

The Commercial Areas Component City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan

Faculty of Landscape Architecture
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Preface



PREFACE

Managing growth is not an easy task, but it is one that governments must undertake if they are to fulfill their responsibilities to citizens. Each place is different in its history, its culture, its politics, and its growth patterns, and therefore each place needs to find the solution that fits the locale. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to growth management. But failing to find the right answer, or worse, failing to *try* to find the right answer will almost certainly lead to unwanted answers down the road—fiscal bankruptcies, abandoned older communities, unnecessary loss of open space, and chaos....

Economist Thomas Michael Power explains that “the objectives of a community are more complex than those of a business operating in a commercial market. A business focuses on the bottom line.” Ask members of a community what *they* want, however, and “it becomes apparent that most of their wishes are qualitative”—a good place to live and work and raise a family. These are subjective goals. It is hard to put a price tag on them. But reaching public agreement on what they mean is part of the process that brings people in a community together....

Consider how much better our communities would be if...[we] no longer had to prove why saving a community is in the community’s best interest. Imagine what would happen if developers were the ones who had to prove why their proposals would not harm a community....

Seeking...inducements has become an integral part of most developer’s strategies, primarily because they know how hungry so many communities are for new projects and because they know how to play them off against each other....

Communities in every corner of the country allow themselves to be whipsawed in this fashion. They accept a developer’s idea of how their community should be shaped, because they have few ideas of their own. How much better off they would be if they would step back from immediate development pressures, allow the community to decide what it wants to be, and then proceed to make it happen.

Richard Moe and Carter Wilke, *Changing Places. Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl*. 1997



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 Commercial Areas Component of that Plan. It is the section that addresses the financial, physical and social issues related to business district and commercial corridor development, as well as related citywide issues. Commercial Areas Component is the fourth section of the

Comprehensive Plan to be completed, which illustrates the importance of commercial area development to the future of Syracuse and its sense of community as a whole.



Introduction



INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial heritage of the United States arguably is best represented in the multi-layered, multi-faceted economy of its cities. These were and are the places that host the most significant concentration of people, and traditionally have generated both the greatest supply and demand for goods and services. Whether out of necessity, a response to inspiration, or a drive for financial reward, generations of individuals have taken up the call to engage in business within America's cities. They have provided for every day needs by operating everything from groceries to bakeries, laundries to barbershops; they have delivered services from the traditional trades to personal assistance in order to accomplish tasks; and they have responded to cultural interests by offering special wares and distinctive activities. Larger commercial enterprises have provided an equally wide-range of offerings, such as banking and insurance, manufacturing and warehousing. In combination these various businesses have mirrored the intricate mosaic of city populations and re-enforced the diversity so central to urban centers.

Societal changes, however, have been eroding the dynamic make-up and financial viability of American cities. Post World War II prosperity triggered the outward migration of city residents and businesses, and it is a deeply set complacency towards sprawling suburban development that continues to slow the economic revival of the country's cities. Far too many people have bought into the illusion that regional malls, super stores and suburban office parks are more convenient because they are easy to drive to and from, and have acres of free parking. City business districts and

commercial corridors are viewed—if not promoted—as the converse: offering limited choices, difficult access, no parking and high costs. In reality the situation is the reverse, as suburban commercial development generates greater demands on personal time and money, seriously impacts natural resources, and upsets community dynamics. The uninspired physical uniformity of these places coupled with an acute concern for the “bottom line” leaves an indelible black mark on a region's physical and fiscal landscapes.

Fortunately metropolitan communities across the country understand that they will remain financially viable only when their centers—their cities—are strong contributors to the regional economy. Likewise city officials must be confident that those characteristics unique to urban areas can be the foundation of a city's economic rebirth. Chief among these urban traits is diversity; the vast variety of businesses traditionally associated with cities and necessary to supply the goods and services required by such highly complex populations. A mix of businesses in buildings and along routes, so common to the urban condition and antithetical to single-purpose suburban commercial locations, must be maximized. Also important are urban entrepreneurs, those individuals who operate the many small businesses found in city downtowns and neighborhood business districts and along commercial corridors. These are people not only committed to personal success, but also dedicated to the overall economic well-being of a city; who see investment in their business as an investment in their community. Finally, but certainly not last, cities must remain the life-blood for new businesses. Where else in a metropolitan region can owners of start-up companies find the complete



gambit of necessary support facilities but in a city.

Syracusans must accept and embrace these critical concepts to ensure a strong economic future for the city. Rather than trying to mimic the financial structure that underlies suburban sprawl, there must be promotion of those aspects of Syracuse that make it unique in the regional marketplace, and therefore a preferred place to do business. There also must be a pledge to maintain a visually interesting and attractive physical setting for equally well-designed, high-quality commercial properties. And there must be a commitment to support a diverse economic base, which will lead to increased investment, financial growth and overall fiscal stability. 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. Pursuing a course to aggressively market, physically improve and financially grow in-city commercial development is in keeping with these responsible approaches to community planning.

History of 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 also the various railroad stations consumed entire downtown blocks, including the 1869 New York Central Railroad (NYCRR) Station on Franklin Street between Washington and Fayette. Not only did the tracks literally run through downtown streets, but the various railroad stations consumed entire downtown

blocks. Tracks, bridges, trestles and other railroad related features were scattered within the neighborhoods as well, particularly those where the community's many industries were expanding due to improved rail service.

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. Residential development in the neighborhoods offered single-family units, as well as two- and three-family buildings. In some cases, lots were purchased and houses built by citizens with the financial resources necessary to construct stylish state-of-the-art residences. Most housing development, however, was done on speculation with an eye toward attracting the increasing number of middle-income families that could finally afford their own home.

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 downtown example. These and other factors resulted in on-going out-migration, with many owner-occupied properties becoming rental units. Some neighborhood areas realized a decrease in sense of community and cultural continuity, and the city core exhibited 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. 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 business and commercial development, and consequently, the future of the city business districts and corridors.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Well into the mid-20th century the Syracuse economy remained centered around large-scale manufacturing and warehousing. Retail, entertainment, traditional trades, and government, professional and consumer services were less prominent but clearly important components of the community's overall fiscal structure. By the 1970s advances in technology, coupled with an increase in various costs, saw many long-established industries leave Syracuse for others areas. At the same time increasing residential development in outlying areas triggered a shift in convenience goods and services, as business owners followed their customers out of Syracuse—eventually resulting in an urban financial system

based largely on banking, insurance and other white-collar businesses.

In the past 10 years, however, there has been a concerted effort by many constituencies to re-establish a diverse economy for the city, and great advances have been made as demonstrated by the following rankings for Syracuse:

- Ranks 1st in the northeast and 14th overall in the top 25 cities nationally for doing business in America [*Inc. Magazine*]
- Ranked 6th in the top 100 American metropolitan areas to do business in [*Regional Financial Associates*]
- Ranks 1st in the top 15 of 124 metropolitan areas for increase median sale price of existing houses
- Ranks 1st in the top 10 cities nationally for Internet penetration [*Scarborough Research*]
- Ranks in the top 50 cities nationally for business expansion and relocation [*Expansion Management* magazine]

In addition a recent study by the Pathfinders, Site Selection/Location Analysis Consultants, states that the Central New York area has 71,200 available workers for new or expanding businesses.

The businesses that contribute to these standings are many and varied. Some are individual enterprises, often isolated from other commercial properties; others are integrated—financially and physically—within discernible areas; and still others align principal vehicular routes throughout the city. For the purposes of this plan



these individual properties, business districts and commercial corridors will be referred to collectively as “commercial areas.”

It is arguable that the greatest concentration of commercial entities is within Downtown. The special nature of the city center already has been addressed in the *Downtown Master Plan* component of the Comprehensive Plan and therefore downtown businesses are not discussed in this document. Similarly due to the complex and dynamic forces impacting its commercial development, the Lakefront area also is not included as part of this plan.

Methods

Preparation of the City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan, a component 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, programs 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 physical environment, 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 include 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 spring. 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 the City of Syracuse that contribute to the city’s 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 Commercial Areas Plan was obtained through a 19-person steering committee. Members included representatives of the Syracuse Common Council, Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board, Syracuse City Planning Commission, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, Syracuse Departments of Community Development and Economic Development, Metropolitan Development Association, Northeast Hawley Development Association, Inc., Syracuse Zoning Board of Appeals, Syracuse 20/20, Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc., Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, and the Onondaga Historical 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 analysis and goals/objectives phases of the project; and subsequently smaller work sessions were organized to engage individual committee members in the formulation of recommendations.

Organization of the Plan

The City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan generally is organized according to each phase of work conducted.

Inventory and *Analysis* give 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 and opportunities related to the inventoried topics.

Goals, Objectives and Recommended Actions, presents the three primary goals for the Commercial Areas Plan. This narrative also provides the objectives pursuant to each goal and the proposed policy, program and physical project recommendations related to each objective.

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



Inventory and Analysis



INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

To further understand the dynamics of business and commercial activity in the City of Syracuse, information was gathered through various means to form a holistic image of the issues. Social and cultural information was obtained through various sources. Public agencies, non-profit organizations, and economic development entities were all interviewed. Information from pertinent literature, reports, and academic works was gathered.

During the inventory of social, cultural and legislative factors, the following three categories were considered: mechanisms and actors, economics, and planning, zoning, and land use. The study of the physical environment included an inventory of organization, built form, open space, and vacant land.

From the information collected, an analysis was conducted that resulted in a list of problems and opportunities.

Problems were defined as existing physical conditions, uses, or programs that are inadequate, insufficient, or inappropriate for current or future needs.

Opportunities are physical features, uses, or programs that may potentially be utilized to help satisfy current and future needs.

Business and Commercial Mechanisms and Actors

Inventory

Within the City of Syracuse there are many programs and organizations available to assist business and

commercial development, including policies and programs administered by city government as well as private Not-for-Profit organizations (NFPs).

Two municipal departments and several subsidiaries work with individuals and organizations to either continue existing or start new commercial ventures in the city. The Syracuse Department of Economic Development (DED) guides current and potential business owners through the process of identifying 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.

They work in conjunction with the Syracuse Industrial Development Agency (SIDA), which 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 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.

The DED staff also work with the Syracuse Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO), which is a business development corporation that obtains public and private funds and makes them available to business owners for acquisition, renovations, expansion, development, and purchase of equipment and machinery by requiring a very small amount of upfront capital.

The Syracuse Department of Community Development (CD) provides less direct,



but equally important, municipal assistance to business and commercial enterprises. This department is charged with applying for and subsequently allocating resources from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Through its annual Consolidated Plan it evaluates existing city conditions related to housing, jobs and overall quality of life; describes actions for improvement; and outlines the distribution of funds to realize positive change. The CD department is committed to maintaining vibrant neighborhoods that offer good housing choices, prosperous businesses and abundant recreational opportunities, which in turn will encourage continued social and economic investment in the city.

Through its Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) program, a citywide community participation-based planning initiative, CD helps city residents and business people identify and build upon local assets and develop plans for maximizing these resources. The program defines eight sectors or Area Planning Councils intended as the principal vehicle for generating and maintaining community involvement. Public participation varies among the sectors, but each attains some tangible results. However, because the sectors work largely independent of one another, the cumulative impact of their individual initiatives is not fully realized by the city as a whole—partly because the CD staff, although representative of a variety of disciplines and expertise, include few if any planners and designers with educational or practical experience dealing with the physical conditions of cities.

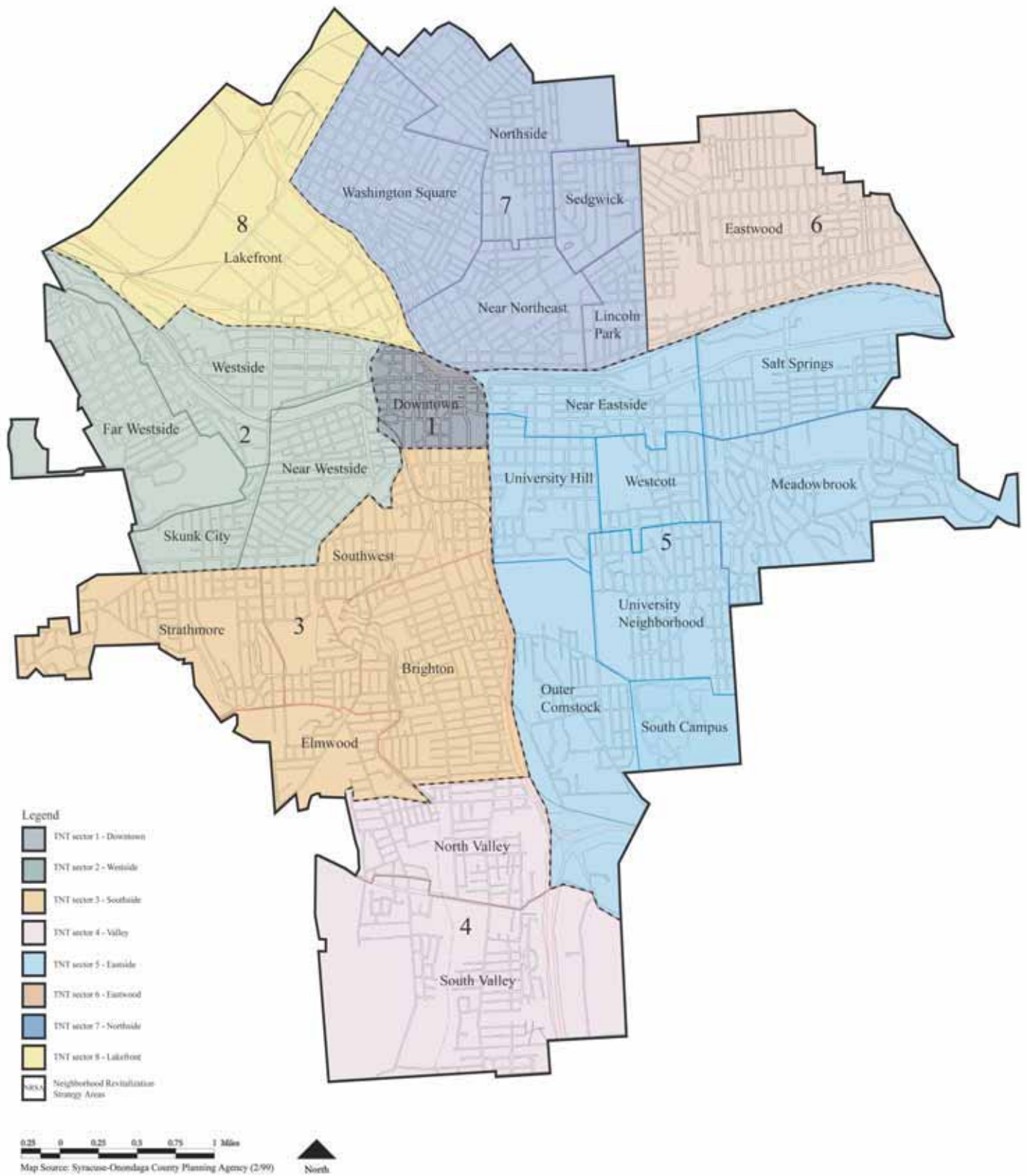
In addition to the DED and CD, the Division of Code Enforcement plays an important role in business and commercial

development, as it is responsible for issuance of building and demolition permits, as well as review and inspection of building construction within the city. Although these permit processes are managed by Code Enforcement, staff work with their counterparts in the city departments of Public Works, Fire, Zoning, and Water.

The city Department of Assessment also has an impact on business and commercial development, as it is the primary vehicle for valuing property and collecting real property taxes. A substantial portion of property in the city is owned by tax-exempt entities, such as hospitals, educational institutions and advocacy organizations; therefore limits are placed on the total amount of general revenue generated by real property tax, placing a large burden on the tax-paying property owners. Development incentives that relieve all or some of the property tax assessment either permanently or for an extended time period further diminish the city's income stream.

In addition to these municipal agencies, there are numerous not-for-profit organizations involved with business and commercial development. The two largest NFPs dealing almost exclusively with the issue are the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA) and the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. Organizations that indirectly address economic investment in Syracuse include 40 Below, Forging Our United Community's Strength, also known as FOCUS Greater Syracuse, and Syracuse 20/20. Most of these NFPs have non-commercial primary interests, for example neighborhood housing advocacy groups such as the Northeast Hawley Development Association (NEHDA).





Faculty of Landscape Architecture TNT Sectors and NRSA Areas

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan



The *Metropolitan Development Association* is a private-sector NFP established in 1959 for implementation and advocacy of key development projects. Represented within the organization are business leaders from the largest corporations and institutions in the region. The MDA provides services and technical assistance to the community including information on finance and incentive packages, identifying and acquiring development sites, obtaining pertinent economic data, securing consulting services, and linking businesses with government agencies responsible for development decisions.

The *Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce* provides assistance to local businesses in the Syracuse metropolitan region. The majority of involved businesses have between 1 and 50 employees and are relatively smaller than those involved in the MDA, though membership is unrestricted by size or line of business. The Chamber provides support through networking, training and education, government relations, group employee benefits, conventions, visibility and credibility. There are over 2000 members of the Chamber in the greater Syracuse area. One of the Chamber's most recent initiatives is the Syracuse Technology Garden, an incubator for 23 high-tech entrepreneurs.

Syracuse is fortunate to have a high number and wide variety of organizations committed to neighborhood revitalization and community pride and involvement. Some of these NFPs, such as the *NEHDA*, primarily deal with affordable, owner-occupied, single family housing for first-time buyers. They receive funds from the city Department of Community Development, United Way, sale of assets, and general fundraising, in addition to grants from NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal. *NEHDA*

recently expanded its role in the community by serving as the conduit for a grant from the New York Main Street Program. With these funds *NEHDA* will undertake a variety of projects on multiple blocks of North Salina Street in Little Italy. Though some of these projects might involve housing, the focus will be on façade rehabilitation of commercial properties.

40 Below is a NFP created to engage and empower young adults in Central New York to make a difference in the community, with an emphasis on retaining young professionals in the city or attracting them back. *40 Below* is working indirectly to connect businesses with one another as well as to the community at-large, creating a stronger economic base. The organization has 14 advisors and 6 tasks—Adaptive Re-use, Civic Engagement, Downtown Public Arts, Marketing and Information Clearinghouse, Training for Young Entrepreneurs, and the Mentoring Program.

FOCUS Greater Syracuse advocates for coordinating and combining the efforts of government agencies, businesses and NFPs to improve general quality of life and realize greater economic vitality. The organization, supported by a mix of public and private funding sources, maintains a database of trends, ideas, tools and solutions related to the Syracuse community.

Syracuse 20/20, although concerned about the overall social and economic climate of the city, is principally committed to reform of the failing public education system. The organization sees this mission as tied directly to the general well being of the local economy.



Analysis

Problems

1. *Decrease in Community Development Block Grant funds*

Each year the amount of Community Development Block Grant funds allotted by the federal government decreases. The proposed 2006 budget is approximately \$6.3 million, almost \$1 million less than 2005, presenting a serious shortfall in the city's budget.

2. *Limited funding to support Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today planning efforts*

The proposed 2006 budget for the 8 TNT sectors within the city is \$16,000, which is an inadequate sum to carry out plans, initiatives and reach their set objectives. Additionally the overall city commitment to specific TNT projects is not guaranteed from year to year.

3. *Limited neighborhood involvement in TNT*

One of the purposes of the TNT program is to involve the community in the development process; however, some sectors are not as active as others. Without increased participation the TNT program falls short of holistic public participation.

4. *Limited business and commercial involvement in community development*

Businesses sometimes fail to see themselves as neighbors within the community, and lack a strong commitment should act with a commitment to neighborhood issues. Failing to communicate with the local residents can isolate businesses from a primary customer base.

5. *Perceived municipal focus on large businesses*

Within the city 90% of businesses employ 25 or fewer people. However, small-scale projects are often deterred from seeking

economic incentives due to the misconception that only large-scale projects and businesses are eligible for financing through such programs.

6. *Lack of cohesive and comprehensive plan for small neighborhood businesses*

Many small businesses have developed business plans or strategies for growth, but no single coordinated community strategy exists to guide such development on a city-wide basis. Lack of collaboration and oversight from city government can minimize investment opportunities.

7. *Inadequate attention on business and commercial areas outside of Downtown*

Though the economic success of Downtown is extremely important to the city's overall success, more focus needs to be placed on commercial areas in the balance of the City of Syracuse.

Businesses in these locations, particularly neighborhood districts, are critical to community solvency.

8. *Lack of municipal professional design and planning staff*

Although staff members with experience in planning and design have been recently added to city agencies, these individuals are not located in the same office, therefore limiting the full benefit of their expertise. In addition, there is no one agency that in practice actually addresses the physical condition of the city in a comprehensive manner.

9. *Unequal application of programs and resources by large not-for-profit organizations within their service areas*

When NFPs concentrate their attention on small sections within their own service areas, it becomes difficult to identify and implement widespread change. Similarly, limited resources further reduce the potential impact of these organizations.



10. *Inability of small NFP organizations to take action on identified problems*

Overall, the NFPs are proficient at identifying problems, but smaller organizations sometimes lack lobbying power, funding and resources necessary to realize sustained success.

11. *Overlap in organizations' objectives without coordination*

There are several groups that often work towards the same goals without collaboration, resulting in inefficient use of resources and, at times, conflicting goals.

12. *General citizen participation in NFP organizations not maximized*

The meeting attendance of several NFPs is inconsistent and is not completely representative of the populations that the organizations aim to incorporate. There is also often a lack of long-term commitment on the part of those temporarily involved.

13. *Lack of positive community image in local media coverage*

The positive things that are accomplished within the community are more often than not missing in the local news stories and broadcasts. Even if positive stories are reported, greater attention is still given to negative stories that can sometimes be sensationalized to further exaggerate less-than-positive city images.

Opportunities

1. *More effectively utilize TNT program*

The TNT sectors currently provide workable plans and priorities for neighborhoods, directing city resources to preferred areas and projects and allowing neighborhoods to take a leadership role. Better utilization and implementation of the information and suggestions provided

by TNT councils will maximize public participation.

2. *Promote traditional neighborhood commercial and business areas*

Traditional neighborhood commercial and business areas are an integral part of the urban environment. They fulfill community needs by providing goods and services directly to residents, as well as adding to the city's tax base.

3. *Encourage retention of traditional businesses*

Long-established business areas business areas play an important role in the city as they are integral to the community's heritage and current economic structure. These areas need to be recognized for their significance and reinforced through active retention of existing businesses.

4. *Encourage creation of neighborhood business associations*

The formation of additional neighborhood business associations will expand the network between businesses, and give individual commercial enterprises a voice to effectively communicate their needs. These organizations can also lend identity to distinct commercial areas.

5. *Better coordinate community and economic development programs*

The departments of Economic Development and community development can better coordinate and therefore integrate efforts to address issues involving city businesses. More closely aligned agencies is especially important for areas in which businesses are directly linked to their user base.

6. *Increase municipal focus on small business development*

The issues and needs specific to small businesses are best addressed separately from general economic development programs. Special initiatives designed for



small entrepreneurs will better support these businesses.

7. *Maximize availability of local college and university resources*

The central New York region contains over 60 colleges and universities, which creates an opportunity for local business and industries to collaborate with institutions of higher learning. These institutions also provide a source for young, creative residents, and a means to stabilize the city population.

8. *Promote NFPs as facilitators and networkers for businesses with similar goals and objectives*

Many NFPs recognize that several groups are working independently toward similar goals. Their efforts to bring these groups together must be encouraged and further promoted.

9. *Encourage NFP support of typically underrepresented businesses*

NFPs can use several methods to advocate for those businesses that do not have any other representation in the community. They can serve as a means to expand particular business constituencies while providing a vehicle for access to government programs.

10. *Encourage NFP advocacy of small business development in city neighborhoods*

There are few groups within the city that recognize the physical and economic importance of small neighborhood businesses. These organizations not only can promote this significance to the general community, but also actively advocate for them with the local government.

11. *Support NFP efforts to integrate economic and social issues*

NFPs recognize that social and economic issues are often intertwined and therefore

can strive to connect those in need to economic opportunities. The result will be cultural and social stimulation for the city.

Business and Commercial Development Economics

Inventory

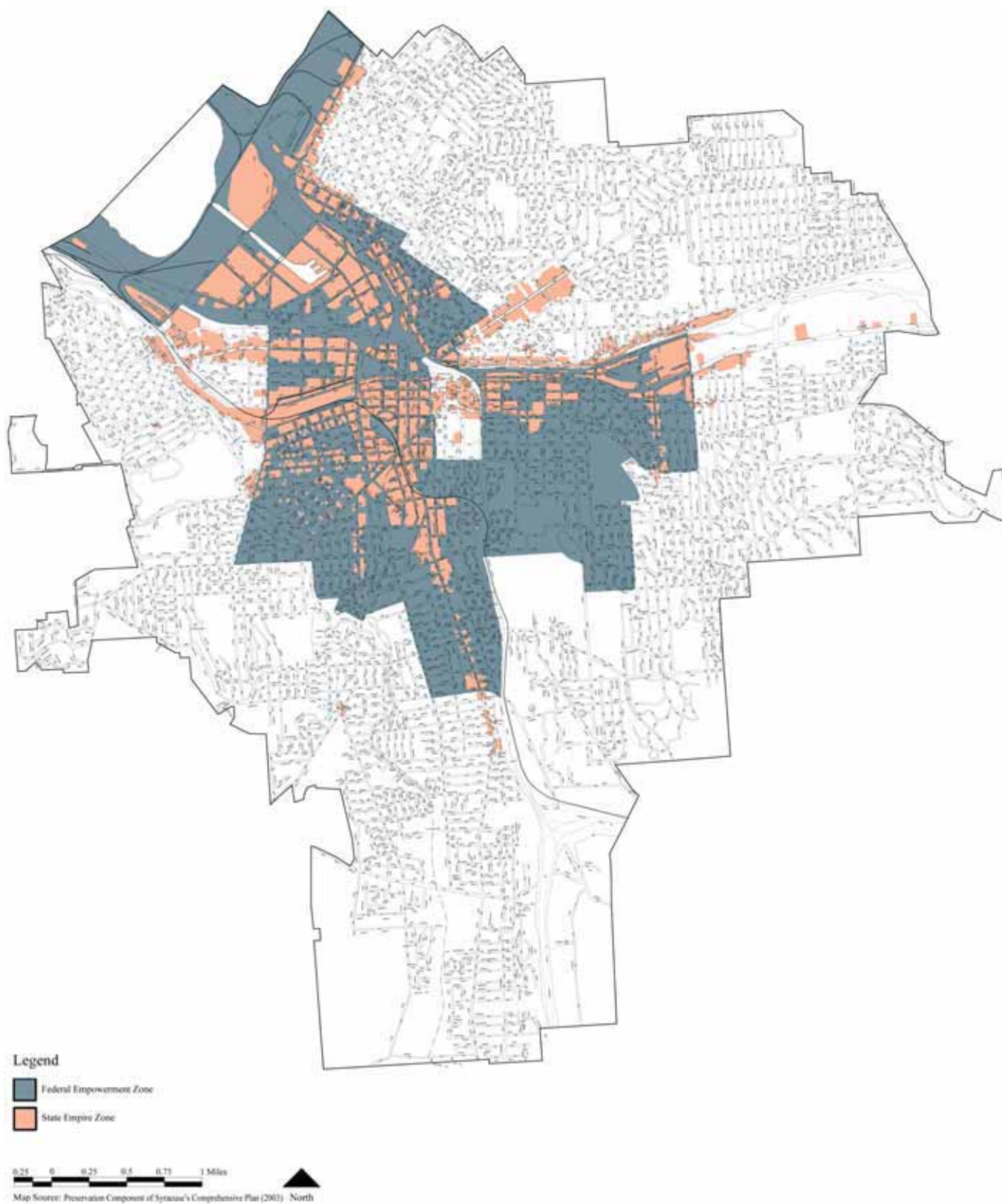
Economic investment in Syracuse involves both public and private entities, most often acting in concert. Through joint efforts, resources can be maximized to insure the greatest short and long-term return on every dollar spent. Public funding programs administered by federal, state, and municipal agencies often provide the dollars or tax incentives necessary to ensure project success. Understanding current and future markets is equally important, but particularly when non-traditional economic development ventures are proposed. Adoption of a formal plan by the city government, with 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)





Faculty of Landscape Architecture Economic Development Zones

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City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan



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 to 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 over \$6.3 million in 2006.

HUD 108 Loans

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

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; for example, the priority projects in Downtown have all involved housing development. The Syracuse Department of Community and Office of Economic Development administer SNI funds.

Empowerment Zones

Economic development projects within designated federal 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 most of Downtown and a large portion of the city. Businesses can determine whether they are within the zone on the city's website in order to benefit from this federal program.

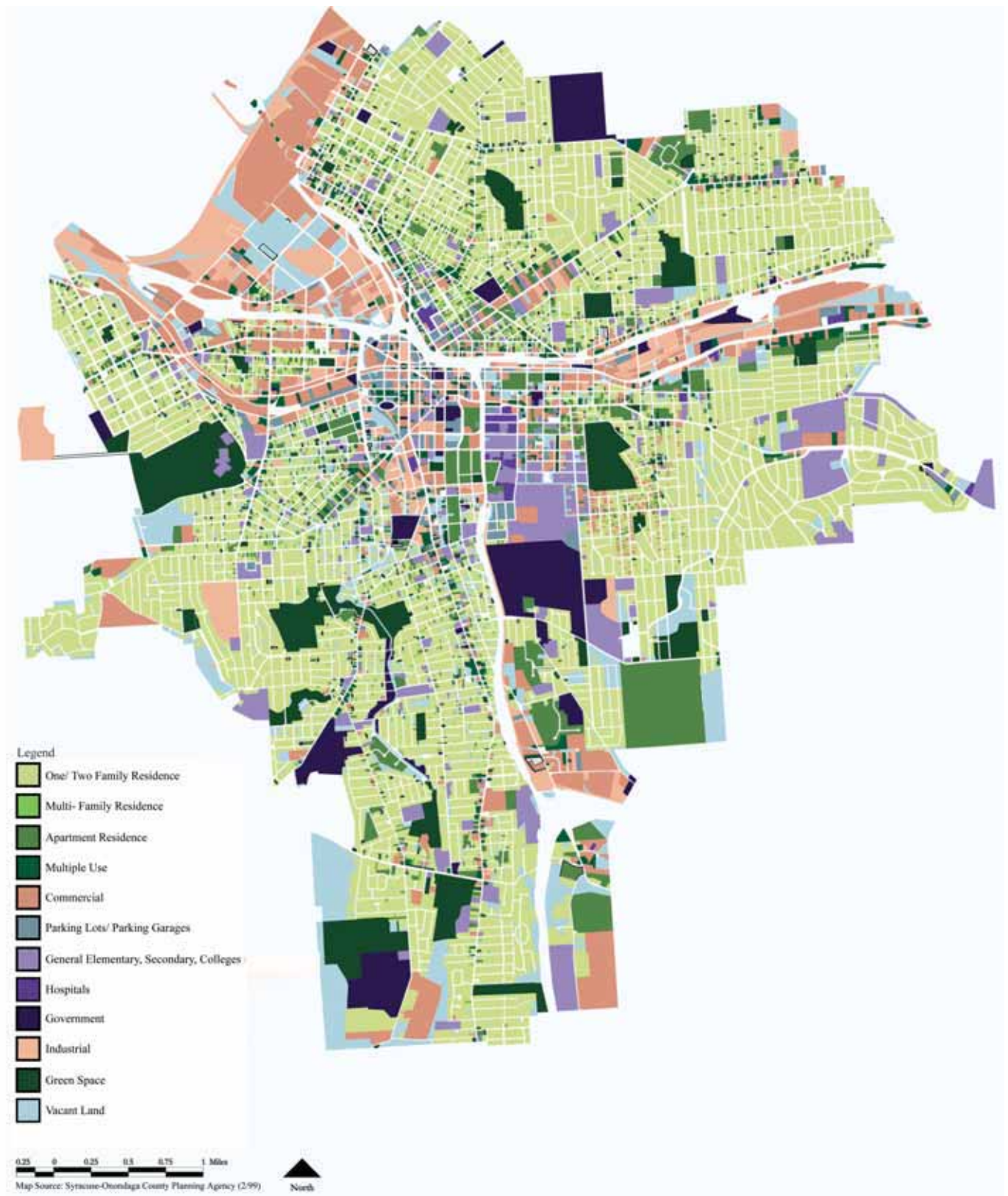
HUBZone

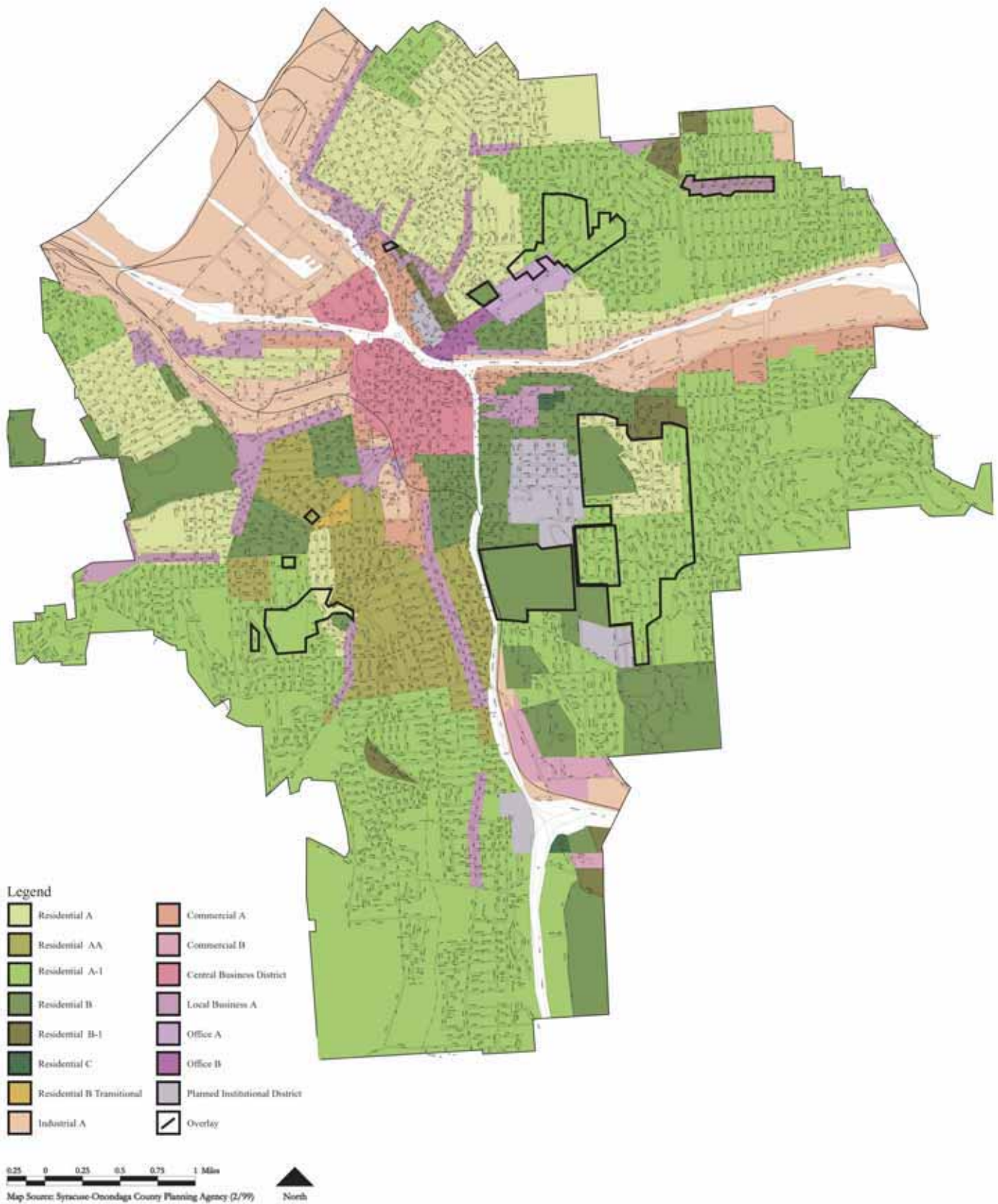
The Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) Empowerment Contracting Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in urban and rural communities by providing federal contracting preferences to small businesses. For a business to receive these benefits it must be located in a designated HUBZone, which included most of the City of Syracuse, be owned and controlled by US citizens, and have at least 35% of employees reside in a HUBZone. Program administrators maintain information about the financial condition HUBZone businesses, to evaluate the progress of individual businesses as well as the HUBZone.

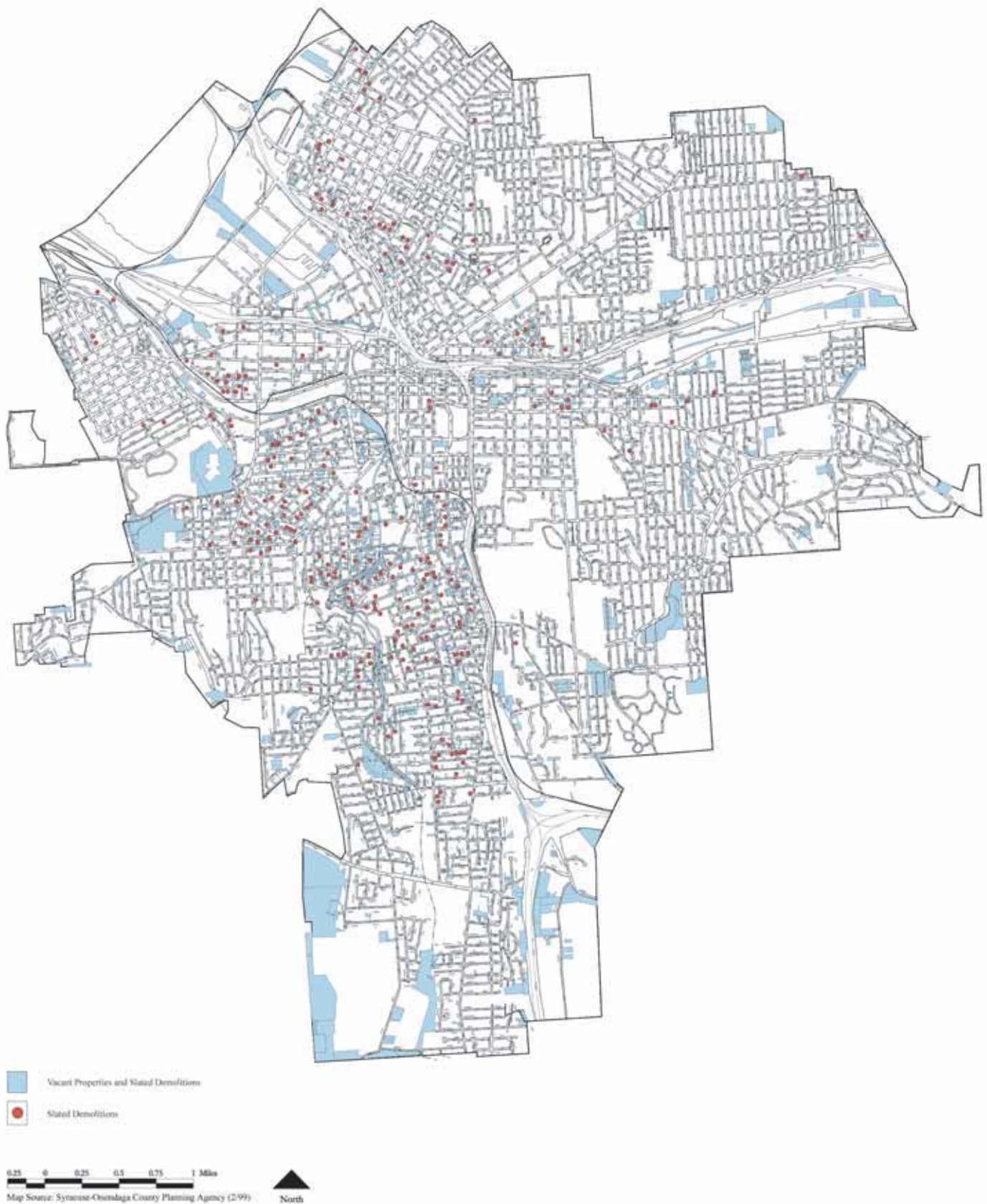
Small Business Administration (SBA)

The federal SBA is charged with working to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting and protecting the interests of small businesses and by helping families and businesses recover from national disasters. They provide information resources concerning whether a business is within an area designated eligible for economic incentive programs.









Faculty of Landscape Architecture Vacant Properties and Demolition

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan



Internal Revenue Service Investments 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.

New York State Programs:

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 growth and development. Beginning in 2000, all zone-certified entities are now identified as Qualified Empire Zone Enterprises (QEZE), which are businesses projecting job growth. Components of the zone tax incentives 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 Proper Tax Abatement
- State-wide Zone Capital Credit Corporation

Empire State Development Corporation

This State agency offers financial assistance for the construction and

expansion of industrial, manufacturing, and non-retail commercial facilities.

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 areas. Syracuse currently has only two BIDs; Downtown and the Crouse-Marshall Streets BID.

Local Programs

City of Syracuse

Through its various departments and staffs, as well as related subsidiary entities, the city provides a number of economic development tools to business people and commercial property owners; including grants, loans and partial exemption from property taxes.

Syracuse Metropolitan Region COMCO Revolving Loan Fund (Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison, Cortland, and Oswego Counties)

COMCO provides working capital loans and loan guarantees for business start-ups, planned expansions or relocations. Eligible businesses are new and expanding manufacturing business located within the stated counties. The Syracuse Industrial Development Agency is an official member of the COMCO organization, and loans awarded in the city are administered through the Syracuse Economic Development Corporation.



Analysis

Problems

1. *Limited awareness and understanding of available economic development programs*

Potential business owners and developers lack a comprehensive understanding of available economic incentives that encourage commercial and business development. Although information is available, multiple outlets dispense materials and can confuse the public as to the principal source for additional assistance.

2. *Perceived and/or real difficulties interfacing with municipal agencies for commercial development*

The start-up process can seem overwhelming or confusing to developers, as it deals with plan approval, the loan process, permits, codes and inspections. Without a time limit approval of commercial development by municipal agencies can appear never-ending.

3. *High percentage of tax-exempt properties*

Substantial amounts of revenue are lost annually due to the inordinate number of properties granted tax exemptions, which accounts for about 60% of Syracuse properties. This situation not only impacts the City's general revenue stream, but also places an extraordinary burden on the small percentage of property owners that pay taxes based on full value assessment.

4. *High percentage of absentee-investor owned properties*

The City has not created a climate where absentee investor-owners are necessarily held accountable for poorly maintained properties. This situation creates concern that outside investment ultimately can lead to property neglect and neighborhood decline.

5. *Failure to publicize temporary real property tax abatements*

While permanent partial and/or full tax exemptions have a long-term negative impact on the City, short term exemptions can be used to attract new residents and/or encourage economic reinvestment. Incentives exist to promote development in existing building stock, but they are not heavily advertised.

6. *Difficulty marketing economically stressed areas to potential investors*

Due to the condition of older economically stressed areas, potential investors concentrate their search for properties in areas that are more stable and desirable, thus perpetuating these conditions.

7. *Multiple, but uncoordinated community marketing efforts for business development*

The lack of one central, holistic promotional campaign directed at in-city business development disperses limited resources. More importantly, unless independent campaigns are coordinated, messages can be mixed and contradictory.

8. *Failure to retain reasonable percentage of graduates as permanent residents*

The local job market has yet to maximize retention of local university graduates. This failure leads to loss of potential homeowners, taxpayers, consumers and educated citizens, which has unfavorable effects on the city's economic market.

9. *Perception that older building stock cannot meet contemporary needs*

While the city has a large supply of older building stock, some developers are not persuaded to rehabilitate existing buildings because of perceived costs and code issues. The lack of capital to make necessary improvements makes many older properties less desirable.



10. *Over abundance of vacant buildings and lots*
Syracuse's loss of population, among other factors, has left many storefronts vacant. This loss of building fabric dramatically impacts the visual character as well as physical density of commercial areas. The continuous cycle of disrepair, deterioration, and demolition of building stock concerns many residents who do not understand the city's policies toward vacant buildings.

Opportunities

1. *Better coordinate and market existing business assistance programs*

The numerous assistance programs available can be best utilized through a multi-agency effort. With less overlap and more attention to detailed implementation, these programs can be more effective. Municipal agencies should work closely with individual businesses and guide them through the process required to take advantage of these programs.

2. *Focus PILOT program on specific areas in need of re-investment*

Directing the PILOT program to defined areas in need of re-investment will limit unnecessary and unwarranted use of this incentive. PILOT agreements can become more widespread once targeted areas have been stabilized and are growing.

3. *Pursue continued participation in the New York Main Street Program and the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program*

The Main Street and Brownfield Programs are based on effective national models and successful economic stimulators. Strengthening commercial areas through those programs will improve overall economic opportunity.

4. *Target existing and new initiatives to smaller businesses*

In Syracuse approximately 90% of businesses consist of 25 employees or smaller. These small businesses and the small entrepreneur provide needed markets and services, and will benefit from targeted assistance.

5. *Utilize lower property values in city to encourage growth*

Although the depressed commercial market generally is not viewed as a benefit, in the short term, promoting the low cost of in-city business can result in an increase in development. Many classes of buyers can find these lower prices extremely attractive.

6. *Promote low cost of starting a business within the city*

In 2004 INC Magazine ranked Syracuse 1st in the Northeast and 14th overall among small to medium sized cities in which to do business; and the Cost of Doing Business Index ranked Syracuse as the 6th most affordable place for business. These rankings must be marketed as an inducement for business establishment in the city.

7. *Use currently successful neighborhood commercial areas as models*

Areas as diverse as Little Italy and the Westcott Street business district can be used as models for revitalization and economic growth. These districts have been enhanced through local investment and the reuse of existing buildings, an approach transferable to other areas of the city.

8. *Maximize existing investment in public infrastructure*

The economic value of existing infrastructure can save the regional and City community time and money.



Similarly developers' costs can be substantially reduced by using sites already connected to existing public systems.

9. *Market vacant lots and buildings for redevelopment*

Instead of demolition, Syracuse has the opportunity to promote the rehabilitation of its older structures through the use of various programs. Viable small-scale businesses often can be excellent candidates for adaptive reuse, while unique large-scale enterprises can take advantage of large tracts of vacant land.

10. *Promote mixed-use development*

Development that maintains the city's traditional mix of uses in individual buildings and districts are uniquely urban. Seeking out these projects will strengthen the City's place in the regional economy.

11. *Market historic properties for redevelopment*

The city is in the unique position to offer developers high quality buildings rich in character for commercial use. The high number and concentration of such properties in Syracuse sets the City apart from outlying communities.

12. *Capitalize on recent population stabilization*

The city is fortunate to have seen its population stabilize and increase in recent years. This fact should be widely promoted to encourage business development, especially by local investors and business owners who have a personal stake in the success of the city.

13. *Promote trends in green design*

A sustainable economy must be built through sustainable design and construction. City government can be a leader in green design by adopting policies supportive of this philosophy.

Planning, Zoning and Land Use

Inventory

Zoning is the implementation of comprehensive planning, and a guide for land use. 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 the inhabitants of the city. This occurs through the designation of zoning districts, which contain rules, regulations, restrictions and prohibitions that encourage or discourage certain types of land use for each property in the city.

Zoning is intended to be uniform within each district, with properties treated equally. The *Syracuse Zoning Rules and Regulations* describe the physical characteristics required for each district, which include setbacks, density, height and bulk of structures, and parking. An additional section deals with parking and loading in greater detail. Still other sections address signs, historic preservation and demolition.

Zoning has had a significant impact on the way that the city has evolved to its current physical form. 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 entirely revised. For this study, the City of Syracuse *Zoning Rules and Regulations* of 2002 was referenced, along with information collected from interviews with various municipal officials and staff.

Currently there are 27 different zoning districts and 4 overlay districts, with 10 dealing principally with residential use; all of these—even the most restrictive,



Residential District Class A-1—accommodate some level of commercial land use. Eight district classifications are exclusive to the Downtown, and incorporate a wide variety of business uses. Two districts focus on industrial use, two on office use, and one on institutional use. The remaining 4 classifications—Local Business District Class A (BA), Planned Shopping District (PSD), Commercial District Class A (CA) and Commercial District Class B (CB) primarily addressed commercial uses. The 4 overlay district types include: Historic Preservation Districts, Special Neighborhood Districts, the James Street Overlay District and the Motor Vehicle Sales Business Overlay District (Auto Row). They deal with business and commercial development to varying degrees.

The Syracuse City Planning Commission (CPC) and the Syracuse Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) have primary responsibility for administering the *Zoning Rules and Regulations*. The mayor appoints members to both bodies, and none are required to have any particular educational or professional expertise; 5 individuals serve on the CPC and 8 on the BZA. Staff to both bodies responds to zoning related questions, distribute application materials, review submittals for completeness, and generally summarize proposals for the CPC and BZA.

The CPC is concerned with overall enforcement of ordinance provisions, such as subdivision and special permit requests. The BZA deals specifically with area and use variances. Area variances allow deviation from the prescribed physical allowances for each zoning classification. Use variances allow departure from allowable uses defined for each classification. Both variances are

widely requested of and routinely approved by the BZA.

Planning for the City of Syracuse occurs through a variety of independent public and private mechanisms, although with no single entity responsible for coordination of efforts. The Syracuse-Onondaga Planning Agency (SOCPA) contains the staff for the City Zoning Administration Office, which supports both the CPC and BZA; and occasionally undertakes studies dealing with physical development within the city. The most significant of these efforts was preparation of the *City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan*. The Syracuse Department of Community Development addresses discrete portions of the city's physical environment through its funding of individual NFP programs and projects in its annual Consolidated Plans.

Private entities, including educational institutions such as Syracuse University and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and special interest organizations, like the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects or the Metropolitan Development Association, also undertake initiatives that consider the short- and/or long-term quality of the city fabric. Four examples of such separate and unconnected planning ventures include:

The Connective Corridor

Conceived by Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor in the spring 2005, the Connective Corridor is a plan to improve and promote access to the Syracuse arts communities and to provide safe and affordable physical connections between University Hill and Downtown. Additionally, the intention is to incorporate design components highlighted in the *City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025* that will make the city more innovative and conducive to



modern urban lifestyles, adding a new vibrancy and energy to the involved areas and serving as a foundation for continued growth in Syracuse.

Butternut Street Task Force

An outgrowth of the TNT program, the Butternut Street Task Force is initiating projects directed at improving the street as the service corridor to the traditional Northside residential neighborhood. The stated project goal is to develop a strong community of commerce and living along Butternut Street by expanding the economic base, stabilizing residential properties, and improving the overall image from North Salina Street to Butternut Circle.

North Salina-Little Italy Streetscape Project

This short-term plan is focused on comprehensive streetscape and road improvements for several key blocks within the North Salina Street National Register Historic District. After over 20 years of limited re-investment, this important commercial corridor is realizing a slow but steady economic resurgence. Upgrading of the public right-of-way, including the introduction of stylized street furnishings, is intended to mirror private development already underway and to spur additional commercial investment.

South Salina Street Gateway Project

This initiative calls for a holistic planning approach for redevelopment of the South Salina Street corridor. The Center for Community Design Research at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry is working with TNT Sector 3 and the Central New York Community Foundation to identify issues impacting the physical character, and therefore economic viability, of the area.

Analysis

Problems

1. Outdated zoning rules and regulations

The current Syracuse Zoning Ordinance was written in the 1930s and revised in the 1950s. It was based on automobile use and a suburban model for development. It does not address emerging issues regarding urban business and commercial development.

2. Inadequate project site review guidelines and Process

The current project site review process reviews physical character of a project on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to utilizing an established set of design standards and guidelines. As a result, the physical character of projects does not always fit with their surrounding context. The current process is too subjective and allows variation in evaluation.

3. Lack of design standards

The current ordinance fails to adequately address aesthetics or the effective use of new design practices. Without a comprehensive set of guidelines it is difficult to ensure high quality physical character.

4. Difficulty in accurately defining commercial areas in transition

With widespread use of variances it is difficult to accurately identify commercial areas that have developed a new physical character. Some areas have been eroded by the encroachment of incompatible uses, and others by designs that stand in striking contrast to established properties.

5. Lack of guidelines to assess appropriateness of variance requests

The absence of objective standards by which to evaluate requests has led to an over-use and over-approval of variances.



Without an adequate set of guidelines it is difficult for the Board of Zoning Appeals to discern between variances that are augmentative and those that are detrimental to their context.

6. *Inadequate public notification/participation regarding variance applications*

Current notification procedures reach only the closest properties to a location under review by city review bodies. Additionally, the information received is relatively vague and it is cumbersome to obtain clarification. This inadequate notification process leads to a situation in which not all businesses and residents who are affected by the property in question are aware of the zoning modification.

7. *Insufficient zoning enforcement*

There is limited and/or inconsistent enforcement of various zoning regulations, which leads to unauthorized development with a great impact on overall land use and physical character.

8. *Lack of adequate resources for code enforcement and inspections*

Though the city administration tries to enforce the building code and zoning regulations, it is often overwhelmed. This situation is partially due to a shortage of city resources, as well as a climate of disregard for both the building code and zoning laws. There are not enough inspectors to allow for efficient inspection schedules.

9. *Lack of coordination between inspections and work phases*

Limited staff and general administrative procedures do not always correspond to construction phases, making it difficult to advance projects as well as enforce codes. Inspectors are not as thorough as they should be because it is assumed that the contractor will continue to maintain the

same quality of work after the initial inspection.

10. *Both real and perceived difficulties in applying current building code to rehabilitation projects*

Most of the city's buildings were designed and built prior to the establishment of current codes. These buildings often require substantial changes for code application, which can sometimes increase costs.

11. *Absence of professional planning or design qualifications for appointees to the central Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.*

Many cities require that some members of planning and zoning bodies have professional qualifications in order to serve. Syracuse, however, has no such guidelines, which at times can hinder decision-making.

12. *Lack of fiscal and administrative municipal resources to implement the Comprehensive Plan*

Although the Comprehensive Plan identifies many tasks to move towards implementation, details are not provided, nor are there any specific provisions.

13. *Limited connection between site-specific studies, plans and proposals and the city at large*

The scope of many current independent projects can be rather narrow, lacking consideration of the greater community. With no codified detailed plan to guide these individual proposals, private entities will continue to pursue projects that might be in the best interest of the City as a whole.

14. *Failure to adequately address impacts of large-scale individual projects on municipal service*

With many current projects lacking sufficient funding for upkeep and maintenance, as well as placing a significant drain on public City services, the cost of large-scale commercial development can far outweigh the benefits.

Opportunities

1. *Revise zoning ordinance*

Modifying the city zoning ordinance to better reflect traditional urban conditions, rather than mid-20th century suburban expansion ideals, can improve both municipal decision-making and private sector proposals. The ordinance should be rewritten to support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning District Classifications should be streamlined and simplified to provide clear guidance as to the most appropriate development and use in each district.

2. *Revise project site review mechanism*

Substantial modifications to the existing process can result in a more commonly used and more effective site plan review process and design standards.

3. *Encourage better physical and social connections between business districts and surrounding neighborhood context*

Improved visual links and physical ties between commercial areas and adjacent city fabric can help create more attractive streetscapes and therefore more appealing places to do business. New businesses provide employment for community members, augmenting civic pride, shortening commuter times, and encouraging neighborhoods to become more economically self-sufficient.

4. *Utilize site specific studies, plans and proposals as catalysts for developing comprehensive neighborhood plans*

The use of individual projects as vehicles to ignite interest in similar but more comprehensive studies can lead to more effective revitalization efforts.

5. *Use overlay zoning classifications to address commercial area aesthetics*

Expanding the use and type of overlay zoning districts can more effectively protect preferred commercial character. Combined with increased and well-defined regulations for aesthetics through the zoning ordinance, specific overlay classification can provide optimal oversight for development in many city neighborhoods.

6. *Maximize flexibility in code reviews for historic buildings*

If the code review process is more flexible with regard to historic buildings, it will be more enticing for new ownership and rehabilitation by investors. Promoting the use of variances and listing on the National Register to avoid costly building changes will further encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings.

7. *Re-evaluate the five strategic economic areas identified in the comprehensive plan*

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan must involve reevaluation and modification as more detailed components are developed. In particular, the identified strategic economic areas should be carefully reconsidered and/or prioritized.

8. *Create a plan to bring all existing signage into compliance with an improved sign ordinance*

With overall revision to the Syracuse Zoning Rules and Regulations, there is an ideal opportunity to implement state-of-the-art guidelines for signage.



Physical Form

Inventory

Patterns within city fabric can be the result of political influences and legal requirements; or they can correspond to historic events, societal needs or cultural preferences. Some of these patterns stem from the initial incorporation of the City of Syracuse, with the merger of the villages of Salina and Syracuse. As the city expanded, the layout of these and other smaller pre-existing municipalities were connected as newer developments were laid according to the methods of the day. The underlying natural topography affects all of these patterns, resulting in physical characteristics decidedly unique to Syracuse. Regardless of their origin, the arrangement of streets, blocks and lots create the fundamental order of the city, while buildings contribute to its overall character.

Information regarding organizational patterns and built form focused on buildings, lots and streets.

- For buildings, form, height, width, architectural style, exterior features and materials were noted.
- For lots, their alignment to the street, size, shape, frontage, front and side yard setbacks was recorded.
- For streets, observations focused on the sidewalks, planting strips, street trees, curbs, lights and other street furnishings.

In order to fully understand the physical factors at play in Syracuse commercial areas, data was gathered through primary and secondary sources, site visits, and interviews with local officials. Two principal criteria were utilized in the inventory process: physical form and time

period of emergence, with form being the primary consideration. While physical features corresponding to both original and current uses were factors under consideration, the emphasis was on original uses rather than current.

Using these criteria, 4 very broad categories were developed and then used for field evaluation of business and commercial properties, excluding those properties currently used solely for industrial and/or manufacturing purposes. The first category, traditional urban neighborhood business districts and corridors, is characterized by multiple business or commercial properties located adjacent to one another along a city street. Overall density is high with buildings covering all or most (>75%) of lot and having little if any front and side set backs. Generally, on-site parking and loading are limited.

Traditional urban neighborhood business nodes, the second category, occur where one or more business or commercial properties are located around the intersection of city streets. Residential use is sometimes found on upper floors, and in contiguous individual one, two or three-family properties. These areas have high density, with buildings covering all or most (>75%) of the lot with little if any set back from public streets, and limited on-site parking and loading.

The third category is mid-20th century commercial districts and nodes, which have multiple businesses located on a single large parcel or several such properties adjacent to one another along a city street for all or a portion of at least one block. Residential use is not incorporated, but often in close proximity. There is generally low to moderate density, with buildings covering less than 50% of the lot and set back significantly



from public streets. Most of the lot area is used principally for parking and/or loading, and is typically located between the building and the public street.

The fourth category is late-20th/early 21st century commercial districts and corridors, which are similar to the third type, but instead incorporate far more features that prioritize vehicular use. During the fieldwork, two additional categories were used to classify properties; a “hybrid” corridor that includes a mix of all the other types as well as a former industrial category.

Following extensive discussion, research and additional fieldwork it was determined that the physical form of Syracuse’s existing commercial areas fits within 13 business types:

- Live Work Properties
- Established Area Corner Store
- Established Neighborhood Commercial Property or District
- Main Street Corridor
- Suburban Neighborhood Commercial Property
- Small Community Shopping Center
- Big Box Property
- Established Community Commercial Corridor
- Regional Commercial Corridor
- Highway Commercial Corridor
- Automotive Sales Property or Corridor
- Former Industrial Property or Corridor
- Suburban Office Complex Property or Corridor

Problems

1. *Lack of compatibility in physical character along business and commercial corridors.*

Due to changes in design styles throughout different eras, as well as a lack

of design guidelines, the city has realized a break in continuity of its physical character. There is inconsistency within given districts and along some corridors with respect to setbacks, building sizes, building locations on lots, and parking configurations. While diversity should be maintained and streetscapes not give way to uniformity, parameters must be established that will support higher quality physical development.

2. *Incremental loss of traditional mixed-use properties within existing commercial areas.*

Where there were once areas in the city comprised almost exclusively by properties that supported both housing and business, most commercial districts have lost much of their mixed character to single-use properties. This change not only has weakened the physical character of these areas, but also their social composition.

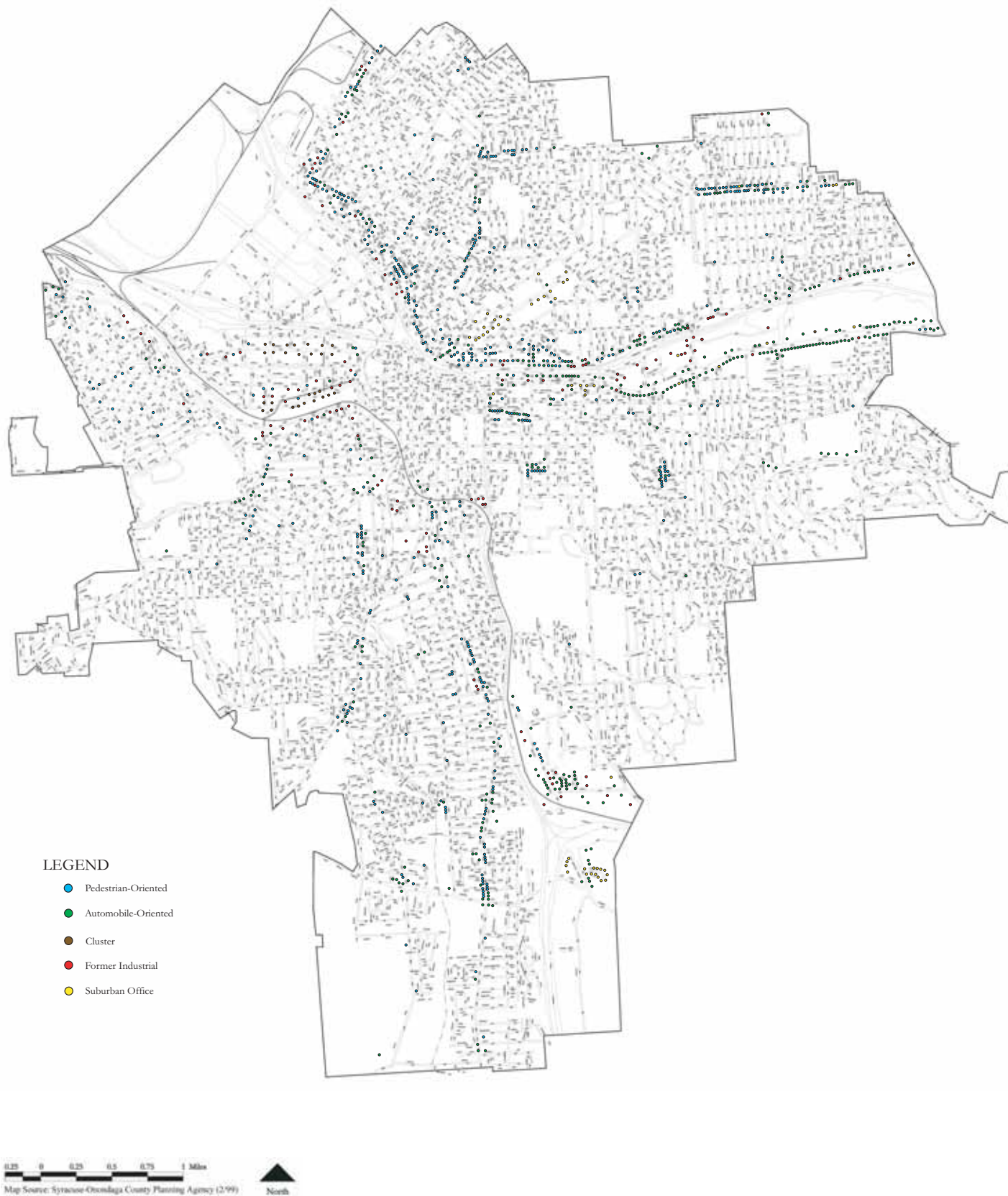
3. *Overall physical development strategy based on a suburban model.*

The current zoning provisions allow for suburban-based development, that is physical growth focused on vehicular circulation while marginalizing the role of the pedestrian. The result is physical densities substantially lower than those typically associated with cities, and based on large lots and buildings, surrounded by ample parking.

4. *Physical separation of some commercial areas from their user/customer base.*

Physical barriers such as Interstates 81 and 690, West Street Arterial, and active railroad corridors limit convenient access to commercial areas for customers in surrounding residential neighbors. Because these physical barriers also are primary inter- or intra-urban transportation routes, they also remove traffic—and potential customers—from nearby local streets.





Faculty of Landscape Architecture

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Business Typologies

City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan

Urban Design Studio 2006



Existing Business Types



In order to fully understand the physical factors at play in Syracuse commercial areas, data was gathered through primary and secondary sources, site visits, and interviews with local officials. Two principal criteria were used: physical form and time period of emergence, with form the primary consideration. While physical features corresponding to both original and current uses were factors considered, the emphasis was on the former rather than the latter.

Traditional urban neighborhood business nodes, the second category, occur where one or more business or commercial properties is located around the intersection of city streets. Residential use is sometimes found on upper floors, and in contiguous individual single, two- or three-family properties. These areas have high density, with buildings covering all or most (>75%) of lot with little if any set back from public streets and limited on-site parking and loading.

The third category is mid-20th century commercial districts and nodes, which have multiple businesses located

on a single large parcel or several such properties adjacent to one another along a city street for all or a portion of at least one block. Residential use not incorporated, but often in close proximity. There is generally low to moderate density, with buildings covering less than 50% of lot and set back significantly from public streets, with the area used principally for parking and/or loading; generous on-site parking and loading typically is between the building and public street.

The fourth category is late-20th/early 21st century commercial districts and corridors, which is much like the third type, but incorporating far more features that prioritize vehicular use. During fieldwork, two additional categories were used to classify properties, a hybrid corridor that included a mix of all the other types and a former industrial category.

Following extensive discussion, research and additional fieldwork it was determined that the physical form of Syracuse's existing commercial areas actually exhibits greater distinctions than defined by these six categories.

These differences are evident in the site, use, and buildings locational characteristics. Reevaluation of the collected data based on these more detailed definitions resulted in 13 identifiable business types within the city.



1. Clark Street and Allen Street



Live Work

Site Characteristics

- Lot size dependent on building form
- Minimal physical and visual impact on adjacent properties

Use Characteristics

- Single use commercial within a single dwelling unit; connected and non-dividable
- Mainly offices, studios and low impact retail
- Maximum of two outside employees. Small scale commercial operations
- Limited patron visits to the business site per day.

Building Characteristics

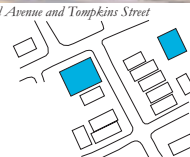
- Residential housing character
- Maximum 50% of floor space for commercial use

Locational Characteristics

- In established neighborhood



2. Lowell Avenue and Tompkins Street



Established Area Corner Store

Site Characteristics

- ~ 6,000 sq.ft. lot
- +/- 75% lot coverage
- Buildings located on or close to front property line
- Minimal to no on-site parking

Use Characteristics

- Retail use, such as restaurant, with dwelling unit
- Restricted use size

Building Characteristics

- Typically a 1-3 storey building
- Dwelling units and other accessory uses restricted to second story or rear portion of building

Locational Characteristics

- In established neighborhoods
- Nodal corners



3. Westcott Street



Established Commercial Neighborhood District

Site Characteristics

- 1-3 blocks of development
- 75-100% lot coverage
- Pedestrian oriented
- On-street parking with some parking lots
- Minimal on-site parking at rear
- Minimal landscaping
- Typically located on or close to front property line

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail and personal services
- Pedestrian-oriented uses

Building Characteristics

- 2-3 storey buildings
- Varying building styles
- Varying sizes of retail spaces, but generally small
- Storefront with significant first floor glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located on neighborhood streets
- Linear along block face
- Generally integrated into surrounding environment



4. North Salina Street



Main Street Corridor

Site Characteristics

- Narrow, deep lots
- 75-100% lot coverage
- Pedestrian Oriented
- On-street parking with shared parking lots
- Minimal on-site parking at rear
- Minimal landscaping
- Buildings located on or close to front property line

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail and personal services
- Minimal auto service and gas stations
- Pedestrian oriented uses
- Mixed use buildings

Building Characteristics

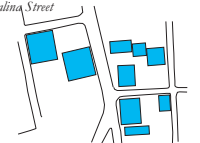
- 1-4 storey buildings with infrequent taller buildings
- Varying building styles
- Storefront significant first floor glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located along collector streets
- Linear along block face
- Typically adjacent to residential areas
- Distinguishable from surrounding environment



5. South Salina Street



Suburban Neighborhood Commercial Properties

Site Characteristics

- 0.5-2 acre sites
- 25-50% lot coverage
- Parking configurations vary
- Parking generally located between building front and public street

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail, and personal services
- Medical office
- Gas and convenience store

Building Characteristics

- 1-2 storey buildings, but typically 1 storey
- Standard building styles
- Generally minimal glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located along a collector road, but also neighborhood streets
- Typically adjacent to residential areas
- Contrasts with surrounding environment



6. Shop City Shopping Plaza



Small Community Shopping Center

Site Characteristics

- 2-4 acre sites
- 25-30% lot coverage
- Parking configurations vary
- Parking generally located between building fronts and public streets

Use Characteristics

- Common parking
- Promenade connecting buildings
- Generally retail food store and personal services, restaurants, retail
- Varying floor sizes for grocery stores and varying parcel size

Building Characteristics

- 1-2 storey buildings
- Buildings are oriented toward central parking area

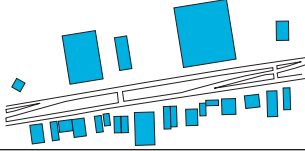
Locational Characteristics

- Located along collector Streets
- Typically adjacent to residential areas
- Contrasts with surrounding environment





7. Erie Boulevard



Big Box Property

Site Characteristics

- Narrow, deep lots, with some larger
- 50-100% lot coverage
- 0-15' setbacks
- Minimal on-street parking with some parking lots
- Parking usually at side or rear
- Minimal landscaping

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail and personal services
- Auto service and gas stations
- Uses generally serve local and commuting public
- Some destination oriented uses
- Mix of pedestrian and auto orientation
- Mixed use buildings

Building Characteristics

- 1-4 storey buildings with infrequent taller buildings
- Varying building styles
- Some store fronts with significant first floor glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located on collector streets
- Linear, generally along blockface
- Generally distinguished from surrounding environment



8. South Salina Street



Established Community

Commercial Corridor

Site Characteristics

- Generally 1 acre lots, with some larger
- 20-25% lot coverage
- Substantial building setback from property line
- Auto oriented
- No on-street parking
- Large free standing signs

Use Characteristics

- Retail and wholesale

Building Characteristics

- 1-2 storey buildings
- Standardized building styles
- Generally minimal glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located along collector streets and regional highways
- Typically not adjacent to residential areas
- Sometimes adjacent to industrial areas
- String of free standing independent sites
- Contrasts with surrounding environment



9. Burnett Avenue and Lodi Street



Regional Commercial Corridor

Site Characteristics

- 0.5-2 acre sites
- 20-75% lot coverage
- Parking configurations vary

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail, wholesale, personal services
- Automotive service and gas stations
- Light Industrial

Building Characteristics

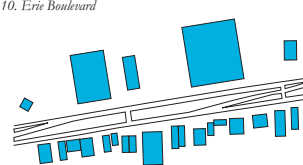
- 1-2 storey buildings
- Varying building styles
- Some storefronts with significant first floor glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located along collector streets
- Generally located next to residential areas



10. Erie Boulevard



Highway Commercial Corridor

Site Characteristics

- .05-2 acre sites
- 20-75% lot coverage
- Setbacks vary
- Auto oriented
- Parking configurations vary

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail and whole sale
- Auto service and gas stations
- Medical Office
- Light industrial
- Adult entertainment

Building Characteristics

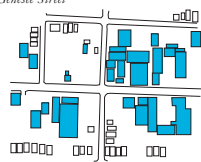
- 1-2 storey buildings
- Varying building styles

Locational Characteristics

- Located along major arterials
- Typically not adjacent to residential areas
- String of free standing sites
- Corridor can have median divider



11. West Genesee Street



Automotive Sales Property/Corridor

Site Characteristics

- 0.5-5 acre sites
- Lot coverage varies
- Setbacks vary
- Auto oriented
- Building parking for auto storage

Use Characteristics

- Specialty auto sales/service corridor

Building Characteristics

- 1-2 storey buildings
- Varying building storeys
- Showrooms with considerable glazing
- Service areas

Locational Characteristics

- Generally located along collector streets
- Contrasts with surrounding environment



12. Wolf Street



Former Industrial Property/Corridor

Site Characteristics

- .05-2 acre sites
- 75-100% lot coverage
- Building located on or close to front property line
- Pedestrian and auto oriented
- On-street parking with some parking lots

Use Characteristics

- Restaurants, retail and personal services
- Housing
- Office
- Mixed use buildings

Building Characteristics

- 2-4 storey buildings with some taller buildings
- Varying building styles
- High percentage of glazing

Locational Characteristics

- Located along various street types



13. Brighton Hill Office Park



Suburban Property or Corridor/District

Site Characteristics

- 0.5-1 acre lot sites
- Lot coverage varies
- Set back varies
- Parking configuration and location varies
- Minimal Landscaping

Use Characteristics

- Office with support commercial

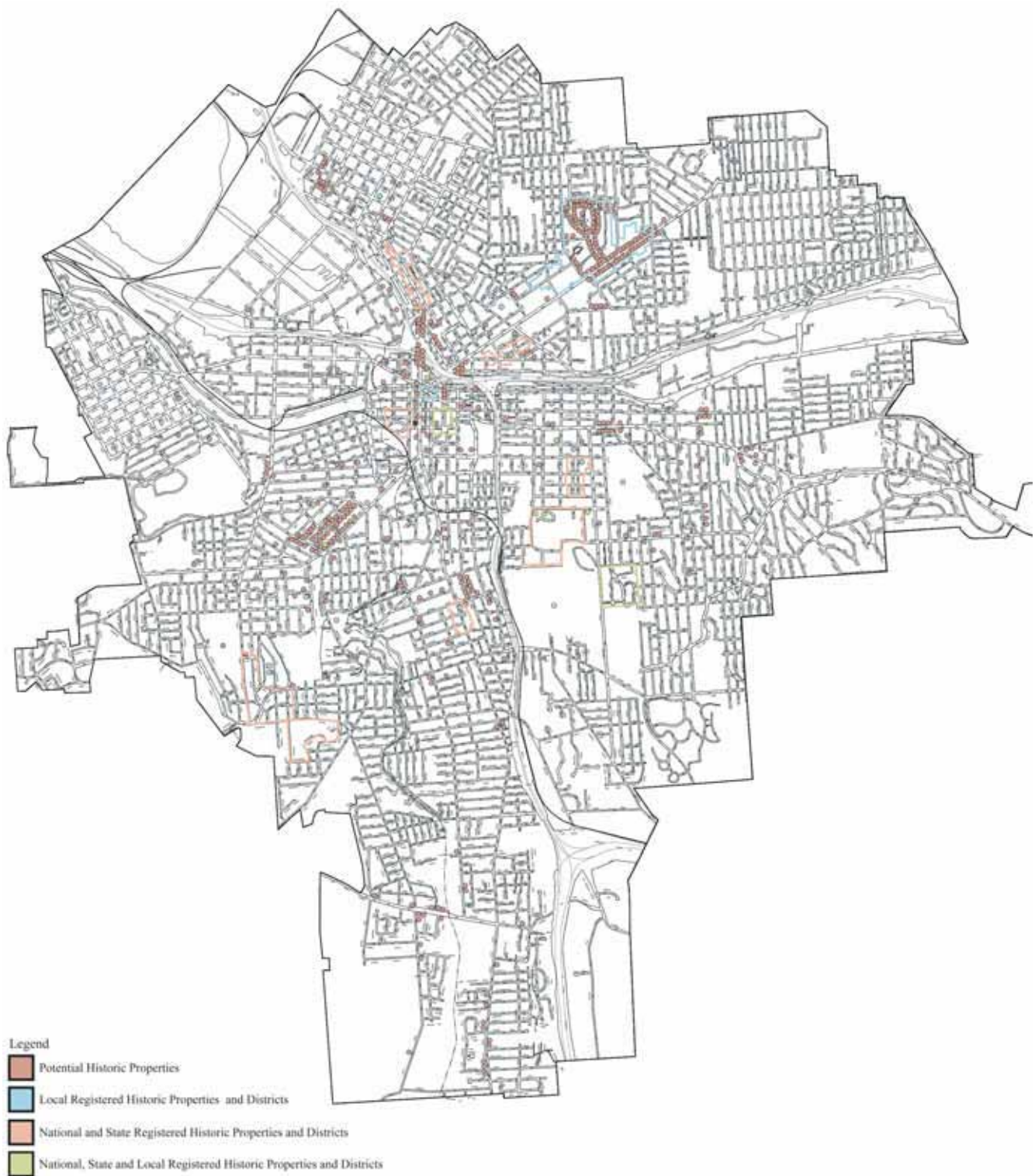
Building Characteristics

- 1-2 storey building
- Varying building styles

Locational Characteristics

- Located along major street types
- Contrasts with surrounding environment





5. *Fragmented corridors caused by over-abundance of vacant lots.*

A number of factors, not least of which is the city's loss of population over many decades, has resulted in many vacant commercial buildings, many of which are left to deteriorate and ultimately are demolished. This loss of built fabric dramatically impacts the physical density and visual character of business districts and commercial corridors.

6. *Isolated businesses and business nodes result in fragmented physical neighborhood character.*

The decreased number of neighborhood-oriented businesses in some areas has isolated those that remain, making commercial areas less physically and socially cohesive. This impact on the city's fabric is compounded in neighborhoods have high number of isolated business nodes.

7. *Perceived lack of convenient parking serving commercial areas.*

Although there might be an ample supply of parking to support city businesses, a customer's inability to park within unobstructed view of his/her destination creates a perceived lack of parking. In addition, the marginal physical condition of some lots and garages leads to concerns about safety, eliminating those facilities from consideration as viable parking options and thereby increasing the impression that parking is not readily available.

Opportunities

1. *Develop design guidelines for business and commercial districts and corridors*

Creating guidelines based on a traditional urban model will prevent further suburban-based development and provide

standards for future development.

Guidelines will create physical continuity for business and commercial districts and maintain density that is essential to urban vitality.

2. *Retain diversity of traditional business and commercial districts and corridors*

The historic fabric of Syracuse incorporated diversity in traditional building styles and business types, which created a unique visual character for the city. This diversity needs to be retained to restore the traditional character that Syracuse once embodied.

3. *Encourage compatibility of new construction with existing physical character*

New construction has a tendency to disregard traditional character within the city. Successful areas and their unique physical characteristics should be identified. For example, the older building stock has a traditional storefront setback that engages pedestrians in the street experience of the public realm. By encouraging compatibility of new construction with the preferred existing physical character, neighborhood identity can be enhanced and a unified fabric for the city can be created.

4. *Encourage adaptive re-use rather than demolition of existing buildings*

Instead of demolition, Syracuse can encourage and prioritize re-use of the city's existing older commercial and business structures. The continued presence of the older building stock could eventually act as a catalyst for future neighborhood reinvestment while accommodating modern uses.

5. *Encourage rehabilitation of traditional building façades*

Many traditional buildings have undergone inappropriate façade



treatments. These buildings need to be identified and the façades need to be rehabilitated as necessary to enhance city sense of place and character.

6. *Improve existing business and commercial districts and corridors that are gateways into the city*

Identifying and recognizing specific areas as gateways into the city will draw in users from more than just the immediate area, and can improve the overall image of the city.

7. *Improve transitions and promote connections between currently isolated business nodes*

Currently, many districts are isolated with no physical or visual connections from one business area to the next. Strategies like creating continuity along the streetscape, adding consistent signage, and restoring historic and traditional associations can create a visual and physical connection for currently isolated business areas.

8. *Promote neighborhood contextual identity within business districts*

By encouraging business owners to take into account the physical character of the surrounding area, and to compliment this character, a neighborhood contextual identity can be established.

9. *Utilize existing business nodes to enhance neighborhood character*

Existing successful business nodes create and add to the identity of the surrounding neighborhoods. These successful nodes need to be examined and used as a model for creating future successful business nodes that enhance neighborhood identity.

10. *Identify strategic locations for clusters of compatible businesses*

Clustering similar businesses will give the city a reputation for being a center of

regional specialty while creating a support system for businesses. This will also allow clusters to share certain infrastructure.

11. *Develop a strategy using creative methods to abolish the perception of a lack of parking*

Parking will be organized into clusters, and lots will be used jointly as far as business flexibility permits. Signage will indicate parking opportunities so that they are easy to recognize, and so that users can easily orient themselves to their destinations.



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, three goals for business and commercial development were created, 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 Commercial Areas Component of the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan has three goals:

- To celebrate Syracuse as a great place to do business.
- To revitalize the business and commercial fabric of the City of Syracuse.
- To reestablish Syracuse as an economically viable and sustainable city.

Goal 1: Celebrate Syracuse as a great place to do business.

Even from their earliest years, American cities were places of intense activity, the lifeblood of a young republic sustaining a national population torn between the pursuit of a rural idyllic and a cosmopolitan synergy. As many citizens moved into the far reaches of the nation searching for their private piece of the

countryside, many more congregated within centers of transportation and trade. These latter places gradually became the focus of much more, including the seats of government and culture; and their compactness and density afforded an economy of space, activity and exchange. Cities also provided unparalleled options for entrepreneurial experimentation, for these places had the largest, ready-made customer base for all manner of goods and services. Inventive and creative individuals with the right resources easily established themselves as businesses people, providing city dwellers with all their daily needs and wants. By the end of the nineteenth century advances in technology allowed the most enterprising among them to use their city locations as the base for regional operations, and by the 1980s for global ventures. Even in the wake of the mid-twentieth century population shifts from urban to suburban locations, US cities nonetheless had more resources than other community type to support business development, for they still were the centers of government and culture, still the physical heart of sprawling metropolitan areas, still the most intense and exciting communities. Such characteristics have enabled Syracuse to fare better than most of its upstate neighbors during these societal shifts. For even though a substantial part of its economic heritage is based on manufacturing, the city also has long benefited from advances in health care, and professional and personal service industries and, most significantly, is poised to capitalize on new industries and state-of-the-art technologies. It is this diversity of commercial ventures coupled with an equally diverse population and outstanding quality of life offerings that undeniably make Syracuse an outstanding place to do business.



Goal One: Celebrate Syracuse as a great place to do business.

Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.



Local Urban Entrepreneur helps boost Local Economy

Action 1: Maintain a detailed list of local assets for business and commercial development.

Action 2: Create multimedia program for distributing information.

Objective 2: Pursue greater community involvement in planning for business and commercial development.

Action 1: Educate the general public regarding the impacts of business and commercial development.

Action 2: Utilize a revamped TNT program to focus on neighborhood business and commercial development.



Syracuse has 8 TNT Planning Areas

Action 3: Partner with not-for-profit organizations to maximize economic development options.



Current Not-for-Profit Organizations and Programs



Syracuse Not-for-Profit Organization, NEHDA, helps locate new business

Objective 3: Publicize the existing diversity of commercial resources.

	Imported Income	% of Total
Machinery Mfg	\$ 327,043,923	11.7%
Utilities	\$ 281,776,284	10.1%
Insurance carriers & related	\$ 194,677,616	7.0%
Ambulatory health care	\$ 171,607,535	6.1%
Educational svcs	\$ 152,945,572	5.5%
Primary metal mfg	\$ 152,424,643	5.5%
Fabricated metal prod	\$ 142,948,461	5.1%
Wholesale Trade	\$ 117,840,499	4.2%
Transportation eqpmt	\$ 112,511,281	4.0%
Paper Manufacturing	\$ 107,762,325	3.9%

Top ten Income Producing Industries in the Syracuse Area

Action 1: Advertise the availability of a diverse work-force.

Action 2: Advertise the variety of business and commercial areas.



Commercial Corridor on North Salina Street in Little Italy



Syracuse offers wide diversity of small businesses

Objective 4: Encourage greater civic and community responsibility among neighborhood businesses.

Action 1: Promote business sponsorship of neighborhood organizations and events.



Sponsors of the 2006 Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce Business Show

Action 2: Promote business owner participation in TNT.

Action 3: Facilitate partnerships between business owners and neighborhood associations and groups.

Action 4: Develop incentives to promote business involvement in the community.

Action 5: Support creation of business improvement districts.



Business Improvement District, Marshall Street

Action 6: Increase public education regarding Certificate of Use regulations.



Certificate of Use effects Small Businesses, typically under 20,000 Square Feet

Objective 5: Encourage the media to convey a positive image of Syracuse.



Crouse Hospital and CenterStage Events named Businesses of the Year



Syracuse has already been Nationally Recognized as a Great Place to do Business

Action 1: Disseminate regular press releases regarding business and commercial development.



2003 Press Release made by Governor Pataski's Office

Action 2: Hold press events on a wider range of business and commercial successes.

Action 3: Utilize local access cable to target special projects.

Action 4: Partner with local public television to develop public education programs regarding development successes.

Action 5: Incorporate regional and national media in outreach efforts.



The Power of Three is a Not-for-Profit Organization Promoting Regional Media between Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse



Central New York Magazine Premier May 2006

Faculty of Landscape Architecture

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan

Urban Design Studio 2006



Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

A significant number of public agencies and private organizations promote the Syracuse community. Although these efforts generally are well prepared, they are decidedly independent of one another and therefore fail to maximize local resources. More importantly, however, they do not distinguish local government as the principal promoter of the community. In order to attract and sustain a strong foundation of businesses, the city administration must be an outspoken, regionally recognized voice for well-planned, sustainable commercial growth. Certain community strengths must be highlighted to attract businesses from outside the area, just as other resources must be promoted because they help established local businesses. The city administration must take the lead in gathering disseminating such data, highlighting those people and places that set Syracuse apart from, but make it integral to, the regional economy.

Action 1: Maintain a detailed list of local assets for business and commercial development.

- Emphasize the city as the economic heart of the metropolitan region
- Gather and disseminate pertinent positive demographic data
- Calculate and distribute information regarding buying power within individual neighborhoods and the city overall
- Identify existing physical assets, including existing public infrastructure
- Recognize and promote the value of various NFPs addressing business retention and development

Action 2: Create multimedia program for distributing information.

- Incorporate all forms of print, audio-visual, and web-based media

- Utilize successful local, regional, and national marketing models

Objective 2: Pursue greater community involvement in planning for business and commercial development.

Syracuse has long been a center for citizen participation in community-wide and national debates. To varying degrees, residents have built on this legacy to provide comment on the city's fiscal health and efforts to grow the local economy. It is arguable, however, that during the last 30 years a sense of desperation sometimes has overshadowed the need for measured evaluation of in-city projects. Citizens must play an active role in assessing proposed commercial development in order to have a voice in the economic composition of the community, and so that businesses can cultivate a strong, positive interaction with a primary customer base.

Action 1: Educate the general public regarding the impacts of business and commercial development.

Action 2: Utilize a revamped TNT program to focus on neighborhood business and commercial development.

- Define smaller sectors.
- Identify common program goals and objectives.
- Foster community and political support for the program.
- Provide professional staff support, including seasoned senior level planners/designers and training opportunities for younger members.
- Announce program results

Action 3: Partner with not-for-profit organizations to maximize economic development options.



- Support not-for-profit organization efforts to integrate economic and social issues.
- Support not-for-profit organizations as facilitators and networkers for businesses with similar goals.
- Collaborate with private groups to assist typically underrepresented businesses.
- Generate advocacy among not-for-profit organizations for small business development in city neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Publicize the existing diversity of commercial resources.

Each Syracuse neighborhood offers a unique demographic composition in terms of social and physical characteristics, factors that are important to successful local business development. Similarly, the city as a whole has features unique to its urban condition that are equally significant to regional commercial ventures. The most must be made of these community assets that set Syracuse apart from neighboring municipalities and make it the preferred place to locate and operate a business.

Action 1: Advertise the availability of a diverse work-force.

Action 2: Advertise the variety of business and commercial areas.

- Underscore the uniqueness of traditional urban neighborhood business districts.
- Market Downtown as the primary business and commercial district in the region.

Objective 4: Encourage greater civic and community responsibility among neighborhood businesses.

Just as the city administration must cultivate community interest in the long-term health of its commercial areas and overall economy, so too must it foster business owner concern about the well-being of Syracuse residents. Businesses that operate independent of, or worse yet in spite of, the social and physical conditions that surround them are destined to ultimately fail. The quality of life in and around a commercial establishment is a reflection on not only the financial solvency of that enterprise but also a measure of its civic commitment. The city administration must encourage businesses to be “good neighbors,” exhibiting the same degree of respect and civility that they expect from local residents.

Action 1: Promote business sponsorship of neighborhood organizations and events.

- Create incentives, such as awards programs, to increase business involvements in the community.
- Provide mechanisms to match community needs with available business goods and services.

Action 2: Promote business owner participation in TNT.

Action 3: Facilitate partnerships between business owners and neighborhood associations and groups.

Action 4: Promote creation of business improvement districts.

Action 5: Develop incentives to promote business involvement in the community.

- Create awards program

Action 6: Increase public education regarding Certificate of Use regulations.



Objective 5: Encourage the media to convey a positive image of Syracuse.

Most American media is driven by sound bytes and techno-charged graphics that are intended to convey the essence of an occurrence, but instead sensationalize only a portion of a particular incident. With a cultural focus on the bizarre, the negative and the scandalous, there is little incentive to produce in-depth news stories about up-beat events or trends. Nevertheless, the media can be a valuable tool for attracting investment to Syracuse. Local reports that focus on the community's positive attributes will validate the decision by hundreds of people to do business here; and stories that reach the regional and national markets likely will entice others to the same thing. The city administration can take a concerted and active role in promoting economic successes, and thereby act as a principal catalyst for positive media portrayal of Syracuse.

Action 1: Disseminate regular press releases regarding business and commercial development.

Action 2: Hold press events on a greater variety of business and commercial successes.

Action 3: Utilize local access cable to target special projects.

Action 4: Partner with local public television to develop public education programs regarding development successes.

Action 5: Incorporate regional and national media in outreach efforts.

Goal 2: Revitalize the business and commercial fabric of Syracuse.

The physical complexity of and powerful social interaction inherent in the density

of a city is critical to sustaining its economic base. Overall organizational patterns as well as the location and condition of individual properties impact when and how people engage one another. The urban street network is the web upon which individual city businesses connect to customers and clients, and the system through which employees travel to and from work. The experience along these routes—the ease of movement, quality of streetscape, sense of vitality—can impact whether or not a return trip will be made. The blocks formed by these corridors can differ in dimension and form from one to the next, yet their orientation and order combine to create distinct areas within a city. Some correspond to the high volume of pedestrians common to urban neighborhoods; others relate to regional vehicular traffic. Add to these configurations enterprises that share similar functional or physical attributes and city blocks become discernible business districts, lending fiscal viability to individual commercial ventures. These blocks in turn offer lots that vary in size, sale and shape and accommodate an equally wide variety of building sizes and types. Where similarities in site development and architectural design exist, individual lots can help create a sense of place—which in turn can be perceived as the place to do business. Syracuse has such dynamic and interesting fabric to support an equally diverse economy, but lack of long-range planning, limited popular and political commitment to a high quality physical environment, and pockets of disinvestments have eroded its tangible features and perceived image. To fully realize sustained economic resurgence, there must be a commitment to restoring the character of Syracuse that makes it a special place to do business.



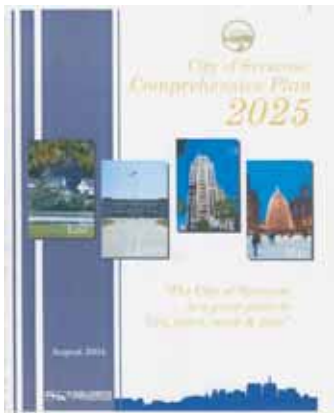
Goal Two: Revitalize the business and commercial fabric of Syracuse.

Objective 1: Revise the Zoning Rules and Regulations.



Syracuse Zoning Ordinance

Action 1: Correlate zoning directly to the Comprehensive Plan.



Comprehensive Plan Adopted in August 2004

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

Action 3: Consolidate and streamline zoning district classifications.

Action 4: Incorporate provisions for conservation districts as per the Preservation Component of the Comprehensive Plan.



Detailed Recommendation for Conservation Districts

Action 5: Expand requirements for planned institutional districts, including provisions that address issues of aesthetics and physical context — particularly where contiguous to business and commercial zones.

Action 6: Expand and enforce the requirements for surface parking lots and screening.



Existing Parking Lot, North Salina Street and East Division Street

Action 7: Expand and enforce provisions of the sign ordinance.

Action 8: Incorporate additional overlay districts.

Action 9: Incorporate new design review mechanisms and design guidelines.



Design Guidelines Presents

Action 10: Consider addition of site plan review process and criteria.

Action 11: Create guidelines for reviewing and approving variance, subdivision, and special permit requests.

Action 12: Increase public notification time, area and degree of information disseminated for all applications.

Action 13: Utilize a format that is more user-friendly.

Action 14: Incorporate professional qualifications and training for City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members.

Objective 2: Coordinate public and private sector planning efforts.

Action 1: Create an office for city planning and design.

Action 2: Re-evaluate the five strategic economic areas included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 3: Create a strategy for evaluating private planning projects for conformance to the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 4: Incorporate successful local, regional, national and international models for specific commercial areas.



Proposed Center of Excellence Rendering

Action 5: Educate community, business, and political leaders to support comprehensive planning.

Action 6: Require assessment of long-term public costs for private projects.

Objective 3: Retain physical diversity of traditional business and commercial districts and corridors.



Traditional Business Corridor, South Salina Street

Action 1: Prioritize re-use of existing buildings, particularly historic properties, over demolition.



Hogarty's Home and Garden, Helen Street and Park Street

Action 2: Promote building facade improvements when more substantial improvements are not possible.

Action 3: Require compatibility of new construction with preferred existing physical character.



Family Dollar Store, South Salina Street

Action 4: Improve code enforcement.

Objective 4: Strengthen physical connections to business and commercial areas.

Action 1: Promote contextual identity within neighborhoods.



Eastwood Neighborhood Sign

Action 2: Improve the physical condition of gateway business and commercial corridors.

Action 3: Reduce impacts from existing physical barriers.



West Street Arterial

Action 4: Capitalize on existing city circulation systems.

Objective 5: Undertake a comprehensive strategy for vacant properties.

Action 1: Promote retention of existing buildings over demolition.



In the News: Local examples of Adaptive Re-use and Demolition

Action 2: Promote new construction on open neighborhood lots.

Action 3: Develop special options for strategically located vacant lot.

Action 4: Monitor availability of land for development.

Action 5: Implement site control strategies, such as land banking, for multiple vacant properties in key neighborhoods.

Objective 6: Coordinate a comprehensive approach to parking with business and commercial development.

Action 1: Evaluate supply and demand.

Action 2: Utilize successful, creative models for parking.



Models for Planned Parking

Action 3: Explore cooperative management of parking facilities within business districts.



Objective 1: Revise the 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-twentieth century focus of promoting 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 traditional urban fabric will result in a legal mechanism supportive of smart growth and economic reinvestment.

Action 1: Correlate zoning directly to the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Action 3: Consolidate and streamline zoning district classifications.

Action 4: Incorporate provisions for conservation districts as per the Preservation Component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 5: Expand requirements for planned institutional districts, including provisions that address issues of aesthetics and physical context—particularly where contiguous to business and commercial zones.

Action 6: Expand and enforce the requirements for surface parking lots and screening.

Action 7: Expand and enforce provisions of the sign ordinance.

Action 8: Incorporate additional overlay districts.

Action 9: Incorporate new design review mechanisms and design guidelines.

Action 10: Consider addition of site plan review process and criteria.

Action 11: Create guidelines for reviewing and approving variance, subdivision, and special permit requests.

Action 12: Increase public notification time, area and degree of information disseminated for all applications.

Action 13: Utilize a format that is more user-friendly.

Action 14: Incorporate professional qualifications and training for City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members.

Objective 2: Coordinate public and private sector planning efforts.

The individual buildings and spaces that comprise commercial areas often have been ignored as essential parts of the cityscape. Absent any long-range view that establishes a defensible course for future development, the business uses and places exclusive to cities are likely to disappear in the wake of unplanned development. As critical urban features give way to single-purpose single-use projects that bear no visual relationship to city structure and identity, the physical, cultural and economic diversity of city commercial areas is greatly diminished. Yet these trends can be changed by carefully planning to integrate traditional fabric and uses with new development.



Elected officials, supported by effective legislation and administrative tools, can be the principal advocates promoting such an approach. When Syracusans recognize that their urban commercial areas are unique within the metropolitan region, and adopt a strategy to maintain that status, they will be successful in championing reinvestment in the city.

Action 1: Create an office for city planning and design.

- Employ professional planning and design staff.
- Require cooperative planning and design efforts within and between community and economic development offices.

Action 2: Re-evaluate the five strategic economic areas included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 3: Create a strategy for evaluating private planning projects for conformance to the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 4: Incorporate successful local, regional, national and international models for specific commercial areas.

- Identify and evaluate successful precedents/models.
- Identify locations for potential cluster development based on applicable precedents.
- Include preferred models in neighborhood-based plans.

Action 5: Educate community, business and political leaders to support comprehensive planning.

Action 6: Require assessment of long-term public costs for private projects.

Objective 3: Retain physical diversity of traditional business and commercial districts and corridors.

Urban street size and alignment, as well as lot and block configurations, were defined largely in response to the needs of early enterprises. Buildings augmented these patterns, in many cases re-enforcing the urban grid and in others responding to exceptional natural or cultural conditions. Above all, however, urban commercial areas were highly concentrated collections of buildings and activities. But from the 1950s on, municipal administrations failed to value the obvious association between social vibrancy and densely built-up districts. Construction of single-purpose buildings on large lots substantially setback from the street gradually decreased human interaction within the public realm, leaving traditional density subject to indiscriminant demolition and radical alteration. Syracuse must be safeguarded against actions that will further alter its organizational patterns or diminish its physical density any further, and therefore hamper its vitality. The long-established order of streets, blocks and buildings in Syracuse provide a link with past prosperity and a context for future development.

Action 1: Prioritize re-use of existing buildings, particularly historic properties, over demolition.

Action 2: Promote building façade improvements when more substantial improvements are not possible.

Action 3: Require compatibility of new construction with preferred existing physical character.

Action 4: Improve code enforcement.

Objective 4: Strengthen physical connections to business and commercial areas.

One of the most unique characteristics of a city, 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 urban communities, the place where the broad spectrum of residents, workers and visitors interface on common ground. Many corridors stand out because they connect principal people-generators with key destinations. Others gain importance depending on time of day or season, as they are primary pedestrian routes within and between neighborhoods and special districts. Regardless of how many people use any one city street, there must be an adequate number of appropriately designed furnishings to make the public realm inviting and safe. Many corridors in Syracuse can benefit from such physical improvements, becoming more effective transportation and economic links within the community.

Action 1: Promote contextual identity within neighborhoods.

Action 2: Improve the physical condition of gateway business and commercial corridors.

- Design unified sign systems for key corridors.
- Design streetscapes sensitive to the urban pedestrian experience.
- Provide incentives for property maintenance.

Action 3: Reduce impacts from existing physical barriers.

- Investigate removal of elevated I 81.
- Modify the West Street arterial.
- Enhance conditions at or along railroad corridors.

- Support physical improvement of industrial areas.

Action 4: Capitalize on existing city circulation systems.

- Support connections to and use of mass transit.
- Support viable alternate modes of transportation, including biking.
- Require walkability to and within neighborhood business districts.

Objective 5: Undertake a comprehensive strategy for vacant properties.

Cities that continue to suffer from a steadily declining population are faced with an oversupply of residential and commercial properties, some of which become vacant, tax delinquent and/or abandoned in the face of decreasing property values. Such disinvestment first becomes evident in the rapid deterioration of buildings due to a lack of maintenance or acts of vandalism. It is more glaring as buildings are razed and replaced by vacant, often unkempt lots. And it is unmistakable when there is no discernible plan for reversing the trend. The result is incremental destruction of city fabric and ultimately community character. Many commercial areas within Syracuse have fallen prey to the combination of less-than-effective code enforcement and an aggressive municipal demolition policy, leaving many blocks physically scarred and visually disturbing. Both policies and programs must be put in place to ensure more positive short- and long-term solutions to the problem of vacant properties.

Action 1: Promote retention of existing buildings over demolition.

- Modify and enforce requirements for securing vacant buildings.



- Prioritize code enforcement and policing of vacant buildings.
- Coordinate with not for profit organizations and individual property owners to market vacant buildings.

Action 2: Promote new construction on open neighborhood lots.

- Create and enforce maintenance standards for vacant lots.
- Coordinate with not for profit organizations and individual property owners to develop and/or market individual vacant lots.
- Create and enforce design guidelines to ensure compatible construction.

Action 3: Develop special options for strategically located vacant lots.

Action 4: Monitor availability of land for development.

Action 5: Implement site control strategies, such as land banking, for multiple vacant properties in key neighborhoods.

Objective 6: Coordinate a comprehensive approach to parking for business and commercial development.

In the post mid-20th century urban renewal and highway-building era, a major societal concern is the provision of safe, convenient and affordable parking. Nowhere more than in cities has this cultural phenomenon had such severe, tangible impact than in cities. A first approach by many urban communities was to provide as much parking as possible to retain existing and then attract new businesses. Absent any comprehensive plan, the result was that countless US cities found themselves associated with both the unattractive image created by scores of surface parking

lots and the perception that cities never have enough parking. This dichotomy persists today, as evidenced in Syracuse where most commercial areas have a large supply of on- and off-street parking, but the public continues to believe that parking is a problem. There must be a commitment to better utilizing and promoting existing parking options in the city, with a focus on ensuring that all facilities positively relate to the city's organizational structure as well as its long-established emphasis on the pedestrian experience.

Action 1: Evaluate supply and demand.

- Identify general parking needs within individual business districts.
- Identify potential conflicts between business and residential users.

Action 2: Utilize successful, creative models for parking.

Action 3: Explore co-operative management of parking facilities within business districts.

Goal 3: Reestablish Syracuse as an economically viable and sustainable city.

In recent years American cities have been warned by a wide variety of professionals that the short-lived rewards associated with continued physical development and financial investment at their fringe is a threat to their economic base and therefore that of the surrounding region. Developers lured to these outlying areas by relatively cheap land, low construction costs and public subsidies are taking their capital for investment further and further from urban centers. Cities struggle to attract these same individuals because urban sites are comparatively more expensive and building on them



Goal Three: Reestablish Syracuse as an economically viable and sustainable city.

Objective 1: Advocate for business and commercial reinvestment.



Family Investment is Revitalizing Western Street

Action 1: Develop and distribute information about available business and commercial programs.



Syracuse Post-Standard Article highlighting Available Grant Programs

Action 2: Enhance existing local programs.

Action 3: Pursue continued participation in programs such as the New York Main Street and the Brownfield Opportunity Areas.



Governor Pataski Announces the New York Main Street Program Grant Recipients



Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program

Action 4: Create new assistance programs based on successful national models.



Exciting National Business Assistance Programs

Action 5: Streamline development review process for commercial projects of all scales and sizes.

Action 6: Capture capital available from out-of-area investors.

Action 7: Capitalize on local university and college intellectual and financial assets and physical facilities.



Center of Excellence developed through City - University Partnership

Action 8: Capitalize on expertise and experience of professional organizations.



Local Professional Organizations

Objective 2: Implement a comprehensive approach to business development.

Action 1: Utilize lower property values in the city to encourage growth.

Action 2: Promote low cost of conducting business in Syracuse.

Action 3: Focus incentive programs on specific areas in need of reinvestment.



Sears and Roebuck Building, South Salina Street

Action 4: Retain neighborhood business and commercial districts.



Samir's Imported Foods, East Genesee Street



Alo Cinn, Western Street

Action 5: Use current successes as models.

Action 6: Increase municipal focus on small businesses.

Action 7: Identify preferred business typologies.



Center of Excellence can Serve as a New Typology

Action 8: Market underutilized areas in existing business and commercial areas.

Objective 3: Strengthen the residential base and downtown core.



Residential Growth in Downtown

Action 1: Adopt the Housing, Preservation, and Downtown components of the Comprehensive Plan.



Comprehensive Plan Components

Objective 4: Explore taxation policies that generate a more equitable distribution of the property tax burden.

Action 1: Prioritize proposals for vacant properties that will generate real property taxes.

Action 2: Support temporary rather than long-term and/or permanent real property tax abatement and/or exemptions.

Action 3: Reconsider the present valuation process and formula.

Faculty of Landscape Architecture

State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Goal Three
City of Syracuse Commercial Areas Plan

Urban Design Studio 2006



somewhat more costly. Exacerbating the situation is the perception that cities cannot satisfy today's markets, which are driven largely by high speeds, high volume and high technology. Yet the suburban locations that seemingly have been successful in capturing these markets have such mundane character that they are virtually indistinguishable from one another—lending little credence that they truly are good “places” to do business. Conversely, US cities have been and remain positioned to offer a unique alternative—one that is based on the synergy that comes from having a critical mass of people in close proximity to one another and exchanging ideas, goods and services. Cities such as Syracuse can offer local, regional and national business people the opportunity to not only maximize their profit, but to do so in a places that have undeniable and decidedly exceptional identity.

Objective 1: Advocate for business and commercial reinvestment.

In order to reverse the trend of inner city abandonment and declining property values, steps must be taken to instill investor confidence in urban commercial areas. Business people, particularly those associated with new ventures, must have some assurance that investments made in their property and operations will not be diminished or entirely undermined by inappropriate development, abandonment or demolition. Although it might not be possible to guarantee a particular rate of return, there should be some degree of certainty that both the financial and emotional capital expended was worth the risk. Investors from outside a region, however, often require a more definitive promise of reasonable financial profit and, not being personally vested in a community, will more readily withdraw their interest at the first signs of potential

loss. To prevent such decisions, cities such as Syracuse can enact public policies and programs that set the stage for successful private investment.

Action 1: Develop and distribute information about available business and commercial programs.

- Improve communication and administrative links to current programs through multi-media outlets.
- Enhance and continually update data.
- Coordinate with not-for-profit organizations to distribute information.
- Publicize successful projects that incorporate current programs.
- Coordinate a forum for business networking.

Action 2: Enhance existing local programs.

- Revise and promote Section 444a of the local Real Property Tax Law to provide maximum exemptions.
- Target a percentage of existing programs in close proximity to one another.

Action 3: Pursue continued participation in programs such as the New York Main Street and the Brownfield Opportunity Areas.

- Identify business needs and match with appropriate programs.
- Direct other available, appropriate resources to program areas to maximize their impacts.

Action 4: Create new assistance programs based on successful national models.

- Establish financial mechanisms that assist business owners.
- Develop and implement programs that prevent unnecessary demolition.
- Continue public-private partnerships to advance business and commercial development.
- Support NYS "Smart Growth for a New Century" bill.



Action 5: Streamline development review process for commercial projects of all scales and sizes.

- Develop guidelines for submission requirements.
- Coordinate review responsibilities among city departments.

Action 6: Capture capital available from out-of-area investors.

- Coordinate with not-for-profit organizations to create investment vehicle linked to business and commercial development.
- Proactively pursue prospective investors.
- Promote use of neighborhood plans to guide expenditure of investment dollars.

Action 7: Capitalize on local university and college intellectual and financial assets and physical facilities.

Action 8: Capitalize on expertise and experience of professional organizations.

Objective 2: Implement a comprehensive approach to business development.

As they realize the true impact of unchecked metropolitan sprawl, many suburban and rural communities have taken steps to plan for more orderly and sustainable growth. Included in these efforts is the public will and policy to say “no” to unwanted or inappropriate development. Cities such as Syracuse must act accordingly and for the same reasons. A comprehensive strategy for pursuing economic investment will allow the city administration to maximize its physical and financial resources; convey to investors a strong community commitment towards common goals; and revive old markets while positively responding to new ones.

Action 1: Utilize lower property values in the city to encourage growth.

Action 2: Promote low cost of conducting business in Syracuse.

Action 3: Focus incentive programs on specific areas in need of reinvestment.

- Balance distribution of programs throughout the city.

Action 4: Retain neighborhood business and commercial districts.

- Identify key individual business and commercial areas in neighborhood plans.
- Target existing economic development programs for business retention and expansion.
- Support traditional mix of convenience retail in neighborhoods.
- Proactively seek out new businesses to diversify neighborhood options.
- Encourage participation in small business training programs.
- Promote benefits of Empire and Empowerment Zones where applicable.

Action 5: Use current successes as models.

- Promote mixed-use development.
- Use historic preservation as a development strategy.
- Encourage sustainable design and compliance to LEEDS standards.

Action 6: Increase municipal focus on small businesses.

- Encourage creation of small business associations.
- Create a small business development office within the city.

Action 7: Identify preferred business typologies.

- Develop a balance between small businesses and national chains.
- Create strategies for both independent entrepreneurs and large corporations.



- Encourage compatible businesses to locate near one another.
- Encourage diversity of business types within business districts.

Action 8: Market underutilized areas in existing business and commercial areas.

- Acquire and remediate select sites.

Objective 3: Strengthen the residential base and downtown core.

The viability of any urban commercial area is largely dependent on a city's residential base and its downtown. Without a stable if not growing resident population, local businesses cannot be successful. Similarly if the city center is not a culturally and economically vibrant place, other urban commercial areas will suffer. A high quality of life in Syracuse's neighborhoods and attractive and successful Downtown must be pursued in concert with a comprehensive economic development strategy.

Action 1: Adopt the Housing, Preservation, and Downtown components of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 4: Explore taxation policies that generate a more equitable distribution of the property tax burden.

Some of the most popular incentives used to encourage development are tax abatements and credits, particularly those used to reduce real property taxes. Projects incorporating these allowances can have an immediate, positive impact on a city's economic condition. If the tax abatements are permanent, however, the long-term economic benefits of these projects are somewhat diminished.

Absent substantial revisions to how cities generate revenue in New York State, Syracuse must seek ways to balance the benefits and detriments associated with real property tax valuation and abatements.

Action 1: Prioritize proposals for vacant properties that will generate real property taxes.

Action 2: Support temporary rather than long-term and/or permanent real property tax abatement and/or exemptions.

Action 3: Reconsider the present valuation process and formula.

