

The Downtown Master Plan Component of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan



Faculty of Landscape Architecture
Urban Design Studio
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry



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Preface



PREFACE

In the end, the most essential need of a downtown is character. If nothing distinguishes downtown from the strip, the mall, the nearest megastore, or the formula-design chain store, why would someone bother to come downtown? Character is what old buildings contribute best. History disappears from view when they do....

The most interesting downtown rebirth is, in fact, occurring in the cities and towns that have not malled or urban-renewed themselves into parking lot or corporate extinction. Long-ignored but now reviving downtown districts exhibit the character lost in the downtowns rebuilt with megaprojects. But this rebirth process is gradual, often slow at first, small step by small step, ad hoc. This is both the good news and the bad news, the good news because this is simply how it happens best, the bad news because the “experts” fail to recognize and value this style of rejuvenation until big developers or retail chains notice. When they do notice and more move in with new, overwhelming projects, the hard-won character is in danger....

Surviving districts with visible layers of history and growth have a different kind of downtown essential—a traditional downtown fabric with buildings of all ages, sizes, and styles, suitable for varied uses, convertible to innovative activity and a reasonable purchase or rental price. “The more variations there can be, the better,” Jane Jacobs wrote. “As soon as the range and number of variations in buildings decline, the diversity and population and enterprises are too apt to stay static or decline, instead of increasing.” In addition, these streets [of downtowns] have the opportunity to add new by filling in empty spaces, adding on to existing structures, or reconfiguring the interior spaces by combining or dividing. The existing fabric and surviving uses are the most important assets. They are the foundation to build on.

Roberta Brandes Gratz and Norman Mintz, *Cities Back From The Edge: New Life for Downtown*, 1998.

In August of 2001, political and civic leaders in Syracuse realized that it was necessary for Syracusans to improve upon the shaping of their community, and thereby committed to developing a new Comprehensive Plan for the City of Syracuse. This document comprises the Downtown Master Plan of that larger

document. It is one of many sections that focuses on a specific geographic area within the community, while other parts address citywide issues. The Downtown Master Plan is the second section of the Comprehensive Plan to be completed, which is evidence of how important the center city is to the community’s future.



Introduction



INTRODUCTION

All American cities, no matter how small, have within in their physical cores substantial financial and cultural capital that represents the investment of generations of citizens. These are the places where settlement first occurred, where independent entrepreneurs and expanding corporations were founded, where seats of government made their presence known, where society exhibited its broad array of cultural traditions as well as novelties. Downtowns bring together the diversity that is urbanity—the people and places that represent the broad interests and needs of the citizenry. It is in American downtowns that people gather en masse to celebrate, protest and remember, but also where they go as individuals to obtain basic public services, engage in business, or experience cultural expression. Downtowns are non-hierarchical, equally available to business leaders and homeless, students and seniors, residents and visitors. Richard Moe and Carter Wilke say it best: “More than any place else, downtown gives a community its collective identity and thus its pride. It is the keystone that keeps the other pieces of the city in place. Downtown is the heart and soul of the metropolis.”

Inherent in this view is the recognition and acceptance that downtowns are not static, but that they are continually growing, evolving. It is critical, however, that communities such as Syracuse understand when accommodating change that there cannot be a complete abandonment or benign disregard for the existing physical and social fabric of the city center. Changes in industry and manufacturing, transportation methods and communication technology cannot be

allowed to summarily dictate Downtown land use patterns and physical form—nor can these factors be used as a justification to allow traditional and essential Downtown functions to be relocated elsewhere. The city and county governments must commit to valuing and protecting the distinctiveness of Downtown Syracuse.

As individual projects in and the general condition of Downtown are being publicly debated, it is clear that there must be a long-range plan for the future of this significant place. Policies, programs and physical projects must be considered and steps taken to insure that they are pursued based on a logical course of action. There must be, then, recognition of the rich physical make-up of Downtown and the collective obligation of the community to protect it. A similar commitment must be made to maintaining the social and cultural vibrancy, the many layers of human interaction fundamental to Downtown. And there must be widespread confidence in the economic viability of this city center, which will inspire local citizens as well as outside parties to invest in this most critical of places.

The 20th century ended with a call for Syracuse to embrace environmental sustainability, smart growth and new urbanism. Through these movements, citizens recognized the need to conserve community resources, including natural areas, the built environment and the very people that live here. Acknowledging the intrinsic value of Downtown and committing to a course of action that will reinforce it as the psychological, physical and economic heart of the Syracuse metropolitan region is in keeping with



these responsible approaches to community planning.

History of Downtown Syracuse: An Overview

Like most American urban areas, the City of Syracuse began as a series of small, independent hamlets clustered around natural resources and transportation corridors. Salina near the shores of Onondaga Lake, Syracuse, Lodi and Geddes along the Great Genesee Turnpike and Erie Canal, Onondaga Valley along the old Seneca trail, and other early 19th century settlements ultimately formed the nucleus of the young city. Salina, the first of these noted settlements, and Geddes were established and grew as a result of the area's natural salt deposits and subsequent salt production. Syracuse and Lodi developed largely due to their position along the primary east-west transportation corridors through the state—making them important to shipping the area's salt throughout the country. And Onondaga benefited from its turnpike connections to the Finger Lakes region and beyond.

Through-routes such as the turnpikes were based on long established regional Native American trails, while local Indian paths determined the location of many community streets. The Genesee Turnpike initially connected settlements on the eastern fringes of today's Onondaga County and ultimately became a primary east-west route not only through the young communities, but also across the central portion of the region. In 1804 through the political persuasions of James Geddes, a transplanted Pennsylvanian, the State sold 250 acres of the Salt Springs Reservation to extend the road west to the small settlement Geddes had founded. In addition to this primary

road, the Erie Canal carved a major swath through the landscape and also served most of these early communities. Travel and transport on the Canal, as well as the successful development and seemingly unstoppable expansion of the salt industry, dominated the area for most of the early 19th century. Syracuse's original Erie Canal packet landing stood adjacent to the Genesee Street turnpike, creating a multi-use common. Soon named Clinton Square, after the canal-building governor, it became the area's primary civic space. The adjacent Hanover Square, just south of the Erie and Oswego Canals junction and north of the first Washington Street railroad depot Vanderbilt Station [1837, enlarged 1839], became an early mercantile center. Retail activity spread south along Salina Street.

By the mid-1830s, each of the original villages had incorporated and some dozen years later, in 1848, Salina, Lodi and Syracuse were joined to become the City of Syracuse. When the political boundaries of the new municipality were drawn they encompassed the various street alignments of each village. Yet because none of these systems was laid out in correspondence with the other, streets and blocks met at odd angles throughout the city—giving the young urban fabric an interesting quality that was further enhanced by the types and styles of its built form. Prior to incorporation, the areas to become the city were characterized by mostly small wood frame buildings, with a few 2-3-story masonry buildings. Salt blocks and associated buildings and structures of the salt manufacturers dominated the area closest to the shores of Onondaga Lake and south towards the Canal. The lands to the periphery of these built-up areas were largely open—either undeveloped, used for farming or, as in the case of some



promontories, used as community burial grounds.

The 1850s and 1860s brought rapid growth as the Canal and then the railroads fueled the local economy. Just as the Canal passed through the new city's center, so did the railroads—making them equally prominent features on the urban landscape. Not only did the tracks literally run through downtown streets, but the various railroad stations consumed entire downtown blocks, including the 1869 New York Central Railroad (NYCRR) Station on Franklin Street between Washington and Fayette.

Immigrants continued to pour into the city, first to build these transportation corridors and later to work on them or at industries dependent on these links to the State and country. Not surprisingly, individuals and families chose to live and work within neighborhoods having large numbers from their respective “old country.” These cultural groups affected the urban fabric through the construction of religious properties, fraternal organizations and clubs, in addition to their homes and small commercial establishments. During these decades, community leaders expanded business interests in terms of their markets and operating physical plants; they also continued to build stately residential dwellings for their families and supported the construction of worker housing for their employees. Arguably the area to become Downtown exhibited the greatest change, as the core of the former village of Syracuse evolved into the center of a more sophisticated municipality. Both the city and county governments established their seats within the expanding Downtown, as did several religious denominations, the banking industry, and a variety of prominent businesses. Residential districts developed south and

east of Clinton and Hanover Squares, around Center [Fayette] Park and St. Mary's [Columbus] Circle.

This time also gave rise to other social and civic improvements. Largely through the efforts of Elias W. Leavenworth, a local businessman, politician and philanthropist, citizens became interested in enhancing overall city image and quality of life. This was an interest in using nature as a foil to the ills of urban conditions, and was expressed best when Syracuse community leaders—through the newly created Syracuse Improvement Society—initiated plans for wide, paved tree-lined streets and a system of parks and open spaces.

The late 19th century also saw private enterprises expand both railroad and street railway systems in the municipality. The first Delaware, Lackawanna & Western (DL&W) station was constructed in 1870, while the NYCRR constructed its second station in 1895; and numerous independent streetcar operators laid tracks throughout the city. It was this effort in the 1890s that began widespread city neighborhood development. The street railways made it easy for community leaders and the growing middle class to travel to centrally located jobs from homes situated at the city's fringe, and residential development in the city's neighborhoods increased. The once fashionable downtown residential addresses were left behind as the community's most prominent families moved out of the central core and into new residential enclaves, and the area remained home primarily to the city's working class. This time also saw commercial enterprises continuing to grow and line the major corridors in Downtown as well as the balance of the city, with more industrial business focused near the canal and railroads. In



Downtown a particularly strong concentration was found south of Fayette and west of Clinton Streets, and included factories, warehouses, stables, shops, boarding houses and over twenty hotels.

With the salt industry declining at the turn-of-the-20th century, Syracusans turned their attention to other manufacturing pursuits, many based on inventions developed locally. Some businesses did retain ties to salt production, but eventually diversified their product line. These advances in industry continued to support the local workforce and residential development remained steady. The increasing neighborhood population also had the benefit of improved and new parks, an expanding public school system, and effective police and fire protection. And Downtown Syracuse continued to serve as the government, business and cultural center of the community. Even with the closing of the Erie Canal in 1923 and the removal of railroad tracks from the streets in 1936, the city center remained an active and vibrant place. The Hotel Syracuse, a 612-room giant, opened in 1924 and reflected an era of downtown elegance and status, as did the impressive 1927 Art Deco State Tower Building.

This continued economic prosperity and attendant physical growth reached its peak by the middle of the 20th century. The post-war years saw many businesses and residents leave the urban core and move out of the city. In a desperate attempt to retain viable commercial entities, elected officials and political leaders became increasingly flexible with local legislation and planning goals in order to entice business to remain in the city. They also embraced the federal programs touted as a means to combat urban disinvestment, participating in urban renewal and highway building with the same blind faith of community leaders across the country.

This attempt to stabilize the city's economic base often conflicted with the needs and desires of residents, and therefore did little to convince some homeowners to stay, while at the same time purposefully dislocated others, such as the majority of the 15th Ward that lay east of Montgomery Street. In addition public services were consolidated leaving some buildings vacant, with Central High School on Warren Street the most notable example Downtown. These and other factors resulted in on-going out-migration, with many owner-occupied properties becoming rental units, some neighborhood areas realizing a decrease in sense of community and cultural continuity, and the city core exhibiting increased vacancy, abandonment and demolition.

As the 20th century drew to a close, the city continued to fall prey to unplanned community growth. Many properties were razed in attempts to spur potential reinvestment or, more unfortunately, incongruous development. Downtown was not exempt from such activity and in many cases buildings were demolished only to create small, inefficient parking lots. The exception to this trend of unchecked and inappropriate downtown development can be seen in Armory Square and, more recently, Hanover Square. The former is a near perfect example of how the independent actions of pioneer developers, artists and downtown advocates rejuvenated a former mixed-use district into a contemporary downtown neighborhood and sparked the interest and support of successive city administrations. The latter is an equally successful although smaller scale case of how public-private partnerships and long-term commitment brought life back to one of the oldest segments of Downtown. Nevertheless, the ever-present pressure of single-



purpose projects, shortsighted decisions, and lack of a comprehensive plan continues to generate concern for the future of Downtown Syracuse.

Demographics

Syracuse encompasses 26 square miles and is the center of the Central New York region, home to approximately 500,000 individuals. Based on past neighborhood planning efforts, the city administration has identified particular neighborhoods to “better understand the specific needs in every area of the city.” One of those areas is Downtown, for which demographic information was examined.

Historically Downtown Syracuse has served as the civic, cultural and commercial center of the city and region. The area has been and remains home to city and county government, principal community cultural organizations and facilities, and corporate offices of local and regional businesses. It has emerged as a distinct district offering office, retail and residential space. Approximately 30,000 people come to Downtown Syracuse each day to work. However, most of these individuals depart at the end of the business day, leaving Downtown seemingly empty except for areas providing entertainment or cultural events or programs. Of those that do stay, most eventually depart at the end of the evening for other parts of the city or surrounding communities.

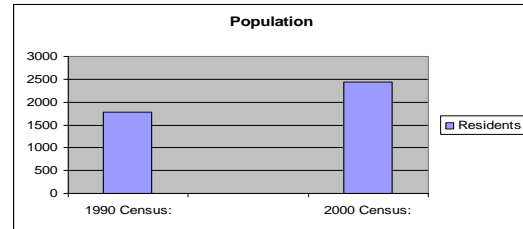
The boundaries for Downtown are demarcated by Interstate 690 to the north, Adams Street to the south, Interstate 81 to the east and Onondaga Creek and the elevated tracks of the New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad to the west. These boundaries also represent the boundaries of the US Census tract that

comprises all of Downtown. Prior to the 2000 Census, Downtown consisted of census tracts 31 and 31. Due to low population numbers within each, the tracts were combined.

Population

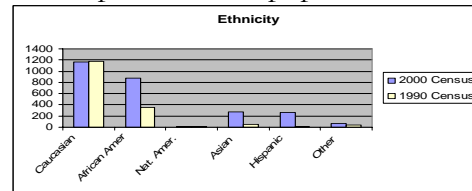
After a peak in population in the 1950s, the City of Syracuse suffered dramatically from urban sprawl. The number of people residing in the city slowly dwindled from 220,583 in 1950 to 149,722 in the year 2000, a decrease of almost 32%.

Downtown experienced a similar decline in population, but this trend is reversing. The 1990 Census reported 1,784 Downtown residents while the 2000 Census recorded the number of people living Downtown as 2,444—an increase of almost 37%.



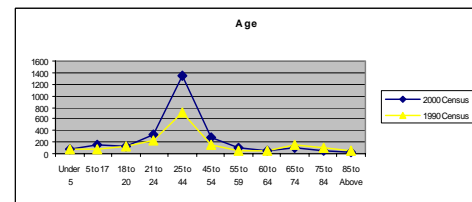
Race and Ethnicity

The current downtown population consists primarily of Caucasians and African-Americans, which combined make up 88% of the population.



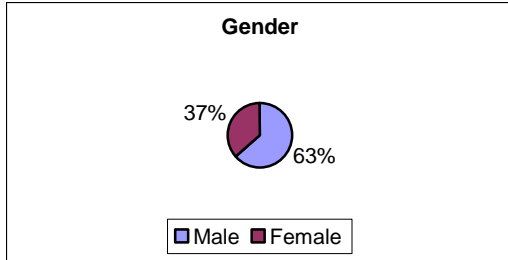
Age Distribution

Downtown residents between the ages of 25 to 44 years old, comprise over half of the Downtown population. This age group has doubled since 1990.



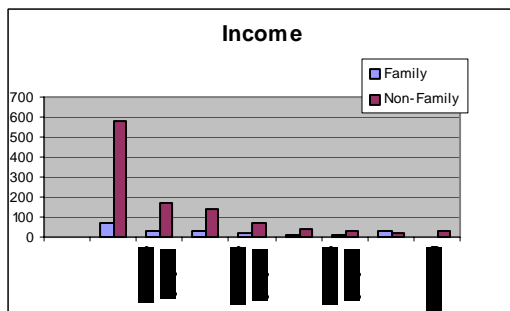
Gender

According to the 2000 Census, there are 1,546 males (63%) and 898 females (36%) living downtown.



Income

Income was categorized between family and non-family households. Of the 1,308 households within Downtown, the median income per household was \$9,940 per year, while the median family income was \$21,339. According to 2000 Census data, Downtown Syracuse had a per capita income of \$14,562.



Methods

Preparation of the Downtown Master Plan of the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan was carried out as a traditional planning and design undertaking. The process included conducting an inventory of pertinent information, evaluating collected material and data, formulating goals and objectives, and developing recommendations. The proposals put forth consist of policy, program and physical actions.

The project process involved a combination of thorough and limited research. A thorough level of research was undertaken with respect to the existing Downtown physical environment and zoning and land use. Other areas of research were investigated on a more limited basis, particularly the wide range of community and economic development mechanisms that occur in other communities within New York State and across the nation.

Primary and secondary source materials were referenced and included books, articles in professional periodicals, conference and seminar proceedings, and publications of public agencies and private organizations; web pages accessed via the Internet also were utilized. Additional information was collected through interviews with staff from the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County and a number of not-for-profit advocacy or special interest organizations.

On-site investigations were conducted during the entire project period, providing an opportunity to examine existing conditions from mid-winter through summer. The initial field investigation involved a two-week image study based on the work of noted urban planner Kevin Lynch in his seminal book *The Image of the City*. The result generated an initial indication of those components of Downtown Syracuse that contribute to its identity, give it meaning and, therefore, are worth protecting. Various paths, edges, nodes, landmarks and districts were articulated on a city plan and served as a graphic reference throughout the project.

Public participation in development of the Downtown Master Plan was obtained through a 17-person steering committee. Members included representatives of the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board,



Syracuse City Planning Commission, Syracuse Common Council, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, Syracuse Department of Community and Economic Development, Onondaga Historical Association, Metropolitan Development Association, Downtown Committee, Inc., Armory Square Association, Downtown East Business Association. In addition, other at-large members represented the design, development and educational communities within the city. Working meetings involving the entire committee were conducted in conjunction with the first three phases of the project.

Organization of the Plan

The Downtown Master Plan generally is organized according to each phase of work conducted.

Section I, Physical Environment, and Section II, Socio-Cultural Factors, provide

an inventory and analysis and gives a summary of all data that was collected. A definition is provided for each topic investigated, including an explanation of why such information was considered relevant to the plan. A brief summary of facts obtained is presented. The analysis component is structured as problems, opportunities and constraints related to the inventoried topics.

Section III, Goals, Objectives and Recommended Actions, presents the four primary goals for the Downtown Master Plan. This narrative also provides the objectives pursuant to each goal and the proposed policy, program and physical project recommendations related to each objective.

Section IV, Detailed Recommendations, puts forward a number of proposals that are more fully developed and that might serve as the first recommendations to be implemented.





Saline salt "flat" near Spencer St., c1895. The land to the north and east of present-day downtown was covered with salt "flats" where salt was produced.



Walton Street, c1890. Several former stable, warehouse, manufacturing, and industrial buildings survive today in Downtown.



Residences on Fayette Park, c1870. The park was once surrounded by fashionable homes of Syracuse's leading families.



Pease Home, Montgomery Street, 1880. Until the 1950s much of Downtown was characterized by single family houses.



The New York Central Station (1925, designed by W. L. Gilbert in 1895). The station, located at Franklin and Fayette, was one of several railroad stations located in Downtown during the late 19th and early 20th Century.



Clinton Square, c1900. The Erie Canal defined the square from 1825 to 1925.



Hanover Square, c1920. Hanover Square has been the center of banking and commerce since the mid-19th century.



St. Cloud Hotel, c1870. The hotel was one of over twenty serving railroad passengers. It was destroyed in the 1960s and replaced with a parking lot.



Clinton Square, 1926. Following closure of the canal, automobiles now dominated Clinton Square.



15th Ward, c1950. The residential character of this section of Downtown was lost in demolition under the Federal Urban Renewal Program.



Southeast corner of Downtown, c1960. Refusing in the mid-20th century, the county initiated a facilities construction program that continues today.



South Clinton Street, c1950. Trains, buses, and automobiles shared Downtown streets.



James Street at Orange Street, c1940. One of the principle downtown streets.



The 15th District, c1965, after demolition.

Early Settlement

- 1786 Trading post settlement is established on Onondaga Creek by Benjamin Neukirk.
- 1794 James Geddes establishes the first salt works.

19th Century

- 1804 Genesee Street is established when James Geddes sponsors a bill to finance construction of a road to the west line of the salt reservation.
- 1804 Abraham Walton purchases the 250 acre area known as "Walton Tract", site of much of present day Downtown.
- 1825 Erie Canal completed.
- 1828 Oswego Canal completed.
- 1830 With the completion of the Erie Canal Clinton Square becomes a thriving marketplace. Commercial development begins around Hanover Square and residential development begins around Fayette Park.
- 1830 New York Central Railroad comes to Syracuse running East-West on Washington Street.
- 1837 First New York Central Railroad Station located at Salina and Washington Streets.
- 1845 Former Wesleyan Methodist Church constructed.
- 1848 City of Syracuse incorporated.
- 1850 The Canal Weighlock Building is constructed.
- 1859 First Armory constructed at the Jefferson Oval, H. N. White, Architect, burns down c1875.
- 1860s Trolleys are added to Downtown streets.
- 1862 Salt Industry reaches it's peak production with nine million bushels per year.

1865 Civil War

- 1869 New York Central Railroad Station moved to corner of Franklin St. and Washington St.
- 1870 First Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (N/S route) station constructed on south side of Armory.
- 1875 Park Central Presbyterian is constructed.
- 1876 Second Armory constructed, H. N. White, Architect.
- 1886 Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is constructed.
- 1890s Armory expanded. Further expansion in 1907 and c1930.
- 1892 City Hall constructed, C. E. Colten, Architect.
- 1893 Dey Brothers & Company Department Store constructed.
- 1895 Second New York Central Railroad Station constructed at Franklin St. between Washington and Fayette Streets, W. L. Gilbert, Architect.

20th Century

- 1904-06 Fourth Onondaga County Court House constructed.
- 1917 World War I
 - 1923 Canal filled in and becomes Erie Boulevard.
 - 1924 Hotel Syracuse opens.
 - 1927 State Tower building constructed.
- 1930s Great Depression
 - 1930 Common Council legislation to move railroad off streets. Project completed in 1936.
 - 1932 Niagara Mohawk Building constructed.
 - 1936 St. Mary's Circle rededicated as Columbus Circle.
 - 1941 Second Delaware, Lackawanna & Western station constructed. It serves passengers until 1958.
- 1945 World War II
 - 1950s Demolition of 1895, New York Central Railroad Station for parking lot.
 - 1951 War Memorial Building constructed.
 - 1960s The 1936 New York Central Railroad Station on Erie Boulevard moved to E. Syracuse and rail bed becomes location of Interstate 690.
 - 1960s Interstates 690 and 81 completed.
 - 1965 Downtown Urban Renewal Plan completed and the 15th Ward demolished.
 - 1966, 1970 MONY Towers constructed.
 - 1968 Everson Museum constructed, I.M. Pei, architect.
 - 1972-1976 Residential Towers: Townsend, Harrison, Clinton constructed.
 - 1976 Hanover Square listed on the National Register of Historic Places. First National Register Listing in Syracuse.
 - 1980s Armory Square District revival begins.
 - 1991 National Guard moved from Armory to Hancock Field.
 - 1991 Oncenter constructed.
 - 1994 OnTrack, new station constructed at Armory Square.
 - 1994 MOST moved to Armory Building.



Walton Tract, 1804.



Villages of Salina and Syracuse, 1810.



Village of Syracuse, 1834.



City of Syracuse, 1883.



City of Syracuse, 1944.



Downtown Syracuse, 2004.



Image



IMAGE STUDY

Image is a mental record of an individual's experience of a place. It is formed by using the five senses, experiencing the individual elements of a place and combining them to create a complete image. Elements can, and often do, overlap. In his book, *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch describes the five elements of an urban environment that contribute to its overall image. These elements are districts, nodes, landmarks, paths and edges. All or a portion of a city can be described in these terms and were used in recording the image of the study area.

District

Medium to large sections of a city, having two-dimensional character, which the observer mentally enters 'inside of' and which are recognizable as having some common, identifiable character.

Examples of districts found Downtown include Hanover Square District, Armory Square District and Fayette Park District.

Nodes

Nodes are strategic spots in a city into which the observer can enter and which are intensive points to and from which one is traveling. They may be primary junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths and movements or shifts from one structure to another. There were two types of nodes identified in the study, major and minor nodes. Major Downtown nodes include Columbus Circle and Clinton Square. Minor Downtown nodes identified include Lincoln Plaza and Vietnam and Korean War Memorial Plaza.

Landmarks

Landmarks are another type of point reference. Here, the observer may or may not enter within them. They are physical objects such as important buildings, statues or bridges. Downtown landmarks include the Niagra Mohawk Building, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and City Hall.

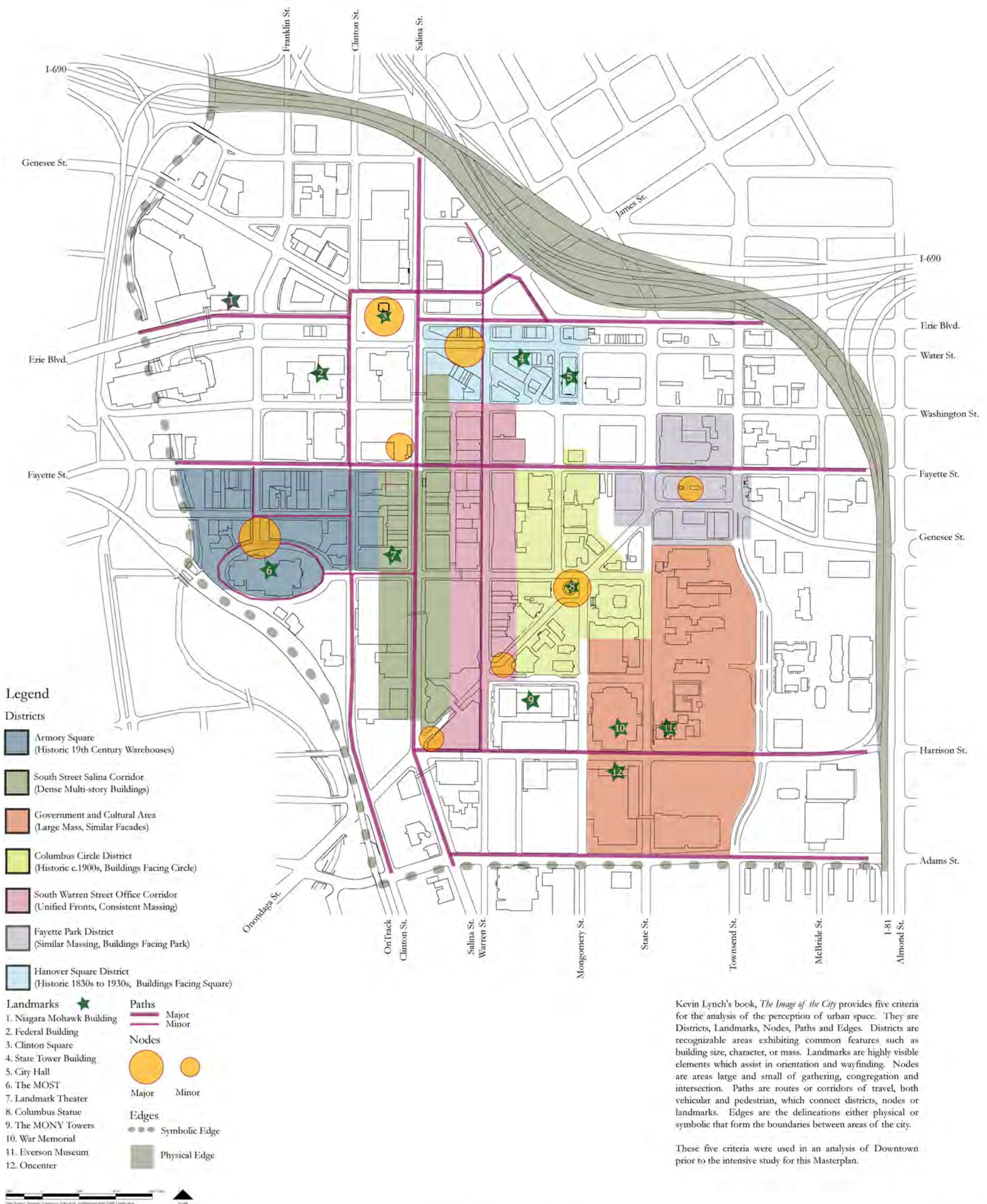
Paths

Paths are channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally or potentially moves, and may be streets, waterways or railroads. Major and minor paths were located in Downtown. Major paths include Salina Street and minor paths include Warren Street.

Edges

Edges are linear elements not used or considered as paths by the observer. Edges may act as barriers and in some cases may be impenetrable. Edges serve to define places with their own set of characteristics that differ from adjacent places. Canals, walls and streets may be considered edges. Two types of edges were identified in Downtown, physical edges and symbolic edges. Physical edges include Interstates 81 and Route 690. Symbolic edges include Adams Street and Onondaga Creek.





Physical Environment



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Layers of social, economic and physical history rest within the existing organizational patterns and individual properties of Downtown. The character of street-block configurations, buildings, structures and open space reflect the rich history of Downtown as an industrial district, transportation hub and regional commercial center. Woven within today's complex physical fabric are tangible indicators of shifts in trade and travel, housing and entertainment, and government policies and programs—all of which had a direct physical impact on the Downtown fabric. Contemporary trends and market forces, such as recent rehabilitation efforts and focused investment in select districts, also have had a substantial effect on the Downtown physical environment. These more current undertakings generally have been independent actions, which created substantial physical changes to specific properties as well as subtler but significant modifications to the overall Downtown composition.

Inventory

In order to fully understand the Downtown physical environment, research was conducted regarding built form, parks and open spaces, vegetation, and circulation. Data was gathered through primary and secondary sources, fieldwork, and interviews with local officials and professionals.

Built Form

Within Downtown there are a variety of districts that contain similar, if not the same, physical and visual characteristics

that are based on three principal components:

- Street-Block Relationships—considering size, form, density and orientation
- Lots—focusing on size and setbacks
- Buildings—with attention to scale, shape, architectural expression and materials.

The majority of the street-block organization is based on a traditional urban grid, with two distinct diagonals in Genesee and Onondaga Streets and the unique oval of East Jefferson Street. This pattern is visually and physically interrupted at the north and east by the elevated highways and at the west by the elevated railroad corridor, Onondaga Creek and West Street arterial, effectively isolating Downtown from the greater city fabric. Blocks lining Erie Boulevard are dramatically narrower than all others Downtown, and take this form from their historic association with the Erie Canal. For the most part the overall street-block pattern has been retained over time, with noted exceptions linked to the extreme intervention of mid-20th century urban renewal policies and programs. The most obvious evidence of these influences, and the greatest deviation from the traditional grid, occurs in the southeastern sector of Downtown, where several small to mid-size blocks were combined by removing streets to create super blocks. One other noticeable change is where the 300 block of East Genesee Street was eliminated, truncating that diagonal corridor by allowing the land to become a building site. Density within this organizational pattern is greatest where the street-block relationships of the 19th and early 20th



century have been retained and little demolition has occurred. Areas of relatively low density correspond to the super blocks.

Most individual lots within Downtown are somewhat narrow and run from street right-of-way to mid-block. These parcels typically have little or no setback along all lot boundaries, contributing to high-density characteristic of most city centers. Some exceptions do exist on lots used for public, quasi-public or religious functions—such as the former Carnegie Library on Montgomery Street or Park Presbyterian Church on South Townsend, which both have very modest setbacks that incorporate limited vegetation and/or site features. Larger parcels generally are associated with mid-20th century development (see above), where earlier buildings have been demolished and several original smaller lots have been combined to accommodate either one structure or surface parking. In such cases, significant setbacks occur at most if not all property boundaries, resulting in substantially lower density such as found at Presidential Plaza, the James M. Hanley Federal Building Complex and along the 400 block of South State Street.

Downtown Syracuse contains an impressive collection of individual buildings. Those from the mid-19th through early 20th century generally are 2-6 stories tall, narrow and cover the lot. Of these the vast majority are typically simple elongated rectilinear masses, with noted exceptions those that occupy triangular parcels or are special use buildings such as churches. A few buildings from this period, such as the State Tower Building and the former New York Telephone operations building at South State and East Fayette Streets, have much larger footprints and are substantially taller. In all cases, however, the principal facades of

these early buildings are highly articulated by fenestration patterns of some regularity and enhanced with architectural features such as elaborate cornice details, decorative window treatments, and distinctive entries and first-floor storefronts. Both older and contemporary signs advertising past and current tenants provide even more visual interest. Almost all these buildings are comprised of brick, stone and/or cast stone. Buildings constructed beginning in the mid-20th century generally range from 10-20 stories but are more box-like in form and usually do not fully cover the lot. The various residential and office towers constructed during this time are substantially taller, but they are still boxy in appearance and set back from the street. These more recent buildings incorporate fenestration patterns that are less articulated than those of the earlier buildings, although the rhythm of bays, windows and/or entries of some are enhanced by minor architectural treatments. In general however, these buildings lack ornamentation, detailing and visual/physical complexity.

There currently are seven districts that can be distinguished within the overall built form of Downtown: Armory Square, Columbus Circle District, Fayette Park District, Government and Cultural Area, Hanover Square, South Salina Street Corridor, and the South Warren Street Office Corridor.

Armory Square encompasses several square blocks along the west boundary of Downtown. Its distinctive identity is derived in large part from the almost uniform use of building materials and treatment of streetscape. The various former industrial, manufacturing and warehouse buildings have similar and complimentary architectural stylistic details, including first floor treatments that continue to offer physical and visual



links between outdoor public space and private building interiors. Blocks within the district continue to be densely built-up, creating a strong sense of enclosure and intimacy along the streets and sidewalks.

The Columbus Circle District is centered on the popular open space of the same name. It is primarily defined by monumental historic buildings set back from the street edge and which form the envelop of the space. Although different in scale, form, architectural details and materials, the diverse yet complimentary character of these buildings combine to form a cohesive composition.

The Fayette Park District is that area surrounding Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park. Buildings in this district also vary in scale, form, details and materials, but unlike the Columbus Circle District, the resulting architectural composition is somewhat disjointed. Rather, it is the strong form and perimeter detailing of the open space that defines this area as an identifiable district.

The Government and Cultural Area is defined by the mix of large-scale building complexes, set back from the street edge and surrounded by open lots used for parking. Buildings have little ornamentation or detail and building materials, although similar, often are used in stark contrast to one another. It is this low density and minimalist approach to building design that sets this area dramatically apart from the majority of Downtown.

Hanover Square, located in the northern section of Downtown, contains a high density and eclectic mix of buildings within a small area. The individual buildings have a variety of complimentary architectural stylistic details, including first

floor treatments that continue to offer physical and visual links between outdoor public space and private building interiors. The uninterrupted lines of building walls make the central open space one of the most enclosed and inviting in Downtown.

The South Salina Street Corridor is characterized by a dense collection of various height buildings, with most having traditional first floor storefronts. Once the center of Downtown retail trade, the individual buildings were and still are outstanding examples of architectural detailing and ornamentation. A nearly continuous building wall defines the extremely wide expanse of the corridor, while a somewhat consistent treatment of the sidewalks lends a degree of definition to the pedestrian environment.

The South Warren Street Office Corridor is a narrow and seemingly constricted district defined largely by opposing walls of moderately tall buildings virtually along its entire length. The individual buildings are a variety of disparate architectural styles, but most do have first floor arrangements that offer some physical and visual links between outdoor public space and private building interiors. The upper level treatment of these buildings is less critical to defining the district, however, as the narrowness of the street and sidewalk make the ground level more critical to overall district image.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space within Downtown include dedicated municipal parkland, federal/state/county public spaces, and privately owned but publicly accessible outdoor space.

Municipal Parks and Open Spaces

The City of Syracuse, Department of Parks, Recreation and Youth Programs classifies Downtown parks as open spaces



of varying size that contain passive recreational, civic, cultural and historical elements. Maintenance of Downtown parks is the responsibility of the Department, which employs two full-time staff as caretakers for these facilities, and funds most capital improvement parks projects. There are approximately three acres of municipal parkland and open space in Downtown, including Armory Square Park, Billings Park, Bruce Park, City Place, Clinton Square, Fayette Fire Fighters Park, Genesee-Townsend Park, Hanover Square, Jefferson Park, Korea-Vietnam Plaza, Lincoln Plaza, Perseverance Park, Pitts Park, St. Mary's (Columbus Circle) and Vanderbilt Park.

Armory Square Park is located within the Armory Square Historic District, bounded by Walton, West Jefferson and Franklin Streets. It was established in 1989 and offers shaded seating, a small lawn area for passive use, and a brick plaza often used for live performances.

Billings Park is located at the intersection of East Adams, South Salina and South Warren Streets. Formerly known as Warren Park, this triangular parcel was established prior to 1841. This small park is named after Roger Billings, the owner of a shop across the street, who in the mid-19th century offered to take care of the landscaping of the park. It contains two memorials located at either end of the park. At the northern end is a statue of an infantryman, in recognition of the soldiers who died during World War I. This monument, "Rock of the Marne", was erected in 1920. At the southern end stands a statue of a Spanish American War soldier, dedicated in 1924 to those who died during that war. The park also contains some vegetation, featuring recently planted trees and lawn area, as well as limited seating.

Bruce Park is located at the intersection of Erie Boulevard East and Montgomery Street, and was established prior to 1934. It is a small space containing a memorial dedicated to the Onondaga Indians. The monument, a large boulder, holds a commemorative plaque recognizing the generosity of the Onondaga toward the early non-native settlers of Syracuse. The monument was added to the park in 1934.

City Place is located in the 200 block of East Genesee Street and was established in the 1980s. A contemporary plaza located between the State Tower Building and City Hall Commons, the plaza features include decorative lighting, seating, tree groupings, planting beds, lawn area and brick paved surfaces. It is used primarily for passive activities.

Clinton Square, located between Salina, Clinton, Genesee and Water Streets, was established in 1804 as a transportation and commercial node adjacent to the Erie Canal, which by 1828 bisected the space. In 1837 it was declared a public market, and in 1899 dedicated as a city park. It was the forecourt of the third Onondaga County Courthouse and was in close proximity to hotels and entertainment venues for much of the 19th century. In the 1910s, the northern portion was modified according to principles of the City Beautiful movement and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument was installed. With the closure and infill of the Canal in 1923, the square was modified to accommodate parking in the southern portion, while the Monument area remained largely ceremonial. In the 1970s it was again altered to include a large contemporary fountain in place of the parking area; and in 1998 plans were initiated to close Erie Boulevard and unite the northern and southern sections. The redesigned square was rededicated in 2002.



Today Clinton Square is the largest municipal downtown park and features the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Jerry Rescue Memorial, reflecting pool, seating, lawn and paved areas, trees, decorative lighting, a kiosk and banners. In the winter months, a temporary skating rink replaces the pool and additional portable furnishings are installed.

Fayette Fire Fighters Park is located between East Fayette, East Genesee, South Townsend and South State Streets. Originally established as Center Park in 1834 and renamed Fayette Park in 1842, it was at the center of a residential district and surrounded by the homes of notable Syracusans. In 1871 John Crouse installed two statues and a fountain in the park. In 1905 the White Memorial was installed at the South State Street entrance in honor of Hamilton S. White, who lost his life fighting a fire. In 1939 the Firefighters Memorial was added at the South Townsend entry, mirroring the White Memorial. By the mid-20th century commercial buildings of various sizes had replaced all but one of the residential buildings around the park, and the park itself was simplified in terms of plantings and pathways. By the late 20th century, the name was again changed to Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park, in memory of the firefighters whose lives were lost in a 1939 fire on East Genesee Street. Since that time a number of contemporary memorials have been added to the park in honor of other fire fighters. These elements are in addition to the earlier memorials, the central and only remaining historic fountain, large lawn panels, perimeter decorative fence and circular path, and trees and shrubs.

Genesee-Townsend Park is located directly adjacent to Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park, on the corner of East Genesee and South Townsend Streets. It

was created in 1969 as part of the urban renewal project encompassing several former neighborhood blocks. The area is primarily open lawn containing a small grouping of trees and limited seating.

Hanover Square is located within the Hanover Historic District, at the intersection of East Genesee, East Water and Warren Streets. The space was established in 1825, and like Clinton Square was strongly tied to activities associated with the Erie Canal, which abutted the rear elevation of the buildings along the north side of the square. Its generally triangular form was unadorned during this early period, as the space was used for commercial activity. By the end of the 19th century, however, plantings were installed, giving the space a more formal appearance. During World War I a public comfort station was added. By the 1970s the square and the surrounding buildings had experienced a significant degree of decline and disinvestments and both were perceived by some members of the community as expendable. After great public debate, however, it was agreed that the area instead was worthy of retention and improvement. As part of that redevelopment, East Genesee Street was closed to traffic and the public park space was extended to the facades of the buildings lining the south side of the square. A contemporary water fountain, amphitheater-like seating, benches, small lawn areas and trees, large paved space and decorative lights were installed. All these features remain today.

Jefferson Park, located on the eastern end of the Jefferson Street oval, was originally laid out in 1848 when the mill pond was filled. It later was incorporated into the grounds of the New York State Armory. Today this gently sloping open lawn area includes a central walk, which provides access to the eastern portion of the



former armory complex that now houses the MOST.

Korea-Viet Nam Wars Memorial is located on the area created by the realignment of the East Onondaga and South Warren Streets intersection. This small paved space is dominated by the memorial piece itself, but also contains two flagpoles.

Lincoln Plaza is located on the corner of South Salina and West Fayette Streets, contiguous to the Centro central hub and One Lincoln Center. It was created as a result of the urban renewal project that replaced the mixed-use late 19th and early 20th century buildings on the block with the contemporary office tower, and is effectively the setback for the building. The plaza is paved and includes contemporary sculptures and two tree groupings with seating.

Perseverance Park, adjacent to Lincoln Plaza, is located on the corner of South Salina and West Washington Streets. Like Lincoln Plaza, it is heavily used by mass transit riders due to its proximity to the central Centro hub. In contrast, however, it contains a significant amount of lawn area and seating. The park is further distinguished by freestanding artistic columns and trees.

Pitts Park is bounded by Erie Boulevard East, Montgomery and East Water Streets, across from the Erie Canal Museum. It is a small public space that contains limited plants, lawn and some seating.

St. Mary's (Columbus) Circle is located contiguous to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and is bounded by East Jefferson, East Onondaga and Montgomery Streets. The area was designated as Library Circle in 1895, and

renamed St. Mary's Circle following construction of the Cathedral. During the 19th century, the circle was dedicated as a city park. In the 1930s the space was substantially modified to accommodate a large statue of Christopher Columbus, mounted on an intricately designed obelisk and surrounded by a reflecting pool. By the 1970s, these features were dramatically altered when traffic was removed from the west side of the circle and the space was physically extended to the cathedral building façade. A significant amount of brick and concrete paved area was added, along with some seating and a small grouping of trees. These features were retained when the space was returned to its 1930s appearance, and the statue, obelisk and fountain were restored to the original Dwight James Baum design.

Vanderbilt Square is located on East Washington Street between North Salina and North Warren Streets on the site of the original Vanderbilt Train Station, which served Downtown until 1836. The square was established as a public space in 1869 and in the mid-20th century was designated as a city park. Despite its name, the square is best described as an extension of the sidewalk along the southern side of the block and includes street tree plantings, seating, and brick pavers.

Federal, State and County Public Spaces

There are several open spaces Downtown that are located on property owned by federal, state or county government, which are responsible for the maintenance and capital improvements of their respective holdings. These spaces, which accommodate public use through passive recreation and/or special events, include James M. Hanley Federal Building Plaza, New York State Office Building Grounds,



Community Plaza, Onondaga County Courthouse Plaza, and the Erie Canal Museum Outdoor Exhibit Plaza.

The James M. Hanley Federal Building Plaza is a contemporary open space that contains smaller sub-spaces defined largely by building components. Overall it provides broad expanses of unadorned and unfurnished paved areas. The balance of the open area contains lawn, trees and shrubs, which occupy the substantial setbacks along the north, south and west property lines. The maintenance and management of this property is the sole responsibility of the US Office of General Services.

The main entrance of the New York State Office Building, located on East Washington Street, is flanked by small lawn areas. Each contains several large trees and minimal seating. The maintenance and management of this property is the sole responsibility of the State of New York.

Community Plaza, located on South State Street adjacent to the Everson Museum, is situated on top of a sub-surface public parking garage. The principal feature is a contemporary pool with fountains. The largely open and paved space also contains some scattered trees, planting beds and seating. The maintenance and management of this property is the sole responsibility of Onondaga County.

The Onondaga County Courthouse Plaza, located on the abandoned right-of-way of Cedar Street, lies between the courthouse and the Civic Center. This multiple-level, largely paved space contains information kiosks, seating and some seasonal vegetation. The maintenance and management of this property is the sole responsibility of Onondaga County.

The Erie Canal Museum Outdoor Exhibit Plaza occupies the space that once served as the basin for the Erie Canal Weighlock Building. No longer an open prism, the area contains an exhibit that interprets how canal boats approached the Weighlock. The maintenance and management of this property is shared by Onondaga County, which owns the property, and the Erie Canal Museum, which operates the facility.

Privately Owned Outdoor Space

In addition to publicly owned open space, Downtown contains a number of privately owned and managed outdoor areas that are perceived as public areas. These spaces accommodate a range of uses, albeit generally related to functions associated with the adjacent buildings. The most notable of these private outdoor spaces include Niagara Mohawk Building Grounds, Clinton Exchange Plaza, Blue Cross Blue Shield Building Plaza, Walton Courts, AT&T Building Court, Plymouth Church Churchyard, Hotel Syracuse Plazas, Clinton Plaza, Cathedral of Immaculate Conception Courtyard, Cathedral School Playground, Hamilton White House Yard and the Gridley Building Plaza.

Vegetation

Vegetation in Downtown includes street trees, park and open space plantings, screening along surface parking lots, and naturalized areas along Onondaga Creek and the New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad.

Street Trees

According to the Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan, 4.5% of Downtown has tree coverage, with South Salina, South Warren and Montgomery Streets having the fewest number of trees. Honey



Locust comprise 49% of the street tree population, but other species include *Pyrus calleryana* (Callery pear), *Ginkgo biloba*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* (green ash), and *Platanus x acerifolia* (London planetree). Each of these species present routine maintenance or long-term concerns. For example, green ash is susceptible to disease, London planetree suffers from effects due to root growth and Callery pear has delicate twigs that make it vulnerable to damage.

Street cleaning, snow and ice removal, and tree grate maintenance all impact the health and condition of the trees. Diseases, microclimate conditions, soil compaction and other sub-surface conditions further reduce tree quality. Downtown street tree conditions are characterized as:

Good.....	70.9%
Fair.....	24.1%
Poor.....	4.2%
Dead.....	0.8%

The City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation and Youth Programs and the Downtown Committee Inc. share maintenance of the Downtown street tree population.

Park and Open Space Plantings

As noted above, municipal parks, other publicly owned spaces and private outdoor areas contain a variety of vegetation. In addition to trees, which are represented by the species noted above as well as a few others, woody shrubs and herbaceous materials are present. Annuals, either in beds or planters, are seasonal plantings that expand the vegetation composition found in Downtown. Vegetation maintenance is the responsibility of respective property owners, although supplemental maintenance for some public areas is

provided through contractual services provided through the Downtown Committee, Inc. Vegetation in parks and other open spaces is generally in fair condition.

Screening

Some, but not all, surface parking lots incorporate vegetation as a perimeter screen or visual buffer, as do some interstate access/egress ramps and associated underpass areas. These plantings can be solely woody shrubs or also include trees. Maintenance of this vegetation is the responsibility of the property owners; such vegetation is generally in fair to poor condition.

Onondaga Creek Corridor

The Onondaga Creek corridor defines, in part, the western boundary of Downtown. The entire length of the creek within the city boundaries has been the subject of several studies, with most recognizing that the area has high recreational and environmental potential. One proposal, the Onondaga Creek Walk, has been partially implemented just north of Downtown, in Franklin Square. This section, as well as the proposed Downtown section, incorporates only the east side of the corridor. This linear, naturalized area is characterized by volunteer species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous materials along banks that are eroding in various locations.

New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad Right-of-Way

The New York Susquehanna & Western Railroad provides Syracuse with a commercial rail link to New York City and Canada. Although used regularly for freight, and less frequently for limited passenger service (see below), the corridor supports a substantial amount of naturalized vegetation characterized by volunteer species of trees, shrubs and



herbaceous materials. Minor maintenance, mostly in the form of severe sheering and removal, is undertaken periodically by the railroad company.

Circulation

Circulation Downtown includes the combined patterns of vehicular and pedestrian movement, as well as those physical features that support motorists, pedestrians and mass transit riders. Information was collected regarding vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation and mass transit.

Vehicular Circulation

Vehicular circulation inventory included 3 related elements: traffic patterns, traffic volume, and parking.

Traffic patterns--The majority of Downtown streets accommodate two-way traffic; however, there are several one-way streets:

- Adams Street eastbound, State Street to Almond Street
- Clinton Street southbound, 81 South Exit 19 to Adams Street
- Erie Boulevard eastbound, Salina Street to Montgomery Street
- Erie Boulevard westbound, Clinton Street to Franklin Street
- Harrison Street westbound, Almond Street to Onondaga Street
- Jefferson Street eastbound, Montgomery Street to State Street
- Madison Street eastbound, Onondaga Street to State Street
- Market Street northbound, Washington Street to Water Street
- Montgomery Street southbound, Erie Boulevard to Adams Street
- Onondaga Street northbound, Salina Street to Warren Street
- Onondaga Street southbound, State Street to Warren Street.

- Warren Street northbound, Adams Street to Willow Street
- Water Street eastbound, Franklin Street to Montgomery Street
- West Street Arterial, Herald Place Exit eastbound to Franklin Street

Interstate routes 81 and 690 provide direct links between Downtown and the regional transportation system. An egress ramp for I-81 North is located at Adams/Almond Streets, and an access ramp is at Harrison/Almond Streets. A second access ramp for I-81 North is just north of Downtown at Pearl Street. Egress ramps for I- 81 South are located at Franklin/West, Salina, Clinton and Harrison/Almond Streets, and an access ramp is at Adams/Almond Streets. Egress from I-690 East is provided at West Genesee Street, and an access ramp is at McBride Street. An egress ramp from I-690 West is located at Townsend Street, and an access ramp is at Erie Boulevard/West Street.

Downtown streets are comprised of asphalt pavement with a limited number of blocks having decorative paving. Pavement conditions range from good to poor, with those rated as good having limited deterioration (e.g. potholes, cracking and warping) while those rated poor having significant damage. All streets are maintained by the City of Syracuse Department of Public Works with supplemental maintenance, such as debris pick-up, addressed through contractual services secured by the Downtown Committee, Inc. Traffic on Downtown streets is controlled primarily by a synchronized traffic signal system, although several intersections have 4- or 2-way STOP signs.

Traffic Volumes--Traffic volume information was obtained from the 2000-



2003 traffic study by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council. This study documents traffic counts from 39 locations throughout Downtown and its immediate surroundings and computations for yearly outputs of all appropriate directions. From these 39 street locations, 8 were identified as important Downtown locations with relatively high traffic volumes. The highest TVR AADT (Traffic Volume Report Annual Average Daily Traffic) of these 8 locations was 12,400 cars, documented from a recorder on West Genesee Street between Franklin and West Streets.

Parking--Approximately 60% of the available land area in Downtown is dedicated to parking, offering approximately 22,000 off-street spaces. Of that total, almost 12,900 are in garages open to the public. Monthly permit parking is available in most garages and surface lots. According to a late 1990s Downtown parking lot evaluation conducted by TNT Sector 1, only one of the total 125 surface lots received the highest (100%) rating. The evaluation criteria are based on appearance, functionality, security controls, and other features; only 56 lots scored above 50%.

In addition to garages and surface lots, there are approximately 900 on-street spaces, with most regulated by parking meters. Other curbside locations provided limited parking for deliveries or loading, and many streets include designated HC accessible spots.

Pedestrian Circulation

Inventory of pedestrian circulation in Downtown included safety measures, street furnishings (lights, benches, trash receptacles, newspaper dispensers, bike racks, kiosks, etc.), pavement and sky

bridges. Although pedestrian volume data was not collected, it can be assumed that most of the major vehicular corridors within the Downtown core support the greatest number of pedestrians.

Safety Measures--Almost all Downtown intersections provide marked pedestrian crosswalks and ADA compliant curb cuts. Intersections within the core also include mechanized pedestrian crossing signals.

Street Furnishings--The type, design and materials of street furnishings vary throughout Downtown, with the most consistent installation found within the core on portions of Salina, Clinton, Montgomery, Warren, Water, Washington, Fayette, Walton, Franklin and Jefferson Streets. These corridors were improved as part of a major streetscape project initiated in the 1990s and include decorative streetlights, kiosks and related signage, benches, trash receptacles, newspaper dispensers, and telephone booths. Other corridors include similar furnishings, but not executed in the same style or materials.

Pavement--Most Downtown sidewalks are concrete with a simple scoring pattern. Those corridors included in the 1990s improvement project (see above) also have multiple-color decorative pavement in one of several related patterns. The Armory Square Historic District, portions of sidewalks along Onondaga and Genesee Streets, and sidewalks near Clinton Square also include decorative paving, however each is different from the others as well as from the patterns noted within the core.

Sky Bridges--There are seven sky bridges Downtown connecting:



- 500 South Salina Street Office Building to Hotel Syracuse Parking Garage (not in use)
- Niagara Mohawk Building to Ni-MO Parking Garage (in use)
- Atrium to Vanderbilt Plaza (not in use)
- HSBC Building Parking Lot to the Former Dey’s Building (in use)
- HSBC Building Parking Lot to Jefferson Center
- Former Sibley’s Department Store Building to the Galleries of Syracuse (not in use),
- Hotel Syracuse to The Hotel Syracuse Annex (in use)
- Hotel Syracuse to Hotel Syracuse Parking Garage (not in use)
- Onondaga County Convention Center to Convention Center Parking Garage (in use)

Mass Transit

There are two main sources of public transportation that serve Downtown: the Centro bus system and the OnTrack train system.

Centro is the Syracuse metropolitan area bus system, serving approximately 25,000 riders per day system-wide. Roughly 20,000 of these passengers pass through the main Fayette/Salina Streets hub, where anywhere from 18-25 busses routinely stop. There are 37 Centro routes, all of which depart or arrive from the hub. Centro has fourteen Park ‘N’ Ride mostly suburban locations where patrons can park their cars and take advantage of Centro service. Centro users also can park at a designated Centro Parking lot, four of which are along Almond Street from Genesee Street to Erie Boulevard. By using this service, monthly patrons are entitled to free bus service between the designated lots and Downtown locations at any time. Centro

also offers special event services to Carrier Dome events, OnCenter conventions, and SkyChiefs baseball games.

The hub at Fayette and Salina Streets provides basic schedule information and open-air shelter for Centro riders. The current size and design of the hub, however, does not adequately accommodate the volume of users at peak hours and results in conflicts between waiting riders and Downtown pedestrians. Most Downtown intersections serve as Centro stops, although few provide any rider amenities, such as schedule information, shelters or seating.

OnTrack provides limited passenger rail service within the Syracuse metropolitan area, currently offering seven stops:

- Carousel Center
- Armory Square
- Syracuse University
- Colvin Street
- Rock Cut Road
- Jamesville
- Jamesville Beach

Ontrack is only available from Wednesday-Sunday, with hourly pickups at its Carousel Center, Armory Square and Syracuse University stops. The Colvin Street, Rock Cut Road, Jamesville and Jamesville Beach stops are “flag stops”, which are used only for special events. A single passenger car is available for regularly scheduled trips, with additional cars provided on higher-volume days. Riders can pay as they board the train, or tokens can be purchased at the main station located in Armory Square. Riders boarding at the station can park in the Trolley Lot, west of the elevated railroad, or use several other lots and garages in the area, along with metered on-street parking. Like Centro, OnTrack also offers



service to special events, such as those at the Carrier Dome.

Analysis

Physical Environment

Problems

1. Visual and physical separation of Downtown from its surrounding context.

The elevated highway and railroad corridors and the West Street arterial are substantial constructed features that create strong physical boundaries and limit views between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. They alter the traditional organizational grid of the city center, resulting in awkward street-block patterns and lot configurations that make the transition between Downtown and its surroundings less than memorable.

2. Erosion of traditional center city density.

Since the mid-20th century, substantial demolition has greatly reduced the critical mass of built form traditionally associated with a vibrant downtown. In some cases, collections of contiguous buildings have been replaced by one large structure or surface parking, effectively eliminating the overall physical and visual interest of some Downtown districts. In other cases, district character has been severely diminished by razing even only one building.

3. Lack of appreciation for historic and older building stock.

While there is a general public acknowledgement that many Downtown buildings are historically or culturally significant, there is no strong commitment to retaining and re-using existing buildings. Rather, indiscriminate demolition of viable buildings occurs

frequently. In addition, most older and many historic buildings are the subject of renovation work that does not respect original architectural character or features. Both demolition and misguided alterations weaken the physical composition of Downtown and contribute to an image that is less than positive.

4. Failure to integrate Downtown buildings with street level activities.

Storefronts of many Downtown buildings have been eliminated or filled-in, substantially reducing the visual and physical connections between the public sidewalks and building interiors that are so necessary to a positive downtown experience. In addition, the setbacks of many contemporary buildings fail to offer such an opportunity by being so far removed from pedestrian traffic. And in the case of parking structures, vehicular requirements are prioritized rather than overall visual image and pedestrian experience.

5. Limited use of history in park and open space design or interpretative programming.

Few Downtown parks and open spaces effectively incorporate either historic features and/or informational or education displays. The rich and interesting history of these places, and Downtown as a whole, is not being maximized to enhance passive recreation or support heritage tourism.

6. Lack of connections between Downtown municipal parks and open spaces and citywide system.

Although the small population of Downtown residents has a number of options for both passive and active recreation, there is no convenient green connection to other city parks and open spaces where additional opportunities are offered.



7. *Lack of diversity in street trees species.*

Honey Locust comprises almost 50% of the Downtown street tree population, providing limited variety in texture and form and presenting the potential for catastrophic loss due to disease or blight. In addition, the other dominant species exhibit signs of stress, which also might result in decline and eventually loss.

8. *Insufficient maintenance of Downtown parks, open spaces and vegetation.*

Given the volume of users, routine functions and special circumstances associated with Downtown, the existing parks, open spaces and street trees exhibit a high degree of deterioration and damage. Current public and private efforts fail to adequately meet daily, seasonal and cyclical needs.

9. *Confusing traffic patterns.*

Incremental changes to traffic patterns have led to disjointed one-way pairs, truncated one-way routes, and opposing one-way flows on the same corridor. These patterns are confusing and disorienting to visitors and create frustration for Downtown workers and residents. Coupled with high volumes during peak hours, current traffic patterns contribute the perception that it is difficult to drive to, through and from Downtown.

10. *Perception that there is a lack of safe, convenient parking.*

Although nearly 60% of Downtown is dedicated in whole or part to parking, there is a widespread perception that there is insufficient parking available for residents, workers and visitors. This view is derived in large part from parking opportunities associated with suburban office parks and retail malls. Since the mid-20th century, citizens frequenting these developments have been conditioned to expect parking within view

of—but not necessarily in close proximity to—their ultimate destination, something that is not always possible or desirable in a downtown.

11. *Lack of enforcement of parking regulations.*

Both on-street and off-street parking regulations are not routinely and consistently enforced. Failing to address illegal on-street parking contributes to traffic congestion and further reinforces the perception that Downtown lacks convenient, available parking. In addition, when owners of off-street lots are allowed to forgo required screening, install non-compliant signs or defer maintenance, unkempt lots become visually dominant and contribute to a negative Downtown image.

12. *Inconsistent and less than optimum pedestrian environment.*

Although most Downtown corridors provide passable sidewalks and some amenities, the experience for pedestrians varies. Within the core of Downtown, a greater variety of street furnishings offers a somewhat comfortable and pleasant experience. Outside of this area, however, streetscape conditions do not adequately address pedestrian needs. The situation is exacerbated along most surface parking lots and garages, where vehicular requirements are given precedent over the quality of the pedestrian experience.

13. *Insufficient maintenance of Downtown streets and sidewalks.*

Given the volume of users, routine functions and special circumstances associated with Downtown, the streets and sidewalks exhibit a high degree of deterioration and damage. Current public and private efforts fail to adequately meet daily, seasonal and cyclical needs.



14. Inefficient Centro Hub.

The traditional Downtown transfer point for the Centro system generates a significant amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, which creates conflicts with general circulation patterns. The volume of buses arriving and departing the hub interrupts the already heavy traffic volumes on South Salina and Fayette Streets. Similarly, the large number of Centro riders waiting for scheduled buses stymies the high amount of pedestrians passing through this intersection. In addition the amount of available streetscape space makes it difficult, if not impossible, to provide adequate shelter for Centro users as well as accommodate pedestrians.

15. Lack of user amenities at Centro stops.

While Downtown stops are identified with the Centro logo, most do not provide any other user amenities, such as shelters, seating or schedule information. Lack of these elements might not impact user numbers, but it does decrease system visibility within Downtown.

16. Lack of comprehensive Downtown information sign system.

There is no single information sign system regarding Downtown districts, key places or significant properties. There are a number of partial, single-purpose systems, which together create clutter and confusion rather than clear direction and a positive image. None of these systems adequately address the needs of motorists and pedestrians, nor does any system consider the transition from initial arrival to final destination.

17. Lack of distinct Downtown gateways.

Although arrival to and departure from Downtown is in large part acknowledged as one travels under the elevated highways or railroad, this experience fails to instill a positive and memorable image of the city

center. The lack of comprehensive signage or other notable temporary or permanent features further detracts from one's sense of entering or leaving the heart of the city.

Opportunities

1. Strengthen physical and visual links between Downtown and its context.

By improving the physical connections between the city center and its surrounding neighborhoods, Downtown will be more readily viewed as integral to the larger community. Physical elements and traditional views can be enhanced to create links rather than boundaries.

2. Re-establish traditional density through in-fill construction.

Constructing new buildings on already open lots will eliminate the visual emptiness that such stark parcels present, as well as restore the sense of vibrancy and success that comes with higher density development. In addition, carefully planned in-fill construction can serve to retain or re-establish the traditional organizational patterns of Downtown.

3. Retain and reuse existing significant and noteworthy building stock.

Emphasizing the reuse of existing buildings as critical to improving Downtown image will decrease reliance on demolition as a primary revitalization mechanism and reinforce the fact that older buildings can adequately meet contemporary needs. It also will reinforce the importance of retaining the high concentration of historically significant properties that make Downtown so unique.

4. Enhance existing parks and open spaces.



The current Downtown parks and open spaces can be augmented through the addition of new features, or the substantial improvement of existing elements, that relate to Downtown history. They also can be enhanced through a coordinated management and maintenance program, which will ensure pleasant and safe user experiences.

5. Improve Downtown vegetation management and maintenance.

The aesthetic and environmental benefits of vegetation within Downtown can be greatly increased through comprehensive management and maintenance.

Appropriate practices implemented by trained and experienced individuals will insure that any initial investment will be maximized over time.

6. Improve overall vehicular circulation.

Ease of travel to, through and from Downtown is essential to fostering a positive image of the city center.

Downtown residents, workers and visitors must reach their respective destinations with minimal confusion and through limited congestion. Modest modifications to existing patterns can result in safer and more convenient downtown circulation.

7. Address parking comprehensively.

The complexity of Downtown parking can best be addressed through comprehensive efforts. Development, management and maintenance issues must be considered in concert in order to insure a safe and adequate supply of spaces that meet daily and special events needs. Such an approach also is necessary to diffuse the perception that Downtown does not and cannot provide adequate parking for its diverse users.

8. Enrich the pedestrian experience.

The most intimate exposure to Downtown arguably comes when one is a

pedestrian. A safe, clean, comfortable and enjoyable pedestrian environment will engender a strong positive image of the city center. Introducing a comprehensive streetscape program for the entire Downtown, including street furnishings that respond to user needs, and capitalizing on the high concentration of historical references that are present, will insure a more memorable pedestrian experience.

9. Promote improved Centro services in Downtown.

The already successful Centro service to and through Downtown can be greatly enhanced by the redesign of its central hub and increase of general user amenities. In turn, riders' impression of Downtown will likewise be improved, as their travels to and through Downtown occur with greater ease.

10. Implement a comprehensive Downtown signage system.

A multi-tiered signage system specific to Downtown can be used to aid local citizens as well as visitors in locating specific districts, key locations and significant properties. It also can be a principal component in an improved streetscape and central to establishing a unique image for Downtown.

11. Create distinctive gateways to Downtown.

Developing highly recognizable gateways along the various downtown boundaries can emphasize the importance of Downtown to the balance of the city and the larger metropolitan region. By using a mix of temporary and permanent elements, these entries and exits provide both the pedestrian and motorist with lasting images that are unique to experiencing Downtown.



Constraints

1. Established street-block patterns.

Organizational patterns already exist within Downtown and have evolved throughout the city's growth. New development will need to consider existing land use patterns and physical framework that comprise Downtown.

2. Interstates 81 and 690.

These elevated highways represent substantial public investment in the regional transportation network. In light of the multi-year, multi-billion dollar effort to remove comparable elevated

corridors in Boston, it is not likely that Syracuse, or any other community, will be able to undertake similar work.

3. Sub-surface utilities.

Below grade conditions throughout Downtown consist of sanitary and storm sewer systems, telecommunications lines and electric service. Elimination and/or re-routing of substantial portions of these features might be physically and technologically possible; however, it is not likely that the time and cost necessary to substantially improve conditions will be justified.

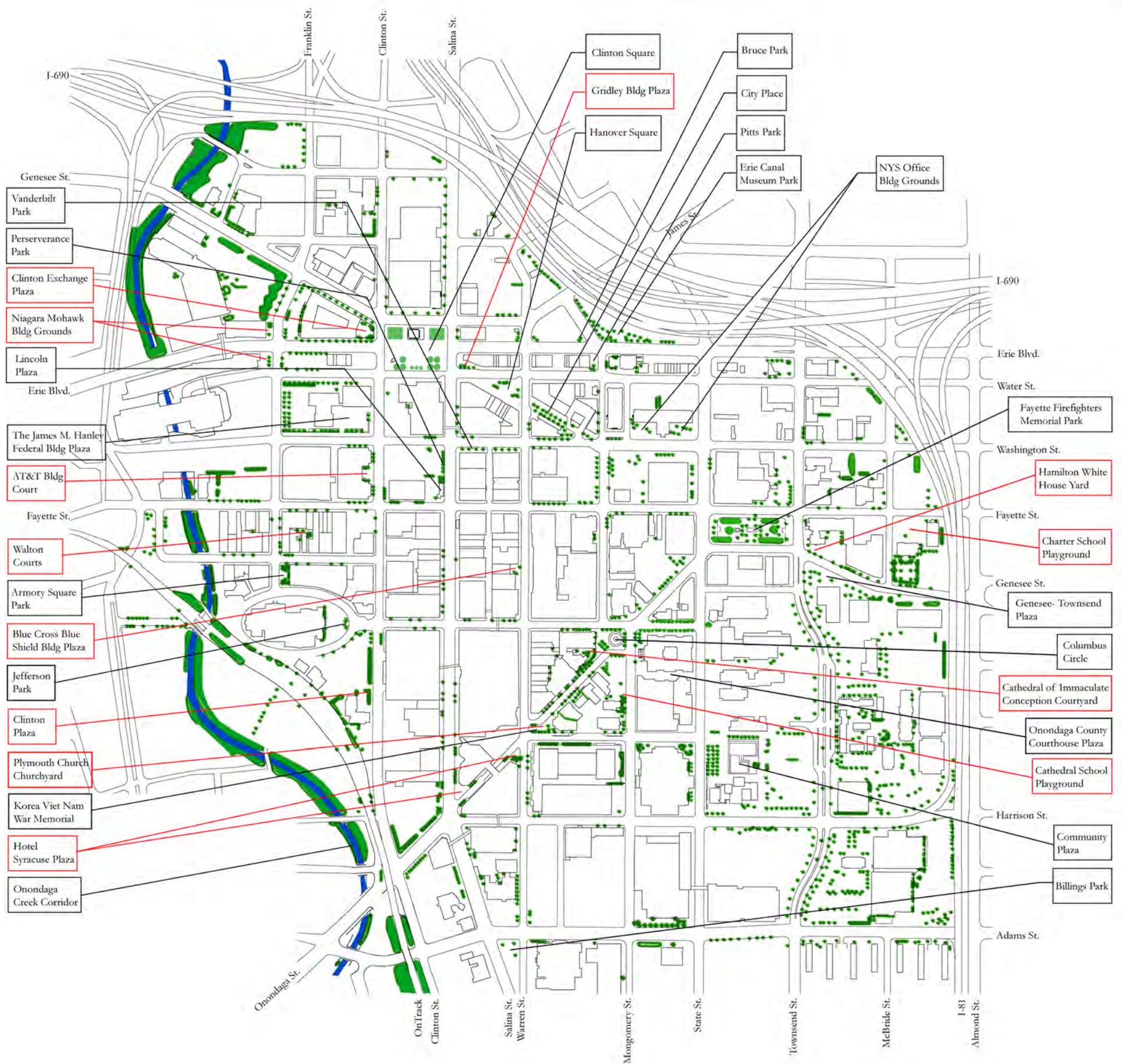




Legend

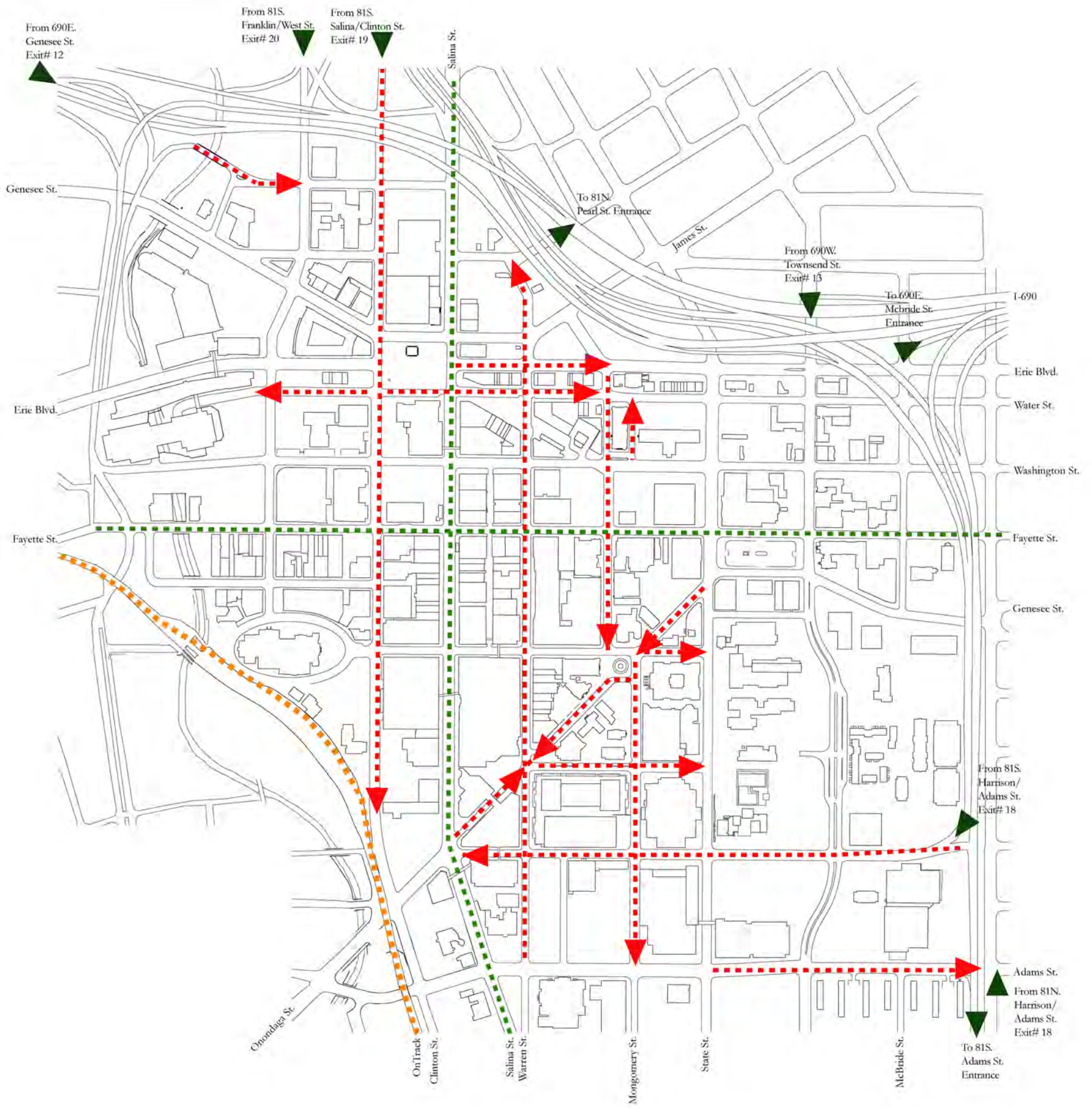
- Mass
- Space





- Legend**
- Vegetation
 - Public Parks & Open Space
 - Private Open Space





Legend

-  Interstate Access / Exits
-  Major Bus Route
-  On-Track Route
-  One-Way Street





Legend

-  Parking Meters
-  Parking Lots
-  Parking Garages





- Legend**
- Special Sidewalk Paving Pattern
 - Cobra Light Standards
 - Decorative Light Standards
 - Benches



Faculty of Landscape Architecture

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Street Amenities

City of Syracuse Downtown Master Plan



Socio-Cultural Factors



SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Socio-cultural factors, such as private groups and organizations, public services, and community and economic development programs respond to peoples' needs, interests and associations. Their productive contributions to Downtown vitality provide a powerful vehicle for the articulation and realization of shared goals. Private groups, alone and in conjunction with one another, form an opportune basis for an individual to participate in transforming the Downtown experience. Public services provided by the municipality, as well as other levels of government, further enhance the quality of life. And community and economic programs support existing and new development. In concert these are key factors in realizing positive change in Downtown.

Socio-cultural factors researched included Private Organizations, Cultural Organizations and Facilities, Public Services, Downtown Events, and Community and Economic Development Programs. Additionally, zoning, land use and retail and office occupancy were researched. Data was gathered through primary and secondary sources, as well as through interviews with local officials and professionals.

INVENTORY

Private Organizations

Private organizations involved in Downtown issues are associations of people concerned with improving the quality of life and business environment of Downtown. These groups are private

not-for-profit organizations that might be funded in whole or part from government sources; some but not all are incorporated. Some of these groups deal with issues such as economic development, community organizing, planning, visioning and coalition building.

The Downtown Committee, Inc.

The Downtown Committee, located in the State Tower Building, is a not-for-profit organization committed to improving Downtown's image, strengthening its economic base, and increasing its attractiveness. It is funded through the Special Assessment Tax (a supplemental tax for additional service) levied on all property owners, except religious properties, within the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID). The Downtown Committee coordinates special projects that help initiate or promote residential, retail and commercial development. It coordinates marketing efforts for events, businesses and Downtown as a whole. In addition, the Downtown Committee has developed an environmental maintenance program to upgrade the Downtown physical environment with the goal of providing a safe and secure environment for residents, businesses, employees and visitors. The organization also provides daily security patrol officers and coordinates with the Syracuse Police Department mobile unit.

Metropolitan Development Association (MDA) of Syracuse and CNY

Established in 1959, the MDA is a not-for-profit planning, research and development organization serving Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Cortland, and Oswego counties. Located in the State Tower Building, the MDA is one of the region's principal economic development, planning and research



groups. It works to facilitate key development projects by providing resources to interested parties. Through the Metropolitan Development Foundation (MDF), the MDA is able to facilitate the transfer and redevelopment of properties, such as the former federal post office and court facility (Clinton Exchange), former NYS Armory (The MOST) and former Jefferson-Clinton Hotel (Hawthorne Suites).

Chamber of Commerce

With offices at 527 South Salina, the Chamber of Commerce seeks to foster an economic climate that enhances growth, prosperity and quality of life for all who live and work in greater Syracuse. With roughly 2200 members the organization provides services that businesses alone cannot afford, including networking, business and government cooperation, and lobbying in Albany. The Chamber shows a special interest in Downtown as the historic heart of the region's commercial activity. This interest is expressed in the sponsorship and support of projects such as the NASA incubator currently under construction behind the MONY Towers.

Armory Square Association

The Armory Square Association is a not-for-profit corporation committed to the continued growth and improvement of the Armory Square neighborhood, generally defined by West Fayette Street on the north, South Clinton Street on the east, West Jefferson Street on the south, and Onondaga Creek and the railroad on the west. It is an organization of property and business owners (voting members) and the general community (non-voting), which meets regularly to address problems and opportunities regarding promoting, protecting and revitalizing the district. The Association also hosts events, engages in cooperative promotions, and

presents awards celebrating achievement in revitalization Downtown.

Hanover Square Association

The Association was formed as a neighborhood revitalization organization in the 1990s. Its work focuses on promoting development of apartment and condominium residences, first floor retail and restaurants, maintenance issues, and other common needs within Hanover Square. The Association continues to work with residents, business owners, developers and city government to further the revitalization of historic Hanover Square.

Downtown East Business Association (DEBA)

DEBA advocates for businesses in the northeast corner of Downtown, symbolically centered at the historic Fayette Park, extending to I-81 to the east and I-690 to the north. It actively petitions the city for services and infrastructure improvements in the area. The group is loosely structured, charges no membership dues, and currently has a membership of 40 area business and property owners whose principal concerns involve parking, safety and security, and streetscape improvements.

Forging Our Community's United Strength (FOCUS)

FOCUS is a citizen-driven community organization that serves the people of Syracuse, as well as outlying communities, by developing visioning statements and recommendations for achieving stated goals. FOCUS works with other organizations, as well as city government, to bring about changes in direct response to the goals generated by the group's participatory process. FOCUS is a key force behind the initiative for establishing the Cultural District in Downtown.



Cultural Organizations and Facilities

Cultural organizations Downtown include groups primarily involved in the promotion, exhibition, facilitation and celebration of diverse local, regional and national cultural expressions. Through art, music, dance, theater, science and history, the cultural organizations Downtown build a sense of community and attachment to place. The concentration of cultural opportunities establishes Downtown as the region's cultural core and forges connections between Downtown and a broader cultural context. The convergence of physical cultural heritage (as expressed through architecture and public spaces) with rich cultural programming makes for unique and authentic experiences not found elsewhere.

Cultural Resource Council

Located in the John H. Mulroy Civic Center, the Cultural Resource Council is a not-for profit organization dedicated to providing services for the cultural arts community of the Syracuse metropolitan region. Services include the disbursement of grants to local arts and cultural groups, and the online publishing of calendars of events, opportunities in the arts, and portfolios of artists' work. The Council also organizes the Cultural Coalition, a collective of area arts and cultural organizations that through its monthly meetings creates links and cooperation among participating groups.

John H. Mulroy Civic Center

The John H. Mulroy Civic Center at OnCenter is located at 411 Montgomery Street, and houses three distinct theaters: the 2,117-seat Crouse Theater, 463-seat Carrier Theater and the 150-seat Bevard Studio. Annual visitation for 2003 was estimated at 300,000, a 10% decline from

the previous year. The Civic Center is one of three venues that form the Onondaga County OnCenter complex. The total number of annual visitors last year for all three venues was an estimated 900,000.

Onondaga County Convention Center

With over 99,000 square-feet of available space, the Onondaga County Convention Center at OnCenter is host to a wide variety of conventions. Within the Convention Center is the Exhibition Hall, featuring over 350 10' x 10' exhibition booths that can be configured for specific audiences and events (theater, banquet, classroom-style, etc.). The Convention Center connects to a 1,000 car-parking garage through an enclosed second-floor walkway.

Onondaga County War Memorial

The Onondaga County War Memorial at OnCenter is home to the Syracuse Crunch Hockey team, and host to numerous large-scale events. The Memorial includes an Exhibition Hall with a 2,400 seating capacity, a 350-seat Assembly Hall, and a number of small-scale meeting rooms. The building offers a number of exhibitions that commemorate Onondaga County citizens who served in the US military, including an honor roll of over 62,000 veterans. Local veterans conduct tours on a regular basis.

The Syracuse Symphony (SSO)

The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra is a fully professional resident orchestra with an ensemble of 75 musicians and a conducting staff of international caliber. The John H. Mulroy Civic Center provides the home concert hall for the SSO. The Orchestra performs 200 full-orchestra and chamber ensemble concerts, extending beyond its Syracuse-based activities into the Central New York region and reaching more than 252,000 audience members during its 39-week



season. The SSO presents *The Nutcracker* with a visiting ballet company each December and also plays for Syracuse Opera performances. Concerts are broadcast twice weekly on WCNY-FM public radio and the Orchestra operates two youth ensembles—the Syracuse Symphony Youth Orchestra and Syracuse Symphony Youth String Orchestra.

Museum of Science & Technology (MOST)

The MOST, located at 500 S. Franklin Street, is a “hands-on” science center that encourages interactive visitor participation. Educational programs and exhibitions are offered for all ages, including children as young as five years of age and senior citizens. The MOST is home to the Bristol Omnitheater, an IMAX Theater that is one of only 30 in the US. The theater features a 66-foot diameter and 6 story high screen. The MOST provides services to educate citizens in the field of science outside the museum facility through several outreach programs.

Everson Museum of Art

Founded in 1897, the Everson Museum of Art located at 401 Harrison Street is housed in I.M Pei’s first museum building, built in 1968. The museum hosts numerous exhibitions, ranging from 18th century American paintings to Chinese ceramics and English pottery. The museum ceramic collection contains works from around the world including contemporary works. Programs at the museum consist of adult and children’s art workshops, lectures, films, and trips. The number of annual visitors for 2003 was approximately 80,000.

The Syracuse Area Landmark Theatre

The theatre was designed by Thomas W. Lamb and was christened Loew’s State Theatre on February 18, 1928. The lavish

Indo-Persian styled theater, located at 362 South Salina Street, was saved from demolition and is presently run by the Syracuse Area Landmark Theater, Inc. (SALT). Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 3000-seat Landmark Theater is a unique performance venue that hosts a diversity of entertainment programs, including Symphony performances, Broadway acts, contemporary artists and special events.

Erie Canal Museum

The Erie Canal Museum is a private not-for-profit organization housed in the historic Weighlock Building at 318 Erie Boulevard. The museum mission is to educate visitors on canals, canal life and local history. The museum presents this history through participatory exhibits, including three special exhibitions each year that draw on its nationally renowned collection of artifacts and documents. Museum tours and school programs also invite visitors to learn about local and state history. The number of annual visitors for 2003 was approximately 20,000. Also located in the Weighlock Building is the Syracuse Heritage Area Visitor Center, established as the principal visitor venue representing the city’s participation in the NY State Heritage Area system.

Onondaga Historical Association Museum (OHA)

The Onondaga County Historical Association located at 321 Montgomery Street is an organization dedicated to commemorating 300 years of local history through numerous exhibitions and collections. The OHA Research Center houses valuable research resources on local architectural, industrial and transportation history.



Private Schools

Private schools form part of the complex fabric that is Downtown Syracuse. In addition to offering educational services to children and adults, they provide a variety of community-based events and programs that attract a range of visitors to Downtown.

Cathedral Elementary School

The Cathedral Elementary School, located at 420 Montgomery Street, is administered by the Syracuse Roman Catholic Diocese and offers grades pre-K through 6. Enrollment in 2003 was 180 students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. The Cathedral Pre-School Program provides a day-care service for four-year olds of working parents.

The Media Unit

The Media Unit, located at 327 Montgomery Street, provides youths in the central New York region with hands-on training in television production and broadcasting.

Religious Organizations

Religious organizations remain the heart and soul in many peoples' vision of community. Downtown is home to a great diversity of religious groups. In addition to regular spiritual guidance, these organizations also provide vital services to those in need and those not adequately served by other means. These services range from shelters and food banks to education, outreach and community building. In addition, many of the Downtown religious organizations are located in irreplaceable examples of the city's architectural heritage.

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, seat of the Syracuse Roman

Catholic Diocese, is located at 259 East Onondaga Street in Columbus Circle. The cathedral offers traditional services as well as outreach to its parishioners and the community as a whole in such forms as the Guardian Angel Society and a Downtown Emergency Assistance Office for members in need. Sunday services attract roughly 200 worshipers each week.

Catholic Chancery Diocese of Syracuse

The Catholic Chancery Diocese of Syracuse serves as an operating agency for diocesan human development programs and community services. Such services include marriage and family counseling, individual counseling, and youth recreational programs. The Bishop's office is located at 240 East Onondaga Street.

St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral

The St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, located at 310 Montgomery Street, is the seat of the Central New York Episcopal Diocese. The cathedral provides the local community with numerous educational and music programs. Its food programs include the Samaritan Center, a service provider for the hungry.

New Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church

The New Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, located at 317 East Jefferson Street, is home to regular religious services, and community and educational meetings. The church also operates a food pantry.

Plymouth Congregational Church

The Plymouth Congregational Church is located at 232 East Onondaga Street and provides numerous community programs. Members of the church are actively involved in neighborhood-outreach programs including the Men's, Women's



and Youth Fellowship, Taste of the Arts, and the Plymouth Day Care Center.

Park Central Presbyterian Church

The Park Central Presbyterian Church, located at 504 East Fayette Street, offers traditional services, and a wide range of neighborhood outreach services including partnerships with Habitats for Humanity and the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network.

Public Services

Public services include those programs or functions provided by the municipality or other levels of government for the community at large and consist of, among other things, public schools, public works, and fire and police protection. These services are intended to ensure public health, safety and welfare. As the essential 'basics' of any city, these services contribute significantly to general community well being.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

The DPW provides routine street cleaning, grounds maintenance, sanitary sewer maintenance, drainage maintenance, and snow and ice removal. The department coordinates numerous operations including the cleaning of street drainage basins, streetscape maintenance, and solid waste removal. Under the department road classification system, all streets in Downtown are defined as improved roads meaning paved with impervious material over a compacted subgrade. Maintenance of sidewalks Downtown, like those throughout the city, is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner; however, solid waste removal, unlike in the rest of the city, is handled largely by private haulers.

Syracuse Fire Department

The Syracuse Fire Department provides fire rescue, confined space rescue, and emergency medical services within the city. Average response time to any call is under four minutes. The department also provides the local community with educational courses related to fire prevention and rescue techniques. Station 1, located at 900 South State Street at Adams Street, provides primary service to Downtown and contains two rescue units and a rescue truck.

Syracuse Police Department

The Syracuse Police Department is the largest unit of city government, operating out of the Downtown law enforcement campus at 511 South State Street. It is comprised of 486 sworn officers and 88 civilian employees, including the Planning and Research Division, which analyzes crime data within the city. Services include public safety, drug law reform, traffic control, and regular attendance at neighborhood meetings to assess concerns of local residents. Based on recent data, Downtown is the lowest ranked neighborhood in terms of overall crime statistics within the city, with the greatest concentration of drug-related incidents along its southern boundary.

Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT)

TNT is a citywide initiative comprised of eight Area Planning Councils and facilitated by the Syracuse Department of Community Development. TNT's mission is to provide a comprehensive process for involving residents, business owners and organizations in the community planning process. The Downtown Area Planning Council (Sector 1) represents the traditional geographically bounded area of the Central Business District (I-690 at the north, Adams Street at the south, I-81 at the east, and Onondaga Creek to the



west). It includes Downtown residents, neighborhood groups, business owners and organizations, and representatives from various City departments. TNT Sector 1 is dedicated to making Downtown a desirable, accessible place to live, work and shop and specific objectives and action goals are expressed in five-year plans.

Sydney L. Johnson Vocational Center

Located at 573 East Genesee Street is the Syracuse City School District Johnson Vocational Center. The center provides occupational and career-training programs for students from secondary school age through adults. Enrollment in 2003 was approximately 300 students.

Central New York Charter School for Math and Science

The State University Board of Trustees approved the Central New York Charter School for Math and Science in January 2000, and the State Board of Regents approved it in April that same year. In September the school opened under a charter that releases the school from the state educational requirements, giving the school the authority to develop its own standards of achievement. The school had 528 students in grades K-6 in its first year, and by the end of the 5-year charter the school expects to have 816 students enrolled in grades K-10. The school is located at 610 East Fayette Street, on a two building campus that was once science teaching and laboratory facilities for Syracuse University.

SUNY Empire State College

The offices of the SUNY Empire State College are located at 219 Walton Street. This accredited college specializes in educational programs geared toward the adult and working student. It offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the arts and sciences. Day

and night classes accommodate students who need a flexible alternative from the traditional campus environment. The campus serves roughly 1,000 students both in traditional classrooms and distanced learning programs.

Onondaga County Public Library

The library, located within the Galleries of Syracuse at 447 South Salina Street, houses a diverse range of reading material, audio, video and other informational resources. Numerous services and programs are offered including the Literacy Resource Center and the Special Technologies and Adaptive Resources (STAR) program, dedicated to providing services for the disabled. The library also offers low cost classes such as Computer Skills, Grant Writing and English Classes, and supports Creative Writing Workshops as well as the Rosamond Gifford Lecture Series. The facility is opened every day except Monday and Sunday, as well as two weekday evenings.

Downtown Events

Downtown is the location for many regularly programmed events. Some take place on an annual, one to three day basis, and others are seasonal series. Events take place throughout Downtown, with a high percentage held in Clinton, Hanover and Armory Squares. Various entities, including the City of Syracuse, the Downtown Committee Inc., and Downtown neighborhood and business associations independently or jointly organize and sponsor these activities. Many Downtown events and programs are supported by CNY Community Events Program Grants. Additionally, some events are supported by private sponsors.



The Downtown Committee, Inc. events calendar for 2004 provides more details regarding these events, including event name, dates and location. Attendance varies greatly, with the largest attended events being: Taste of Syracuse—25,000, Fleet Syracuse Arts and Crafts Festival—70,000, NYS Budweiser Rhythm and Blues Festival—50,000 to 60,000, The Guinness Irish Festival—20,000, and La Festa Italiana—35,000.

January

- None

February

- February 12 – 22: Winterfest
 - Clinton Square
 - Hanover Square
 - Armory Square
 - Various Indoor Locations

March

- March 12 and 13: St. Patrick Day Parade and Festivities
 - Salina Street
 - Various Indoor Locations

April

- None

May

- May 12: Hanover Square Block Party
 - Hanover Square
- May 29: Rumble in the Square (Bicycle Racing and Sprints)
 - Hanover Square
- May 30: Memorial Day Concert
 - Clinton Square

June

- June 4 and 5: Taste of Syracuse
 - Clinton Square
- June 8 – October 26: Downtown Farmers’ Market

- Corner of South Salina Clinton Streets
- June 11 and 12: Polish Festival
 - Clinton Square
- June 18 and 19: Juneteenth
 - Clinton Square
- June 19: CNY Pride Parade and Festival
 - Salina Street and Everson Museum Plaza
- June 20: Jewish Music and Cultural Festival
 - Clinton Square
- June 23: Ice Cream Social
 - Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park

July

- July – August: Fat Thursdays in Armory Square (every Thursday)
 - Walton Street
- July 6 – August 19: Fleet Bank World in the Square (Lunchtime)
 - Hanover Square
- July 7 – August 25: Party in the Plaza (every Wednesday)
 - James E. Hawley Federal Building Plaza
- July 9 and 23: Swingin’ in the Square
 - Hanover Square
- July 9: The Empire Brewing and Music Festival
 - Clinton Square
- July 10, 17, and 24: Candlelight Series in Armory Square
 - South Franklin and West Jefferson Streets
- July 10: Caribbean Festival
 - Salina Street
 - Trolley Lot next to MOST
- July 10: Chase Country Fest
 - Clinton Square
- July 16 – 18: NYS Budweiser Rhythm and Blues Festival
 - Clinton Square



- July 16 – 18: Fleet Syracuse Arts and Crafts Festival
 - Columbus Circle and Surrounding Streets
- July 29 – 30: Jazz in the Square
 - Clinton Square
 - Hanover Square
- July 24: Hanover Square Music Festival (Block Party)
 - Hanover Square

August

- August 6 – 8: Eurofest
 - Clinton Square
- August 6 20: Swingin’ in the Square
 - Hanover Square
- August 7: Candlelight Series in Armory Square
 - South Franklin and West Jefferson Streets
- August 8: Hanover Square Music Festival
 - Hanover Square
- August 21-22: Latino American Festival
 - Clinton Square

September

- September 3 and 9: Swingin’ in the Square
 - Hanover Square
- September 10-11: The Guinness Irish Festival
 - Clinton Square
- September 18-19: La Festa Italiana
 - In front of City Hall
- September 24: Dancin’ in the Square
 - Hanover Square
- September 24-26: The Great Syracuse Oktoberfest
 - Clinton Square
- September 25: Hanover Square Music Festival (Block Party)
 - Hanover Square

October

- October 8-9: Haunted History Happening
 - Ghost Walk in streets of Downtown

November

- November 28: Light Up Syracuse
 - Clinton Square
 - Armory Square
 - Various Indoor Locations

December

- None

Community & Economic Development

Economic investment in Downtown involves both public and private entities, most often acting in concert. Through such joint efforts, resources can be maximized to insure the greatest short- and long-term return for every dollar spent. Public funding programs administered by federal, state and municipal agencies often provide the dollars or tax incentives necessary to insure project success. Understanding current and future markets is equally important, but particularly when non-traditional economic development ventures are proposed. Adoption of a downtown plan by a city administration, which establishes a commitment to quality physical development, sends a signal to private lending institutions and individual investors that the economic success of a project is more likely to be realized.

In order to fully understand available community and economic development programs, research was conducted regarding both public and private programs and mechanisms. Data was gathered through primary and secondary



sources, as well as through interviews with local officials and professionals.

Federal Programs

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant program provides funding to local governments for creating affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and expansion of economic opportunities for people of low or moderate incomes. The CDBG Program began in 1975 and represents the majority of HUD funds available to municipalities. The City of Syracuse, defined as an entitlement community, received \$7.4 million in 2004.

HUD 108 Loans

These loans fund job creation, housing rehabilitation, construction of public facilities, and large-scale development projects.

Section 8 Housing Vouchers

The Section 8 housing voucher assists low-income families and the elderly in obtaining safe, sanitary and decent housing. The program, administered through HUD, allocates vouchers to local public housing agencies for families that need assistance. Eligibility is based on gross income, family size and is limited to US residents and specific immigrants that have non-citizen status. Locally the Syracuse Housing Authority administers section 8 housing vouchers, and a number of qualified individuals and families use their vouchers to reside Downtown.

Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative (SNI)

The Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative program provides monies for projects within Syracuse that coincide with the overall goals of the CDBG Consolidated Plan, as well as specific objectives of individual TNT sectors. The sectors establish priority projects within areas targeted for substantial change; the priority projects in Downtown have all involved housing development. SNI funds are administered by the City of Syracuse Department of Community and Economic Development.

Empowerment Zones

Economic development projects within the designated empowerment zones can qualify for regulatory relief and tax incentives. Funds are earmarked to generate community revitalization by stimulating job growth, promoting economic development and creating affordable housing opportunities within city neighborhoods and central business districts. Components of the zone tax incentive package can be used together or independently, and include:

- Work Opportunity Credit
- Employment Tax Credit
- Welfare-To-Work Tax Credit
- Business Investment Incentives
- Enterprise Zone Facility Bonds
- Tax Exempt Bond Financing
- Capital Gains Exclusions

The designated Syracuse Empowerment Zone includes approximately half of Downtown, and is bordered by I-690 on the north, Adams Street on the south, Montgomery Street on the east and Onondaga Creek on the west.

Internal Revenue Service

Investment Tax Credits



The federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 included incentives for the rehabilitation of historic and older income-producing properties. Income tax credits that can be earned are based on 20% of the rehabilitation costs of a certified historic property. A 10% tax credit is available for rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings constructed prior to 1936. Depreciation of rehabilitation costs can be taken over a 60-month period.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program also was created under the Tax Reform Act of 1986. It provides a tax credit incentive for low-income housing to private developers that invest in qualified rental housing. The program gives credits to individuals who develop, rehabilitate and acquire property that meets the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

Federal Highway Administration

Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003(SAFETEA)

The pending federal SAFETEA legislation seeks to extend the goals and programs established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and continued under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century of 1998. If passed by Congress and signed by the President, it will ensure future economic growth and quality along transportation corridors, as its predecessors have done. It includes initiatives that promote traffic safety, support flexible and efficient transportation, and protect and enhance natural, historic and cultural resources.

State Programs

NYS Department of State

Business Improvement Districts (BID)

State enabling legislation allows municipalities to designate areas as business improvement districts. Municipalities can levy an additional tax on properties within BIDs as a special assessment to be used for physical improvements or programs within the designated area. The entire Downtown is a BID.

NYS Department of Taxation and Finance

Empire Zones

Economic development projects within the designated Empire Zones can qualify for tax credits, reductions and abatements, utility rate reductions, and low-interest loans. These incentives are intended to stimulate job growth and development. Beginning in 2000, all zone-certified businesses are now identified as Qualified Empire Zone Enterprises (QEZE), which are businesses projecting job growth. Components of the zone tax incentive package can be used together or independently, and include:

- Tax Reduction Credit
- Real Property Tax Credit
- Wage Tax Credit
- Investment Tax Credit
- Sales Tax Refund
- Utility Rate Reduction
- 485E Property Tax Abatement
- State-wide Zone Capital Credit Corporation

All of Downtown, except the extreme southeast section, is designated as an Empire Zone.

Empire State Development Corporation

This agency offers financial assistance for the construction and expansion of



industrial, manufacturing, and non-retail commercial facilities.

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Environmental Protection Fund

This matching grant program funds the acquisition and/or development of parks and recreational facilities, historic properties, and properties and exhibits in heritage areas. Applicants are limited to municipalities and not-for-profit organizations that own or have an ownership interest in park facilities, properties listed in the National or State Registers of Historic Places, or are located within a designated heritage area.

New York State Energy Research Authority

Central New York Energy Smart Communities (CNYESC)

CNYESC offers low-interest financing, cash incentives for energy-efficient improvements, and free technical assistance.

Local Programs

City of Syracuse

Department of Community and Economic Development

This office guides existing potential business owners through the process of locating and applying for economic development aid from federal, state and local sources. The staff brings together a range of business-related programs to create an environment that encourages commercial growth. The Department has eight divisions: Operations, Lead Hazard Control, Economic Development, Legal, Code Enforcement, Neighborhood

Planning, Grants Management and Program Evaluation & Monitoring.

Syracuse Industrial Development Agency (SIDA)

SIDA is a tax-exempt public corporation designed to benefit the public through the enhancement of the city's economic capabilities. Through industrial revenue bonds, SIDA is able to finance loans for up to 100% of the acquisition, construction or reconstruction of manufacturing, warehousing, commercial and industrial properties. Other SIDA tools include sales tax exemption, investment tax credits, and partial exemption from commercial, business and industrial property taxes.

Syracuse Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO)

SEDCO is a business development corporation that obtains public/private funds and makes them available to business owners for acquisitions, renovations, expansion, development, and purchase of equipment and machinery by requiring a very small amount of up-front capital.

Business Investment Exemption

New construction, or the alteration or improvement of commercial, business and industrial property is eligible for a partial tax exemption from assessment increases under section 485-b of the Syracuse Real Property Tax Law. The value of work on non-residential properties occurring within one year (not including ordinary maintenance) that exceeds \$10,000 can be deferred when considering the property assessment, based on graduated scale over a finite period.



Planning Efforts

For over 25 years various public agencies and private organizations have prepared or commissioned plans examining existing Downtown conditions and making recommendations for future development and growth of the city center. While most efforts were generally comprehensive, no one document was officially adopted by city government and used to establish policy, generate specific programs or guide physical development. Among the most recent efforts are:

City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan-2025

In August of 2001, political and civic leaders realized it was necessary to take steps to improve upon the shaping of the community, and thereby committed to developing a new comprehensive plan for the city. Public participation mechanisms were developed to illicit community comment. The plan sets general policy for overall city development, with more detailed recommendations offered through supplemental pieces such as the Preservation Component and Downtown Master Plan.

City of Syracuse Consolidated Plan-2004

This yearly plan is required by HUD to assess city proposals for the expenditure of, among other sources, the Community Development Block Grant. This plan outlines both general goals and specific programs, but does not include an overarching vision to guide the physical development of the city nor any specific city neighborhood, including Downtown.

The Essential New York Initiative and Florida/Battelle Report

The Essential New York Initiative of 2004 is a comprehensive economic development plan for creating jobs and

revitalizing the economy of the 12-county Central New York region. A major recommendation of the plan is to align local companies with regional colleges and universities to create job growth. The plan is the product of extensive meetings between academic leaders, business executives, economic advisors, concerned residents and government representatives.

The 2004 Florida/Battelle report on the Central New York regional economy emphasizes the area's potential to reach greater diversity in economic development through the pursuit of the "3T's": talent, technology and tolerance. The report states that these new ventures would bring an increase in the number of residents identified as part of the "creative class," including engineers, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, writers, actors and designers. To nurture and attract such individuals, the study emphasizes that the region must:

- Be a place rich in talent and ideas.
- Be able to learn and adapt in order to succeed.
- Create and nurture bold partnerships among businesses, government, universities, and non-profits.
- Attract a more diverse population.
- Realize the importance of quality of life such as recreation/outdoor scene, music scene, art scene, lively street scenes, and communities with distinctive character.



HyettPalma Action Agenda 2001

The HyettPalma Action Agenda, commissioned by the Downtown Committee Inc. in 2001, presented a revitalization plan for Downtown. The recommendations were offered as an update to a 1996 plan prepared by the same consultants. The Agenda identified these 6 priority issues; specifically to:

- Create additional market-rate housing Downtown.
- Address the appearance and business mix of the 300 block of South Salina Street.
- Create the Columbus Circle cultural corridor.
- Ensure that Downtown remains, and is perceived as being, clean and safe.
- Ensure that Downtown parking is adequate.
- Market Downtown throughout the region and beyond.

Recent Downtown Development

Absent a comprehensive strategy for guiding Downtown growth, individual projects have been and will continue to be pursued by individual developers independently or in partnership with local, state or federal government. Within the past few years the following projects have been announced, initiated and/or completed, and none relates to an overall plan for Downtown:

- Amos Building Rehabilitation & Adjacent New Construction.
- Central Tech High School Rehabilitation and Expansion.
- Donohue Building Rehabilitation.
- Everson Museum Expansion.
- Excellus Office Building Expansion & Garage Construction
- Hotel Syracuse Rehabilitation.

- Landmark Theatre Interior Restoration & Stage Expansion.
- Syracuse Technology Garden Business Incubator.
- Onondaga County Convention Center Hotel Construction.
- Powelson Building Demolition & Site Marketing.
- Masonic Temple/Metropolitan School for the Arts Rehabilitation.
- Former First Baptist Church and Mizpah Tower Rehabilitation.

Zoning And Land Use

Zoning is the implementation of comprehensive planning and a guide for making land use decisions. The City of Syracuse maintains zoning rules and regulations in order to promote orderly and manageable growth of the urban environment, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. This occurs through the designation of zoning districts, which are defined by allowances, restrictions and prohibitions that in turn encourage or discourage certain types of land use for each property within the city.

Zoning is intended to be uniform within each zoning district, with properties treated equally. The zoning rules and regulations describe general physical characteristics intended for each district classification, including setbacks, density, height and bulk of buildings, signs, and parking and loading.

Inventory

Zoning

Zoning and land use in Syracuse generally follow historic settlement patterns and result in an urban fabric that has been largely influenced by geology,



transportation, infrastructure and commerce. Syracuse first adopted a zoning ordinance in 1922 and, since that time, the articles have been amended to accommodate urban growth and changing ideas about city development, but have never been comprehensively revised. Information regarding zoning was obtained from the City of Syracuse Zoning Rules and Regulations of 2002, and additional material was collected from interviews with various city and county officials.

CDB Zoning Districts

Downtown is located in the physical center of the city and is one of three areas that hold the greatest concentration of current and potential development and redevelopment. The City of Syracuse Zoning Rules and Regulations includes 8 zoning districts for Downtown and one overlay district. When viewed in concert, these classifications generally support office, retail and residential use in varying degrees of density.

- **CBD-R, Central Business District, Retail District**—allows high-density development with an emphasis on retail use.
- **CBD-OS, Central Business District, Office and Service District**—allows medium- to high-density development with an emphasis on office use.
- **CBD-OSR, Central Business District, Office and Service District (Restricted)**—allows medium- to high-density development with an emphasis on office use and restrictions intended to protect adjacent residential areas.
- **CBD-GS, Central Business District, General Service District**—allows greater range of

commercial uses not permitted in previous zoning classifications.

- **CBD-LB, Central Business District, Local Business District**—allows service and convenience retail, primarily as support for residential use.
- **CBD-HDR, Central Business District, High-Density Residential District**—allows high-density residential development.
- **CBD-MDR, Central Business District, Medium-Density Residential District**—allows medium-density residential development.
- **CBD-GSA, Central Business District, General Service A District**—allows for mixed-use development.
- **Landmark Preservation Overlay Classification**—allows for qualified individual properties and collections of properties to be classified as local protected sites or local preservation districts, respectively. This classification is in addition to, not in place of, zoning classifications that govern land use and density.

Land Use

Land use is defined as the primary function that is being performed on a single parcel of land. Information was gathered by analyzing a land use map for the Downtown area provided by the City of Syracuse, as well as through field work. Nine land use categories were identified for Downtown:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Parking Garages



- Surface Parking
- Office
- Entertainment
- Community Facilities
- Industrial
- Open Space

Residential use occurs in several locations within Downtown, with the greatest number of residential properties located in the southeast corner along South Townsend Street. Smaller pockets of housing also are found in Armory and Hanover Squares. The mix of housing includes market rate apartments and condominiums, as well as subsidized housing.

Commercial uses include traditional, service and convenience retail, such as clothing, shoe and novelty stores; dry cleaners, office supply stores and personal service shops (e.g., barbers); and drug and gift stores. While these uses are found throughout Downtown, they are present in limited numbers near its boundaries.

Parking garage and surface parking uses can be found on virtually every Downtown block.

Although **office use** is found throughout Downtown, it is most concentrated between East Washington Street on the north, East Jefferson Street on the south, Montgomery Street on the east, and Warren Street on the west.

Industrial use is quite limited within Downtown, and generally can be isolated to two properties, the Syracuse Newspapers printing plant and the Verizon switching facility.

Land used for public **open space** is scattered throughout Downtown.

Both **retail** and **office occupancy** levels vary considerably throughout downtown.

Analysis

Socio-Cultural Factors

Problems

1. Failure to fully capitalize on the rich complexity of Downtown.

Downtown is generally viewed as a complex place, encompassing residential, business and cultural resources. There is a strong diversity of socio-cultural organizations, commercial enterprises, residential enclaves and calendar of events. Despite this, Downtown is not engaged or used as a multi-purpose place by most city residents or visitors.

2. Less than full utilization of Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT).

TNT Sector 1 suffers from inconsistent participation, as well as unequal involvement from Downtown residential and business interests. The Sector has not been able to attract a representative group of participants for the planning and visioning process and, therefore, a strong shared vision for Downtown has not been developed. In addition, the City currently has inadequate resources to respond to the Sector's needs.

3. Limited outreach to potential new populations to invest or locate Downtown.

Educational and technical assistance efforts to encourage a more diverse Downtown resident, worker and visitor population are not adequate to insure positive Downtown growth over time. Additionally, independent efforts often do not maximize available resources and therefore are not always successful in attracting new permanent or repeat Downtown users.



4. Less than optimum coordination of Downtown promotions, events and programs.

Community organizations, economic and business oriented groups, and cultural organizations presently do not take advantage of their shared location and audiences to coordinate promotions and activities. Singular or individual efforts do not reinforce the multiple layers of functions of and in Downtown.

5. Insufficient Special Assessment Funds to meet goals identified by the Downtown Committee.

The unique characteristics and functions of Downtown require a significant investment to maintain cleanliness and safety of the physical environment. A large percentage of the Special Assessments Funds collected are used to supplement routine public works and public safety services. Expenditure of these funds in this manner makes it difficult to adequately address the wider spectrum of Downtown needs that have been identified.

6. Inadequate provisions for public services in Downtown.

Municipal services related to cleanliness and safety generally are perceived as less than optimal. As a result private individuals and organizations supplement them. This results in inefficient and ineffective handling of snow removal, solid waste removal and street maintenance, and an ever-present interest in improved public safety.

7. Failure to objectively evaluate long-term economic value of independent and disparate development projects.

The lack of a long-term vision for Downtown results in an emphasis on single projects that rarely fuel related investment across a broad context. Without a strategy to guide future Downtown growth patterns and development decisions, the economic

value of individual projects cannot be objectively assessed and, therefore, unlikely economic expectations are established.

8. Lack of coordination between economic development agencies in marketing information and funding assistance.

Many economic programs exist to help facilitate and guide business and property owners. However, public awareness and understanding of available mechanisms and programs is somewhat limited due to the independent efforts of the various development advocacy agencies and organizations.

9. Limited coordination or promotion of heritage and cultural tourism Downtown.

Although Downtown boasts the highest concentration of historic resources and cultural venues within the metropolitan region, efforts to actively promote these places and coordinate their events and/or exhibits are not maximized. Therefore, the economic spin-offs of both heritage and cultural tourism are not fully realized.

10. Insufficient number of Downtown residents.

Despite the number of small residential developments at various locations, as well as studies that show a growing interest in downtown residential living, there has been limited success in growing the Downtown residential population. Without a substantial number of people living Downtown, the economic base of the city center remain less than stable.

11. Need for coordination of major construction projects to mitigate effects on businesses.

Although Downtown construction activity is a sign of economic strength and growth, it also disrupts business operations by preventing access to individual properties and entire districts, results in traffic congestion and decreased on-street parking, and causes temporary noise and



air pollution. When multiple projects occur in close proximity to one another or within a short timeframe and without coordination, these disruptions have a greater impact for a longer duration.

12. Limited coordinated and cooperative marketing of Downtown.

Although several entities actively market Downtown as an attractive location for investment, these efforts are not sufficiently coordinated to insure optimum exposure. In addition, such efforts do not adequately emphasize the potential for retail, cultural-related businesses or historic building re-use.

13. Outdated Zoning Rules and Regulations.

The city zoning ordinance was originally written in 1922, and has not been entirely updated since the 1950s. It has not kept pace with contemporary community needs, nor does it insure that traditional dense urban form will be retained.

14. Inadequate existing project site review process to comprehensively address physical and visual character.

The current review process takes a highly quantitative approach to evaluating physical and visual characteristics of proposed development, without the aid of overarching standards or specific guidelines. Projects are considered on a case-by-case basis, allowing for inconsistency in defining the larger physical and visual context for development. In addition, the balance of the existing zoning ordinance only addresses bulk, mass and setback requirements—providing little direct for staff conducting reviews.

15. Lack of professional planning and design qualifications for those appointed to the City Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Members of the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals currently are not individually or collectively required to have demonstrated professional design or planning training and experience, which decreases their efficiency and effectiveness. . Both of these decision-making bodies would be strengthened by adding relevant expertise in design and planning as a requirement for an appointment.

16. No clear design standards for, or definition of, “temporary” parking lots.

The zoning regulations do not include requirements for screening, paving materials or overall visual quality of temporary lots. In addition, there are no rules that define how long a parking lot can remain temporary, resulting in large parcels that are not subject to any standards for physical or visual quality.

17. Incomplete and/or inaccurate land use data for Downtown.

Mixed-uses within buildings are not clearly defined or represented by the current land use data, resulting in an inaccurate and incomplete interpretation of land use patterns Downtown. In addition, there is no mandate to routinely update databases to insure that information is accurate and comprehensive.

18. Inadequate sign ordinance.

The sign regulations pertaining to Downtown do not encourage coordination and of materials, colors and other qualities regarding physical and/or visual character.

Opportunities

1. Improve public appreciation for the diverse features and offerings found Downtown.

The wide variety of employment opportunities, services uses, cultural activities and entertainment located Downtown needs to be recognized as a



principal characteristic that makes Downtown a unique regional asset. Its rich layers of people, places and events can and must be emphasized as dynamic features that are inextricably linked to one another, making Downtown an unparalleled multi-purpose center.

2. Reinforce TNT as a primary community voice for the whole of Downtown.

With consistent leadership and participation, TNT has the potential to provide a community voice within city government that represents all Downtown constituencies, including businesses and residents. TNT has the potential to positively and productively impact decision-making related to the future of Downtown. A stronger overall TNT program, as well as more an engaged Sector 1, can ensure better awareness of and response to the growing needs of the Downtown residential and business communities.

3. Support coordination of promotions and programs in Downtown.

The various interest groups that sponsor events in and about Downtown can maximize their impact by sharing resources. In turn, they will help stimulate a more complete use of Downtown places and events by residents, workers and visitors. They will also greatly assist in drawing new and repeat users to Downtown.

4. Support economic development and marketing as principal efforts of the Downtown Committee.

By capitalizing on the Downtown Committee's success in identifying and marshalling catalytic projects and marketing campaigns, the organization can maximize its role in promoting all facets of Downtown life and activity.

5. Utilize the Downtown Master Plan as primary strategy for guiding Downtown development.

A long-range plan for Downtown development can help local civic and political leaders make informed decisions about the physical and fiscal environment of the city center. Business outreach, marketing and promotion efforts can be geared to maximize public and private investment and insure the greatest economic return. With an officially adopted plan in place, attractive financial expectations can be defined and attained.

6. Increase cooperative efforts among economic development agencies and organizations.

Existing programs will be better understood and more readily pursued if public and private economic development agencies and organizations combine resources and efforts, rather than act independently. Similarly, the cooperation between Downtown development advocates has the potential to result in creative new incentive mechanisms, which in turn can be used to attract a wider variety of investors.

7. Encourage heritage and cultural tourism-based development.

Historic properties and cultural venues attract both new and repeat visitors to Downtown. The spending power of these visitors can be maximized through coordination of events and exhibits, joint programming and cooperative advertising. Development to support expansion of existing or the introduction of new heritage or cultural places in Downtown will generate additional visitors and even greater economic spin-off.

8. Encourage development of a wide range of housing types within Downtown.

A diverse Downtown resident population will generate a wide-range of personal and household needs, in turn creating a



demand for increased Downtown retail and commercial businesses. As its economic base expands and diversifies to meet these needs, Downtown will become more financially stable.

9. Use public improvements as catalysts for private development.

Investing in Downtown public lands—whether the streets, sidewalks, parks or open spaces—demonstrates a commitment to the economic viability of the city center. Dedicating scarce public dollars to insure a high quality physical environment for Downtown can convince developers to make complimentary investments on private lands.

10. Encourage coordinated marketing and promotion of Downtown.

A professionally designed, multi-media, multi-outlet marketing and promotional campaign can be used to attract new investors to Downtown. It also can be instrumental in convincing current Downtown property owners and business people to remain in the city center. The economic vitality of Downtown can only improve through increased regional and national exposure.

11. Completely revise current Zoning Rules and Regulations.

The existing ordinance serves only as a basic means for controlling how a property can be used and how a building occupies a property. It is not reflective of contemporary planning and design trends nor does it recognize noteworthy traditional urban fabric. With substantial revisions, the ordinance can be an effective tool used to implement the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Downtown Master Plan.

12. Establish a more effective design review mechanism to address physical and visual character.

Standards and guidelines can be created for downtown development, which will aid in maintaining or obtaining a high quality physical environment of the Downtown. They will provide elected and appointed officials, as well as professional staff, with objective criteria for evaluating the physical and visual qualities of proposed development and thereby insure retention and/or enhancement of traditional Downtown urban character.

13. Establish and enforce more effective standards for surface parking lots, as well as vacant land.

In order to improve the overall physical and visual quality of Downtown, as well as the pedestrian experience, the zoning regulations should establish standards for parking lots and vacant parcel in terms of screening, paving, lighting, signage, and entries/exits. Consistent enforcement of such standards can lead to an improved image of Downtown.

14. Amend the sign ordinance to provide to include more comprehensive design guidance, particularly for Downtown signs.

Additional guidelines should be developed that address physical characteristics, such as overall design, materials and color. Such modifications to the ordinance can result in signs that contribute to, rather than detract from, traditional urban character.

15. Target vacant open lots for new development.

Demolition of existing buildings to accommodate new construction should be discouraged. Instead currently vacant parcels should be promoted as preferred locations for new construction in order to maintain or re-establish traditional downtown density and preferred land use patterns.

Constraints

1. Grandfathering of non-conforming uses.

As changes to the zoning ordinance are



made there will be physical conditions and land uses Downtown that do not conform with the goals of the amended rules and regulations. Therefore, the benefits of more comprehensive zoning and an

adopted Downtown Master Plan may not be fully realize for some time.

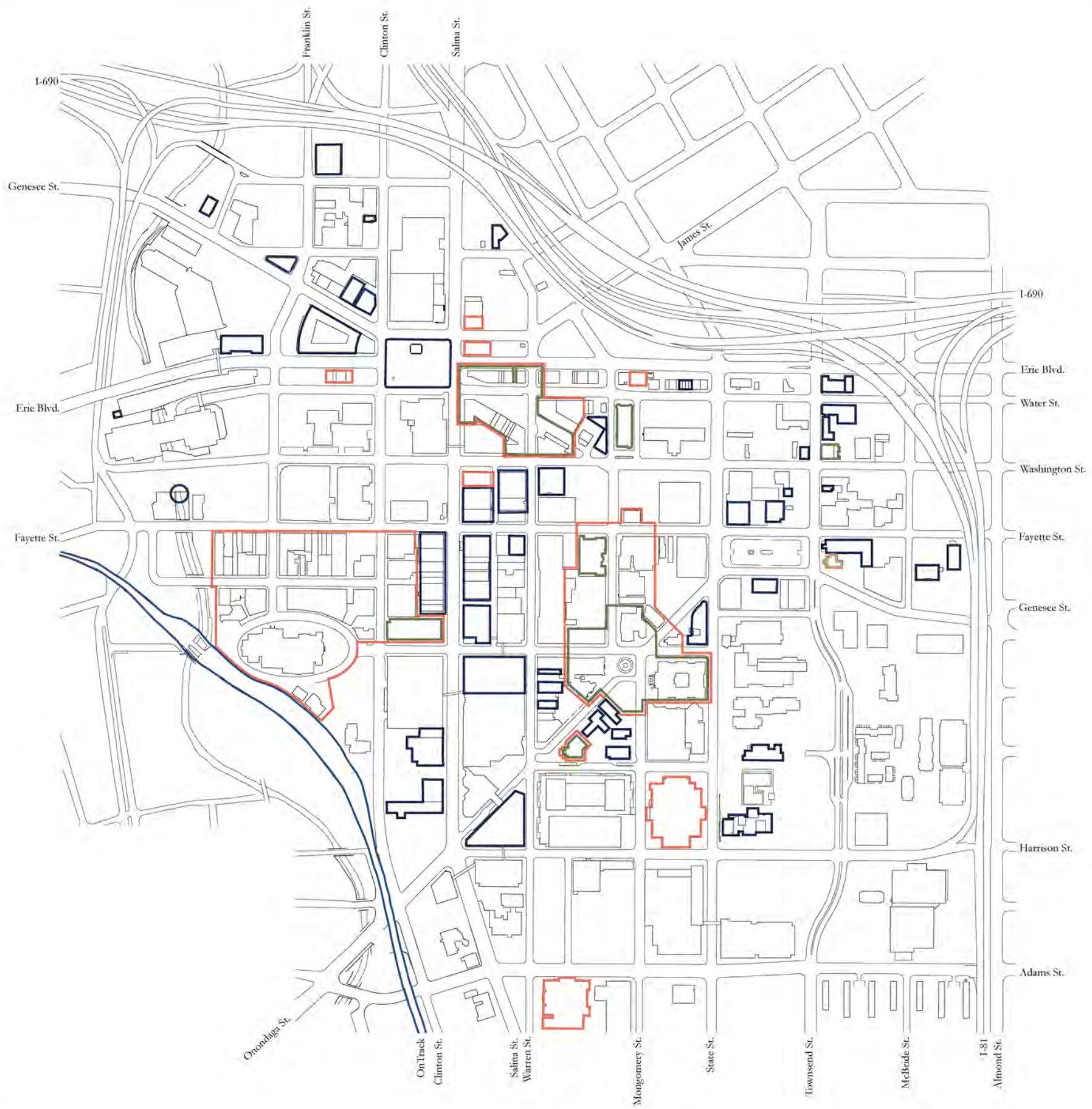




Legend

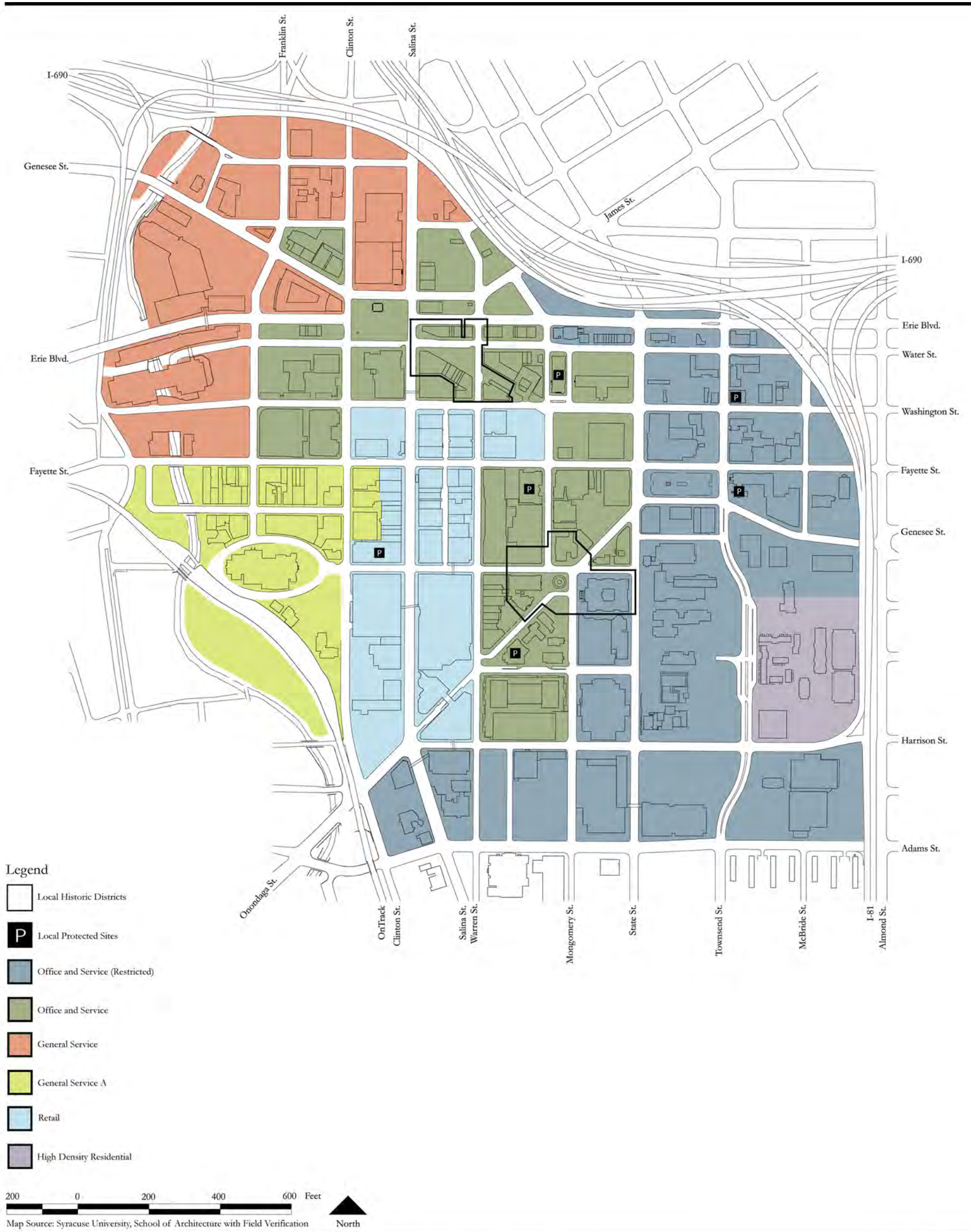
- Performance and Event Location
- Museums
- Library, Schools & Churches

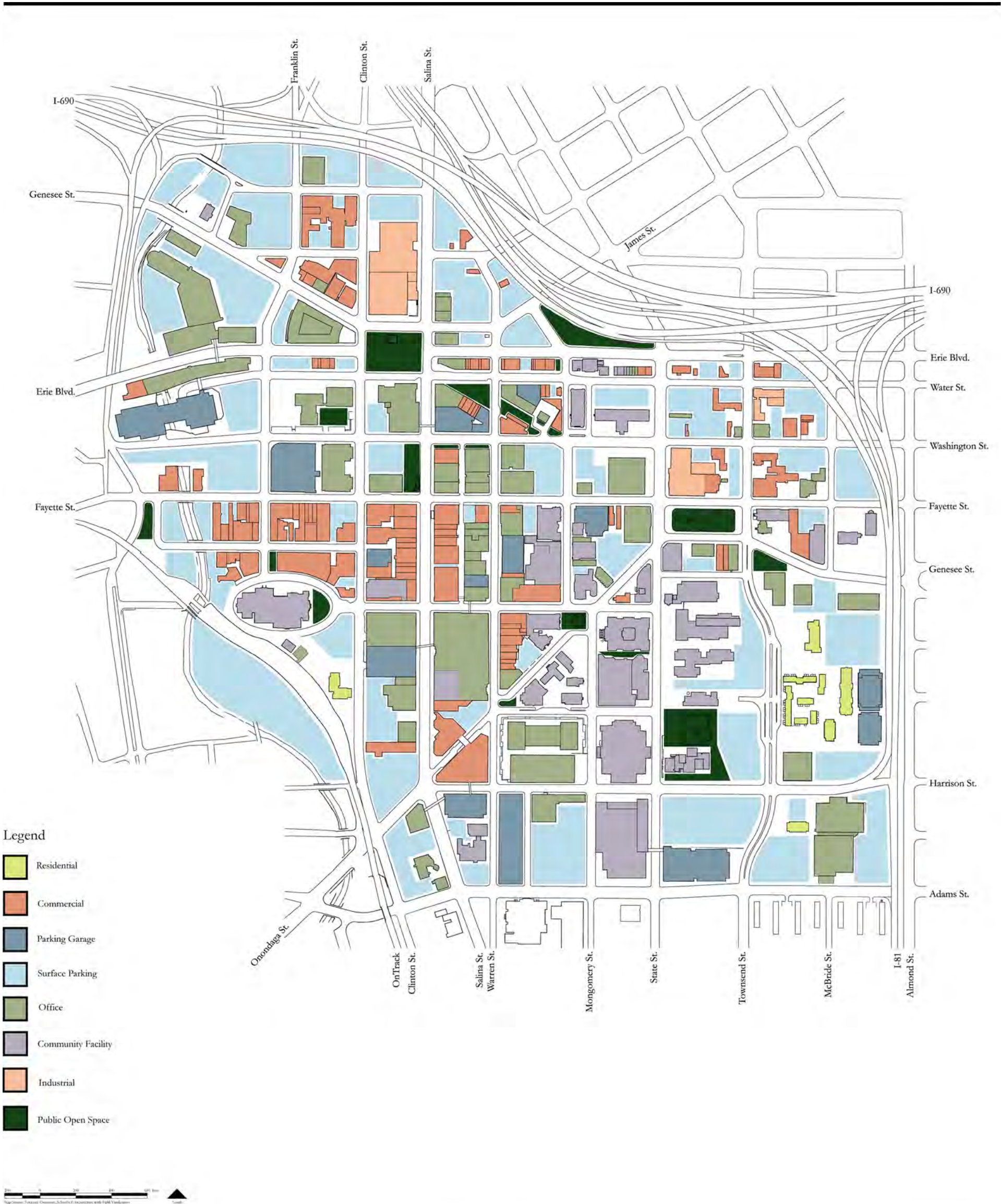




- Legend**
- Local Designated Sites or Districts
 - National/State Register Sites or Districts
 - National/State Register Eligible





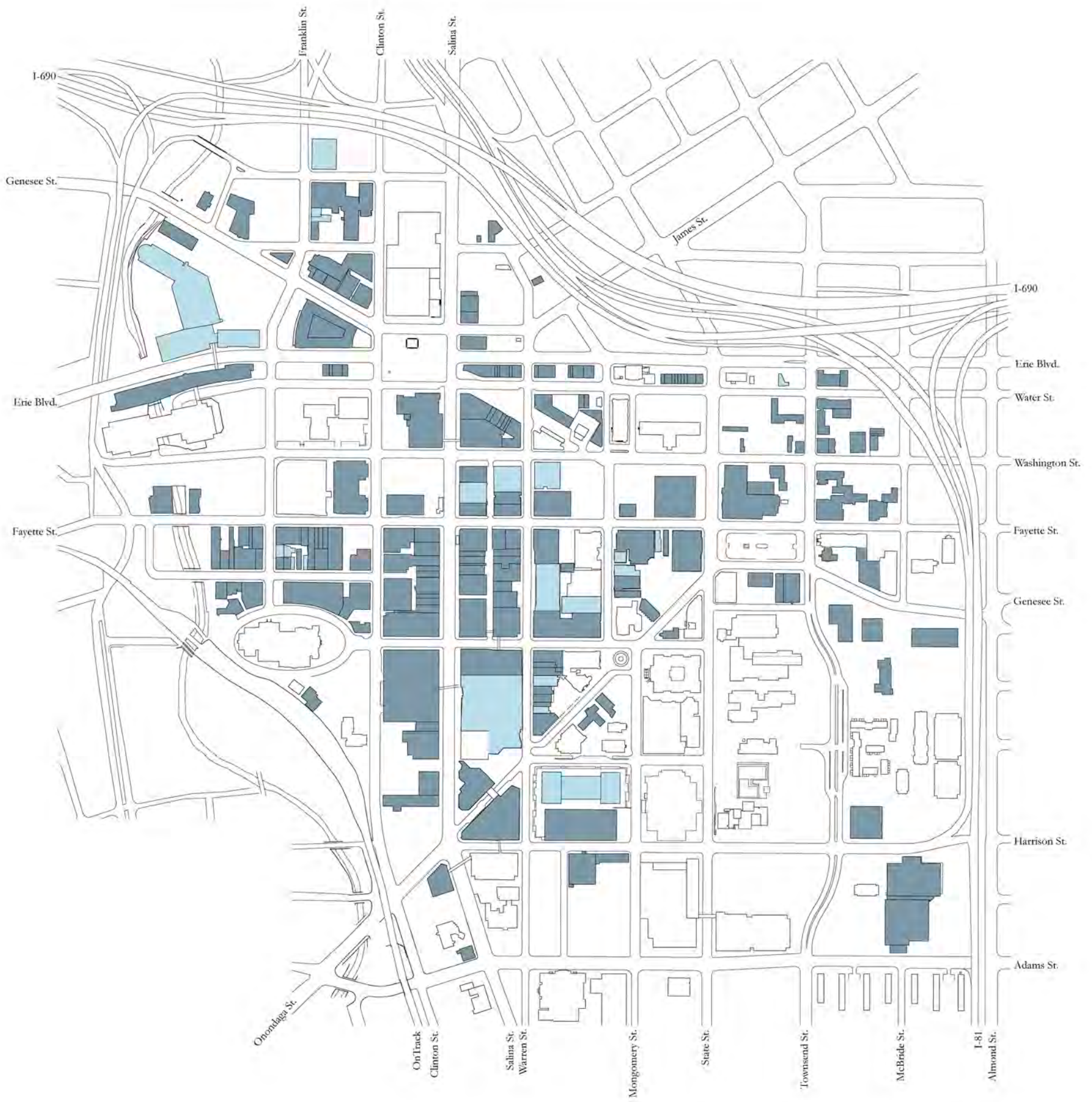




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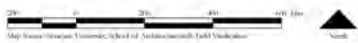
- Buildings With Available Retail Space
- 100% Occupied Retail Space
- Buildings With No Available Retail Space





Legend

- Buildings With Available Office Space
- 100% Occupied Office Space
- Buildings With No Available Office Space



Goals, Objectives, and Recommended Actions



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Based on the data collected during the inventory and the subsequent evaluation of that information, four Downtown goals were developed, each with supportive objectives and each of those with recommended actions. Goals are defined as the general results toward which all efforts will be directed. Objectives are the specific attainable results pursuant to each goal; and recommended actions are the policies, programs and physical projects that are the real means to reaching each goal. Recognizing that not all the recommendations presented are fully developed, nor that they all can be accomplished at once, additional research, development of detailed tasks, and public discussion and debate must continue.

The Downtown Master Plan of the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan has four goals:

- To make Downtown planning a priority
- To value the diverse physical character of Downtown
- To celebrate Downtown as a multi-faceted neighborhood
- To instill confidence in Downtown as a primary market for investment

Goal One: Make Downtown Planning A Priority.

Throughout the last one hundred years, American society has periodically failed to recognize the key components necessary to sustain a viable city center. The functions, individual buildings and spaces that are critical to comprising a vibrant

downtown have been ignored as essential parts of the whole. Absent any long-range view that establishes a defensible course for future development, the uses and places unique to downtowns are likely to disappear in a wake of unplanned development. As these critical features give way to single-purpose single-use projects, the physical, cultural and economic diversity of city centers, including Downtown Syracuse, is greatly diminished. Yet these trends can be changed by carefully planning to integrate traditional downtown fabric and uses with new development. Elected officials, supported by effective legislation and administrative tools, can be the principal advocates promoting such an approach. And a population that recognizes the city center as the physical and fiscal heart of the metropolitan region, and adopts a strategy to maintain that status, will be successful in championing reinvestment in Downtown Syracuse.

Objective 1: Integrate concern for downtown issues more fully into the administration of the city.

In order to instill a deep-seated appreciation for Downtown within the community, there must be a strong commitment to quality Downtown development infused in the city administration. Elected officials, appointed individuals and hired staff should consider a thriving Downtown central to a successful community and, therefore, a primary concern among their responsibilities. Plans, laws, regulations and rules are the most effective way to insure comprehensive integration of defensible downtown priorities into city management, planning and living. When official decision-making by the Mayor, Common Council and various boards and commissions routinely respects the



importance of maintaining a high quality city center, municipal actions will insure a prosperous Downtown.

Action 1. Require elected and appointed officials to reference the Downtown Master Plan in all decision-making.

- Develop and implement educational materials for new officials.
- Hire professional staff with qualifications in planning and design professions.
- Routinely seek outside professional advice regarding downtown issues.
- Reference Downtown Master Plan in relevant city documents, such as facility management plans, departmental capital budgets, CDBG plan, etc.

Action 2. Establish interdepartmental review process for all public and private projects in Downtown.

- Issue an executive/mayoral mandate for insuring coordination of efforts.
- Require planning and design expertise of key staff.

Action 3. Encourage cooperation between city administration and Downtown advocates and stakeholders.

- Incorporate public participation/community design and planning in downtown municipal efforts.
- Recognize successful downtown projects/programs undertaken through official awards, mayoral proclamations, and/or council resolutions.

Action 4. Harness more efficiently the expertise and resources available through local universities and colleges.

- Collaborate on research efforts regarding Downtown issues.
- Institute professional internship programs regarding Downtown programs and projects.
- More aggressively promote/advertise existing cooperative efforts.
- Support new long-term cooperative efforts with key academic departments and new research regarding Downtown concerns.

Action 5. Improve enforcement of codes, rules and laws in Downtown.

- Revise codes, laws and/or regulations to more effectively support the Downtown Master Plan.
- Insure consistent and comprehensive enforcement of all such legal mechanisms.
- Develop a system to target code enforcement in Downtown.
- Develop and implement a training program for Downtown building inspectors.

Action 6. Require professional qualifications for City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members.

Action 7. Create a professional city planning staff.

Objective 2: Revise zoning rules and regulations.

The current Syracuse Zoning Rules and Regulations originally were written in 1922, and have not been completely revised since the 1950s. Changes made at that time reflect the popular mid-20th century focus of promoting a more suburban, and therefore less dense, physical city fabric. Limited revisions made sporadically since then do not relate to an overarching approach to long-range



community planning, but rather to single issues raised by various constituencies. The result is that the current text provides little direction as to preferred land use patterns, physical characteristics or visual quality, and addresses primarily use and building bulk, mass and setbacks. A comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance that incorporates greater sensitivity to historic properties and noteworthy traditional urban fabric will result in a legal mechanism supportive of smart growth and economic reinvestment.

Action 1. Incorporate revisions that encourage mixed use in downtown zoning classifications.

Action 2. Reinforce existing, desirable, land use patterns in terms of allowable and special uses.

Action 3. Revise design review mechanisms and design guidelines.

Action 4. Develop guidelines for reviewing and approving variance, subdivision and permit requests.

Action 5. Expand and enforce the requirements for surface parking lots and their screening.

Action 6. Expand and enforce provisions of the sign ordinance, particularly as related to temporary signs.

Goal Two: Celebrate The Diverse Physical Character Of Downtown.

The physical fabric of the city center is traditionally compact and dense, richly detailed and finely articulated. Many urban areas began as a collection of

industrial and transportation related buildings, structures and spaces. The tangible legacy of such business and commerce provided a visually interesting framework for subsequent generations of development. Housing, entertainment and cultural venues, and places of worship, memorial and play were layered upon a gritty base. With each new era of growth came new views on physical form and visual character, and downtowns became the showcase for the latest stylistic trends in city planning, architecture, landscape architecture, decorative arts, and advertising and promotion. Some periods respected the previous ones, and sought to literally build upon the existing urban fabric by expanding streets into boulevards or adding more floors to buildings. Other periods called for eliminating any evidence of the past, and creating new fabric glaringly distinct from its context or leaving open voids that should be filled in. The overall result is a physical character unique to the city center. Syracuse must celebrate the diverse composition of built form that comprises Downtown and distinguishes it from the balance of the city and region.

Objective 1: Reinforce the traditional physical organization of Downtown.

The organizational patterns of cities illustrate an incremental physical response to societal trends. Most often new development radiated out from points of settlement to accommodate industry and commerce, which were located in close proximity to one another to become the city center. Street size and alignment, as well as lot and block configurations, were defined largely in response to the needs of these early enterprises. As populations grew, however, distinct districts were formed, with downtowns continuing to house the greatest mix of uses within a framework based on successful earlier



development. Such traditional organizational patterns provided a sense of continuity during times of fast-paced growth, as they still do today. The long-established order of streets and blocks in Downtown Syracuse provide a link with past prosperity and a context for future development.

Action 1: Retain or re-establish historically significant street and block relationships.

- Identify key corridors for retention and enhancement.
- Re-instate lost or altered street alignments and/or rights-of-way.

Action 2: Maintain recognizable, cohesive districts.

- Designate all of Downtown as a Conservation District.
- Designate eligible areas within Downtown as official local, state and/or national historic districts.
- Create design guidelines for new construction and alteration to existing properties.

Action 3: Enhance parks and open spaces.

- Utilize park and Downtown history to guide physical improvements.
- Incorporate components of a comprehensive interpretive sign system.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Downtown park maintenance program, including provisions for vegetation maintenance.
- Expand and implement creek walk plan.

Objective 2: Reinforce traditional physical density.

The density traditionally associated with city centers is derived largely from the construction of 19th century buildings on narrow lots—building wall to building wall, street front to back lot line—that resulted in an overall sense of compactness. This trend to maximize available downtown land continued into the mid-20th century, reinforcing the image of downtowns as highly concentrated collections of buildings and activities. But from the 1950s on, new development failed to value the obvious association between social vibrancy and a densely built-up downtown. The construction of single-purpose buildings on large lots elevated above or substantially setback from the street gradually decreased human interaction within the public realm. This phenomenon continues to persist as traditional density is subject to indiscriminant demolition and radical alteration. Downtown Syracuse must be safeguarded against actions that will diminish its physical density any further, and therefore hamper its vitality.

Action 1: Discourage demolition.

- Expand and enforce the provisions of the demolition articles with the Zoning Rules & Regulations.
- Prevent demolition to create surface parking lots.
- Enforce and expand regulations regarding screening of surface parking and/or vacant land.

Action 2: Encourage retention and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- Retain and reuse historic buildings.
- Identify important non-historic buildings worthy of reuse.
- Promote complete redevelopment of existing buildings over partial rehabilitation.



- Promote facade improvements on private buildings.

Action 3: Encourage compatible new in-fill construction on current open lots.

- Identify key parcels of vacant land for new development.
- Create design guidelines for new construction.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy for available land.

Objective 3: Enhance the pedestrian experience.

One of the most unique characteristics of a downtown, one that has not and cannot be successfully replicated in suburban office parks or retail malls, is the public sidewalk. This is where the majority of social interaction takes place in the city center, the place where the broad spectrum of downtown residents, workers and visitors interface on common ground. Many corridors are the lifeblood of a downtown because they connect principal people-generators with key destinations. Others gain importance depending on time of day or season, as they support pedestrian travel to and from special events or programs. Regardless of how many people use any one downtown route, there must be an adequate number of appropriately designed furnishings to make the public realm inviting and safe. Many corridors in Downtown Syracuse provide such an opportunity; but many more need to be enhanced to insure that the pedestrian experience is one that people will want to repeat.

Action 1: Adopt a comprehensive streetscape plan for all of Downtown.

- Provide a complete complement of pedestrian amenities.

- Include a variety of public art (murals, 3D art, first floor exhibits, art walk).
- Develop and implement comprehensive informational and interpretive sign systems.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive street tree management plan and maintenance program.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive streetscape maintenance program.

Action 2: Improve pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

- Identify key corridors and entries.
- Implement site-specific physical improvements, including components of the comprehensive streetscape plan where appropriate.

Action 3: Encourage pedestrian related, first floor building uses.

- Implement design guidelines that insure adequate interior-exterior connections at the first-floor level of new buildings.
- Require retail or other commercial uses at first-floor of all parking structures.

Objective 4: Insure comfortable, efficient vehicular circulation to and within Downtown.

In the post mid-20th century urban renewal and highway-building era, many city advocates lobbied strongly for downtowns without cars. Their goal to re-emphasize the pedestrian denied the presence and need for vehicles within the center city and was counter-productive. For example, pedestrian malls eliminated activity that was essential to the vitality and economic viability of many downtown streets and failed to provide



high quality and sustainable pedestrian space. As long as regions continued to pursue development at the fringe, downtown workers and visitors would rely on cars to bring them to and from the heart of the city. In more recent years, it has generally been recognized that downtowns must accommodate cars, but not at the expense of all else. Identifiable approach routes, distinctive entry points, easily traveled primary streets and safe, convenient parking are essential to the success of Downtown Syracuse, but their design and detail must take into account overall downtown organizational structure as well as the pedestrian experience.

Action 1: Improve vehicular circulation patterns.

- Re-evaluate one and two-way traffic flow.
- Enforce all on-street parking and loading regulations.
- Implement site-specific physical improvements at key vehicular Downtown entries, exits and approach routes, including components of a comprehensive information sign system.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive parking plan, which addresses physical conditions, fees and overall administration.

Action 2: Enhance public transit.

- Support increased Centro amenities and coordinate design for Downtown system.
- Support central Centro hub improvements.
- Support expanded regular On-Track service.

Action 3: Explore alternative transportation opportunities for access to and from Downtown.

- Improve bicycle circulation to and through Downtown.
- Improve and expand use of bus and train shuttles for special events.

Goal Three: Celebrate Downtown As A Multi-Faceted Neighborhood.

Unlike other neighborhoods or districts within cities, downtowns contain a wide variety of people, places and functions that in any other setting would seem incongruous and incompatible. They house the seats of government, as well as the financial, business and cultural communities. Residents, workers, shoppers, students and visitors alike come to the city center. At times they occupy the same spaces and draw on the same downtown resources; at others, they are pursuing agendas that create seemingly endless conflict. Yet together these disparate groups create a synergy that is at once exhilarating and chaotic, vibrant and frenzied. They give life to downtown places during a single day, throughout the week, from season to season. And among them, some appreciate that downtown can be much more than just a place to live, or a place to work, or a place to relax. They understand that downtown can be all of these things at once, that there are multiple levels on which to engage the city center and that no one trip to downtown need be for one single purpose. When these people are in the minority, however, there is the danger that essential components of this complex place might be viewed as unnecessary and, over time, important parts of the city center will disappear. It is imperative, therefore, that the rich physical and social diversity of Downtown Syracuse be recognized as an unparalleled regional community resource.



Objective 1: Increase the Downtown residential population.

Successful city centers have always included some level of housing. In the 19th century, residential buildings were often equal in number to those that served industrial or commercial purposes, providing 24 hours of activity and social exchange. But by the 1910s the streetcar had spurred the development of outlying residential neighborhoods and housing downtown was consolidated into densely packed buildings or districts. By the mid-20th century city dwellers continued their out-migration, leaving both urban residential neighborhoods and the city center. With a decrease in the number of people living in downtowns came a decrease in the vitality attendant with round-the-clock human interaction. This trend has slowly been reversed over the last 25 years, with more individuals and couples selecting downtown locations for their principal residence. Two districts in Downtown Syracuse are excellent examples of how the resident population has been reestablished, and how important it is to attract even more downtown dwellers.

Action 1: Address vacancies in existing residential buildings/complexes.

- Support physical improvement of all units.
- Assist in marketing available units.
- Support existing and future residents associations

Action 2: Encourage new housing development.

- Identify key sites and districts for residential development.
- Promote mixed-use projects that incorporate housing.
- Promote diversity of housing types and residents.

- Support development of artist lofts/studios.
- Target available financial tools toward residential projects.

Action 3: Support development of new and retention of existing neighborhood services for residents.

Objective 2: Emphasize Downtown as the cultural core of the metropolitan region.

Clearly all sectors of a city have buildings, structures and spaces that are evocative of significant cultural trends and events, or are important cultural venues. But it is downtown that contains the greatest concentration of monumental places that literally and figuratively embody a community's collective cultural heritage. It is here that one finds the great examples of architecture, civic art and public spaces; grand movie palaces, imposing museums and eclectic art galleries; and homes of the symphony, opera and performance theater. Their close physical proximity to one another invites joint or complimentary events, programs and exhibits, which in turn unleash a creative energy throughout the city center. Downtown Syracuse contains such a rich concentration of cultural organizations and facilities, a prestigious assemblage that should be enhanced and expanded.

Action 1: Preserve and utilize culturally significant buildings, spaces and districts.

- Designate all of Downtown as a Conservation District.
- Designate eligible areas within Downtown as official local, state and/or national historic districts.
- Create a comprehensive marketing program that highlights culturally significant properties.



Action 2: Encourage all existing Downtown cultural organizations and facilities to remain.

- Assist in promoting cultural events and programs.
- Create a public arts program in cooperation with current cultural organizations.
- Support cooperative advertising and scheduling.
- Promote coordination between Downtown businesses and cultural events and programs.
- Provide financial assistance for operations, events, programs and capital improvements.

Action 3: Attract major new cultural organizations and facilities to Downtown.

- Identify key sites and districts as cultural venues.
- Create economic incentives to attract new cultural organizations.
- Establish physical links and experiential connections between existing and new facilities.

Objective 3: Continue to support a diverse Downtown worker population.

When downtown advocates are successful in attracting new businesses to a city center, they are obligated to provide a setting that supports the growing worker population. Not only must they insure enjoyable and safe travel routes between arrival points and places of employment, they must offer a range of functions and activities that cater to the “off-hours” of the downtown work force. Service and convenience retail, principal government offices, restaurant and entertainment options, and cultural events and programs allow employees to engage more than just the place where they work. They are provided with the opportunity to become

intimately familiar with the city center and to learn first hand its importance to the larger regional community. Day-time workers must be enticed to arrive earlier and stay later in Downtown Syracuse, and to see that it can meet a range of needs beyond providing a place of employment.

Action 1: Market Downtown as an attractive work environment.

- Expand promotional efforts to emphasize services, programs and events that cater to employee needs.
- Attract new businesses that will directly benefit from specific Downtown offerings.

Action 2: Support greater variety of ‘off-hours’ activities.

- Attract businesses, entertainment establishments and cultural facilities that will increase off-hours options.
- Encourage consistent operating hours among current and future Downtown businesses.
- Encourage expanded cooperative advertising and promotions for events and programs.

Goal Four: Instill Confidence In Downtown As A Primary Market For Development.

In recent years professional urban planners, designers and economists have brought attention to the short-lived rewards associated with continued physical development and financial investment at the fringe of metropolitan regions. They have argued that community resources are better spent by building on the inherent economic value of existing infrastructure, buildings, recreational facilities and cultural venues, rather than create any of these anew. They further promote investing in downtowns not only to stabilize these



critical places but also to demonstrate to outside investors a local confidence in the city center. If continued disinvestment in downtowns is allowed, or tacitly encouraged by a lack of smart-growth policies, then the health of an entire metropolitan region is threatened. The economic condition of Downtown Syracuse is a barometer for measuring the economic state of central New York. Therefore, decisions regarding public and private development in Downtown must consider both short and long-term effects and rewards.

Objective 1: Create a diverse economic strategy for Downtown.

The physical and social diversity traditionally associated with city centers has always been complimented by an equally wide-ranging economic base. While the industry and manufacturing that once commanded the lion’s share of downtown economies might no longer be present in large numbers, such enterprises can and still do contribute to the financial well-being of many city centers. It may be, however, that the definition of “industry” and “manufacturing” has changed in recent times. Similarly, retail businesses also can still be essential to insuring a sound downtown economy, but it likely is specialty, service and convenience—rather than traditional—retail. In addition, it is increasingly high technology and information technology companies that make up the downtown commercial office market. Add to these components spin-offs of cultural and academic institutions and the economic base of today’s downtowns is as intricate as in the past. The key to a sustainable economy for Downtown Syracuse is to develop strategies that recognize and perpetuate, rather than diminish, this diversity.

Action 1: Promote mixed-use development.

- Identify preferred business types, mixes and locations.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated marketing program to attract developers of mixed-use projects.
- Target available funding mechanisms and create new incentives that prioritize mixed-use projects.

Action 2: Support a variety of project types, sizes and scales.

- Encourage small entrepreneurial development efforts that are unique to Downtown Syracuse.
- Maximize the impact of large development projects by simultaneously pursuing investment in adjacent properties.
- Capitalize on the economic investment already made in existing infrastructure and public spaces.
- Work with property owners to market available properties.

Action 3: Utilize cultural tourism as an economic generator.

- Encourage links between local cultural organizations and facilities and regional and national events and programs.
- Support coordinated cultural events, programs and marketing.
- Promote physical and functional links between cultural facility venues, events and programs.

Action 4. Promote downtown as a location for high technology and information technology businesses.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated marketing program to attract high technology and information technology businesses.



- Capitalize on the educational and economic capital of local universities and colleges engaged in various high technology and information technology research.
- Support the Syracuse Technological Garden Business Incubator and encourage the development of additional centers.

Objective 2: Maximize economic development tools.

Both government and private sector entities offer a large number of tools for assisting economic development ventures. Some programs, such as the federal investment tax credits for the certified rehabilitation of properties listed in the National Register, might be particularly attractive to developers interested in the high concentrations of historic properties found in downtowns. Others, however, such as the various Federal Highway Agency Administration enhancement programs, often are not readily considered for activities associated with a traditional urban center. No matter what the state of the national, New York State or Syracuse economy at any given time, all available economic development programs must be considered viable options for projects within Downtown Syracuse

Action 1: Develop and distribute information about available programs through a multi-media marketing campaign.

- Enhance and continually update existing brochures.
- Hold periodic public information sessions regarding current programs.
- Target programs to key projects.
- Publicize successful projects that incorporated current programs.

Action 2: Establish new local programs based on successful national models.

- Create programs specifically for attracting residential development, such as real property tax abatements for adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing.
- Create programs that assist third parties in preventing unnecessary demolition or encouraging rehabilitation, for example a revolving fund for emergency acquisitions.
- Create programs that assist in the establishment of new small businesses, such as a “free rent” program.

Action 3: Partner with local universities and colleges to encourage Downtown business development.

- Provide support of academic research related to the local economy, including traditional industries and manufacturing, high and information technology, and entrepreneurial innovations.
- Encourage creation of start-up businesses in Downtown based on current academic research.
- Cooperate with local academic institutions to create or expand internship programs that match students with existing and new Downtown businesses.

Action 4: Strengthen coordination of economic development efforts among the City, Metropolitan Development Association and Chamber of Commerce.

Objective 3: Undertake key public improvements in Downtown to stimulate private development.

When local governments devote scarce public resources to infrastructure, public



buildings and spaces within their downtowns, they send a strong signal to the private sector that the city center is worth investing in. Well maintained storm and sanitary systems, roads and sidewalks, and municipal buildings and parks provide a safe, stable and attractive framework for private development. Improving—and subsequently maintaining—these essential features will encourage existing Downtown Syracuse property and business owners to make improvements of their own, and together such investments will attract new entrepreneurs and developers.

Action 1: Develop a comprehensive strategy for managing Downtown parking.

Action 2: Support improved and expanded mass transit.

Action 3: Improve and maintain streetscape quality.

Action 4: Improve and maintain parks and open spaces.

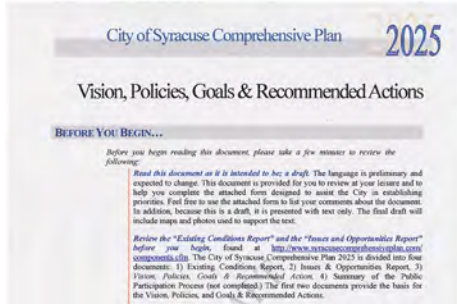
Action 5: Develop a more coordinated and comprehensive approach for handling solid waste disposal.

The four goals of the Downtown Master Plan of the Comprehensive Plan clearly define the importance of establishing a commitment to downtown planning among elected officials, business and civic leaders, and the general population; fostering an appreciation for the rich physical and social capital that constitutes the city center; and pursuing an agenda that evokes strong confidence in the current and future Downtown economy. The objectives presented further codify these ideals; and implementation of the recommended actions will make them a reality.



Goal One: Make Downtown Planning a Priority

Objective 1: Integrate concern for downtown issues more fully into the administration of the city.



Draft of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Syracuse.

Action 1: Require elected and appointed officials to reference the Downtown Master Plan in all decision-making.



Public hearing before Common Council.

Action 2: Establish interdepartmental review process for all public and private projects in Downtown.

Action 3: Encourage cooperation between city administration and Downtown advocates and stakeholders.



Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee Presentation.



City of Syracuse Preservation Plan
Faculty of Landscape Architecture
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Cover image for the Syracuse Preservation Plan.

Action 4: Harness more efficiently the expertise and resources available through local universities and colleges.



Illegal parking in Downtown.



Downtown police bike patrol.

Action 5: Improve enforcement of codes, rules and laws in Downtown.

How much more poor planning can we stand?
To the Editor:
Columnist Sean Kirst is right that demolishing the core of our historic Main Street and replacing it with a giant parking garage is inappropriate. Mayor Driscoll appears destined to follow the same misguided direction of past city leaders.
Preserving jobs is an important job of any leader. But destroying the historic appearance of the city in the process is too great a price to pay...

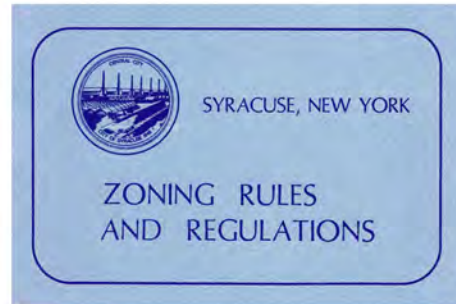
Post-Standard letter to the editor.



Architectural style that is not congruent with its surroundings.

Action 6: Require professional qualifications for City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members.

Action 7: Create a professional city planning staff.



Syracuse zoning ordinance.

Objective 2: Revise zoning rules and regulations.



Mixed residential/retail development on West Genesee Street.

Action 1: Incorporate revisions that encourage mixed use in Downtown zoning classifications.

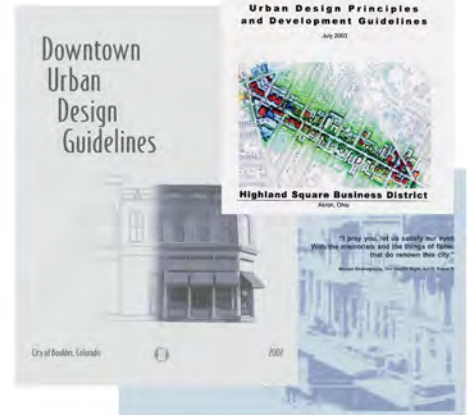


The courtyard at Pitalabites.



New restaurant in Downtown.

Action 2: Reinforce existing, desirable, land use patterns in terms of allowable and special uses.



Examples of design guidelines.

Action 3: Revise design review mechanisms and design guidelines.

Action 4: Develop guidelines for reviewing and approving variance, subdivisions and permit requests.



Appropriate screening of parking lot in Downtown.

Action 5: Expand and enforce the requirements for surface parking lots and their screening.



Inappropriate signs in Downtown.



Inappropriate signs in Downtown.

Action 6: Expand and enforce provisions of the sign ordinance, particularly as related to temporary signs.



Goal Two: Celebrate the diverse physical character of Downtown.

Objective 1: Reinforce the traditional physical organization of Downtown.



East Genesee Street corridor: view to Fayette Park.



East Genesee Street corridor: view blocked by contemporary building.



Building situated in historic street corridor.

Action 1: Retain or reestablish historically significant street and block relationships.



Clinton Street.

Action 2: Maintain recognizable, cohesive districts.



President Murphy of SUNY-ESF joining Senator Clinton and others at the tree planting ceremony to launch the Urban Forestry Initiative.



Holiday celebration in Downtown.

Action 3: Enhance parks and open spaces.

Objective 2: Reinforce traditional physical density.



Demolished building on South Salina Street.

Action 1: Discourage demolition.



Rehabilitation of the Donahue Building.

Action 2: Encourage retention and rehabilitation of existing buildings.



Park and parking lot prior to construction of Center Arroyo.



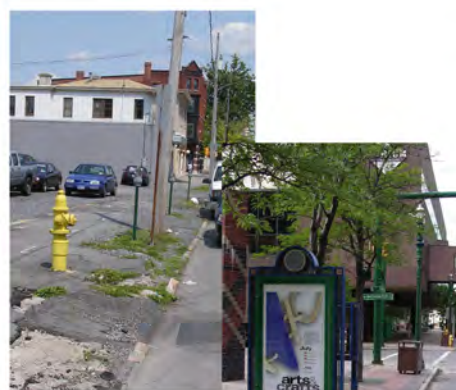
Park with Center Arroyo.

Action 3: Encourage compatible new in-fill construction on current open lots.



Sidewalk activity along South Clinton Street.

Objective 3: Enhance the pedestrian experience.



Street with streetscape implementation.



Fully implemented streetscape.

Action 1: Adopt a comprehensive streetscape plan for all of Downtown.



Downtown disconnected from University Hill neighborhood.

Action 2: Improve pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods.



First floor retail in Hanover Square.

Action 3: Encourage pedestrian related, first floor building uses.

Objective 4: Insure comfortable, efficient vehicular circulation to and within Downtown.

Action 1: Improve vehicular circulation patterns.



Transit hub at Salina and Fayette Streets.

Action 2: Enhance public transit.



Bicycle lane in Downtown.

Action 3: Explore alternative transportation opportunities for access to and from Downtown.



Goal Three: Celebrate Downtown as a multi-faceted neighborhood.

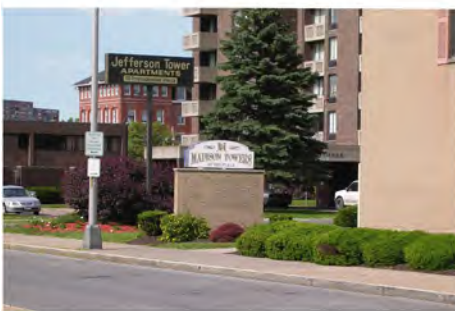
Objective 1: Increase the Downtown residential population.



Kodak bike race.



Clinton Tower apartments.



Jefferson Tower apartments.

Action 1: Address vacancies in existing residential buildings/complexes.



Proposed new development at Clinton Square.

Action 2: Encourage new housing development.



Imperial Dry Cleaner on Fayette Street.



Downtown YMCA.

Action 3: Support development of new and retention of existing neighborhood services for residents.

Objective 2: Emphasize Downtown as the cultural core of the metropolitan region.



'Sitting and Dancing' in Lower Square.



Symphony-goers in Armory Square.



Everson Art Museum.



H. H. Franklin Celebration.

Action 1: Preserve and utilize culturally significant buildings, spaces, and districts.



Media Unit, Montgomery Street.

Action 2: Encourage all existing Downtown cultural organizations and facilities to remain.



50th Anniversary Polish Festival in Downtown.

Action 3: Attract major new cultural organizations and facilities to Downtown.



Downtown workers.

Objective 3: Continue to support a diverse Downtown worker population.



New resident and employee of Downtown.



Expanded uses of Landmark Theatre.

Action 1: Market Downtown as an attractive work environment.



Outdoor dining in Downtown.

Action 2: Support greater variety of 'off-hours' activities.



Detailed Recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS: DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines provide a forum for citizens, private developers and city government to work together toward achieving a better urban environment through attention to fundamental planning and design principles. They are important for protecting community character and insuring successful revitalization of areas targeted for development. They allow a municipality to look beyond the specifics of an individual project and to objectively consider its relationship to and impact on the larger urban context. Design guidelines are a flexible tool, and a supplement to traditional zoning requirements, that can be used to protect and enhance areas having distinctive physical and visual character. They often are based on existing and/or preferred characteristics for open space and natural features, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, building scale and massing, architectural expression and details, informational and advertising needs, and site landscape features.

The proposed Downtown Design Guidelines are intended to assist in the planning and design of new construction, renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings, and conditions at parking lots within Downtown Syracuse. Property owners and developers considering potential projects can use the Guidelines to guide conceptual and final designs. The city administration will use the Guidelines to review development proposals and, in doing so, insure high quality results that enhance rather than diminish the physical and visual character of Downtown.

These Downtown Design Guidelines directly correspond to a principal recommendation made in *The Preservation Component of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan*, a compliment to this Downtown Master Plan. That document calls for the establishment of conservation districts, areas of the city having distinctive character, as embodied in the street patterns, building density, size, form, features and materials, and site topography, features and materials that make them integral parts of the city's identity. These districts can cover large portions of the city and may include one or more historic districts or individual historic properties within them; they are areas worth conserving and warrant special land use planning and physical design consideration. Based on the classification criteria established in the Preservation Component, Downtown Syracuse is recognized as the largest and most significant conservation district in the city.

Review of Downtown projects pursuant to conservation district designation will be the responsibility of the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board or, due to the unique nature of Downtown, a new separate Downtown Design Review Board comprised of appointed individuals having demonstrated professional experience in architecture, landscape architecture, city planning or community design.

The Guidelines are structured so that the success of a project, and ultimately Downtown Syracuse as a whole, will be assured when:

- Overall site development compliments the larger Downtown context.
- New building mass and architectural expression relate to



- the immediate Downtown neighborhood context.
- Primary building facades support a safe and interactive pedestrian environment.
- Vehicular access and parking for a property minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment.

City of Syracuse Downtown Design Guidelines

New Construction

The introduction of new development within existing Downtown fabric must take into account current and/or preferred density, overall scale and form of contiguous and adjacent buildings, and details used in both building and site features within the immediate context of the subject property. New construction must compliment rather than provide stark contrast to the unique character of Downtown. This guidance is intentionally not prescriptive: it is to be used as a framework for overall site and building design.

Site Planning and Massing

Respond to Overall Physical Downtown Environment—Develop an overall concept and site composition in response to patterns of urban form found contiguous and adjacent to the subject property

Considerations—The arrangement of building components on the property, as well as overall built area, must be consistent with density of the immediate context; or, where existing adjacent conditions are not optimum, development of the subject property must establish preferred conditions. In either case, site planning must consider:

- Changes in the street grid alignment that yield a site having a nonstandard shape;
- Contrasting site edge conditions;
- Patterns of urban form, such as nearby buildings, that have distinctive and effective massing compositions;
- Daily or seasonally access to direct sunlight; and
- Views to noteworthy buildings or natural features.

Architectural Expression

Respond to Immediate Neighborhood Context—Develop an architectural concept and compose major building elements that reinforce desirable features existing in immediately contiguous properties.

Considerations—Each new construction site lies within a specific Downtown neighborhood or district that has distinct physical features and visual characteristics. The design of any new building must compliment the stylistic articulation of immediately contiguous properties; or, where existing adjacent conditions are not optimum, design of the new building must establish preferred conditions. In either case, architectural expression must consider:

- Massing composition, scale and proportions of adjacent buildings;
- Roof form and roof line articulations of adjacent buildings;
- Architectural features, materials and finishes of nearby historic and/or noteworthy properties; and
- Nearby public open space.

Create a Transition in Bulk and Scale—Develop massing composition that creates a transition in height, bulk and/or scale in



areas where current conditions are not optimum.

Considerations—The design of new buildings must support community interest in re-establishing traditional urban density and form. New construction must be used as a transition between undesirable and preferred conditions, where previous development has diminished density, or in the rare case where density has been increased unnecessarily. Creating transitions in bulk and scale must consider:

- Relationships resulting from lot orientation;
- Articulation of building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that reflect existing patterns of adjacent buildings;
- Reducing the bulk of upper floors; and
- Limiting the horizontal length of facades.

*Provide Visually Interesting Facades—*Develop design details that result in attractive overall architectural compositions, as well as individual building elevations.

Considerations—New buildings must contribute to the overall aesthetic composition of the skyline and streetscape through the use of fenestration patterns, architectural features, ornamentation, materials and/or finishes. Blank or minimally articulated building facades detract from the visual quality of Downtown. The design of building facades must consider:

- Fenestration patterns that allow visual connections between public space and private interiors.
- Limiting overall length of unarticulated building elevations;

- Subtle setbacks, indentations or projections that divide wall surfaces;
- Colors, textures and finishes that create variation;
- Lighting that highlights building features; and
- Incorporating public art into building façade design.

*Provide Visually Interesting and Functional Building Entries—*Develop highly visible and easily accessible entries to new buildings.

Considerations—All building entries, but specifically the principal one, must be readily discernible. They must incorporate sufficient physical details to create visual interest at street level, as well as appropriate features to insure safe and convenient access. Open space created adjacent to entries also must be defensible and positively contribute to the overall pedestrian experience. The design of building entries must consider:

- Projecting or recessed bays;
- Distinctive doors, openings and canopies;
- Decorative building lighting and/or signage;
- Distinctive site treatments, such as paving, seating and/or water features; and
- Incorporating public art.

Noteworthy Traditional Buildings

Alterations to existing Downtown buildings must take into account the historic significance of some properties, as well as the importance of others that contain non-historic but nevertheless noteworthy traditional buildings. Rehabilitation of the former and renovation of the latter generally calls for the retention of original fenestration patterns, architectural features, materials



and finishes that comprise the distinctive character of the property. Modifications to historic properties must be reviewed in light of the *US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which generally require the retention of historic design and fabric. While changes to noteworthy buildings also can be based on this approach, the greater emphasis is on alterations that will compliment original architectural expressions.

Significance

Respect Traditional Physical and Visual Quality—Develop renovation designs that retain or compliment the long-established scale, form and details of noteworthy buildings.

Considerations—Many older buildings are important cultural components within the overall composition of Downtown. While they may lack the specific criteria to qualify for official designation as historically significant, these properties are essential to maintaining the traditional organizational patterns, forms and architectural expressions unique to Downtown. Respecting key physical and visual features must consider:

- Minimal alteration to overall building scale and form through additions or demolition;
- Retention of original orientation to the street; and
- Minimal alteration of original design details of principal facades.

Architectural Expression

Retain or Re-establish Visually Interesting Facades—Develop renovation designs that highlight original overall architectural composition, as well as individual building elevations.

Considerations—Traditional architectural expressions contribute to the overall aesthetic composition of the skyline and streetscape through the use of fenestration patterns, detailed features, ornamentation, materials and/or finishes. Building facades that have been stripped of these elements, or where previous alterations have obscured or removed them, detract from the visual quality of Downtown. When original design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties must serve as a guide in designing alterations. Addressing building facades must consider:

- Original fenestration patterns, including door and window openings and units;
- Original colors, textures and finishes that create variation;
- Original roof forms and roof line details; and
- Incorporating new materials complimentary in color, pattern, texture and finish.

Retain or Re-establish First-Floor Storefronts—Develop renovation designs that provide traditional physical and visual links between public space and the building interior.

Considerations--Storefronts must be clearly identifiable and visible from the street or sidewalk. Building treatments must provide a visual link between the public right-of-way and private interior space. Whenever possible, physical access must also be provided. When original storefront design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties must serve as a guide in designing alterations. Addressing first-floor storefronts must consider:

- Original scale, rhythm and proportions of overall storefront;
- Original materials;



- Original design details, including transparency of storefront glass and location and type of signs; and
- Incorporating new materials complimentary in color, pattern, texture and finish.

Retain or Re-establish Building Entries—
Develop renovation designs that emphasize original or traditional entries.

Considerations--All building entries, but specifically the principal one, must remain readily discernible and accessible. They must incorporate original and/or contemporary physical details to create visual interest at street level, as well as appropriate features to insure safe and convenient entry. Original open space adjacent to entries also must be defensible and positively contribute to the overall pedestrian experience. When original entry design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties must serve as a guide in designing alterations. The treatment of building entries must consider:

- Original doors, openings and canopies;
- Original decorative building lighting and/or signage;
- Original distinctive site treatments, such as paving, seating and/or water features; and
- Incorporating new materials complimentary in color, pattern, texture and finish.

Repair Existing Features and Materials—
Develop renovation designs that prioritize repair of deteriorated or damaged architectural features, as well as materials.

Considerations—Whenever possible, alterations must include comprehensive repairs to damaged or deteriorated components of the building. Original stylistic features and materials that cannot

be retained must be replaced in a manner and using new materials similar to their original counterparts. When original design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties must serve as a guide in designing alterations. Repairs must consider:

- Removal of previous alterations that contrast with original physical and visual characteristics;
- Reversal of previous repairs that have created damage or caused deterioration; and
- Incorporating new materials complimentary in color, pattern, texture and finish.

*Accommodate Contemporary Services and Utilities Unobtrusively—*Develop systems that can be installed with minimal physical and visual impact.

Considerations--Mechanical equipment and utilities must be designed and installed in a manner that does not detract from the character of the property. Previous additions that are highly visible, obscure important building features, or have destroyed original building fabric must be relocated. Providing service and utilities must consider:

- Locations that are not visible from principal views to the property;
- Materials and colors that diminish visual prominence of system equipment; and
- Screening of equipment that compliments the overall building character.

Vehicular Access and Parking

Both new construction and projects involving existing buildings must consider vehicular access and parking needs associated with the property. With new physical development, there is the



opportunity to address both early in project planning and design. In cases involving existing buildings, accommodating vehicles might prove more problematic as priority must be given to retaining historically significant and noteworthy traditional fabric.

Provide Safe, Efficient Parking Lots—

Develop surface parking lots that maximize efficiency, but incorporate appropriate screening, signage and user amenities.

Considerations—Parking lots must include provisions to minimize their visual impact while still providing a safe and efficient layout. Attention must be given to surface materials, size of parking stalls and drive lanes, perimeter screening, lighting and signage. Designs for surface parking lots must consider:

- Locating parking at the rear or side of properties, and never along primary street frontages;
- Parking stalls generally 10 x 20 feet, with 24 foot travel lanes;
- Durable impervious pavement (e.g., asphalt) and surface markings for parking bays and drive lanes;
- Perimeter screening;
- Informational and direction signs, including universal parking sign logo;
- Site lighting;
- Vegetation;
- On-site storage for snow removal; and
- Incorporating bicycle parking in lots having more than 75 parking bays.

*Minimize Access/Egress Points—*Develop designs that limit the number of curb cuts and associated vehicular travel lanes across public sidewalks.

Considerations--Where vehicular access to a property is deemed appropriate, entry/exit points must be held to a minimum and located to create the least impact on the Downtown pedestrian environment. Access points must also provide appropriate connections to overall vehicular circulation. Locating access/egress points must consider:

- Proximity to street intersections;
- Volume of vehicular traffic on contiguous streets;
- Volume of pedestrian traffic on contiguous sidewalks;
- Minimum practical number and width of curb cuts; and
- Design details to identify access/egress.

*Provide Appropriate Screening—*Develop screening that adequately reduces the visual prominence of surface parking lots.

Considerations—Open lots decrease the traditional density of Downtown and detract from overall physical and visual character. Screening the perimeter of surface parking must diminish this effect, as well as re-establish some sense of enclosure along the street line. Screening of parking lots must consider:

- Screening devices no less than 5 feet high;
- Perimeter walls, no longer than 20 linear feet and separated by 3 foot wide breaks;
- Perimeter planting areas, generally no more than 20 linear feet and separated by 3 foot wide breaks, less than 4 feet wide or not less than 5 feet to accommodate trees; and
- Internal planting screens that provide visual relief and summer shade.



Provide Service Areas Separate from Parking Lots—Develop distinct property service areas to accommodate loading, solid waste storage and removal, and services and utilities.

Considerations—Loading, service and utility features can be haphazardly added to surface parking areas, further exacerbating the negative image of these often unsightly areas. Separate, dedicated spaces must be provided to accommodate

such property needs. Design of service areas must consider:

- Locating service areas at the rear or side of properties, and never along primary street frontages;
- Screening with durable materials that complement the primary building;
- Proximity to street intersections;
- Volume of vehicular traffic on contiguous streets; and
- Volume of pedestrian traffic on contiguous sidewalks.





Inappropriate transition in bulk, materials, and scale that does not reflect traditional urban patterns of adjacent buildings.



Compatible buildings in terms of bulk, materials, and scale reinforce traditional urban density and form.



Buildings with no articulation of street facades detract from overall aesthetic composition of streetscapes.



Buildings with well articulated street facades result in attractive overall architectural compositions.



Inappropriate entrance articulation detracts from all pedestrian experiences.



Well designed entrance articulation positively contributes to the overall pedestrian experience.



Inappropriate signage that does not fit the scale and character of the building.



Appropriate signage that fits the scale and character of the building and neighborhood.

New Construction

Design guidelines provide a forum for citizens, private developers and city government to work together toward achieving a better urban environment through attention to fundamental planning and design principles. They are important for protecting community character and insuring successful revitalization of areas targeted for development. They allow the municipality to look beyond the specifics of an individual project and to objectively consider its relationship to an impact on the larger urban context. Design guidelines are a flexible tool, and an alternative to traditional zoning requirements, that can be used to protect and enhance areas having distinctive physical and visual character. They often are based on existing and/or preferred characteristics for open space and natural features, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, building scale and massing, architectural expression and details, informational and advertising needs, and site landscape features.

The Guidelines are structured so that the success of a project, and ultimately Downtown Syracuse as a whole, will be assured when:

- Overall site development compliments the larger Downtown context.
- New building mass and architectural expression relate to the immediate Downtown neighborhood context.
- Primary building facades support a safe and interactive pedestrian environment.
- Vehicular access and parking for a property minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment.

The introduction of new development within existing Downtown fabric must take into account current and/or preferred density, overall scale and form of contiguous and adjacent buildings, and details used in both building and site features within the immediate context of the subject property. New construction must compliment rather than provide stark contrast to the unique character of Downtown. This guidance is intentionally not prescriptive: it is to be used as a framework for overall site and building design.

Site Planning and Massing

Respond to Overall Physical Downtown Environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose building massing in response to patterns of urban form found contiguous and adjacent to the subject property

The arrangement of building components on the property, as well as overall built area, must be consistent with density of the immediate context; or, where existing adjacent conditions are not optimum, development of the subject property must establish preferred conditions.

Architectural Expression

Create a Transition in Bulk and Scale. Develop massing compositions that create a transition in height, bulk and/or scale in areas where current conditions are not optimum.

The design of new buildings must support community interest in reestablishing traditional urban density and form. New construction must be used as a transition between undesirable and preferred conditions, where previous development has diminished density, or in the rare case where density has been increased unnecessarily.

Provide Visually Interesting Facades. Develop design details that result in attractive overall architectural compositions, as well as individual building elevations.

New buildings must contribute to the overall aesthetic composition of the skyline and streetscape through the use of fenestration patterns, architectural features, ornamentation, materials and/or finishes. Blank or minimally articulated building facades detract from the visual quality of Downtown.

Provide Visually Interesting and Functional Building Entries. Develop highly visible and easily accessible entries to new buildings.

All building entries, and in particular the principal one, must be readily discernible. They must incorporate sufficient physical details to create visual interest at street level, as well as appropriate features to insure safe and convenient access. Open space created adjacent to entries also must be defensible and positively contribute to the overall pedestrian experience.





Inappropriate storefront articulation that does not provide traditional physical and visual links between public space and building interior.



Appropriate storefront articulation that provides visual links and an inviting atmosphere for pedestrians.

Noteworthy Traditional Buildings

Alterations to existing Downtown buildings must take into account the historic significance of properties, as well as the importance of other non-historic but nevertheless noteworthy traditional buildings. Rehabilitation of the former and renovation of the latter generally calls for the retention of original fenestration patterns, architectural features, materials and finishes that comprise the distinctive character of the property. Modifications to historic properties must be reviewed in light of the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. While changes to noteworthy buildings also can be based on this approach, the greater emphasis is on alterations that will compliment the original architectural character.

Significance

Respect traditional physical and visual quality. Develop renovation designs that retain or compliment the scale, form and details of noteworthy buildings.

Many older buildings are important cultural components within the overall composition of Downtown. While they may not meet the specific criteria to qualify for official historic designation, these properties are essential to maintaining the traditional organizational patterns, forms and architectural character unique to Downtown.

Architectural Expression

Retain or Reestablish Visually Interesting Facades. Develop renovation designs that highlight original overall architectural composition, as well as individual building elevations.

Traditional architectural expressions contribute to the overall aesthetic composition of the skyline and streetscape through the use of fenestration patterns, detailed features, ornamentation, materials and/or finishes. Building facades that have been stripped of these elements, or where previous alterations have obscured or removed them, detract from the visual quality of Downtown. When original design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties can serve as a guide in designing alterations.



Inappropriate facade treatments of structures detract from the overall character of the building.



Appropriate facade treatments enhance the street corridor.

Retain or Reestablish First-Floor Storefronts. Develop renovation designs that provide traditional physical and visual links between public space and the building interior.

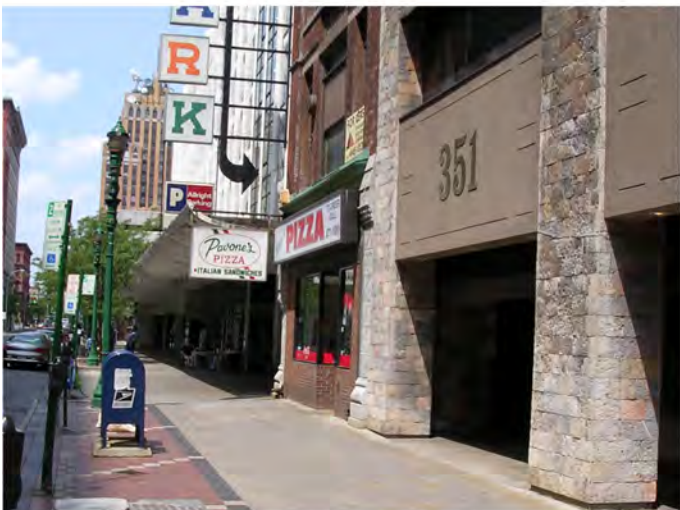
Storefronts must be clearly identifiable and visible from the street or sidewalk. Building treatments must provide a visual link between the public right-of-way and private interior space. Whenever possible, physical access must also be provided. When original storefront design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties can serve as a guide in designing alterations.

Retain or Reestablish Building Entries. Develop renovation designs that emphasize original or traditional entries.

All building entries, but specifically the principal one, must remain readily discernible and accessible. They must incorporate original and/or contemporary physical details to create visual interest at street level, as well as appropriate features to insure safe and convenient entry. Original open space adjacent to entries also must be defensible and positively contribute to the overall pedestrian experience. When original entry design or fabric is unknown, similar adjacent properties can serve as a guide in designing alterations.

Accommodate Contemporary Services and Utilities Unobtrusively. Develop systems that can be installed with minimal physical and visual impact.

Mechanical equipment and utilities must be designed and installed in a manner that does not detract from the character of the property. Previous additions that are highly visible, obscure important building features, or have destroyed original building fabric must be relocated.



Inappropriate entrances detract from the overall character of Downtown.



Distinctive doorway and canopy entrances create visual interest at street level and provide safe and convenient entry.



Inappropriate window character that is inconsistent with traditional Downtown buildings.



Appropriate window character for traditional Downtown buildings.





Inappropriate siting and screening of a surface parking lot which maximizes its visual impact.



Appropriate parking lot design using proper screening technique that minimizes visual impact.



Inappropriate informational and directional signage which creates visual clutter.



Appropriate signage that provides orientation, reduces visual clutter and enhances pedestrian safety.



Inappropriate perimeter screening that detracts from the physical and visual character.



Appropriate perimeter screening that establishes a sense of enclosure along the street and enhances the physical and visual character.



Inappropriate use of material and lack of surface markings for parking bays and drive lanes.



Appropriate durable impervious pavement and surface markings for parking bays and drive lanes.

Surface Parking Lots

Both new construction and existing buildings must consider vehicular access and parking needs associated with the property. With new physical development, there is the opportunity to address both early in project planning and design. In cases involving existing buildings, accommodating vehicles might prove more problematic as priority must be given to retaining historically significant and noteworthy traditional fabric.

Provide Safe and Efficient Parking Lots. Develop surface parking lots that maximize efficiency, but incorporate appropriate screening, signage and user amenities.

Parking lots must include provisions to minimize their visual impact while still providing a safe and efficient layout. Attention must be given to surface materials, size of parking stalls and drive lanes, perimeter screening, lighting and signage.

Minimize Access/Egress Points. Develop designs that limit the number of curb cuts and associated vehicular travel lanes across public sidewalks.

Where vehicular access to a property is deemed appropriate, entry/exit points held to a minimum, and located to create the least impact on the Downtown pedestrian environment. Access points must also provide appropriate connections to overall vehicular circulation.

Provide Appropriate Screening. Develop screening that adequately reduces the visual prominence of surface parking lots.

Surface parking lots decrease the traditional density of Downtown and detract from overall physical and visual character. Screening the perimeter of surface parking lots will minimize this effect, as well as re-establish a sense of enclosure along the street.

Provide Service Areas Separate from Parking Lots. Develop distinct property service areas to accommodate loading, solid waste storage and removal, and services and utilities.

Loading, service and utility features can be haphazardly added to surface parking areas, further exacerbating the negative image of these often unsightly areas. Separate, dedicated spaces must be provided to accommodate such property needs.



RECOMMENDATION: DOWNTOWN ENTRIES

The approach to and entry into city districts or neighborhoods should and can be a memorable experience. For long time residents and daily users, the routes taken and portals used to pass into a particular sector become routine and familiar. While they might lack outstanding features, these physical links and entry points take on great meaning—signaling arrival at home, work or play. Basic amenities, such as informational signage, lighting and regular maintenance, are sufficient to insure local citizens are afforded safe and pleasurable movement throughout a city.

For the uninitiated or infrequent visitor, however, the quality of the experience in traveling to and ultimately reaching a particular city location is much more significant. These individuals are looking for both overt and subtle clues to guide them to an intended destination. Powerfully articulated primary corridors linking a city to its larger context, and districts within a city to one another, contribute to successful way-finding and a positive first impression of a community. Equally impressive entrances to specific neighborhoods or areas enhance that initial image. Given the historic and cultural significance of most city centers, it is arguable that the entry experience into a downtown is one of the most important for a community to consider.

The proposed Downtown Entry System is intended to emphasize principal gateways and approach routes to Downtown Syracuse. A collection of coordinated physical elements, as well as the incorporation of permanent or temporary public art, will insure that the visual character of designated entry points are appreciably enhanced. Attention to both

the motorist and pedestrian is addressed in the various entry features that can be used.

The city administration can implement the System incrementally, gradually improving the sense of arrival at particular locations and ultimately enriching the overall visual character of Downtown. The city Department of Public Works will be the principal agency responsible for administering the System, and can work with the City Research Bureau to seek out funds for design, installation and maintenance.

The System is structured so that the Downtown arrival experience will be of the highest quality when:

- Entry points incorporate historic and cultural references.
- Physical features insure safety and convenience, and offer direction.
- Overall composition provides sufficient visual interest for a positive lasting impression.

City of Syracuse Downtown Entry System

Designating System Entries

Every city street and sidewalk provides a connection between Downtown and its surrounding context, and affords the traveler an entry experience at some point along the Downtown boundary. Some entries mainly support vehicular traffic, others pedestrian traffic, and some provide for both; and many points provide entry and exit experiences. However, not all of these places are equal in terms of the number of motorists or pedestrians that use them or the size of the physical space that comprises them, and therefore only those that meet the



following criteria can be designated entries within the System.

- Access points that accommodate high volumes of vehicular traffic can be classified as primary vehicular entries. These entries also must have:
 - Direct links to Interstate access/egress ramps;
 - Direct links to major residential and institutional areas immediately contiguous to Downtown;
 - Close proximity to key Downtown locations and attractions;
 - Incorporate principal bus routes; and/or
 - Incorporate principal Downtown streets.

- Access points that accommodate moderate to high volumes of vehicular traffic can be classified as secondary vehicular entries. These entries also must have:
 - Convenient links to Interstate access/egress ramps;
 - Convenient links to major residential and institutional areas immediately contiguous to Downtown;
 - Close proximity to key Downtown locations and attractions; and/or
 - Incorporate major Downtown streets.

- Access points that provide direct pedestrian links from the major residential and institutional areas immediately contiguous to Downtown, that is the Hawley-Green Streets area, immediate South Side neighborhood, Franklin Square and University Hill, can be classified as primary

pedestrian entries. These entries also must have:

- Close proximity to key Downtown locations and attractions and
 - Incorporate principal Downtown streets.
-
- Access points that provide less direct, but convenient pedestrian links from the major residential and institutional areas immediately contiguous to Downtown, as well as other adjacent city areas, can be classified as secondary pedestrian entries. These entries also must have:
 - Convenient proximity to key Downtown locations and attractions and
 - Incorporate major Downtown streets.

Entry Elements

The sense of arrival is triggered by a combination of physical features and visual character. Entries might be strongly defined by existing city fabric, such as the organization and size of streets and blocks, proximity of buildings to the street and sidewalk edge, or presence of elevated crossings for highways or railroads. In such cases, these features will be enhanced to improve the overall entry experience. Other entries might be less definitive in terms of tangible components because of the presence of surface parking or vacant lots; however these can be altered to varying degrees to provide a more positive feeling of entry. In all cases, four basic System elements will be used in different combinations to make such improvements: information signage, lighting, public art and vegetation.



Comprehensive Downtown Informational Signage System

A multi-tiered sign system, which provides directional information, will greatly enhance arrival to and travel through Downtown. Most importantly, these signs will facilitate way-finding for first-time and occasional visitors, insuring that their initial impression of and introduction to Downtown will be uncomplicated and pleasant. Beginning at designated entries and continuing at appropriate intervals, components of the system will lead visitors to key Downtown locations, such as districts, cultural venues and parking facilities.

The system will consolidate directional information and thereby reduce the number and type of signs on Downtown streets. Overall size of individual signs and degree of information provided will vary for each tier of the system. However, all signs will be consistent in design, that is:

- Material: Metal signboards with reflective text, mounted on flat metal poles.
- Graphic symbols: Contemporary city logo.
- Color: Logo-white on a solid color background, text-white on various mid-range tones; maps-black on white background.
- Text format & font: Horizontal alignment, consistent in font.
- Installation: Freestanding on metal poles with footings or flush-mounted to vertical surfaces.

Design standards will be developed for all tiers of the system, The first three sign types, associated with entries and the arrival experience to Downtown, will include:

- Freestanding Vehicular Entry Sign
 - Height, overall—9'-9"

- Height, mounting —4'-6" above grade
- Signboard—4'-6" x 4'-6", double-sided at entry-exit points, single-sided on entry-only and exit-only points
- Text boxes—maximum 6, each 9" high
- Text size—5" high
- Wall-mounted Vehicular Entry Sign
 - Height, overall—2'
 - Height, mounting —varies
 - Signboard—2' x 4'-6"
 - Text boxes—maximum 2, each 9" high
 - Text—destination name, directional arrow, font 8" high
- Freestanding Pedestrian Entry Sign
 - Height, overall—8'-9"
 - Height, mounting —3'-6" above grade
 - Signboard—4' x 4', double-sided
 - Text size—Downtown map with legend

Lighting

By modifying the level, quality and color of light at and/or adjacent to designated System entries, individual Downtown access points will become prominent pieces of the nighttime landscape and, in some cases, will be more noticeable during day-time hours. Installing the current multi-color, decorative Downtown streetlight on all Downtown streets (except those within official historic districts), will improve travel routes from the entries to all Downtown destinations.



Lighting treatments will vary for each designated System entry, but will incorporate one or more of three methods:

- Decorative street lights
 - Cast metal pole with acorn globe
 - Dark green base with multiple accent colors
 - Height, 18' overall
 - Installed along street edge in the public right-of-way

- Accent lights
 - Various types [sodium, neon]
 - Freestanding elements or integral to other entry features [handrails, artwork]
 - Installed within public right-of-way

- Down lights
 - Small-scale, non-decorative units
 - Dark colored housing with opaque globe
 - Installed on underside of highway and railroad overpasses

Public Art

Using public art to mark entries will bring added distinction and meaning to those places already recognized as access points into Downtown. Incorporating public art into the System directly corresponds to a principal recommendation made in *The Preservation Component of the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan*, a compliment to this Downtown Master Plan. That document calls for incorporating community history in art and thereby creating a time corridor that connects today's citizens with those of the past. However public art also could

be based on contemporary trends and movements. All of these additions to the existing urban fabric, particularly at Downtown entries, will add a new layer of cultural meaning to the city landscape. The combination of both permanent and temporary pieces will provide the opportunity to showcase a wide range of creative artistic expression, and indirectly reflect both the enduring and ephemeral nature of history as well as contemporary culture.

Public art will vary for each designated System entry, but will incorporate either or both temporary or permanent pieces:

- Temporary Art
 - Relate to seasonal or cyclical events, programs or exhibits;
 - Include banners, temporary 2- and 3-dimensional pieces, and/or installation art; and/or
 - Highlight local artists.

- Permanent Art
 - Incorporate historical and/or cultural references;
 - Incorporate water features;
 - Include permanent 2- and 3-dimensional pieces; and/or
 - Highlight local, regional and/or national artists.

Vegetation

There are a limited number of species that can withstand existing environmental conditions along the Downtown boundary and therefore at designated Downtown entries. The strategic introduction and maintenance of appropriate vegetation will provide seasonal interest at these key points.

Permanent plantings will be 25-30 ft. from elevated highways and/or 3 ft. from the



street edge and seasonal vegetation will be in movable planters. All selected species will be tolerant of urban conditions, including high amounts of road salt,

carbon monoxide and suspended particulates. Appropriate urban soils and provisions for routine maintenance will be incorporated.

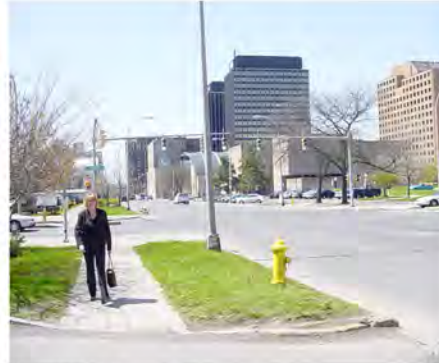


Designating System Entries

Every city street and sidewalk provides a connection between Downtown and its surrounding context, and affords the traveler an entry experience at some point along the Downtown boundary. Some entries mainly support vehicular traffic, others pedestrian traffic, and some provide for both; and many points provide entry and exit experiences. However, not all of these places are equal in terms of the number of motorists or pedestrians that use them or the size of the physical space that comprises them, and therefore those that meet specific criteria can be designated entries within the System.



Downtown vehicular entry.



Downtown pedestrian entry.



Pedestrian crossing under elevated roadway.

Public Art-Using public art to mark entries will bring added distinction and meaning to those places already recognized as access points into Downtown. Incorporating community history in art creates a time corridor that connects today's citizens with those of the past. However, public art could also be based on contemporary trends and movements. All of these additions to the existing urban fabric, particularly at Downtown entries, will add a new layer of cultural meaning to the city landscape. The combination of both permanent and temporary pieces will provide the opportunity to showcase a wide range of creative artistic expression, and indirectly reflect both the enduring and ephemeral nature of history as well as contemporary culture.



9/11 Firefighter's Memorial.



Outdoor sculpture at the Everson.



Columbus Circle Monument.

Lighting-By modifying the level, quality and color of light at and/or adjacent to designated System entries, individual Downtown access points will become prominent pieces of the nighttime landscape and, in some cases, be more noticeable during day-time hours. Installing the current multi-color, decorative Downtown streetlight on all Downtown streets (except those within official historic districts), will improve travel routes from the entries to all Downtown destinations.



Downtown lighting.



Downtown entry signage.



Downtown directional signage.

Lighting treatments will vary for each designated System entry but will incorporate one or more of three methods: decorative street lights, accent lights, and down lights.

Map	Location	Classification						Suggested Design Elements																
		Vehicular		Pedestrian		Street Direction		Vegetation		Lighting		Public Art				Signage								
		Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Two Way	Entry to Downtown	Exit from Downtown	Seasonal	Permanent	Streetlight Lampposts	Accent Lighting	Underside of Bridge	Temp Banners	Temp Sculpture	Temp Paintings	Temp Image Projection	Fountain	Sculpture	Mural	Motor Attached	Motor Freestand	Pedestrian Freestand	
A	W. Genesee St.																							
B	W. Erie Blvd.																							
C	W. Fayette St.																							
D	W. Onondaga St.																							
E	S. Salina St.																							
F	S. State St.																							
G	Adams St.																							
H	Harrison St.																							
I	E. Genesee St.																							
J	E. Fayette St.																							
K	E. Erie Blvd.																							
L	Townsend St.																							
M	N. State St.																							
N	James St.																							
O	Willow St.																							
P	N. Salina St.																							
Q	N. Clinton St.																							
R	N. Franklin St.																							

Downtown entry system matrix.

Vegetation-The strategic introduction and maintenance of appropriate vegetation will provide seasonal interest at the designated Downtown entries.

Permanent plantings will be 25-30 ft. from elevated highways and/or 3 ft. from the street edge, and seasonal vegetation will be in appropriate and movable planters. All selected species will be tolerant of urban conditions, including high amounts of road salt, carbon monoxide and suspended particulates.



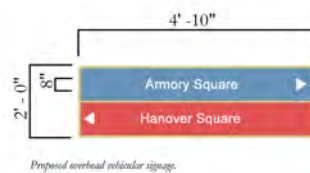
Proposed Downtown plant material containers.

Comprehensive Downtown Informational Signage System-A multi-tiered sign system, which provides directional information, will greatly enhance arrival to and travel through Downtown. Most importantly, these signs will facilitate way-finding for first-time and occasional visitors, insuring that their initial impression of and introduction to Downtown will be uncomplicated and pleasant. Beginning at designated entries and continuing at appropriate intervals, components of the system will lead visitors to key Downtown locations, such as districts, cultural venues and parking facilities.

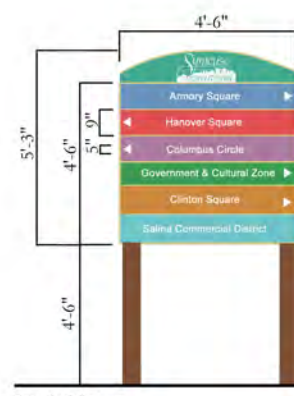
The system will consolidate directional information and thereby reduce the number and type of signs on Downtown streets. Overall size of individual signs and degree of information provided will vary for each tier of the system. However, all signs will be consistent in design, that is:

- Material: Metal signboards with reflective text, mounted on flat metal poles.
- Graphic symbols: Contemporary city logo.
- Color: Logo-white on solid color background, text-white on various mid-range tones; maps-black on white background.
- Text format & font: Horizontal alignment, consistent in font.
- Installation: Freestanding on metal poles with footings

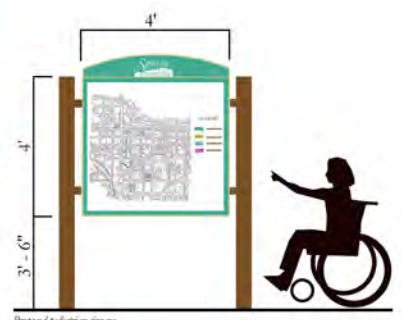
Design standards will be developed for all tiers of the system.



Proposed overhead vehicular signage.



Proposed vehicular signage.



Proposed pedestrian signage.





Proposed.
Murals, sculpture, and lights enliven the proposed design for the Franklin Street entry to Downtown.



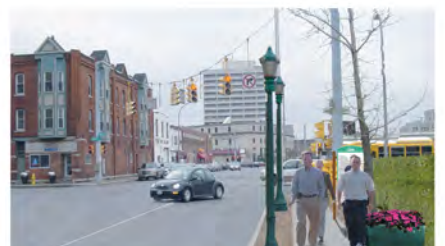
Existing conditions, Franklin Street.



Proposed.
Pedestrians passing under the I-690 bridge from Franklin Square to Downtown are protected from passing cars by a lit plexi-glass barrier.



Existing conditions, Franklin Street.



Proposed.
After passing under the I-690 bridge, pedestrians are guided by signage located at the intersection of Franklin Street and Herald Place. A map is provided to guide visitors to destinations Downtown.



Existing conditions, Franklin Street.

Franklin Street



Proposed.
Exit 19 off of I-81 South directs motorists to the North Salina Street bridge. Visitors are greeted by local artists' murals and signage directing them to Downtown destinations.



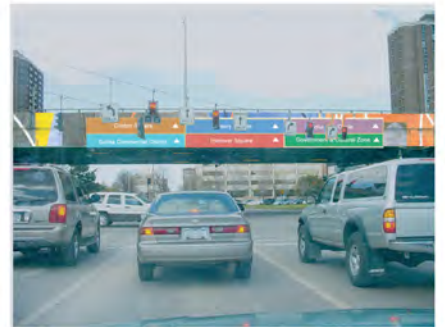
Existing conditions, North Salina Street.



Proposed.
Recent improvements have been made to Little Italy on North Salina Street. Downtown can capitalize on this by upgrading the connection between Little Italy and Downtown.



Existing conditions, North Salina Street.



Proposed.
Passing under I-81 on Harrison Street can be made into a more enjoyable experience with the application of proposed signage and murals.



Existing conditions, Adams Street.

North Salina Street



Proposed.
Both State and James Streets pass under the I-81 / I-690 interchange bridges into Downtown. The intersection provides a wonderful opportunity for both a pedestrian and vehicular entry. This design uses the structure of the interstate bridges to welcome visitors Downtown with signage, murals, lights, and pavement changes.



Existing conditions, State and James Streets.



Proposed.
Pedestrians passing under I-81 on Adams Street will feel more comfortable if in addition to existing crossing signals, the walking area is more clearly defined and more interesting.



Existing conditions, Harrison Street.



Proposed.
Downtown direction signage is provided for both pedestrians and motorists at the intersection of Harrison and Townsend Streets.



Existing conditions, Adams and Harrison Streets.

State and James Streets

Adams and Harrison Streets

RECOMMENDATION: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Downtown development unquestionably is a function of economics. Private individuals and corporations must be confident that the investment necessary to acquire land or buildings, undertake new construction or rehabilitation, and subsequently operate and maintain property will yield a reasonable profit. Similarly a city government must ensure, through enforcement of zoning ordinances, local and state building codes, and various other rules and regulations, that such private investment makes a positive contribution to the municipal economy, rather than places a drain on it. Deciding whether to pursue or support a downtown development project therefore is inherently tied to both the financial merits of a specific proposal and its impact on the economic viability of the city center.

Calculating the potential fiscal risk and profit of a particular project rests largely with individual and corporate investors. Local government, however, can offer some assistance in making these projections and also can provide information documenting the current downtown financial environment and forecasting future economic conditions. In doing so, however, elected officials and public agency staff must also acknowledge the unique physical and cultural components of the city center that have meaning to the citizenry and, therefore, influence market forces, contribute to investor confidence, and ultimately result in economic growth.

The proposed Downtown Development Strategy is intended to seek a balance among the physical, cultural and economic

factors of Downtown Syracuse. Developers, property owners and business people considering potential projects can use the Strategy, as they would the Downtown Design Guidelines, to evaluate how their proposals meet the community's vision for Downtown. Public decision-makers will use the Strategy to review development proposals and thereby determine which projects merit support because they can strengthen the physical composition, cultural richness and economic viability of Downtown.

The Strategy will be used by all public agency staff, appointed individuals and elected officials having review and/or approval authority over development projects within Downtown. Staff level reviews will result in weighted evaluations of how a proposal conforms to the Strategy and such evaluations will be prepared and provided to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and/or Landmark Preservation Board for inclusion in their respective reviews. The Common Council and Mayor will incorporate the evaluation in their decisions. Only those proposals that score at or above a defined minimum score will receive municipal support.

The Strategy is structured so that Downtown development and growth will be successful when:

- Proposed projects reinforce preferred land use patterns and functional relationships.
- New construction and rehabilitation compliments traditional Downtown organizational patterns and built form characteristics.
- New investment is a direct response to previous economically successful development ventures.



City of Syracuse Downtown Development Strategy

The Downtown Development Strategy identifies those locations within Downtown that should be high priorities for development. Because market forces are reasonably fluid, it is assumed that investors promoting a project will be responsible for evaluating general economic conditions and the specific fiscal soundness of a particular proposal. The Strategy directs proposals to targeted properties where they will generate the greatest benefit to Downtown and the city at large. Properties that have cultural and physical characteristics valued by the community, key features of development, and/or qualities useful in maximizing investment return are of highest priority and will receive the support of the city administration. Each location has its own unique combination or layers of these characteristics, which in turn will affect its development potential or priority level.

Community-valued Characteristics

Historic street-block relationships

The physical evolution of Downtown resulted largely from the impact of transportation systems on natural topography. Native American trails, early turnpikes, the Erie and Oswego Canals, and various railroad corridors provided the framework for Downtown streets and blocks. This long established organizational pattern is an important subconscious cultural reference for the community that must be maintained. Development proposals that respect this framework—or seek to reestablish traditional street-block relationships where they have been altered or removed—are high priorities. Specifically, where

historic/traditional street-block relationships are:

- Abandoned and will be restored. (10)
- Modified and will be restored. (8)
- Existing and will be re-enforced. (5)
- Existing and will be abandoned and/or modified and not restored. (3)
- Existing and will be altered and/or destroyed, or NA. (0)

Historic properties

Downtown arguably has the greatest concentration of historically important properties in Syracuse and many of the buildings are significant examples of the various architectural styles popularized during the 19th and 20th century. These properties are the tangible evidence of Downtown's past and, like the street-block relationships, serve as subliminal touchstones for the community.

Development proposals that utilized historic properties are high priorities. Specifically, projects involving properties that are:

- National/NY State Register listed and locally designated. (10)
- National/NY State Register listed or locally designated. (8)
- Locally eligible. (5)
- Non-historic, but traditional older urban fabric (50 yrs. or more). (3)
- Non-historic, contemporary construction (less than 50 yrs.), or NA. (0)



Parks and open spaces

The compactness and high density of Downtown is made comfortable in large part due to the municipal parks and public and private open spaces that provide visual and physical relief from the intense concentration of buildings. These public holdings expand common space within Downtown, while private places increase the perception of the public realm. Whether public or private, well-placed open spaces add meaning and identity to adjacent properties. Development proposals that protect or reinforce existing Downtown parks and open spaces are high priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- Contiguous to a municipal park or public open space. (10)
- Within one block of municipal park or public open space. (8)
- Creating appropriate new private open space. (5)
- Contiguous to or within one block of private open space. (3)
- Removing or otherwise negatively affecting parks/open space, or NA. (0)

Cultural facilities and event venues

Downtown Syracuse contains the seat of local, state and federal government, various religious organizations, visual and performing arts facilities, educational institutions and museums; and is host to a wide variety of special events and programs. Citizens and visitors alike look to Downtown Syracuse, indeed any downtown, as the social and cultural heart of the community. Development proposals that expand existing or introduce new cultural facilities or event venues are high priorities. Specifically projects where cultural facilities/event venues are:

- New to Downtown. (10)
- Retained and expanded. (8)
- Retained. (5)
- Retained, but reduced in size or scope. (3)
- Eliminated, or NA. (0)

Key Development Characteristics

Open land

A substantial number of Downtown properties that do not contain buildings can be found clustered along the periphery of Downtown, as well as a few scattered within its core. The lack of any buildings or structures on these parcels makes them particularly attractive for new construction, as demolition is not a consideration. In addition, several contiguous open parcels offer the opportunity to address uses requiring large square footage per floor, which might be difficult to accommodate in existing older buildings. Although most if not all of these parcels are viable surface parking lots, they hold greater economic potential as more intensely used properties. Development proposals that utilize open land for new construction can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that involve:

- Individual or multiple open parcels within the Downtown core. (10)
- Individual or multiple open parcels in the mid-Downtown sector or on major entryways. (8)
- Multiple open parcels along Downtown boundaries. (5)
- Individual open parcels along Downtown boundaries. (3)
- Demolition of existing buildings to create open land, or NA. (0)



Available building space

Existing Downtown buildings that are not 100% occupied offer a number of investment options. Properties with high vacancy rates might be most attractive for resale and redevelopment by a new owner for a new use, such as vacant warehouse space that can be converted to residential units. Those buildings with modest vacancy rates might be of greatest interest to start-up businesses, convenience commercial entities, and other small-scale ventures that require limited space. Regardless, fully utilized buildings are indicative of economic stability. Development proposals that increase occupancy in existing buildings can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that involve properties with vacancies of:

- 100%. (10)
- 75-99%. (8)
- 50-74%. (5)
- 25-49%. (3)
- <25%, or NA. (0)

Parking

While alternative means of transportation should continue to be explored, private car use likely will remain the dominant form of access to and from Downtown. It is critical, therefore, that all proposed projects include provisions for convenient, safe and affordable parking. Development projects that include parking provisions can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that provide parking through:

- Cooperative agreements for use of existing lots/garages. (10)
- Expansion of existing lots/garage without demolition. (8)
- Construction of new lots/garage within project limits. (5)

- Construction of new lots/garages on adjacent parcels without demolition. (3)
- Demolition for expansion of existing or construction of new lots/garages, or NA. (0)

Maximizing Characteristics

Accessibility

Downtown locations that are easily accessed by residents, workers and/or visitors hold the promise of becoming easily assimilated into Downtown life and, therefore, have a greater opportunity for success. Direct physical connections to primary vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, as well as strong physical relationships between contiguous properties, can reinforce organizational patterns and improve accessibility. Development proposals that strengthen the overall structure and function of Downtown can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- On primary vehicular or pedestrian routes and with direct access from/to primary Downtown entries. (5)
- On primary vehicular or pedestrian routes. (4)
- Contiguous to primary Downtown entries. (3)
- Incorporating public transportation stops or services.(2)
- On secondary vehicular or pedestrian routes, or NA. (1)

Imagability

The physical and cultural structure of Downtown results in a strong and memorable image of place. Tangible features, such as important pieces of



architecture and public art, in conjunction with more ephemeral components, such as annual festivals, leave lasting impressions on residents and visitors alike. While many individual properties or events are notable on their own merit, it is their contribution to the composite image that makes them most significant. Development proposals that are positive additions to the visual and social character of Downtown can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that conform to the Downtown Design Guidelines and that incorporate:

- New permanent public art based on local history and that is the work of local artists. (5)
- New permanent public art by local artists. (4)
- Physical provisions and an implementation plan for temporary art by local artists. (3)
- New permanent or temporary art by non-local artists. (2)
- Existing public art in new exhibits, or NA. (1)

Proximity

Recent projects have the potential to generate spin-off benefits for subsequent near-by development. Individual properties that have been the subject of substantial investment can be catalysts for the development of contiguous properties. And in districts experiencing continued growth and expansion even the least likely properties become attractive for redevelopment. Proposals in close proximity to recent projects (within 1-3 yrs.) can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- Distinct individual, independent proposals. (5)
- Within close proximity (2-3 blocks) of other recent substantial private or public investment. (4)
- Contiguous to and integrated with other recent private development. (3)
- Contiguous to and integrated with recent public investment. (2)
- Contiguous to and integrated with other recent private development and public investment, or NA. (1)



Downtown Development Strategy

The Downtown Development Strategy identifies those locations within Downtown that should be high priorities for development. Because market forces are reasonably fluid, it is assumed that investors promoting a project will be responsible for evaluating general economic conditions and the specific fiscal soundness of a particular proposal. The Strategy directs proposals to targeted properties where they will generate the greatest benefit to Downtown and the city at large. Properties that have cultural and physical characteristics valued by the community, key features of development, and/or qualities useful in maximizing investment return are of highest priority and will receive the support of the city administration. Each location has its own unique combination or layers of these characteristics, which in turn will affect its development potential or priority level.

Community-valued Characteristics

A) Historic street-block relationships

Development proposals that respect this framework—or seek to reestablish traditional street-block relationships where they have been altered or removed—are high priorities. Specifically, where historic/traditional street-block relationships are:

- Abandoned and will be restored 10
- Modified and will be restored 8
- Existing and will be re-enforced 5
- Existing and will be abandoned and/or modified and not restored 3
- Existing and will be altered and/or destroyed, or NA 0

B) Historic properties

Development proposals that utilized historic properties are high priorities. Specifically, projects that involve properties that are:

- National/NY State Register listed and locally designated 10
- National/NY State Register listed or Locally designated 8
- Locally eligible 5
- Non-historic, but traditional older urban fabric (50 yrs. or more) 3
- Non-historic, contemporary construction (less than 50 yrs.), or NA 0

C) Parks and open spaces

Development proposals that protect or reinforce existing Downtown parks and open spaces are high priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- Contiguous to a municipal park or public open space 10
- Within one block of municipal park or public open space 8
- Creating appropriate new private open space 5
- Contiguous to or within one block of private open space 3
- Removing or otherwise negatively affecting parks/open space, or NA 0

D) Cultural facilities and event venues

Development proposals that expand existing or introduce new cultural facilities or event venues are high priorities. Specifically, projects where cultural facilities/event venues are:

- New to Downtown 10
- Retained and expanded 8
- Retained 5
- Retained, but reduced in size or scope 3
- Eliminated, or NA 0

Key Development Characteristics

E) Open land

Development proposals that utilize open land for new construction can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that involve:

- Individual or multiple open parcels within the Downtown core 10
- Individual or multiple open parcels in the mid-Downtown sector or on major entryways 8
- Multiple open parcels along Downtown boundaries 5
- Individual open parcels along Downtown boundaries 3
- Demolition of existing buildings to create open land, or NA 0

F) Available building space

Development proposals that increase occupancy in existing buildings can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that involve properties with vacancies of:

- 100% 10
- 75-99% 8
- 50-74% 5
- 25-49% 3
- <25%, or NA 0

G) Parking

Development projects that include parking provisions can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that provide parking through:

- Cooperative agreements for use of existing lots/garages 10
- Expansion of existing lots/garages without demolition 8
- Construction of new lots/garage within project limits 5
- Construction of new lots/garages on adjacent parcels without demolition 3
- Demolition for expansion of existing or construction of new lots/garages, or NA 0

Maximizing Characteristics

H) Accessibility

Development proposals that strengthen the overall structure and function of Downtown can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- On primary vehicular or pedestrian routes and with 5 direct access from/to primary Downtown entries 5
- On primary vehicular or pedestrian routes 4
- Contiguous to primary Downtown entries 3
- Incorporating public transportation stops or services 2
- On secondary vehicular or pedestrian routes, or NA 1

I) Imagability

Development proposals that are positive additions to the visual and social character of Downtown can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that conform to the Downtown Design Guidelines and that incorporate:

- New permanent public art based on local history and that is the work of local artists 5
- New permanent public art by local artists 4
- Physical provisions and an implementation plan for temporary art by local artists 3
- New permanent or temporary art by non-local artists 2
- Existing public art in new exhibits, or NA 1

J) Proximity

Proposals in close proximity to recent projects (within 1-3 yrs.) can become higher priorities. Specifically, projects that are:

- Distinct individual, independent proposals 5
- Within close proximity (2-3) blocks of other recent 4 substantial private or public investment
- Contiguous to and integrated with other recent private development 3
- Contiguous to and integrated with recent public investment 2
- Contiguous to and integrated with other recent private development and public investment, or NA 1

Example 1: Locating a New Downtown Sports Stadium



Location A: Washington Street West



Points Accumulated:			
A)	0	F)	0
B)	3	G)	10
C)	10	H)	5
D)	10	I)	NA
E)	8	J)	5
Total Points: 51			

Example 2: Restoring the Hotel Syracuse, or Building a New Hotel



Location A: Hotel Syracuse



Points Accumulated:			
A)	8	F)	10
B)	5	G)	10
C)	NA	H)	4
D)	8	I)	NA
E)	NA	J)	5
Total Points: 50			

Location B: Washington Street East



Points Accumulated:			
A)	5	F)	NA
B)	NA	G)	10
C)	0	H)	4
D)	10	I)	NA
E)	5	J)	5
Total Points: 39			

Location B: Proposed Site, State and Harrison Streets



Points Accumulated:			
A)	3	F)	0
B)	NA	G)	10
C)	NA	H)	5
D)	10	I)	NA
E)	3	J)	5
Total Points: 36			

Based on the two examples above, the Strategy works to clearly determine the most effective choices for both location as well as type of project. Implementing the Strategy will ensure that proposed projects, including rehabilitation as well as new construction, will reinforce preferred land use patterns and complement the traditional organization of Downtown.



Conclusion



CONCLUSION

Over forty years ago, in her seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, urban theorist Jane Jacobs warned the nation of the dangers that lie in wait for communities that fail to maintain vibrant downtowns:

Probably everyone is aware of certain general dependencies by a city on its heart. When a city heart stagnates or disintegrates, a city as a social neighborhood of the whole begins to suffer: People who ought to get together, by means of central activities that are failing, fail to get together. Ideas and money that ought to meet, and do so often only by happenstance in a place of central vitality, fail to meet. The networks of city public life develop gaps they cannot afford. Without a strong and *inclusive* central heart, a city tends to become a collection of interests isolated from one another. It falters at producing something greater, socially, culturally and economically, than the sum of its separated parts. (1961)

Jacobs' grim perspective was and continues to be valid. More importantly it has been taken to heart by many political, civic and business leaders committed to revitalizing their communities. Those that have dedicated the resources necessary to support successful downtown re-investment are enjoying culturally dynamic and financially solvent city centers. Such strong downtowns can be the catalysts for comprehensive community revitalization.

The Downtown Master Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Syracuse establishes the policies necessary for community leaders to recognize and strengthen the social, cultural and economic fabric of Downtown. It stresses how a commitment to thoughtful short- and long-range planning can guide both public and private decisions

regarding Downtown development. It extols the importance of the rich physical make-up of the city center and the need to maintain and enhance its traditional organization, composition and character. It describes the inherent value in perpetuating the diversity of Downtown users from day to day, one generation to the next. And it emphasizes the fundamental link between the financial viability of the central core and the economic strength of the metropolitan area.

Adoption and implementation of the Downtown Master Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan will allow Syracusans the opportunity to ensure that their community will be something greater than the sum of its parts.



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