# Table of Contents

Letter from the Mayor 4
Executive Summary 5
Letter from the Director of Planning & Sustainability 6
Steering Committee 7
Introduction 9

Chapter 1
Current Conditions 13

Chapter 2
Goals & Recommended Actions 29

Chapter 3
Character Areas and Land Use Categories 41

Chapter 4
Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations 55
  Northside
  Eastwood
  Eastside
  Valley
  Southside
  Westside
  Downtown
  Lakefront

Appendix A: Smart Growth Principles 73
Appendix B: Maps 74
Appendix C: Public Participation Process 81
Appendix D: Definitions 82
Appendix E: References 85
The Land Use & Development Plan, a component of Syracuse’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Common Council in 2005 and which called for the development and adoption of a land use plan, sets the course for changes to the City’s zoning and development regulations. The goals and policy recommendations in this plan are based on an understanding that both public and private actions shape the places we experience every day—the places we live, work, and play. It establishes a vision for future public and private investment in buildings and infrastructure. The power to regulate land use and development regulations is one of the strongest tools municipalities have to influence the way a city feels and functions—from the macro level of major corridors and interactions with surrounding municipalities to the micro level of neighborhoods, streetscapes, and individual blocks. The specific goals and policy recommendations in this plan are organized according to five overarching goals and under five subject areas:

**Overall Land Use Patterns**
Preserve and build upon Syracuse’s existing transit-oriented, multi-nodal land use pattern—the network of interconnected commercial and mixed-use neighborhood centers and surrounding residential areas.

**Character of Existing Neighborhoods**
Protect and enhance the character and unique “sense of place” of Syracuse’s neighborhoods.

**Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations**
Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Energy & the Environment**
Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices.

**Regulatory Process**
Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.

The policy objectives and strategies included in this document guide the way for the City of Syracuse to transition to a form-based zoning code that ensures high quality new development in all neighborhoods. To this end, the plan and the future land use map outline ‘character areas’ that describe the desired building forms, uses (or mix of uses), and physical scale desired in various parts of the city. Addressing form-based standards across the entire city for the first time will ensure that all new development prioritizes the pedestrian experience, encourages walking and public transit use, and contributes to enjoyable public places throughout the city. These form-based standards may be supplemented with more specific design guidelines or overlay regulations in neighborhoods where this is desired.

Major priorities detailed in this plan include reducing reliance on private automobile travel through amended parking and site-plan standards, reinforce transit oriented development patterns by focusing residential and business growth in neighborhood centers and transportation corridors, and ensuring that new development and major renovations enhance the quality of their surroundings.

This plan marks a shift in the way the City approaches development regulations—reducing or eliminating parking minimums in some areas, emphasizing the pedestrian experience in the way designs and site plans relate to the street, and embracing the urban qualities of our neighborhoods—including density, historic architecture, and mixed-use neighborhoods. In order to achieve these desired effects, this plan must be followed by an overhaul of the City’s over 50 year old zoning code, at which point this new approach to the built environment will be interpreted and translated into a detailed ordinance. In the interim, but once adopted, the plan can guide discretionary decisions by boards and commissions and City staff.
STEERING COMMITTEE

Andrew M. Maxwell, Director, Planning & Sustainability
Owen Kerney, Deputy Director, P&S
Heather Lamendola, Zoning Administrator
Paul Driscoll, Commissioner, Neighborhood & Business Development
Sharon Owens, Deputy Commissioner, NBD
Ben Walsh, Deputy Commissioner, NBD

Hon. Van Robinson, Common Council President
Hon. Joy, Majority Leader, Common Councilor At-Large
Hon. Jean Kessner, Common Councilor, At-Large
Hon. Matt Rayo, Common Councilor, District 1
Ruben Cowart, Chair, City Planning Commission
Rebecca Livengood, City Planning Commission
Linda DeFichy, Chairwoman, Board of Zoning Appeals
Mike Stanton, Board of Zoning Appeals
Donald Radke, Chairman, Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board

Kate Auwaerter, Preservation Planner, P&S
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Yasmin Guevera, Environmental Planner, P&S
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Ashley Wilson, Sustainability Coordinator, P&S
Katelyn Wright, Land Use Planner, P&S

Luke Dougherty, Neighborhood Planning Coordinator, NBD
Rebecca Klossner, Site Location Specialist, NBD
Alys Mann, Housing Director, NBD
Martha Maywalt, Case Manager, NBD

Meghan McLees Craner, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Jeff Harrop, Office of Zoning Administration
Paul Mercurio, Transportation Planner, Department of Public Works

Megan Costa, Program Manager, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency
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Dominic Robinson, CenterState CEO
Meghan Vitale, Principle Transportation Planner, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

Chris Capella-Peters, At-Large
George Curry, At-Large
Robert Doucette, At-Large
Robert Haley, At-Large
INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE PLAN

The City of Syracuse Common Council officially adopted its Comprehensive Plan 2025 in January 2005. The Comprehensive Plan serves as a policy document guiding decision-making based on an established set of policy statements, goals, and recommended actions. The Comprehensive Plan recommended that the City develop a land use plan to serve as a basis to make land use and zoning decisions. Together, the Land Use & Development Plan and the future land use map define the preferred urban form that the city will assume in the future by assigning future land use designations to locations throughout the city.

A Land Use Plan and a Comprehensive Plan serve as non-regulatory policy documents. They include no explicit mechanism to ensure development consistent with their established vision for future growth, but should inform public decision-making processes. A zoning ordinance and a zoning map is the regulatory tool a community uses to promote managed growth consistent with the community’s vision. New York State law requires that a zoning ordinance and a zoning map be consistent with a community’s vision as established in its officially adopted comprehensive land use plan.1 Thus, in order to accomplish the goals laid out in this plan, and to be in compliance with state law, after adopting this plan, the City of Syracuse must update its zoning ordinance and map. The land use plan should be periodically revised to examine which zoning and land use strategies are working to achieve the community’s vision and where changes to both the Plan and the zoning code might be warranted.

As does the practice of zoning, the land use plan takes a long-term view of development. The vision for urban development that is called for in this plan will be achieved incrementally through individual development projects and decisions by City boards and commissions, in accordance with necessary zoning code revisions.

Just as zoning has evolved to address form and design in addition to use and building siting, this plan addresses the character of areas, as defined by various mixes of uses, building forms, and scale. Identifying where various “character areas” will be distributed across the city, this plan lays the groundwork for a transition to a form-based zoning code.

The land use policies and recommendations in this plan are based on the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, community input, TNT Area 5-year plans, and a close examination of current land use patterns to identify the City’s assets and challenges.

Specifically, the Land Use & Development Plan will serve the following purposes:

- Provides a valuable resource to guide evaluation of the merit and compliance of development projects. As projects are proposed, City staff and Commissions

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will be able to reference the plan to determine whether a given proposal aligns with the Plan’s stated objectives regarding land use and urban form.

- **Opens doors to public funding for development and capital improvement projects**, including state and federal grant awards as well as potential economic stimulus opportunities. Proposed projects are typically required to demonstrate their agreement with, and advancement of, local planning objectives. The land use plan will provide a focused record of the City’s stated land use planning objectives, and development proposals aligning with its recommendations are certain to meet these funding criteria.

- **The plan can be used as a marketing tool to help stimulate investment in the City of Syracuse.** By identifying future land patterns and areas targeted for improvement, the Plan will provide certainty to investors – such as potential homeowners or commercial developers – regarding the nature of future uses at or surrounding any given location in the City.

- **Provides the foundation upon which zoning revisions or a zoning ordinance re-write will be based.**

**Guiding Principles**
The following five principles represent this Plan’s vision for future development in the City of Syracuse. They are based in the sources described above and on Smart Growth Principles (explained more fully in Chapter 3). Each of the overarching principles is accompanied by a series of policies and recommended actions in Chapter 3. The categorization of the City’s land area into various land use categories and patterns is informed by these principles, policies, and recommended actions.

I  **Preserve and build upon Syracuse’s existing sustainable, multi-nodal land use patterns.** Protect and enhance a sustainable land use pattern that provides opportunities to “work,” “learn,” and “play” within proximity of residential (“live”) areas.

II  **Protect the character and unique “sense of place” of Syracuse’s neighborhoods.** Encourage development that fits into the neighborhood context and encourage the retention and reuse of existing buildings and “urban” form wherever possible.

III  **Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city.**

IV  **Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices.**

V  **Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.**

**Plan Organization**
Chapter 1 provides an overview of how Syracuse’s existing land use pattern developed and identifies challenges and assets for moving forward. Chapter 2 includes a set of goals, recommended policies, and actions related to future land use and development in Syracuse and contains recommendations to achieve this vision through City policy and zoning ordinances. The vision of how these goals apply across the city is largely illustrated by the allocation of future land use categories within the future land use map. These categories, more accurately called character areas, take into account use, form, and scale, and are fully described in Chapter 3. The following chapter addresses neighborhood-specific goals and considerations by TNT Area.

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2 See Chapter 3 for a full explanation of “multi-nodal” and the inherent sustainability of this pattern.
Land use plans set the community’s vision and priorities for development, including everything from landscaping and signage to building style and density standards for new construction.
CURRENT CONDITIONS

Syracuse’s existing pattern of land uses, buildings, and infrastructure is the result of the city’s long history of transportation, industrial, commercial, and residential development. Located at the center of New York State, industry in Syracuse thrived alongside the Erie Canal and later with easy access to cross-state rail lines. As with many other industrial American cities, the construction of interstate highways allowed the dispersal of manufacturing and shipping facilities, and eventually the working population as well, through suburban real estate development. Despite the challenges of a changing economy, Syracuse is positioned to adapt and excel in the 21st Century. Syracuse’s position at the heart of Central New York remains an asset; the city is home to many of the region’s major employers and cultural and governmental institutions. The land use pattern which Syracuse inherited from the streetcar era not only gives the city’s neighborhoods a unique historic character, but also allows for walkable neighborhoods with commercial centers, placing Syracuse in an advantaged position relative to its suburban neighbors. This pattern of dense residential development surrounding commercial and mixed-use corridors and centers is emulated by recent New Urbanist development throughout the United States and supports varied “urban” landscapes that are increasingly in demand. Indeed, recent studies confirm that the new generation of home buyers overwhelmingly favors an urban setting, putting a premium on the ability to walk to work and other destinations.¹

A capable network of private developers, advocacy organizations, institutions, nonprofits, and local government has contributed to the revitalization of Syracuse’s Downtown and has focused on spreading this to surrounding neighborhoods. Through much hard work, these stakeholders have coalesced around the vision of an urban resurgence, capitalizing on the city’s location, economic strengths, and history. This human capital and Syracuse’s physical resources (in the form of infrastructure, geography, buildings, and land use patterns) must be leveraged to their maximum potential in order to expand upon these existing efforts. The most successful developments in recent years have utilized existing buildings and celebrated the urban attributes of Syracuse that differentiate the city from the surrounding suburbs. Embracing this urban identity and setting Syracuse apart from the suburbs will further serve to offer a diversity of housing options throughout the region, but will also allow Syracuse to move forward toward neighborhood revitalization more purposefully. In addition, key players throughout the county now realize the importance of a strong core to the region and have rallied around the need for investment in the city. A strong city will make the region more competitive as demand for urban spaces to live and play grows among young professionals; and moving population back to the core will be critical to sustainability efforts related to open space protection and rising energy and transportation costs. While revitalization efforts can be supported through strategic public investment and partnerships, we can speed the process by ensuring that our zoning and development regulations make urban, walkable designs the norm, rather than the exception to the rule.

¹ http://blogs.wsj.com/developments/2011/01/13/no-mcmansions-for-millennials/
In recent years the City’s and the Central New York region’s economy has begun to adapt to the national shift toward a service-based economy. Syracuse University, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and LeMoyne College, all major regional employers, are located in the city. Syracuse is at the center of Central New York medical services, as well—home to Crouse Hospital, St. Joseph’s Hospital, the Veterans Administration Hospital, and Golisano Children’s Hospital. In addition, Syracuse is the cultural and governmental hub of Central New York—the Everson Museum, the Museum of Science & Technology (MOST), the Erie Canal Museum, the Onondaga Historical Association, independent performing arts groups and Federal, State, County, and City government institutions are all located in Downtown Syracuse.

The historic urban character of Downtown Syracuse has come to be viewed as an asset. Young professionals are returning to Downtown in record numbers, moving into market-rate apartments and condos—most developed in existing buildings. This reinvestment has been centered around Armory, Hanover, and Franklin Squares, but is spreading to South Salina Street in the “Heart of Downtown” area and outside of Downtown to North Salina Street in the Little Italy area. Many of these rehabilitation projects have been facilitated by the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit available to properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A recently passed State Historic Preservation Tax Credit is expected to incite additional redevelopment. Historic buildings and streetscapes are an asset throughout the city, lending the character and sense of place that sets Syracuse apart as a distinctive urban environment within the region, offering what the suburbs often do not—a walkable atmosphere filled with shopping, restaurants, festivals, downtown plazas in which to people-watch, urban parks, and outdoor music performances.

Outside of Downtown, neighborhoods cluster around commercial corridors and nodes dating from the late 1800s and the turn of the 20th century. This physical framework of dense residential neighborhoods can support efficient transportation services and retail and services within walking distance of most households in addition to allowing for efficient provision of city infrastructure and services and neighborhood schools. However, population loss in many neighborhoods has reduced market support for such large commercial corridors and necessitates more creative uses for vacant residential and commercial land. In these neighborhoods, a robust network of nonprofit housing providers is engaged in activities from low-income housing provision to neighborhood beautification. Syracuse University has entered into ambitious reinvestment programs aimed at the Near Westside and Southside neighborhoods. On the Northside, a collaborative effort coordinated by the Northside Urban Partnership is engaged in redevelopment along the North Salina Street corridor and on Prospect Hill near St. Joseph’s Hospital, another major regional employer.

This land use plan provides a coordinated vision for redevelopment and infill construction throughout the city to ensure high quality development that reinforces the urban character of neighborhoods and promotes environmental sustainability and Smart Growth development patterns. An exploration of land use trends and concentrations of vacant land and buildings will identify where new uses for vacant land and abandoned property are appropriate and, conversely, where growth and infill should be targeted. This approach to development regulations will support a variety of transportation and housing options, accessible goods and services, equitable development throughout the city, and provide a transparent set of goals development goals for private and public investment.
The many assets mentioned above are accompanied by as many challenges—economic, physical, and political—all of which are common in Northeastern industrial cities. These primarily include de-densification of population, a diminishing tax base, and increased costs of service provision, resulting socioeconomic phenomena associated with concentrated poverty and population loss, including vacant buildings and land, and disinvestment in the built environment. Many of these challenges are appropriately addressed through the City’s operational plans, assessment practices, and the investment of CDBG and other federal dollars. The history of these assets and challenges informs the vision and recommendations expressed in this plan.

**Historical Development**

What follows outlines the physical development of the city’s infrastructure and built environment.

The City of Syracuse is located at the crossroads of Central New York, at the intersection of Interstate 81 and Interstate 90, and is served by the Empire Corridor freight and passenger rail line. European explorers initially came to trade with the native Onondaga tribe, but settled permanently after discovery of mineral resources—salt mines along the southern shore of Onondaga Lake, which led to the Villages of Salina (Washington Square today) and Syracuse (now Downtown)—and along the Seneca Turnpike at Onondaga Hollow (today at the southern end of the city in the Valley neighborhood).

The Onondagas considered Onondaga Creek and the Lake to be sacred sites. Several Native-American trails later became city streets; the most notable of these is Lodi Street. Salina Street initially functioned as the connecting route between these three villages. These irregular streets, dating from before the expansion of the regular street grid, create some of the city’s most interesting vistas and streetscapes and the pattern of triangular green spaces at odd intersections today. The Village of Danforth developed as a commuter suburb on South Salina Street near Kennedy Street in the mid-1800s. Villages were also located at Elmwood, Geddes (now Tipp Hill) and Eastwood.

Located on the Erie Canal, the city experienced an ongoing economic boom fueled by the availability of affordable transportation for industrial products provided by the canal and then the railroads. The railroads arrived in the 1830s and continued to serve the city’s industry after the decline of the Erie Canal. Industry located along rail lines that radiated out from Downtown along lowlands and valleys. At this time industrial uses were scattered throughout the city, and most factory workers lived nearby and walked to their jobs. Dense residential neighborhoods surrounding these industrial corridors—major 19th century industrial corridors such as W. Fayette St., W. Genesee St., Erie Blvd, N. State Street, Wolf Street, and Burnet Ave—are in less demand today, but represent the city’s industrial history. Today they represent an opportunity for revitalization, as they’re close to Downtown and built in a pattern that can potentially support dense, mixed-use neighborhoods that are increasingly in demand among young professionals. Some of these industrial buildings remain appropriate for manufacturing or light industry, while others are prime candidates for adaptive reuse as commercial, residential, or mixed-use space. This kind of reuse has

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been successful in Franklin Square and Armory Square and is underway along Fayette and Wyoming streets on the Near Westside. A number of other areas with potential for this kind of reuse are identified as Industrial Transition on the future land use map.

In the later 19th century and through the early 20th century, trolley lines allowed more suburban style development to spread outward from Downtown. Small- and medium-scale commercial corridors and nodes developed along the trolley lines which were surrounded with slightly less dense residential neighborhoods than those developed in the preceding era. These neighborhood commercial districts provided services and retail outlets to nearby residents, and often contained offices and residences on the upper floors. Neighborhood centers on James Street in Eastwood, South Avenue, much of South Salina Street, Westcott, Butternut Circle, and others date from this period of development.

Following World War II, Syracuse’s development mirrored that of most Northeastern and Upper Midwestern industrial cities. Onondaga County, outside of Syracuse, experienced remarkable population growth between the end of World War II and the 1970s as a growing middle class quickly bought up new suburban homes. This outward suburban growth was facilitated by Interstate highway construction and affordable mortgages guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Soon the trucking industry developed, taking advantage of highway construction, and factories moved to suburban locations where expansion was cheaper. Shopping centers soon followed and Downtown department stores and small neighborhood businesses suffered. Even within the city, development (although little development was occurring) became increasingly oriented toward the automobile.

It is most important to note that not all city residents had the option to relocate to the suburbs. Outward mobility was economically, racially, and ethnically limited by FHA underwriting procedures. Furthermore, home owners and investors who remained in the inner-ring neighborhoods surrounding downtown were typically unable to obtain mortgages for home improvements in these locations. What government investment took place in the Downtown and inner-ring neighborhoods in the 1960s and ’70s was often in form of Urban Renewal and “slum clearance.” The most dramatic example of this in Syracuse was the clearance of the 15th Ward for the construction of Interstate 81.

This diminished investment in the building stock was and continues to be exacerbated by concentrated poverty and resulting low rents that persist today. Inner-ring neighborhoods today have the lowest rates of homeownership, low rents, and, consequently, lower levels of reinvestment in the building stock. Real estate speculation is a challenge to addressing vacant and abandoned property. The Northside varies from these patterns, in that it has experienced some population growth over the past few decades due to immigration of refugee populations. The neighborhoods around Prospect Hill and Butternut Street support a relatively dense population and a variety of small businesses, but face many of the same challenges related to building quality due to the age of the building stock and absentee ownership.

Generally speaking, as Syracuse has rapidly lost population over the past 60 years the population of the County has remained relatively stable, sprawling outward.
detailed discussion of suburbanization and population shifts is included below.) Had it not been for stagnant regional growth, sprawl wouldn’t have necessarily harmed the inner city. This spreading out of a fixed population has resulted in high residential and commercial vacancy rates in the city, a trend that has been felt most in the inner-ring neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.

Syracuse’s current land use patterns were intended to support a significantly larger population. In addition to the impact on the building stock, the City continues to provide infrastructure and services to the same geographic area, supported by less residents and a reduced tax base.

Demolitions carried out in response to building deterioration and abandonment, as well as neighborhood concerns over crime and public safety have greatly increased the number of vacant parcels in the City. Even so, more than 1,700 vacant buildings remain, many of which are effectively abandoned and are a blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhood. Addressing abandoned property—both buildings and lots—remains a major challenge for the City today. While the embodied energy and architectural character in existing neighborhoods represents a significant asset, rehabilitation is often cost-prohibitive in neighborhoods with low property values. Public subsidies through the CDBG and other programs have supported the rehabilitation of many homes for low-income housing. Many larger buildings have utilized the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and it is hoped that expanded use of the recently adopted statewide historic rehabilitation tax credit will further induce reinvestment in existing buildings.

In addition, the decline of heavy industry has left the city with approximately 196 identified brownfield sites, covering 1,365 acres, which require remediation prior to redevelopment. Successful remediation and redevelopment of these sites could generate an additional 9 to 38 million dollars in property tax revenue annually.\(^3\) The City is actively participating in the New York State Brownfield Opportunities Area program to plan for and encourage the remediation of these sites.

Similarly, Onondaga Creek and Onondaga Lake have been negatively affected by industrial pollutants, storm-water runoff (largely attributable to an increase in urban, impermeable land cover), and inappropriate use of the creek for combined sewer overflow. In addition, the creek has been straightened and channelized, reducing the viability of natural fish habitats. Environmental remediation of the Creek and Onondaga Lake are long-term projects, but are gradually being achieved through improvements to sewer and storm water runoff systems, encouraging more permeable surfaces on urban parcels, and the Creekwalk trail project. Other creeks and tributaries throughout the City have been little studied, but sensitive environmental areas will be included in the upcoming County Sustainable Development Plan and the City of Syracuse Sustainability Plan.

**Recent Trends**

As the Syracuse Metropolitan Area’s population has shifted and employment centers have changed over the past several decades, a number of notable trends have emerged:

- Countywide population has remained relatively stable while Syracuse’s population has

declined 34.2 percent from its peak in 1950. This has resulted in an increased cost of 
public service provision throughout the region. In addition, population loss has been 
shown to have a statistically significant correlation with declining property values, and 
thus a declining tax base.4

- While the entire city bears the burden of decreased resources for the provision of 
services, some neighborhoods have borne the brunt of the city’s population loss. The 
highest levels of vacant housing and land are concentrated in a few neighborhoods 
(see the vacancy map in Appendix B).
- As the regional seat of government and as the economy increasingly shifts toward 
education and medical institutions, approximately 50 percent of the city’s tax base is 
now exempt.
- Between 2000 and 2008, Syracuse’s working age population and median household 
income did decline, although far less than other Upstate Cities.5
- “Eds and Meds” fuel the region’s economy and are the area’s primary expanding sectors. 
These are primarily based in the city. These institutions, and the professionals that 
support them, thrive in a vibrant urban environment with a mix of office, residential, 
and retail activities. As employment patterns shift, the city has experienced a decreased 
demand for industrial land, but there is potential to revitalize existing land use patterns 
into the types of neighborhoods in demand among young professionals nationally.
- In recent years, Downtown has experienced increased investment and revitalization. 
Market rate housing has expanded dramatically in Armory Square, Hanover Square, 
Franklin Square, and other neighborhoods in the city’s core.
- “Urban homesteaders” are starting to be drawn to the city by low housing prices, unique 
historic architecture, and walkable urban neighborhoods.6 Efforts to encourage this 
kind of private rehabilitation for home ownership should be explored. In addition, 
a network of low-income housing providers works to provide affordable home 
ownership and rental options to city residents. (See the City’s Housing Plan.)
- As average household size continues to decline, there is potential to ‘fill’ the City with 
less people than resided in Syracuse at its peak.

Metropolitan Policy Program. October, 2003. AND New York State Comptroller, Division of Local 
5 Brookings State of Metropolitan America Metro Profiles. Census 2000 to American 
Accessed September, 2010. Syracuse’s working-age population declined by 1.3% while Buffalo and 
Rochester lost 2.6% and 7.5%, respectively. Syracuse’s median household income declined by 4.6% 
whereas Buffalo and Rochester’s declined by 5.7 and 15.2%.
=syracuse&st=cse.
Brandes Gratz, Roberta, “Redeveloping an Old City the Right (Thoughtful) Way,” www.citiwire.net, 
**POPULATION TRENDS**

While this Plan concerns itself with regulation of the built environment and real estate development, investment in buildings takes place only as the market demands, and Syracuse’s population shifts indicate the potential for development throughout the city.

*Regional Population Shifts and the Need for Smart Growth*

Syracuse has lost 34.2 percent of its population since its peak in 1950, yet the population of Onondaga County as a whole has declined only slightly since 1970 (see Figure 1). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the city’s population has only slightly declined since 2000, more or less stabilizing at 145,170. Onondaga County’s population declined from 472,835 to 467,026 between 1970 and 2010.7 This shift from a dense urban core of population toward low-density, suburban sprawl has harmed the quality of life, environmental health, and economic health of the region in many ways. Urbanized land in Onondaga County has increased 92 percent since 1970. This dispersal of residents has resulted in increased costs of municipal services (including schools, police, emergency response, and transportation) and infrastructure across the region and increased greenhouse gasses produced as residents commute further to work, shopping, and recreational activities.8

The following graph illustrates population shifts within Onondaga County between 1900 and 2010. The population of the county as a whole remained stable, declining slightly, since 1970 (at approximately 460,000 persons). However, as of the 1960 Census the countywide population made a major shift: transitioning from the majority of county residents living in the City of Syracuse to the majority of county residents living in the surrounding towns and villages. This trend in population shift toward the suburban towns continued at a rapid pace over the following decades (as shown below).

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7 U.S. Census.
Between 1950 and 1970 the population of suburban towns (towns within metropolitan areas) throughout New York State grew by 110 percent. In nearly every metropolitan area in the New York, the majority of share of the population shifted from city to suburbs.\textsuperscript{9}

Bruce Katz, Director of the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program, speaking in Syracuse in 2005 identified sprawl and its accompanying increased service costs and concentrated poverty as some of the region’s biggest challenges.\textsuperscript{10} Katz also attributed disinvestment in the urban core, largely a result of suburban sprawl and expansion, as the region's primary obstacle to retaining highly educated workers and expanding the Upstate economy, which has lagged behind the rest of the country in terms of hourly wages, average salaries, and rates of expansion for decades.\textsuperscript{11}

This dispersal of the region’s population slows the economic growth that typically results from agglomeration economies, increases costs of service provision per capita, and (because suburbanization has been accompanied by negative regional growth) diminishes urban property values. In addition, there is an environmental cost associated with increased storm-water runoff and the loss of rural lands. This is to say nothing of the economic and environmental cost of devaluing existing buildings that, absent economic hurdles, would still be viable structures. These are the challenges that Smart Growth addresses. Smart Growth is further discussed in Chapter 3 as it relates to recommended policies and actions, but the basic tenants include directing growth toward areas of existing infrastructure and maintaining low costs of service provision and high property values achieved through density. New York state legislature recently passed a Smart Growth-based bill limiting spending on infrastructure expansion to areas where increased capacity is needed. Other Smart Growth-based, sprawl preventing bills are being currently discussed.


The following table shows how population in each TNT area has changed over the past decade, and the resulting population densities. Note that despite a dramatic population loss, the Southside remains the second most densely populated TNT area. The population growth on the Northside can largely be attributed to the influx of Southeast Asian and North African immigrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TNT Area</th>
<th>2010 Population</th>
<th>‘00-'10 Pop Change</th>
<th>2010 Persons/Sq. Mile.</th>
<th>2010 Persons/Acre</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>38,928</td>
<td>2,302</td>
<td>10,073</td>
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<td>-2,718</td>
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<td>Southside</td>
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<td>Lakefront</td>
<td>579</td>
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<td>247</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Downtown</td>
<td>1,879</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>3,863</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westside</td>
<td>22,697</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7,364</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residential Segregation, Concentrated Poverty, and their Relationship with Real Estate

The factors described above collectively influenced disinvestment in building stock, but also created a lasting legacy of residential segregation by race and concentration of poverty in a few neighborhoods. (See the City’s 2011 Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area plan.)

This residential segregation by race coincides with concentration of poverty. Strong geographic correlations exist between vacant housing, vacant land (see next section), low rates of educational attainment, low homeownership rates, high racial dissimilarity indices, and high poverty rates in Syracuse, as is common in many Rust Belt cities. Syracuse's concentrated poverty challenges have been cited as some of the worst in the nation.12


Onondaga County

Source: U.S. Census, 2010
In a study measuring indices of “urban hardship” Montiel et al. assert that there is a strong correlation between dispersal of metro area populations (sprawl) and their “urban hardship” index which includes many of the factors listed above. They also assert that there is a strong correlation between this index and concentrated residential segregation by race. The connections between population loss, poverty levels, residential segregation, education levels, and property values have been well documented, although there is no clear definition of a causal relationship. It is clear, however, is that these variables relate to one another in a positive feedback cycle, making intervention critical to prevent downward spiral.

**CURRENT LAND USE PATTERNS**

Syracuse’s land use patterns are best understood by study of the current land use map (see map at the end of this chapter), but a number of trends can be described.

*Relationship to Transportation Networks*

Neighborhoods closer to Downtown and along the major east-west corridors are most likely to contain high-density housing and office uses. Former (and remaining) rail corridors, which located in valleys and lowlands radiating out from Downtown, typically contain industrial and large-scale commercial uses. West Genesee Street and Erie Boulevard, in particular, contain a great deal of the City’s auto-oriented commercial uses.

Other corridors, which were historically served by streetcars rather than located along freight rail, retain commercial and high-density apartment buildings more urban in style. In some places, later infill construction has been compatible in scale and style, while other corridors now possess a patchwork of streetcar and auto-oriented development.

---

13 Montiel, Lisa M., Richard P. Nathan, and David J. Wright. “An Update on Urban Hardship.” The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government. 2004. Their paper on “urban hardship” utilizes an index which ranks urban hardship as influenced by unemployment, high levels of dependency (elderly or youth populations), education level, per capita income, crowded housing (housing units with more than one person per room), and poverty rates.
Nonetheless, the pattern of corridors which connect neighborhood commercial nodes dates from the streetcar era. While the city is far more car dependent today than it was at the turn of the 20th century, many of these corridors now serve as major bus routes. Due to evolving retail models, most remaining neighborhood commercial nodes no longer provide for all their residents daily needs, but many do thrive and provide walkable restaurants, entertainment, and small-scale retail.

![Land Uses as a Percent of Total Area](image)

**Land Uses as Percent of City Land Cover.**
*Source: Assessor’s Rolls, September 2010.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Total Parcels</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent of City Land Cover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>891.5</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>495.5</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>1437.7</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>271.7</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>198.2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Residence</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>193.8</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>524.6</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>303.1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>192.3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>607.8</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>24,386</td>
<td>4040.2</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Family</td>
<td>7,371</td>
<td>962.1</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Family</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>112.7</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>466.9</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
<td>3,573</td>
<td>1448.4</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified or Streets</td>
<td></td>
<td>4252.7</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acreage</td>
<td></td>
<td>16437.5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Assessor’s Rolls, September, 2010.*
Chapter 1  Current Conditions

Percent of Land Use by TNT Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Eastwood</th>
<th>Eastside</th>
<th>Lakefront</th>
<th>Valley</th>
<th>Southside</th>
<th>Northside</th>
<th>Westside</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooming Houses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Residence</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Family</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Family</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified or Streets</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vacancy Rates

The city today contains nearly 1,700 vacant buildings and more than 3,600 vacant parcels of land. Combined, these affect approximately 36 parcels per 1,000 City residents. 1,747 acres are either vacant land or contain one or more blighted, vacant buildings. This represents 13 acres per 1,000 City residents. The City has recently reorganized the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency (SURA) to act as an interim land bank, granting it greater powers to plan for revitalization of these lots and buildings, acquire properties, and convey them to appropriate developers. The New York legislature just passed land bank enabling legislation, clearing the way for the formation of a City-County land bank, which will be critical to addressing property abandonment in Syracuse.
Syracuse’s residential vacancy rate in 2000 was 16.2 percent; and in 16 census tracts the vacancy rate was 20 percent or higher. Stable real estate markets typically operate at 5 percent or less vacancy. The U.S. Census calculates percentage of residential units vacant. This data has not yet been released in the 2010 Census. The data below, collected by the Division of Code Enforcement, tracks vacant buildings, rather than units. According to this data, approximately 4.6 percent of residential buildings and 6.1 percent of commercial buildings are vacant.

**Vacancy Rates by Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcels</th>
<th>Number of buildings vacant</th>
<th>Percent vacant</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Number of Units Vacant</th>
<th>Percent of units vacant</th>
<th>Owner Occupied</th>
<th>Percent owner occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>21,450</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>24,667</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>24,667</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>18,139</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Family</td>
<td>7,391</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>14,782</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>2,462</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Family</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>2,538</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Residence</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34,380</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>64,145</td>
<td>3,068</td>
<td>20,836</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Citywide Land Uses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Total Parcels</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
<th>Percent Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Residence</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>24,386</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Family</td>
<td>7,371</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Family</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land</td>
<td>3,573</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Assessor’s Rolls, September 2010.
Chapter 1  Current Conditions

Current Land Use

July 2011 Assessor's Rolls

2011-07-06

<all other values>

Land Use

- Commercial
- Parks
- Cemetery
- Recreation
- Community Services
- Religious
- Schools

Single Family
Two Family
Three Family
Multiple Residence
Apartment
Parking
Utilities
Vacant Land
Industrial
**Opportunities and Assets**

- Syracuse is uniquely positioned relative to its suburban neighbors, already possessing a network of land uses and transportation corridors that lend themselves to efficient transit service and neighborhoods with walkable commercial centers. The worldwide need to reduce the environmental footprint of cities will favor cities like Syracuse that possess this infrastructure.

- Improved transportation service, utilizing this network of corridors, has the potential to draw new residents to Syracuse, improve the quality of life of existing residents, and to bolster the market for neighborhood businesses.

- Syracuse's infrastructure capacity should also be protected from deterioration. Although not operating under full demand currently, this capacity may be a valuable asset to market in the future in light of rising energy and transportation costs.

- Syracuse's affordable and distinctive historic homes may be a draw to first-time homebuyers.

- Syracuse possesses a distinctive network of large parks, open spaces, and natural features such as Onondaga Creek. Expanded connectivity should be pursued within this network, both for recreational activities and natural habitats.

- Large, former-industrial buildings are also prime candidates for rehabilitation into live-work space and other commercial and residential uses. The success of the revitalization of Armory Square Downtown is a great example of this and is beginning to spill over to adjacent blocks.
A land use plan establishes the community’s vision for future development and outlines policies and actions necessary to achieve this vision. The five primary goals and following actions outlined in this chapter and the descriptions of character areas in the next chapter establish this vision for the City of Syracuse.

The vision for future development established in this plan will be achieved through investments by private property owners, nonprofit organizations, the City, and other governmental organizations. The majority of these actions occur in the private sector, and their conformance to the Plan is ensured through municipal codes, primarily the zoning ordinance. This chapter addresses how the zoning ordinance should be changed to guide development consistent with the character areas described in Chapter 3. It also addresses other areas of municipal control—City policies, City Departments’ capital investment plans, and economic incentives.

The development priorities outlined in this plan, which address the use, form, and scale of the built environment, represent a significant shift from the City’s current zoning practices, which primarily address use and siting of buildings. Current regulations of building siting are frequently at odds with walkable, urbanist development objectives. This shift reflects a national trend in zoning practice toward addressing the form and design of buildings, as well as the impacts associated with land use. Use, form, and scale guide the descriptions of character areas in the next chapter. The following goals, policies, and recommended actions inform the development of these character areas and their locations on the future land use map. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter. This significant shift toward a more holistic consideration of the built environment necessitates the development and adoption of a new zoning ordinance rather than assorted amendments to the existing zoning ordinance.

The overall vision described by these five primary goals, recommended policies and actions, the character area descriptions and the future land use map, is based on the following data:

- The Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025
  Adopted by Common Council in 2005
- Tomorrow’s Neighborhoods Today (TNT) Five-Year Plans
  The TNT Area 5-Year plans are citizen-driven community-development plans meant to guide citizen action and to inform City decisions. The creation of these TNT area plans is mandated by the City Charter.
- Smart Growth Principles
  Explained in more detail below
- Public input
  See Appendix C for an outline of the public participation that informed this plan.
- Analysis of current conditions
- Other communities’ recent zoning code assessments
FIVE PRIMARY GOALS
The policy recommendations in this chapter are organized according to five primary goals, each of which falls under a thematic area of land use planning and regulation:

**Overall Land Use Patterns**
I. Preserve and build upon Syracuse’s existing transit-oriented, multi-nodal land use pattern—the network of interconnected commercial and mixed-use neighborhood centers and surrounding residential areas.

**Character of Existing Neighborhoods**
II. Protect and enhance the character and unique “sense of place” of Syracuse’s neighborhoods.

**Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations**
III. Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Energy & the Environment**
IV. Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices.

**Regulatory Process**
V. Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.

ADDITIONAL THEMES
While each policy recommendation falls under one of the subject areas and goals described above, the three aspects of sustainability—environmental, economic, and social—run throughout this plan. All recommended actions are intended to positively affect one or more aspects of sustainability, and each recommendation takes into account its impact on all three concerns. This balance is essential to the management of all shared resources and they are particularly important in light the financial constraints faced by cities today, regional population loss, and the impending impacts of global climate change and increased energy costs.

In addition, issues related to transportation and open space, which warrant their own chapters in the Comprehensive Plan, are addressed in this Plan as they relate to the pattern of urban neighborhoods, place-making, and sustainability.

The Smart Growth Principles relate to the three areas of sustainability described above and to urban design and ‘livability’ typically associated with walkable neighborhoods. These Principles inform this plan’s overarching goals and policy recommendations. Those most relevant to Syracuse are emphasized in this plan. Smart Growth as an urban planning approach is based on a set of principles meant to guide development, which emphasize directing growth to locations where infrastructure already exists, reduced reliance on private vehicle transportation (through density), mixed land uses, and provision of a variety of housing options. Smart Growth is typically associated with New
Urbanism and the SmartCode which emphasizes a return to traditional urban design patterns and building styles. Focusing growth in areas with existing infrastructure is meant to reduce sprawl, commute times, and greenhouse gas emissions, encourage reuse of existing buildings, and protect natural and agricultural areas from urbanization. Pedestrian activity is further encouraged by mixing land uses, encouraging density, and creating engaging urban streetscapes. The Smart Growth Principles are included as Appendix A.

**GOALS & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**
The following goals and recommended actions are organized according to this plan's Five Primary Goals.

**Overall Land Use Patterns**

**1. Preserve and build upon Syracuse's existing transit-oriented, multi-nodal land use patterns.**

Protect and enhance a sustainable land use pattern that provides a mix of land uses, including retail, offices, restaurants, and schools, within proximity to residential areas.

Much of Syracuse's existing land use pattern is based on early streetcar development, in which residential neighborhoods were grouped around neighborhood-scale commercial areas—or commercial nodes. These commercial nodes are connected by corridors which are also often lined with businesses. Some neighborhoods straddle a commercial/mixed-use corridor, rather than clustering around a smaller node. This interconnected network of commercial nodes and corridors surrounded by residential neighborhoods is the multi-nodal land use pattern that is typical throughout Syracuse today.

This land development pattern is inherently sustainable. It enables decreased dependence on automobiles, reducing auto emissions in the city. Neighborhoods surround mixed-use commercial corridors and nodes that encourage pedestrian activity, define unique neighborhood character and, when efficiently connected, facilitate efficient provision of transit services. These historic development patterns provide the basis for the Smart Growth development model which emphasizes walkability (both an environmental and a public health benefit),

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Business centers such as James Street in Eastwood or Westcott Street that include restaurants, theaters, convenience stores, and small retail and office businesses. These often include a variety of residential uses as well—such as single-family homes, duplexes, and small (1-3 stories) apartment buildings.

These commercial corridors may be continually lined with businesses, or include segments that contain businesses such as those described above and segments of residences—including single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment buildings that vary in size from small to high density such as those found on James Street between Downtown and Eastwood.

A walkable neighborhood is considered to be a mixed-use commercial center and the surrounding "pedestrian-shed" or the area within a 5-minute walk—generally ¼ miles. (Duany, Andres, Jeff Speck, and Mike Lydon. The Smart Growth Manual. New York: McGraw Hill, 2010). However, more recent research shows that the pedestrian shed may extend ½ mile, or a 10-minute walking distance. The availability of sidewalks in good repair and visually open, lively storefronts to attract the pedestrians' interest has also been shown to increase the distance people are willing to walk.
distinct neighborhood identity, diverse housing options and density, and efficient transit service.

I.1 Reinforce Downtown as the center of the land use and transportation network.
I.1.1 Remove or minimize aesthetic and pedestrian barriers between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.
I.1.2 Ensure that zoning of major corridors encourages seamless, pedestrian friendly spines in and out of Downtown, connecting to surrounding neighborhoods.

I.2 Promote land use patterns that support connectivity, efficient transportation service, and reduced reliance on automobile travel.
I.2.1 Line major transportation corridors with higher-density residential and mixed-commercial uses. Existing business districts will include a mix of uses, but other areas should include higher density residential to facilitate efficient transit service.
I.2.2 Complete a transportation systems analysis and alternatives analysis for the metro area within five years. Once major transportation corridors, served by bus rapid transit or some other regional public transportation mode, are identified apply a “TOD” Overlay to the surrounding one-quarter mile radius. designate the one-quarter mile radius, targeting the area for pedestrian-friendly, high-density, mixed-use development. as these corridors are identified, pay special attention to streets with wide rights-of-way in which dedicated bus lanes might be established. North Salina is a good example of this; a bus-line to the northern suburbs could be accommodated within the right-of-way and feed into St. Joseph’s, a major regional employer, and then into Downtown.

Transit-oriented development increases property values and the city tax base, supports walkable land use patterns, and reduces energy dependence by supporting public transit.
I.2.3 Ensure that development approvals related to transportation access consider connectivity and safety for all modes of transportation—bus, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle.

I.3 Support the economic viability of neighborhood centers (nodes and corridors as centers of economic and social activity) throughout the city.
I.3.1 Encourage higher-density housing options within the pedestrian-shed of mixed-use corridors and neighborhood nodes, placing people within walking distance of neighborhood centers.

Population density, economically and socially vibrant centers of activity, and efficient transportation service are mutually supportive.
I.3.2 Encourage a mix of uses along transportation corridors and neighborhood nodes.

Emphasize that a mix of uses is desired in these areas. Zone these areas to encourage a variety of commercial, residential, and office activities. Mixed-uses induce more pedestrian activity than density.

I.3.3 Encourage shared parking lots for businesses located in these concentrated commercial areas. The potential for municipal lots operated by a parking authority should be explored in these areas.

These lots should be well screened from the street, located off side streets if possible, so as not to detract from the pedestrian environment, and well lit to ensure pedestrian safety.

I.4 Link standards for the right-of-way that facilitate a variety of transportation modes, where appropriate, to new zoning districts.

I.4.1 Develop a targeted, phased plan for development of “Complete Streets.”

I.4.2 Incorporate standards for pedestrian-scale lighting into heavily traveled corridors to improve safety.

I.4.4 Adopt right-of-way standards for each zoning district in conjunction with the development and adoption of a new zoning code. These should be based on the right-of-way descriptions in the next chapter.

Character of Existing Neighborhoods

II Protect and enhance the character and unique “sense of place” of Syracuse’s neighborhoods.

Most Syracuse neighborhoods and business districts have a distinct character. Eastwood’s rows of bungalows, Hawley-Green’s Victorians, Sedgwick’s early 20th century period-revival mansions. Some have wide boulevards with planted medians and others feature narrow streets densely lined with buildings. Some neighborhoods have small businesses scattered throughout and lots of pedestrian activity and others are serene and park-like. The way properties are used—commercial, residential, etc.—and buildings and the right-of-way are developed all affect this collective ‘feel’ of a place. Distinctive traits of the city’s various neighborhoods can be reinforced through the zoning ordinance and City investments.

II.1 Set lot widths and setbacks to desired character of specific neighborhoods.

Infill construction designed to respect the surrounding context—in terms of setbacks, lot sizes, building forms and volumes, etc.—without having to slavishly imitate historic buildings, has the potential to foster long-term revitalization, while incompatible infill typically deflates property values.

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5 Complete Streets aim to design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind—including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. http://www.completestreets.org/ Local Complete Streets legislation is currently pending.

Most neighborhoods in the city are far denser than suburban residential neighborhoods. Most of the city includes a mix of one- and two-family residences located within walking distance of a neighborhood center. Many neighborhoods include apartment buildings and row-houses. This dense, walkable character should be reinforced and promoted as an asset. Walkability and historic character are amenities that set Syracuse apart from its suburban neighbors.

Set lot sizes and setbacks dating from each neighborhood’s period of initial development as the neighborhood standard in residential areas with potential for growth and infill construction. This should also define maximum lot sizes—lots with wider frontage would require an area variance.

For example, lots in most neighborhoods that developed during the Victorian-era (much of the Northside, Tipp Hill, Westside, and the Southside) range from 30 to 35 feet wide. Currently, building on a lot narrower than 40 feet wide requires an area variance. Setbacks and lot widths should be more narrowly customized to each neighborhood, ensuring that the desired density and setback are the norm, rather than the exception.

Allowing a broad range of setbacks and lot widths has permitted buildings that are out of place and disrupt the streetscape. A lack of visual cohesion like this has been shown to decrease surrounding property values preventing neighborhood revitalization.

Setting lot sizes and setbacks at sizes appropriate to each neighborhood will ensure visual cohesion in all residential neighborhoods—urban where that is desired and more suburban in other neighborhoods where that is the desired pattern. A revised zoning ordinance should take this into account.

II.1.1 The strongest effort to maintain urban densities should be made on blocks that retain most of their housing stock. See concentration of vacant land map overlayed with pedestrian sheds in Appendix B.

II.2 Encourage the reuse of existing buildings that contribute to neighborhood character and the city’s urban aesthetic.\(^6\)

II.2.1 Use local historic designation to protect the most significant buildings. Develop financial incentives for local designation.

II.2.2 Develop local financial incentives for significant rehabilitation of commercial buildings similar to that for the rehabilitation of vacant residential buildings.

II.2.3 Ensure that design review is flexible with regard to existing buildings that don’t fit the character area description, but that are unique and should be preserved.

\(^6\) The reuse of existing buildings should also be encouraged for environmental benefits. Enhanced design review, addressed under Goal III, should also address this.
rehabilitated, such as this gas station at South Salina and Adams Streets (left).

II.3 Prevent commercial and industrial encroachment into viable residential neighborhoods.
Areas where commercial and industrial uses may subsume marginal residential neighborhoods are designated commercial on the future land use map. Areas where stable neighborhoods should be protected from encroachment are designated residential.

II.3.1 Ensure that the subdivision ordinance does not allow commercial zoning to encroach on surrounding areas through resubdivision of lots.

II.4 Allow for scattered commercial activity where historic precedent exists.

  Tipp Hill, defined by corner businesses and bars throughout the neighborhood, is the best example of this type of neighborhood. This scattered commercial pattern should be allowed, while preventing nodes from developing and without spot-zoning individual parcels for commercial activity. Much of the Northside and Washington Square neighborhoods also possess this land use pattern.

  Design standards, limits on business size, and loading/unloading (delivery) restrictions should protect the peace of the surrounding neighborhood. Their design should mimic that described in Neighborhood Center areas, or work within converted residences. These businesses, which most frequently serve the surrounding neighborhood, should have no requirement for on-site parking.

II.5 Ensure that accessory issues such as lighting, signage, parking, and landscaping are appropriate for their use and character area.

  II.5.1 Reassess sign regulations to improve clarity of meaning and appropriateness for their area. Billboards are not appropriate except for Strip-Mall Commercial or Industrial character areas.

  II.5.3 Parking maximums, rather than minimums, should be established in most character areas, except for large institutions and large commercial uses. Parking should not be allowed in front of buildings—in the setback—except for Strip-Mall Commercial or Industrial areas and in some cases in Industrial Transition areas.

  II.5.4 Landscaping standards should be dramatically increased to encourage permeable surfaces, increased tree-canopy cover, screening of parking from pedestrian environments and prevent headlights from impacting adjacent residential areas.

  II.5.5 Lighting standards should emphasize pedestrian safety.
Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations

III Ensure high-quality, attractive aesthetic and architectural design throughout the city, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Zoning standards should ensure that development in all neighborhoods is of comparable high quality, encourage new construction appropriate to the surroundings, encourage pedestrian activity in mixed-use nodes and corridors, and ensure investor confidence in the surrounding area. Furthermore, consistent, high-quality design stabilizes and enhances property values, improves quality of life in city neighborhoods, and draws new residents and tourists.

III.1 Implement a form-based zoning ordinance that addresses form, siting, scale, and use.

A Form-Based Zoning Code will mean “Building with Better Rules.”

Illustrated form-based standards set a baseline for building form, roof form, solid-to-void ratios and fenestration (window) patterns, siting and setbacks in addition to use and scale. Developers should then be able to mix-and-match between standard forms and allowed uses. These standards should still allow for architectural creativity and may be supplemented by more specific design overlays or guidelines in certain neighborhoods.

III.1.1 Design in commercial areas should take into account the pedestrian experience. This informs the character area descriptions in the following chapter.

Large storefront windows are desired to generate pedestrian interest and increase visibility. Long blank walls facing sidewalks should be avoided. Security grills facing sidewalks should be aesthetically pleasing. Pedestrian scale buildings and details like lighting should be emphasized.

Entrances should be located on the primary façade, facing the sidewalk. Corner entrances should be encouraged when possible.

Parking should not be located in the building setback whenever possible. Parking in strip-mall commercial areas should still accommodate pedestrian circulation and, when large enough, accommodate public transit stops and bicycle parking.

III.1.2 Ground floors of parking garages should be wrapped in retail or office space when facing a sidewalk.

III.1.3 Curb cuts on major streets, especially with heavy pedestrian traffic, should be avoided whenever possible.

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7 In areas where security is a concern parking may be in front of buildings, but should be screened by low shrubs or a low wall.
III.1.4 Major alterations on street-facing facades should be subject to design review to ensure consistency with the forms and window patterns of the surrounding neighborhood.

III.2 Overlay districts, which supplement the requirements of the underlying zoning, may be necessary to further customize general form-based standards to specific commercial corridors or residential neighborhoods.

Energy & the Environment

IV Promote environmentally sustainable land use patterns, transportation options, site plans, and construction practices.

IV.1 Allow for more creative uses of vacant land, such as community gardens, urban agriculture, and green infrastructure, particularly in areas outside of pedestrian sheds.

**Target Development toward viable blocks where urban densities should be maintained, within walking distance of commercial centers, and promote alternative, green projects in areas with large amounts of vacant land.**

IV.1.1 Write the zoning code to allow for community gardens and urban agriculture at tiered, increasing intensities and size in most zoning districts. Minimum size required for increasingly intense uses. Ability to acquire a large enough site will dictate the allowed agriculture-related uses, such as bees and livestock, in addition to hours of operation, sales, etc.

IV.1.2 As a matter of City policy, encourage traditional nfill in viable blocks within pedestrian sheds and steer these alternative uses toward areas outside of pedestrian sheds and/or where concentrations of vacant land already exist (see map in Appendix B).

IV.1.3 Coordinate this with a regional food systems plan that addresses food deserts and job training.

IV.2 Improve landscaping standards for private property and within the right-of-way.

IV.2.1 Adopt landscaping standards for large parking lots that reduce impermeable surfaces, encourage increased tree-canopy cover, and screen parking from the pedestrian realm.
IV.2.2 Reinstall lawns in planting strips where they have been replaced with asphalt.

IV.3 Streams, wetlands, and steep slopes should be mapped within the next three years and inappropriate impacts of development should be restricted through a protective zoning overlay.

IV.4 Connect the city’s open space network. Coordinate green-infrastructure and parks projects to create a connected ecosystem and recreation network.

Regulatory Process

V Ensure that development processes and decisions are efficient, predictable, and transparent.

V.1 Allow more flexibility within zones.
Streamline enumerated uses into broad categories. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Uses</th>
<th>General Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pet Store</td>
<td>Retail Goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe Store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record Store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly define the general uses so that applications can easily be sorted into the appropriate category. Regulate the real items of concern—size, hours, deliveries, etc.

V.2 Make the zoning code more user-friendly

V.2.1 An illustrated, form-based code will make design objectives clear.

V.2.2 Use tables to make clear the different allowed uses, parking, signage, and form standards between various districts, similar to those in the SmartCode.

V.2.3 The code should be fully functional online, including linked cross-references and the ability to look up zoning regulations by address.

V.2.4 The code should allow as many types of applications as possible to be administratively approved according to clear, objective standards.

V.3 Site Plan Review

V.3.1 The Project Site Review process should be revised to take into

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8 http://www.transect.org/codes.html
9 Administrative approval means that the Zoning Administrator can approve the action/application without a Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals hearing.
consideration environmental concerns, on- and off-site circulation, infrastructure and utilities, and design character.

V.3.2 Design review should be guided by a set of objective standards related to form, massing, fenestration patterns, siting, lighting, and signage.

V.3.3 Submissions should be reviewed by design staff, who will make professional recommendations to the reviewing board, for conformance to the form-based standards.

V.4 Nonconformities

V.4.1 Carefully craft the zoning ordinance so as not to discourage investment in nonconforming structures where they are not actively detracting from the surrounding neighborhood.

V.4.2 Develop strategies to encourage property owners to bring their buildings into compliance with the zoning code—this is particularly relevant to parking, lot coverage, and signage.

V.5 Prevent spot-zoning

New zoning districts should allow for a mix of uses and promote certain ratios—including scattered commercial within certain zoning districts, without spot zoning individual parcels.

V.6 Address the resubdivision process at the same time as the zoning ordinance.

Prevent commercial districts from encroaching on the surrounding neighborhood through resubdivision.
Character Areas

The character areas described below and applied to the future land use map illustrate a vision for future physical development of buildings and real estate in Syracuse. These categories are based on the typical uses or mix of uses, building forms, and scale found in or desired for each area. These three variables—use, form, and scale—make up the context and feeling of various streetscapes and neighborhoods and, in various combinations, express the vision for development in each area.

These character areas, which emphasize the importance of urban context or the “feel” of an area, as well as the allowed uses, will inform the development of the City’s new form-based zoning code. The character areas are intended to provide enough detail for one to envision the future built environment and mixes of activity or land use and to set the stage for appropriate zoning revisions, but are not meant as proposed new zoning districts, which require far more detail and may include additional categories allowing for detailed differentiation between districts. The described characteristics of each category included in the following table are meant to be illustrative and not regulatory.

This plan illustrates a long-term vision for redevelopment and land use, but it is important to note that the potential densities included in the various character areas allocated across the future land use map are not based on population projections, but rather are intended to allow flexibility in application. Depending on population shifts, these areas may be built to lesser densities during the life of this plan than these categories, as described and allocated on the future land use map, can accommodate.

Several of Syracuse’s neighborhoods have borne the brunt of population loss and economic decline as regional population has shifted dramatically toward the suburbs since the 1960s. Despite this, Syracuse is uniquely positioned within the Central New York region in light of increased national and statewide focus on Smart Growth and widely renewed interest in urban living. The City of Syracuse possesses a concentration of interesting historic architecture, which dates from periods of dense urban settlement and is arranged in walkable neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods which currently possess high vacancy rates are poised to accept population growth, particularly among young professionals and families who desire a traditional urban environment and who may take advantage of Syracuse’s affordable historic housing stock and walkable, urban neighborhoods. Commercial corridors with low levels of activity and density today are dispersed through Syracuse’s neighborhoods in a connective, multi-nodal network which, better utilized, are suited to provide centers of activity within walking distance of homes efficient transportation services.

Flexible regulations that facilitate creative new uses for land and buildings while preserving the character of blocks that retain some level of their original character—setbacks, massing, etc.—are needed for those neighborhoods that have been hardest hit by population loss. Furthermore, a form-based zoning code will ensure that new development enhances and
does not detract from the urban environment, protecting the character that defines Syracuse's neighborhoods.

The allocation of uses and densities indicated in the future land use map reflects potential capacity and is based on the policies and goals discussed in the previous chapter, existing conditions (including land use patterns, vacancy rates, levels of investment in the existing building stock), and community-driven visioning and priorities gathered at the neighborhood level. Every effort should be made at a regional level to direct development toward this existing infrastructure and this development capacity. Market conditions may dictate development below the maximum allowable in the short-term, but zoning should allow for future compatible development of higher density. This capacity should be preserved by maintaining zoning for density levels in line with the existing built environment, so that over the long-term the City may market its ability to cost-effectively absorb regional population growth—based on existing infrastructure and an urban land-use pattern that lends itself to walkable neighborhoods, local commercial and business services, and efficient transit service. In the short term, every effort should be made to focus growth and density within the pedestrian sheds of neighborhood commercial nodes and corridors—to support local businesses and efficient transit service.

The following descriptions represent the typical characteristics desired for each character area. A revised zoning code should account for more variation than these and will address each type of area in far more detail. Typical mixes of uses are described for each area. Form refers to the form of the building and addresses where it is located on the site. Scale refers to the scale of the building as it addresses the street. The character areas are meant to describe a ‘sliding-scale’ of allowable uses—from entirely residential to entirely commercial, with various ratios of mixed-use between, some predominately residential and others predominately commercial. The same is true with building forms; various areas include more or less variation. Within any character area developers should choose freely from allowable forms and uses, mixing the two where appropriate and/or feasible (example: Recess Coffee Shop shown at the beginning of this chapter).

While this plan primarily concerns itself with the regulation of private property, public investments in the right-of-way also have a significant impact on the way people experience various neighborhoods. Typical right-of-way arrangements are described in the table at the end of this chapter. Right-of-way standards such as these should correspond to specific zoning districts and be designed to promote pedestrian safety and promote actively used sidewalk spaces.

This illustration, from the Portland Pedestrian Design Guide (1998), shows the various elements of the pedestrian/sidewalk area of the right-of-way. The top shows a typical residential sidewalk cross-section and the bottom is typical of a commercial area, showing sidewalk cafe seating. The widths of the furnishings zone, pedestrian zone, and frontage zone vary between character areas. The width of these zones, the materials of which they are constructed, and the elements they contain—trees, trash cans, benches, etc.—have an effect on the pedestrian experience, just as signs, awnings, windows, and other façade elements do.
Character Area Descriptions

Open Space and Public Plazas
Designated open space includes parks and recreational spaces, nature reserves, environmentally sensitive areas, and wooded utility-owned parcels that are often perceived as open space. Community gardens and green infrastructure that occur within a neighborhood context typically aren’t designated on the map as large-scale open spaces are. Public plazas such as Clinton and Hanover Squares, a character-defining feature of downtown Syracuse, are also highlighted on the future land use map.

Suburban Residential (Single-Family)
Typically developed after World War II, these neighborhoods typify the mid-20th century boom in suburban residential construction. Often in neighborhoods designed with winding roads, these homes are typically on large lots compared to other residences in the city. Most feature an attached garage that figures prominently on the primary façade. These neighborhoods include no commercial uses aside from the occasional home office. Lot size and the role of the garage on the façade are the primary distinctions between this and the Streetcar Suburb character area.

Streetcar Suburb Residential (Single-Family)
These neighborhoods developed as middle- and upper-middle class suburbs during and immediately after the streetcar era. Architectural styles typically date from the 1910s to the late 1930s, including a variety of eclectic revivals and traditional colonial styles. Some earlier homes were Foursquare and restrained Queen Anne styles. These streetscapes differentiated from the Suburban type by steeper pitched roofs and vertically oriented windows; garages are often present, but typically detached and located at the rear of the lot. Attached garages, when present, are typically a later addition.

Some of these neighborhoods feature winding street patterns, but they are just as often laid out on a grid. Setbacks are typically slightly smaller than those in post-war neighborhoods, but can be as deep as 35’. Streetcar era single-use, single-family neighborhoods were often formally designed developments, such as Strathmore and Sedgwick. Others were developed by a variety of contractors and developers through less formal subdivision, these typically in a standard grid pattern.

Unlike the Low-Density Residential neighborhoods these areas developed just after the
Neighborhoods that include a mix of single-and two-family housing are very common in Syracuse, and often include some commercial uses scattered throughout the neighborhood, typically at intersections.

Low-Density Residential (Single- and Two-Family)
These neighborhoods developed earlier in the streetcar era and include a mix of single- and two-family residences. The majority of housing in these areas was developed between the mid 1800s and the 1910s. These typically have smaller setbacks and narrower lots than the “suburban” models that followed.

The two-story porch so common throughout Syracuse is a significant element of these neighborhoods that were developed just before and around the turn of the 20th century. Victorian-era neighborhoods, developed a few decades earlier, have different residential forms—many of these were built as two-family homes, but larger Victorians have often been subdivided into multiple units.

These areas are typically tightly clustered around neighborhood commercial areas, which often form the spine of the neighborhood—running along the former streetcar lines, such as James Street through Eastwood. These areas developed before widespread single-use zoning, these often included small-scale commercial activities scattered throughout, in addition to distinct commercial nodes, most often at key intersections (see the Northside gallery pictured at the beginning of Chapter 4). These small commercial establishments should not exceed 3,500 sq. ft. and should require a special use permit to limit them from clustering and reduce impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Primarily serving pedestrian traffic, they should have no on-site parking requirement.

Neighborhood Center
These small-scale neighborhood commercial centers typically developed during the streetcar era and most remaining buildings date from the early 1900s; although in some areas of the city, concentrations of 19th century buildings remain. These were designed to serve pedestrians and so buildings were tightly packed together, built up to the sidewalk, and featured large storefront windows to entice shoppers—all of which are desirable characteristics in new development today and assets of these neighborhood centers that should be reinforced. Most buildings here are one-to-two stories tall, but some with residential or office use above can be up to four stories tall.
Medium-Density Residential

These areas are typically adjacent to (sometimes former) industrial and commercial employment centers. Residential uses were settled densely in these areas prior to widespread streetcar and automobile access. For the same reasons, small-scale retail was frequently scattered throughout the neighborhood (primarily at intersections). Other areas classified as medium-density residential in this plan were developed as large single-family residences, but have been subdivided into multi-unit residential and offices. These areas also include streetcar style apartment blocks and small apartment buildings (see the James Street apartment building shown at the beginning of this chapter.) These areas include a broad variety of building forms; setbacks and lot size vary widely, but should be kept consistent with the rest of their block. Conversion to low-impact commercial uses is acceptable, but these should not exceed 5,000 sq. ft. These areas are found within walking distance of Neighborhood Centers and Urban Mixed-Use districts.

Industrial Transition

These are typically former areas of heavy industry located near major road and rail (and former canal) corridors. With the evolution of industrial technologies, the remaining buildings are typically no longer appropriate for heavy industrial use, but may accommodate light-industry or warehousing. In many locations there is potential for conversion to retail, services, and residential uses. There is frequently a wide range of building forms found throughout the area—as detached and row-style residential and commercial buildings were formerly interspersed among industrial activities. This is
The area around Wolf and Salina Streets includes a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential buildings representative of the Industrial Transition character area.

seen today along corridors such as W. Fayette Street, Erie Blvd. West, parts of Burnet Ave., and surrounding the intersection of Salina and Wolf Streets.

New construction should mimic the surrounding residential forms, such as row houses, or the larger industrial forms that are usually at least partly built up to the sidewalk. Fenestration patterns should respect surrounding precedent, as well. Setbacks, lot sizes, and parking arrangements will vary widely here since most projects are adaptive reuse of existing buildings, but every effort should be made to make development pedestrian friendly and provide ample landscaping and adequate screening in parking areas. Sidewalks here will be narrower than in the Urban Mixed-Use areas.

Urban Mixed-Use
This area is the most ‘urban’ feeling setting outside of Downtown; in fact, much of downtown falls into this category. Buildings come up to the sidewalk and feature large first-floor storefront windows. Upper floors may include residential, office, or commercial uses. Building façades and upper floor windows should be vertical in orientation. Wide sidewalks accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic and café seating in some locations.

Parking is located behind buildings and well-screened when this is not possible. There are very few one-story buildings in these areas. Although most new construction will likely be detached, row buildings are encouraged. The urban row buildings of North Salina Street through Little Italy, Armory Square, and Montgomery Street just north of Columbus Circle, typify this character area.

Urban Core
The Urban Core includes the tallest Downtown office and mixed-use buildings. These are typically over six-stories in height, but possess a variety of setback depths depending on whether a public plaza fronts the building (as with the Federal building and AXA Towers). Sidewalks are wider here to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic.

Parking is never allowed in the setback and ground floor of parking garages should be wrapped in commercial uses. Ground-floor retail, restaurant or some use that engages pedestrians should be encouraged where possible, although this typically serves the
daytime office clientele in these areas. Even where offices are located on the ground floor, this level should include large windows to create visual interest. Public plazas, where present, should be encouraged to utilize permeable surfaces and native plantings.

**High-Density Residential/Office**

This area, outside of Downtown, includes a similar mix of activities, but is more likely to include high-rise residential towers, such as those that line much of James Street. Low-rise, multi-building apartment complexes and low-to-medium rise office buildings with large setbacks are also included in this character area because of their similar site plans and uses. Commercial uses that provide services and small-scale retail to residents and office clientele are common. They usually include deep setbacks with broad yards. Parking should not be located in the setback. Entrances should be oriented to the street as much as possible to facilitate pedestrian access.

**“Strip-Mall” Commercial**

These automobile-oriented major corridors are the typical location of ‘big-box’ commercial activities. Careful design regulations can ensure that large parking lots include pedestrian circulation routes connected to sidewalks, impermeable surfaces, adequate landscaping, and space for public transit stops. Design standards should ensure that these buildings remain aesthetically pleasing rather than detracting from the surrounding area. They may often also include light-industrial uses or office complexes, but these should also take into account the same basic screening, landscaping, and design standards.

**Heavy Industrial/Utilities**

Heavy industrial area typically located near major rail and highway transportation corridors. They serve as another economic anchor of the community. Restrictions on building style less relevant here, but screening and protection of the nearby pedestrian environment should still be taken into consideration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Area</th>
<th>Use:</th>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>Site Arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Space</strong></td>
<td>Parks, recreation fields, cemeteries, woods, etc.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suburban Residential (Single-Family)</strong></td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Detached single-family residences</td>
<td>Parking must be screened when large parking lots are present (schools, churches, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers.</td>
<td>Schools, Libraries, &amp; Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Gardens</td>
<td>Post-war style homes (see description). Garages on primary façades are common.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Streetcar Residential (Single-Family)</strong></td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Detached single-family residences</td>
<td>Parking must be screened when large parking lots are present (schools, churches, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers.</td>
<td>Schools, Libraries, &amp; Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Gardens</td>
<td>Pre-war residential forms and styles (see area description above). Garages may be attached in new construction, but garage doors should not be placed on the primary façade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low-Density Residential (Single- and Two-Family)</strong></td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Detached one- and two-family residences</td>
<td>No parking in the setback Detached garages often found at the rear of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers.</td>
<td>Occasional small, traditional storefront commercial buildings (usually at intersections on major streets with minimal setback from the sidewalk and no taller than surrounding houses).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-impact commercial: Office, Small-scale Retail, Services (On non-local roads, preferred at corners. No more than 3,500 sq. ft.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Gardens; Urban Ag. in some instances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Center (Mixed-uses and forms)</strong></td>
<td>(Single- or mixed-uses; mostly commercial) Small-scale Retail and Services; Restaurants Residential; Office Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Community Gardens; Urban Ag. in some instances</td>
<td>Traditional storefront commercial buildings; some freestanding, some row-style Detached one- to multi-unit residences “Streetcar” style apartment buildings (minimal setbacks, 2-4 stories, may incorporate a courtyard)</td>
<td>No parking in the setback Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium-Density Residential</strong></td>
<td>(Single- or mixed-uses; mostly residential) Residential Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Office Small-to-Medium Scale Commercial: Small-scale Retail, Services, etc. (No more than 5,000 sq. ft.) Community Garden/Urban Ag</td>
<td>A mix of detached one-, two-, three-, and up to multi-unit residences (may be converted for small scale office/commercial use) Row-houses “Streetcar” style apartment buildings Occasional scattered small, traditional storefront commercial buildings</td>
<td>No parking in the setback Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale:</td>
<td>Street and Right-of-Way:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Setbacks</td>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Street Pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 stories</td>
<td>Typically no less than 24' (some neighborhoods have much larger setbacks)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Curved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 stories</td>
<td>Typically 16' - 24' (some neighborhoods have much larger setbacks) Setbacks and lots size should generally be consistent along the block</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Curved grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 stories</td>
<td>Typically 12' to 24' feet Setbacks and lots size should generally be consistent along the block</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 stories</td>
<td>Typically no more than 5' for commercial rows or 16' - 24' for residential buildings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 stories</td>
<td>Typically 12' - 24' 0' to 5' for most commercial buildings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Grid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Character Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Area</th>
<th>Use:</th>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>Site Arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typical Uses</td>
<td>Typical Building Forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site Arrangement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Transition</strong></td>
<td>All of the below, plus light industrial and some scattered detached, but dense, residential (such as on Burnet Ave.) Community Garden/Urban Ag</td>
<td>Late 19th, early 20th century industrial buildings (regardless of use). New construction may follow styles from “urban mixed use” category or mimic industrial styles Row-houses and other residential forms mixed throughout</td>
<td>No parking in the setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Mixed-Use</strong></td>
<td>(More mixed- than single-use buildings) Pedestrian-oriented commercial typically found on ground floor Office, Residential, and Commercial above Live-work lofts Community Garden/Urban Ag in limited instances</td>
<td>Traditional, urban, mixed-use attached row buildings (multi-story, large storefront windows, minimal setback) “Streetcar” style apartment buildings</td>
<td>No parking in the setback Parking should be kept to the center of blocks and accessed from side-streets when possible. Limit curb cuts on major streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Core</strong></td>
<td>Commercial and mixed-use with a preference for pedestrian-heavy uses on the ground floor Residential Office</td>
<td>Minimal setback, typically taller than 6 stories, mixed-use buildings; pedestrian oriented</td>
<td>No parking in the setback Parking should be kept to the center of blocks and accessed from side-streets when possible. Limit curb cuts on major streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High-Density Residential/Office</strong></td>
<td>Residential Office Services and small-scale retail, restaurants Community Gardens</td>
<td>High-rise towers (office or residential) Low-rise complexes (office or residential)</td>
<td>No parking in the setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strip-Mall Commercial</strong></td>
<td>Commercial Office Light-industrial Auto-oriented uses such as car dealers, gas stations, mechanics, etc.</td>
<td>“Strip” style commercial buildings (usually have parking in front) Auto-oriented businesses Office Complexes Light-Industrial buildings</td>
<td>Large parking lots include landscaping that mitigates storm water runoff and slows traffic. Sidewalks should connect from right-of-way to business entrances in areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy Industrial/Utilities</strong></td>
<td>Industrial Sites Transportation and other Utilities Auto-oriented uses such as car dealers, gas stations, mechanics, etc.</td>
<td>A variety of utilitarian buildings. Screening standards needed.</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The height, scale, and forms represent what is typical in each character area. Buildings that do not conform to these generalizations may exist and these categories must be further refined into more specific zoning districts.

Churches, libraries, schools, community centers, and similar unique building forms are found in nearly every character area except Heavy Industrial.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale:</th>
<th>Street and Right-of-Way:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6 stories</td>
<td>Typically 0’ to 5’ although this varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 stories</td>
<td>5’ max for commercial rows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically 6+ stories, although smaller buildings are often mixed in</td>
<td>0’ to 5’ except for public plazas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Typically with a deep setback from the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically 1-2 stories</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Future Land Use/Character Areas
NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

NORTHSIDE

CURRENT CONDITIONS
The Northside TNT Area is bound on the east by Teall Avenue, the south by Interstate 690, the southwest by Interstate 81, and the west and north by City boundaries. The large area includes numerous distinct neighborhoods—Lincoln Hill, Hawley-Green, Sedgwick, Court Woodlawn, Prospect Hill, Washington Square, parts of the Lakefront and other areas generally referred to as the Northside. The area encompasses 4 square miles.

The Northside is home to nearly 40,000 people, one of the few parts of the City that gained population between 2000 and 2010, gaining 2,300 residents. This places residential density at approximately 10,000 persons per square mile or nearly 16 persons per acre—one of the most densely populated parts of the City. The Northside TNT Area is home to a diverse mix of recent immigrants and the area has adopted the slogan “Generations of Many Nations.”

The area includes a vibrant collection of neighborhoods and commercial districts which are described below. The area is anchored by a number of businesses and institutions—including St. Joseph’s Hospital, Franciscan Ministries, the Northside Urban Partnership, and others. At the northwest edge of the area are the Central New York Regional Market, the Alliance Bank Baseball Stadium, and the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center, served by Amtrak, Greyhound, and other long-distance bus providers. North along Hiawatha Boulevard an industrial zone continues to thrive. Commercial activity lines Wolf Street, North Salina Street, Butternut Street, parts of James, and other smaller business corridors. These are identified on the future land use map as areas to focus small business development.

Former industrial buildings near the intersection of Salina and Wolf, no longer suited for heavy industry, are identified as “Industrial Transition” and targeted for light-industry, commercial, and residential loft conversions. As redevelopment spreads up North Salina Street, this key intersection may leverage its proximity to the market, stadium, and transportation center. This same mix of light-industry, residential conversion, and a mix of building types commonly found around 19th century industrial centers (historic industrial buildings, dense housing, and commercial buildings) can be found along Burnet Ave at the southern edge of Hawley-Green. The largest parks on the Northside are Schiller and Lincoln Hill, although smaller public greenspaces are scattered about, both small formal parks and also triangular open spaces caused by the Northside’s irregular street pattern.

More typical, early 20th century detached single family homes are located at the eastern and northern edges of the Northside TNT Area. Sedgwick, at the northeast edge of this area, is one of the most picturesque and park-like single-family neighborhoods in the city, and has been a locally designated historic district since the 1970s. Most housing closer to Washington Square
and the North Salina Street corridor are more densely located and many larger homes have been divided into multi-family buildings. Businesses are frequently scattered about these areas. At the southeast corner of this area the Hawley-Green neighborhood surrounds a small, historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hawley-Green surrounds a mixed-use node at the intersection of Hawley, Green, and Catherine that includes several historic homes, apartment buildings, and businesses.

The Washington Square area was one of the earliest settlements in the Syracuse area—initially the Village of Salina—and was the location of early salt mining operations. The Village of Salina was incorporated into the City along with what was then the Village of Syracuse (now Downtown) at the time of the City’s founding in 1847. The connection between these two villages, which ran along Salina Street, had become urbanized by this time, as well, and the two met at Division Street. Some of the oldest buildings in the city run between downtown and Washington Square along this northwesterly route and the area remains one of the most urban feeling streetscapes, densely settled with high levels of pedestrian traffic and successful small businesses. This stretch of North Salina Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The area is known as Little Italy today, but is also home to thousands of Southeast Asian immigrants (a community which extends up Butternut and throughout the Northside, as well), who have received resettlement assistance in this part of Syracuse since the 1980s.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Northside TNT Area.

- Development along commercial corridors should be consistent with the traditional, dense, urban architectural character found throughout the Northside.
- Identify landmark eligible properties and potential historic districts and proactively designate the most significant. Pursue strategies to encourage their rehabilitation and maintenance.
- Commercial corridors should not expand beyond those areas identified on the future land use map into stable residential neighborhoods.
- However, small-scale commercial uses that provide everyday goods and services to surrounding residences should be allowed along major streets, particularly at intersections, in medium-density residential areas—consistent with historic patterns that remain on the Northside. A special permit process should ensure that businesses size and any negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood are limited. These buildings should follow the design standards for neighborhood mixed-use areas and not be built taller than the surrounding residential buildings.
- Wolf Street at North Salina Street, formerly an industrial area, is a prime area for redevelopment—in close proximity to Carousel Center, the Regional Transportation Center, Alliance Bank Stadium, and the CNY Regional Market. Streetscape improvements here may prompt private investment.
- Improved connectivity between the Washington Square neighborhood and the CNY Regional Market, Stadium, and Transportation Center is needed—this should
include general right-of-way improvements, but also bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

- Improvements to the right-of-way are needed throughout the Northside area to protect pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

- Community parking along Wolf Street (near North Salina), North Salina Street, Butternut Street, and James Street should be supported by the City and made available to customers, to reduce the amount of high-value commercial property being used for surface parking.

**EASTWOOD**

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**
The Eastwood TNT area is bound on the west by Teall Avenue, the South by Interstate 690, and on the north and east by the City boundaries. The area encompasses 1.95 square miles. Eastwood is home to approximately 11,000 residents, and has lost approximately only 277 residents since 2000. This places the residential current density at nearly 5,800 persons per square mile or nine persons per acre (approximately 1/2 that of the Northside).

The majority of Eastwood’s neighborhoods consist of early 20th century, detached, single-family homes—mostly bungalows. Duplexes are common in the areas immediately north and south of James Street, the area northwest of James’ western end, and in some areas directly north of Burnet Ave. All of these are nearest to historic streetcar lines, where density was desirable. Larger apartment buildings are also located near these major corridors. The largest park in Eastwood is Sunnycrest, which includes a golf course and is located adjacent to Henninger High School.

The primary commercial strips that run through the area are Burnet Avenue, running east-to-west at the area’s southern edge, and James Street, running east-to-west across the center of the TNT area. Both serve as commuter corridors, used by residents of eastern suburbs. James Street’s small-town commercial character reflects Eastwood’s history as an independent village until the 1920s, a true streetcar suburb of Syracuse.

Burnet Avenue is lined with a mix of residential buildings, industrial and commercial uses. The residential uses along this strip consist mostly of historic homes that have been divided into rental units. The street is lined with a number of restaurants and bars that serve the surrounding residents in addition to small retail businesses. Many of the buildings along this corridor date from the late 1800s and early 1900s and are built to the sidewalk line, with parking at the side, rear, or on the street; others are separated from the street by large parking lots.

James Street is lined with a mix of medium-density apartment and commercial buildings. The corridor is regulated by a zoning overlay that requires traditional storefront design, minimal setbacks, and large storefront windows in addition to regulating color and materials and disallowing parking in the building setback. Many buildings that pre-
date the adoption of this overlay are fronted by large parking lots, but the majority of commercial buildings are built up to the sidewalk, creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

**Recommendations**
The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Eastwood TNT Area.

- Continue to work toward revitalization of James Street buildings, encouraging new construction and rehabilitations to conform to a pedestrian-friendly urban design.

- Reduce on-site parking requirements for businesses along James Street, particularly restaurants. Develop a plan for shared parking areas.

- Community parking along James Street should be supported by the City and made available to customers, to reduce the amount of high-value commercial property being used for surface parking.

- Businesses along Burnet Avenue should be built to the sidewalk line in traditional urban forms and continue to provide services, retail, and restaurants within walking distance of the adjacent neighborhoods. The businesses along the north of Burnet should be closer in scale to the adjacent houses.

- Businesses along the south side of Burnet Avenue have little trouble accommodating parking in the rear of the parcel, but shared parking facilities should be pursued to alleviate the difficulty that businesses on the north side of Burnet face when trying to accommodate parking.

- Ensure that pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, and cars can coexist safely on major corridors—James Street and Burnet Ave—through careful right-of-way design and enforcement of the sidewalk ordinance.

- Commercial corridors shall not spread beyond the specified areas in the future land use map into surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- Some low-intensity commercial uses should be allowed along major streets, particularly at intersections, in low-density residential areas. A special permit process should ensure that businesses size and any negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood are limited. These buildings should follow the design standards for neighborhood mixed-use areas and not be built taller than the height limits of the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Form-based zoning code or a potential conservation district should protect the distinctive feel of Eastwood’s bungalow areas.

- No commercial uses shall be allowed in single-family residential areas, except for residential-to-office conversions, which follow a special use permit process.
EASTSIDE

CURRENT CONDITIONS
The Eastside TNT Area is bound on the west by Interstate 81, the north by Interstate 690, and on the south and east by the City boundary. The 6.7 square mile area includes University Hill, the Near Eastside, Salt Springs, Meadowbrook, Westcott, the University Neighborhood, Outer Comstock neighborhoods and the Erie Boulevard East commercial corridor.

The Eastside is home to nearly 27,618 people, having lost nearly 3,000 people since 2000. This represents 6.4 persons per acre or 4,120 persons per square mile—even less dense than Eastwood. This is partly due to many low-density, suburban neighborhoods and non-residential areas within the Eastside. The area is home to many of the region’s major employers—Syracuse University, SUNY ESF, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and several hospitals. The University Neighborhood and Westcott house large numbers of students in detached single- and multi-family housing, creating a tension that is not uncommon in university neighborhoods related to parking, quality of life, and nuisance challenges.

The Connective Corridor runs from Syracuse University to Downtown along University Avenue and Genesee Street, pushing the University Hill neighborhood northward to Interstate 690. This formerly residential section of the Eastside has undergone much transition since the 1950s; first razed for the construction of I-81, then housing projects, and later university and hospital expansions. The flat valley floor south of I-690 once held the Erie Canal, an industrial center, and rail yards. Today this is one of the most pivotal centers of opportunity for the City of Syracuse as the Center of Excellence has built their new regional facility here and Upstate Medical is currently building a new biotech facility. The demolition of derelict and now vacant public housing project, Kennedy Square, will clear the way for near total reinvention of this part of the city. Combined with the likely removal of Interstate 81, there is great opportunity for better connecting University Hill, Downtown, and the Hawley-Green neighborhood (just north of I-690 from here).

Erie Boulevard East runs directly east out of this area and includes a mix of industrial and strip-mall style commercial activity. This former route of the Erie Canal may be incorporated into the Erie Canalway Trail system. Right-of-way improvements and design standards are badly needed along this commercial corridor, although more recent development near the eastern edge of the city appears to be of a higher quality. Investments in the public sphere may further prompt development. Improved landscaping requirements for large, big-box parking lots would be a great improvement and would help to reduce storm water runoff.

The Near Eastside neighborhood uphill from Erie Boulevard faces similar vacancy challenges to those on the city’s south and west sides and decreased property values. Wedged between Genesee Street and Erie Boulevard’s industrial area a coordinated strategy is needed to encourage reinvestment here. At least one nonprofit housing agency is engaged in rehabilitating and building new multifamily housing here.
Salt Springs and Meadowbrook, at the eastern edge of the Eastside, are mostly residential in nature, although a small commercial and institutional strip near Nottingham High School is located mid-way along East Genesee Street, the dividing line between the two neighborhoods. These two neighborhoods are mostly made up of Suburban and Streetcar Suburban character areas, although there are some areas of Neighborhood Residential (Single- and Two-Family) in Salt Springs. Salt Springs also possesses a small commercial node adjacent to LeMoyne University. Outer Comstock, located at the southern end of the Eastside separated from the Universities by Oakwood Cemetery, is almost entirely suburban in nature, but the Brighton Ave. corridor that runs along I-81 includes some industrial and commercial activity and a few large, suburban-style apartment complexes are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

The Westcott neighborhood centers on the Westcott commercial district and Thornden Park, located at its western edge. The commercial district includes a number of restaurants, small-scale retail, the Westcott Theater, second-hand stores, coffee shops, and a branch library. Further south in the Westcott Neighborhood is an organic food cooperative. The housing here is mostly Streetcar Suburban and Single- and Two-Family, although many multi-family apartment buildings are located around the business district.

The University Neighborhood is wedged between Westcott and Syracuse University and ESF. This picturesque Streetcar Suburb era neighborhood includes a large proportion of student housing. Both Westcott and the University Neighborhood face parking and nuisance challenges related to this concentration of students. Berkeley Park, a local and National Register Historic District, at the southern end of the University Neighborhood has retained its single-family character and mostly includes owner-occupants. The northern end of this neighborhood, along Euclid, has undergone significant changes at its western end where housing has been replaced with larger dormitory style buildings. The rest of Euclid toward Westcott has been subdivided into multi-unit student housing. This area is included in the Special Neighborhood Zone meant to limit student housing conversions and mitigate parking challenges.

**Recommendations**

The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Eastside TNT Area.

- On-site parking requirements for restaurants in the Westcott business district (and all neighborhood centers), a high proportion of whose customers arrive on foot, should be reduced or eliminated.

A two-pronged approach to the University Neighborhood should:

1) Make it easier to live in the University Neighborhood without a car (make it more walkable):

   - Much needed everyday services, such as a full-service grocery store, should be promoted within walking distance of student housing in the Westcott and University neighborhoods in order to make living here without a personal vehicle feasible. To provide these within walking distance (one-quarter mile) of most student residences, this would require the introduction of a commercial district at the western end of Euclid Avenue (see future land use map).
And 2) Make it harder to bring a car to school:

- Neighborhood-resident parking passes, with a limited number granted per address, should be required for on-street parking. These could limit parking only during business hours, enabling on-street parking for guests in the evening, but preventing commuters from parking in the neighborhood and students from leaving unpermitted cars on the street during the day.

- Redevelopment of the area surrounding Upstate Biotech Center and the Center of Excellence should fit into the Urban Mixed-Use character area. This area presents a unique opportunity for reinvention and connectivity between Downtown and the University Hill.

The image at left shows an Urban Mixed Use node introduced at the western end of Euclid Ave. Pedestrian Sheds are designated in red. This mixed-use node would provide the capacity for needed everyday services for surrounding residents, such as a grocery store, restaurants, and small-scale retail. Residential uses may be located on the upper floors in this area. Buildings would be designed to be aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly, and parking would not be visible from the street.

The addition of this node enables much of the University Neighborhood that would not otherwise be considered “walkable” to fall within a pedestrian shed and, most importantly, would make it easier to live in the University Neighborhood without a car.

The image above shows this area without the addition of the mixed-use node.
Chapter 4  Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations

- Revitalization of businesses along East Genesee Street and East Fayette Street should be redeveloped as Urban Mixed-Use commercial centers.

- Encourage higher quality development on private property and in the right-of-way on Erie Boulevard East as a gateway into the city.

- With the Eastside’s remarkably high bike ridership levels, expansion of bike-lanes should be a high priority in this part of the city. This will support a comprehensive approach to make living in Westcott and the University Neighborhood without a personal vehicle easier and more convenient.

**Valley**

**Current Conditions**
The Valley TNT Area is located at the southernmost tip of the City of Syracuse. It is bound on the north by Ballantyne Road and on the west, south, and east by the City boundaries. The area encompasses approximately 3.2 square miles. The area is home to approximately 8,400 residents. This represents 3.8 persons per acre or 2,422 persons per square mile. The Valley is divided in half by Onondaga Creek, which runs north-south. There is very little automobile or pedestrian connectivity between these two halves. The Valley is primarily a single-family residential community with one commercial corridor along Salina Street, between Ballantyne Road and Seneca Turnpike, and nodes of commercial activity at Seneca Turnpike’s major intersections. Several high-rise senior-housing facilities are located near the I-81 and I-481 interchange.

The median household income of the Valley is higher than the citywide average and the residential vacancy rate lower, indicating the general good health of the residential neighborhoods. The majority of housing in the area south of Seneca Turnpike is single-family and suburban in character. This area, however, appears to be underserved by commercial and retail businesses. The area north of Seneca Turnpike is more densely settled, including single- and two-family housing and some denser along Valley Drive and South Salina Street. These residences are located closer to commercial businesses along South Salina Street.

Most of the area is made up of single-family residences, interspersed with a great deal of public open-space. The residential areas of the Valley vary from rural to rather urban in feeling. The major corridors are lined with mixes of businesses and open space. Development in the Valley follows a north-south pattern, as Onondaga Creek and the City boundaries divide residential areas from east-west access to one another. The neighborhoods north of Seneca Turnpike are relatively stable and primarily consist of single-family homes. Midland Avenue and Valley Drive retain several early, originally rural, historic residences. Two-family homes are more commonly found adjacent to South Salina Street or nearer to Ballantyne Road. The neighborhoods south of Seneca Turnpike contain more owner-occupied, single-family residences. A few two-family homes exist within these neighborhoods. Older historic homes on large lots line South Salina Street and much of Valley Drive. Most of the residences in this area were built during the 1940s and 1950s and are suburban in style. There are some pockets of late-
19th and early-20th century residences nearer the east and west edges of the valley floor.

Commercial properties concentrated at Seneca Turnpike's intersections with Valley Drive, Midland Avenue, and South Salina Street are auto-oriented with large surface parking lots separating the store and sidewalk. Seneca Turnpike is a major commuter corridor, heavily traveled by workers entering the city from the east and west. These include popular ice cream shops, casual restaurants, pharmacies, and small shopping plazas. South Salina Street contains concentrations of commercial businesses near Ballantyne (around Valley Plaza) and north of its intersection with Seneca Turnpike. The corridor is heavily travelled and serves a customer base that extends beyond the surrounding community. The businesses between Ballantyne and Florence (including and across the street from Valley Plaza) have incorporated auto-oriented uses and on-site parking. The rest of the corridor is lined with medium-density housing and commercial buildings that meet the sidewalk and encourage pedestrian activity. Many of these commercial buildings south of Florence Avenue date from the streetcar era. Other commercial uses are scattered along major corridors, primarily found at intersections. Valley Drive, Lafayette Road, and South Salina Street also serve as heavily traveled north-south commuter corridors, leading to towns south of the city.

East Brighton Avenue, opposite I-81 and dramatically higher in elevation than the Valley, is a north-south corridor that includes small office parks, gas station and drugstore chains, and the Loretto senior community. The corridor provides direct access to Interstates 81 and 481. The commercial corridor is further removed from residential neighborhoods and, with the exception of a new national drug store chain, is mostly oriented toward medical services and offices.

The Valley possesses a great amount of open space. This is partly due to an extensive system of parks and forest reserves and partly due to the Valley’s natural geography. Natural areas include a number of streams, tributaries, and wetlands and extreme elevation changes along the Valley walls, which are densely forested. The valley walls provide steep barriers between the Valley and surrounding areas. Major open spaces include Meachem Field, Heath Park, the Valley Cemetery, Webster Pond, the Rand Tract, and land surrounding Onondaga Creek, which is expected to be made publicly accessible in Phase III of the Creekwalk project. A large open space west of the creek, just north of Dorwin Avenue is occupied by telecommunication towers. The land around the creek today contains many informal jogging and walking trails. The Creek originates south of the City and runs north through a number of neighborhoods and the Downtown until it reaches its outlet at Onondaga Lake.

Recommendations
The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Valley TNT Area.

- Ensure that the right-of-way is safely shared by vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit, particularly at major intersections and along South Salina Street. There is a need for improvements to the public right-of-way throughout the Valley. Some sidewalks are in good repair and many buffer pedestrians from traffic, but many other sidewalks are asphalt paved, if paved, and provide no buffer between pedestrians and busy traffic. Pedestrian lighting improvements will also increase
safety. In addition, the introduction of bicycle routes and narrowing of traffic lanes to slow the flow of traffic will improve bicyclist safety.

- Improved citywide signage regulations should address incompatible, oversized signage along the South Salina Street commercial corridor, Seneca Turnpike, Valley Drive, and Midland Avenue.

- Commercial development should not spread beyond the areas indicated in the Valley future land use map and should not encroach into the surrounding residential areas.

- Denser residential, commercial, and mixed-use development should be focused on South Salina Street to support efficient transit service.

- Future commercial development at the intersections of Seneca Turnpike and Valley Drive, Midland Ave., and S. Salina Street should be in a traditional urban design that is friendly to pedestrians. Development at Valley Drive and Salina Street may be slightly denser than that at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and Midland Ave.

- The northern segment of the Valley TNT Area east of I-81 (surrounding and north of the intersection of W. Seneca Turnpike and Brighton Ave.) should be zoned to accommodate high-density residential, office park, and supporting commercial businesses. Much of the area that is appropriate for this is currently zoned for low-density residential use.

- A broader mix of retail, services, and other commercial uses are needed to serve residents of this area near the intersection of W. Seneca Turnpike and Brighton Avenue. Pedestrian improvements are necessary to improve safety here, especially in light of large student and elderly populations.

- The land around Webster Pond and Onondaga Creek should remain protected as open space with public access and amenities. Public access to Onondaga Creek will be developed in Phase III of the Creekwalk project.

- The robust network of streams and wetlands in the Valley (in addition to steep slopes which contribute to difficulties with water runoff and flooding) must be better mapped and protected from detrimental development.

**SOUTHSIDE**

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**
The Southside TNT area includes approximately 3.8 square miles and is bound on the north by Downtown at Adams Street, Onondaga Avenue on the northwest and Bellevue Avenue on the north extending to the city boundary on the southwest. The area is bound on the south by Ballantyne Road, where it is bordered by the Valley TNT Area. Interstate 81 makes up the area’s eastern border. The TNT Area includes the Winkworth, Strathmore, Southwest, Elmwood, and Brighton neighborhoods. The Southside TNT
area has lost significant levels of population since the 1950s, nearly 10,000 just in the
last decade, but still maintains residential density rates higher than many other parts of
the city. According to the 2010 Census, 34,321 persons reside in the Southside TNT area.
This represents 14.2 persons per acre or 9,085 per square mile—the second highest
density rate in the city. Some of the highest concentrations of vacant housing and
vacant residential land in the city are found in the Southside TNT Area.

The majority of the Southside TNT area consists of single-family and two-family housing.
The area is also home to Onondaga, Kirk, and Elmwood parks. This is in addition to the
Woodland Reservoir, St. Agnes Cemetery, and the Bellevue Country Club. Onondaga
Creek runs the length of this area from north to south, buffered and publicly accessible
by Onondaga and Kirk Parks in several areas. Phase II of the Onondaga Creekwalk will
pass through this area from Armory Square to Kirk Park providing increased access to
the creek and restoring the health of this ecosystem.

Higher density housing is typically located around commercial corridors—especially
the South Salina Street corridor. The highest concentrations of apartment buildings are
found on the blocks surrounding Onondaga Avenue and South Salina Street.

The Elmwood, Strathmore, and Winkworth neighborhoods are made up of primarily
single-family homes and include no notable commercial centers or corridors.
Winkworth is mostly a post-war suburban style neighborhood and the rest fall into the
Streetcar Suburb character area type. Strathmore includes two National Register
Historic Districts, one south (the Strathmore-by-the-Park NR District) of and one north
(the Onondaga Highlands-Swaneola Heights NR District) of Upper Onondaga Park. A
number of large homes west of the park, higher in elevation and overlooking the park
and much of the city, are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Further east within the Southside TNT area, South Salina Street between Kennedy and
Borden is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The residential neighborhoods north of Stolp Avenue (with the exception of the
Onondaga Highlands-Swaneola Heights National Register Historic District), east of
Onondaga and Kirk Parks, in the area just south of and surrounded by both parks,
and clustered around the South Avenue business district, include a much higher
concentration of two- and three-family residences.

Despite the density of residents in this area, the Southside has one of the highest
concentrations of vacant housing and vacant residential land in the city. Vacancy rates
in this area range from .9% to 11.4% of parcels (not units) depending on census tract.

The major commercial corridors in this area are South Salina Street, South Avenue,
and Onondaga Avenue (at its northern end). Some industrial, warehousing, and
manufacturing uses are found at the northern end of South Salina Street in the Southside
Gateway area. These activities provide a critical employment base in this part of the city
and are generally well buffered from the major commercial corridor. Phase II of the
Onondaga Creekwalk will pass through this area from Armory Square to Kirk Park.

These business corridors were developed during the streetcar era and many traditional
storefront buildings line the street, although many are in poor condition and many have
been lost to surface parking lots. Many automobile-oriented buildings have developed along both corridors, including drive through businesses and gas stations. Despite these intrusions, the corridors retain the feeling of a neighborhood business district clustered in several nodes (see the future land use map), and are well positioned for commercial development intended to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents and in some cases may house specialty destination retail.

Several major east-west corridors, primarily lined with residential properties, provide access to Interstate 81, and experience a heavy traffic volume, but these are primarily residential in nature. Traffic along South Avenue and South Salina Street moves at a fast pace and is a cause of concern for pedestrians' and bicyclists' safety.

The Southeast Gateway Plan, adopted by Common Council in 2006, addresses the South Salina Street commercial corridor between Taylor and Castle Streets. This plan established a vision for future development in the area in line with the New Urbanist style, suggesting multistory, mixed-use buildings with parking hidden from South Salina Street and entrances on the primary façade. It emphasized traditional building designs, built up to the sidewalk and with large storefront windows and traditional materials.

12% of commercial parcels in the Southside TNT area are currently classified as vacant. This compares 5.9% citywide. This does not take into account the high percentage of lots along South Salina Street and South Avenue used for surface parking. Maintaining such high levels of density it appears that there must remain a market for commercial corridors here.

**Recommendations**
The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Southside TNT Area.

- Prohibit the conversion of empty lots into surface parking (as a primary use) in both residential and commercial areas.

- Encourage compatible infill development on South Salina Street, Onondaga Avenue, and South Avenue.

- Ensure that pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles can all safely use South Salina Street.
  - Minimize curb cuts on Salina.
  - Implement improvements to the public right-of-way that buffer pedestrians from traffic and parking areas.
  - Implement traffic calming strategies along Salina.
  - Better delineate bus pull-outs.
  - Require buildings in pedestrian-oriented areas to be built to the sidewalk with entrances on the primary façade.

- Encourage higher-density residential uses around commercial corridors to facilitate efficient transit provision and sustain commercial enterprises.

- Maintain zoning that allows for industrial uses south of Downtown, a major employment center in the area.
• Improve access to open space in the eastern portion of the Southside TNT Area. This may be accomplished by increasing green space here or through pedestrian safety improvements connecting the east and west sides of the area and minimizing South Salina Street’s role as a barrier.

• Define where community gardens and small-scale urban agriculture are appropriate as temporary or long-term uses in the wake of housing demolitions and high concentrations of vacant land.

• Ensure that new construction and major alterations in these historic neighborhoods conform to the area’s architectural context—particularly with regard to setbacks, form, and window patterns. Identify blocks where maintaining the urban densities should be encouraged and protected. (See future land use map and strategies in the previous chapter for both of these.)

WESTSIDE

CURRENT CONDITIONS
The Westside TNT area encompasses approximately three square miles and is bound on the north by Interstate 690, the east by Downtown, the south by Onondaga and Bellevue Avenues and the west by the city boundaries. This includes the Southwest, Near Westside, Skunk City, Tipp Hill, Park Ave., and Far Westside neighborhoods. Major commercial corridors include Geddes Street, West Street, West Genesee Street, Erie Boulevard West, and West Fayette Street. Other neighborhood commercial corridors are scattered throughout the Near Westside and Tipp Hill.

The Westside is home to 22,697 residents settled at 7,364 persons per square mile or 11.5 persons per acre, the third-most densely populated TNT area. The population has remained stable over the past decade overall, but a closer look shows significant shifts within the larger TNT area (see Maps appendix).

The northern half of the Near Westside has been the focus of targeted investment by Syracuse University, the City of Syracuse, and low-income housing nonprofits. Originally settled as a Victorian era neighborhood with narrow lots and setbacks and dense housing, within walking distance of industrial employers on the north, east, and west, a variety of infill has been introduced over the years. These corridors include a variety of industrial, commercial, and mixed-uses today. A large number of residential buildings have been demolished in this area, but there is a larger concentration of vacant land in the southern half of the Near Westside. Skunk City also faces challenges with vacant housing and land, but has a higher owner occupancy rate.

Skunk City and the Near Westside are separated from Tipp Hill by a dramatic change in elevation and Burnet Park. North of the Near Westside, separated by elevated rail tracks, is the Park Avenue neighborhood. This was developed in a similar manner as the Near Westside—lined by industrial uses on its southern edge with dense housing on narrow lots within walking distance. However, Genesee Street and Park Avenue, within close
proximity of Downtown, developed with more affluent housing. Genesee Street was quickly supplanted with early automobile dealerships and became known as Auto Row. Much of the housing on Park Avenue was subdivided into multi-unit residential. Auto Row has experienced increasing commercial vacancy rates in recent years, but as a major east-west commuter corridor into downtown, is prime for reinvention.

Tipp Hill and the Far Westside developed along the same railway, but are located up a steep hill from the rest of the Westside TNT area, separated by elevation, the elevated railway, and Burnet Park. From block to block these neighborhoods vary in lot size and setbacks with some blocks housing larger homes, many of which have been subdivided into multiple units. The Far Westside includes smaller, early 1900s, working-class housing. These neighborhoods are characterized by scattered commercial activity, particularly bars and restaurants.

Recommendations
The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Westside TNT Area.

- Reinvent the Erie Blvd. West corridor in the same fashion as West Fayette Street—as an Industrial Transition area of light-industry and mixed-use conversions. This stretch is located within walking distance of Downtown.

- Explore the possibility of introducing a bicycle and pedestrian trail and green-way connecting Tipp Hill to Downtown through the corridor between Erie Boulevard West and West Fayette Street through easement acquisition.

- Encourage new development on Geddes to be more pedestrian friendly. Make right-of-way improvements to increase safety when crossing this busy arterial.

- Allow the scattered commercial activity that is so characteristic of Tipp Hill to thrive without spot-zoning specific parcels.

Downtown

Current Conditions
Downtown Syracuse has undergone near constant change since its founding as the Village of Syracuse in the 1820s. What remains today is the employment and cultural center of the city and the region. The approximately ½ square mile area is bound on the east by Interstate 81, on the south by Adams Street, on the west by West Street and Onondaga Creek, and on the north by Interstate 690.

The residential character of Downtown has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years. Downtown’s population remained relatively stable over the past decade, losing only 18 people according to the 2010 census. Downtown residential units used to be located primarily in a number of high-rise, high-density housing projects. A number of these towers have been closed down or converted to other uses in recent years, but Downtown has also experienced a surge of conversions of historic office and
commercial buildings to urban loft-style apartments and condos. This has primarily taken place on blocks that typify the Urban Mixed-Use character area.

Downtown’s street network radiates from a series of public plazas and parks—Fayette Park, Clinton Square, Hanover Square, Columbus Circle, and Armory Square. These provide ample space for public gathering, festivals, and outdoor events. The downtown includes blocks that typify both the Urban Mixed-Use and Urban Core character areas, and desired future development according to these are laid out on the future land use map.

However, Downtown also possesses a remarkably high proportion of surface parking lots—nearly 20 percent of downtown parcels are used for parking. Connectivity to all surrounding neighborhoods is an extraordinary challenge, as Downtown is penned in on all sides by Interstate highways and major arterials. The Creekwalk and Connective Corridor are helping to minimize the barriers caused by West Street and the Creek.

**Recommendations**

The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Downtown TNT Area.

- Improve connectivity between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, focusing on removing and minimizing visual barriers and barriers to circulation.

- Encourage connections between successful nodes of activity within Downtown. Ensure that zoning along these connective routes is set at an appropriate scale and that new development includes pedestrian-intensive uses.

- Encourage redevelopment north of Armory Square at a mid-rise scale that can build off Creekwalk access and encourage ‘filling the gap’ between Armory, Clinton, and Franklin Squares.

- Protect Downtown’s most significant historic buildings, a significant asset when marketing Downtown’s character, through proactive designation as Local Protected Sites.

- Allow architectural creativity is allowed within basic form-based parameters. Encourage designs that create visual interest.

- Prohibit the creation of additional surface parking lots (as a primary use). When they cannot be avoided ample landscaping and/or architectural screening elements must be present.

- Ground floor of parking garages must be wrapped in retail or office uses.

- Adopt right-of-way standards and introduce additional street trees to improve the pedestrian experience.

- Revise FAR premiums allowed in the CBD to encourage appropriately designed parking facilities that are well screened from pedestrians, green roofs, and on-site green infrastructure.
Chapter 4  Neighborhood-Specific Recommendations

LAKEFRONT

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Lakefront TNT area includes only small residential sections, industrial uses, the Inner Harbor,1 and a large shopping mall. The 2.3 square mile area has gained population over the past decade with the build-out of Franklin Square, but today is home to only 579 persons. Measures of population density are skewed by vast non-residential areas.

Franklin Square, a former industrial center at the intersection of rail lines, Onondaga Creek and the Oswego Canal (today at the intersection of Interstates 81 and 690), has been revitalized as the epitome of the Industrial Transition character area, full of loft apartment and condo conversions, offices, and small-scale services. This area includes a mix of historic industrial buildings, large new construction buildings in similar forms, and smaller industrial structures such as The Foundry. All of this is developed around a recently constructed public plaza.

New Urbanist style development to the north, surrounding the Inner Harbor, which currently contains recreational and entertainment venues, is expected to capitalize upon this successful node. This area, formerly known as Oil City because it was dotted with large oil tanks, still contains a number of brownfields. Further north, across Hiawatha Boulevard, is Carousel Center, a regional shopping mall. This complex is separated from Onondaga Lake by rail lines. The Inner Harbor and Franklin Square will soon be connected to Onondaga Lake Park on the north and Downtown and Armory Square to the south by Phase I of the Onondaga Creekwalk.

The western edge of the Lakefront Area is bound on the south by Interstate 690 and includes a mix of industrial uses and automobile friendly commercial, along with a few residential blocks that were cut off from the rest of the Park Avenue and Sackett Tract neighborhoods by the construction of the interstate.

The Lakefront is subject to a zoning overlay that mandates New Urbanist style development, regulates color, materials, signage, and building design.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following specific recommendations correspond to the future land use map prepared for the Lakefront TNT Area.

• Encourage dense New Urbanist development around the Inner Harbor, building upon the patterns present in Franklin Square.

• Contain the spread of surface parking lots associated with the mall. Ensure that surface parking is as separated from the pedestrian environment as possible—located off major streets and well screened.

• Improve connectivity between the Lakefront and the Northside neighborhoods.

1 The harbor itself, today an exceptional waterfront redevelopment opportunity, is a remnant of the canal era, which connected canal and creek traffic to Onondaga Lake and served as an industrial barge canal harbor.
• Relax expectations for development in the western portion of the Lakefront. This built-out area will be harder to ‘reinvent’ and zoning regulations should be tailored to encourage high quality redevelopment but to work with existing buildings and patterns.

• Improve the aesthetics of Hiawatha Boulevard and Bear Streets as gateways into the city.

• Reevaluate the Lakefront Zoning Overlay to ensure that its requirements are consistent with current redevelopment goals for the Inner Harbor and surrounding area.
The Armory Square neighborhood in Downtown Syracuse is a good example of the Urban Mixed-Use character area. Streets are narrow and sidewalks wide, buildings built up to the sidewalk with active first-floor uses and large storefront windows with a variety of uses on the upper floors.

The Near Westside Initiative’s railroad bridge mural project is a good example of efforts to minimize the impact of barriers between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. A series of former industrial buildings along this railroad line and W. Fayette Street are being rehabilitated for a mix of uses illustrative of the Industrial Transition character area, including light-industry, residential, office, and artists work spaces.
APPENDIX A
SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

• Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
  Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.

• Create Walkable Neighborhoods
  Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth.

• Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
  Growth can create great places to live, work and play—if it responds to a community’s own sense of how and where it wants to grow.

• Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
  Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.

• Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
  For a community to be successful in implementing smart growth, it must be embraced by the private sector.

• Mix Land Uses
  Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.

• Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
  Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our communities quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.

• Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
  Providing people with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation is a key aim of smart growth.

• Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
  Smart growth directs development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and conserve open space and irreplaceable natural resources on the urban fringe.

• Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
  Smart growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development.

Tracts color-coded by rate of population change between 2000 and 2010, labeled with actual population gain/loss. Source: U.S. Census
Denser concentrations of vacant parcels are shaded darker beige. In areas that overlap with ped sheds, strategic infill construction, in conjunction with rehab of vacant structures should be encouraged. Creative uses for such large amounts of vacant land, such as community gardens, green infrastructure, and urban agriculture should be encouraged to minimize the blighting effect of vacant lots.
Vacant Land Density & 1/4 Mile Pedestrian Sheds
Density of Vacant Buildings

Darker orange indicates a concentration of vacant buildings.
Character Areas & 1/4 Mile Pedestrian Sheds

Pedestrian Sheds illustrate the 1/4 mile buffer, as walked along the street network, surrounding neighborhood, pedestrian-oriented commercial and mixed use centers. Each pedestrian shed radiates from a neighborhood or urban center (node or corridor). To reduce reliance on automobile travel, higher density housing should be encouraged in proximity to neighborhood services here. Businesses that provide neighborhood services within these neighborhood centers should be encouraged and supported.
Major Non-Local Streets

More flexibility should allow for low-impact businesses that provide services to nearby residents (such as small restaurants, markets, florists, professional services, etc.) to locate along major, non-local streets in low- and medium-density residential neighborhoods.
This land use plan is informed by the City’s Comprehensive Plan, TNT-area 5-year plans, and extensive public involvement that contributed to the 2009 CHA draft Land Use Plan for the City of Syracuse. This draft was developed by an interdepartmental panel of City staff during 2010-2011 to better reflect Smart Growth principles and set the stage for a transition to a form-based zoning ordinance. Additional public feedback was gathered from TNT meetings in summer and fall of 2010.

Public feedback specific to this draft will be gathered at September 2011 TNT meetings. Limited neighborhood-specific meetings and a city-wide public meeting will be held in October 2011. A steering committee of planning staff and professionals, elected officials, and members of the City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals will review the plan between September and November 2011. The draft will be available for public review on the City’s website (http://www.syracuse.ny.us/LandUsePlan.aspx) and comments will be accepted by Planning & Sustainability staff until November 15, 2011, at which point the plan will be revised and submitted to the Planning Commission for approval.
### APPENDIX D
### DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Approval</td>
<td>Approval granted by the Zoning Administrator, rather than a legislative or quasi-judicial body such as the Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation (of a façade)</td>
<td>Changes in the depth of the surface of a building face or façade such as attached columns, recessed windows or window bays, horizontal banding or decorative cornices. Articulation gives texture to the building surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)</td>
<td>The Board of Zoning Appeals hears applications requesting waivers from the standards allowed in a zoning district—use and area variances, sign waivers, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Pull-outs</td>
<td>Space for public transit busses to pull out of the traffic or parking lane, typically indented into the sidewalk and curb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Streets</td>
<td>Complete streets are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor</td>
<td>A major transportation corridor. This may be lined with businesses or medium-density housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curb cut</td>
<td>Where the curb is flush with the street allowing vehicles to cross the sidewalk. Curb cuts should be limited on pedestrian heavy corridors so that traffic crosses the pedestrian path at as few points as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Façade</td>
<td>Building surface or face. A single side elevation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenestration Pattern</td>
<td>Window and door pattern. The pattern of openings in a façade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form (Building Form)</td>
<td>The shape and mass of the building. Building typologies (outlined in the character areas table in Chapter 3) commonly come in one or a few forms. For example, a ranch house is typically one-story in height and emphasizes horizontal lines, with a low-sloping gabled roof or a flat roof. All these elements are part of the building form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form-Based Code (Form-Based Zoning)</td>
<td>A system of zoning that focuses on building form and design—how the buildings relate to the streetscape and to one another—in addition to use. Use regulations are typically more flexible in form-based codes than in traditional zoning codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnishings Zone</td>
<td>The furnishings zone buffers pedestrians from the roadway and is the place for elements such as street trees, poles, parking meters, and street furniture (Portland Pedestrian Design Guide, 1998). In residential areas this is often referred to as a planting strip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Use</td>
<td>A disallowed use that was begun after the zoning regulations were put in place without obtaining a use variance. This is distinguished from a nonconforming use (see definition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infill (Infill Development)</td>
<td>New construction that “fills in the gaps” in an already urbanized area. This type of development can utilize existing infrastructure and reinforce the existing economy. Smart Growth emphasizes the benefits of infill development over “greenfield” development which takes place in undeveloped areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Coverage</td>
<td>The percent of the lot that is covered with impermeable surface—buildings and driveways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Massing (Building Massing)</td>
<td>The volume and shape of a building. Massing (and scale/size) of new construction and rehabilitations should be similar to the massing. A commercial building is typically a rectangular mass with a flat roof. Homes can be simple rectangular mass, or more complex with numerous additions, and typically have gable or hipped roofs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Node (Commercial Node/Multi-Nodal)</td>
<td>A center of activity, economic or otherwise. These often occur at intersections of major corridors, but some just function as the center of their neighborhood—such as the Westcott business district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconformity</td>
<td>A nonconformity is an existing use or structure that is not consistent with zoning regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconforming Structure/Building</td>
<td>A nonconforming structure or building may be too large or located too close to the lot lines, violating new required setbacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconforming Use</td>
<td>A nonconforming use may be a commercial business in a residential zone that predates the zoning and is ‘grandfathered’in. This is distinguished from an illegal use (see definition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlay District</td>
<td>A set of zoning standards that applies to a specific geographic area in addition to the standards of the underlying zoning districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Shed (Ped Shed)</td>
<td>The pedestrian shed is the ¼ mile buffer around a neighborhood center or other attraction that illustrates a five-minute walking distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Commission (PC)</td>
<td>The Planning Commission hears cases that require a hearing according to the zoning ordinance, but follow specific guidelines—special use permits, resubdivisions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting Strip</td>
<td>Grass strip between the sidewalk and the curb. More common in residential areas. In commercial areas this is the furnishings zone (see definition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resubdivision</td>
<td>Redrawing of legal parcel boundaries. Subdivision separates a parcel into two or more separate parcels. Resubdivision combines parcels or simply redraws boundaries. This requires a survey by a licensed surveyor be filed with the County Office of Deeds and an official zoning action so that appropriate zoning regulations are applied to the parcel(s). Also referred to as Subdivision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way</td>
<td>The public right-of-way includes sidewalks, planting strips, and streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Relationship of the size of the building to the buildings around it and pedestrians. This is mostly related to the height of buildings, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Elements used to visually screen or separate detrimental elements of a site. Commonly used to obscure parking areas, utilities, dumpsters, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setback (Building Setback)</td>
<td>The distance of the building façade or front of the building from the sidewalk or the right-of-way line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Business (on-site or off-site, such as billboards) or way-finding signs visible from the right-of-way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Plan</td>
<td>An official survey that includes building footprints, parking and landscaping information. Required for zoning applications. Often, when less formally referred to, means the arrangement of buildings and other objects on the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siting</td>
<td>The arrangement of buildings and other elements on the site or parcel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Growth</td>
<td>Smart growth is an urban planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth in compact walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, complete streets, and mixed-use development with a range of housing choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Use Permit</td>
<td>“Special Uses” are allowed in a zoning district (don’t require a use variance), but require special conditions, such as additional parking or limited hours of operation, be met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spot-Zoning</td>
<td>Designation of a single parcel as a zone that varies from its neighbors, allowing for different regulations to be applied, when the property doesn’t substantially vary from its neighbors in a way that justifies special treatment. A better strategy is define special use permit procedures that apply to parcels that satisfy specific conditions or a use variance that allows a different use for the time-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision</td>
<td>Redrawing of legal parcel boundaries. Subdivision separates a parcel into two or more separate parcels. This requires a survey by a licensed surveyor be filed with the County Office of Deeds and an official zoning action so that appropriate zoning regulations are applied to the parcel(s). Also referred to as Resubdivision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Calming</td>
<td>Traffic calming is intended to slow or reduce motor-vehicle traffic in order to improve the living conditions for residents as well as to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming strategies include narrowing or reducing the number of traffic lanes, extending curbs to narrow the road at specific points, speed bumps, raised intersections, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use (Land Use)</td>
<td>Allowed uses (allowed by right and allowed through a special permit) are enumerated in the regulations for each zoning district. Basic uses of property include commercial, office, residential, and industrial, although zoning district regulations often list more specific activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance (Area Variance, Use Variance)</td>
<td>Use variances are exceptions to a zoning regulation outside of uses permitted or permitted through special permits; area variances are exceptions related to structural requirements such as setbacks or height limits. Variances require a hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical Articulation</td>
<td>Changes in the depth of the surface of a building face or façade such as attached columns, recessed windows or window bays, horizontal banding or decorative cornices. Articulation gives texture to the building surface. Vertical articulation can be used to divide a façade into pieces that appear to be separate buildings or can simply be ornamental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian right-of-ways, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
REFERENCES

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