

SYRACUSE LAND USE &
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2040

Syracuse

New York



A COMPONENT OF THE SYRACUSE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



SYRACUSE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2040

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Land Use & Development Plan 2040* is a component of Syracuse's *Comprehensive Plan 2040*—an update of *Comprehensive Plan 2025* adopted by Common Council in 2005 and which called for the development and adoption of a land use plan.

The *Land Use & Development Plan* sets the course for changes to the City's zoning and development regulations. Once adopted, the plan can guide discretionary decisions by boards and commissions and City staff. In order to achieve the vision contained in this plan, its adoption must be followed by an overhaul of the City's zoning ordinance.

The specific goals and policy recommendations in this plan are organized according to five overarching goals and under five subject areas:

Overall Land Use Pattern

- I **Preserve and enhance Syracuse's existing land use patterns.**

Character of Existing Neighborhoods

- II **Protect and enhance the character and "sense of place" of Syracuse's neighborhoods.**

Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations

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

Energy & the Environment

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

Regulatory Process

- V **Ensure that development regulations and review processes are efficient, predictable, and transparent.**

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE PLAN

The *Land Use & Development Plan 2040* is a component of Syracuse’s *Comprehensive Plan 2040*—an update of *Comprehensive Plan 2025* adopted by Common Council in 2005 and which called for the development and adoption of a land use plan. The *Land Use & Development 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.

Hanover Square, Downtown Syracuse, illustrates the characteristics found in the Urban Core character area. Buildings are multi-story and attached, row-style, with retail on the ground floor and residential and offices above.

Together, the *Land Use & Development Plan* and the *Future Land Use Map* included in the plan 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 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.

Roosevelt Avenue, Westcott Neighborhood.

This block is typical of the Traditional Residential character area, (see Chapter 1), which includes a mix of single- and two-family homes. The two-story porch is often a defining feature of these neighborhoods.

Just as zoning has evolved to address form and design in addition to use and building siting, this plan addresses the character of areas, 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 ordinance that ensure high-quality new development in all neighborhoods. Applying form-based standards across the entire city for the first time will ensure that all new development

1 Gen. City Law §20(25).

prioritizes the pedestrian and bicyclist use and safety, encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking, and mass transit), and contributes to the creation of enjoyable public spaces throughout the city.

Major priorities detailed in this plan include reducing reliance on private automobile travel through amended parking and site-plan standards, reinforcing 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 life in the surrounding area.

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 dense, urban qualities of our neighborhoods. In order to achieve the vision contained in this plan, its adoption must be followed by an overhaul of the City’s zoning ordinance, much of which dates from the late 1950s. In the interim, once adopted, the plan can guide discretionary decisions by boards and commissions and City staff.

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 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 on the sources described above and on Smart Growth Principles (the Smart Growth Principles are included as Appendix A). Each of the overarching principles is accompanied by a series of policies and recommended actions in Chapter 2. The categorization of the City’s land area into various character areas (each possessing a unique blend of uses, building forms, and scale or density) is informed by these principles, policies, and recommended actions.

Overall Land Use Pattern

- I **Preserve and enhance Syracuse’s existing land use patterns.**

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Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations

III Ensure high-quality, attractive design throughout the city.

Energy & the Environment

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

Regulatory Process

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

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The vision for future real estate development and redevelopment is largely illustrated by the allocation of character areas across the future land use map. These character areas take into account use, form, and scale and are fully described in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 includes the goals, recommended policies, and actions related to future land use and development in Syracuse and recommendations to achieve this vision through City policy and zoning ordinance changes.

An overview of how Syracuse's existing land use pattern developed and identified challenges and assets for moving forward is included as Appendix E.

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.





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.

This apartment building on James Street is typical of those found along former streetcar corridors and is a relatively dense example of the Urban Neighborhood character area—which would include mostly residential uses and forms, but may allow for some businesses.

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.

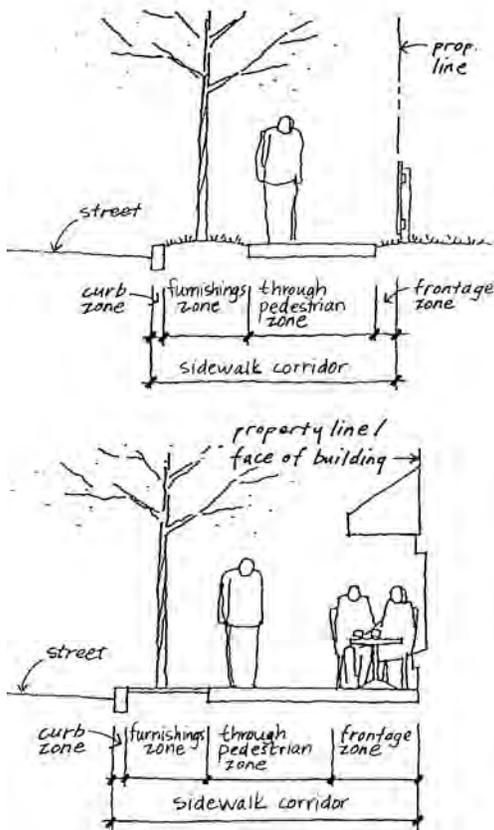
Several of Syracuse’s neighborhoods have borne the brunt of population loss and economic decline as regional population has shifted dramatically toward the suburbs since the 1960s. Despite this, Syracuse is uniquely positioned within the Central New York region in light of increased national and statewide 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, when better utilized, are suited to provide centers of activity within walking distance of homes and support efficient mass transit.

Recess Coffee Shop in the Westcott neighborhood is an example of an appropriate reuse of an existing building—combining a residential form and a commercial use.

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.



(Portland Pedestrian Design Guide, 1998.)

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 in the Westcott neighborhood, 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 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.

The character area descriptions make reference to a number of building forms. The following descriptions are not intended to be comprehensive architectural descriptions, but highlight some of the key elements of each building form to help the reader visualize each character area:

- **Suburban detached residence or suburban residence**

These buildings typically have a horizontal emphasis in their design. It is common for an attached garage to figure prominently on the primary elevation. Asymmetrically arranged facades are not unusual, although Cape Code and Colonial Revival houses are typically symmetrical. They are usually built on large lots. Windows may be vertically or horizontally oriented depending on the style of the home.
- **Pre-War or Pre-World War II style detached residence**

Pre-war detached homes were built in a wide variety of architectural styles in various historical periods both predating and during the streetcar era. Common features are that a garage door is almost never located on the primary façade and windows are typically vertically oriented, often with divided panes. The roof forms of these houses are typically more steeply sloped than their more suburban-style counterparts. Except in some picturesque neighborhoods, the windows and ornament are typically symmetrically arranged.

 - **Two-Family**

Two-family homes, designed as such, are very common throughout Syracuse. Typically these are a one-over-one, “flat-style” arrangement with stacked fireplaces and two-story front porches. These were common from the Victorian era onward and can be found in interpretations of almost every style.
 - **Multi-family**

Some were designed as more than two-units, although it seems common that these were large single and two-family residences later divided into smaller units.

- **Row-house**

Few historic row-houses remain in Syracuse, but they are typically located in denser, older neighborhoods that were clustered close around commercial and industrial employment centers prior to the spread of the streetcar network. Due to the nature of their arrangement, the buildings appear to have a vertical orientation; some may feature a turret or other vertical ornament, as well. Windows are vertically oriented. Façades are usually symmetrically arranged. Brick and wood-frame versions can be found.
- **Apartment Block**

Typically found directly on the historic streetcar line, these are large, often brick-clad, block-like building forms, usually with flat roofs. The windows are usually vertically oriented with divided panes. The front entrance may be recessed into a courtyard or capped with canopy or awning. The façade and window spacing is symmetrically

arranged. The front-yard setback varies, but these properties typically feature some landscaping.

- **Commercial Block**

Commercial blocks can be detached buildings or attached row-style buildings, single- or multi-story. If multi-story, upper floor windows are usually vertically oriented and symmetrically arranged. Ground floors feature large, transparent storefront windows, engaging passing pedestrians. Roofs are typically flat and the building has an overall block-like massing. These typically have no set-back from the sidewalk and never have parking in front of the storefront.

- **Commercial Storefront**

Commercial storefronts include pedestrian access and transparent, ground-floor storefront windows and doors covering at least 50% of the ground-floor façade. They are usually symmetrically arranged.

- **Industrial (Historic Industrial or Industrial Legacy building forms)**

Also typically block-like in massing. These may feature vertically oriented windows or bands of metal-framed windows. Differentiating them from the commercial buildings, these typically do not feature large transparent storefronts, but ground-floor window patterns mimic those of upper floors (except where show-rooms were present on the ground floor). The windows are symmetrically arranged, except where large entrances and/or loading bays may be found. The setbacks of these buildings vary. In some areas they may be attached to other buildings, but detached is more common. Parking may be integrated into former equipment yards and open spaces, as long as it is screened from pedestrian pathways.

CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Open Space (Publicly Owned)

Designated open space includes publicly owned parks and recreational spaces, wetlands, 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 are not designated on the map in the same way that large-scale open spaces are. Public plazas such as Clinton and Hanover Squares, a character-defining feature of downtown Syracuse, are also included in the Open Space category on the future land use map.



Mayor Stephanie Miner at "City Hall Parks Here" in Upper Onondaga Park, Summer 2010.

Environmental Protection Overlay (Privately Owned)

These areas are typically privately owned, but within an environmentally sensitive area that warrants restricting development or encouraging sustainable development practices. Guidelines for private property owners, developed in conjunction with the Sustainability Component of the Comprehensive Plan, provide this voluntary guidance. Portions of property within wetlands, within proximity of open waterways, and/or on steep slopes warrant special review.

Development proposals here may need to work around these areas or offer special mitigation for their environmental impact. This will function as an overlay atop other character areas. These areas need further study to be mapped.

Suburban Residential (Single-Family)



Typically developed after World War II, these neighborhoods date from the mid-20th century boom in suburban residential construction. Often in neighborhoods designed with winding roads, these homes are usually on relatively large lots, in comparison to other residences in the city. Most feature an attached garage that figures prominently on the primary façade.

The lots sizes and setbacks are typically larger in these neighborhoods and garages usually figure prominently on the primary façade of the building.

These neighborhoods include no commercial uses aside from the occasional home office. Lot size and the presence of the garage on the façade are the primary distinctions between this and the Streetcar Residential character area.

Streetcar Residential (Single-Family)

Most of these neighborhoods developed as middle- and upper-middle class suburban enclaves during and immediately after the expansion of streetcars throughout Syracuse, allowing homes to be built further from Downtown and separated from commercial nodes. Architectural styles typically date from the 1900s to the late 1930s, including a variety of eclectic revivals, traditional Colonial-Revival, and Craftsman 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 later additions or the door is located facing the rear of the property.



This block of Shotwell Park Drive in Eastwood is an example of a single-family, single-use "streetcar suburb" neighborhood (the inspiration for the Streetcar Residential character area's name), designed with slightly larger lots and setbacks than were found elsewhere in the city at that time.

Some of these neighborhoods feature winding street patterns, but they are just as often laid out on a grid. Setbacks are typically slightly less deep 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 are typically laid out in a grid pattern.

Unlike the Traditional Residential neighborhoods these areas developed just after the advent of zoning and were designed as some of the first entirely residential, single-use enclaves. These neighborhoods include no commercial uses aside from the occasional home office.

Neighborhoods that include a mix of single- and two-family housing are very common in Syracuse. The Traditional Residential character area is more dense than Streetcar Residential and includes two-family detached residences.

Traditional Residential (Single- and Two-Family)

These neighborhoods developed earlier in the streetcar era and include a mix of single- and two-family detached residences. The majority of housing in these areas was developed between the late-1800s and the 1920s. These typically have smaller setbacks, narrower lots, and more lot coverage than the “suburban” models that followed. Like the Streetcar Residential areas, garages are typically not attached and do not figure prominently on the primary elevation of the house. Building massing and windows are typically vertically oriented.



The two-story porch, so common throughout Syracuse, is a significant element throughout these neighborhoods. The most common are typically from the early 1900s and are built in a wide variety of styles including Colonial and Classical Revivals. Victorian-era neighborhoods, developed a few decades earlier, have different residential forms, although many of these include one-over-one, “flat-style” duplexes, as well. Many homes from this era 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.

Urban Neighborhood

The Urban Neighborhood character area is comprised predominately of residential neighborhoods, typically adjacent to former industrial and commercial employment centers. Residential uses were densely clustered in these areas prior to widespread streetcar and automobile access. Small-scale retail was frequently scattered throughout the neighborhood (primarily at intersections). Other areas classified as Urban Neighborhood in this plan were developed as large single-family residences, but have been subdivided into multi-unit residential and offices. These areas also include row-houses, 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 should not exceed 1,500 sq. ft. These areas are typically found within walking distance of Neighborhood Center, Urban Core, Adapted Mansion Corridor, and Industrial Legacy character areas.

The Urban Neighborhood character area can vary from multi-unit detached buildings to low-rise traditional apartment buildings. Unlike the Traditional Neighborhood character areas, some small-scale commercial activity is mixed into these neighborhoods, like what’s found in Tipperary Hill or Hawley-Green.



While the list of uses found here may be comparable to those in a Neighborhood Center or Urban Core, the neighborhood is predominately residential, building forms are residential in origin (although some converted residences may include storefronts), and siting includes front-yard style setbacks and dense tree-canopy.

Adapted Mansion Corridor

This character area is found along major transportation corridors and retains a legacy of large, detached mansion-like residences. Examples include West Onondaga Street, parts of East Genesee Street, and parts of West Genesee Street. Building forms are residential in origin although uses may include residential, office, retail, small restaurants, and services although commercial uses should not exceed 3,000 sq. ft. Some apartment block or row-house infill may be present. The streets retain a residential feel with landscaped front-yard setbacks. Parking should not be located in the setback. Entrances should be oriented to the street to facilitate pedestrian access.



These corridors were developed as high-end residential enclaves, with apartment blocks introduced in the early 1900s. Today the large buildings may be divided into apartments, used for office, services, or low-impact retail. Despite the mix of uses, they retain a residential character with deep setbacks, lush landscaping, and ample tree canopy.

High-Density Residential/Office



This area, outside of Downtown, includes a similar mix of activities as Adapted Mansion, but is more likely to include high-rise residential towers, such as those that line 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

High-rise apartment towers and low-rise office complexes and multi-building apartment complexes are typical of this character area.

to residents and office clientele are common. Despite the broad mix of uses these streets feel residential in character with deep landscaped setbacks and dense tree-cover. Parking should not be located in the setback. Entrances should be oriented to the street to facilitate pedestrian access.

Neighborhood Center

These neighborhood-scale commercial centers 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 protected and



Neighborhood Centers are vibrant, mixed-use and/or commercial centers which attract pedestrian traffic from surrounding neighborhoods.

expanded upon. Most buildings here are one-to-two stories tall, but some with residential or office uses above can be up to four stories tall.

Uses here include retail, services, restaurants, office, and residential. Active uses should be located on the ground floor whenever possible. Large new buildings inserted into the streetscape should break up their sidewalk-facing façade with vertical articulation and windows to fit in with the smaller surrounding buildings and avoid visual monotony. Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic and, in some locations, café seating.

Occasionally detached housing is mixed into these centers, especially when they take the form of a corridor rather than a node, such as South Ave. and Butternut Circle. Residential building forms like this are not unusual in this character area, and they are often converted to commercial use with the addition of a storefront—a mix and match of forms and uses should be allowed here. (See the table following and the photos of the Northside Gallery and Recess coffee shop elsewhere in this plan, illustrations of converted residential buildings.)

Urban Core

This area is the most ‘urban’ feeling, built-up, mixed-use center of activity. 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.



Armory Square is typical of the Urban Mixed-Use character area with lots of pedestrian activity, large storefront windows, and a mix of uses.

Parking is located behind buildings and well-screened when this is not possible. There are very few one-story or detached buildings in these areas. Building heights do not typically exceed six stories. 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.

Suburban Commercial

These major transportation corridors are the typical location of ‘big-box’ commercial activities. This is the only character area that does not discourage or prohibit parking in the setback. 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



Large and small strip-malls can still take into account landscaping and design standards and plan for multiple modes of transportation

from the surrounding area. These areas may often include light-industrial uses or office complexes, but these should also take into account the same basic screening, landscaping, and design standards. access.

Industrial Legacy

Industrial Legacy area are previous sites of heavy industry located near major road and rail (and former canal) corridors. With the evolution of industrial technologies, these 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. A wide range of building forms are typically found throughout the area—detached and row-style residential and commercial buildings may be interspersed among industrial activities. This is 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.



The area around Wolf and Salina Streets includes a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential buildings representative of the Industrial Transition character area.

New construction should mimic the surrounding residential forms or the larger industrial forms (usually close to the sidewalk) depending on use. 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 and around parking areas. Sidewalks here will often be narrower than in the Urban Core or Neighborhood Centers, but pedestrian spaces may be created on private parcels with ample open space.

Heavy Industrial/Utilities

Heavy industrial areas typically located near major rail and highway transportation corridors. They serve as an economic anchor of the community. Restrictions on building style are less relevant here, but screening and protection of the nearby pedestrian environment should still be taken into consideration.

Downtown Overlay

Downtown includes the tallest Downtown office and mixed-use buildings. This overlay supplements the Urban Core character area description. Buildings here



are typically over six-stories in height. Ground floor of parking garages should be wrapped in pedestrian-traffic-generating commercial uses. Surface parking lots should be strongly discouraged here and, when present, heavily screened from pedestrian traffic.

Ground-floor retail, restaurant or some use that engages pedestrians should be encouraged

Tall commercial towers, often setback from the street, such as the AXA towers, are characteristic of the

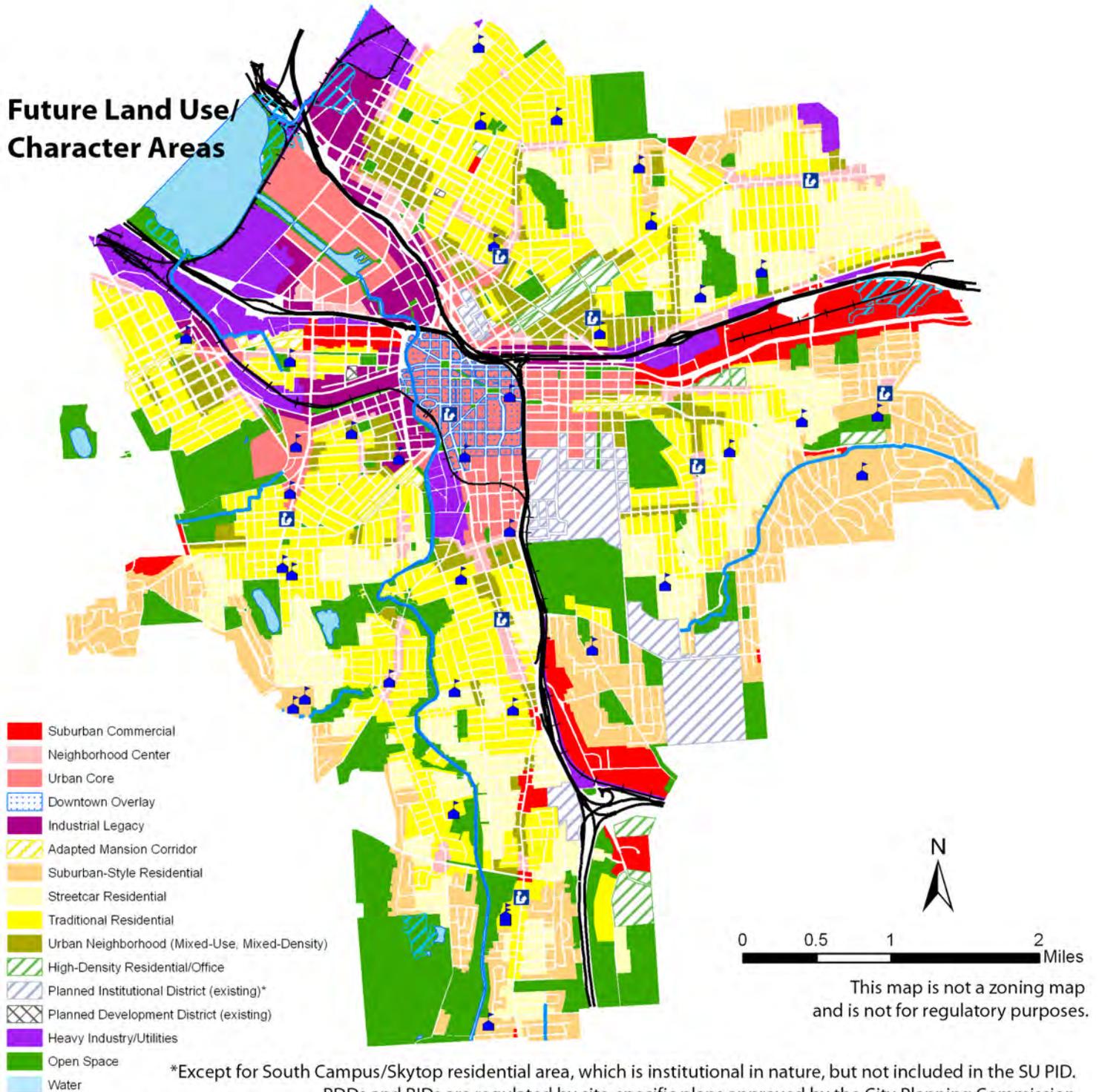
Urban Core character area.

where possible, although this typically serves the daytime office clientele in much of the Downtown. As the supply of market-rate residential continues to expand in Downtown Syracuse, the off-hours clientele for these businesses will expand, activating the streetscape of additional parts of Downtown during evening hours. Even where offices are located on the ground floor, this level should include large windows to create visual interest and opportunity for future conversion to retail.

Institutional

The areas mapped as Institutional on the future land use map are regulated by Planned Institutional Development Districts approved by the City Planning Commission and the Syracuse Common Council (with the exception of the South Campus SU housing development). Institutional districts include a broad variety of uses and building types depending on their needs, but generally have a planned campus feel. Attention should be paid to transitions at their edges to minimize abrupt shifts from the surrounding neighborhood.

Future Land Use/ Character Areas



*Except for South Campus/Skytop residential area, which is institutional in nature, but not included in the SU PID.
 PDDs and PIDs are regulated by site-specific plans approved by the City Planning Commission.
 Institutional uses are common elsewhere throughout the city, but are not subject to Planned Institutional District plans except in PIDs.

Character Area	Use:	Form:	
	Typical Uses	Typical Building Forms	Site Arrangement
Open Space	Parks, recreation fields, cemeteries, woods, etc. Public Plazas	n/a	n/a
Suburban-style Residential	Residential Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Community Gardens and Green Space	Detached single-family residences Schools, Libraries, & Churches Post-war style homes (see description). Garages on primary façades are common. Some suburban-style apartment buildings at neighborhood edges	No parking in the set-back Parking must be screened when large parking lots are present (schools, churches, etc.)
Streetcar Residential	Residential Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Community Gardens and Green Space	Detached single-family residences Schools, Libraries, & Churches 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.	No parking in the set-back Parking must be screened when large parking lots are present (schools, churches, etc.) Detached garages often found at the rear of the site
Traditional Residential	Residential Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Community Gardens; Urban Ag. in some instances	Detached one- and two-family residences Schools, Libraries, & Churches Occasional small, traditional storefront commercial buildings (usually at intersections on major streets with minimal setback from the sidewalk and no taller than surrounding houses).	No parking in the set-back Detached garages often found at the rear of the site
Urban Neighborhood	Residential; Office Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers. Low-impact services and small-scale retail, restaurants (no more than 1,500 sq. ft.) Community Gardens and Green Space	Detached one- and two-family residences) Schools, Libraries, & Churches Detached multi-family residences Row-houses “Streetcar” style apartment buildings Some with store-front conversions	No parking in the set-back Parking should be kept to the rear of the lot Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present
Adapted Mansion Corridor	Residential; Office Low-impact services and small-scale retail, restaurants (no more than 1,500 sq. ft.) Community Gardens and Green Space	Medium-to-large residential buildings in forms that mimic historic single-family homes. Early 20th century apartment buildings Office buildings	Deep setbacks and landscaped front yards replicate historic residential pattern. Large parking areas screened No parking in the set-back
High-Density Residential/Office	Residential; Office Services and small-scale retail, restaurants Community Gardens and Green Space	High-rise towers (office or residential) Low-rise office or residential complexes	No parking in the set-back Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present

Scale:		Right-of-Way:						
Height	Setbacks	Street Pattern	Street Parking	Trees	Sidewalks	Furnishings Zone	Curbs	
n/a	n/a	Varies	None required.	Recommended	Varies	Varies	Varies	
1-2 stories	Typically no less than 24' (some neighborhoods have much larger setbacks)	Typically Curved	Alternate	Required	5'	Vegetation	Varies	
1-2 stories	Typically 16' - 24' (some neighborhoods have much larger setbacks) Setbacks and lots size should generally be consistent along the block	Curved or Grid	Alternate	Required	5'	Vegetation	Yes	
1-2 stories	Typically 12' to 24' Setbacks and lots size should generally be consistent along the block	Grid	Alternate	Required	5'	Vegetation	Yes	
2-6 stories	Typically 12' to 24' Setbacks and lots size should generally be consistent along the block	Grid	Alternate	Required	5'	Hardscape or Vegetation	Yes	
2-6 stories	25' to 50' In line with historic residential setbacks	These are generally high-traffic corridors with wide rights-of-way	Varies	Required	5'	Vegetation	Yes	
Varies	Typically with a deep setback from the street	Varies	None required.	Required	5'	Hardscape or Vegetation	Yes	

Character Area	Use:	Form:	
	Typical Uses	Typical Building Forms	Site Arrangement
Neighborhood Center <i>(Mixed-uses and forms)</i>	Single- or mixed-uses; mostly commercial Small-scale Retail and Services; Restaurants Residential; Office Community uses such as schools, libraries, churches, and community centers.	Traditional storefront commercial buildings; some detached, some row-style Detached one- to multi-unit residences "Streetcar" style apartment buildings (minimal setbacks, 2-4 stories, may incorporate a courtyard)	No parking in the set- back Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present
Industrial Legacy	All of the below, plus light- industry and live-work spaces	Late 19th, early 20th century industrial buildings New construction may follow styles from Urban Core or Neighborhood Center categories or mimic industrial building styles. Row-houses and other residential forms mixed throughout	Varies Parking must be screened and landscaped when large parking lots are present
Urban Core	Commercial and mixed-use with a preference for pedestrian-heavy uses on the ground floor Residential Office	Typically attached row-buildings with traditional storefronts. Minimal setback, typically taller than 6 stories, mixed-use, with pedestrian oriented uses on the ground floor. Transparency on ground floor.	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
Suburban-Style Commercial	Commercial Office Light-industrial Auto-oriented uses such as car dealers, gas stations, heavy mechanics, etc.	"Strip" style commercial buildings (usually have parking in front) Auto-oriented businesses Office Complexes Light-Industrial buildings	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
Heavy Industrial/ Utilities	Industrial Sites Transportation and other utilities Auto-oriented uses such as car dealers, gas stations, heavy mechanics, etc.	A variety of utilitarian buildings. Screening required when adjacent to another use.	Varies

*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.

Planned Institutional Districts are not included in the table because each campus plan is unique.

Scale:		Right-of-Way:						
Height	Setbacks	Street Pattern	Street Parking	Trees	Sidewalks	Furnishings Zone	Curbs	
1-3 stories	Typically no more than 5' for commercial rows 12' - 24' for residential buildings	Grid Short blocks	2-Hr / Alternate	Required	10' minimum	Hardscape	Yes	
2-6 stories The scale varies between Neighborhood Center and Urban Core	Typically 0' to 5' for industrial building forms. May be deeper for residential building forms	Grid Block length varies	2-Hr / Alternate	Varies	5'-10'	Hardscape	Varies	
Typically 4-6+stories, although smaller buildings are often mixed in	Typically 0' to 5'	Grid Short blocks	2-Hr	Required	10' minimum	Hardscape	Yes	
Typically 1-2 stories, although some uses may build higher	Varies	Long blocks	None required.	Varies	5'	Hardscape or Vegetation	Yes	
Varies	Varies	Varies	None required.	Not recommended	Varies	Hardscape	Varies	



GOALS & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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 related objectives and actions outlined in this chapter and the descriptions of character areas in the next chapter illustrate this vision for the City of Syracuse.

The vision for future development described in this plan will be achieved through investments by private property owners, nonprofit organizations, the City, and other government organizations. The majority of these actions occur in the private sector, and their conformance to the Plan is ensured through municipal codes and regulations, 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 items under municipal control—City policies, City Departments' capital investment plans, and economic incentives for development that furthers the vision described in this plan.

The development priorities outlined in this plan address the use, form, and scale of the built and/or designed environment and are a significant shift from the City's current zoning practices, which primarily address use and the siting of buildings. Current regulations for building siting are frequently at odds with walkable, urban development objectives. The shift in these priorities, embodied in this plan, reflects a national trend in zoning practice toward addressing the form and design of buildings, as well as the impact of land use on the surrounding properties and neighborhood. 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, discussed in detail in the next chapter. This significant shift toward a more holistic approach to regulating the built environment necessitates a comprehensive rewrite of the zoning ordinance, as opposed to neighborhood-specific revisions as has been the City's approach in the past.

James Street Business District; Eastwood

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:

- *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 D for an outline of the public participation that informed this plan.
- *Analysis of current conditions – including parcel-level data and Census 2010*
- *Other communities' recent zoning code assessments*

Multi-family housing adjacent to the Westcott Neighborhood Business District

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 enhance Syracuse’s existing land use patterns.**

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 design throughout the city.**

Energy & the Environment

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

Regulatory Process

- V **Ensure that development regulations and review processes are efficient, predictable, and transparent.**

UNDERLYING THEMES

While each objective and action 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 relate to 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, stagnant regional population growth, and the impending impacts of global climate change and increased energy costs.

In addition, issues related to **circulation** and **open space**, while not directly addressed by the zoning ordinance, 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, with emphasis on 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

I Preserve and enhance Syracuse's existing land use patterns.

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

Syracuse's land use pattern and circulation network are the densest in the Onondaga County, due to its historical function as the core of the regional economy, home to the region's primary employers, and cultural and government institutions. This land use and transportation pattern expands outward from downtown into the various neighborhoods via a radial network of major transportation corridors. These are lined by dense development including a mix of residential and commercial activities. (Some of these corridors developed as industrial corridors and some still contain these uses). The downtown area and these high-density corridors, with their high numbers of visitors each day, support a broad variety of uses. The 'web' between the corridors that radiate outward from downtown is filled in with less dense urban fabric. In the inner-ring neighborhoods around downtown, this area is still relatively dense, and although it is primarily residential in nature, supports some scattered mixed uses that fit into the neighborhood's pattern activities and provide neighborhood-scale services and retail.¹ Other parts of Syracuse's existing land use pattern, further from downtown, are based on early streetcar development, in which single-use, residential neighborhoods were grouped around defined neighborhood-scale commercial areas²—commercial nodes and corridors. These two types of areas both provide for goods and services within walking distance of most residences in the city.

This 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** walkability³ (both an environmental and a public health benefit),

¹ Neighborhoods such as Hawley-Green, parts of Tipp Hill (not adjacent to downtown, but dense because it developed as an independent village), and the Near Westside all fit this description.

² 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.

³ 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).

distinct neighborhood identity, diverse housing options and density, and efficient transit service.

Later-developed neighborhoods, including some early 20th century residential neighborhoods and all post-World War II neighborhoods were developed after most or all of their relatively affluent residents had access to private automobiles. They aren't necessarily adjacent to a neighborhood center and they usually include single-family homes on larger lots than are found elsewhere in the City. These areas weren't planned for ease of pedestrian use, and it is more difficult to provide them with mass-transit service today. Even so, these areas are far more dense than most developed areas (except villages) elsewhere in Onondaga County and Central New York and their residents commute shorter distances to work than many people living outside of the city.

I.1 Reinforce Downtown as the mixed-use center of the land use and transportation network.

Downtown, already the densest neighborhood in the city and supporting a broad mix of uses, should be further enhanced as the core of the City and the region, both in terms of land use and transportation.

I.1.1 Increase density, through infill of 'empty' spaces, and mix-of-uses Downtown.

Increased density and mix of uses should be encouraged to fill in gaps in the streetscape and to increase vibrancy and safety in areas of Downtown that aren't quite yet "24-hour neighborhoods."⁴

I.1.2 Ensure that transportation options Downtown are compatible with its function as the regional urban core. Encourage businesses to share parking. Provide incentives for businesses to encourage their employees to use alternative means of transportation to and from work, including ride-sharing, mass-transit, bicycling, etc.

Encouraging visitors and residents to utilize mass-transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, and improved treatment of parking facilities—so they do not detract from the pedestrian environment—are high priorities in Downtown, as these all support Downtown's success as a dense urban place by reducing the negative impacts that private vehicles and parking facilities have on that environment.

I.1.3 Smooth the transitions between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Remove or minimize barriers between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

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.

⁴ In the Urban Core character areas (see Future Land Use map) we should encourage a mix of uses that are active at different times of day so that there are people active in a neighborhood throughout the day. This will increase pedestrian safety as there are more people around to provide "eyes on the street."

Barriers such as the West Street arterial, elevated Interstate highways, and elevated rail tracks separate the surrounding neighborhoods from downtown, discouraging people from walking in and out of downtown. Removing these visual barriers would allow adjacent neighborhoods to benefit from their proximity to downtown and entice private property owners to revitalize these areas, which provide affordable residential options within walking distance of the downtown core.

I.1.4 Ensure that zoning of major corridors encourages seamless, pedestrian friendly spines in and out of Downtown, connecting to surrounding neighborhoods.

To lay the groundwork for improved connectivity between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, mixed-use, urban development should be encouraged along the major corridors leading outward from Downtown—East Genesee Street, Adams and Harrison Streets, South Salina Street, West Fayette Street, James Street, etc.

I.2 Promote land use patterns that support connectivity, efficient transportation service, and reduced reliance on automobile travel.

I.2.1 Enable and encourage higher-density development and mixed-uses along major transportation corridors.

Focusing growth and denser development along these corridors will encourage more residential units to locate within walking distance of mass-transit, enabling more efficient provision of transit service. Commercial nodes and districts are already generally located along these corridors, resulting in more people to access them via transit, more potential customers to pass them and stop to patronize them. A mix of activities and storefronts within view has been shown to encourage pedestrians to walk further.

I.2.2 Complete a transportation systems analysis and alternatives analysis for the metro area within five years. Once major transportation corridors, to be served by bus rapid transit or some other regional public transportation mode, and fixed stations are identified apply a “TOD⁵ Overlay” to the surrounding one-quarter mile radius. This overlay should designate the area immediately surrounding these stations as appropriate for pedestrian-friendly, high-density, mixed-use development.

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 Consider access and safety for all modes of transportation—bus, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle—when reviewing site-plans for development approval.

This practice is consistent with the Complete Streets legislation being proposed for all right-of-way planning in the City of Syracuse, and would extend that philosophy of equitable access for various modes of transportation to the site-plan. This is particularly applicable to large sites where pedestrian access from the street to the storefront has historically been ignored as it was assumed most customers arrived by private vehicle.

⁵ TOD: Transit-oriented development

I.2.4 Identify opportunities for and encourage easements and other alternative means of access to reduce the number of curb-cuts on major transportation corridors. Enable rear-lot access and other alternative means of access in areas and in ways that DO NOT have a detrimental impact on or encroach upon stable residential neighborhoods.

Webster Avenue between Colvin Street and Brighton Avenue is a good example of this, providing rear access to parcels facing Salina Street. A narrow block with exceptionally high vacancy rates, this street provides access to the rear of properties facing the Salina Street business corridor. In other areas, easements between neighboring properties may be encouraged so that otherwise 'land locked' properties can be accessed from a side-street curb-cut.

Reducing the number of curb-cuts on major corridors will reduce opportunities for pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, making the corridor safer for pedestrian traffic, and reduce the chances for vehicle-on-vehicle collisions as vehicles enter the flow of traffic.

I.2.5 Encourage new development to build upon and expand stable areas and to build out from major corridors and neighborhood centers.

Building upon these assets will help to bolster them, to ensure the success of the new development, and to maintain urban densities where possible.

I.3 Support the economic viability of neighborhood centers, nodes and corridors that act as centers of economic and social activity, throughout the city.

I.3.1 Enable and encourage higher-density housing 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 Enable and encourage a mix of uses along transportation corridors and within neighborhood centers. 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 are shown to induce more pedestrian activity than density alone.

I.3.3 Encourage the use of shared parking lots for businesses located in neighborhood commercial areas. These lots should be well screened from the street, located on side-streets if possible, so as not to detract from the pedestrian environment, and well lit to ensure pedestrian safety. Increased sign area to direct drivers' attention to these parking areas should be allowed.

Shared parking managed via private agreements should be allowed to substitute for required on-site parking at a (to be determined) ratio of less than 1:1, if it can be shown that the lot will be used at different times of day by different users.

Shared parking areas will reduce the total area dedicated to parking within business districts, allowing more area to be dedicated to commercial uses that generate more tax revenue, are of more interest to pedestrians, and contribute more to the character and vibrancy of business districts. Furthermore, it will reduce the amount of parking area that often contributes to storm-water runoff.

I.3.4 Establish “alternative transportation equivalents”—a number of parking spaces that may be substituted for a number of bicycle parking spaces, location on a bus line with a certain frequency of service, or participation in a shared parking lot arrangement, etc.—that may be substituted for required on-site parking spaces.

This will enable other modes of transportation, previously ignored in on-site parking requirements, to be given equal consideration.

I.3.5 Offer the option of a parking “impact fee” which may fund these shared lots, as an alternative to on-site parking.

This will function as another “alternative equivalent” in lieu of on-site parking.

I.3.6 Reduce the amount of parking required in local business districts where a considerable portion of customers walk or bike. With parking-alternatives discussed above, commercial and residential uses in these business districts may be able to meet the requirements while having no on-site parking due to site constraints. Of particular importance – reduce the parking requirements for restaurants requiring a special permit; the current requirements are overly onerous and often not physically possible in existing business districts.

This will accommodate the transportation needs of customers and their impact on the surrounding neighborhood, while addressing the site-constraints of older commercial and mixed-use buildings. Syracuse’s parking requirements for many uses are higher than comparable municipalities.

I.3.7 Do not require public hearings for restaurants located within business or commercial districts when they otherwise meet all zoning requirements. These may be administratively approved, unless a waiver is needed, in which case the special permit may be heard by the Planning Commission.

These zones are areas where we want businesses to locate. Not requiring a hearing of applicants that meet all requirements will speed the development process and enable businesses to open more easily. See V.6 on administrative review, special permit review, and public hearings.

I.4 Ensure orderly transitions between character areas.

I.4.1 Ensure that commercial areas do not encroach on adjacent stable residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes are an asset to their surrounding neighborhoods, but should not expand to the point of having a

detrimental impact on the surrounding residential areas.

The functions of a commercial corridor should be contained within the commercial zone. A neighborhood-scale commercial corridor within walking distance can be an asset, but that asset is diminished if traffic, loading and unloading, refuse storage, or other negative impacts are not adequately buffered from the surrounding residences.⁶

I.4.2 Do not allow combination of tax parcels unless an official resubdivision has been approved by the Planning Commission.

This informal resubdivision of lots has contributed to confusion and informal encroachment of commercial activities into surrounding residential neighborhoods. Furthermore, it leaves future owners unaware that their on-site parking may, in fact, be illegal, and creates other zoning administration and development approval difficulties.

I.4.3 Identify areas where neighborhood zone parking passes may alleviate on-street parking challenges, particularly in neighborhoods in which residential properties often do not have off-street parking. In areas where the neighborhood residents support it, implement several pilot parking permit zones.

Examples of appropriate neighborhoods include Park Avenue, Hawley-Green, Tipp Hill, the University Neighborhood, and parts of Eastwood in which employees and/or customers of nearby business corridors or institutions flood the neighborhood during the day, leaving little or no on-street parking for neighborhood residents. Neighborhood zone parking, with hour-of-day and other regulations customized to each neighborhood's specific challenges, should be established. Each zone will require approval from the state legislature.

This will control on-street parking congestion in residential neighborhoods and may prove to be a revenue generating tool for the City, as well. Surrounding businesses, whose employees or customers need additional parking, will be encouraged to pursue shared parking arrangements or other off-street solutions (see above) to provide for their needs.

Character of Existing Neighborhoods

II Protect and enhance the character and “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 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

⁶ Note that this does not apply to on-street parking, which, as part of the public right-of-way is freely available to any vehicle and not limited to the property in front of which it is located. Parking regulations must be enforced to ensure that on-street parking is orderly and follows all regulations.

reinforced through the zoning ordinance and City investments.

II.1 In commercial and mixed-use neighborhood centers, use form-based code and design review to ensure that major alterations and new construction fit with the area’s character.

II.1.1 Form-based code should ensure that building form, roof form, setbacks, fenestration patterns and materials, cladding materials, lighting, signage, location of pedestrian entrances, parking size and location, lot coverage, and other site elements are consistent with the desired character of the neighborhood center. In some neighborhood centers this should include residential buildings, both attached and detached, as well as traditional commercial buildings. Denser commercial and mixed-use areas are less likely to include detached buildings—these are described in detail in Chapter 3.

All of these elements contribute to the character of an area and can contribute to its economic vibrancy and safety. All relate to the urban context that sets Syracuse apart from the surrounding suburbs and which contribute to the village-like feel of our individual neighborhoods. This character is an asset to be protected. In many areas that character has been lost due to inappropriate infill.

The protection of our neighborhood centers is balanced with the need for auto-oriented commercial areas, which are accounted for on the future land use map. These commercial areas should have design regulations that address most, if not all, of the above characteristics of their design, but they will take into account the very different character of these areas, allowing parking in the building setback, larger parking lots, and allow for buildings to be set back further from the street.

II.2 In residential areas, use a ‘sliding-scale’ of options to regulate infill and major alterations in order to ensure that they are consistent with the desired character of the neighborhood.

This menu of options is proposed for residential areas, rather than a city-wide form-based approach as is advocated in commercial areas because 1) there is more variety of character in residential areas and they will often need to be customized to that neighborhood and 2) neighborhood residents should be engaged in determining which tool is most appropriate for their neighborhood.

II.2.1 In historically or architecturally significant neighborhoods that are eligible for **local preservation district** designation, this option should be discussed with property owners and residents. These stake-holders should participate in defining the characteristics that they value and that define their neighborhood and participate in developing the design-guidelines that dictate allowable alterations within their district. This process will be facilitated by the Landmark Preservation Board and City staff. These are the most strictly regulated districts (as opposed to conservation districts that control fewer actions). The historic preservation component of the Comprehensive Plan presents this process in more detail.

Eligible districts are identified through ongoing survey of historic properties throughout the

City. These are some of the most significant parts of the City and are assets that set Syracuse apart from the rest of the region. Their preservation should be a priority for future generations' enjoyment and as an economic development strategy. Areas with intact historic character often have higher property values and have been shown to be more likely to economically revitalize than neighborhoods that have sustained incompatible alterations.

II.2.2 Other residential neighborhoods not eligible for local historic preservation district designation, but with some character residents desire to protect could be designated **conservation districts**. The form, roofline, setbacks, porches, window patterns, and site plans of new construction and major alterations would be regulated for general consistency, but color, materials and other minor alterations would not be subject to review. Individual properties within this area may be designated local protected sites and subject to a higher standard of review than non-historic neighboring properties.

Conservation districts should be designated at the request of a majority of the property owners within the district and design guidelines dictating allowable alterations should be developed in consultation with that district's property owners.

The option for some protection of the character that defines their neighborhood and sets it apart should be available to property owners, even if their neighborhood lacks the historic or architectural significance to be eligible for local historic district designation. Regulation of major alterations and new construction will provide property owners here with many of the same assurances that local preservation district designation (or home owners' associations elsewhere) provide. Their involvement with the drafting of design guidelines will ensure that the design elements important to that neighborhood's residents are protected while ensuring a level of flexibility with which property owners are comfortable.

II.2.3 **Elsewhere, only new construction and major additions would be reviewed for consistency with form-based standards** included in residential zoning district regulations. Appeals for waivers from form and design standards could be heard by the City Planning Commission.

Infill construction is common throughout the City and ensuring that it fits into the surrounding context, particularly regarding form and siting, will support a visual continuity that's been shown to stabilize property values.

II.2.4 Property owners making minor alterations would be encouraged to follow **voluntary guidelines for context-sensitive renovations**. The City should provide city-wide guidelines (separate from, but complementary to, the zoning ordinance) for context-sensitive renovations in residential neighborhoods.

This will give property owners in all neighborhoods the information needed to ensure that alterations to their property fit into the neighborhood context if they so choose, but are not located in one of the districts described above. Studies have shown that property values in neighborhoods with a cohesive character are more stable and more likely to increase over the long-term. This is good for the property owner and good for the City's tax base.

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.

-Alan Mallach, 2006, Bringing Buildings Back: From Abandoned Property to Community Assets

	Alterations	New Construction
Local Preservation District	Regulated by District Guidelines	
Conservation District	Regulated by District Guidelines	
Other Residential Areas	Optional Guidelines Available*	Form-based standards for new construction and major alterations.

*Except for individual Local Protected Sites located within these areas.

II.2.5 Any grandfathered non-conforming uses converted to have store-fronts or built to be commercial in nature (along major corridors where this would be an allowable use) should follow the design standards for that building form, as regulated in Neighborhood Center areas.

This is in keeping with requiring high quality design of commercial properties (Goal III), especially important in such proximity to residential neighborhoods.

II.3 Ensure that lot widths and setbacks (particularly on blocks with few vacant lots and which retain a cohesive pattern of buildings) are kept consistent with the desired character of the area.

II.3.1 Set the minimum buildable lot width to be consistent with historic development patterns of the neighborhood.

For example, lots in most neighborhoods that developed during the Victorian-era (much of the Northside, Tipp Hill, Westside, and parts of 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.3.2 Establish a building set-back maximum, in addition to a minimum, and require a variance to deviate from it.

Infill new construction is often built much further back from the street than the surrounding properties, breaking up the consistent street-wall, but nonetheless in compliance with existing set-back minimums. This would establish a setback maximum, as well, to ensure consistency in the streetscape.

II.3.3 Establish lot-width maximums in these areas so as to discourage de-densification in stable neighborhoods.

On blocks that maintain density and have few vacant buildings or lots, a lot-width maximum should be established and variances would have to be sought to resubdivide into larger lots. Combining lots in areas with growth and infill potential decreases the likelihood that these areas will return to their original density.

II.4 Identify 'areas of transition' with high rates of vacant lots and buildings and define and permit interim- and long-term strategies for their stewardship and reuse.

These areas are often categorized no differently on the future land use map than stable, denser residential areas. In reality, they will require a broader variety of new uses for vacant land and possess a different, less dense, urban pattern than other neighborhoods with very low vacancy rates. While Syracuse's population loss has significantly slowed over the past decade, the South and West sides of the City have continued to rapidly lose population.

New development and infill construction should be tightly focused within and around Neighborhood Centers (neighborhood business districts), Urban Core, Industrial Legacy, and Adapted Mansion character areas (see above I.2.5) (and in other stable areas with low vacancy rates). Any new residential development in these areas will increase their density, support the economic base of these neighborhood centers, promote walkable development patterns, and support public transit service.

Isolated areas—not adjacent to these assets—that are experiencing high vacancy rates (among buildings and land) will likely require short-term and long-term stewardship strategies for open spaces, or voids between remaining buildings, given the lack of short-term demand for traditional real estate development and the decreasing amount of public subsidy available for housing development.

This topic is far-reaching and impacted by the City's capital improvement budget, housing subsidies, property maintenance policies and actions taken by the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation and other nonprofit organizations, and warrants a strategic plan of its own. However, as far as the zoning and subdivision ordinances are involved, **allowing large lot assembly in these areas and incentivizing alternative "green" uses for vacant land are preliminary steps that can be taken to stabilize these areas.**

II.5 Allow for scattered commercial activity where historic precedent exists – in areas categorized as Urban Neighborhood on the future land use map.

Tipp Hill, defined by corner businesses scattered 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. Much of the Northside and Washington Square neighborhoods also possess this historic land use pattern.

II.5.1 Allow scattered commercial businesses, of limited size and intensity, in this character area. Regulate based on proximity to one another so that the entire area is not saturated with commercial activity. These should require Special Permits and public hearings, rather than be allowed by right, due to their unique impact on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Design standards, limits on business floor area, 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. Regulations should carefully prevent the proliferation of corner stores and only allow these businesses to be located, although within a residential character area, on defined major roads (see map).

This will allow for the reuse of commercial buildings that are found in these locations, but prevent negative impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhood. In the past, this has been allowed through spot-zoning individual parcels, but there is no logical or rational reason for zoning one corner of an intersection commercial without considering the other three appropriate for commercial development. Allowing for this scattered commercial activity while preventing its clustering, would treat all parcels at intersections equally.

Design & Form of Infill Development & Major Alterations

III Ensure high-quality, attractive design throughout the city.

Zoning standards should ensure that development in all neighborhoods is of comparable high quality and that new construction is appropriate for its surroundings. Development should encourage pedestrian activity in mixed-use nodes and corridors. High quality design should be required of all major alterations⁷ and new construction.

III.1 Integrate form-based standards into the City's zoning district regulations.

Illustrated, form-based standards set basic requirements for building form, roof form, solid-to-void ratios and fenestration (window) patterns, façade articulation, siting and setbacks in addition to use and scale (already addressed in our current zoning ordinance). Developers and property owners should then be able to “mix-and-match” between allowed forms and allowed uses (with some combinations being the logical conclusion). These standards should still allow for architectural creativity within this basic framework and may be supplemented by more specific design overlays or guidelines in certain neighborhoods where more detailed requirements are desired.

III.1.1 Design in all character areas should take into account the pedestrian experience, as well as efficient and safe vehicle movement and parking. Some areas will be more pedestrian-oriented and give preference to the needs of the pedestrian (neighborhood centers and more dense mixed-use areas); design here should encourage increased pedestrian activity through large, transparent storefront windows, minimal setbacks, and the scale of signage and lighting, among other design considerations.

⁷ Of a size to be defined in zoning code revisions

Others (strip-commercial) are more commonly frequented by vehicles, but should still seek to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

Consideration should be paid to the following design elements when setting regulations in all commercial and mixed-use districts (with different standards as appropriate for each district):

- Lot coverage
- Window patterns, size, and material and solid-to-void ratios
- Setbacks
- Parking location
- Location of pedestrian entrances
- On-site circulation of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles
- Site-access and curb cuts
- Landscaping and other site-treatments
- Buffering from adjacent uses
- Sign and lighting standards

III.1.2 These form-based standards should be applied to new construction⁸ and major alterations.⁹ Existing buildings should be given some leeway; alterations should bring them closer to compliance rather than further from it, but full compliance will not be expected as a result of any investment in the property.

Ensuring that all neighboring property owners will be held to a high design standard will ensure investor confidence to make high-quality improvements to their owner properties. Furthermore, consistent, high-quality design stabilizes and enhances property values, improves quality of life in city neighborhoods, and draws new residents and tourists. City-wide design standards for commercial development will ensure that review of development proposals in all neighborhoods receives the same attention to detail. Pedestrian friendly design in neighborhood centers and denser areas will encourage more walking and other alternative means of transportation and support local businesses.

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

This may be the case in areas such as the Near Westside or Westcott that want to encourage more non-traditional, artistic expression. It may also be desired in neighborhoods that wish to reinforce some unique quality through architectural features. See II.2 regarding guidelines for specific residential areas.

III.2.1 Identify the commercial or mixed-use districts that warrant these overlays during the process of revising the zoning ordinance and include one or more in the revision so that the review process for these types of districts is defined at the outset and other overlays follow the same review process as they are established.

This practice will allow property owners in specific areas and/or neighborhoods to customize guidelines to their circumstances where they desire to do so. Establishing the process at the time of zoning ordinance revisions and applying it to any additional overlay districts will

8 Only new construction over a certain size in residential areas

9 Additions and partial demolitions

ensure consistency and predictability.

Energy & the Environment

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

As many neighborhoods in Syracuse continue to experience increased vacancy rates and amounts of vacant land, creative uses are needed to provide stewardship for this vacant property and reduce the negative environmental impacts of increased storm-water runoff and soil contamination.

New development should happen in a pattern consistent with the character areas described in the next chapter, and should occur as infill in transitional blocks that are adjacent to stable residential areas, major corridors, and neighborhood centers.¹⁰ On blocks that possess extremely high vacancy rates and aren't adjacent to a stable residential area, major corridor, or neighborhood center, interim- and long-term patterns of development will be needed. These patterns will include alternative 'green' uses for urban land.

Focusing growth around these existing neighborhood centers and transportation networks will help the City, Centro, and other agencies to provide more efficient services to City residents. It will also have a higher marginal impact on neighboring property values here than in extremely depressed areas where alternative uses may better address blight. The land use pattern described under Goal I is inherently sustainable at capacity (population), although this goal addresses retrofitting the land use pattern where population loss has rendered it ineffectual (unable to support neighborhood commercial districts or efficient mass-transit where not enough customers remain in dense concentrations, etc.).

IV.1 Allow "alternative" or non-traditional¹¹ uses of vacant land, such as community gardens, urban agriculture, and green infrastructure.

These uses should be enabled throughout the city, with dictating where traditional development will be more appropriate. The City will put its resources into incremental expansion of existing assets (see above) when siting new development.

IV.1.1 Amend the zoning ordinance to allow for community gardens and urban agriculture increasing in most zoning districts—increasing in intensity as lot size increases. Ability to acquire a large enough site will dictate the location of agriculture-related uses, such as bees and livestock, in addition to hours of operation, sales, etc. Require adequate buffering from adjacent residential uses.

¹⁰ This strategy of building upon existing assets is described above.

¹¹ Not traditional in an urban setting.

Somali Bantu community garden.

Photo courtesy of Syracuse Grows.



This practice will allow for flexibility as market conditions shift in Syracuse neighborhoods. Where demand for traditional development increases, it will be more difficult to acquire land for more intense agricultural uses.

IV.1.2 As a matter of policy, steer users interested in community gardens and other green uses toward lots where there is not short- or medium-term demand for traditional development. Strategic site selection will be guided not by the zoning ordinance, but by City and Land Bank policy.

Strategic site selection will prevent tension between gardeners and traditional developers, leaving space for traditional economic development, while filling in the ‘voids’ in areas with large concentrations of vacant lots, with long-term alternative uses.

IV.2 Establish requirements for landscape and site-design features on private property.¹²

IV.2.1 Adopt landscaping standards for large parking lots¹³ that reduce impermeable surface, increase tree-canopy, screen parking from pedestrian paths, and slow traffic.

Adequate landscaping and careful site planning will mitigate the negative impacts associated with large paved areas—including storm-water runoff, the heat-island effect, and discouraging pedestrians from walking distances that they would otherwise if there more visual interest (people have been shown to walk further when there is a visual interest, and vast empty spaces discourage people from walking when they might otherwise).

IV.2.2 Reinstall permeable vegetation in planting strips where they have been replaced with asphalt or other inappropriate materials such as gravel and hard-packed soil.

Proper treatment of the planting strip will improve the attractiveness and uniform appearance of the right-of-way and reduce storm-water runoff.

IV.3 Connect the city’s “green-ways” and open space network.

As the City works to connect its robust network of open spaces and parks to provide uninterrupted habitats and ecosystems, “green corridors” may be identified as environmentally sensitive linkages or paths that should allow for natural plants and species to thrive. These linkages and environmentally sensitive areas, where they overlap private property, are represented as a cross-hatched overlay on the future land use map. (While these will likely remain in private use for decades, the City should attempt to acquire properties located in the cross-hatch as they become available—through tax foreclosure or other low-cost means—in order to fully connect the open space network and increase permeable surface in these environmentally sensitive areas.) As we attempt to reduce our reliance on gray infrastructure and make Syracuse a more

¹² And for parts of the right-of-way for which adjacent property owners are responsible

¹³ Equal to or larger than an area to be determined during zoning revisions

sustainable city, more environmentally-friendly site treatments may be required of private property owners, as well. Other environmentally sensitive, privately owned areas include wetlands and steep slopes, where similar restrictions are appropriate.

IV.3.1 Two types of open spaces are represented on the Future Land Use map – one publicly owned and the other warranting an ‘environmentally-sensitive’ overlay with restrictions for lot coverage, impermeable surface, non-native plants, etc.

Designating some privately owned land as “environmentally sensitive” will allow private use of these properties to continue, but mitigate their impact on the environment.

IV.3.2 When cost-effective opportunities to acquire land located within the ‘environmentally-sensitive’ overlay become available, the City should acquire this property and add it to the publicly owned open space network.

This policy will allow the City to gradually expand recreation-ways, remove impermeable surfaces, and improve the health of these natural systems.

IV.4 Protect streams, wetlands, and steep slopes from impacts of inappropriate development.

IV.4.1 Map these areas and implement appropriate restrictions on potentially harmful development through a protective zoning overlay. While parts of these privately owned sites may be appropriate for development, overlays should identify areas where increased restrictions are necessary to avoid soil erosion, flooding, and damage to natural habitats.

An environmental protection overlay is a common tool used by other municipalities to facilitate a more thorough and efficient environmental review process while preventing damage to other property (soil erosion and flooding concerns) and protecting natural resources.

Regulatory Process

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

V.1 Revisit the definitions of uses in the existing zoning code.

V.1.1 Streamline enumerated uses into broad categories whenever possible. For example:

Specific Uses	General Uses
Pet Store	Retail Goods
Shoe Store	
Clothing Store	

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.

Such a system should more easily allow for the regulation of most “new” uses as they arise.

V.1.2 Evaluate whether the definitions of uses need to be updated to reflect new development models and/or technologies.

V.1.3 Investigate the creation of a high-intensity retail definition, which might require a special permit, that would include operations that typically attract nuisances and loitering.

V.2 Make the zoning ordinance more user-friendly.

V.2.1 Incorporate illustrations along with predictable, form-based standards in each zoning district.

Making design objectives clear and predictable—rather than referring to the surrounding context, which we do not always wish to duplicate—should reduce review-time for development applications and result in higher-quality projects.

V.2.2 Use tables to make clear the differences between permitted uses, parking, signage, and design standards, in various district—similar to those in the SmartCode.¹⁴

This ordinance format will enable developers to quickly find the district that allows their desired project and helps to clarify the reason behind the creation of additional zoning districts.

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

A digital ordinance and map will help property owners to quickly determine which regulations apply to their property.

V.2.4 The code should allow as many types of applications as possible to be administratively approved according to clear, objective standards. Waivers would require review by a board or commission.

Administrative approvals for projects that clearly meet the standards will reduce review and approval times and help developers to craft applications that meet desired outcomes earlier in their design process.

V.3 Amend plan-review processes to be more predictable and encourage compliance with the ordinance.

¹⁴ <http://www.transect.org/codes.html>

V.3.1 Make professional staff available to “coach” applicants in conforming to the design-standards included in the zoning ordinance.

This should be available as “walk-in” assistance for small projects that do not warrant a pre-development meeting. For larger projects, design staff can act as a liaison to project architects to help proposals conform to the community’s desired design and character, enforced by the zoning code.

A proposal that complies with the code upon submittal can be approved more quickly. Professional design staff can help applicants understand and interpret the zoning ordinance and how it applies to their project, ensuring submittals comply with regulations and likely facilitating administrative approval.

V.3.2 Design review should be guided by a set of objective standards related to form, massing, fenestration patterns, siting, lighting, and signage. See III.1 and III.2 above. Additional guidelines should be developed to guide decision-makers—boards and commissions—in the review of waiver requests.

These objective standards will guide transparent and predictable review of applications that do, or do not, meet the standards. Predictable standards should result in faster development approvals.

V.3.3 Whichever board reviews waiver requests should include design professionals in the review of design-base waivers, whether as members of the board (via board member qualifications) or in the form of a professional opinion/recommendation from staff or consultants.

Design professionals should be able to more quickly recommend modifications to proposals that will achieve results comparable or complementary to those defined in the zoning ordinance.

V.4 Take market conditions into consideration when addressing grandfathered uses, use variances, and nonconformities.

V.4.1 As long as the proposal does not detract from the surrounding neighborhood and the building on site was designed for a non-residential use, the priority of reusing existing buildings, and sustainability concerns, should be a factor in granting use variances.

Giving consideration to a building’s design intended for commercial use will enable some scattered commercial buildings to be reused rather than sit vacant. In a stronger real estate market, these would quickly be demolished for new housing or development that fits the current zoning regulation. In Syracuse, these often sit vacant and act as magnets for crime and vandalism, diminishing surrounding property values and contributing to neighborhood decline, because demolition and new development are cost prohibitive in the near-term.

V.4.2 In addition, within the Urban Neighborhood character area, the history of scattered commercial activity should be allowed to continue, regulated by special use

permits, ensuring that business does not detract from the surrounding neighborhood.

Special Permit regulations will provide more guidance regarding the types of uses that are considered compatible within these neighborhoods. Again, a special permit process by which commercial uses can be permitted will facilitate the reuse of existing buildings. In this instance, a historic pattern of commercial businesses integrated into their urban, mixed-use surroundings, often predates Syracuse's current zoning ordinance.

V.4.3 Proactively enforce the zoning ordinance as zoning amendments are made and this plan is implemented. Identify nonconformities that are not 'grandfathered.'

Thorough research and documentation at the time of implementation will enable the new regulations to take effect with a minimal number of grandfathered nonconformities.

V.5 When implementing this land use plan and amending the zoning atlas, eliminate spot-zoned parcels.

V.5.1 While scattered commercial will be allowed in Urban Neighborhood character areas, individual commercially zoned parcels should not remain in the zoning map.

This practice of spot-zoning often allows commercial uses on only one corner of an intersection, with no rational reason for not treating the entire intersection as a commercial node—unfair to other property owners where commercial uses are not allowed by right, but whose properties are not materially different than the one spot-zoned parcel.

V.6 Review what types of development proposals may be administratively approved, which require Planning Commission review, which requires special permits, and which require a public hearing.

V.6.1 All new construction should require review by zoning for compliance with the applicable zoning regulations, including design standards. All significant exterior alterations, including signage, should require zoning review. In most instances, this should be an administrative approval, with appeal to the Planning Commission for a waiver.

V.6.2 Only the most intense developments that impact the surrounding neighborhood should require a public hearing. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Live entertainment
- Recreation/Amusement
- Scattered-site commercial in the Urban Neighborhood Character area (i.e. commercial uses not in a solely commercial district)
- Comparable, high-intensity retail

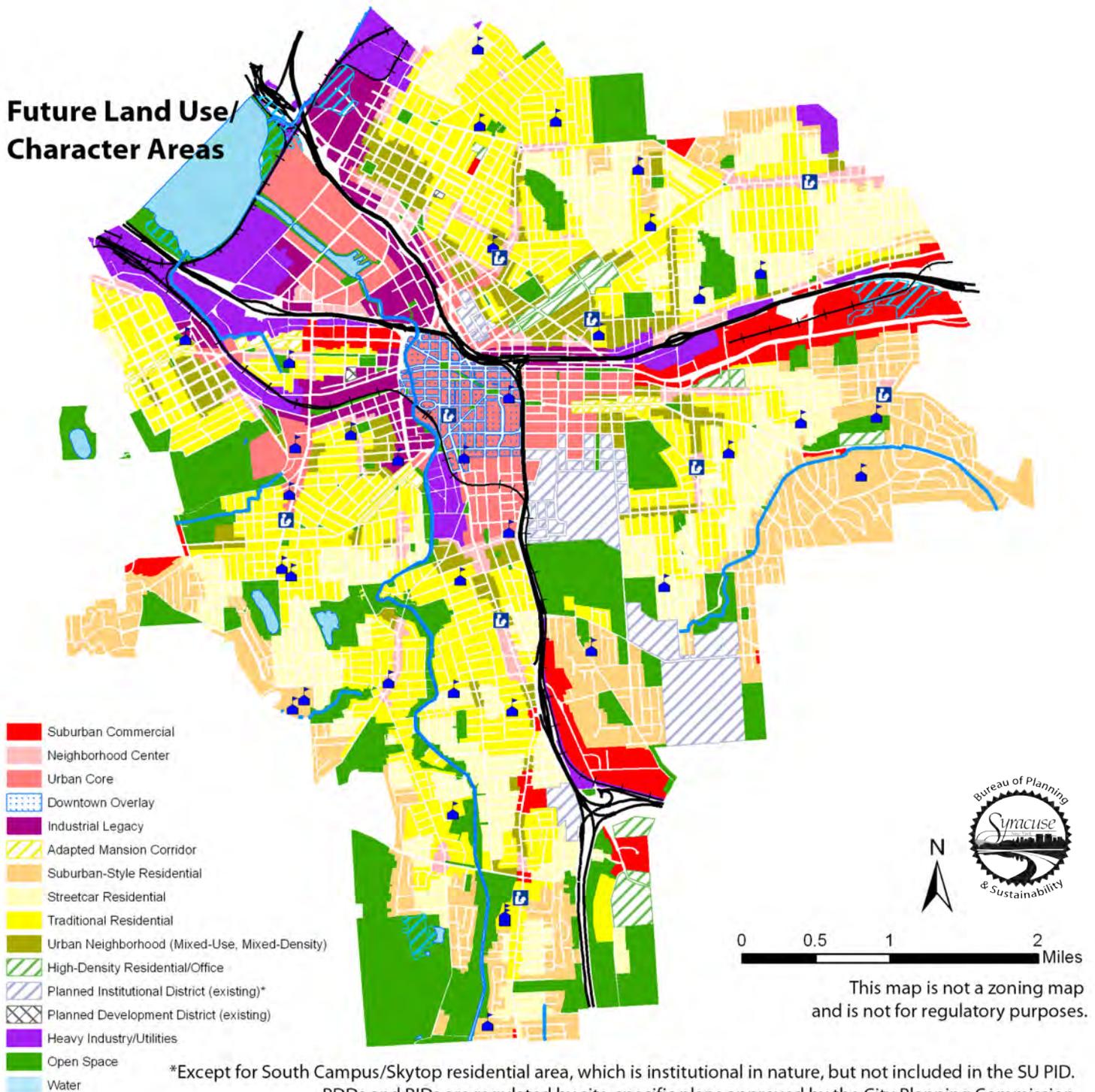
V.7 Make a commitment to ongoing maintenance of the zoning ordinance.

This comprehensive land use plan was necessary due to long-time lack of a comprehensive approach to land use regulations in the City of Syracuse. While attention was paid to development pressures and market changes in some neighborhoods—James Street Overlay, Lakefront Zoning Districts—opportunities for citywide consistency were bypassed and other neighborhoods' needs were not addressed. For example, the Commercial zoning on North and South Salina Streets is in direct conflict with the priorities of the North Salina National Register Historic District and the adopted South Salina Street Gateway plan. Other neighborhoods experience infill that clashes with the surrounding context in form and siting. Little direction has been provided to guide community gardens to appropriate locations for short- and long-term 'alternative uses.'

In the future, the City must annually evaluate development pressures and patterns throughout the City looking for any conflicts with the overhauled zoning ordinance. Neighborhood-scale amendments may be necessary in areas where goals and priorities for future growth change. Periodic updates to specific zoning district regulations, creation of new zoning districts, or neighborhood-scale amendments to the zoning atlas may be deemed necessary to keep development regulations up to date and in line with the community's priorities.



Future Land Use/ Character Areas



*Except for South Campus/Skytop residential area, which is institutional in nature, but not included in the SU PID.
PDDs and PIDs are regulated by site-specific plans approved by the City Planning Commission.

Institutional uses are common elsewhere throughout the city, but are not subject to Planned Institutional District plans except in PIDs.
See larger, fold-out map for more detail.



NEIGHBORHOOD-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following descriptions of neighborhoods are organized by TNT area (see map in Appendix B). The neighborhood-specific recommendations at the end of each section focus on areas in which the future land use map calls for a dramatic change from existing conditions.

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. This large geographic 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 four square miles.

The “painted ladies” on Howard Street in Hawley-Green are a good example of medium-density residential housing stock.

The Northside is home to nearly 40,000 people and is one of the few areas 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 not-for-profit institutions—including St. Joseph’s Hospital, Franciscan Ministries, the Northside Urban Partnership, InterFaith Works, and others. The northwest edge of the area is anchored by 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, but has room for considerable infill to occur. Commercial and mixed-uses line 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 future commercial and mixed-use development.

This gallery on the Northside, housed in a converted residence, fits seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhood.

North Salina Street, much of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the most intact urban, commercial areas outside of Downtown. Recent revitalization efforts, including streetscape improvements and a façade loan program, have encouraged market-rate and higher-end residential redevelopment in the upper stories of these existing, 19th century, commercial row-buildings. While the City’s current Project Site Review process has referred exterior alterations to the Landmark Preservation Board for comment and recommendations, changes in the zoning district and regulations in order to require infill development the appropriate urban form and scale would ensure the appropriate revitalization of this corridor

and reduce review times for development proposals.

Former industrial buildings near the intersection of Salina and Wolf, no longer suited for heavy industry, provide an opportunity for revitalization, as well. This area is categorized as the “Industrial Legacy,” with reference to its legacy of industrial uses and the desired character of future development. This character area includes light-industry, commercial uses, live/work loft conversions, and the like. As market-rate redevelopment continues to spread up North Salina Street, this key intersection may capitalize on its proximity to the market, stadium, and transportation center.

The largest parks on the Northside are Schiller and Lincoln Hill, although smaller public greenspaces are scattered about, including both small formal parks and also triangular open spaces caused by the Northside’s irregular street patterns caused by the intersection of the Village of Salina and Village of Syracuse street-grids.

Throughout the Northside, the future land use map generally calls for the continuation of existing densities and development styles in residential areas. 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 the Northside TNT area, is a significant Picturesque-era, park-like, single-family neighborhood and has been a locally designated historic district since the 1970s. Most housing closer to Washington Square, the North Salina Street corridor, and Butternut Street is more densely developed and many larger homes have been divided into multi-family buildings. Businesses are frequently scattered about within these areas.

At the southeast corner of the Northside TNT area, the largely mixed-use Hawley-Green neighborhood includes a small, historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hawley-Green surrounds a dense, primarily commercial node at the intersection of Hawley, Green, and Catherine.

The Washington Square area, formerly the Village of Salina, is one of the earliest settlement sites in Syracuse and was the location of early salt mining operations. The Village of Salina was incorporated into the City of Syracuse along with what was then the Village of Syracuse (now Downtown) at the time of the City’s founding in 1847. The route between these two villages, Salina Street, had become urbanized by this time and the two villages 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 many small entrepreneurial businesses. The area is known as Little Italy today, but is also home to thousands of more recently arrived Southeast Asian immigrants (a community which extends up Butternut and throughout the Northside) 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. While these recommendations are specific to the Northside, many of the citywide recommended policies and actions in Chapter 2, although not repeated here, are particularly relevant to the Northside.

- The Northside is home to many pre-existing commercial uses and buildings designed for commercial use scattered throughout predominately residential areas. This is a legacy of its pre-streetcar, pedestrian-driven development. While these parcels should not be spot-zoned for commercial use, the BZA should look favorably upon use-variance requests when necessary to put these buildings into productive commercial or mixed-use without having a detrimental impact on the surrounding residences. Significant exterior alterations should follow the design guidelines for commercial building forms included in the neighborhood business district zoning regulations.

The reuse of these buildings in a positive manner is consistent with neighborhood character, encourages proper building maintenance and should decrease the number of vacant buildings and their negative impact on surrounding property values and quality-of-life, and may save the City potential future court-ordered demolition costs.

- The area surrounding the Central New York Regional Market, Alliance Bank Stadium, and the Regional Transportation Center includes large areas of surface parking and vacant or underutilized property. When the Regional Transportation Center is connected to the Empire Corridor High Speed Rail this area will present a well-situated opportunity for high-density, transit-oriented development (TOD) that will enjoy the amenities of the stadium and market—along with close proximity to the future Loop the Lake Trail, the Creekwalk, and the Inner Harbor. Zoning amendments should be made now to encourage TOD and prevent inappropriate industrial infill that might discourage this kind of future development.

Changing the zoning regulations now will lay the groundwork for an efficient transition to this style of development. Mixed-use, high-density, TOD zones have been shown to generate more property tax revenue than single-use commercial development. This connection to statewide transportation networks will be another competitive advantage for the City to attract future regional growth.

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, according to the U.S. Census, 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 ½ that of the Northside).

The majority of Eastwood's residential areas are comprised of early 20th century, detached, single-family homes, including many bungalows, a feature for which Eastwood is known. Duplexes are common in the areas immediately north and south of James Street and in some areas directly north of Burnet Ave. 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 dense apartment and commercial buildings. The corridor is regulated by a zoning overlay district 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 the James Street business district; require new construction and rehabilitations to conform to a pedestrian-friendly urban design.

Once these standards are incorporated into the zoning district regulations for local business districts, the James Street Overlay can be removed.

Incorporating form-based standards into Local Business, Class A zoning district will ensure that all neighborhood business corridors are held to these high standards that encourage pedestrian safety and activity.

- Along Burnet Avenue in the Hawley-Green neighborhood, zoning should allow for a broad mix of building styles included in the Industrial Legacy character area and the development of light-industries that are not harmful to the adjacent neighborhood, in addition to a variety of residential, commercial, and mixed-uses described in the Industrial Legacy character area, but that promote the reuse of the historic buildings that line this corridor.

This section of Burnet Avenue currently has a neighborhood business zone on the north side of the street and industrial zoning on the south side of the street. Industrial Transition would ensure that both sides of the street allow similar uses and building types, facilitate broader uses to utilize these buildings for which there is relatively lower demand compared to other neighborhood business districts, and more closely reflect the development patterns that led to this corridor's diverse building stock.

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 approximately 27,600 people. This represents 6.4 persons per acre or 4,120 persons per square mile. This is likely due to many low-density, suburban neighborhoods at its eastern edge and non-residential areas within the Eastside, because the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the universities and the Westcott business district are densely settled. 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, alongside families, professors, retirees, and young professionals—creating some nuisance-related tensions common in “college towns” and great demand on city services, but also providing a customer base for the Westcott and Marshall Street business districts.

The Connective Corridor runs from Syracuse University to Downtown along University Avenue and Genesee Street, pulling offices and activity from the University Hill neighborhood northward toward Interstate 690 and rapidly evolving Near Eastside neighborhood. This formerly residential section of the Eastside has undergone much transition since the 1950s; first razed for the construction of I-81, then the construction of housing projects, and later university and hospital expansions. The flat valley floor south of I-690 once held the Erie Canal, heavy industry, and rail yards. (I-690 itself was built on an elevated rail line.) Today this is one of the most pivotal areas of economic development 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 reinvention of this neighborhood. As the fate of Interstate 81's replacement or removal is considered, 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 from of this area and includes a mix of industrial and suburban-style commercial uses. This former route of the Erie Canal may be incorporated into the Erie Canalway Trail system. Right-of-way improvements for pedestrian and bicyclist safety and design standards for new commercial construction are needed along this commercial corridor. Investments such as these in the right-of-way may further prompt high-quality commercial development. Improved landscaping and design requirements for large, big-box stores would be a great improvement and would reduce storm water runoff, improve pedestrian safety and ease of transit use, and minimize the heat-island effect induced by large, asphalt parking lots.

The Near Eastside neighborhood uphill from Erie Boulevard faces similar vacancy

challenges to those on the city's south and west sides and stagnant to decreasing property values. Housing Visions, an affordable housing developer, is engaged in rehabilitating and building new multifamily housing here, but vacancy rates remain high and are spreading eastward. Salt Springs and Meadowbrook, at the eastern edge of the Eastside, are mostly residential in nature, although a small commercial 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-style and Streetcar Residential character areas, although there are some areas of Traditional 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-style Residential, but the Brighton Avenue 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 is anchored by the Westcott business 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 library branch. Further south in the Westcott Neighborhood is an organic food cooperative. The housing here is mostly Streetcar Residential and Traditional Residential although several multi-family apartment buildings surround the business district.

The University Neighborhood is wedged between Westcott and the Syracuse University and ESF campuses. This picturesque Streetcar Suburb-era neighborhood includes a large proportion of student rental housing. Both Westcott and the University Neighborhood face parking and nuisance-related challenges due 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 most properties here are owner-occupied. The northern end of the University 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. The "Special Neighborhood District" (SND) zoning overlay here is meant to limit student housing conversions and mitigate parking congestion, but following a recent court-case overturning an on-site parking requirement of the SND, this is currently undergoing study to identify a viable alternative approach to these challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 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. Expand the Westcott Business District accommodate retail segments missing from the neighborhood and bring walkable retail closer to the University Neighborhood.

Much needed everyday services and retail, such as a 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 of most student residences, expand the Westcott Business District south to Euclid.

2) Make it harder to bring a car to school—require neighborhood parking passes for on-street parking.

This passes the responsibility on to the automobile owner, rather than the landlord. 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 un-permitted cars on the street during the day.

- Redevelopment of the area surrounding Upstate Biotech Center and the Center of Excellence should follow the patterns described in the Urban Core character area.

This should include pedestrian-heavy uses on the ground floor. Encourage a mix of residential and office/institutional uses upstairs to create a “24-hour neighborhood” which supports retail and services before and after, as well as during, regular business hours. This area presents a unique opportunity for reinvention and connectivity between Downtown and the University Hill.

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

Erie Boulevard supports suburban-style commercial uses and, closer to Downtown, a mix of industrial activities. Due to the “gateway” nature of this commuter-heavy corridor, improved design standards are needed in both commercial and industrial areas.

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 and is home to approximately 8,400 residents. This results in 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. Its east and west sides terminate at steep valley walls.

The majority of housing in the area south of Seneca Turnpike is single-family and suburban in character; although the housing closer to S. Salina Street dates from the 1800s-early 1900s. 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 uses along South Salina Street. Most of the Valley TNT 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 dense and urban in character. 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 are scattered 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.

The commercial nodes at Seneca Turnpike's intersections with Valley Drive, Midland Avenue, and South Salina Street are auto-oriented with large surface parking lots separating the stores from the sidewalk. Seneca Turnpike is a major commuter corridor, heavily traveled by workers entering the city from the east and west. These nodes 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. South Salina Street is heavily travelled and serves a customer base that extends beyond the surrounding neighborhood. The businesses between Ballantyne and Florence (including and across the street from Valley Plaza) have evolved to incorporate 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-citizen residential 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 large amount of open space—both official parks and other natural areas. 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 the densely forested, steep slopes along the Valley walls. The valley walls perform as 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 Onondaga Creek, just north of Dorwin Avenue is occupied by telecommunication towers. The land around the creek today, although not officially publicly accessible, 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.

- Future commercial development at the intersection of Seneca Turnpike and Valley Drive should be in a traditional urban design that is friendly to pedestrians.

When these large parcels are redeveloped, they present an opportunity for denser, more pedestrian-friendly development.

- 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, and supporting commercial businesses.

Much of this area is currently zoned for low-density residential use. These low-density zones are appropriate where a single-use residential neighborhood context is being preserved, but this context no longer remains here and the high-traffic intersection may support denser development. 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 open-space network within the Valley TNT area is one of its most significant amenities. Public access to these green spaces should be expanded and promoted.

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.

An overlay should be implemented City-wide that protects private property within proximity of these natural resources from inappropriate development while still allowing for private use—see IV.3.1 in Chapter 2.

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 experienced significant population loss since the 1950s, nearly 10,000 persons 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. In contrast, 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 South Salina Street. The highest concentrations of apartment buildings are found on the blocks surrounding West Onondaga Street, Onondaga Avenue, and South Salina Street.

The 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 falls 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. Just down the hill, the Elmwood neighborhood includes some higher-density detached housing and surrounds the South Avenue business district, which has much potential for pedestrian-friendly infill

development.

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 industrial 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.

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.

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 percent of commercial parcels in the Southside TNT area are currently classified as vacant. This compares 5.9 percent citywide. In addition, a high percentage of lots along South Salina Street and South Avenue are used for surface parking. Considering the dense residential population in the area, it appears that there is much potential to support infill commercial development and the reuse of vacant commercial buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Ensure that parking lots are adequately screened and that they are buffered from the sidewalk.

They should not present a hazard to pedestrian traffic or visually detract from the neighborhood's character.

- Encourage pedestrian-friendly infill development on South Salina Street, West Onondaga Street, and South Avenue.

All of these corridors have great potential to attract pedestrian customers from the adjacent neighborhoods and well-designed new construction can encourage this activity and bring density and housing to the corridor itself, supporting efficient transit

service and bringing customers closer to the businesses.

- Maintain zoning that allows for industrial uses south of Downtown.

This is a major employment center in the area and has very few points of conflict with adjacent residential uses.

- 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.

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 received 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 shift 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 year, 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.

- Encourage a mix of office, residential, commercial, and mixed-uses, along with low-impact light-industry, along the West Fayette Street and Erie Boulevard West corridors.

These areas are located within walking distance of Downtown and contain a rich inventory of historically industrial buildings prime for adaptive reuse.

- 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.

This may require easement acquisition and may be physically accommodated within the railway right-of-way.

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

Within areas categorized as Urban Neighborhood, scattered, low-intensity commercial and mixed-use development is development appropriate.

DOWNTOWN

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Downtown Syracuse has undergone near constant change and redevelopment 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 nature of Downtown residential offerings 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. However, Downtown residential

units used to be located primarily in a number of high-rise, high-density subsidized housing projects. A number of these towers have been closed down or converted to market-rate 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.

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. Downtown properties and streetscapes are some of the best intact examples of the Urban Core character area and future development according to this dense, walkable pattern is called for 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, major arterials, and an elevated railway. The Creekwalk and Connective Corridor are helping to mitigate the barriers formed by West Street, Onondaga Creek, and Interstate 81, but there is far more work ahead to accomplish this goal.

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 or otherwise mitigating visual barriers and barriers to circulation—for example, physical barriers such as the highways and major arterials and visual barriers such as large expanses of surface parking.

These barriers are a significant deterrent to the revitalization of these neighborhoods which would otherwise benefit from their proximity to Downtown and historic character.

- 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.

While the future land use map calls for all of Downtown to be developed in a manner consistent with the Urban Core character area, an analysis of existing conditions would show that several blocks already possess these characteristics, have mostly occupied storefront retail, and high levels of pedestrian activity. Other areas are relatively devoid of pedestrian activity. Business development should focus on directing growth and redevelopment of existing buildings to blocks that fill in the 'gaps' and connect these successful, vibrant nodes. For example: 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 through proactive designation as Local Protected Sites.

Historic architecture is one of Downtown's strongest attractors of new residents and

businesses. Protecting these assets is an investment in the City's future as Syracuse positions itself to accept regional growth.

- Discourage 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 to mitigate their negative impact on the pedestrian environment.

- Require the ground floor of parking garages to be wrapped in retail or office uses that engage passing pedestrians and generate more visual interest.

Pedestrians are likely to walk further past storefronts and other interesting elements, increasing the vibrancy of Downtown and drawing potential customers further out from existing successful anchors such as Armory Square.

- Encourage private developers to break-up superblocks.

This will enable pedestrians and bicyclists to pass through and/or allow for loading and unloading and parking to be kept internal to the block, limiting these activities negative impact on the streetscape and pedestrian activity.

- Revise FAR premiums to encourage integrated storm water management, green buildings, street arcades and other amenities that improve the pedestrian environment, locating parking facilities internal to the block, and locating loading and unloading facilities internal to the block. Study and implement revisions to this system that focus on improving public spaces and encourage pedestrian traffic.

Existing FAR bonuses in the CBD that reward internal arcades and plazas bring pedestrians in off the street and remove them from the urban environment. These would focus on improving the streetscape and public spaces.

LAKEFRONT

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Lakefront TNT area includes only small residential sections, industrial uses, the Inner Harbor, and a large suburban-style shopping mall. The 2.3 square mile area has gained population over the past decade with the build-out of Franklin Square and continues to gain as more historically industrial buildings are converted to residential uses, new construction continues, and the Inner Harbor development is realized.

Franklin Square, a former industrial center at the intersection of major 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 Legacy character area, full of loft apartment and condo conversions, offices, and low-intensity retail and services. This area includes a mix of historic industrial buildings, large new construction buildings in similar design and form, and smaller industrial structures and outbuildings such as The

Foundry. All of this surrounds a recently constructed public plaza.

Dense, mixed-use development to the north, surrounding the Inner Harbor is expected to capitalize upon this successful node and draw additional development between Franklin Square and the lake. This area, formerly known as Oil City because it was dotted with large oil tanks, still contains a number of brownfields which require remediation. Further north, across Hiawatha Boulevard, is Carousel Center, a regional shopping mall. This complex is separated from Onondaga Lake by rail lines. Phase I of the Onondaga Creekwalk runs from the lake, through the Inner Harbor and Franklin Square, and south to Downtown and Armory Square. Eventually this trail will reach further south throughout the City and, at its north end, connections with the Loop the Lake trail should be pursued.

The western edge of the Lakefront Area is bound on the south by Interstate 690 and includes a mix of industrial uses and suburban-style commercial development, along with a few intact residential blocks that remain a reminder of the former working-class industrial neighborhood located here.

The Lakefront zoning embraces the transition toward “Industrial Legacy” style development, mandates New Urbanist style new construction and regulates color, materials, signage, and building design. However, in many instances it calls for financially unrealistic sparse, detached residential development. The designations on the future land use map attempt to rectify this and identify appropriate styles of development that will be financially feasible in the coming decades, and bring this area closer to the vision of a pedestrian-friendly vibrant neighborhood on the water.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- Encourage dense, mixed-use development around the Inner Harbor, building upon the patterns present in Franklin Square. However, development in the Inner Harbor should have more transparent storefronts and uses on the ground floor that help to activate the public space of the waterfront and generate pedestrian traffic.

Dense development here will draw more people to the area and a broad array of uses will draw people at all times of day.

- 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, preferably located on the interior of blocks and accessed via alleys.

Such large expanses of asphalt have a detrimental aesthetic impact on the area, discourage pedestrian activity - even across a short distance -, and discourage high-value mixed-use development that can integrate parking into the interior of the block.

- Improve connectivity between the Lakefront and the Northside neighborhoods

Pedestrian connections between these two neighborhoods should ensure safe access to

the amenities in the Lakefront and the Creekwalk trail.

- Relax expectations for New Urbanist style development in the western portion of the Lakefront.

This area is already built-out in a rather suburban style. Zoning regulations should be tailored to encourage high quality redevelopment but to work with existing buildings and patterns.

- In rewriting the zoning ordinance, utilize zoning districts here that are found elsewhere throughout the City.

This will help to ensure consistency in development regulations citywide and, with high quality standards for new construction throughout the City the Lakefront will no longer require specialized zoning districts. This will also provide for an opportunity to ensure that zoning in the Lakefront adequately regulates signage, parking, loading and unloading, and all of the other issues addressed in the zoning ordinance.



The Armory Square neighborhood in Downtown Syracuse is a good example of the Urban Core 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 those desired in the Industrial Legacy character area, including light-industry, residential, office, and artists' work spaces.

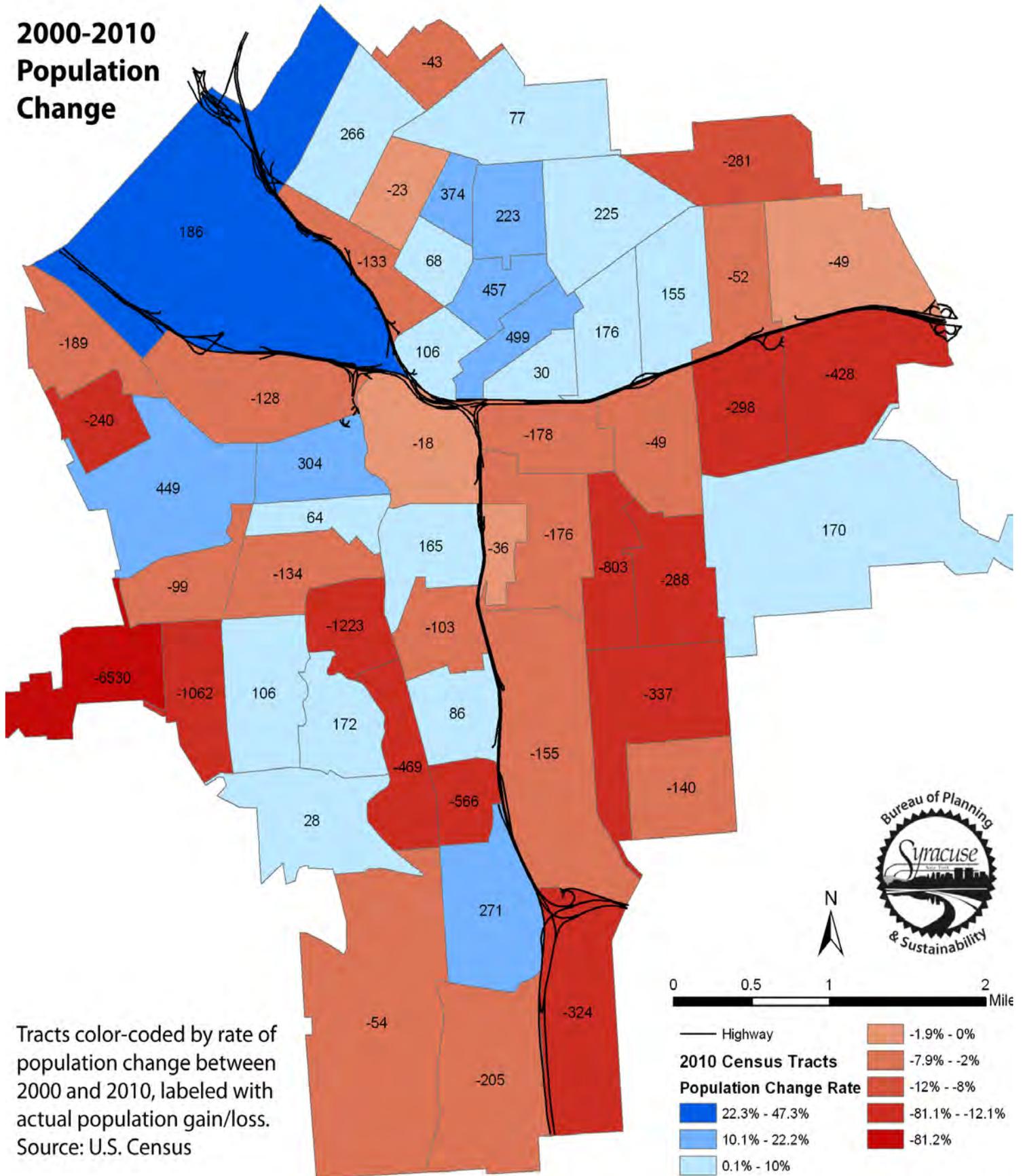


SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

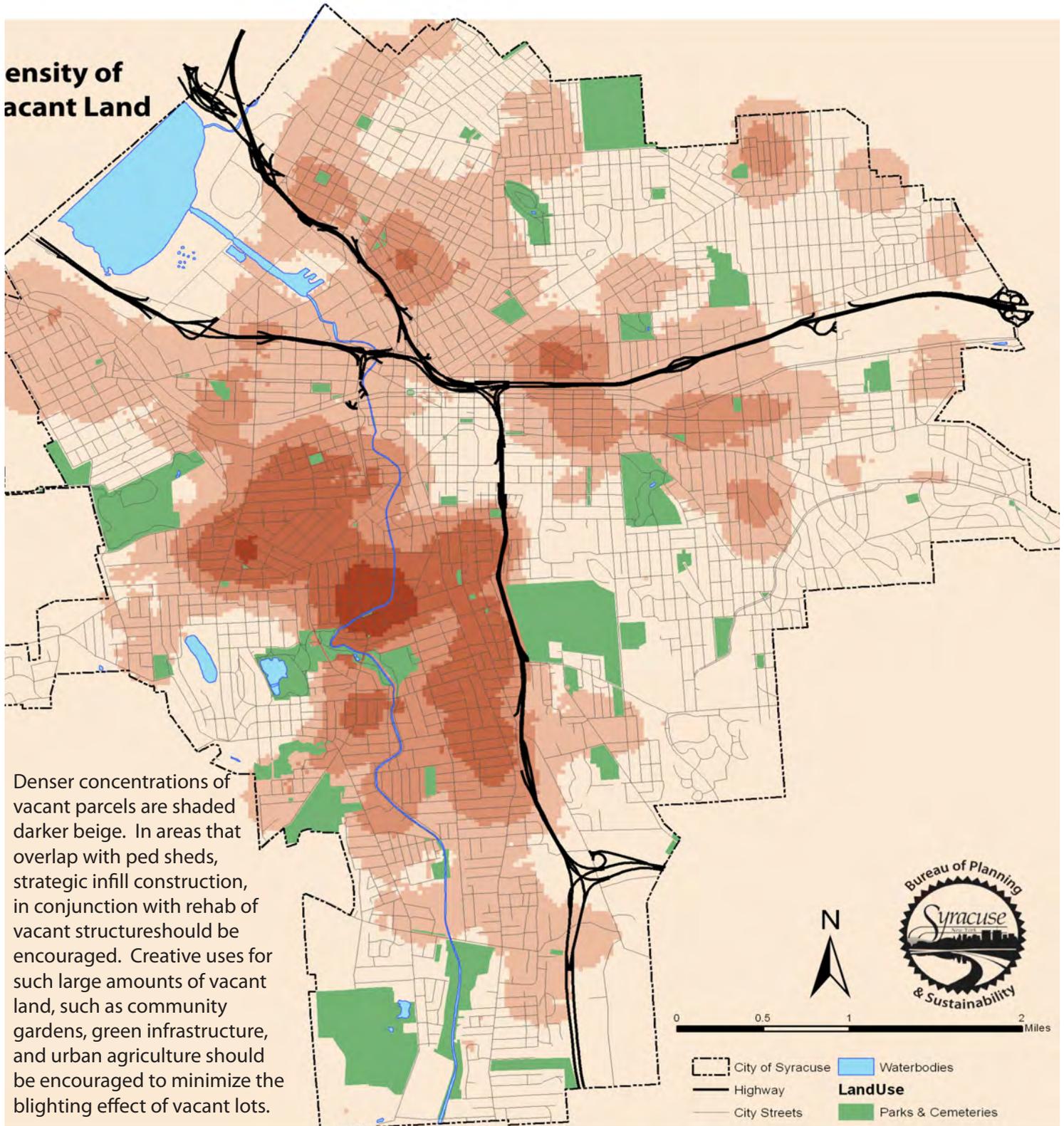
- **Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices¹**
Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.
- **Create Walkable Neighborhoods**
Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore 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.

¹ Taken from the Smart Growth Network’s website. Accessed September 8, 2010.
<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp>

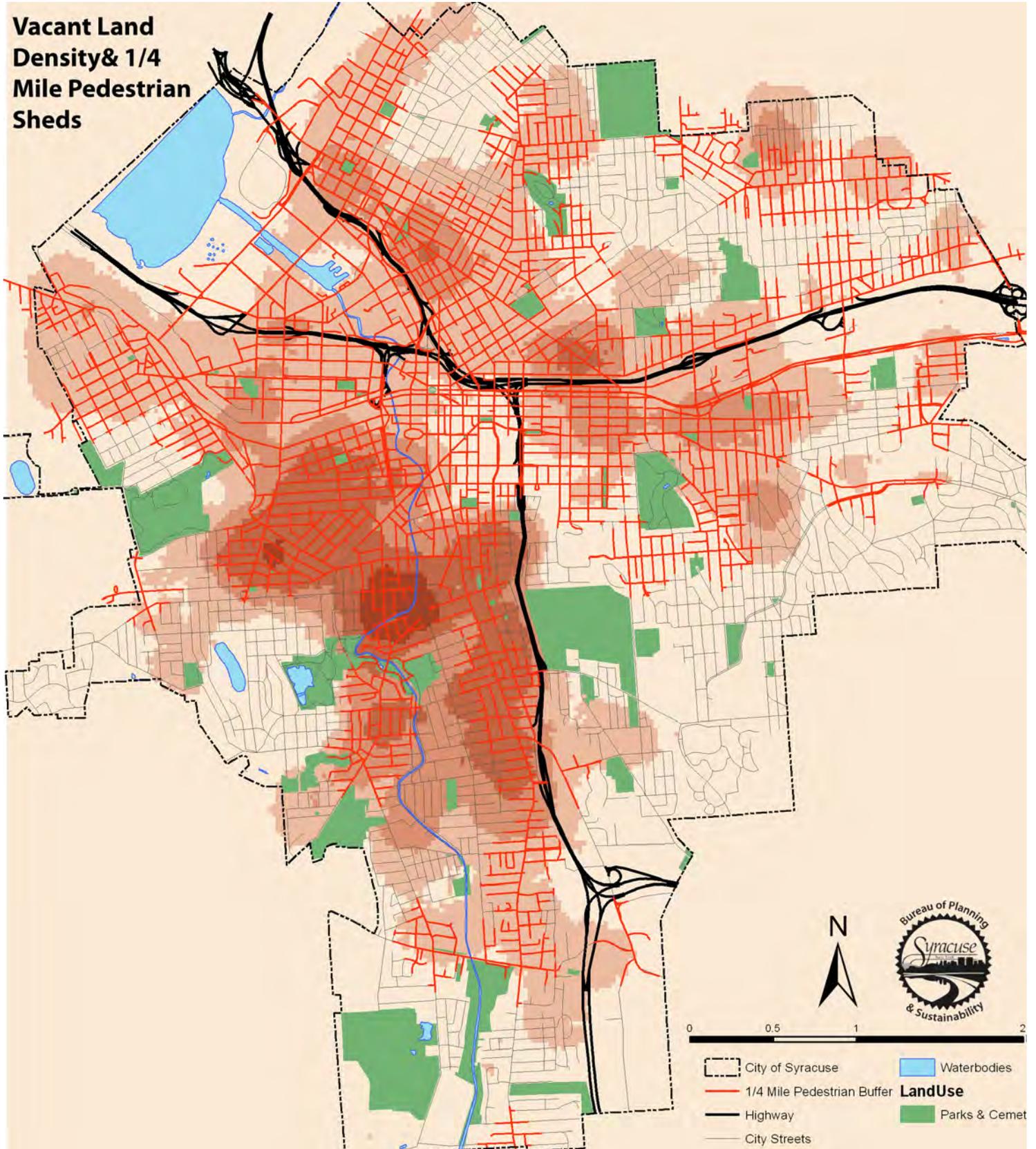
2000-2010 Population Change

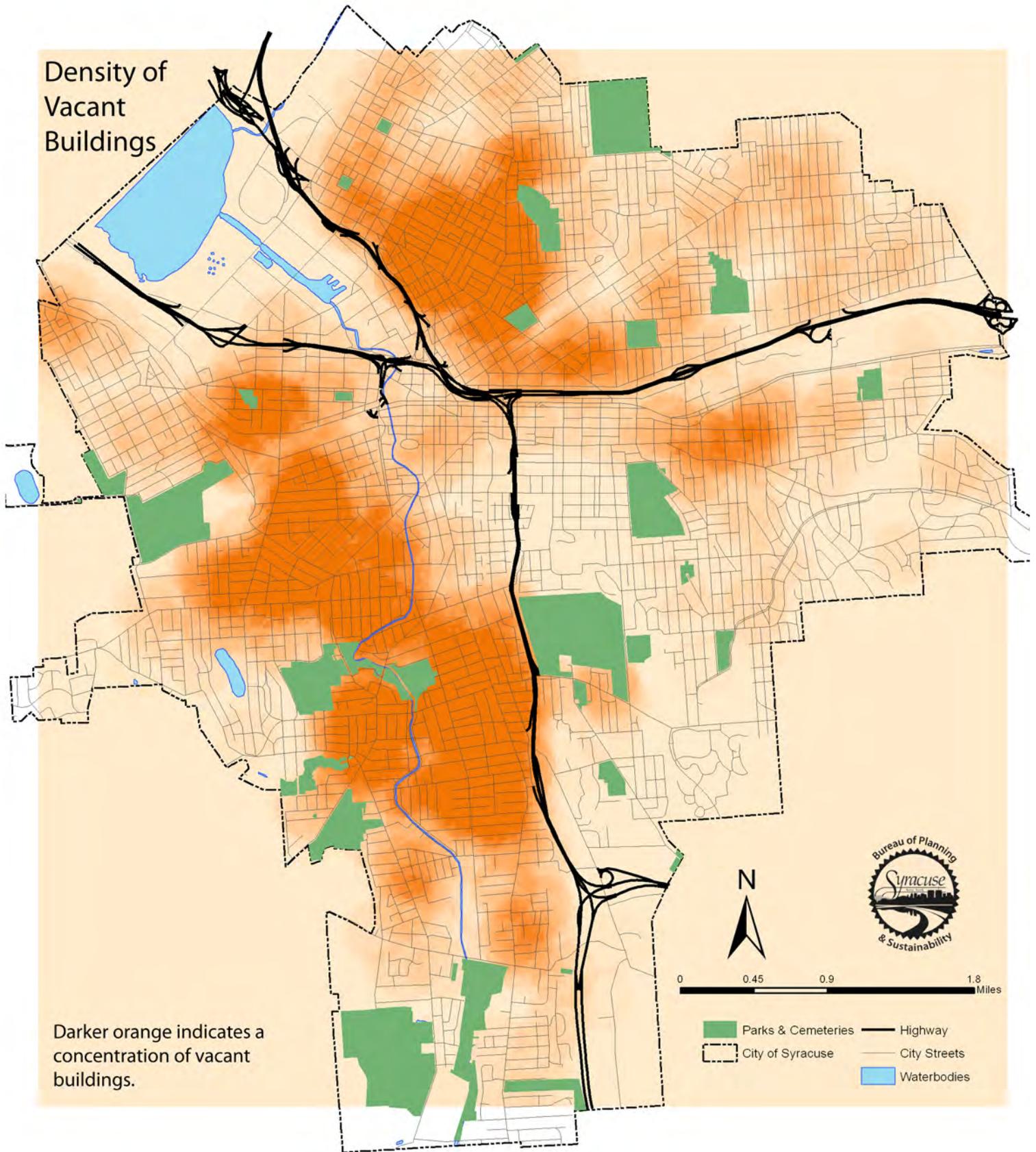


Density of Vacant Land

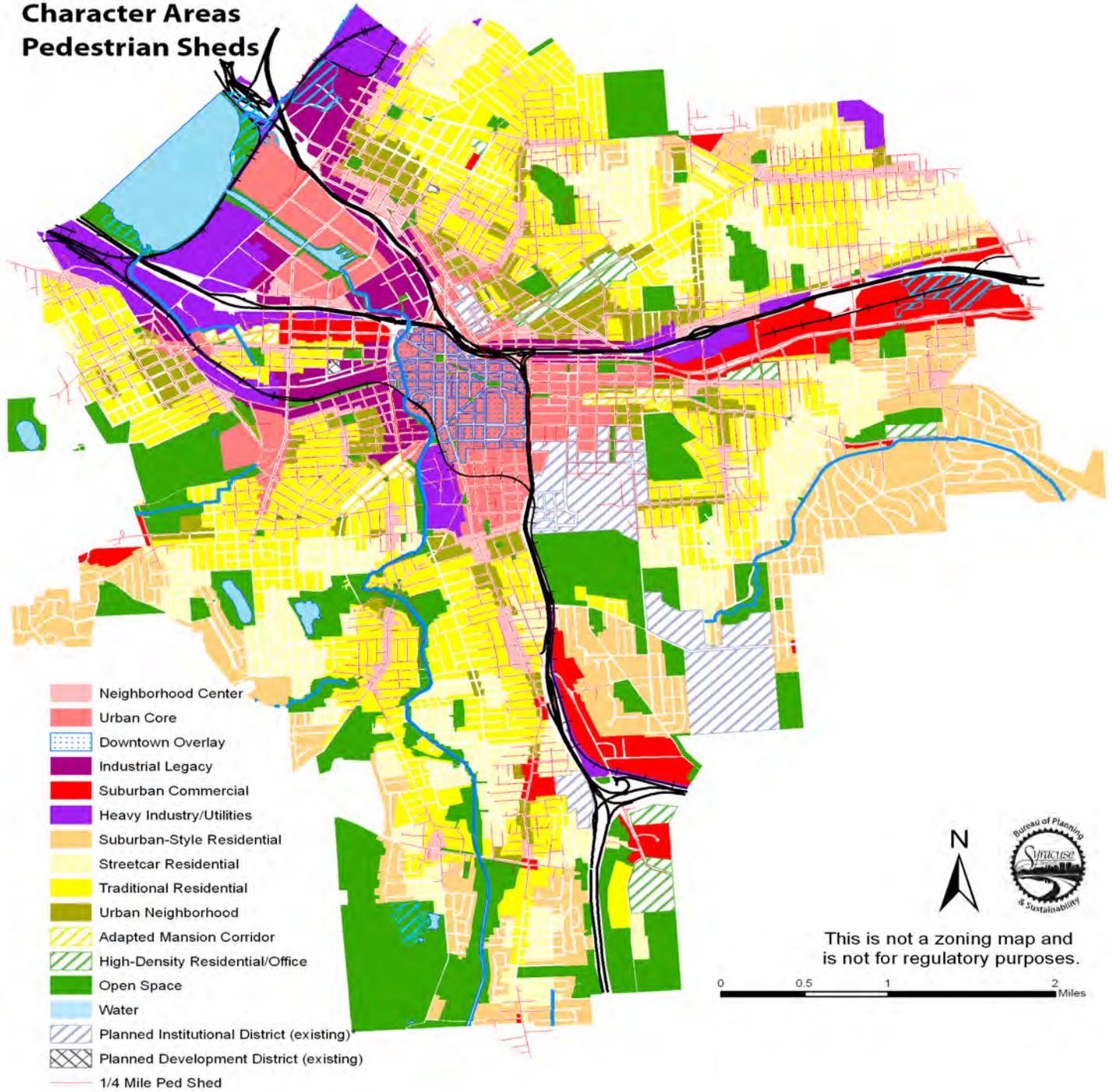


Vacant Land Density & 1/4 Mile Pedestrian Sheds



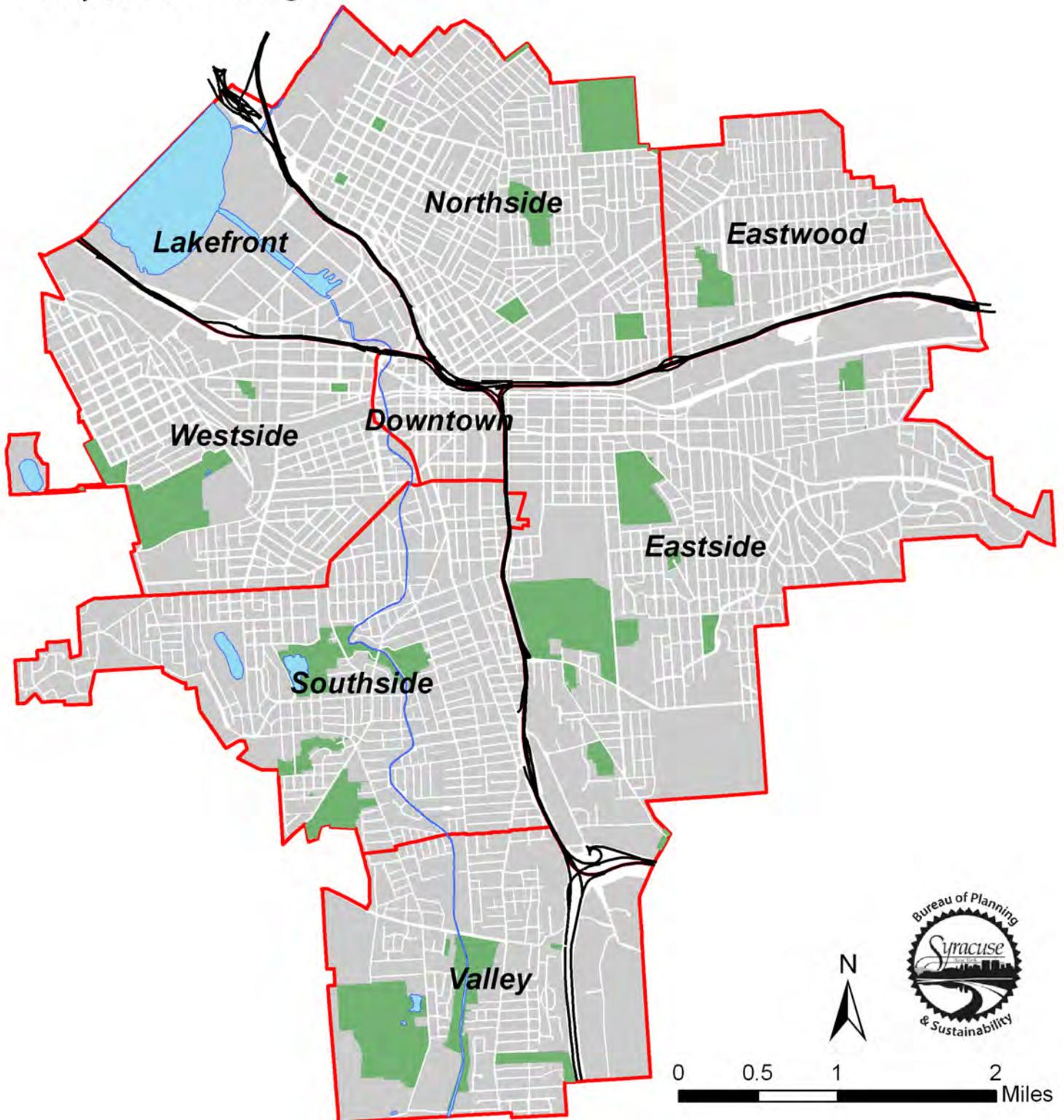


Future Land Use/ Character Areas Pedestrian Sheds



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.

Tomorrows' Neighborhoods Today (TNT) Planning Areas





CURRENT CONDITIONS

*North Salina Street
National Register
Historic District*

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.

*Hickock Avenue,
Eastwood Neighborhood*

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 and Hanover 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 framework of dense residential neighborhoods can economically 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 the original large footprint of many 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 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 Community Development Block Grant (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; one such example 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.² 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 known as Tipperary 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—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 developmental 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, baby boomers, and others searching out neighborhoods with more variety of activities occurring day-to-day. Some of these industrial buildings remain appropriate for manufacturing or light industry, while others are prime candidates

² The Historic Designed Landscapes of Syracuse, New York. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Properties Documentation. Landscape & Prospect. Syracuse, NY: September, 1994.

for adaptive reuse as commercial, residential, or mixed-use space. This kind of reuse has been successful in Armory Square and Franklin 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 Legacy 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 1930s 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). As a result, the trucking industry expanded, 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 the city became increasingly oriented toward the automobile in an effort to compete for development with suburban municipalities.

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 the 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 maintenance due to absentee ownership, declining resources for code enforcement, and the age of the building stock.

Generally speaking, as Syracuse has rapidly lost population over the past 60 years the population of the County has remained relatively stable, sprawling outward. (A more detailed discussion of suburbanization and population shifts is included below.) Had

it not been for stagnant regional growth, sprawl would not have 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 and building inventory 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 State 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 systems, encouraging more permeable surfaces on urban parcels, and the Creekwalk trail project. Other creeks and tributaries throughout the City have been little studied, and sensitive environmental areas will be included in the upcoming County Sustainable Development Plan and the City of Syracuse Sustainability Plan.

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.

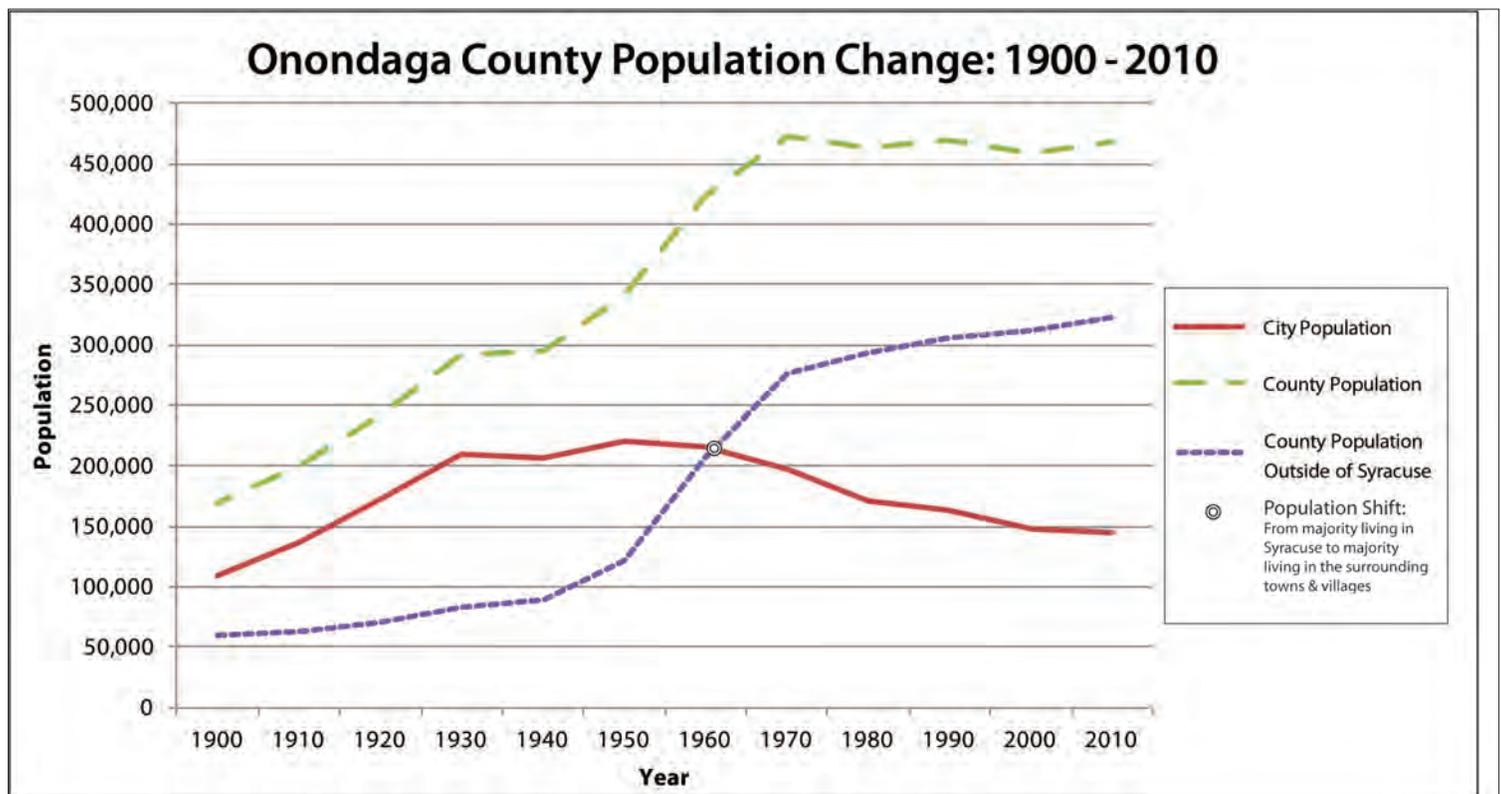
Regional Population Shifts and the Need for Smart Growth

Syracuse has lost 34.2 percent of its population since its peak in 1950, yet the population

³ U.S. Conference of Mayors Brownfields Survey, 2010. Syracuse Survey.

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 2010.⁴ 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.⁵

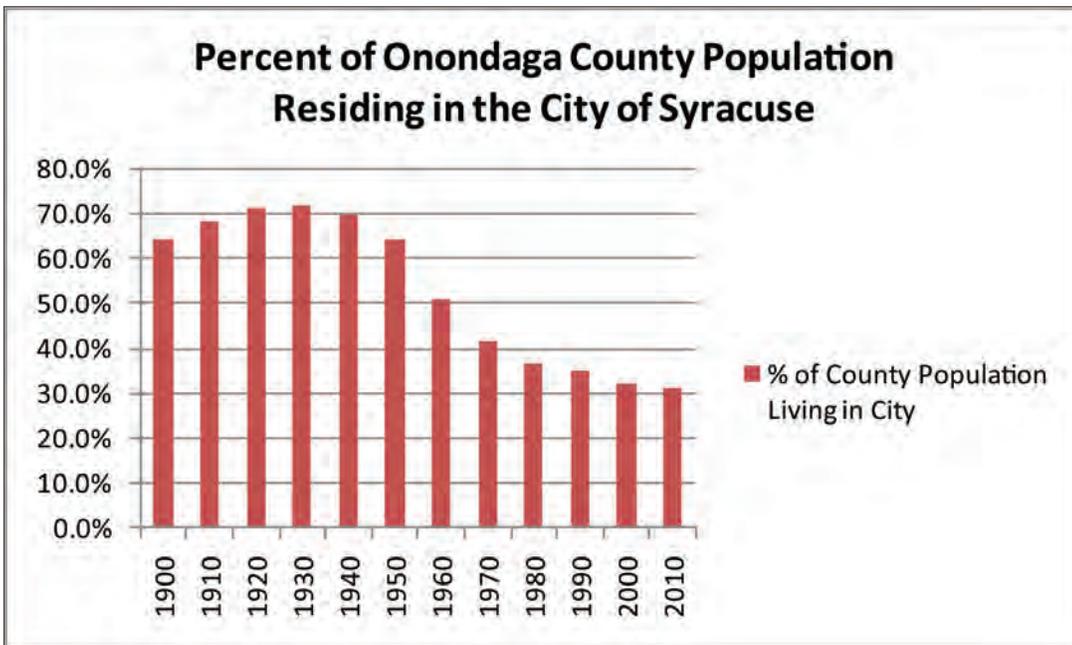
The population of Onondaga County as a whole has remained relatively stable since 1970. As of the 1960 U.S. Census the countywide population made a major shift, transitioning from the majority of county residents living in the City of Syracuse to the majority of county residents living in the surrounding towns and villages (see where these two lines cross in the graph below). This trend in county population shift toward the suburban towns continued at a rapid pace over the following decades.



Source: U.S. Census,
1900-2010.

4 U.S. Census.

5 Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency. "Understanding Our Region" PowerPoint Presentation, n.d. http://www.ongov.net/planning/documents/plan_presentation.pdf; accessed July 14, 2011.



Source: U.S. Census, 1900-2010.

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.⁶

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.⁷ 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.⁸

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

⁶ New York State Comptroller. Division of Local Government Services & Economic Development. Hevesi, Alan G. "Population Trends in New York State's Cities." Local Government Issues in Focus. December, 2004.; p. 5.

⁷ Katz, Bruce. Director, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution. "Confronting the Realities of Core Cities in Weak Markets." Rebuilding Upstate New York: What Works II Symposium. Syracuse, NY. May 2, 2005.

⁸ Pendall, Rolf, Matthew P. Drennan and Susan Christopherson. "Transition and Renewal: The Emergence of a Diverse Upstate Economy." The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program. January, 2004.

capacity is needed. Other Smart Growth-based, sprawl preventing bills are being currently discussed in the New York legislature.

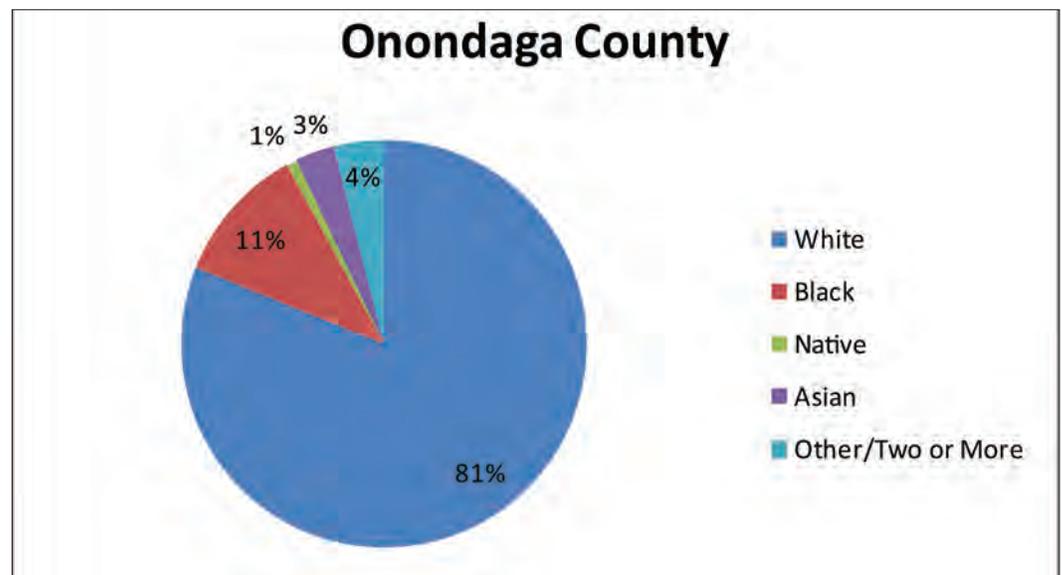
The following table shows how population in each TNT area has changed over the past decade, and the resulting population densities. Note that despite a dramatic population loss, the Southside remains the second most densely populated TNT area. The population growth on the Northside can largely be attributed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

TNT Area	2010 Population	'00-'10 Pop Change	2010 Persons/ Sq. Mile.	2010 Persons/ Acre
Northside	38,928	2,302	10,073	15.7
Eastwood	10,724	-277	5,792	9.1
Eastside	27,618	-2,718	4,120	6.4
Valley	8,422	-312	2,442	3.8
Southside	34,321	-9,396	9,085	14.2
Lakefront	579	186	247	0.4
Downtown	1,879	-18	3,863	6.0
Westside	22,697	27	7,364	11.5

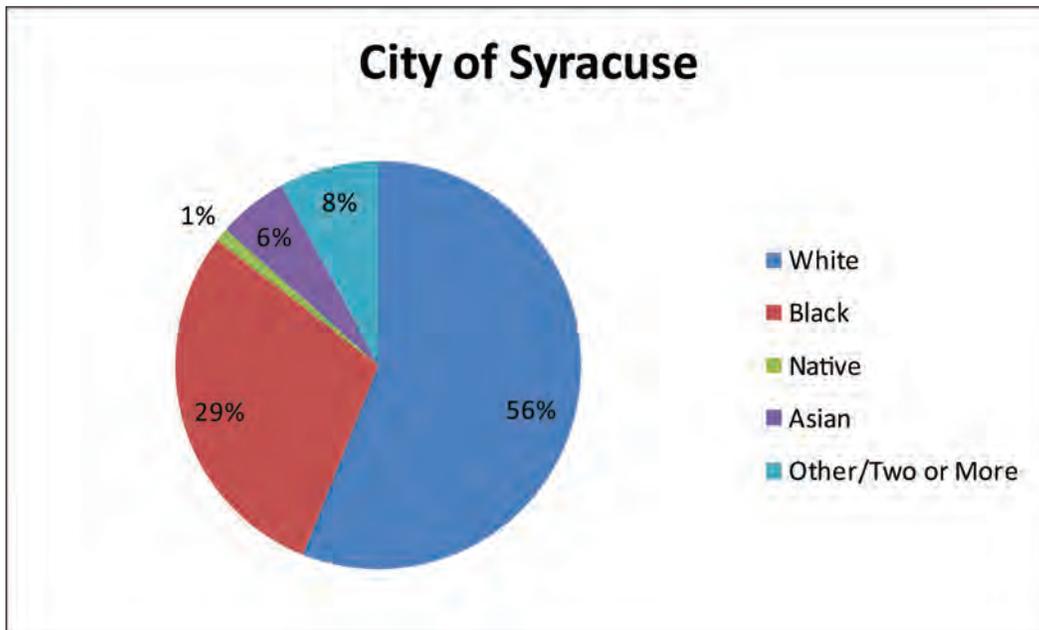
Residential Segregation, Concentrated Poverty, and their Relationship with Real Estate

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.



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.⁹ 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.

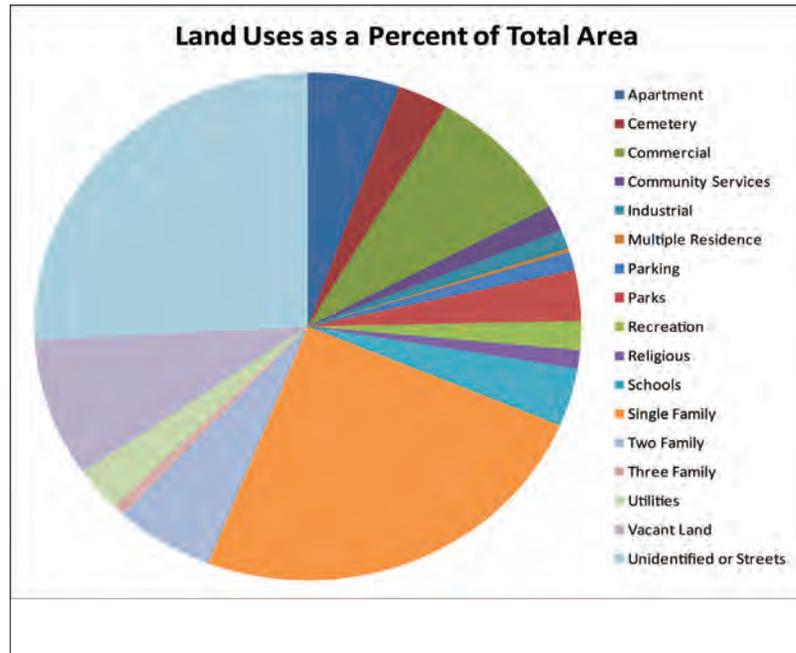
Relationship to Transportation Networks

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.

⁹ 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 restaurants, entertainment venues, and small-scale retail services within easy walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods.



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

Land Cover by Land Use

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

Source: Assessor's Rolls, September, 2010.

Percent of Land Use by TNT Area

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

VACANCY RATES

Stable real estate markets typically operate at five percent vacancy or less. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Syracuse's citywide vacancy rate was 10.9 percent (units, not buildings). 16 percent (nine of the 55 census tracts in Syracuse) of census tracts in the city have a vacancy rate of less than five percent. Half of the city's census tracts have a vacancy rate of 10 percent or less. However, a full quarter of the city's census tracts have vacancy rates of 15 percent or higher.¹⁰

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. In the past year, the New York legislature 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. The City is developing other strategies to address vacant buildings that are tax current, as well.

¹⁰ 2010 U.S. 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.

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

Source: AS400 Property Database, August, 2012.

This data is even more striking when mapped. Issues of vacancy and property abandonment are primarily concentrated in older, inner-ring neighborhoods with higher minority rates, higher crime rates, lower incomes, and lower levels of educational attainment.¹¹

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.¹²
- 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).

Source: Assessor's Rolls, September 2010.

11 Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan. City of Syracuse Dept. of Neighborhood & Business Development, May 2011.

12 Pendall, Rolf. "Sprawl Without Growth: The Upstate Paradox." The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program. October, 2003. AND New York State Comptroller. Division of Local Government Services & Economic Development. Hevesi, Alan G. "Population Trends in New York State's Cities." Local Government Issues in Focus. December, 2004.

- 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.¹³
- "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 employed by them and their related supporting businesses, 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 these Eds and Meds professionals.
- In recent years, Downtown has experienced increased investment and revitalization. Market rate housing has expanded dramatically in Armory Square, Hanover Square, and other neighborhoods in the city's core.
- "Urban homesteaders" are once again being drawn to the city by low housing prices, unique historic architecture, and walkable urban neighborhoods.¹⁴ 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.)
- While median household size has shrunk nationally, it has slightly increased in the City of Syracuse. An analysis of whether existing building stock is meeting the needs, or the projected needs, of Syracuse's population is needed.

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 global need to reduce the environmental footprint of cities favors cities like Syracuse that possess this infrastructure.
- Improved transportation service, utilizing this network of corridors, may help draw new residents to Syracuse, improve the quality of life of existing residents, and to bolster the market for neighborhood businesses.

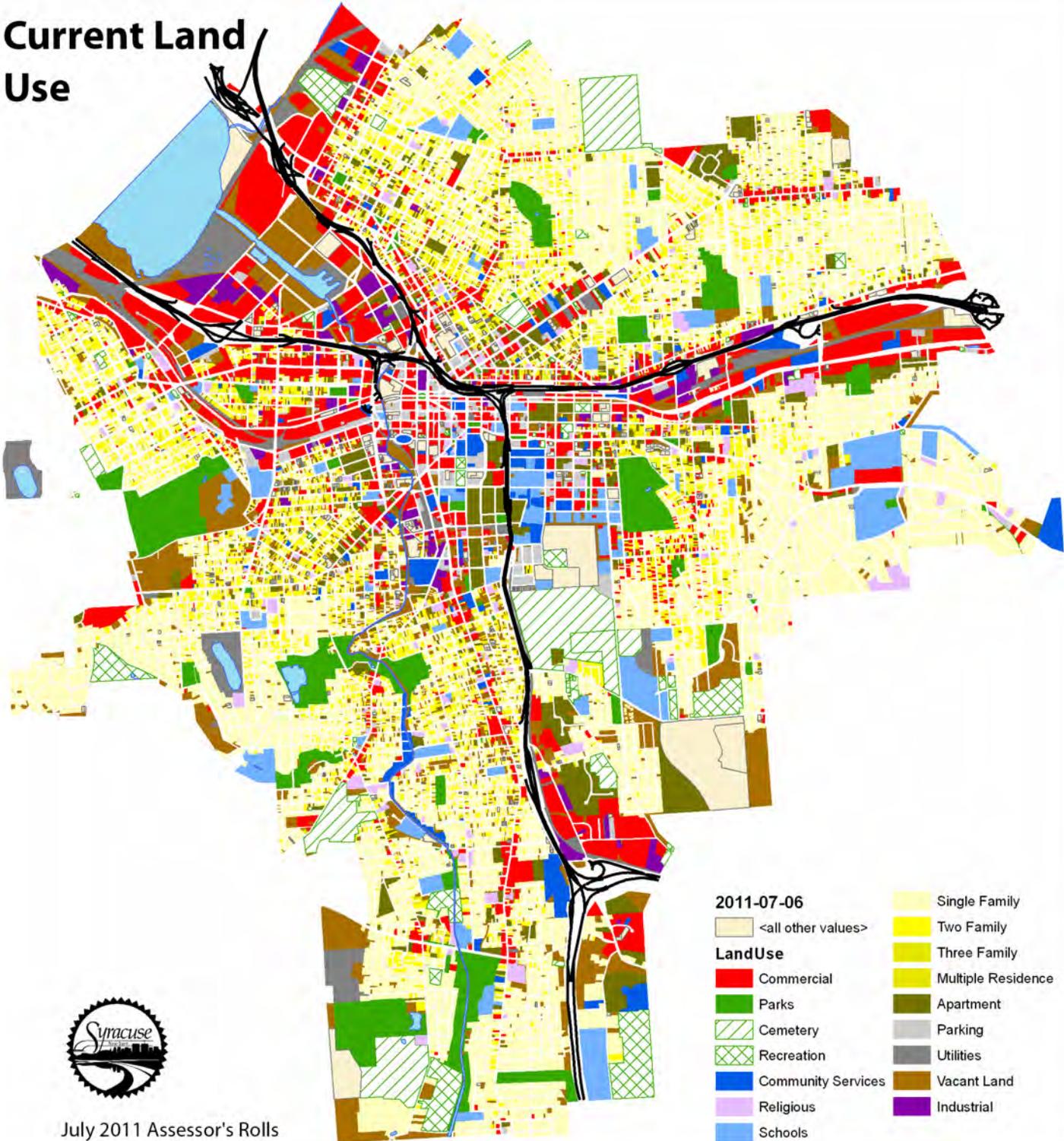
13 Brookings State of Metropolitan America Metro Profiles. Census 2000 to American Community Survey 2008 comparisons. <http://www.brookings.edu/metro/StateOfMetroAmerica> Accessed September, 2010. Syracuse's working-age population declined by 1.3% while Buffalo and Rochester lost 2.6% and 7.5%, respectively. Syracuse's median household income declined by 4.6% whereas Buffalo and Rochester's declined by 5.7 and 15.2%.

14 Brandes Gratz, Roberta, "Rebirth of a City," *The New York Times*, August 10, 2010, accessed September 7, 2010, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/10/rebirth-of-a-city/?scp=2&sq=syracuse&st=cse>.

Brandes Gratz, Roberta, "Redeveloping an Old City the Right (Thoughtful) Way," *www.citiwire.net*, July 18, 2010, accessed September 7, 2010. <http://citiwire.net/post/2155/>

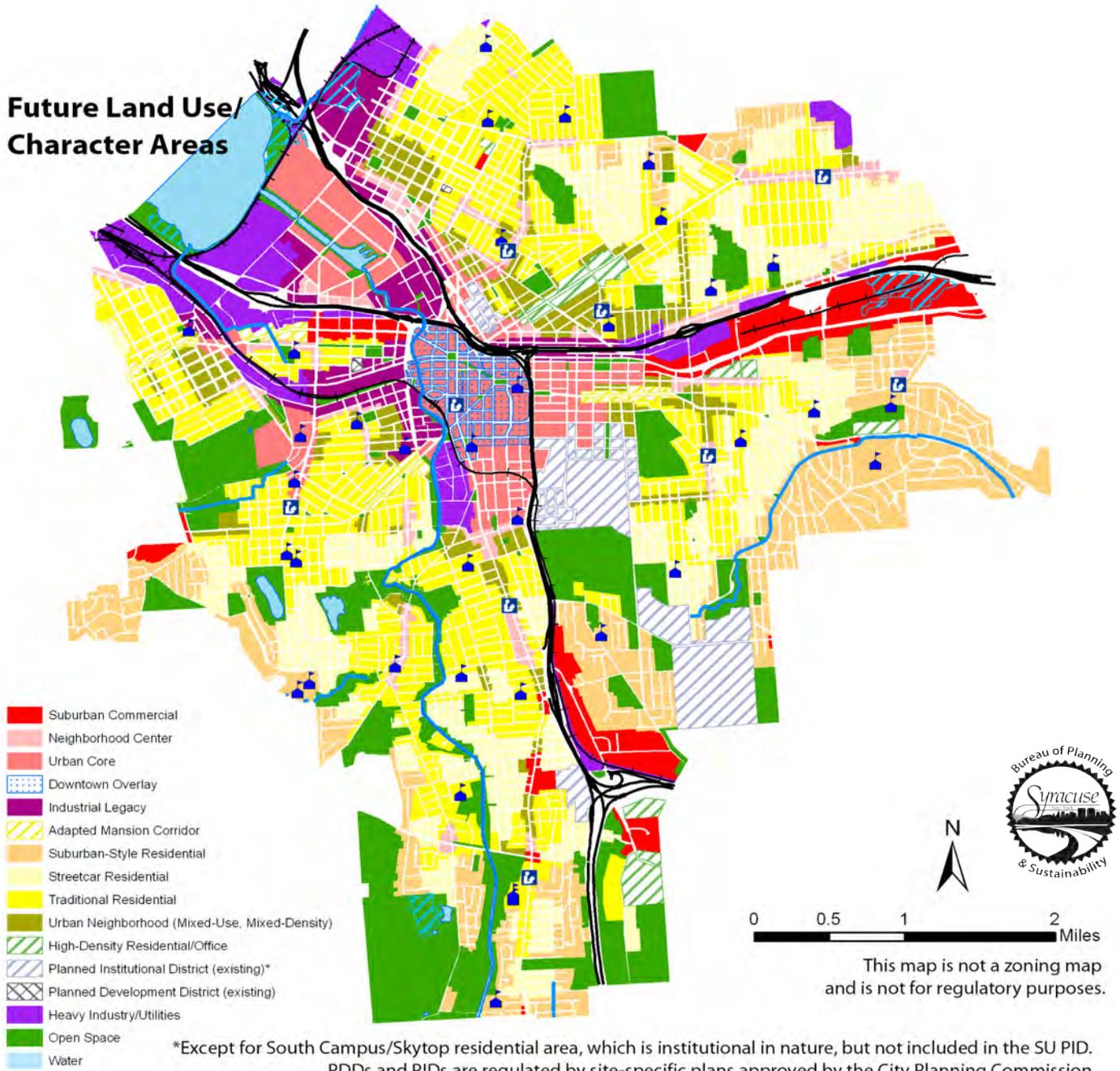
- Syracuse's infrastructure capacity must be protected from deterioration. Although not operating under full demand currently, this capacity is a valuable asset to market in the future in light of rising energy and transportation costs.
- Syracuse's affordable and distinctive historic homes are a draw to first-time homebuyers.
- Syracuse possesses a distinctive network of large parks, open spaces, and natural features such as Onondaga Creek. Efforts should be made to connect this network of open spaces, both for recreational activities and natural habitats.
- Large, former-industrial buildings are 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.

Current Land Use



July 2011 Assessor's Rolls

Future Land Use/ Character Areas



See larger, fold-out map for more detail.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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 (unadopted) draft Land Use Plan for the City of Syracuse. This draft plan was developed throughout 2010-2011 by an interdepartmental panel of City staff to better reflect Smart Growth principles and set the stage for a transition to a form-based zoning ordinance. Additional public feedback was gathered at TNT meetings in summer and fall of 2010 to inform the first draft and identify neighborhood-level priorities for future development.

Public feedback specific to this draft was gathered at TNT meetings during September and October of 2011. Several neighborhood-specific meetings were held as requested during the fall of 2011 and a city-wide public meeting was held in October. In addition, a focus group of local developers was held in October and was hosted by CenterState CEO.

A steering committee of planning staff and professionals, elected officials, and members of the City Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals reviewed the plan between September and December 2011. The draft was available for public review on the City's website (<http://www.syracuse.ny.us/LandUsePlan.aspx>) from August 2011 through August 2012 and comments were accepted during this time.

Between January and August 2012 the plan was revised to incorporate extensive feedback from TNT groups and the steering committee and a revised draft was presented to the Neighborhood Preservation Common Council in August 2012. The final draft incorporated feedback on the revised version from the Neighborhood Preservation Committee meeting and the plan steering committee.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Administrative Approval	Approval granted by the Zoning Administrator, rather than a legislative or quasi-judicial body such as the Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals.
Articulation (of a façade)	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.
Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)	The Board of Zoning Appeals hears applications requesting waivers from the standards allowed in a zoning district—use and area variances, sign waivers, etc.
Bus Pull-outs	Space for public transit busses to pull out of the traffic or parking lane, typically indented into the sidewalk and curb.
Complete Streets	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.
Corridor	A major transportation corridor. This may be lined with businesses or medium-density housing.
Curb cut	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.
Façade	Building surface or face. A single side elevation.
Fenestration Pattern	Window and door pattern. The pattern of openings in a façade.
Form (Building Form)	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.
Form-Based Code (Form-Based Zoning)	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.
Furnishings Zone	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.
Illegal Use	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).
Infill (Infill Development)	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.

Term	Definition
Lot Coverage	The percent of the lot that is covered with impermeable surface—buildings and driveways.
Massing (Building Massing)	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.
Node (Commercial Node/ Multi-Nodal)	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.
Nonconformity	A nonconformity is an existing use or structure that is not consistent with zoning regulations.
Nonconforming Structure/ Building	A nonconforming structure or building may be too large or located too close to the lot lines, violating new required setbacks.
Nonconforming Use	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).
Overlay District	A set of zoning standards that applies to a specific geographic area in addition to the standards of the underlying zoning districts.
Pedestrian Shed (Ped Shed)	The pedestrian shed is the ¼ mile buffer around a neighborhood center or other attraction that illustrates a five-minute walking distance.
Planning Commission (PC)	The Planning Commission hears cases that require a hearing according to the zoning ordinance, but follow specific guidelines—special use permits, resubdivisions, etc.
Planting Strip	Grass strip between the sidewalk and the curb. More common in residential areas. In commercial areas this is the furnishings zone (see definition).
Resubdivision	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.
Right-of-Way	The public right-of-way includes sidewalks, planting strips, and streets.
Scale	Relationship of the size of the building to the buildings around it and pedestrians. This is mostly related to the height of buildings, but
Screening	Elements used to visually screen or separate detrimental elements of a site. Commonly used to obscure parking areas, utilities, dumpsters, etc.
Setback (Building Setback)	The distance of the building façade or front of the building from the sidewalk or the right-of-way line.
Signage	Business (on-site or off-site, such as billboards) or way-finding signs visible from the right-of-way.

Term	Definition
Site Plan	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.
Siting	The arrangement of buildings and other elements on the site or parcel.
Smart Growth	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.
Special Use Permit	"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.
Spot-Zoning	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.
Subdivision	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.
Traffic Calming	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.
Use (Land Use)	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.
Variance (Area Variance, Use Variance)	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.
Vertical Articulation	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.
Walkability	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.

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