have design flows of less than one MGD.



Water

Public water supply withdrawals were also mapped and reviewed. There are a total of 60

water public water supply withdrawal facilities serving the LCLG region, including nine in Clinton County, 24 in Essex County, seven in Hamilton County, 13 in Warren County, and six in Washington County; the water supply for the Village of Fort Edward (in Washington County) is located outside of the LCLG region in the Town of Moreau (in Saratoga County).

Documenting the Region's Infrastructure Needs

Beyond availability, the age, capacity, and condition of infrastructure is also crucial. Many communities across the region struggling to obtain the funds needed to make the improvements needed to serve both existing and future residents and businesses. Already financially burdened, infrastructure needs further create financial stress to local government.

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC) is a public benefit corporation that provides low-cost capital and grants for water quality improvement projects. They are the primary source and central clearinghouse for low-cost financial assistance for local wastewater and drinking water infrastructure through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds.

NYSEFC annually prepares an Intended Use Plan (IUP), which provides information about how the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) work, the type of financial assistance available, the sources and uses of the funds, and projects that are eligible for D/CWSRF financial assistance.

IUPs are published for both SRF programs and serve as an inventory of water and wastewater capital project needs. NYSEFC solicits municipalities to list their project needs and develops two lists of eligible projects: the Multi-Year Project Priority List, which identifies all projects for which applicants have expressed an interest in receiving financial assistance and is the first step in preparing a project for financing; and the Annual Project Priority List, which identifies projects that NYSEFC may provide financial assistance to in the IUP Period. A project may receive financial assistance in the IUP period only if it is on the Annual List. Each project seeking SRF financial assistance is scored using criteria established by NYSEFC. A project's rank relative to other projects in its category determines the type of financial assistance available

The 2021 IUPs for the five counties were revised as a means of quantifying local infrastructure needs. As indicated in the table, below $242 Million in wastewater needs and $189 Million in drinking water needs are documented in the 2021 IUPs. It is important to note, that this is not an exhaustive inventory of needs, as not all municipalities respond to the NYSEFC solicitation. However, this information serves as an indicator.

Wastewater and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs

County	CWSRF		DWSRF	
	Number	Dollar Value	Number	Dollar Value
Clinton	14	$ 70,658,826	34	$ 95,742,087
Essex	12	$ 52,151,337	23	$ 46,404,126
Hamilton	1	$ 748,753	4	$ 6,577,061
Warren	20	$ 60,899,577	25	$ 28,215,550
Washington	10	$ 57,569,186	15	$ 12,321,944
LCLG Region	***57***	**$ 242,027,679**	***101***	**$ 189,260,768**

To add to this one data source, the EPA's Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS) was also reviewed. The CWNS is an assessment of capital investment needed for publicly-owned wastewater collection and treatment facilities to meet the water quality goals of the Clean Water Act. This list also serves as an indicator of local infrastructure needs and serves as a report to the US Congress. This survey was intended to be updated on a five-year cycle, and this has not occurred; the most recent CWNS is from 2012.

The table below identifies the total needs (by category and associated cost) for each county in the LCLG region, based on the 2012 CWNS. As indicated in the table, the CWNS identified over $250 million in needed improvements in the region.

Public Wastewater Collection/Treatment Improvement Needs (2012 CWNS)

Category	Clinton County	Essex County	Hamilton County	Warren County	Washington County	LCLG Region
Secondary Wastewater Treatment	$11,794,626	$37,363,083	$588,232	$14,131,884	$9,754,593	**$73,632,418**
Advanced Wastewater Treatment	$11,556,323	--	--	--	--	**$11,556,323**
Infiltration/ Inflow (I/I) Correction	--	$2,244,133	--	$1,605,073	$13,033,305	**$16,882,511**
Replacement/ Rehabilitation of Sewers	$10,122,499	$3,912,846	--	$47,757,935	$634,879	**$62,428,159**
New Collector Sewers	$19,388,447	$13,361,855	$5,644,511	$13,064,288	$27,995,920	**$79,455,021**
New Interceptor Sewers	$1,569,023	--	--	$974,862	$4,545,186	**$7,089,071**
Totals	***$54,891,253***	***$57,280,951***	***$6,232,743***	***$106,848,954***	***$79,010,789***	***$251,043,503***

As another point of reference to understanding infrastructure needs on the five-county region, the Adirondack Council prepared "Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Adirondacks: Status of Compliance and Operational Needs" in 2017. This report documented in excess of $100 million dollars of clean water infrastructure needs at 22 facilities in the Adirondack Park. We note the report includes areas outside the five-county region (although minor) and does not include Washington County or those areas outside the blueline.

Next Steps

As part of stakeholder outreach, Chazen will work to refine the list of the region's water and sewer infrastructure needs.