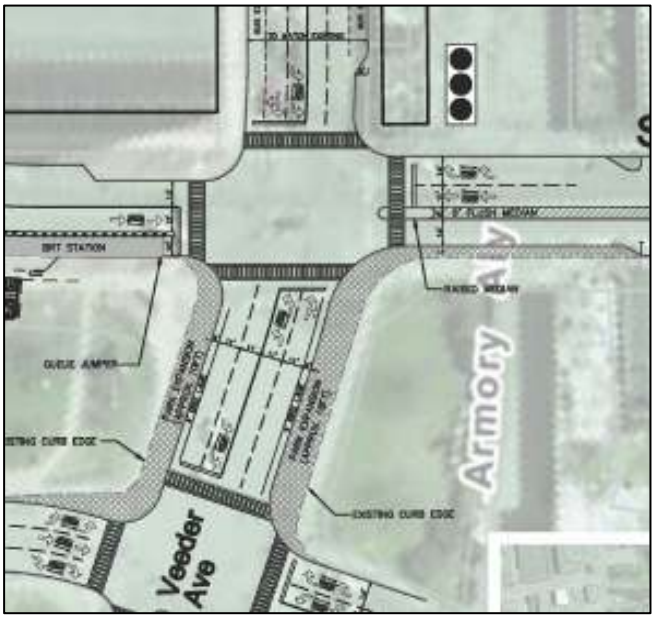
City of Schenectady

State Street
Transit Oriented Development
Study



Final Report
May 8, 2008

City of Schenectady State Street Transit Oriented Development Study May 8, 2008

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I. STUDY OVERVIEW

The plan emerged from a multi-team and multi-faceted effort. CDTC and CDTA managed the study, working with the Study Advisory Committee and a group of stakeholders representing the diverse interests in the study area. This plan benefited from the input and review of other project consultants working with CDTA on related Bus Rapid Transit planning initiatives. A list of the Study Advisory Committee members is included as Appendix A.

The planning Team was led by River Street Planning and Development in consultation with The Chazen Companies and Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. The team worked together throughout the process to identify issues, discuss and evaluate potential solutions and strategies, work with the community and ultimately determine the final plan. The Study Team was primarily responsible for reviewing existing studies, plans, and analysis conducted of the study area. The consultants also conducted extensive field research, visiting the site area, and evaluating opportunities for neighborhood revitalization. The background research, fieldwork and dialogue with CDTC and CDTA staff formed the basis for many of the identified strategies and programs.

Once these strategies and programs were identified, CDTC, CDTA and the Study Team organized two community input sessions held in the summer of 2007. This workshop presented final recommendations. The Study Team used the workshops to identify new ideas and concerns, refine the proposed strategies and programs, and shape the draft final plan.

A final public meeting was held in April 2008 prior to issuing a final project report. The Study Team used this meeting to present and discuss the recommended strategies and projects identified with members of the public. Comments and ideas raised at this meeting were incorporated into the report.

The remainder of this document discusses the key issues and concerns facing the neighborhood beginning with a report on the existing conditions and assessment of the challenges facing the neighborhood. Building on the existing conditions work, the report presents the short and longer-term strategies that will work toward achieving the stated study goals. The final section of the report lays out an implementation strategy.

Purpose

The City of Schenectady State Street Transit Oriented Development Study addresses land use and transportation system needs in the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods. Proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations on State Street at Nott Terrace and Steuben Street (a $600,000 investment) will help jump start the City's revitalization efforts in the neighborhoods of Hamilton Hill and Vale. Key aspects of this effort include analysis of economic development opportunities focused around transit-oriented

development, the location of the proposed BRT stations at Nott Terrace and Steuben Street where they intersect State Street, and the pedestrian environment in the neighborhoods.

The study area is primarily the State Street (NYS Route 5) corridor from Nott Terrace to Steuben Street with emphasis on transit-oriented development and the pedestrian environment surrounding a one-quarter mile radius of the proposed BRT stations at Nott Terrace and Steuben Street in the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods. The Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) and Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) have identified this area as distressed through the NYS Empire Zone and the Federal Renewal Community and as Environmental Justice target areas for low income and minority populations the neighborhood. It should be noted that the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods are separate neighborhoods, but for the purposes of this study are considered one target area.

The purpose of this study is to create a concept plan for transit-oriented development in the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods that supports CDTA's Bus Rapid Transit project on State Street (Route 5) through the year 2020. The BRT project, the two proposed stations at Nott Terrace and Steuben Street, and downtown redevelopment are the catalysts for the city to revitalize these challenged neighborhoods.

II. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) identified a range of assets and liabilities affecting the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods. They are described more fully in the document Summary of Previous Plans and Research (Appendix A) that reviews the following plans and studies:

The Schenectady 2020 Vision Plan and Zoning Ordinance

- City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan (2007)
- Hamilton Hill & Vale Neighborhood Plan (2006)
- City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan Transportation Assessment (2006)
- Visual Assessment by River Street Planning and Development (2006-2007)

Existing Plans and Studies for the City of Schenectady

- City of Schenectady Urban Bike Route Master Plan (2004)
- Downtown Master Plan (1999)
- Canal Square Redevelopment Plan (2004)
- Nott Terrace Conceptual Plan (2004)
- Vale Village Revitalization Feasibility Study (1999)

Regional Transportation and Land Use Studies

- NY5 Corridor Land Use & Transportation Study (2001)

Regional Transit Planning and Studies (Ongoing)

- NY 5 Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Design Study
- Transit Development Plan/Bus Rapid Transit Plan
- Route Design Principles
- Draft Annual Service Evaluation
- Draft 2006 Service Evaluation
- Route Characteristics
- Transit Propensity Index

Other Plans and Studies

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Future Transportation Projects
- Crash Data for the Study Area
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Data for the Study Area

SWOT Analysis

The analysis of opportunities and constraints affecting the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods includes:

Strengths

Many of the socio-economic factors described under weaknesses also provide immediate opportunities. Lower income constituencies offer high potential to ride transit. The increased densities proposed in the study area should result in increased pedestrian activity, more eyes on the street and a safer neighborhood.

Over the past decade, new investors have purchased dozens of buildings and have invested time and money in neighborhood revitalization. The investment is beginning to show, especially since Hamilton Hill and Vale is a relatively compact area, at 276 acres, one of the smallest city neighborhoods. Its size and relatively high density are promising for enhanced transit.

Hamilton Hill/Vale is home to numerous institutions and facilities that serve as community and neighborhood anchors, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Math Science & Technology Magnet School, Washington Irving Adult Education Center, Jerry Burrell Park, Vale Park, Hometown Health Services, the Head Start Program, Carver Community Center, Boys and Girls Club, and Hamilton Hill Branch Library. These programs provide critical community services and help the neighborhood to deal with public safety concerns. The neighborhood plan includes an action to help the numerous youth agencies located on Craig Street keep their young consumers safe from the increasing number of adults who live at or attend programs in neighborhood halfway houses/drug treatment facilities, especially as they are walking to after-school programs. The opportunity to address pedestrian safety and create defensible space is important.

Most of the Hamilton Hill/Vale neighborhood is zoned two-family residential or one of a variety of commercial designations. Land uses and zoning are consistent and relatively minor zoning modifications are being made as part of the Schenectady Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Update to address "spot zoning" and make improvements to existing commercial areas.

The City's housing development partners (Better Neighborhoods Inc., Habitat for Humanity and the Community Land Trust among others) have undertaken many successful rehabilitation projects in the area. The City's efforts to substantially increase code enforcement, demolish, and redevelop problem properties will compliment the nonprofit sector response. Opportunities to develop senior housing are being investigated and should help stem the loss of seniors from the neighborhood and the loss of the stabilizing influence they provide. Taken together with these housing improvements, the TOD initiatives can set an important precedent for public improvement in the inner-city low-income neighborhoods. It can also address environmental justice issues and help to correct impediments to fair housing by increasing mobility of low and moderate-income residents.

The City's approach to comprehensive planning is neighborhood-based and inclusive which helps to strengthen partnerships and provide a strong foundation for this plan. Based on a similar neighborhood based strategy, the Vale Village Plan successfully leveraged over $10.0 million in grant funds and implemented many streetscape improvements. The historic (National Register of Historic Places listed) Vale Park and Vale Cemetery provide tremendous and diverse recreational opportunities. These are rare and important historic resources, although public safety in the park has been identified as a concern. The neighborhood plan outlines an action to develop a pedestrian promenade along the edge of the park behind the houses that border on Vale Park from Mynderse Street to Close Street, and then along Lottridge Street to Nott Terrace and to develop a pedestrian link to connect Vale Park and Cemetery to Central Park and the Central Business District. The park connection project was funded recently by a multi-modal grant for $628,000.

The Downtown Master Plan and Canal Square Redevelopment Plan identify actions that will bring more people into downtown during the daytime and evening hours. They propose initiatives in a relatively small geographic area to maximize impact. Redevelopment of Canal Square and other projects will create more jobs, bring more employees to Schenectady from other communities, expand the tax base, etc... The specific downtown retail and entertainment uses, especially the rejuvenated Proctors Theater and new cinema will bring families of all incomes downtown. As the retail environment expands, it will create entry–level and "low/mod eligible" job opportunities as well as expanded retail choice. Many residents have expressed pride in the success of downtown and the attractiveness of the streetscape and want the City to concentrate the same intensity of resources in the neighborhood corridors, especially State Street, in upcoming years. The downtown area is of high propensity for transit use based upon demographics and ridership.

In terms of transportation issues, the primary need is ongoing maintenance, and in some cases, design modifications to enhance safety and quality of life. At the neighborhood level, transportation concerns are more about pedestrian safety and comfort, transportation alternatives, and neighborhood quality of life rather than traffic and congestion. In general, the city's road system appears to be adequate to support continued residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment without significant changes or expansions to the network. The City's streets are generally in good condition, however, although the City does repair some portion of its streets on an annual basis, limited financial resources have created a backlog of paving projects and it falls short of the nine miles annually that would ensure that each street is repaired within a twenty-year time frame. Crash data indicates that the main segments are generally safe, but concern exists for a number of intersections that should be more carefully evaluated as part of this study.

Transit is critical to the neighborhood. The State Street/Route 5 corridor performs very well. In FY2006, corridor ridership topped 3 million for the first time. From CDTA's perspective, the primary issues regarding transit service in the City of Schenectady include a need to improve performance on neighborhood routes. CDTA has taken a comprehensive look at the overall route structure and performance in an effort called the Transit Development Plan (TDP). CDTA's Board adopted the plan in January 2007, which includes the designation of route categories and desired characteristics, an established procedure for annual route performance evaluation, and route design guidelines. Because many of Schenectady's neighborhood routes do not adhere to the route design guidelines and/or operating characteristics, changes in their configuration and/or schedules is recommended. CDTA is evaluating

routes and changes to significantly improve service along the State Street Corridor dealing more effectively with night routes, transporting workers at hospital shift change, and enabling more cross-town connections. The planned BRT program will significantly expand service answering a strong call for evening and weekend service by young people and adults alike. Three projects are already funded on the TIP: development of the NY5 BRT stations (T-70), a park and ride lot on Route 5 (T-74), and a transit signal priority project between the cities of Albany and Schenectady (T-75).

State Street's revitalization is consistent with, and integral to, regional initiatives including the Route Five Land Use and Transportation Plan that concludes: "Over time, more buildings will front directly onto the street that will be improved with better sidewalks, street trees, and other amenities that make it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians. Pedestrian improvements support increased foot traffic in retail areas, make the neighborhoods livable, support transit ridership, and make community centers more accessible.

Weaknesses

Hamilton Hill and Vale is a poor inner city neighborhood facing long-term disinvestment. The neighborhood lost nearly 21% of its population between 1990 and 2000, the greatest population loss of all city neighborhoods. The largest decrease was by seniors and pre-school age children.

The neighborhood has the city's lowest median household income, with nearly 67% of all households considered low and moderate income, 45.8% of households' very low income and nearly 21% of residents living below the poverty level in 2000. Many adults are unemployed or underemployed. Those who work often work multiple jobs and many lack health insurance. Residents have limited buying power and there is limited retail choice. Too many purchases are made at overpriced convenience stores. Attraction of additional commercial uses to vacant storefronts and vacant lots, and improving the visual appearance of buildings through streetscape and façade improvements is badly needed within the target area.

Significant crime, drug and prostitution were the top priority problems identified by residents in the neighborhood plan. The neighborhood lacks defensible space for adults and children. Some video surveillance is in place, but residents would like to see this program significantly expanded. Residents are concerned about the safety of many children who walk to and from school and to after-school programs through dangerous areas. Identifying safe routes and safe locations is an important task. Vale Park is a great asset but security concerns limit its use. Other than Vale Park, the neighborhood has very limited park and recreation space (Jerry Burrell Park is less than three acres).

The housing market is suppressed. In 2000, there were high residential vacancies (13.5% rental and 16.5% for sale vacancy). With only 13% of land vacant, new development will likely involve acquisition and demolition of existing property to create development sites.

In community meetings, Hamilton Hill residents identified the need for improved sidewalks and crosswalks, installation of additional bus shelters (particularly at schools and community centers) and traffic calming to slow speeding cars. Within Vale, modifications to traffic patterns are needed to reduce crime and improve neighborhood stability. According to the pedestrian accommodation index, most streets provide a barely satisfactory pedestrian environment, with the exception of Swan Street that is unacceptable. It is generally accepted that the City could benefit from going on a "road diet" and/or other

traffic calming initiatives. While downtown State Street and the section between Fehr and Furman have been improved (though more management is required), study area conditions include excessively wide streets with poor access management and an intimidating pedestrian environment. There are no park and ride lots in the neighborhood though CDTA is negotiating a 10-year lease agreement with St. Luke's Church for a shared-use arrangement.

While the City's urban Bike Route Master Plan recommends important improvements, it does not address the target area. It does outline urban bicycle route design standards that should be applied to the neighborhood as bicycle routes are identified. There are no bicycle travel facilities in the neighborhood and bicycle accommodation index results are very low for all streets in the target area.

Problems on Nott Terrace identified in the Linkage Study are similar to problems in the study area: lack of crosswalks, roadway widths, inadequate sidewalks, marginal lighting, strip development and lack of street edge. There has been only minimal improvement on Nott Terrace since the Linkage Study was completed. Implementation of this strategy will be essential to support and enhance BRT station location on Nott Terrace.

Opportunities

The percentage of owner occupied housing in Hamilton Hill and Vale increased between 1990 and 2000. Housing is available for rehabilitation and redevelopment, though it is increasingly expensive. New homebuyers, especially Guyanese residents, have driven up the price of housing; sometimes beyond the level that non-profit agencies can afford to acquire sites for housing rehabilitation. The Neighborhood is a Federal Renewal Community, State Empire Zone and a CDBG eligible target area that increases access to grant funds from State and Federal sources, though the national movement to eliminate CDBG and other related programs could affect Hamilton Hill and Vale significantly.

The neighborhood has the highest concentration of minority residents of any of the neighborhoods (61%) in the city. The diversity and cultural richness this represents is an important opportunity. The development of an ethnic themed business cluster on Crane Street could encourage the development of other ethnic retail clusters in the target area. The neighborhood's population is the youngest of the City's neighborhoods (at 28.9 years it is nearly five years younger that the city average). Additional recreation, bicycle and pedestrian amenities will meet the need of the neighborhood's young population.

There is a significant concentration of community service agencies providing all kinds of supportive services for adults, seniors and youth. Their continued and expanded participation is an opportunity.

A considerable portion of the City's annual road budget is spent on sidewalk replacement and expansion. There was consistent support for incentives to improve existing and expand the City's sidewalk network. Zoning changes and parking requirement modifications to encourage construction of related BRT facilities and higher development densities at the identified station nodes are being reviewed as part of the current zoning update.

In the downtown, the presence of MVP and DOT as anchors, and the plans for significant waterfront redevelopment and technology development along Erie Boulevard ensure that State Street remains a key

commuting corridor. Current development of an intermodal transportation center at the Schenectady Train Station and related planned improvements should strengthen the use of public transportation and help expand employment opportunities for residents. The presence of Metroplex is an important opportunity and one unique in the region. After many years of concentrated effort in the downtown, Metroplex has expressed interest in other commercial corridor improvement initiatives.

CDTA and CDTC have dedicated funding for a Transportation Demand Management initiative that focuses on reducing demand for single occupancy vehicles especially during times of congestion. One program supports homeownership in transit supportive neighborhoods. CDTA is interested in expanding a pilot program in Midtown Albany to other corridors including the target area for this study in Schenectady. CDTA will provide up to 24 months of unlimited CDTA service access to referred participants (who are certified as new homeowners and promise to remain in their residence for at least 24 months) who agree to initial, progress and exit surveys on travel behavior.

Threats

Most of the threats confronting the neighborhood are long standing, including intractable inter-generational poverty, population loss, long-term disinvestment, high residential vacancies and high crime rates. Left unchecked, crime and vandalism will further devastate this neighborhood and continue to spill over into the Central State Street, Eastern Avenue and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods. Population decline is bleeding the neighborhood of required density to support retail development, new housing and transit. The loss of seniors and their stabilizing influence on the neighborhood will be significant if the trend continues.

Population decline has left excess housing units in the neighborhood. Residents perceive that conversions of the typical two-family residence into multiple apartments over the past two decades have increased the vacancy rate. The ongoing property revaluation should help to clarify this issue. Some units are being removed from the inventory (the neighborhood lost almost 10% of units between 1990 and 2000). While the removal of unsafe, code-violated structures eliminates blight and has a positive influence it also results in decreased density and transit demand. If carefully planned, demolition of housing can create sites for new higher density housing like town homes, that are in demand in the region and missing from the housing supply. Existing vacant commercial sites near Mohawk Office Supply and at the corner of Hulett and State act as a blighting influence, but also represent important redevelopment opportunities.

Hostile pedestrian environments and less than optimal public transportation service constrain economic opportunities available to Schenectady households because more than 20% are without a car and nearly 46% have only one car. Limited funding and the potential loss of important programs like CDBG, remains the primary obstacle to accomplishing most of the necessary and desired transportation enhancements.

III. VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The Study Advisory Committee (SAC) drafted the following vision statement and principles to guide the study and serve as a touchstone to evaluate the success of implementation.

> "Transit oriented development along the State Street Corridor in the City of Schenectady's Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods will be a catalyst for revitalization and redevelopment of distinct low and moderate income neighborhoods of choice. It will stimulate pedestrian oriented, mixed use and moderate to high-density new investment. The planned Bus Rapid Transit stations at Nott Terrace and Steuben Street will anchor an integrated multi-modal transportation network that improves connections to State Street and the downtown, improves the pedestrian and bicycling environment, reduces conflicts with motor vehicles and increases transit usage. New development will be well integrated into the existing urban fabric, create attractive streetscape, promote social interaction and help improve public safety. Land use benefits of higher density and compact development along transit routes will include higher quality of life, greater mobility, and reduced pollution. Transportation benefits will include increased transit ridership, reduced traffic congestion and driving, and reduced household spending on transportation. Residents, workers and visitors will enjoy the health benefits of improved conditions for walking and bicycling. The City will enjoy higher, more stable property values, and local businesses will enjoy increased foot traffic and customer base. The initiative will be feasible and implementable, building upon new economic investment and taking advantage of a range of financing methods and funding sources and partnerships.

Principles:

- **Asset-Based**: Build on the existing and historic neighborhood assets including: the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Math Science Technology and Invention Magnet School, Community Business Center, Weed and Seed program, non-profit housing partnerships, rich array of community services, historic Vale Park and Cemetery among others. These assets will be used to strengthen community pride and willingness to take care of the neighborhood. They will strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones for the good of the neighborhood.
- **Safety:** Foster improved public safety through creation of defensible space around the transit stations and in other key locations. Improve roadway and intersection safety for all modes of travel.
- **Housing Affordability, Quality and Choice:** Improve residential quality of life through rehabilitation, infill construction and development of new housing types including senior housing and market rate rentals. Encourage a high rate of owner occupancy. Use CDTA homeowner incentives in transit supportive neighborhoods and consider using other resources to promote affordable homeownership for existing neighborhood residents.
- **Neighborhood Commerce**: Encourage new and expanded local businesses and build employment opportunities in the neighborhood. Expand commercial, service and retail choice.
- **Efficient Transportation**: Assist households to minimize transportation costs by improving transportation accessibility and efficiency. Encourage transit rather than auto-dependence. Provide transit service that is fast, frequent, reliable, safe and comfortable.
- **People Friendly**: Ensure walkable design, lighting, safety and aesthetics that increase resident comfort moving to and from transit stops, residential areas and commercial areas. Buildings should be pedestrian-scaled. Good connectivity and traffic calming features should control vehicle

traffic speeds and make streets friendly to non-motorized transportation by reducing both vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts and vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

- **Mixed Income**: Focus on improving amenities and livability for the existing population, and protect the neighborhood from gentrification. Recognize that long-term stability of the neighborhood requires income sufficiency and diversity.
- **Mixed Use**: Blend uses including housing, schools, churches, public services, retail and commercial uses with public open spaces. Mixed use makes it possible to socialize and shop for basic needs without using a car and create evening and weekend activities with more "feet on the street."
- **Connectivity:** Encourage connectivity between modes of transportation, between properties, open spaces, and geographic areas (viewing State Street as the Link between Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods and with the downtown). Integrate land uses and transportation with a focus on making the walking trip connected, convenient and safe.
- **Density and Compactness:** Focus infill development and new uses (such as senior housing) with in a quarter mile or 5-10 minute walk of the transit stops. Support sustainable high-quality transit service by encouraging additional density around transit stops.
- **Urban Character:** Preserve architectural character and style. Use design guidelines to ensure that new development is consistent or complementary in scale and massing with existing structures. Ensure that new development is urban rather than suburban (big boxes) in both building and site design.
- **Public Space/Landscaping**: Incorporate well-designed public spaces and streetscapes (including pocket parks, tot lots, squares, and public plazas) whenever possible. Include attractive landscaping, tree planting (and tree maintenance/replacement). Make connections to Vale Park.
- **Multi-Modal:** Design the neighborhood for cycling and walking, with adequate facilities and attractive street conditions. Bus Rapid Transit stations should accommodate the easy use of bicycles and include bike lanes separate from pedestrian and car lanes when possible. Provide secure bicycle parking at stations.
- **Parking Management** - Reduce the amount of land devoted to parking and take advantage of cost savings associated with reduced automobile use. Promote shared use parking and design parking facilities to be pedestrian friendly.

IV. OVERVIEW OF BRT AND TOD

What is Bus Rapid Transit?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) combines the speed, reliability, and amenities of a rail system with the flexibility (and lower cost) of buses. BRT emphasizes both speed and reliability, and is most effective in developed (and developing) corridors with concentrations of residents, employees, and land uses. BRT is especially desirable in urbanized areas where passenger flows need frequent service, and there is a sufficient "presence" of buses. The Route 5 Corridor between Schenectady and Albany is an example of this type of urbanized area; to provide sufficient transit access, CDTA is planning the region's first BRT route along this corridor. In support of the BRT transportation services proposed for the corridor, land use and development improvements are also recommended. The BRT stations proposed in the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods of Route 5/State Street offer an optimal opportunity to focus development around the new transit service. This type of station area-focused development is known as Transit Oriented Development.

CDTA's planned Route 5 BRT system will be implemented in phases. Capital improvements at Schenectady's Veeder/Nott and Steuben stations including installation of a CDTA totem, weather-protected shelter, and information kiosk are planned for 2008; installation of real-time information displays to inform passengers when the next bus will arrive is planned for these stations in 2009. Service improvements along the corridor, including implementing skip stop service that will result in a shorter travel time between Schenectady and Albany is planned for 2010. Ticket vending machines to allow for off-vehicle fare payment (and faster boarding) and video surveillance equipment are planned for installation in 2010. CDTA has not specified the totem design, but the proposed Veeder/Nott shelter is illustrated on the next page.

What is Transit Oriented Development?

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is commonly defined as mixed-use development focused around (and designed to maximize access to) public transportation, with an emphasis on pedestrian circulation and accessibility. Typical elements of this design strategy include:

- **Elevated densities** – Increased population and employment densities place more potential riders within walking distance of transit stations/stops;
- **Mixed-uses** – Retail, office, residential, community services, and public space promote concentrations of public activity around transit stations/stops, increasing the prominence of transit in the community, as well as facilitating trip chaining linked to transit (i.e., stopping at a dry cleaners or day care facility on the way to the train during a morning commute, instead of making separate trips); and
- **Pedestrian orientation** – Placing daily goods and services, as well as recreational destinations, within walking distance of residents reduces incentives for car ownership and use, supporting transit use for commuting and other regional travel.

TOD has been promoted for decades in the United States as a means of promoting smart growth, expanding lifestyle options, boosting transit's share of trips (especially commuter trips), and revitalizing neighborhoods. It is promoted as a means of redressing a number of the ill effects attributed to urban and suburban sprawl, including traffic congestion, air pollution, open space consumption, and a diminishing sense of civic connection in modern residential communities.

Today, TOD projects are becoming more and more common throughout the country. A recent survey of transit agencies[1] identified more than 100 TOD projects that have been developed, or are in the planning stages. Expansion of existing transit systems and implementation of new systems across the country has added further momentum to the TOD movement, often by allowing cities to place transit services within districts where residential growth is strongest. New rail or bus rapid transit (BRT) systems are planned or under construction in all but three of the 30 largest U.S. metropolitan areas.

TOD is commonly located outside of city centers, in both inner-ring and outer suburbs. TOD tends to produce development of modest scale, though with residential densities well above suburban norms (20-30 dwelling units per acre compared to 5-6). These projects also incorporate a mixture of land uses, the most common components of which include:

[1] Transportation Cooperative Research Program, *Report 102: Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospect* (2004).

- Mid-rise office buildings with street-level retail;
- Residential townhouses and condominiums;
- Restaurants and entertainment destinations; and
- Civic spaces and buildings such as plazas and libraries.

Transit Oriented Development has enormous potential to help Schenectady redevelop as a more economically vibrant, livable community, while increasing transit ridership, and reducing vehicular congestion on area roadways. Increasing the number of people who live and work within walking distance of CDTA service is one of the most effective ways to increase ridership. TOD also brings broader benefits to the community, including other public sector entities, citizens, private enterprises like employers and developers, and the regional and global environment.

The ten most important advantages of TOD to support the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods, the City of Schenectady, and the Capital District region are:

1. Ability to live, work, and shop within the same area means the neighborhoods are fully functioning, not just places to live
2. Increased travel choices, including the option to walk, bicycle, drive, and take transit more easily
3. Reduced household transportation costs, including the option to own fewer cars and take more trips by cheaper modes such as walking
4. Reduced auto use and auto ownership, and the resulting lower demand for parking and roadway expansions
5. Reduced community spending on streets and highways, and therefore lower taxes or increased community services
6. Increased homeownership rates or more adequate housing, especially among lower income groups
7. Higher tax revenues from increased retail sales and property values;
8. Lower development risk and costs resulting from mix of uses and variety of housing types (affordable housing, rental units etc.);
9. Improved housing availability attracts wider range of employees; and
10. Enhanced identities for both the local neighborhood and the City as host to the development.

What is Needed to Create Transit Oriented Development Around BRT Stations?

Transit Oriented Development is more than just any combination of stores located nearby to a bus stop. It requires a program of land uses, density, access, and pedestrian orientation. By locating the new BRT stations at Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace and Steuben Street, CDTA has provided the community with focal points for two TOD clusters. The following outlines the recommended guidelines for the station areas to foster Transit Oriented Development and maximize the value of the BRT service.

A. Density

TOD generally requires a minimum of seven to fifteen residential units per acre in residential areas and 25 employees per acre in commercial centers, and about twice that for higher frequency transit, such as BRT. Increased population and employment densities place more potential riders within walking distance of transit stations/stops and higher densities, especially residential densities are recommended depending on the type of transit serving the area. Minimum residential densities of 12-25 dwelling unites per acre are

becoming common. These densities create adequate transit ridership to justify frequent service, and help create active street life and commercial activities, such as grocery stores and coffee shops, within convenient walking distance of homes and worksites. The greatest increase in ridership occurs when densities reach approximately 30 dwelling units per acre, which allow for premium services, like bus or rail rapid transit.

Figure 1 Minimum Residential Density Thresholds for TODs

Transit Mode		Minimum Dwelling Units per Acre
Basic Bus Service		7-15
Bus Rapid Transit		15-18
Light Rail Transit		
Distance:	0-1/8 mile	30
	1/8-1/4 mile	24
	1/4-1/2 mile	12

Source: Transportation Cooperative Research Program, Report 102: Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospect (2004).

Commercial land uses require acknowledgement of employment density as well as Floor to Area Ratio (FAR). Recommended FAR's start at 0.35 for nonresidential activities in TODs, but are more frequently recommended at minimums of 0.5 to 1.0 for commercial developments without structured parking and at least 2.0 for developments with structured parking. Employment density of 25 jobs per gross acre (15,000 jobs within one half-mile) will support frequent, high capacity transit service.

Higher-frequency transit supports the development of higher-density centers, which can provide accessibility and agglomeration benefits (efficiencies that result when many activities are physically close together), while automobile-oriented transportation conflicts with urban density because it is space intensive, requiring large amounts of land for roads and parking facilities. Large-scale park-and-ride facilities tend to conflict with TOD, since a transit station surrounded by large parking lots and arterials with heavy traffic is unlikely to provide the densities needed to generate sufficient transit demand. It is therefore important that such facilities be properly located, designed, and managed to minimize such conflicts.

Residential density in these neighborhoods, an important factor in the success of transit investments such as those proposed for the State Street corridor, is somewhat difficult to measure. According to the 2000 Census, there are 7,127 people and 3,941 housing units in the 276 acres that make up the Vale and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods. The result is a residential density of 25.8 persons/acre and 14.3 households/acre.

A more detailed breakdown provided by the City of Schenectady indicates that residential density varies within the study area. In the portion of Vale between Nott Terrace and Mynderse Street, residential density is as high as 23 units per acre. Further from downtown, between Mynderse Street and Swan Street residential density drops to 18.5 units per acre. In Hamilton Hill, southwest of Albany Street to Hamilton Street/Delamont Avenue/Stanley Street, density ranges from 19 residential units per acre

between Veeder Avenue and Hulett Street, to about 16 units per acre between Hulett Street and Backus Street. Between State Street and Albany Street, residential density is somewhat lower – from Veeder Avenue to Hulett Street the density is about 14 units per acre, and from Hulett Street to Swan Street residential density drops to about nine units per acre. The lower residential densities in the blocks between State Street and Albany Street reflect the more commercial nature of the land uses in this section of the study area. The presence of lower residential densities in favor of commercial uses is not necessarily a problem in terms of transit ridership; however, the automobile orientation of most of these commercial uses does create challenges.

8 Dwelling Units per Acre (Portland Place, MN)

15 Dwelling Units per Acre (Hastings, MN)

28 Dwelling Units Per Acre (Riverside MN)

Comparison of Residential Densities

Encouraging higher density development in built neighborhoods can be difficult. It may require demolition of existing structures, which is an expensive undertaking.

In areas like the study area, where both demand for new housing and development have been limited, simply permitting higher density uses may not provide sufficient catalyst to redevelop the housing stock. The physical condition of the buildings in the area may also limit the desire to redevelop individual sites, as high vacancy rates and abandoned property discourage new investment.

B. Mixed-Uses

TOD zones often specify both activities that are permitted as-of-right and unwelcome land uses (like automobile repair shops). According to the Federal Transit Administration, joint development TOD projects include "commercial, residential, industrial, or mixed use developments that are undertaken in concert with transit facilities."[2] The goal of the uses included in a TOD community should be to generate trips throughout the day. This strategy takes advantage of unused transit supply in off-peak hours and results in routes that are more productive than in areas with traditional rush-hour peaks.

The following list presents a sample of land uses appropriate for inclusion in a TOD:

- Mid- to high- density residential
- Retail stores
- Banks
- Private offices/professional businesses
- Government offices
- Schools (especially higher education)
- Child-care centers
- Community facilities
- Public space
- Entertainment complexes

Study Area Land Use Pattern

The TOD target area comprises a total of 105 acres or approximately 38% of the entire Hamilton Hill neighborhood. Based on property class codes contained in the City's assessment database, general land use categories have been summarized in the table below.

State Street Corridor Property Use	Acres	Taxable AV	Parcels	Taxable AV per acre	Taxable AV per parcel
Total Residential	51.75	$21,638,800	547	$418,114	$39,559
Total Vacant land	6.73	$473,450	68	$70,366	$6,963
Total Commercial	36.75	$17,653,125	171	$480,326	$103,235
Total Recreation & Entertainment	0.59	$265,200	3	$450,621	$88,400
Total Community Services	7.35	$4,413,800	13	$600,503	$339,523
Total Industrial	1.19	$361,850	3	$302,862	$120,617
Total Public Services	0.31	$314,602	1	$1,002,431	$314,602
No property class code	0.38	$0	3	$0	$0
Area Totals	105.06	$45,120,827	809	$429,486	$55,774

Residential uses account for 49.3% of all land use, followed by commercial properties at 35.0%. Approximately 7.35 acres or 7.0% of the land is community service properties. Vacant land accounts for 6.4% of the land. Industrial properties comprise 1.1% of land use. Less than one percent of the land area is defined as recreation and entertainment and public service properties.

[2] *Federal Transit Administration, Policy on Transit Joint Development*, Number 62 12266, Federal Register: March 14, 1997 (Volume 62, Number 50)

Of the 547 residential parcels, 309 or 56.5% are two-family, 19.2% are single family and 10.1% are three-family. About 13.5% are in apartment buildings. Among the 171 commercial parcels, 28.7% are converted residences, 21.6% are parking lots, 16.4% are downtown row-type/retail with apartments and 11.7% are one-story small commercial structures.

As described above and as the land use map below indicates, land use in the study area is mixed, with primarily residential neighborhoods located east of State Street (Vale) and west of Albany Street (Hamilton Hill). In the middle, State Street and Albany Street are primarily commercial or mixed residential/commercial. Though commercial uses and community institutions (churches, community centers or organizations, public safety, etc.) are located along both of these streets, Albany Street primarily serves local community needs while State Street includes businesses that might be considered regional in nature. Motels and the auto dealership, for example, take advantage of the regional access provided by State Street (NYS Route 5).

The approximately 400 foot deep block between State Street and Albany Street contains a great deal of vacant or underutilized space associated with the retail, office, and small industrial businesses that front on either street. In some cases, this space is used for parking – as is the case for the auto dealership – while in other cases it appears that this space is marginally used for loading or storage.

The Vale neighborhood consists primarily of single-family and two-family detached residential structures. Recent investments in building rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements are evident in the area between Catherine Street and Mynderse Street. Some three-family and multi-family units are found in scattered locations throughout the neighborhood, as are some institutional uses (Vale Cemetery) and some vacant parcels.

Southwest of Albany Street, the Hamilton Hill neighborhood also consists primarily of single-family and two-family detached residential structures. Some three-family and multi-family units are found in scattered locations around the neighborhood, as are small neighborhood scale commercial and institutional uses (Elementary School, Boys and Girls Club, churches, etc.) and a number of vacant parcels.

The Study Area includes many of the mixed-use elements recommended for a TOD, including residential, retail, and schools. Many of the recommended land uses, however, are absent including banks, offices, and childcare. Auto-oriented uses, especially the auto dealership and the extensive parking lots, significantly detract for the area's ability to support transit. The rezoning of this area for the Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan (as described in the next section) seeks to remediate these deficiencies.

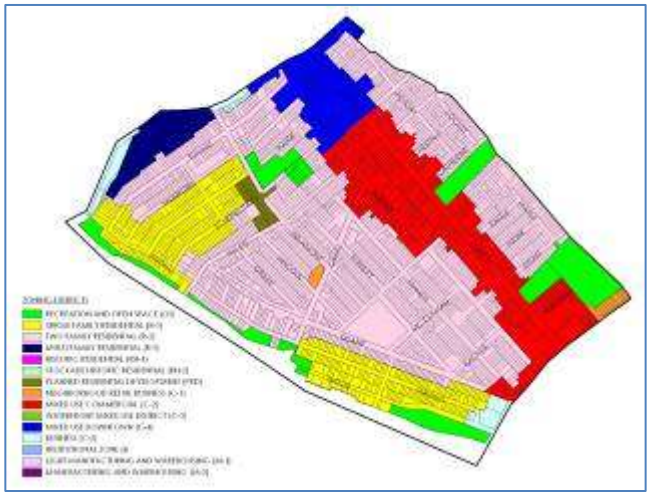
One land use that is in notably short supply in the Vale and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods is recreational land. The Jerry Burrell Park on Hamilton Street is the only active parkland in the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood. The Vale Park and Cemetery lie just to the northeast of the Vale neighborhood, but difficult topography and poor connections from the neighborhood limit the usefulness of this space for neighborhood residents.

Zoning

The State Street TOD area is currently zoned for a mixture of intense commercial uses or more moderate commercial uses but with no cap on size or parking or deference to the relatively small-scale businesses co-mingled with housing that actually exist along both State and Albany Streets. There were no design standards for infill or rehab and no landscaping, buffering or lighting standards. Adjacent to the State and Albany Street corridors the zoning is appropriately zoned two-family.

The new zoning attempts to reflect the existing uses and the scale along State Street and Albany Street by rezoning it to a district that represents a mixture of residential, retail and business services at a scale not to exceed 12,000 SF of floor area. This size covers most of the existing businesses and will limit the number of chain drug stores. Parking standards have been improved by creating a maximum number of parking spaces allowed (110% of the minimum) to curtail the large surface lots being created by chain retailers. Shared parking is encouraged and on-street parking and nearby public parking garages will count towards parking space requirements for the commercial uses. Design standards for infill construction and rehab will ensure proper scale and better design while still providing flexibility. Parking will be required to be located in the back or on the side if the back is logistically impossible. Landscaping and buffering requirements will improve the aesthetic appeal of pedestrian areas with required pedestrian walkways, plantings, and break-up of parking lots along right-of-ways with street furniture or the like. Lighting standards require appropriate lighting with aesthetic appeal throughout the City's commercial zones.

The adjacent residential neighborhoods will continue to be zoned two-family. The downtown is currently zoned "Business" which allows for assembly and light manufacturing in enclosed areas, warehousing and distribution, car dealerships etc – none of which are typical of a downtown business district. The Downtown is obviously best suited for office, retail, service, and entertainment and hospitality uses and the proposed zoning change to a new Downtown District reflects this. The proposed new zoning would extend into the TOD district up to Grove Street.



Most of Albany and State Street in the TOD area is currently zoned Commercial that also allows for intense uses. For this remaining TOD area, a new mixed use zoning district is proposed. This new district would permit residential, mixed use commercial/residential, many retail, service and office uses but would cap the gross floor area at 12,000 so.

The 12,000 sf limit is designed to limit the development of multiple competing retail operations (such as pharmacies). The limit does not affect the downtown district that would include the area surrounding Mohawk Honda. The new zone would also preclude some of the less "neighborly" uses such as used and new car lots. This zone will enable neighborhood oriented commercial uses or mixed commercial/residential development. An ideal mix of uses might include restaurants, ethnic food and clothing stores, home improvement furnishings, personal services (hair dresser, nail salon, tailor, and shoe repair), professional offices, medical and dental, newspaper stand, coffee shop, or ice cream parlor. Changes have also been proposed for the City's Parking and Loading Regulations that would create very flexible parking standards for downtown. Proposed changes include development of on-street credit (all commercial properties located adjacent to a public right-of-way where on-street parking is permitted may receive credit for off-street parking stalls), maximum parking standards, shared and combined parking facilities and exempting uses in the Downtown District from minimum parking standards. The City is currently evaluating how these zoning revisions can be applied to the residential zones. In implementing new zoning, the City will seek to create dense clusters of housing near transit services rather than reducing overall density, with vacated property used for new recreation or green spaces.

C. Pedestrian Orientation

Pedestrians who can access the land uses within a neighborhood are more likely to utilize those sites, including retail, parks, and transit. Placing daily goods and services, as well as recreational destinations, within walking distance of residents reduces incentives for car ownership and use, and supports the use of public transportation for commuting and other regional travel.

The pedestrian environment is inconsistent throughout the study area. Portions of Vale Village's sidewalks were recently reconstructed and widened. In comparison, many of the commercial properties along State Street have subsumed the sidewalks, using them for parking or additional frontage space (see photos, below); the result is that pedestrians have no way of determining if they are walking on a public sidewalk or private property.

Pedestrian Conditions: Commercial Frontage, Parking Spaces, or Sidewalks?

The following recommendations outline the range of improvements that would better orient development in the Study Area to pedestrians:

- Locate active uses that generate a higher number of daily trips on the first two floors. These should include retail and open space located in the first 15-20 feet of building height. Land uses that generate fewer trips should occupy higher floors.
- Bring sidewalks up to the building line.
- Prohibit parking from being located between the sidewalk and the building.
- Sidewalks belong to pedestrians first, even at curb cuts. Where sidewalks and driveways intersect, the height and material should match the adjacent sidewalks, so that both pedestrians and drivers are aware that they are traveling on a portion of the sidewalk.
- Install bollards, trees, and other street furniture to protect pedestrians and buildings from errant drivers.
- Sidewalks connecting the BRT stops to key nearby intersections and destinations should be as short, direct, and visually unobstructed as possible.
- Sidewalks to the BRT stops should be wide and smooth enough for wheelchairs and strollers, and lined with trees, lights and wayfinding signs.
- When designing pedestrian paths, remember that unlike cars, pedestrians can and do walk the shortest routes to their destinations (known as desire lines). If pedestrian ways are not provided, walkers will create their own desire lines. Planners should anticipate the need for direct pedestrian paths.
- Buildings along sidewalks should open directly onto the sidewalk, with transparent ground floors and good views of the path from the upper floors.
- Continuous building frontages should be maintained along sidewalks by avoiding front and side setbacks, blank walls, and surface parking lots that face the sidewalk.
- Building entrances should be conveniently situated relative to transit stations/ stops.
- Sidewalks should be to at least five feet wide at all points.
- Install curb extensions (wider sidewalks) at all corners with on-street parking.
- Install pedestrian signals at all traffic signals.
- Actuate pedestrian phase at all times with traffic phase, e.g. not pedestrian actuated.
- Include Leading Pedestrian Intervals at all signals, thus allowing pedestrians to start ahead of traffic.

D. Access and Connections

For a station area to encourage pedestrian activity and economic vitality, it must be easy to both access the area and circulate within the area. In order to discourage vehicular trips, TODs must prioritize the needs of non-motorized modes. The study area includes many opportunities to increase non-motorized connectivity. Many existing alleys are used primarily as pedestrian connections (see photo, below). Crosswalks, however, are frequently absent from these pedestrian routes, so while people can walk between Albany and State Streets, they must choose between crossing State Street at an unsafe location or walk out of their way to an intersection.

Pedestrian Connections through the Study Area, but not across State Street

The following provides a menu of options for promoting non-motorized access throughout the study area:

- Reduce vehicular roadway lane widths and rededicate the reclaimed space to provide or widen sidewalks, crosswalks, paths, and bike lanes.
- Reduce the number of conflict points between motorized and non-motorized modes. Where conflict points are unavoidable, ensure non-motorized modes have clearly delineated pathways and drivers are aware of their responsibility to share the road.
- Prohibit drive-thrus.
- Increase road and path connectivity, with special non-motorized shortcuts, such as paths between cul-de-sac heads and mid-block pedestrian links.
- Adhere to and exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Include street furniture (e.g., benches) and design features (e.g., human-scale street lights) without blocking traveler's "desire lines" (paths which travelers use, whether designated or not).
- Guide motorized modes to operate at appropriate speeds and along appropriate routes for each location the community character.
- Provide bicycle parking and amenities (lockers, showers, access routes) to connect with all transit facilities.

E. Urban Design

Urban design is an important element of TOD. The preservation of architectural style and character and the use of design guidelines help ensure that new development is consistent or complementary in scale and massing with existing structures. Urban design techniques can protect density and ensure that new development is urban rather than suburban (big boxes) in both building and site design.

While buildings and neighborhoods within the study area have not been formally designated historic, many residential blocks and individual buildings retain characteristics that should be enhanced, encouraged, and protected. Improvements completed as part of the Vale Village Plan have had a positive impact, and it is clear that various city and not-for-profit agencies have been reinvesting in the project area. While many commercial and residential buildings retain their traditional architectural character, that character has frequently been diminished and eroded by inappropriate alterations, signage, or other modifications.

V. NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

Introduction

State Street is an important roadway within the City of Schenectady and for the region. It is one of the key entranceways to downtown and serves as the downtown's main thoroughfare. State Street also functions as NYS Route 5, the primary urban arterial linking downtown Schenectady to downtown Albany. Along the way it passes through the Town and Village of Colonie. This stretch of NYS Route 5, from Schenectady to Albany, is the most densely populated portion of the Capital Region of New York State.

The State Street Study Area runs approximately 4/10 of a mile from State Street's intersection with Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue to its intersection with Steuben Street. This corridor lies just outside, or southeast of Schenectady's revitalizing downtown. State Street forms the common border between the Vale and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods

A detailed analysis of existing conditions in the target area is attached in Appendix B.

Demographics and Market Analysis

The data that is summarized below is taken from the 2000 United States Census of Population and from secondary sources including Claritas Data Services. The estimates and projections provided from Claritas are based upon established census trends as well as new data that becomes available between decennial census periods related to birth, death, marriage records, consumer spending profiles, construction data and information about similar indicators. In reviewing this information, many neighborhood residents felt that the actual circumstances in the neighborhood are more positive than the data indicates. They cited significant new investment in both residential and commercial sectors as important trends not reflected in the profile. The recommendations in this plan consider the census trends but also build upon neighborhood perception that reinvestment is occurring and offer suggestions about how to channel those investment resources for maximum positive impact.

Population

Population declined significantly in all of the target sub areas. The rate of population decline in the Steuben Street and overall HH/V Focus Area was nearly three times the rate in the Nott Terrace area. The Nott Terrace area includes part of the City's downtown that has a low and stable residential population. Continued population declines are projected through 2011, though neighborhood residents believe that the rate of decline has slowed.

Population	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
Population 1990-2000	- 8.1%	- 23.2%	- 23.1%
Population 2000- 2006	- 3.0%	- 12.2%	- 8.4%
Population 2006-2011	- 5.3%	- 7.3%	- 6.6%
% Neighborhood Population (2000)	22.5%	28.0%	29.5%
% City-wide Population (2000)	2.6%	3.2%	3.4%

The substantial population decline in the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods means that the market is shrinking and that opportunities for growth will be limited. Special incentives will be required to make investment in the neighborhood worth the "risk" to business developers and existing companies considering expansion. Part of the reason that the statistics for the Nott Terrace area are less onerous is that it includes a portion of the Downtown that has received significant, investment both public and private, in recent years. A comparable targeted investment strategy will be needed to revitalize the Hill and Vale neighborhood.

Many of the businesses that are prominent in the neighborhood today do not serve neighborhood retail or service needs. Uses like Mohawk Honda, the Econolodge and construction companies rely on market demand outside of the market area. The lack of supermarkets, restaurants, and dry cleaners, for example, reflect limited market and population. As population in the neighborhood has decreased, residential vacancy rates have increased (currently estimated at 29.7% in the HH/V Focus Area, 29.6% in the Steuben Street Sub Area and 25.4% in the Nott Terrace Sub Area), buildings have been abandoned, the rate of demolition has increased and absentee ownership of property has expanded. Few building permits have been issued and relatively little new construction or substantial rehabilitation has occurred. Price escalation in housing has exceeded income, pushing homeownership out of reach for even moderate income residents. Population decline decreases the neighborhood workforce, serving as a disincentive for new business location and commercial growth.

Households

The number of households also decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000 and that trend is projected to continue. Household size has remained relatively constant. Household composition trends effect business location decisions. Loss of households is important since many retail purchases, for example, are household purchases

Households	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
Households 1990-2000	-15.5%	- 25.1%	- 25.0%
Households 2000- 2006	- 4.5	- 10.8%	- 7.0%
Average Household Size 2000	1.9	2.6	2.4
Average Household Size 2006	2.1	2.6	2.4

Given the lack of diverse retail in the neighborhood, it can be assumed that many residents are doing major retail shopping out of the neighborhood, perhaps even outside of the City at big box stores in Rotterdam or along the Route Five corridor. A stable number of households may represent more stable demand for residential units. Overall smaller household size may be positive since it may more closely correspond with Schenectady's older and smaller two family structures. However, as noted below, the housing vacancy rate in the neighborhood is significant (above 25%) indicating perhaps that the poor quality, availability and affordability of existing housing is a contributing factor to population and household decrease in the neighborhood.

Age

The sub areas and HH/V Focus Area are relatively young compared to the City as a whole, the County and the State. The vast majority of residents are between 5- 21 and 21 - 44 years of age. From a market perspective, the youthful workforce can be seen as an asset if newly created jobs match training and education. The lack of a stable population in its peak earning years has considerable consequences for consumer spending, homeownership and entrepreneurship.

Personal expenditures change as people age. Drug stores, for example, flourish in areas with a large elderly population. Day care centers and stores with baby care items are successful in areas with many children and infants. Clothing stores and fast food establishments are attractive to adolescents. Yet the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods have very limited retail, no drug stores within the target area, limited restaurants and other services.

Age	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
Median Age (2006)	35.4 years	28.8 years	29.9 years
0-4 years	5.4%	10.1%	9.6%
5-20 years	19.6%	28.9%	28.2%
21-64 years	62.7%	55.2%	54.9%
21-44 years	*40.2%*	*35.5%*	*34.9%*
45-64 years	*22.4%*	*19.7%*	*20.0%*
65+ years	12.4%	5.7%	7.4%

The age distribution also has important implications for the delivery of services within the community, including education, recreation, childcare and senior services. These nonprofit uses are major employers and their continued presence in the neighborhood is an important part of the employment base. The neighborhoods boast many services, catering to the needs of low income families including child care, after school care, supportive and treatment services and churches. The elementary school in the neighborhood has become a magnet school, and while many neighborhood children attend the school, its identity as a neighborhood anchor is not as strong as it once was. One might expect, in a neighborhood where nearly one-third of residents are between the age of 5 and 20 that there would be a wide array of park and recreation resources, but the only park (Gerry Burrell Park) is very small and offers limited facilities.

A significant portion of the population is young adults between the ages of 21 and 44 just entering the labor market. Although this group includes a large number of available workers, salaries for employees just

starting out are generally low, even for those with college degrees. Only a small percentage of neighborhood residents have bachelor's degrees or higher.

Education

The lack of residents in the target area with advanced degrees is a significant concern. The relatively low educational attainment is an overall concern for economic development and business recruitment and should push the City in its current economic development planning to supplement basic education with other job training methods to ensure that the local labor force remains competitive.

Educational Attainment	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
% No High School Diploma	37.0%	41.7%	41.6%
% High School Diploma or higher	63.0%	58.4%	58.5%
% Bachelor's Degree or higher	9.5%	7.3%	6.9%

Since income increases as higher education is attained, many retailers focus on income level rather than education in assessing locations for future stores. One exception is bookstores that are often sited by developers based on the number of college educated individuals in the trade area. Similarly, computer and software stores are often located in areas with high levels of education. It might be possible to locate uses of this type at the Nott Terrace intersection, adjacent to the downtown and Union College Campus. In order to attract needed services to Hill and Vale (pharmacy, supermarket, restaurants, etc,), it will be necessary to reverse the population decline, provide education and job opportunities to increase household income and revitalize the physical structure of neighborhood buildings and streetscape.

Race

Minorities represent a significant percentage of the neighborhood population. Recognizing the ethnicity of an area is important when evaluating the neighborhood as a location for a service or retail business. Successful retailers in particular are sensitive to cultural differences when choosing business locations and the merchandise they carry. Retailers that use segmentation based on race and ethnic groups make sure their efforts are authentic as well as accurate. Correct assortments, fashion orientation, advertising media, and product selection are all influenced by ethnicity.

Race	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
% White	36.6%	27.9%	30.6%
% African American or Black	40.6%	45.9%	43.5%
% American Indian	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%
% Asian or Pacific Islander	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%
% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.01%
% Other Race	0.3%	0.8%	0.9%
% Two or More Races	6.2%	5.3%	5.7%
% Hispanic Origin	12.4%	16.3%	15.6%

The neighborhood's ethnic diversity is a positive attribute in attracting new retailers to the neighborhood. Culturally appropriate services, ethnic restaurants, specialty grocery stores or other retail operations could flourish in this ethnically diverse neighborhood.

Income

Household income is perhaps the best indicator of the spending power of residents. Household income positively correlates with retail and service expenditures in many product categories. Businesses may consider the median or average household income in a trade area or seek a minimum number of households within a certain income range. Another common practice is to analyze the distribution of household incomes. Discount stores may avoid extremely high or low-income areas. Traditional department stores focus on markets with incomes over $35,000, while some specialty fashion stores target incomes above $75,000. A few store categories including auto parts are more commonly found in areas with lower household incomes. Using income as the sole measure of a market's taste preference, however, can be deceptive.

Income	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
Median Household Income	$12,769	$22,660	$20,449
% HH w/ incomes under $15,000	58.7%	32.3%	39.3%
% HH w/ incomes $15,000-$24,999	12.5%	23.1%	19.7%
Median Family Income	$15,577	$23,563	$21,667
% Families below poverty level	50.0%	37.3%	40.3%
Per Capita Income	$13,078	$11,075	$11,057

A significant number of residents living in the HH/V Focus area as well as the sub areas have low incomes, including many living below the poverty level. Between 30% and 40% of households in the target area earned less than $15,000 per year in 2000 and similar percentages of residents lived in poverty. Neighborhood residents believe that the neighborhoods have enjoyed a significant amount of new investment in the years since the 2000 Census was reported. In some instances, this is reflective of new residents with higher incomes moving into the neighborhood and in other cases it is reflective of new commercial investment by local entrepreneurs.

Residents with low incomes face tough choices about how to spend their limited incomes. The neighborhood would probably benefit most by having stores that provide products that most people purchase on a weekly basis (i.e. supermarkets, restaurants, and gas stations). In the case of the HH/V neighborhood, lower than average income can also be explained by the presence of more young, unmarried individuals. It is not unusual in low income neighborhoods for a considerable portion of household income to go unrecorded. This "under the table" spending is an invisible part of neighborhood spending power. For example, residents may pay cash to a neighbor to fix broken items in their home, to baby-sit, or for rides to the grocery store or other retailers. This extra income is not captured in household income statistics.

Labor Force Characteristics

Businesses use the concentration of white or blue-collar workers as another gauge of a market's taste preferences. Specialty apparel stores thrive on middle to upper income areas and above average white-collar employment. Second hand clothing stores and used car dealerships are successful in areas with a higher concentration of blue-collar workers. Office supply stores, large music, and video stores are especially sensitive to the occupational profile. These retailers target growth areas with a majority of white-collar workers.

Labor Force	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
% Civilian Labor Force Participation	42.4%	59.5%	55.4%
% Civilian Unemployment Rate	5.9%	14.3%	12.5%
% Management, professional, and related occupations	21.4%	20.1%	18.9%
% Service occupations	32.2%	25.5%	28.2%
% Sales and office occupations	29.3%	30.8%	29.7%
% Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.0%	1.0%	0.5%
% Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	4.3%	4.4%	4.9%
% Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.2%	18.2%	17.9%

The HH/V area exhibits high unemployment levels. High unemployment rates could indicate lack of employment opportunities, particularly entry-level positions or other positions available to residents without a college degree. The majority of residents are employed in services and sales/office occupations, which typically exhibit low entry level wages and median wages, depending on the type of occupation. Median wages for sales and office occupations in the Capital District area are currently $21,980 and $28,980 according to the State Department of Labor, with starting wages generally 28%-30% lower.

Median wages for service occupations range depending on the type of service industry. Personal care and service occupations, which includes such jobs as hair dressers, manicurists, child care, and recreation workers has a median wage of $20,180. The median wage for food prep and serving related occupations, including cooks, bartenders, and dishwashers is $17,220. Community and social service jobs such as counselors, social workers, health education and clergy have a median wage of $36,050, while protective service occupations such as firefighters, police, sheriffs, and security guards has a median wage of $43,210.

The service occupations with the lower median wages generally do not require a bachelor's degree; where as the occupations with the higher wages (community and social service job and protective services) typically require a bachelor's degree or successful completion of a specific training program (i.e. police academy). The analysis demonstrates that increased education and training opportunities for neighborhood residents is needed as part of an overall revitalization strategy. The proposed Hamilton Hill Plaza project by the Schenectady County Community Business Center could be an excellent catalyst

for enhancing education and training opportunities for neighborhood residents, entrepreneurs and existing businesses.

Local Consumer Spending

The future stability of retail and service businesses in the Hamilton Hill/Vale Focus Area depends in part on local consumer spending. Income aside, local residents still purchase groceries, prescriptions, clothes, and other necessities. In HH/V, where there are a limited number of local shops, residents travel to other neighborhoods to make their purchases. In some cases, there are local stores, like corner markets, but these shops have little or no competition. Studies in other inner city neighborhoods conducted by HUD and others show that residents pay as much as 40 percent more for basic grocery items than their suburban counterparts. Higher prices and less disposable income results in lower overall spending. Residents may not support the one small store in their neighborhood whose prices are higher than average, but rather choose to travel to stores outside of the neighborhood where prices are considered by them to be reasonable. Given access to public transportation, traveling outside of the neighborhood is a reasonable alternative. If enhanced transit is to be an asset to the neighborhood it must be planned in close coordination with local business development or it could exacerbate the sales and service spending leakage.

Data from Claritas[3] which provides aggregate, per capita and average household spending patterns on a variety of goods and services, indicates that HH/V Focus Area residents spend less on most products and services than the national average with most spending running about 30% to 50% below national spending estimates.

Spending level fluctuations exist for a variety of reasons including income, local availability of goods and services, variation in local and regional demand for certain products and the cost of those goods and services. Given the income profile for the neighborhood, less disposable income appears to be a realistic explanation for local spending below New York State and national levels. Another reason for lower spending on retail goods and services is limited local availability. Without nearby stores, residents do less impulse shopping and spend less aggregate time shopping due to increased travel time.

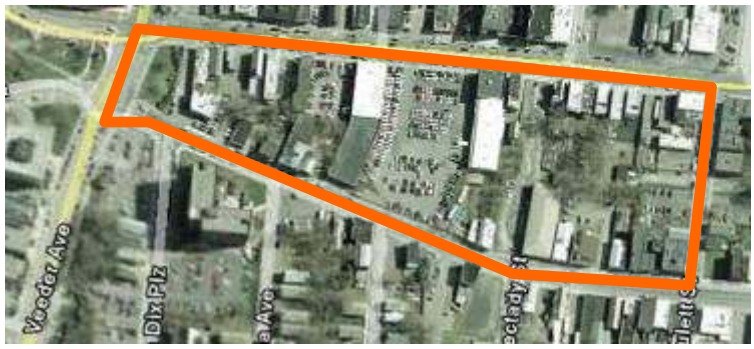
The analysis and table above provide estimates for expenditures in 2006 and as projected for 2011 on a broad sample of goods and services in the Focus Area. The market index value is the ratio of the annual average household expenditure (AAHE) for the HH/V Focus Area as compared to the AAHE for the United States. The AAHE is derived by dividing the number of households by the aggregate spending by the HH/V Focus Area on each good or service.

[3] Claritas Inc. is a marketing information research company that provides demographic data and target market research. Claritas uses the most current Consumer Expenditure Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and an independent set of national-level expenditure estimates and projections to establish its consumer spending data.

Consumer Spending Patterns: HH/V Focus Area						
	Per Capita		Avg. Household		Index to USA	
Annual Expenditures	**2006**	**2011**	**2006**	**2011**	**2006**	**2011**
Total Apparel	$1,149	$1,269	$2,814	$3,075	63	61
Total Food at Home	$1,988	$2,126	$4,868	$5,152	83	81
Alcoholic Beverages at Home	$239	$267	$584	$646	68	67
Total Health Care	$867	$1,220	$2,124	$2,956	55	54
Total Household Textiles	$86	$104	$210	$252	37	36
Total Furniture	$153	$180	$374	$436	48	46
Personal Care Products and Services	$290	$354	$709	$858	72	71
Personal Expenses and Services	$236	$291	$579	$705	36	35
Total Education	$250	$309	$613	$748	47	44
Day Care	$73	$78	$179	$190	57	53
Housekeeping Supplies	$95	$111	$232	$268	64	61
Total Food away from Home	$1,155	$1,305	$2,829	$3,162	58	56
Alcoholic Beverages away from Home	$79	$85	$195	$207	51	47
Fuels and Utilities	$143	$117	$349	$285	189	175
Telephone Service	$323	$366	$792	$886	75	72
Total Transportation Expenses	$1,661	$1,995	$4,069	$4,835	56	55
Total Specified Consumer Expenditures	$11,433	$13,326	$28,001	$32,292	58	56

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Household spending in the HH/V Focus Area is below the national average in all general categories except total housing expenses (which includes fuels and utilities). Housing fuels and utilities are estimated to be almost double the national average. Fuels and utilities (which include all fuels, electricity, water, sewer, garbage pick-up etc.) are traditionally higher in the northeastern United States due to the large number of heating and cooling days.



Neighborhood households spend far less than the national trend on expenses related to personal expenses and services (64% less), household textiles (63% less), education (53% less), and furniture (52%). Household textile expenses include domestic textiles and window and furniture covers. Education expenses include tuition, room and board etc. for any primary, secondary or higher education institution. As the neighborhood and city consider the commercial needs for serving the existing population, attracting retailers that require modest levels of disposable income are probably most realistic. Neighborhood residents point out, as discussed elsewhere in this summary, that the consumer spending profile does not capture "off the books" incomes and spending of the informal economy at work in these neighborhoods. Though it is difficult to quantify this revenue stream, it is clearly an important factor in business location decisions and in the opportunity for success by small businesses.

Housing

The number of homeowners and the rate of housing turnover are important factors for numerous businesses. Home ownership directly correlates with expenditures for home furnishings and home equipment. Home improvement, furniture, appliances, hardware, paint/wallpaper, floor covering, garden centers and other home products all prosper in active housing markets. The vast majority of current residents are renters (over 75%). This stands out as a limiting factor for certain kinds of local consumer spending.

Housing	Nott Terrace	Steuben Street	HH/V Focus Area
% Vacant	25.4%	29.6%	29.7%
% Owner Occupied	10.9%	24.6%	22.7%
% Renter Occupied	89.1%	75.4%	77.3%
% Single Family	5.4%	11.0%	10.4%
% Two Family	24.5%	52.1%	47.5%
% Multi-Family (3 or more units)	70.0%	37.0%	42.1%
% Units built between 1999 and 2006	1.6%	1.9%	3.2%
% Units built before 1940	50.1%	64.9%	61.3%

As mentioned above, the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhood is losing residents that contribute to the double-digit vacancy rate. The 2000 Census reports that the vacancy rate of for-sale housing in the City was 4.6% and the vacancy rate for rental housing was 9.3%. The vacancy rate for rental housing in the Hamilton Hill / Vale Neighborhood was 13.5% and the rate of for-sale housing is 16.3%. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. In public meetings, residents do report considerable new spending on residential rehabilitation in the neighborhood both by new investor owners and by homeowners. This trend, which will be reflected in future census reports, represents an important positive trend for the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods.

Though pedestrian activated signals are present at the intersection of Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace and State Street, the buttons are poorly placed away from the sidewalk.

Crime and Public Safety

Crime and public safety are real problems for the HH/V target area. The police department reports that the majority of calls are from Hamilton Hill, Central State Street and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods. According to a recent newspaper article "A Change for the Hill'" (Times Union, December 17, 2007), there are some improvements in crime rates in Hamilton Hill and Vale. Murder rates have dropped from five in 2002 to zero last year, although this year there was three. Larcenies and aggravated assaults have also dropped. However, not all crime indicators have decreased. Currently there are nine surveillance cameras in Hamilton Hill, which have led to a reduction of calls for those intersections. These issues heavily influence business location decisions. Businesses are concerned that any profit they make is overwhelmed by potential public safety problems. Addressing crime and public safety is perhaps the most important thing the City can do to improve the business climate. Inner city retailers and service providers face higher than average shoplifting by customers and employees and significantly higher employee turnover. Both of these issues can result in high operating costs.

Transportation System Assessment

Roadway Characteristics

The focus of this study is State Street, a principal urban arterial that carries approximately 8,100 vehicles per day (2003 Average Annual Daily Traffic, AADT). State Street maintains a consistent 50 foot section

(curb to curb) throughout the study area. On-street parking is permitted on both sides of the street in most locations; still there is more than ample room for the two travel lanes (one in each direction). In fact, the travelway is so wide that it is not unusual to observe cars driving side by side for short distances when drivers assume there are two lanes in each direction of travel. In general, striping is poor throughout the study area, for both pedestrian and vehicular facilities (stop bars, parking lanes, crosswalks are generally not delineated).

The roadway network near State Street is best described as a modified grid, with local streets intersecting State Street at regular intervals. A typical block is approximately 300 to 400 feet, though there are locations where the pattern is interrupted and no cross street exists. For example, on the west side of State Street between Veeder Avenue and Hulett Street, a distance of 1,200 feet, there are no local street connections to Albany Street. These larger "super blocks" make vehicular and pedestrian movements to/from State Street to the adjoining neighborhood more difficult.

Albany Street runs parallel to State Street and serves as a secondary commercial street with, perhaps, a local orientation. Albany Street is classified as a minor urban arterial and carries between 4,000 and 6,400 vehicles per day (1999, 2000). Craig Street intersects Albany Street about mid-way through the study area, but does not connect to State Street. Craig Street is considered an urban collector and carries approximately 3,900 vehicles per day (2000). The remaining roads in the study area are local streets.

Intersections

Along State Street there are signalized intersections at just three locations in the study area:

- Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace,
- Hulett Street, and
- Steuben Street

Along Albany Street there are traffic signals at four locations in the study area:

- Veeder Avenue,
- Hulett Street,
- Craig Street, and
- Steuben Street

Pavement width (curb to curb) at the intersection of State Street and Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace.

Aside from the intersection of Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace, none of these signalized intersections have designated turn lanes. Some of the intersections in the study area have pedestrian walk/don't walk signals, however marked crosswalks are lacking in all cases except at the intersection of Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace and State Street.

The intersection of Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace and State Street is of particular concern because it will be one of the two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station stops in the study area. As the image at right (top) indicates, this intersection is very wide at three of its four entrances. The exception is the segment from the north (from downtown) which is only 36 feet wide thanks to streetscape improvements that were completed along the downtown portion of State Street over the last few years. Though all four crossings are marked with crosswalks and pedestrian activated signals are present here, the intersection remains a challenge for pedestrians due to the length of the crossings and the vehicular turning movements. As the image at right (bottom) shows, there are also small details in the design of this intersection that could be improved.

The intersection of State Street and Steuben Street, the second BRT station stop in the study area, is much less complicated. Still, this intersection will require at a minimum pedestrian signalization and crosswalks to improve safety.

Crash History in the Schenectady TOD Study Area

Crash data has been provided for a three year period (January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003) for mainline segments and intersections in the study area. An initial review of this data suggests that mainline segments are generally okay, but there are a handful of locations that could be evaluated more closely due to a somewhat higher number of incidents and/or a higher percentage of injuries resulting from accidents. They include:

- State Street between Hulett Street / Mynderse Street and Chestnut Street
- Hulett Street from State Street to Albany Street
- Albany Street from Hulett Street to Craig Street
- Nott Terrace from State Street to Lottridge Street / Chapel Street

There are also several intersections that may benefit from a closer review. Not surprisingly, the intersection of State Street and Veeder Avenue/Nott Terrace is one of these. Others include:

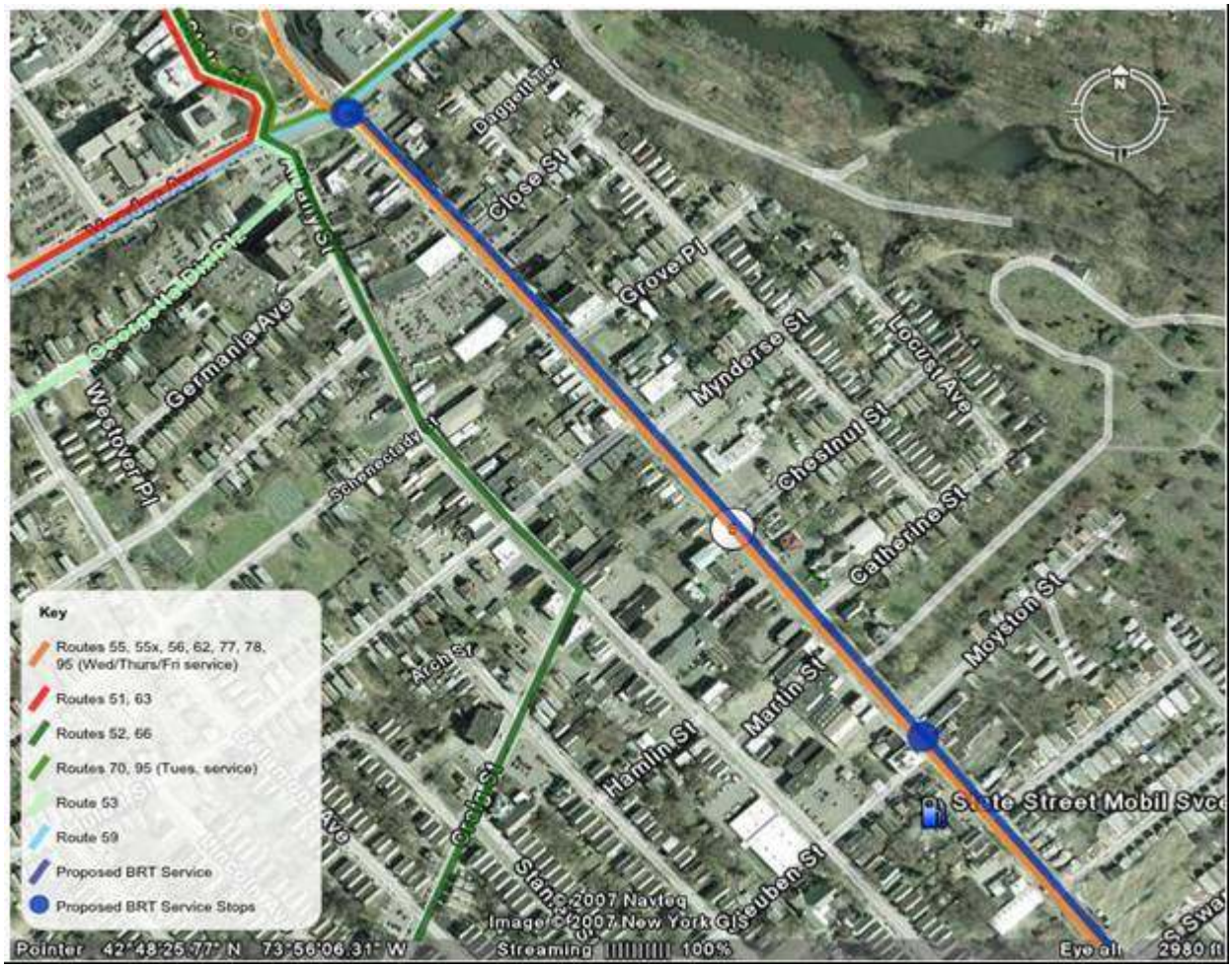
- State Street and Martin Street,
- State Street and Hulett Street / Mynderse Street,
- Albany Street and Hulett Street,
- Albany Street and Veeder Avenue,
- Albany Street and Craig Street,
- Albany Street and Martin Street, and
- Albany Street and Steuben Street

All of these intersections appear to have a somewhat higher number of accidents and/or a higher percentage of injuries to accidents. The intersections of Nott Terrace and Lottridge Street/Chapel Street and Veeder Avenue and Hamilton Street would also fall in this category however they are both outside of the Study Area.

Public Transportation

As the image on the following page indicates, the Study Area is currently served by several bus routes operated by CDTA. The routes connect the Study Area to many of the region's major business districts (including downtown Schenectady, Albany, and Troy), as well as nearby Schenectady neighborhoods, and major trip generators (Rotterdam Mall, Ellis Hospital, State Office Campus, etc.). The result is significant transit activity along State Street/Route 5 with service operating as often as every 15 minutes, seven days per week, between 17 and 20 hours per day. Services also vary by demand, with the 55x and 56x routes offering express service to downtown Albany and the State Office Campus, respectively. Details about the service provided for each of these bus routes is displayed in the table on page 41.

Transit complements to support the transit services are not readily available within the Study Area. The only bus shelters are located at the southwest corner of State Street and Veeder Avenue (technically outside of the Study Area) and at the southwest corner of State Street and Hulett Street. The remainder of the bus stops offer no shelter and provide limited information regarding the bus routes serving the stop.



53	Altamont Avenue	11.5,9 / 5,1	60	NA	60	Schenectady to Altamont Ave.
55	Albany-Schenectady (via Route 5)	22, 20 / 5,2	15	30	30	Schenectady to downtown Albany
55x	Schenectady-Albany Express	Peak only	15	NA	NA	Express service between Schenectady and Albany
56x	Schenectady-State Campus	Peak only	1 service only	NA	NA	Schenectady to State Office Campus
59	Nott Street	12 / 5	60	NA	NA	Schenectady to St James Plaza
62	McClellan Street	12,10 / 5,1	45	NA	45	Schenectady to Rotterdam Mall
63	Albany-Schenectady	12 / 5	30	NA	NA	Downtown Albany to Schenectady
66	Schenectady South Loop	3 / 5	Evening only	60	NA	Downtown Schenectady, Rotterdam Mall and Altamont Ave
70	Troy-Schenectady	17,15 / 5,1	50	60	60/75	Schenectady to Troy
77	Schenectady North Loop	4 / 5	Evening only	60	NA	Downtown Schenectady, Rotterdam Mall and Ellis Hospital
78	Schenectady West Loop	17 / 5	1 service only	60	NA	Downtown Schenectdy, Rotterdam Mall and US Navy Depot
95	Delanson/Duanesburg (Tuesday service)	6.5 / 1	120	NA	NA	Schenectady to Duanesburg
95	Albany to Berne Knox (Wednesday service)	5.5 / 1	1 service only	NA	NA	Albany to Berne Knox
95	Albany to Westerlo (Thursday service)	9 / 1	1 service only	NA	NA	Albany to Westerlo
95	Albany to Rensselaerville (Friday Service)	7 / 1	1 service only	NA	NA	Albany to Rensselaerville

Most locations are limited to a bus stop sign attached to a pole; some stops include a trash can, though many are located within the bus stop boarding area, hindering customers from getting on and off of the bus. Sidewalks and crosswalks providing pedestrian access to the bus stops is also inconsistent, with individual stretches offering easy to follow pathways while other areas are equally used by pedestrians and private businesses.

Bicycle / Pedestrian Data and Analysis

Pedestrian Accommodation Index

For planning purposes, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) staff has developed a Pedestrian Accommodation Index in order to evaluate the "friendliness" of intersections to pedestrians throughout the Capital District. Based on a set of specific characteristics, the CDTC evaluated major

intersections along Route 5 (State Street) in the City of Schenectady and scored them according to how "friendly" the intersection currently is to pedestrians. The index ranges from A to F, with A representing the highest level of pedestrian accommodation and F representing the lowest level. The index is only based on the physical characteristics of the intersection and amenities that are present. It does NOT include other factors such as vehicular traffic volume, pedestrian volume, and approach speed. The more features there are at an intersection that provide a measure of pedestrian friendliness such as pedestrian signals, crosswalks, fewer turn lanes to cross, etc., the higher the raw score; the higher the raw score the higher the overall grade. The table below summarizes the results of the pedestrian accommodation index for signalized intersections in the Schenectady TOD study area.

Intersection - State Street (Route5) and:	**Pedestrian Accommodation Index - Grade**
Swan Street*	D
Steuben Street	C
Hulett Street / Mynderse Street	C
Veeder Avenue / Nott Terrace	B
LaFayette Street*	A

* These intersections are outside of the Study Area.

Pedestrian Accommodation Index ("friendliness") Ratings

A = Nearly ideal pedestrian conditions; factors negatively effecting pedestrian friendliness are minimal.

B =Reasonable pedestrian conditions; small number of factors impact pedestrian safety & comfort.

C =Basic pedestrian conditions; significant number of factors impact pedestrian safety & comfort.

D = Poor pedestrian conditions; factors negatively effecting pedestrian friendliness are wide- ranging or individually severe. Pedestrian comfort is minimal and safety concerns are evident.

E = Pedestrian environment is unsuitable; occurs when all or almost all of the factors affecting pedestrian friendliness are below acceptable standards.

Poor sidewalk condition along State St.

New sidewalks and curbs extending from State Street into the Vale neighborhood create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

Parking in front of a building on State Street extends directly to the road, blurring the distinction between vehicular and pedestrian space.

It is interesting to note that the outcome of the Pedestrian Accommodation Index rating for the Veeder Avenue / Nott Terrace intersection with State Street is better (more pedestrian friendly) than for the other intersections in the Study Area. Because the rating is based simply on the presence of pedestrian infrastructure (crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc.), this intersection receives a quite positive "B" rating. As previously noted, problems such as the expansive width of the intersection and the poorly located pedestrian activation buttons could reduce the "friendliness" of this intersection, particularly for the elderly or disabled.

Shelter at State St. and Hulett St.

Vehicle parked on the sidewalk

Bus stop at State St. and Catherine St

Another very important issue for the entire Study Area is sidewalk condition. Though sidewalks are present throughout most of the area, their condition varies considerably – from new sidewalks and curbs in portions of the Vale neighborhood to sidewalks that are barely passable on several local streets in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is not achieved along many stretches of sidewalk and at many intersections. On State Street there are several locations where the sidewalks have been paved over, or where parking lots in front of commercial buildings run directly to the street blurring the distinction between pedestrian and vehicular space. The lack of curbs in some areas, resulting from the periodic resurfacing of State Street over the years, also makes it possible for cars to park

on the sidewalk. These conditions detract from pedestrian safety and make the experience of walking much less pleasant.

Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) Evaluation

Bicycle Level Of Service (BLOS), together with the FHWA's Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI) are emerging national standards for quantifying the "bike-friendliness" of a roadway. While other "level-of service" indices relate to traffic capacity, these measures indicate bicyclist comfort level for specific roadway geometries and traffic conditions. Roadways with a better (lower) score are more attractive (and usually safer) for cyclists.

Bicycle Level of Service ranges associated with level of service (LOS) designations:

BLOS Score Range	1.50	1.51 - 2.50	2.51 - 3.50	3.51 - 4.50	4.51 - 5.50	> 5.50
LOS Level or Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F

[1] Landis, Bruce, "Real-Time Human Perceptions: Toward a Bicycle Level of Service," Transportation Research Record 1578 (Washington DC, Transportation Research Board, 1997)

This Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) is a nationally recognized measure of the perceived "comfort level" of a range of experienced adult bicyclists sharing a roadway with traffic. Key factors include traffic speed, daily traffic volume, surface condition, lane width, and the presence of on-road bike lanes or paved shoulders. Scores range from "A" (most comfortable for cyclists) to "F" (least comfortable).

Though this portion of State Street is designated as New York State Bike Route 5, there are no facilities specifically oriented towards bicycle travel in the Schenectady TOD study area. The CDTC conducted a bicycle inventory along Route 5 (State Street) in the City of Schenectady as a more specific measure of the quality of service for this mode of travel. The CDTC documented criteria such as overall vehicular traffic volume, percent of heavy vehicles, pavement condition, curb side lane width, presence of parking, presence of bike lanes, presence of drainage structures, and roadway speed, and evaluated them according to the CDTC's BLOS model procedures. The table below summarizes the results of the analysis for the study area and shows that that bicycle level of service on State Street is generally poor southeast of Nott Terrace, and slightly better as you enter Downtown Schenectady (northwest of Nott Terrace).

The index ranges from A to F, with A representing the highest level of bicycle accommodation and F representing the lowest level.

A = Nearly ideal conditions for bicycles; factors negatively effecting bicycling are minimal.

B = Reasonable bicycle conditions; small number of factors impact bicyclist safety & comfort.

C = Basic bicycle conditions; significant number of factors impact bicyclist safety & comfort.

D= Poor bicycling conditions; factors negatively effecting bicyclist friendliness are wide- ranging or individually severe. Bicyclist comfort is minimal and safety concerns are evident.

E = Bicycling environment is unsuitable; occurs when all or almost all of the factors affecting bicyclist friendliness are below acceptable standards.

Segment of State Street (Route 5)			BLOS
From	**To**	**Direction**	**Grade**
Furman Street*	Hulett Street	Toward downtown	E
Hulett Street	Furman Street*	Away from downtown	E
Hulett Street	Nott Terrace	Toward downtown	E
Nott Terrace	Hulett Street	Away from downtown	E
Nott Terrace	Broadway*	Into downtown	D
Broadway*	Nott Terrace	Out of downtown	C

* These streets are outside of the Study Area.

Existing conditions identified elsewhere in this study explain why State Street is currently unsuitable for bicycle travel, with an average BLOS grade of E. As noted earlier, State Street's fifty (50) foot wide street section provides more than enough room for on-street parking and for its two lanes of travel (one in each direction). Without expanding the pavement area, it would be possible to provide a designated bike lane through the Study Area.

VI. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Two community workshops were conducted in June and July of 2007. There were approximately 100 participants including business owners, residents, and religious and non-profit leaders. A presentation summarized the SWOT analysis and preliminary concepts for the study area. Working in small groups participants identified the issues that should be addressed in the plan and evaluated how well the proposed concepts addressed neighborhood needs. The detailed notes from these meetings are attached in Appendix C. Key issues included the need to improve transit amenities and marketing, calm traffic, increase retail choice, prevent gentrification and create incentives for small business development. Other suggestions for new uses include:

- Grocery Store
- Legal office to help community members with personal issues
- Neighborhood hardware store (not a big box)
- CDTA neighborhood station – where residents could get coffee, maps, warm up, etc.
- Medical supplies and repair
- Information booth – brochures for local events, programs, etc.
- Police substation
- "Make and take Gourmet" – prepared meals
- Chain Restaurants like red lobster and olive garden (not fast food restaurant)
- Day care center
- Bakery
- Ethnic hair stylist
- Convenience store that carries "fresh" groceries at decent prices
- Resource Center – where kids could do homework, tutoring, encourages parental involvement with school district, parents meetings
- Cooking classes – introducing foods/use of spices, etc.
- Laundromat
- Nice small corner store
- Wireless internet
- Extended business hours
- Façade program for State and Albany Streets
- Cluster ethnic grocery stores and restaurants
- Spice factory
- Hat factory/store
- Internet café
- Bookstore
- Office supply
- Art and craft store

VII. ACTION PLAN

In order to cultivate a transit-oriented development pattern, the City of Schenectady and its partners must pursue a catalyst approach – focusing on extending the impact of downtown into the neighborhood and stimulating reinvestment in specific neighborhood initiatives. This action plan recommends strategies to create the environment for development to occur physically, socially and economically through incentives and specific program development. Revitalization goals and programs must be realistic in the face of the neighborhoods challenges – but through phased and incremental progress significant improvement can occur.

The basic dilemma facing the neighborhood is longstanding poverty. Income is not sufficient to meet basic needs. The reality is that many residents still choose between paying rent, buying food or filling prescriptions. The market analysis shows that neighborhood residents spend well below national rates for goods and services. Job creation is an obvious solution. However, it will take time for a critical mass of employers to be attracted to the neighborhood.

The development of a mixed income neighborhood will increase stability and property values and create additional diversity, yet real concern exists that rising housing prices will make the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods more attractive to moderate income homebuyers and urban homesteaders. As market pressure builds and rents increase, low income families face displacement and gentrification. This strategy focuses on ways to create a true mixed income neighborhood of stable value.

Underlying all of the actions described below is the basic need for the City to assist residents to create more disposable income. The City should continue efforts to help residents build assets and equity and become homebuyers, as appropriate. Careful monitoring of the housing market and ongoing support for the development of affordable housing and expansion of the Section 8 Rental Assistance program are keys to discouraging gentrification. Utility costs in this region consume an enormous amount of disposable income and drive up the price of rents. The City should explore programs to supplement Home Energy Assistance Program payments and other utility assistance including available Weatherization programs. The feasibility of developing a utility buying cooperative or subsidizing other costs such as water, sewer, or garbage fees if property owners roll back rents should be considered. Enhanced transit usage can reduce travel, fuel demand and the need and expense of a car, also creating more disposable income.

The first priority for the State Street TOD Study Area is to put the proper framework in place to encourage high quality new investment in the area of sufficient scale and density to support transit and create an active pedestrian environment.

1. PLANNING

A. Update Zoning Ordinance and Standards

The City is in the process of adopting a new zoning ordinance. The new zoning reflects the existing uses and the scale along State Street and Albany Street by rezoning it one district that represents a mixture of residential, retail and business services at a scale not to exceed 12,000 SF of floor area. This size covers

most of the existing businesses and will scale back the number of chain drug store type uses that have overrun this area. This limitation is important to create a pedestrian oriented, rather than auto oriented environment critical to TOD. There was also significant discussion about how to handle auto-oriented uses in the TOD target area. Typically the goal would be to eliminate automobile dependent uses like drive-thru windows. However, in Hamilton Hill and Vale some of the desired uses like a coffee shop or pharmacy are unlikely to offer a store model without a drive thru. The City's zoning should be realistic in the face of these challenges and see some uses as transitional while the neighborhood stabilizes.

Parking standards have been improved by creating a maximum number of parking spaces allowed (110% of the minimum) to curtail the large surface lots being created by chain retailers. Shared parking is encouraged and on-street parking and nearby public parking garages will count towards parking space requirements in the commercial zones. Realistic limitations on parking create additional support for transit utilization.

Design standards for infill construction and rehabilitation will ensure proper scale and better design while still providing flexibility. Standards address issues like building scale, massing, materials, articulation, siting, lighting and location of utilities. Parking will be required to be located in the back or on the side if the back is logistically impossible.

Landscaping and buffering requirements will improve the aesthetic appeal of pedestrian areas with required pedestrian walkways, plantings and break-up of parking lots along right-of-ways with street furniture or the like. Lighting standards require appropriate lighting with aesthetic appeal throughout the City's commercial zones. The lighting plan will be consistent with the defensible space initiative being advanced by the Weed and Seed program.

The City also evaluated the desirability of adopting a specific TOD overlay in their new zoning ordinance, but determined that the revised underlying zoning met or exceeded the thresholds in a typical TOD overlay.

B. Complete Implementation Of The Vale Village Plan

The City will prioritize the remaining tasks to be completed in the Vale Village Plan and secure necessary funding to complete improvements. In addition the feasibility of creating a direct linkage from the neighborhood to Vale should be evaluated. If possible, that connection could significantly expand access to green space for neighborhood residents. The Vale Village is an eight-block, 200 home residential neighborhood that is primarily comprised of turn-of-the-century homes located in downtown Schenectady. It is bordered by Nott Terrace to the north, the historic, 32-acre Vale Park (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) to the east, the historic Vale Cemetery (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) to the east and south, and State Street to the west (or State Street, Catherine Street, Vale Park, and Nott Terrace). The Vale Village Revitalization Feasibility Study was completed in 1999 and built upon the previously completed Hamilton Hill and Vale Plan, which the city and neighborhood groups prepared in 1997. The purpose of the plan is to prepare a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan for Vale Village.

C. Improve Public Safety

Increased public safety promotes neighborhood stability and helps insure the overall success of the TOD concept and enhances pedestrian usage within the community. In a survey of major retailers, the International Council for Shopping Centers found that the number one factor influencing retailers' decision not to establish a store in underserved markets was crime and the perception of crime.

In planning workshops neighborhood residents have called for additional police presence and intensity of enforcement. They strongly encouraged community-based policing with more walking patrols and the development of safe routes for children walking to school and after school activities. The approach should place more emphasis on quality of life crimes including enforcement of nuisance issues such as loud music, litter, through traffic enforcement and video surveillance, as appropriate. Close partnerships between the police and community based organizations such as Weed and Seed and neighborhood associations will help accomplish these goals

Through the ongoing efforts of the Weed and Seed program an initiative to advance Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPED) is gaining ground in the TOD target area. This approach focuses on the placement of physical features and activities to maximize visibility and promote social interaction. The City's proposed zoning ordinance incorporates many of the elements of CPED including:

- Landscaping standards and tree planting requirements that enhance buildings and streetscapes without obstructing views
- Requirements that fencing styles and heights enhance building entrances without obstructing views
- Lighting standards that reduce glare and blind spots providing the appropriate intensity of lighting for each use
- Focus on careful site planning for potential problem uses like parking areas, ATM's play areas, Laundromats, and recycling areas
- Clear definition of public and private space
- Strong emphasis on enforcement of maintenance standards and code compliance recognizing that a well maintained property deters vandalism
- Emphasis on creating a mix of uses that creates activity and brings people to the street

D. Facilitate Property Owner Reinvestment

The greatest impact can be realized by encouraging existing owners to reinvest in their properties. Physical improvements to eliminate blight and improve the neighborhood's image so it can attract residents, shoppers and businesses must figure prominently in the strategy. This approach requires outreach and education to increase understanding of the impact of good design and physical improvement, technical assistance and financial assistance to encourage property and business owners to make improvements.

E. Cultivate Partnerships

The City should encourage collaboration, capacity building and ongoing involvement of community-based organizations in neighborhood revitalization. Groups like neighborhood associations, merchant's

organizations, Weed and Seed, neighborhood based cultural and recreation programs, community police, Union College, and Schenectady County Community College are key partners with the City, private developers and organizations like CDTA. Ensuring that these groups are properly funded and supported will be key to facilitating implementation and discouraging displacement of low income residents.

F. Improve Code Enforcement

The City also needs a strong code and traffic enforcement presence with aggressive enforcement against nuisance crimes like speeding, double parking, parking on the sidewalk, and noise. The Neighborhood Plan and City-wide Action Plan developed as part of the Comprehensive plan outline many additional code enforcement initiatives that will have a positive impact on the neighborhood if implemented successfully. While residents expect code enforcement, they have also identified the cost of compliance as an obstacle to small business development in the neighborhood. In some cases a phased in approach to compliance may be possible. Development of a grant program to assist low income property owners to meet standards should also be pursued.

G. Practice Selective Demolition Of Substandard And Vacant Properties

In some instances selective demolition and creation of new building lots may be more appropriate than rehabilitation. New mixed use development can offer housing products not readily available in the City, such as town homes. The 2006 neighborhood plan calls on the City to identify buildings and properties that should be demolished, including an evaluation of properties on Hilderbrandt Ave, Victory Avenue, Mynderse Street, and Moyston Street. It is critical that the City require detailed reuse plans for sites prior to approving demolition whenever possible to avoid creation of more vacant lots.

H. Improve and Develop Green Space

The neighborhood has very little green space. Opportunities to gain access to Vale Park as described above should be carefully evaluated. As redevelopment occurs, there may be opportunities to create pocket parks or tot lots as part of the public spaces associated with housing and commercial projects. It is very important that these spaces be designed according to the CPTED principles described above so that they are safe places that create positive social activity. In addition ongoing improvements identified in the neighborhood plan should be made to existing park and recreation resources such as Jerry Burrell Park. Opportunities should be explored to plan more trees and generally "green" the neighborhoods, perhaps in close cooperation with Retree Schenectady Inc.

I. Increase Cultural Opportunities in the Neighborhoods

Founded in 1968, the Hamilton Hill Arts Center is a rich artistic outlet for African and African-American cultural arts in the Schenectady community and the only arts center of its kind between New York City and Syracuse. The center draws upon the cultural, visual, technological and performing arts to provide residents throughout the Capital Region with a variety of programs and services. The programs Include Project Artreach After School Program, Umoja Dancing & Drumming, Arts in Education Programs, Arts and Technology and Computer Lab Activities, Special Events, Kuumba Krafts Gift Boutique, Music Lessons, including Steel Pan Drum and the Jerry Burrell Gallery. As part of its Federally funded Bus Rapid Transit Project, CDTA will allocate 10% of the overall grant funds to public art along the Route 5 Corridor. This

represents an opportunity for a new partnership with the Arts Center. On a long-term basis, the City should continue to support the Center's efforts.

2. HOUSING

A. Support Homeownership

Residential price escalation means that there is more competition for available buildings, in some instances placing buildings in need of rehabilitation outside the reach of nonprofit housing agencies. A key to the TOD strategy is to get properties suitable for residential and mixed use redevelopment into the right hands so that development projects are responsive to community needs as well as high quality and market driven. During the renovation process, nonprofit housing organizations can market the program and work with potential homeowners through the home buying process. Other incentives such as CDTA's Transit Demand Management homeowner incentives should be featured in this marketing effort. Partners in this effort, in addition to the City's own housing programs include the Community Land Trust of Schenectady, Inc., Better Neighborhoods Inc., Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, Inc., The Schenectady Housing Development Fund Corporation Second Mortgage Program and The Community Builders, Inc.

B. Promote Rehabilitation And Redevelopment Of Vacant Buildings

The most effective revitalization strategy will require a combination of redevelopment and building reuse. Most of the need and the opportunities are in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood starting with Albany Street and going west. The Vale Neighborhood improvements serve as a good model for what can be accomplished in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. There are numerous vacant buildings within the TOD corridor located along State and Albany Streets that provide great opportunities for redevelopment. The city is compiling a list of these vacant structures including critical statistics (building and lot size, ownership, assessed value, etc.).

The City should develop an aggressive program of grants and loans to encourage revitalization of vacant buildings in the neighborhood for affordable rental housing for low and moderate income households. Some mixed income units would also be desirable but the very low income population in the TOD district is the most vulnerable. There are a number of existing neighborhood structures that could be productively rehabilitated into new housing units. The City should begin this process by meeting with housing development organizations and complete an inventory of existing vacant space to include renovation needs, cost estimates and other building characteristics. Funding should be provided.

3. BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A. Enhance Job Training for Youth and Adults

Job creation is an obvious goal of economic development in the TOD district. The nature of the jobs in the commercial district — mostly retail and personal service positions — tends to limit opportunities for resident advancement. This limitation could be addressed by using entry-level positions as a youth development program, and by connecting local jobs to better-paying ones in the regional economy. The

improved BRT system makes this achievable. To create an environment in which new investment can take place, the City should continue to work closely with job training and placement providers to ensure that flexible programs are available that respond to specific employer needs.

This approach is particularly important in Hamilton Hill and Vale where the population is young with limited education and job experience. Nearly one-third of neighborhood residents are between the age of 5 and 20. The 2006 Neighborhood Plan outlines a number of tasks related to youth job training and employment including:

- Identify existing programs targeted to teens between the ages of twelve and seventeen
- Increase awareness of and participation in programming by providing stable funding for community services
- Develop new programs focusing on those that provide employment and job skill development
- Work with Schenectady's Promise and other organizations to develop a youth steering committee to review and evaluate the effectiveness of funded programs

Without focused job training, new development in the area will likely employ residents from outside of the neighborhood – which, while beneficial for the City, does not maximize impact in the TOD district.

B. Provide Economic Development Incentives

The City should encourage use of Empire Zone incentives and low income housing tax credits to foster desired development in the TOD area. It should support private and not-for-profit developers with funding procurement, tax breaks and other incentives to stimulate transit-oriented development in the community. In addition to EZ benefits and low income housing tax credits, the city might consider Payment in Lieu of Tax arrangements to provide property tax relief for newly constructed and renovated property in the TOD area.

C. Implement Retail Recruitment and Targeting Strategy

The Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods have fewer retail outlets and less shopping space, higher prices, fewer products to choose from, and in general do not have access to the shopping opportunities available in other neighborhoods and the outlying suburban areas. Yet, many studies conclude that businesses locating to the inner city can find success by catering to the needs of a diverse and currently underserved population. Studies have found that inner-city residents typically spend a higher proportion of their household income on retail items, especially food and apparel, than do other households.

Careful targeting of retail uses that can prosper in a low and moderate income neighborhood is particularly important. Retail targets should also focus on providing goods and services desired by young people and young families with children, and stores that meet regular or weekly needs such as pharmacies, grocery stores, laundry facilities, beverage stores, coffee shops, etc. These stores can profit in low and moderate income neighborhoods. The City must attract the right uses operated by the right companies with a full awareness of the realities of doing business in an emerging inner city market. To do this, the City needs the ability to target incentives to attract companies that have been successful in inner city neighborhoods. As in downtown, part of the strategy might be to encourage an inner city business to locate second or third operations in the neighborhoods.

The plan also needs to address the market implications of doing business in a high crime area. Inner city businesses are usually faced with increased costs for 24 hour lighting, surveillance, and security improvements to buildings. The City should explore the feasibility of establishing a program to help business owners meet some of these additional costs, perhaps in partnership with Metroplex.

Enhanced transit could make it even easier for residents to spend dollars outside of the neighborhood (at least initially), increasing the leakage of dollars from the neighborhood. A buy local initiative might help to counteract this trend.

The development of ethnic retail and service clusters should also be explored. The neighborhoods enjoy unique and concentrated market segments: Black, Hispanic, and youth markets, as well as ethnic markets supported by concentrations of immigrant populations. In order to encourage a thriving ethnic cluster of businesses, the City should meet with existing ethnic businesses to identify needs for their businesses, and determine what else is missing in the neighborhood.

The transportation enhancements described below call for significant improvements to the State Street/Nott Terrace intersection. This location is close to the Downtown and Union College. The large concentration of people in this area could potentially support specialty and unique retail shops such as a high end coffee shop, jewelry store, copy shop, book store, computer store, office supply, beauty parlor/spa and gourmet foods. As an alternative, a cluster could be created that appeals to the shared needs of neighborhood residents and college students (many of whom also have limited disposable income). Such uses might include a coffee shop, grocery store, used/affordable furniture store, consignment shop, used music store, pizza shop, and ethnic restaurants.

D. Provide Business Technical Assistance

The City's business development efforts in Hamilton Hill and Vale should include provision of technical assistance to existing businesses, perhaps through a Business Improvement District. Such services should include basic business planning, help in securing loans, assistance in obtaining government licenses and permits, advice on merchandising and marketing, and referrals to specialized professionals and service providers. The City should capitalize on the Hamilton Hill Plaza project planning and the sponsorship of the Schenectady County Business Center to promote and incubate businesses that will address resident needs and help stabilize the community.

E. Implement a Façade Improvement Program

The City can also assist small business by developing a façade improvement program for Albany Street, the key neighborhood commercial corridor serving the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. However, the buildings along the street are run down and there are numerous vacant storefronts. Grants can be structured to cover up to 100% based on the household income of the building owner. Potential funding sources include Community Development Block Grant, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Environmental Protection Fund and New York Main Street Program. This project should be coordinated with the Neighborhood Business Center's efforts to incubate new businesses for the neighborhood.

4. TRANSPORTATION

A. Rationalize the configuration of State Street for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians

In developing a recommended street layout for State Street, several competing objectives were considered. A primary goal was to organize the use of the fifty (50) foot curb-to-curb pavement width; delineating travel lanes, parking lanes, and pedestrian crossings. The current lack of defined elements on State Street contributes greatly to the discomfort of this roadway for motorists and other uses.

In defining the street, another consideration was the desire to slow the speed of traffic to improve safety and to transform State Street from a barrier to pedestrians to a place that brings the neighborhoods on either side of the street together. Relatively low traffic volumes on State Street made it possible to consider physical alterations to the roadway - traffic calming techniques - that will signal drivers to slow down and that will improve pedestrian safety in this otherwise walkable urban neighborhood.

A final consideration was the function of this stretch of State Street for regular bus and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Keeping the "rapid" in BRT is important for ensuring the attractiveness, and therefore the potential success of this enhanced transit service. Though this concern was understood, it would be very difficult to provide dedicated BRT lanes within the fifty foot width of State Street in this study area without compromising the other transportation objectives for State Street outlined above. Widening the right-of-way would be expensive and would damage the traditional urban fabric of this city neighborhood. The minimal improvement in BRT efficiency that could be achieved through such measures in this half-mile stretch of State Street is not worth the cost or the potential negative impact on the neighborhood. Dedicated bus lanes could be considered again in the long-term future if other sections of Route 5 are retrofitted for this purpose; but generally, it is felt that such dedicated lanes would be more appropriate along the long stretches of Route 5 in outer portions of Schenectady, and in the Towns of Niskayuna and Colonie that are characterized by lower density suburban development patterns and wider rights-of-way. Instead, BRT along this short stretch of State Street would receive special status through specific improvements at the two station stops. These improvements, described in detail below, would enhance the function and the visibility of BRT service in the corridor. Regular local bus service has also been considered in this work, and several recommended modifications to the number and location of local bus stops are provided.

The recommended layout for State Street is illustrated in a series of four sheets located on the following pages. Changes recommended on each sheet are described in separate sections below. It is important to note that the recommended layout for State Street is not based on survey data and that detailed traffic studies for the street or its intersections have not been conducted as part of this study. The recommendations are based on existing data and the professional judgment of the study's consultant team; however, it may be necessary to perform more detailed analysis at specific locations prior to advancing design and construction of these projects.

Before describing the four sheets individually, there are some common design elements or considerations that apply to the entire corridor. They are:

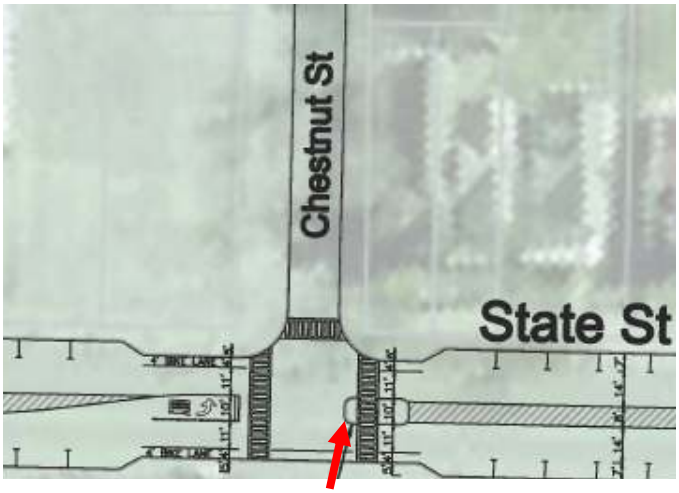
- Well-marked crosswalks (colorized asphalt, StreetPrint, or similar) are recommended at all legs of intersections whether the intersections are signalized or unsignalized. According to seminal research on crosswalk safety, a 30 mph street with 8100 ADT should have marked crosswalks at both signalized and unsignalized intersections [Zegeer, C., et al, Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations, US DOT FHWA (FHWA-RD-01-075), 2001]. This will serve to encourage walking and to help pedestrians identify proper locations for crossing State Street. It will also help achieve ADA compliance, and will alert motorists to the fact that pedestrians are expected in the corridor.
- Curb ramps (or pedestrian ramps) are not shown on the drawings, but in general it is recommended that there be two curb ramps at each corner (not one combined ramp).
- At signalized intersections, walk/don't walk signals should be provided. Pedestrian signals should have an automatic pedestrian phase (not push button activated) corresponding to the movement of traffic through the intersection. The pedestrian phase could also be timed to begin a few seconds before the vehicular phase to bring pedestrians into the crosswalks before turning vehicles begin moving. This improves the visibility of pedestrians, especially for turning drivers.
- Crosswalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian signals should be fully ADA compliant, including provisions for the hearing impaired.
- A four (4) foot bike lane is provided strategically to guide bicyclists and alert motorists at particular locations within the corridor.

"Sharrow" pavement marking

- Where the bike lane is not provided, a fourteen (14) foot shared travel lane marked with sharrows is recommended. Sharrows will also be placed in the travel lane at the bus stop pull-offs, however, when there is no bus at the stop it is expected that bicyclists will ride through the bus stop rather than moving into the travel lane. Due to the scale, sharrows are not shown on the drawings. The image above illustrates the sharrow pavement marking.
- On-street parking is provided in street segments between intersections. The parking lane will be seven (7) feet wide and striped with parking "T's". This will encourage drivers to park closer to the curb and free up space for cyclists.
- Ten (10) foot wide left turn pockets are provided to keep turning vehicles out of the travel lane. Except at signalized intersections, these should be sized for only one or two cars since most of the cross-streets at the unsignalized intersections only go for a few blocks into the neighborhoods.
- Regular bus stop pull-offs are shown as nine (9) feet deep. To provide some consistency in the cross-section, five (5) foot curb extensions and four (4) foot bike lanes are shown at intersections.
- An eight (8) foot flush median (colorized asphalt, StreetPrint, or similar) is suggested for the segments between intersections. Combined with the two, fourteen (14) foot shared travel lanes and seven (7) foot parking lanes, this will utilize the entire fifty (50) foot curb-to-curb width. The

flush median will allow drivers to pass cyclists (or stalled vehicles) by merging temporarily into the median.

- Raised medians are recommended only at specific locations where they will be most beneficial for traffic calming, pedestrian safety, or to make lane alignments work more safely (such as across from left turn pockets). Where raised medians are indicated, median tips are shown because they provide a superior refuge for pedestrians in the crosswalk. This concern has been prioritized over the needs of turning vehicles though such vehicles must still be able to navigate the turn at an appropriate (slow) speed. It is suggested that a standard garbage truck be utilized as the design vehicle for establishing the necessary geometry for turns onto and off this section of State Street.



Median tip provides refuge for pedestrians in the crosswalk

- Sidewalk improvements and streetscape enhancements should be considered for the corridor as resources allow. As noted in the Transportation System Assessment (Neighborhood Overview) the condition of the sidewalk varies significantly along State Street. As much as half of the existing sidewalk between Nott Terrace/ Veeder Avenue and Steuben Street should be replaced. In addition, streetscape enhancements such as pedestrian scaled lighting and street trees would significantly improve the pedestrian environment.

Sheet 1 of 4 – Intersection of State Street with Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue

The main concept illustrated on this sheet is the idea of a "Road Diet". The intersection of Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue and State Street, and the stretch of Veeder Avenue south of this intersection to Albany Street are characterized by an overabundance of pavement. Reducing road width and rationalizing travel lanes and pedestrian space will greatly improve the safety and function of this area for motorists and pedestrians. As illustrated, many feet of pavement from both sides of Veeder Avenue could be removed, and the land added to adjacent city parks, while travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and turning movements are delineated on the remaining fifty-two (52) feet of

Well–defined bus lane alerts motorists to avoid standing in this area.

paved surface.

Well-defined crosswalks are recommended for each leg of the two intersections, with reduced crossing distances created by tightening the turning radii and/or adding curb extensions at the corners as shown. Unfortunately, it is recommended that the relatively new, existing curb extension on the southwest corner of the Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue intersection with State Street be removed to allow for the installation of a queue jumper for BRT buses leaving the eastbound BRT station through this intersection. A queue jumper is a signal enhancement that gives the BRT bus priority to enter the intersection ahead of other vehicles.

The eastbound BRT station and the westbound BRT station totem are as recommended in the CDTA's station design layout plans. The original recommendation in the BRT study to use concrete pavement pads at the BRT stations has been eliminated, however it is suggested here that some form of pavement marking (colorized asphalt or StreetPrint) or similar distinguishing feature (such as Kwik Kurb) at the stations be utilized to help prevent motorists from standing in the bus lane when preparing to make a right turn.

Regular bus service in the City of Schenectady is currently being studied by CDTA to identify options for enhanced cross-town service and to take better advantage of the BRT service that will be implemented in the State Street corridor. In anticipation of this work, possible locations for northbound and southbound bus stops on Nott Terrace (in front of MVP) are also shown.

Sheet 2 of 4 – State Street from Close Street to Grove Place

As close to "typical" as we have in this corridor, the stretch of State Street from just west of Close Street to just east of Grove Place illustrates the primary cross-section configurations suggested. In between the intersections, the cross-section includes two 14' shared travel lanes, a 7' parking lane on each side of the street, and an 8' flush median. At both "T" intersections, a 10' left turn pocket (opposite a 10' raised median) replaces the flush median. The shared travel lanes are reduced to 11' travel lanes and bike lanes (4') and curb extensions (5') replace the parking lanes/bus stops.

It is suggested that the regular bus stops on either side of State Street at Close Street be retained. The significant redevelopment potential of land on the south side of State Street at this location could make these bus stops more useful in the future.

Sheet 3 of 4 – State Street from Hulett Street to Catherine Street

The off-setting intersections of Hulett Street and Mynderse Street with State Street require some modification to the "typical cross-sections" described above. Sheet 3 of 4 illustrates how the conceptual design of this intersection could be modified from the "T" intersections described above. The eastbound local bus station could remain in its current location across State Street from Mynderse Street. A new shelter is proposed to be installed at this bus stop within the next year. It is suggested that the westbound bus stop be relocated to the far side of Mynderse Street (west of Hulett Street) as shown.

Between Mynderse Street and Chestnut Street, the cross-section returns to the typical midblock configuration. Approximately midway along this block, an informal alley connects Albany Street to State

Street. Observations indicate that this informal connection receives a significant amount of pedestrian use. It is suggested that the City consider options for formalizing this alley as a pedestrian connection. Aesthetic and security improvements (lighting, pavement treatment, etc.) would need to be designed into this space. Alternatively, the alley could be converted to a full city street, extending Craig Street through to State Street. In either case, the design of the new intersection with State Street would require careful attention to both vehicular and pedestrian safety and would likely necessitate a change to the "typical midblock configuration" for State Street discussed above.

The intersection of Chestnut Street and State Street repeats the "typical" cross-section for "T" intersections discussed for both Close Street and Grove Place above.

Sheet 4 of 4 – State Street from Catherine Street to Steuben Street

Continuing eastbound, the intersection at Catherine Street begins with the same configuration as the other "T" intersections described above. However, because of the close proximity of Martin Street the cross-section does not return to a typical form east of Catherine Street. Instead, the 10' raised median is replaced by an 8' flush median, but the travel lanes (now 12') and bike lanes continue past Martin Street. Because Martin Street is one-way (out to State Street), there are no left turn pockets to accommodate at this location.

The cross-section returns to "typical" mid-block form past the entrance to Vale Cemetery, but changes again approaching Moyston Street. Here the planned Steuben Street / Moyston Street BRT stations are illustrated. In comparison to initial station plans for this location, one significant change to the layout of both the eastbound and westbound stations is suggested. For this station, it is recommended that BRT buses stop in the travel lane to unload and pick-up passengers. The number of passengers at this location is likely to be somewhat lower than at some of the others along the line so the BRT bus will probably not be stopped for long. Traffic is also very light on this section of State Street. Locating the BRT stop in the travel lane here would effectively serve as a queue jumper, eliminating the need for BRT buses to pull back into the travel lane.

Another alternative that could be considered would be to move the westbound BRT stop to the easterly side of Moyston Street, directly across from the eastbound BRT stop. Placing the eastbound and westbound stops together in this fashion would create a more identifiable station and could help establish a stronger sense of place at this location. This alternative is not illustrated on sheet 4 of 4.

The proximity of Moyston Street to Steuben Street creates a situation where continuing a 10' raised median in the middle of State Street between the two makes sense. A further benefit of this raised median is that it would prevent vehicles from trying to pass the BRT bus while it is stopped in the travel lane. This raised median should be mountable in order to allow EMS vehicles to pass the BRT bus in an emergency.

It is recommended that regular bus stops at Steuben Street and Catherine Street be consolidated to a location at or near the Stueben Street/Moyston Street BRT Station. As shown on sheet 4 of 4, the regular bus stops could be established at a 9' pull-off immediately west of the BRT stations on each side of the street. The purpose of this option would be to keep the regular buses out of traffic when they are stopped to reduce travel delays on State Street and to distinguish BRT service from local bus service.

Another option would be to have the regular bus utilize these BRT stations, stopping in the travel lanes like the BRT buses.

B. Complete design and install Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations

In consideration of proposed BRT station layouts that are currently under development, and the need to enhance pedestrian safety and convenience in the vicinity of these stations, conceptual intersection designs have been prepared for the two intersections where BRT stations are proposed in the Study Area – Nott Terrace/Veeder Street and Steuben Street/Moyston Street. These intersection recommendations were described in Section A above. Further refinement of these concepts is expected as engineering level design progresses.

State Street and Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue

This station is currently planned to be completed in the first phase of station construction for the BRT that could take place as early as 2008. Preliminary plans for the eastbound side show that the existing shelter will be replaced in the same location by a larger shelter (consistent design with the other Route 5 BRT stations). An information kiosk (including automated ticket vending), trash receptacle, newspaper boxes, and security camera will be added, and streetscape amenities (pedestrian scaled lights, benches, planters, etc.) will be retained or enhanced as needed.

The westbound side will consist of a station totem (identifying the stop) without a shelter. Because this station is near the end of the BRT westbound line (Washington Avenue), it is assumed that few people will wait for the bus at this location and therefore a shelter is unnecessary. However, as CDTA reconfigures the local cross-town bus connections in the City to complement the new BRT service it is anticipated that more people will be waiting to take the regular bus at the Nott Terrace side of this corner. The need for a regular bus shelter at that location should be evaluated.

State Street and Steuben Street / Moyston Street

Like the intersection of State Street with Nott Terrace / Veeder Avenue, this station is currently planned to be completed in the first phase of station construction for the BRT. Preliminary plans for the eastbound side show the establishment of a station stop before Steuben Street. On the westbound side, the station stop is proposed to be located on the far side of the intersection with Moyston Street. In both cases, a new BRT shelter will be installed on the sidewalk and an information kiosk (including automated ticket vending), trash receptacle, newspaper boxes, and security camera will be provided. Sidewalk improvements and streetscape amenities (pedestrian scaled lights and benches) will also be added.

As described in Section A above, the suggested

street layout around this BRT station has been modified in one significant way from the initial station plans. For this station, it is recommended that BRT buses stop in the travel lane to unload and pick-up passengers (see Sheet 4 of 4). In addition, the discussion in Section A above contemplates another alternative that would move the westbound stop to the easterly side of Moyston Street directly across from the eastbound stop. This alternative could enhance the placemaking benefits of the BRT station.

C. Regular Bus Stops

As previously noted, regular local bus service will continue in the State Street corridor. CDTA's ongoing route restructuring planning will significantly improve transit operations and access city-wide. Along with cross-town connections, regular bus service on State Street may be reconfigured to better integrate with the new BRT service. Bus stops for the regular service will for the most part remain in their current locations. However, as described in Section A above, existing eastbound and westbound bus stops at Catherine Street and Steuben Street could be consolidated and the westbound bus stop at Mynderse Street could be relocated to the far side of the intersection.

Additional amenities could be considered for regular bus stops in the study area. Trash receptacles or benches would be attractive improvements if appropriate maintenance of these items can be organized. Currently, the only bus shelter along this stretch of State Street is at the southeast corner of the Hulett Street and State Street intersection. This shelter is scheduled to be replaced later this year. If bus shelters are desired at other locations now or in the future, the City should work through CDTA's shelter program to have these locations evaluated.

D. Local Route Restructuring

CDTA City of Schenectady Route Restructuring

Throughout the Schenectady TOD Project's public involvement process, one of the most frequently requested improvements has been to upgrade local bus service to accommodate intra-city travel. To accommodate this public input and maximize the benefit of the proposed NY 5 BRT system, CDTA has initiated a comprehensive restructuring of Schenectady bus service. The objective is to improve productivity and ridership, and to provide neighborhood and feeder service to the NY5 BRT project and other trunk routes. The plan provides for an upgrade to trunk routes in Schenectady, a redesign of neighborhood services, and a significant increase in service span and coverage (nights and weekends). In total, the plan will increase service in Schenectady by about 30%.

Within the Schenectady TOD Study Area, CDTA proposes to provide focused neighborhood routes. These routes would be dramatically restructured compared to existing routes, with new alignments and quality connections to trunk services along Routes 5, 7, 20 and 50. In addition, stand-alone night routes are proposed to be replaced with the span extension of linear routes, so riders are not responsible for learning multiple combinations and route structures. Development of crosstown routing will also provide geographic coverage, transfer connections, and will

simplify the network for customers and potential customers. Specific improvements of the restructuring will make the complete bus network more supportive and allow residents, employees, and shoppers the opportunity to use transit as a primary mode. The improvements are intended to:

- Make the CDTA system simpler to understand and easier to use which will encourage additional riders on all routes;
- Provide a centrally located transfer zone that will increase rider convenience and options to access more locations within Schenectady and the region;
- Increase a traveler's ability to move north/south (crosstown) without transfers (noted a primary need by the TOD Study's public involvement process);
- Eliminate route routing in favor of straight lines which are more intuitive to riders
- Provide service to major destinations (employment, shopping and hospitals); and
- Consolidate service on principal corridors to provide increased frequency.

These local service improvements will support the goals of access and connectivity of the TOD project and enhance the TOD station area development, by providing customer-focused routes that encourage travel throughout the region and direct access to local land uses throughout the Study Area.

E. Neighborhood Streets

Physical improvements to the roadway on State Street will not be enough to support the use of BRT service or to attract investment to properties in proximity to the BRT station stops along State Street. In order for the TOD concept to succeed it must be easy to access the area as well as circulate within the area. In other words, people from the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods must be able to get to State Street safely and find the walk to State Street to be pleasant. Attention to the neighborhood street system is therefore very important.

Albany Street, the neighborhood commercial street that parallels State Street through the Hamilton Hill neighborhood, should be redesigned following many of the same principles as proposed for State Street. Intersection improvements, well-defined crosswalks, improved pedestrian signals, reconstructed sidewalks, identifiable travel lanes and parking lanes would all improve the function and the attractiveness of Albany Street. Additional streetscape enhancements such as pedestrian scaled lighting and street trees should also be pursued as resources permit.

Local streets that intersect State Street and Albany Street should also be improved as part of a regular and incremental program. These streets create the pedestrian network that is vital to sustaining a walkable neighborhood. Improving and filling-in the gaps in the sidewalk and curb system on these local streets should be a priority, and crosswalks and stop-lines should be repainted on a regular basis. Other streetscape elements such as pedestrian scaled lighting and street trees would also be very desirable, but could perhaps be considered of secondary priority given constrained financial resources.

F. Connectivity

Though the traditional modified grid of streets in the study area already provides a fairly high level of connectivity throughout these neighborhoods, there are a few areas where additional connections would be beneficial. The main deficiency is between Albany Street and State Street, where several super-blocks inhibit the movement of people between these two important streets.

On the image below, the arrows indicate several locations where either full streets or pedestrian connections could be established; or in the case of Martin Street, where the pedestrian environment could be improved to create better connectivity between Albany Street and State Street. The middle location, north of the intersection of Craig Street and Albany Street, should be considered for the creation of a formal pedestrian alley or new city street as described in Section A above. An informal connection already exists at this location and is frequently used by neighborhood residents. Finally, if the super-block bounded by Veeder Avenue, Albany Street, Hulett Street, and State Street is redeveloped in the future, consideration should be given to extending one or more of the local streets south of Albany Street – such as Schenectady Street – northward to State Street.

Access Management

According to the Transportation Research Board, access management "involves the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections, as well as median and auxiliary lane treatments and the spacing of traffic signals" (TR News 228, Transportation Research Board, September-October 2003). Access management is used to preserve capacity and to enhance the safety for all users (vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians) of roadways such as State Street. By managing the number and location of access points between the road and adjoining properties, the number of potential conflicts between turning and through traffic can be reduced. This improves the function of the road and reduces the number of accidents.

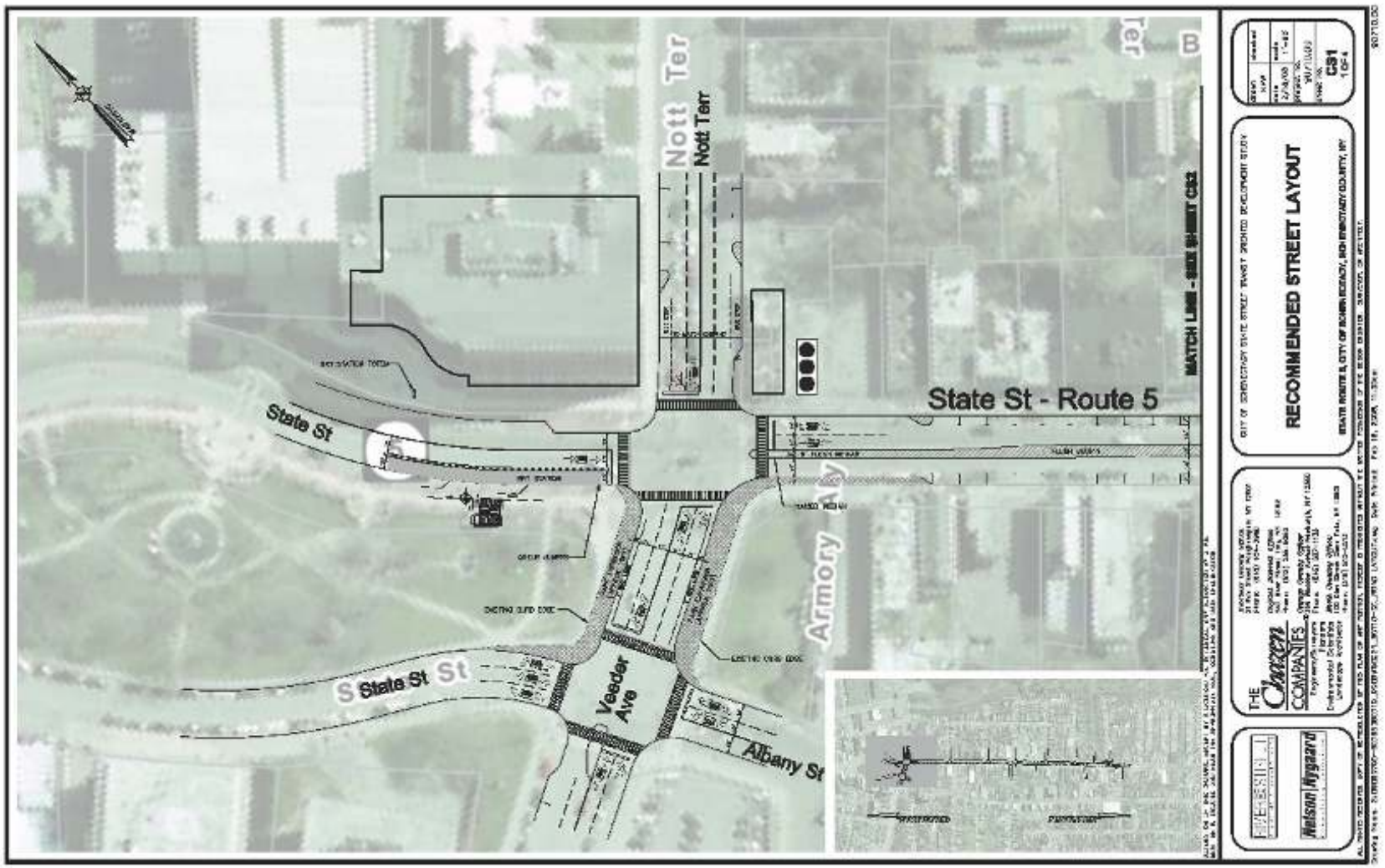
Though this section of State Street is quite urban and walkable, there are still numerous locations where access to/from the road is poorly managed. The photo at right illustrates how such uncontrolled access can negatively impact the safety and comfort of pedestrians walking along State Street. As development and redevelopment occur in the corridor, the City should continue to work with applicants to refine proposed site designs in consideration of access management practices. As a general rule for an urban location such as this, curb cuts onto State Street should be kept to a minimum, with access provided instead via the side streets that intersect State Street. Where no alternative to direct access to/from a particular property onto State Street exists, every effort should be made to limit and consolidate the number of curb-cuts and to minimize their negative impact to all modes of traffic.

Uncontrolled access between State Street and this adjoining property reduces the safety and function of the street, and the safety and comfort of pedestrians walking past this site.

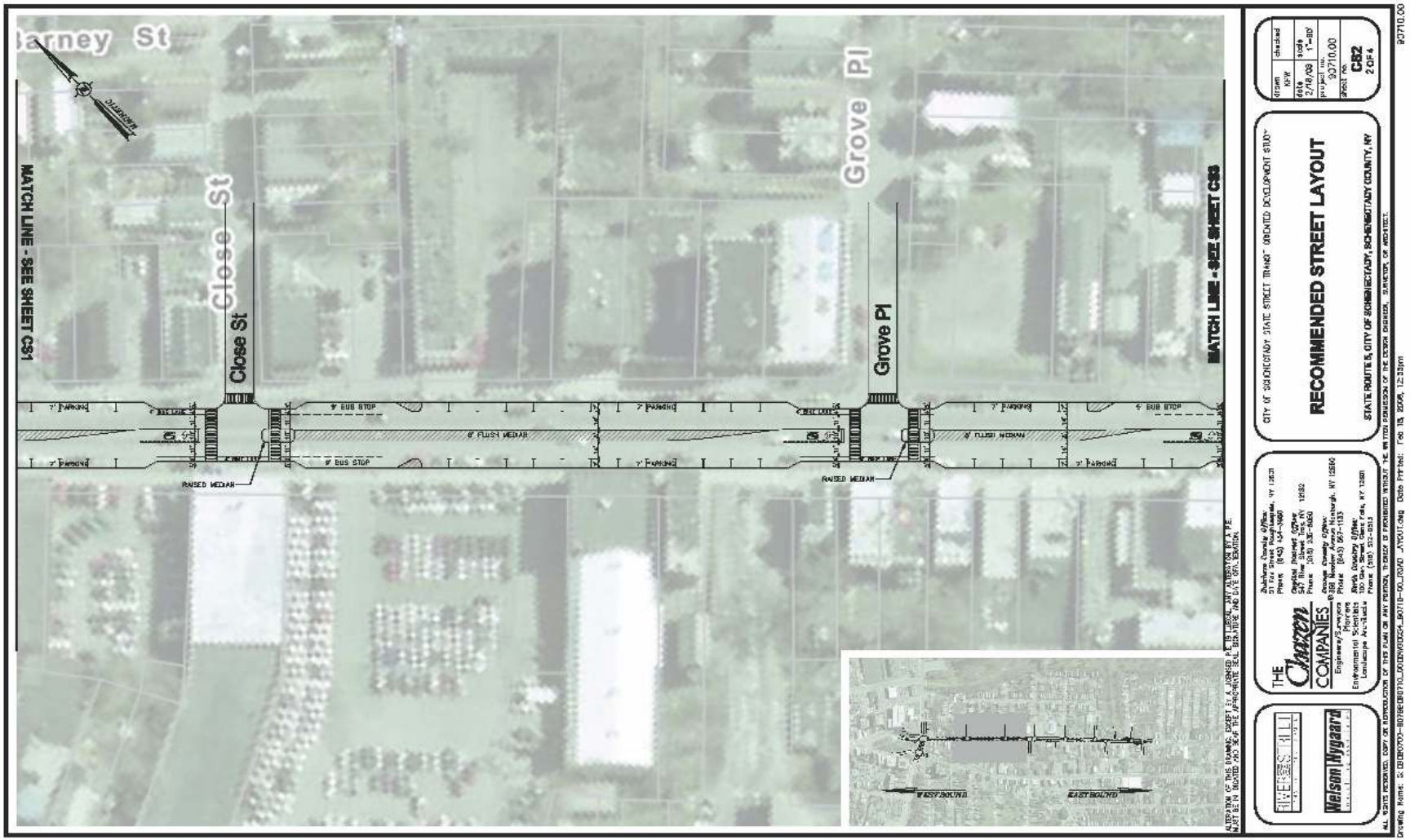
Later this year, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) will oversee a Regional Access Management Study for the entire Route 5 Corridor from Albany to Schenectady. Implementation of specific access management recommendations and strategies from that study should be pursued for this section of State Street.

It is recommended that regular bus stops at Steuben Street and Catherine Street be consolidated to a location at or near the Stueben Street/Moyston Street BRT Station. As shown on sheet 4 of 4, the regular bus stops could be created established at a 9' pull-off immediately west of the BRT stations on each side of the street. The purpose of this option would be to keep the regular buses out of traffic when they are stopped to reduce travel delays on State Street and to distinguish BRT service from local bus service. Another option would be to have the regular bus utilize these BRT stations, stopping in the travel lanes like the BRT buses.

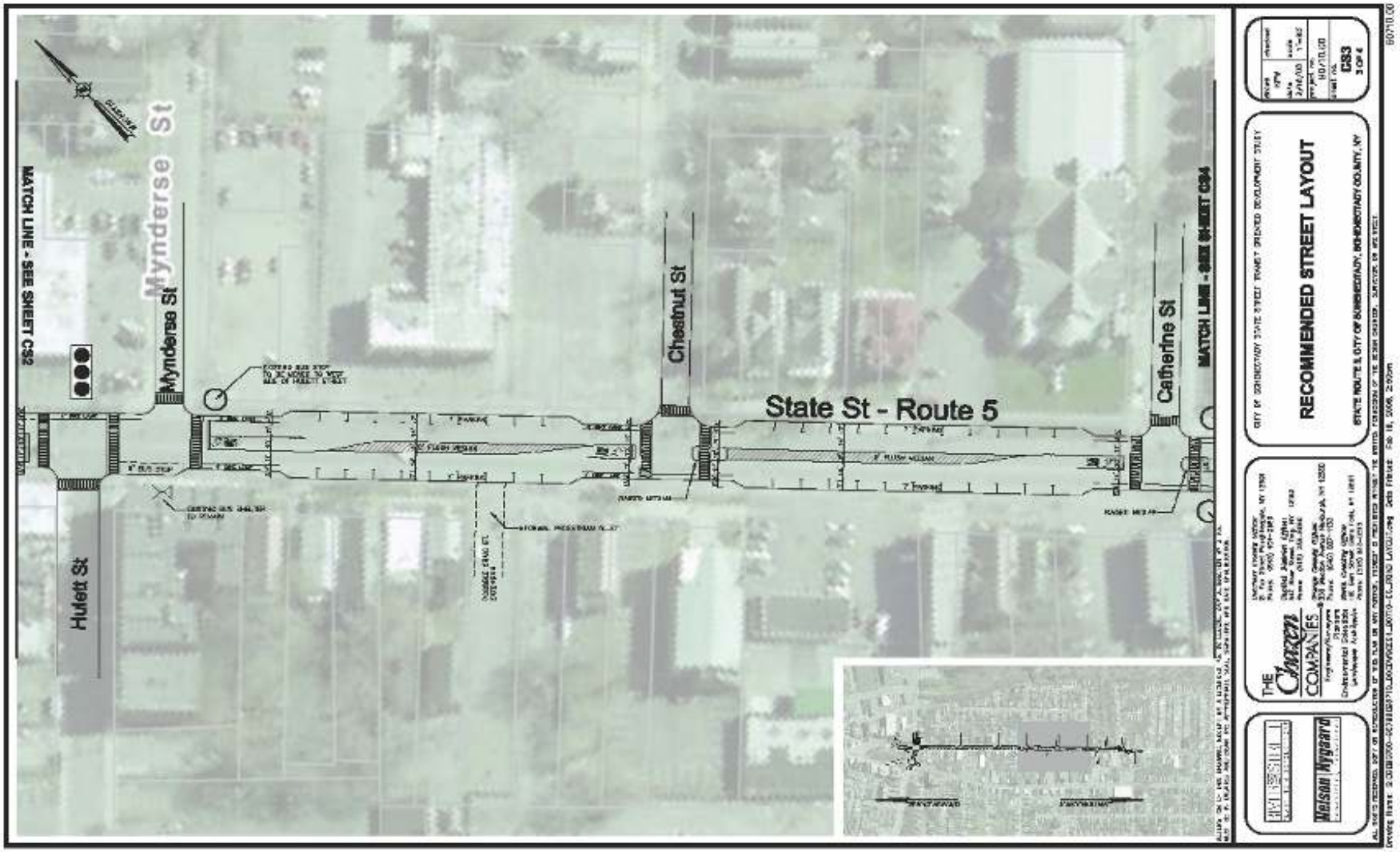
Sheet 1 of 4 – Intersection of State Street with Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue



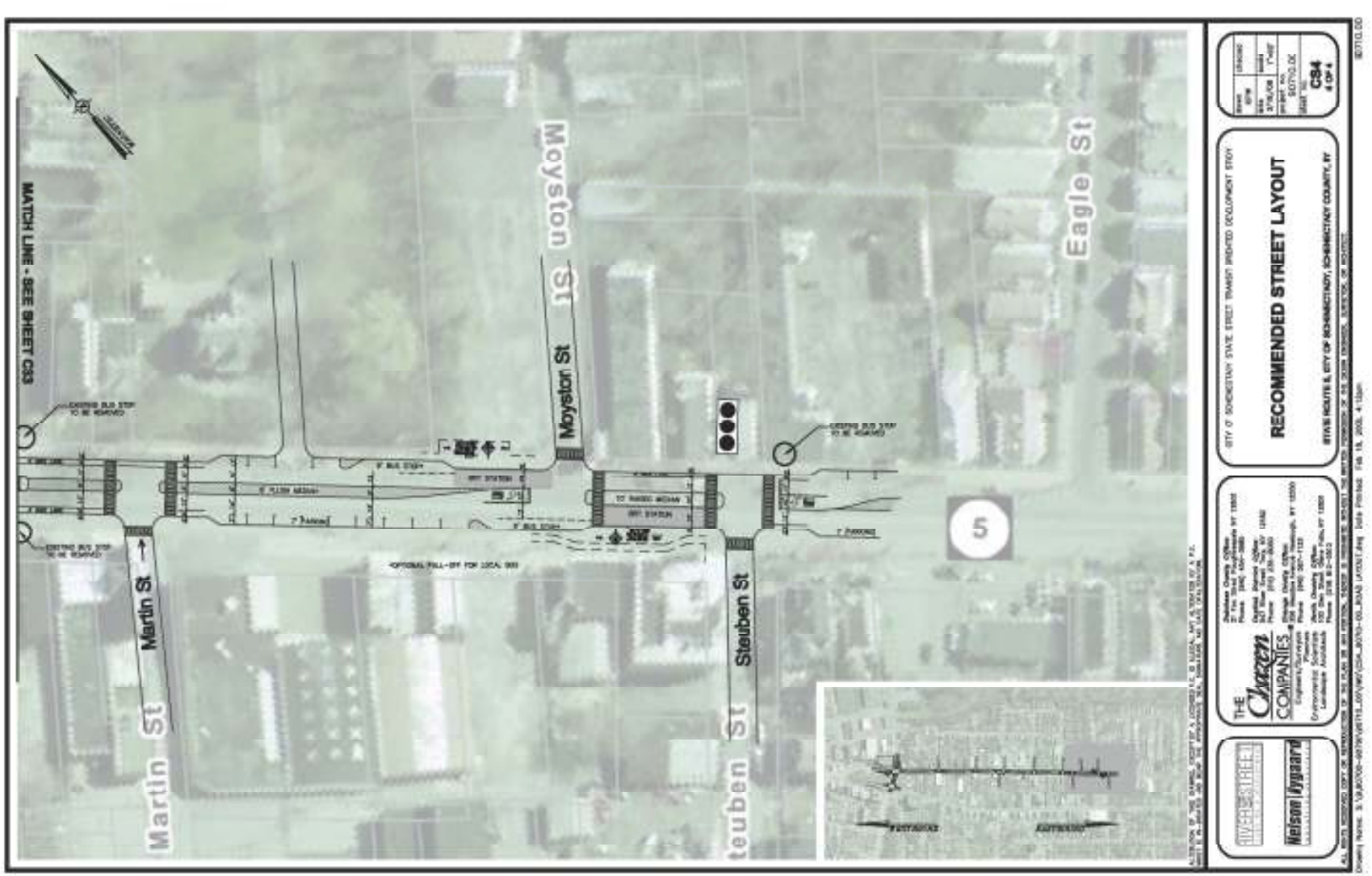
Sheet 2 of 4 – State Street from Close Street to Grove Place



Sheet 3 of 4 – State Street from Hulett Street to Catherine Street



Sheet 4 of 4 – State Street from Catherine Street to Steuben Street



B. Complete design and install Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations

In consideration of proposed BRT station layouts that are currently under development, and the need to enhance pedestrian safety and convenience in the vicinity of these stations, conceptual intersection designs have been prepared for the two intersections where BRT stations are proposed in the Study Area – Nott Terrace/Veeder Street and Steuben Street/Moyston Street. These intersection recommendations were described in Section A above. Further refinement of these concepts is expected as engineering level design progresses.

State Street and Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue

This station is currently planned to be completed in the first phase of station construction for the BRT that could take place as early as 2008. Preliminary plans for the eastbound side show that the existing shelter will be replaced in the same location by a larger shelter (consistent design with the other Route 5 BRT stations). An information kiosk (including automated ticket vending), trash receptacle, newspaper boxes, and security camera will be added, and streetscape amenities (pedestrian scaled lights, benches, planters, etc.) will be retained or enhanced as needed.

The westbound side will consist of a station totem (identifying the stop) without a shelter. Because this station is near the end of the BRT westbound line (Washington Avenue), it is assumed that few people will wait for the bus at this location and therefore a shelter is unnecessary. However, as CDTA reconfigures the local cross-town bus connections in the City to complement the new BRT service it is anticipated that more people will be waiting to take the regular bus at the Nott Terrace side of this corner. The need for a regular bus shelter at that location should be evaluated.

State Street and Steuben Street / Moyston Street

Like the intersection of State Street with Nott Terrace / Veeder Avenue, this station is currently planned to be completed in the first phase of station construction for the BRT. Preliminary plans for the eastbound side show the establishment of a station stop before Steuben Street. On the westbound side, the station stop is proposed to be located on the far side of the intersection with Moyston Street. In both cases, a new BRT shelter will be installed on the sidewalk and an information kiosk (including automated ticket vending), trash receptacle, newspaper boxes, and security camera will be provided. Sidewalk improvements and streetscape amenities (pedestrian scaled lights and benches) will also be added.

As described in Section A above, the suggested street layout around this BRT station has been modified in one significant way from the initial station plans. For this station, it is recommended that BRT buses stop in the travel lane to unload and pick-up passengers (see Sheet 4 of 4). In addition, the discussion in Section A above contemplates another alternative that

would move the westbound stop to the easterly side of Moyston Street directly across from the eastbound stop. This alternative could enhance the placemaking benefits of the BRT station.

C. Regular Bus Stops

As previously noted, regular local bus service will continue in the State Street corridor. CDTA's ongoing route restructuring planning will significantly improve transit operations and access city-wide. Along with cross-town connections, regular bus service on State Street may be reconfigured to better integrate with the new BRT service. Bus stops for the regular service will for the most part remain in their current locations. However, as described in Section A above, existing eastbound and westbound bus stops at Catherine Street and Steuben Street could be consolidated and the westbound bus stop at Mynderse Street could be relocated to the far side of the intersection.

Additional amenities could be considered for regular bus stops in the study area. Trash receptacles or benches would be attractive improvements if appropriate maintenance of these items can be organized. Currently, the only bus shelter along this stretch of State Street is at the southeast corner of the Hulett Street and State Street intersection. This shelter is scheduled to be replaced later this year. If bus shelters are desired at other locations now or in the future, the City should work through CDTA's shelter program to have these locations evaluated.

D. Neighborhood Streets

Physical improvements to the roadway on State Street will not be enough to support the use of BRT service or to attract investment to properties in proximity to the BRT station stops along State Street. In order for the TOD concept to succeed it must be easy to access the area and as well as circulate within the area. In other words, people from the Hamilton Hill and Vale neighborhoods must be able to get to State Street safely and find the walk to State Street to be pleasant. Attention to the neighborhood street system is therefore very important.

Albany Street, the neighborhood commercial street that parallels State Street through the Hamilton Hill neighborhood, should be redesigned following many of the same principles as proposed for State Street. Intersection improvements, well-defined crosswalks, improved pedestrian signals, reconstructed sidewalks, identifiable travel lanes and parking lanes would all improve the function and the attractiveness of Albany Street. Additional streetscape enhancements such as pedestrian scaled lighting and street trees should also be pursued as resources permit.

Local streets that intersect State Street and Albany Street should also be improved as part of a regular and incremental program. These streets create the pedestrian network that is vital to sustaining a walkable neighborhood. Improving and filling-in the gaps in the sidewalk and curb system on these local streets should be a priority, and crosswalks and stop-lines should be repainted on a regular basis. Other streetscape elements such as pedestrian scaled lighting and street trees would also be very desirable, but could perhaps be considered of secondary priority given constrained financial resources.

E. Connectivity

Though the traditional modified grid of streets in the study area already provides a fairly high level of connectivity throughout these neighborhoods, there are a few areas where additional connections would be beneficial. The main deficiency is between Albany Street and State Street, where several super-blocks inhibit the movement of people between these two important streets.

On the image below, the arrows indicate several locations where either full streets or pedestrian connections could be established; or in the case of Martin Street, where the pedestrian environment could

be improved to create better connectivity between Albany Street and State Street. The middle location, north of the intersection of Craig Street and Albany Street, should be considered for the creation of a formal pedestrian alley or new city street or formal pedestrian alleys described in Section A above. An informal connection already exists at this location and is frequently used by neighborhood residents. Finally, if the super-block bounded by Veeder Avenue, Albany Street, Hulett Street, and State Street is redeveloped in the future, consideration should be given to extending one or more of the local streets south of Albany Street – such as Schenectady Street – northward to State Street.

E. Access Management

According to the Transportation Research Board, access management "involves the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street

connections, as well as median and auxiliary lane treatments and the spacing of traffic signals" (TR News 228, Transportation Research Board, September-October 2003). Access management is used to preserve capacity and to enhance the safety for all users (vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians) of roadways such as State Street. By managing the number and location of access points between the road and adjoining properties, the number of potential conflicts between turning and through traffic can be reduced. This improves the function of the road and reduces the number of accidents.

Though this section of State Street is quite urban and walkable, there are still numerous locations where access to/from the road is poorly managed. The photo at right illustrates how such uncontrolled access can negatively impact the safety and comfort of pedestrians walking along State Street. As development and redevelopment occur in the corridor, the City should continue to work with applicants to refine proposed site designs in consideration of access management practices. As a general rule for an urban location such as this, curb cuts onto State Street should be kept to a minimum, with access provided instead via the side streets that intersect State Street. Where no alternative to direct access to/from a particular property onto State Street exists, every effort should be made to limit and consolidate the number of curb-cuts and to minimize their negative impact to all modes of traffic. CDTA is also planning a $250,000 access management study for the corridor.

Uncontrolled access between State Street and this adjoining property reduces the safety and function of the street, and the safety and comfort of pedestrians walking past this site.

5. CATALYST PROJECTS

The State Street Transit Oriented Development study has identified a number of large-scale economic development projects that can catalyze investment in the neighborhoods. As the neighborhood improves, market concerns will fade and new private sector investment will seem smart rather than risky as it does today. Public support for initial catalysts will likely be necessary to encourage investment. The City should gradually decrease financial support as the private sector grows more confident about investments.

A. Build Hamilton Hill Plaza

The main catalyst project identified in this plan and other recent planning efforts including the City's 2020 Comprehensive Plan is development of a mixed use commercial development project known as Hamilton Hill Plaza.

Hamilton Hill Plaza Location

The Schenectady County Community Business Center (SCCBC), with support from the City of Schenectady agreed to sponsor a feasibility study of the Hamilton Hill Plaza to determine the redevelopment potential of an assemblage of properties to revitalize the Hill and Vale neighborhood. The site under evaluation is bounded by State Street, Steuben Street, Albany Street and Martin Street and is located directly across Albany Street from the Business Center. It comprises approximately 2.9 acres including 15 parcels and contains a mix of occupied and vacant buildings and vacant lots. Nearly 40% of the site is vacant.
Forty percent of the 400-foot deep block between State Street and Albany is vacant or underutilized space associated with the retail, office, and small industrial businesses that front on either street. In some cases, this space is used for parking – as is the case for the auto dealership – while in other cases it appears that this space is marginally used for loading or storage.

Existing vacant commercial sites near Mohawk Office Supply and the site planned for future use as the BRT station currently act as a blighting influence, but also represent important redevelopment opportunities.

The Hamilton Hill Plaza is not in an historic district but a couple of the buildings on the site retain some or much of their historical or architectural character and are worth preserving as part of any redevelopment scenario. These buildings include:

- 910 State Street (Mohawk Office Products)
- 918 State Street (Iglesia de Dios Church)
- 922 State Street (vacant multifamily)
- 907 Albany Street (Firehouse)

The three State Street buildings anchor the block along the State Street corridor. Mohawk Office Products (at the corner of Martin Street) is a long-term viable business that has occupied the site for many years. The business also owns other vacant property on the site (including the firehouse) with significant redevelopment potential. 918 State Street is currently being used as a church but historically the structure has been mostly used as a commercial building. The building has great redevelopment potential for commercial use should the current owner decide to relocate. 922 State Street (at the corner of Steuben Street) is currently vacant. The building was most recently utilized as multi-family residential although historically the structure also housed retail stores. The building has potential to be developed as mixed use (first floor retail stores and upper floors professional offices or residential apartments).

On the Albany Street side, the former firehouse stands out as a unique building worth preserving and adapting to a new economically beneficial use. The building could serve as expansion space for incubator graduates. It could also be redeveloped for a combination of ground floor retail and upper floor professional offices.

In contemplating future redevelopment, the Schenectady County Business Center expressed some concern about potential environmental issues resulting from prior uses of the site. A detailed analysis of each parcel is included in the feasibility study. (Appendix D)

Hamilton Hill Plaza Goal

The Business Incubator is looking to facilitate redevelopment of a higher and better use that will create a "hub" in the neighborhood, better connectivity, and classic multi-use, with improvements to both State Street and Albany Street. A study is underway to develop a model of the economic, financial and management dynamics of the development and operation of the proposed Hamilton Hill Plaza that will form the basis of a business plan and financial proformas.

It is envisioned that the Hamilton Hill Plaza project could attract businesses that provide goods and services that neighborhood residents purchase weekly and/or businesses that can provide jobs to neighborhood residents. Its potential location across Albany Street from the Business Incubator is positive and could provide graduates of the incubator with commercial space. Although Albany Street is a main thoroughfare in the City, it is not as busy as State Street and would be suitable to accommodate businesses that target neighborhood residents that could potentially walk to these stores and offices. State Street, on the other hand, is a well-traveled corridor and is clearly more auto dependent than Albany Street. A focus on entrepreneurship can also help to bring the "underground" economy above ground – by creating incentives for childcare providers, for example, to be licensed.

Public Input About The Hamilton Hill Plaza Project

Several meetings were held to discuss the proposed development of the plaza project with residents, neighborhood leaders and business and property owners. Key comments from these discussions include:

- Develop a job training center
- Address public safety concerns that make new businesses hesitant to locate in the neighborhoods
- Fix the streets, facades, and undertake overall beautification
- Form a business association
- Find a niche – perhaps an ethnic theme might be appropriate but make sure there is a critical mass of five or more businesses
- Improve Jerry Burrell Park, specifically its lighting
- Help the Hamilton Hill Arts Center to expand
- Demolish buildings that are burned out/abandoned/inhabitable
- Provide more homeownership incentives
- Involve kids in revitalization so that they respect the neighborhoods
- Create more youth activities and market existing programs more successfully
- Attract companies that offer "career development" instead of job creation
- Develop a youth entrepreneurship program
- Integrate strong businesses like Mohawk Office SCAP, and the First Church of God
- Increase office and parking space fro SCAP
- Consider construction of a parking garage

In terms of future land uses, residents identified the following:

- Grocery Store
- Legal office to help community members with personal issues
- Neighborhood hardware store (not a big box)
- CDTA neighborhood station – where residents could get coffee, maps, warm up, etc.
- Medical supplies and repair
- Information booth – brochures for local events, programs, etc.
- Police substation
- "Make and take Gourmet" – prepared meals
- Chain Restaurants like red lobster and olive garden (not fast food restaurant)
- Day care center
- Bakery
- Ethnic hair stylist
- Convenience store that carries "fresh" groceries at decent prices
- Resource Center – where kids could do homework, tutoring, encourages parental involvement with school district, parents meetings
- Cooking classes – introducing foods/use of spices, etc.

- Laundromat
- Nice small corner store
- Wireless internet
- Extended business hours
- Façade program for State and Albany Streets
- Cluster ethnic grocery stores and restaurants
- Spice factory
- Hat factory/store
- Internet café
- Bookstore
- Office supply
- Art and craft store

Hamilton Hill Plaza Scenarios

In the business planning portion of the feasibility study (yet to be completed), a number of potential redevelopment scenarios for the Hamilton Hill Plaza will be evaluated. Whatever the program components, scenarios assume retention of SCAP and Mohawk Office Products. These are the major property owners on the site and are long term successful businesses. Like many of the State Street corridor businesses, Mohawk Office Products draws customers from a wider geographical area. This customer draw could benefit other businesses locating at the plaza site. The Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP) provides a solid anchor for business development and neighborhood revitalization efforts in Hamilton Hill and Vale. The owner of Mohawk Office Products and the Executive Director of SCAP are currently spearheading an effort to create a new neighborhood business association that would spur revitalization and help attract new businesses to Hamilton Hill.

Although the final redevelopment scenario has not been selected, the following opportunities have been identified as catalysts for neighborhood revitalization:

Mohawk Office Products' would expand and would add a copy store, UPS store and training facility. The job training facility would be located in the warehouse building behind Mohawk Office. The UPS store and copy center would be constructed in the vacant space along State Street between Mohawk Office and Inglesia de Dios Church. The Schenectady Community Action Agency would be improved and expanded on its current site. The former firehouse would be used in connection with the Incubator program, specifically creating space for program graduates.

From the perspective of the TOD project, the rehabilitation of 922 State Street (corner of Steuben) for first floor retail and upper floor professional office / residential use is a critical component of the redevelopment. There is a great opportunity for a use to be located on the first floor of this property that would service the needs of transit users, such as a coffee shop. This business would also be frequented by employees of existing and new businesses. Infill new construction for 901 and 905 Albany Street should also be pursued for first floor retail and upper floor office or residential use after demolition of existing structures. Other vacant buildings on the assemblage would be demolished.
A redevelopment project of this size will require significant parking to support new and expanded uses. The development acreage of the site would be significantly reduced if the project were to meet the City's

parking and impervious material regulations, even under the scaled back parking and minimums established in the new zoning ordinance. To address these concerns, development of a parking structure should be evaluated. Based upon preliminary assessment up to 180 spaces would be needed. This could be constructed on the current site of the SCAP parking lot site. In addition, the parking lot off Martin Street behind Mohawk Office building should be repaved for additional surface parking/loading area. Both of these parking solutions would offer shared use possibilities with CDTA.

Discussion still needs to take place with Inglesia de Dios Church regarding their interest in remaining in the neighborhood or making their property part of the redevelopment plan. If the church decides to relocate, first floor retail and upper floor professional office use should be pursued for the parcel. The same effort should be undertaken with ADS Body Shop, which provides an important service but is not in the best location.

Other community-oriented uses could be integrated into the program. For example, a local physician is interested in developing a wellness health program/alternative healthcare facility offering chiropractic, acupuncture, exercise, nutrition, massage, reiki and other time honored health practices. Opportunity may also exist to develop a community center, perhaps including a new and expanded location for the Hamilton Hill Arts Center.

Development of the Plaza project holds the most hope of catalyzing investment in the neighborhood, bringing necessary new support services and facilitating the expansion of critical community service providers. The development of formal development and operating proformas and a business plan are underway. This detailed analysis will identify the optimal configuration of uses to maximize community benefit.

B. Attract a Full Service Supermarket

It has been suggested that the City evaluate the feasibility of attracting a traditional grocery store to the neighborhood. Today residents either shop at local corner markets or leave the neighborhood to shop at grocery stores located elsewhere in the City or adjacent suburbs. The "Veggie Mobile" offers fresh vegetables, but only on a limited basis during the summer months.

Grocery stores, like department stores and other retailers, fled inner cities to suburban locations in the 1960's and 1970's. As the "super" market emerged, building footprints increased, accommodating in-store pharmacies and other amenities. Grocery stores found it increasingly difficult to assemble parcels of adequate size in urban areas. Developers continue to cite a number of other concerns regarding inner city development, including increased site preparation costs, lack of urban development financing, especially for retail operations, more demanding regulatory context, perceptions and realities of urban crime and higher costs of inner-city store operation (rent, labor, insurance, etc.).

Due to the lack of supermarkets in low-income areas, residents' local shopping options are often limited to smaller neighborhood stores that offer fewer food choices at higher prices than supermarkets, due in part to the lack of "economies of scale". Smaller stores cannot buy in volume, have limited access to large-scale wholesale produce, and often do not have the space or equipment needed to offer fresh produce on a daily basis. Fewer supermarkets in urban, low-income communities also mean less access to fresh, high quality, affordable foods. Limited supermarket access makes it harder for people to meet their dietary

needs, and may therefore contribute to escalating rates of chronic disease in low-income communities. A 2002 study by the Food Trust reported that diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes are linked to poor nutrition.

To test the viability of locating a full service grocery store in Hamilton Hill, a preliminary market analysis of the neighborhood and its capacity to support a traditional grocery store was undertaken. The methodology for this analysis intentionally followed the approach that a major grocery retailer would follow. As such, it does not consider the impact that the underground economy represents.

Based on the analysis of the consumer spending capacity, the Hamilton Hill/Vale Neighborhood spends approximately $7,451,611 on groceries. Smaller national chain stores are approximately 26,864 SF with median sales of over $640 per square foot. Even if every household in the neighborhood shopped exclusively at a new store, the primary target area would be unable to support a typical national chain supermarket. Current neighborhood spending of $522.71 per square foot would support a store of approximately 14,255 square feet - similar to the size of Aldi's, which already exists east of the trade area on State Street. According to the *Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers*, local chains, which may have smaller prototype stores (as small as 16,350 SF), still report median annual sales per square foot of $638.72. Based on $638.72 per square foot, the neighborhood trade area could only support a local chain store of approximately 11,666 SF – the size of a mini-mart, not a grocery store.

While a local chain or an independent store would be more likely to work with this scenario as there is more flexibility for using existing buildings, smaller stores and adapting to existing conditions, the reality is that probably only 50-60% of the primary trade area consumer spending on food-at-home would be done at the new site. Therefore, without *significant* assistance from a secondary trade area market, the trade area will not support a grocery store of any meaningful size (at least 15,000-20,000 SF).

Neighborhood residents point out that the traditional methodology for assessing the feasibility of grocery store development relies on demographic indicators that typically put the inner city market at a disadvantage and do not consider the underground cash economy at work in neighborhoods like Hamilton Hill and Vale. In addition, the typical approach does not reflect the impression of local residents that population decline has slowed and substantial new investment is occurring in the neighborhood. Residents encourage the city to continue promoting this idea like the City of Rochester has done in recent years.

The City of Rochester, NY began the fight for inner city grocery stores in the mid 1990's. The City worked with a local nonprofit citizens group (Partners Through Food) to bring large retail supermarkets back into Rochester. After a lengthy negotiation process, Tops agreed to build four new stores and expand an existing structure. The city agreed to contribute public monies to the project. Public funds were compiled through the Federal Enterprise Community Zone program, the CDBG program, Urban Renewal Trust Fund, and the HUD 108 program. In addition, Rochester also committed to collaborating with Tops in developing a comprehensive plan to help improve the areas where the supermarkets would be located. The Tops Corporation is now promoting its Rochester stores as a model of how the supermarket chain can contribute to urban redevelopment.

In recent years, the saturation of the suburban grocery market and slow down of mergers has led chains to look for new markets and a range of new smaller footprint groceries are springing up across the country,

though not yet in the North East in any significant way. Many grocery and big box retailers have announced plans to debut or test smaller store prototypes in hopes of tapping remaining, under-served, smaller, and urban markets unable to accommodate or support their larger suburban formats. From a real estate perspective, smaller-store prototypes offer reduced construction, real estate acquisition, inventory stocking and employee costs, as well as a reduced timeline from ground-breaking to opening. It has been suggested that a "Whole Foods" type of grocery catering to natural products or a Cooperative Market might be an alternative to a traditional grocery store. Both of those alternatives, however, typically attract a higher end market and provide goods at higher price points and are probably not the most appropriate targets for the neighborhood.

The Mohawk Honda site has also been identified as a potential location for a grocery store. If the site were carefully designed, a new store could break up the existing "super-block" and enhance the pedestrian environment. The Mohawk Honda site is not the most centrally located for the neighborhood, but it opens up a much larger immediate market base, given its proximity to other neighborhoods. This market will continue to expand as downtown residential development and waterfront residential development builds out.

The analysis clearly indicated that attracting a neighborhood grocery store will be a challenge, but it is a project the neighborhood endorses and should receive additional evaluation. Creating a new grocery store for the neighborhood would help draw new residents, serve a critical need within walking distance of existing residents and offer them job opportunities close to home. To advance the idea further the City would need to form strategic partnerships, support a full feasibility analysis using new data sources, and be prepared to aggressively advocate for the new store type with regional grocery retailers. Alternatives to the traditional grocery store model, focusing on a cooperative market, ethnic market or independently owned market should also be pursued.

C. Pursue Development of Other Vacant and Underutilized Sites

The City has identified other important development sites in the neighborhood that could serve as "receptors" for future development initiatives. The Mohawk Honda site, described above is perhaps the largest opportunity, should the current owner make the site available for reuse in the future. This site is critically important as a bridge between the neighborhood and the downtown and can serve as an anchor for new development in the future. The Mohawk Honda property creates a "super block" in its current configuration that is not pedestrian scaled or friendly. Its size and location make it appropriate for a large single use – like a grocery store or for another mixed-use development project like Hamilton Hill Plaza. Infill housing is another possibility as the transit oriented development initiative matures. Though the current owner, Mohawk Honda has no plans to vacate the property, the city should continue discussions with the company regarding their long-term plans for the site.

The property on the corner of Moyston and State Street, across the street from the planned BRT station and adjacent to the Vale Cemetery is another important commercial development site. The narrow parcel has been the subject of recent discussion for a non- profit child care center, site of a city 9/11 Memorial, parking area for the Cemetery and other uses such as a seasonal farmers market. The site is very strategically located to enhance the BRT operations. The highest and best use for the property is as a commercial structure with ground floor retail use such as a coffee house or other similar business.

Two low-end hotels in the neighborhood have been identified as a blighting influence on the neighborhood. Although the current owners have no plans to vacate the properties the sites are the subject of frequent police presence and code complaints. Their long-term redevelopment of significant improvement is critical to neighborhood stability and revitalization. As with the Mohawk Honda site, the City should maintain open lines of communication with the owners of the properties and continue to plan for their redevelopment.

Longer-term redevelopment opportunity on both sides of Moyston Street between State and the Vale Cemetery including the site at the corner of Moyston and State Street describe above. The target area contains some deteriorating residential structures, vacant buildings and underutilized vacant land. The opportunity exists, if this site could be assembled to create new infill residential development and to create a real entrance to the Cemetery and park to add significant greenspace connection for the neighborhood.

Finally, the City has identified the area adjacent to the Hamilton Hill Plaza site including the 800 block of State Street and the current location of the Schenectady Light Opera as a second phase development opportunity to expand the Hamilton Hill Plaza project. The Light Opera has been considering a move to downtown location that would leave its existing theater site available for redevelopment – perhaps as a home for the Hamilton Hill Arts Center. This site, if assembled carefully could also offer new park or greenspace elements for the neighborhood.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation of the transportation improvements identified in the State Street TOD Study will begin this year (2008). The Capital District Transportation Authority's (CDTA) Bus Rapid Transit project for State Street is scheduled to move into the construction phase in the coming months. The new BRT stations at Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue and at Steuben Street will be part of this initial work. As the implementation matrix indicates, improvements at these BRT stations will advance in three phases starting with site/civil work this year, construction of shelter amenities and installation of the real time information system next year (2009), and installation of video surveillance in 2010.

Coordinating the other proposed transportation improvements in the study area with the BRT work will be a challenge due to the advanced status of the BRT's scheduled implementation. Aside from the BRT stations, the design and construction of most of the transportation elements proposed for State Street in this study will need to wait until funding can be obtained for this work (Suggestions for funding are described below). However, it is strongly recommended that proposed improvements near the Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue intersection be advanced rapidly to coincide with the CDTA's planned site/civil work at this BRT station.

For that reason, the implementation matrix separates the proposed improvements in the Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue area from the remaining corridor work. Led by the City, it is recommended that

Left: Site work proposed as part of the Nott Terrace / Veeder Avenue BRT station project.
Right: The full design concept for this area of the State Street TOD Study.

this project be prioritized to better ensure that it is designed in coordination with the BRT station improvements and to limit construction related disruption at this intersection.

The images above show improvements that are to be made to the Nott Terrace/ Veeder Avenue intersection as part of the BRT station project (left) compared to the conceptual design called for in this study (right). The BRT station work (left) will include new crosswalks for all four segments of the intersection, removal of the bulb out at the southwest corner of the intersection, and expansion of the City Park to narrow down the southbound side of Veeder Avenue. Implementing the full design concept for this area (right) would include an expansion of the City Park to narrow down the northbound side of Veeder Avenue (completing the road diet for this road segment). It would also include a curb extension along the south side of State Street just east of the intersection, and the addition of a short raised median, the beginning of the flush median, and additional striped crosswalks (painted) at the intersection of Veeder Avenue and Albany Street. The cost of this work, including a reconstruction of the short segment of Veeder Avenue from State Street to Albany Street, would be approximately $200,000.

CDTA's proposed Steuben Street BRT station improvements include almost all of the conceptual design improvements for the area that are suggested in this study. The one exception is a crosswalk from the eastern side of Moyston Street across State Street that would utilize the raised median as a pedestrian refuge. The City of Schenectady could add that crosswalk to the CDTA's project at the City's expense.

The remainder of the improvements proposed for State Street between the two BRT stations should be implemented at a later date. Completion of all of the conceptual design elements for State Street (curb to curb) shown in this plan will cost approximately $1 million. This includes the resurfacing of State Street, replacing curbs, adding curb extensions at intersections, installing a flush median and raised medians in specific locations as shown, and striping for crosswalks, stop lines, on-street parking, etc. Additional amenities such as planting of shade trees in tree grates at regular intervals along the corridor would add approximately $325,000 to this total. Replacing approximately half of the concrete sidewalk in this corridor could cost another $150,000.

It is suggested that the City start immediately to seek funding for the design and construction of the State Street improvements through the Capital District Transportation Committee's (CDTC) 5-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Once the project is programmed on the TIP it will be eligible to receive federal funding. The City could also seek other sources of funding for this project such as state legislative or congressional appropriations.

The other transportation improvements described in this study are also listed on the implementation matrix. Suggested improvements to neighborhood streets in Hamilton Hill and Vale, including Albany Street, could be undertaken as smaller discrete projects. These projects could be funded in part through appropriate grant programs such as CDTC's Spot Improvement Program, and NYSDOT's Transportation Enhancement Program or Safe Routes to School Program.

Responsibility for many of the actions/recommendations will fall upon the City of Schenectady. Other recommendations may involve direct action by state agencies, funding or partial funding from State and Federal agencies or activities by business organizations. The private sector (business owners, developers, commercial tenants) will also play a large role through development/redevelopment of land within the study area, and through compliance with new zoning standards. Opportunities also exist to collaborate

with Metroplex to assist small and larger businesses through financing, partnerships and façade improvement grants and loans. Regardless of the funding source or "action agency," the City of Schenectady will be responsible for instigating and/or coordinating nearly all of the proposed actions.

The matrix that follows serves as the implementation plan in tabular format. It provides a listing of the recommended improvements and the order of magnitude cost estimates, potential funding sources and estimated periods of implementation for each. Order of magnitude costs are rough estimates that will require detailed engineering analysis to produce more precise estimates as improvement projects proceed from a conceptual stage through required project implementation phases. In addition estimates and actual costs of implementation may vary somewhat depending on the entity undertaking the project and the funding source used (i.e. local, state, federal or private developer).
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Schenectady State Street Transit Oriented Development Study		Note: Order of magnitude costs are rough estimates that require detailed engineering analysis to produce more precise estimates. These estimates and actual costs of implementation may vary depending on the entity undertaking the project and the funding so				
Task	**Phase**	**Description**	**Date**	**Partners**	**Budget**	**Funding**
1 Planning						
A. Update Zoning Ordinance and Standards	Immediate	This project will be complete in April 2008	2008	Complete	N/A	Complete
B. Complete Implementation of the Vale Village Plan	Short Term	Complete implementation as described in 1999 Vale Village Plan	2010	City, Neighborhood Association, Community-based organizations	$5.5 Million	CDBG, HOME funds, HUD programs, NYS OPRHP
C. Improve Public Safety	Short Term	Expand Community-based policing, video surveillance and lighting	2008	City, Police Department, District Attorney, CDTA	$3.0 Million over 5 years	City, State and Federal public safety grants
D. Facilitate Property Owner Reinvestment	Long Term	Increase awareness among property owners of existing financial resources	2009	City, community based organizations	N/A	CDBG, State and Federal community development grants, Renewal Community Funds
E. Cultivate Partnerships	Ongoing	Emphasize public private partnerships and close relationships with neighborhood associations and neighborhood organizations	2010	City, community based organizations	N/A	Community Development grants
F. Improve Code Enforcement	Short Term	Implement key recommendations from neighborhood plan to increase code compliance. Provide financial assistance to residents addressing code violations	2009	City	$2.0 million for staff and grants	City, CDBG for Concentrated Code Enforcement, Renewal Community Funds
G. Practice Selective Demolition of Substandard and Vacant Properties	Long Term	Identify key demolition targets to remove blight and create redevelopment sites	2015	City, Property Owners, community based developers	$3.0 million	CDBG, Renewal Community
H Improve and Develop Green Space	Mid Term	Improve existing park space and create connection to Vale Cemetery and Park	2010	City, property owners, community-based recreation programs	$1.5 Million	City, OPRHP
I. Increase Cultural Opportunities in the Neighborhoods	Long Term	Work with the Hamilton Hill Arts Center to expand cultural opportunities	2010	City, community based organizations	$1.0 Million	Public Art Funds from CDTA, NYS Arts Grants

2 Housing						
A. Support Homeownership	Ongoing	Coordinate with neighborhood organizations and provide financial support	2020	City, community based housing agencies like BNI, Community Builders and Habitat	$5.0 Million	City, CDBG, Renewal Community, State and Federal Housing programs, Affordable Housing Corporation
B. Promote Rehabilitation and Redevelopment of Vacant Buildings	Ongoing	Encourage infill development of vacant sites and demolition of underutilized properties	2020	City, community based housing agencies like BNI, Community Builders and Habitat	$5.0 Million	City, CDBG, Renewal Community, State and Federal Housing programs, Affordable Housing Corporation
3 Business and Workforce						
A. Enhance Job Training for Youth and Adults	Mid Term	Increase coordination with job training organizations	2015	City, County, Weed and Seed, local employers	$5.0 Million	State and Federal grants, NYS TANF Program, CDBG, City
B. Provide Economic Development Incentives	Mid Term	Focus existing and tailor new incentives to small business development on Albany Street and State Street	2010	City, property Owners, Metroplex	$2.0 Million	CDBG, Metroplex-ex, property owner contribution
C. Implement Retail Recruitment Targeting Strategy	Short Term	Develop a targeted retail recruitment strategy for the neighborhood corridors: Albany Street and State Street	2009	City, Metroplex	$100,000	City, Metroplex
D. Provide Business Technical Assistance	Mid Term	Focus existing business assistance programs on neighborhood corridors	2010	City, Metroplex	$150,000	City, Metroplex
E. Implement a Façade Improvement Program	Short Term	Develop a new façade improvement program focused on Albany Street encouraging development of a ethnic retail destination	2008	City, Metroplex	$300,000	City, Metroplex

4 Transportation							
A. Rationalize the Configuration of State Street fo	Ongoing						
i. Veeder/Nott intersection		Additional enhancements to the Nott Terrace/Veeder Avenue intersection and to Veeder Avenue south to northside of intersection with Albany Street (not covered as part of BRT Station Phase 1 project)	2008	City	$200,000	City
ii. State Street		Curb to Curb enhancements as shown in plan (not including BRT station areas)	2010	City	$1,000,000	City, CDTC
Option - sidewalk replacement		Replace approximately half of the sidewalk along State Street from Nott/Veeder to Steuben St.		City	$150,000	City, CDTC
Option - shade trees		Plant shade trees in tree grates - spaced at 30-35 feet intervals	2010	City, Retree Schenectady	$325,000	City, Retree Schenectady
B. Complete Design and Install BRT Stations						
i. State Street and Veeder/Nott	Short Term	Civil Work	2008	CDTA, City	$143,000	CDTA, City
	Mid Term	Shelter/Amenities and Real Time Information System	2009	CDTA, City	$93,000	CDTA, City
	Long Term	Video	2010	CDTA, City	$15,000	CDTA, City
ii. State Street and Steuben/Moyston	Short Term	Civil Work	2008	CDTA, City	$311,000	CDTA, City
	Mid Term	Shelter/Amenities and Real Time Information System	2009	CDTA, City	$128,000	CDTA, City
	Long Term	Video	2010	CDTA, City	$29,000	CDTA, City
C. Regular Bus Stops	Short Term	Replace bus shelter at Hulett Street and State Street intersection	2008	CDTA, City	$5,000	CDTA, City
	Mid Term	Add bus shelters on Nott Terrace for crosstown service	2009	CDTA, City	$15,000	CDTA, City
D. Local Route Restructuring	Short Term	Implement CDTA recommendations for local bus routes	2008	CDTA, City	$2.0 million to increase annual budget	
E. Neighborhood Streets				City		City
		Replace concrete sidewalks - approximately $7.50/square foot. Concrete curb ramps - approximately $1,500 each.	Ongoing	City	$50,000 annually	City
		Painted crosswalks - approximately $500 each	Ongoing	City	$20,000	City
		Plant shade trees - approximately $600 each. Cast iron tree grate - add approximately $1,000 each	Ongoing	City	$50,000 annually	City
F. Connectivity		Address during the review of future development proposals	Ongoing		N/A	
G. Access Management	Short Term	Regional Access Management Study for the Route 5 Corridor (From Albany to Schenectady)	2008	City, CDTC	$230,000	CDTC, City
	Ongoing	Address access management during the review of future development proposals	2008	City	N/A	City

5 Catalyst Projects						
A. Complete Hamilton Hill Plaza	Mid Term	Complete feasibility analysis and if appropriate development of the	2010	City, Business Incubator,	N/A	City, Metroplex, Empire State
B. Pursue Development of Neighborhood Grocery Store	Long Term	Continue to evaluate alternatives for development of a neighborhood grocery store	2015	City, Property Owners, Metroplex	N/A	City, Metroplex, State and Federal Grants and private Financing
C. Pursue Redevelopment of other Key Sites	Mid Term	Continue to evaluate reuse opportunities for vacant and underutilized sites in the neighborhoods	2012	City, Metroplex, Property Owners	N/A	City, Metroplex, property owners, developer financing

Appendix A. Study Advisory Committee Members

The following individuals and organizations were represented on the Study

Advisory Committee:

- Anne Benware, Capital District Transportation Committee
- Andrew Brick, City of Schenectady
- John Colluccio, City of Schenectady
- Sharran Coppola, City of Schenectady Planning Commission
- Ross Farrell, Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Todd Fabozzi, Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC)
- Cari Hourigan, City of Schenectady
- Gary Hughes, Schenectady County
- Jim Kalohn, Schenectady County Planning
- Sandy Misiewicz, Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
- Marion Porterfield, Weed and Seed Program
- Christine Primiano, City of Schenectady
- Ravi Ramdath, Neighborhood Resident
- Chris Rush, City of Schenectady
- Steven Strichman, City of Schenectady
- Kristina Younger, Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)

Consultant Team:

- Margaret Irwin, River Street Planning & Development
- Michael Welti, The Chazen Companies
- Susan Blickstein, The Chazen Companies
- Kelvin Webster, The Chazen Companies
- David Fields, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates
- Mike King, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates