



Final Land Use and Transportation Plan

Route 5 Transit Gateway



Submitted to

the City of Schenectady and the Capital District Transportation Committee

by IBI Group

with River Street Planning & Development, LLC and Creighton Manning Engineering, LLP

August 30, 2010

Route 5 Transit Gateway Land Use and Transportation Plan

Acknowledgements

Study Advisory Committee

Steve Caruso, Assistant to the City Engineer, City of Schenectady
Michael Dussault, General Electric
Todd Fabozzi, Capital District Regional Planning Commission
Stephen J. Feeney, Schenectady County Department of Economic Development and Planning
Michael A. Finocchi, YMCA
Pat Godlewski, Schenectady County Community College
Lyn Gordon, Stockade Neighborhood Association
Jim Phelps, AAA Northway
Susan Rank, The Chamber of Schenectady County
Jim Salengo, Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation
Doug Sayles, Cornerstone Advisors, Ltd.
Mila Vega, Capital District Transportation Authority
Carrie Ward, Capital District Transportation Authority
Michael Wyatt, New York State Department of Transportation

Project Team

Steve Strichman, Schenectady City Planning
Christine Primiano, Schenectady City Planning
Anne Benware, Capital District Transportation Committee
Sreekumar Nampoothiri, Capital District Transportation Committee

Consultant Team

IBI Group
River Street Planning & Development
Creighton Manning Engineering

And

The members of the public who contributed to the two public meetings.

Disclosure Statement

This report was prepared in cooperation with the City of Schenectady, Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), Schenectady County, Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). This report was funded in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration [and Federal Transit Administration], United State Department of Transportation. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of these governmental agencies.

The land use and transportation recommendations presented in this report are designed to help support the existing and future land use pattern described in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The various land use and transportation options identified in the report are based on an analysis of existing and expected future conditions in the study area.

Many of the actions identified in the study are not intended for short-term implementation. A considerable amount of design work still remains to be done before any of these projects can be constructed. The recommendations set forth in this report are conceptual in nature and do not commit the City of Schenectady, CDTC, NYSDOT, Schenectady County, or CDTA to funding any of the improvements. The concepts need to be investigated in more detail before any financial commitment can be made.



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1. Background and History

The Route 5 Transit Gateway Study lays out a long-range vision for what the Gateway District could become over the next 10 to 20 years. It gives guidance to planners, developers, institutions and public sector agencies as they make decisions about the physical development of the area.

The plan study area is bounded by Washington Avenue, State Street, and Erie Boulevard. Both sides of Washington Avenue and State Street and the west side of Erie Boulevard are included. The study area also extends about 600 feet west along both sides of State Street from the intersection of Washington Avenue.

The Gateway District, once a thriving commercial and light industrial area served by the Erie Canal and several railroads, has seen significant decline over the past several decades and now includes much vacant or underutilized land. The area's excellent location, high level of accessibility and its proximity to the rapidly revitalizing downtown, GE's new Renewable Energy Global Headquarters and Advanced Battery Manufacturing Center, and the stable Stockade neighborhood convinced the City of Schenectady that the time was right to pursue its revitalization.

The plan is based on the latest thinking in urban planning including sustainability, smart growth and transit oriented development (TOD) which call for the redevelopment of urban places through more community-oriented design, the use of all modes of transportation, higher density development, and more efficient use of public resources. These concepts respond to the massive shifts going on in the world including steep increases in the cost of oil, global warming, loss of prime farmland and other environmental threats, changes in the foundations of our economy away from industrial and toward services, limited government budgets, and a growing preference for city living. Downtown Schenectady has seen significant revitalization in the past 10 years using some of these concepts and has recently been featured in the *New York Times* (February 28, 2010) and the *Business Journal* (April 12, 2010) for its success.

The study team held two public meetings and eleven formal stakeholder meetings as well as numerous informal conversations to gather the opinions and ideas of a broad cross section of people interested in the study area.

This plan document is organized into five sections taking the reader through the process that created the plan, a description of the background analysis, the guiding principles, a description of the land use and transportation plan and a set of implementation actions that put the plan into action.

Process

The first step in the development of the Gateway District plan was to establish a steering committee of representatives of local institutions, businesses, government agencies, and community groups. The group's first meeting included a presentation and discussion of TOD and Smart Growth and how they could be applied to the study area. The committee established a vision for the project as follows:

"The Transit Gateway District is the vibrant hub that ties together the Stockade neighborhood, the Central Business District, the Community College, and General Electric. This revitalization is supported and energized through mixed-use development, walkable connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, and a network of excellent transportation services. Biking, transit, intercity rail and bus link the district to the city's neighborhoods, the Capital Region and the surrounding Northeast."

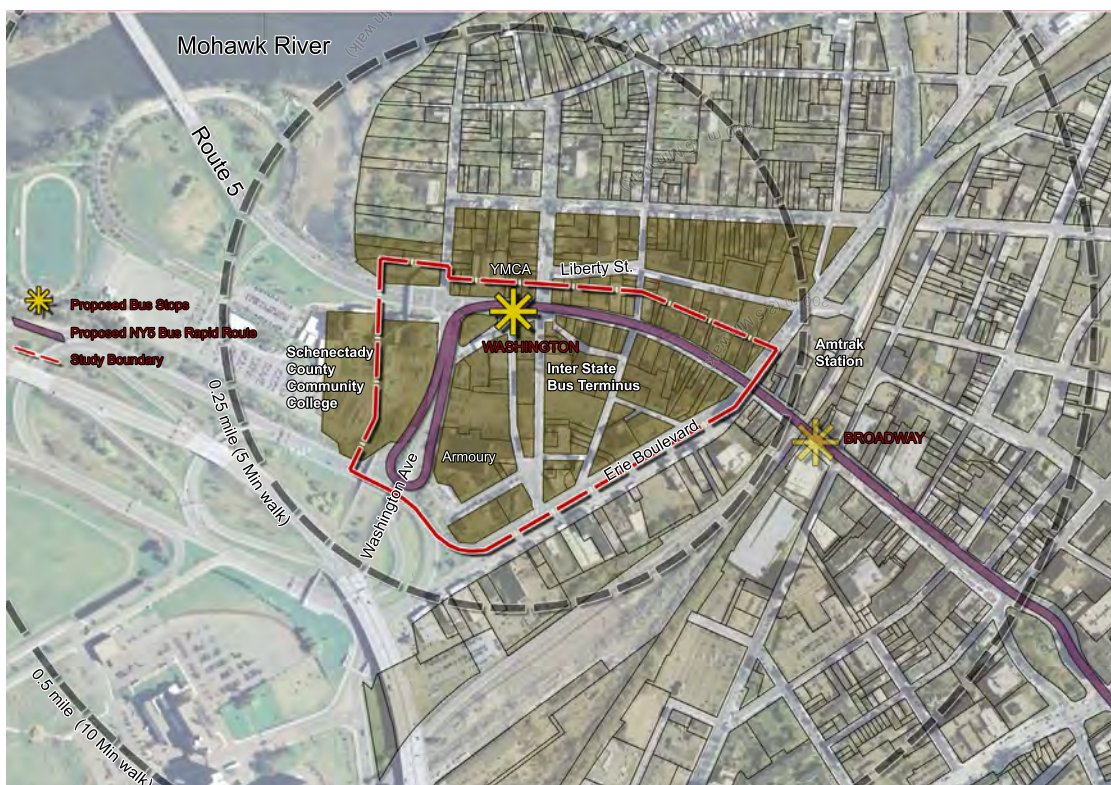
The next step in the Route 5 Transit Gateway Study was an in-depth review of previously completed plans that affected the study area and an investigation of existing conditions. The plans that were reviewed included the City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan, the NY Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Study, the NY 5 Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Design Study, the City of Schenectady Urban Bike Route Master Plan, Erie Boulevard Redesign Concept, and the SCCC Master Plan, among others. The existing conditions review covered study area demographics, land use, built form, open space, FEMA flood plain classification, parking, and transportation as well as other characteristics. The influence that existing conditions would have on future development was considered.

The first public meeting was held at SCCC on June 4, 2009. After a presentation describing the purpose and background of the project, including an overview of TOD and smart growth principles, and the existing conditions analysis, attendees were invited to review the boards and discuss the project with project staff. Comments, suggestions, corrections, and ideas were welcomed and small group discussions were held at the various subject boards. Comments were recorded and incorporated into the development of the draft plan.

The next step was the completion of a market analysis of residential and commercial demand for development for the study area. This report gave planners a base of understanding of how much new residential and commercial space could reasonably be expected to be leased or purchased in the Gateway District over the life of the plan. This helped with planning for the density, type, and uses of new development.

A series of nine (9) stakeholder meetings were held with business, institutions, government agencies and departments to gain their understanding of the future of the study area and challenges and opportunities present for improvement. Additional meetings were held with NYSDOT concerning the I-890 interchange and the Washington Avenue and State Street intersection.

FIGURE 1.1 - STUDY AREA CONTEXT



With the review of current plans, analysis of existing conditions, analysis of market demand, and comments from the public and stakeholders, the study team put together a draft plan for the review of the steering committee. This plan was fine tuned based on their comments and then presented to the public at a meeting on January 27, 2010. Attendees were given an opportunity to review and comment on the plan.

Comments from the public meeting were again incorporated into the plan and the final plan completed. The plan is presented in the following sections of this document.

Existing Conditions

This section reviews existing plans and reports and assesses existing land use and transportation conditions to identify major issues for the Route 5 Transit Gateway project. This establishes the planning context for the project and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities present in the study area. The assessment is based on the vision for the study area established by the steering committee.

General Description

The study area is located on the western end of the city, adjacent to the Mohawk River, Interstate 890, downtown Schenectady and the General Electric plant. The GE plant has expanded significantly recently and is now the Renewable Energy Global Headquarters and home of the Advanced Battery Manufacturing Center. Schenectady County Community College (SCCC), at the western boundary of the study area, is also a major presence and is growing rapidly, with students and employees contributing significantly to activity in the vicinity. Just to the north of study area is the historic Stockade neighborhood, a stable area of well-kept row and detached houses, small apartment buildings, a hotel, churches, and other institutions.



Schenectady County Community College



General Electric main office building

Previous and Ongoing Studies

City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan 2020

The citywide plan recommends improving pedestrian amenities, extending streetscape improvements along State Street and establishing a gateway to the city. To encourage new housing the plan recommends financial and land use incentives and supports compact, mixed-use development. Additional housing for students at Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) is also mentioned, as well as a recommendation to improve access between SCCC and downtown. The study area is also included in the Stockade neighborhood plan. The neighborhood plan recommends improving pedestrian connections to downtown, creating shared off-street parking areas, improving the appearance of existing parking lots, as well as constructing a gateway element at State Street and Washington Avenue to serve as an entrance into the neighborhood. The neighborhood plan also recommends improving the rear facades of commercial buildings along the north side of State Street, those that back the neighborhood.

New York Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Study

The Preferred Future scenario of this study sets forth a vision that provides more transportation choices, including transit, walking and bicycling. Businesses that serve transit riders are recommended at stations. The study's action plan endorses increased investment in transit infrastructure, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and other supporting modes. A section on improving the pedestrian environment recommends traffic calming measures and streetscape improvements designed to encourage walking and to reduce auto dependency.

Smart growth concepts are incorporated throughout the study's recommendations, with recommendations for efficient land use—compact, mixed-use development--and multi-modal accessibility all in an effort to revitalize the neighborhoods surrounding this important regional corridor that runs from the City of Schenectady to downtown Albany through five municipalities along the way.

New York Route 5 Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Design Study – Operations Plan

This plan develops a detailed operations plan for the Schenectady to Albany Route 5 BRT service including the local and feeder routes that will form the complete transit system for the corridor. Routings, headways, span-of-service standards, and connecting points are developed corridor-wide, including the following routes which impact the City of Schenectady:

1. Route 5 BRT Express
2. Route 5 local – formerly Route 55
3. Feeders including:
 - State Campus Feeder and Corporate Woods Feeder (formerly route 56X)
 - Union College/Van Vranken Feeder – formerly Route 61
 - GE Feeder

The next section of the Route 5 BRT Operations Plan report develops station locations and conceptual designs including:

1. Developing a methodology for locating BRT stations based on usage of local stops, transfer points, and other factors. In general, the most heavily used local stops were recommended to become BRT stations.

2. A discussion of the design of the Colonie Center transfer station.
3. Park-and-ride location discussion.

The report discusses operations planning in detail including:

1. Alternatives and recommendations for downtown routing in Schenectady and Albany.
2. Span of Service
3. Headways for all routes in the service plan.
4. Running times based on recorded times in the passenger census.
5. Schedule coordination between the various routes in the corridor and feeder connections to them.
6. Vehicle requirements based on headways and running times.
7. Ridership demand estimation based on the application of elasticities to various origin-destination pairs along the length of the corridor.

The final section of the NY Route 5 Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Design Study – Operations Plan reviews ITS features that would be useful for the BRT service.

CDTA Regional Transit Development Plan

The Regional Transit Development Plan governs all transit service planning for the CDTA. The background research that was used to develop the TDP is also valuable to the current planning process.

Key policies adopted in the TDP are:

- Market segmentation
- Proactive stance
- Frequent service
- System connectivity
- Performance based evaluation

The findings of the study include:

1. Demographic trends are in favor of suburbanization and lower densities.
2. Population densities high enough to warrant transit service are generally in the historic core cities of the Capital District, but also include some suburban areas.
3. Core market areas are declining in density and jobs are suburbanizing, but CDTA still serves 80% of jobs.
4. Suburban residents tend to be higher in income and have higher access to autos, lower income residents with greater need for transit are concentrated in cities.
5. The elderly tend to live in suburban low density development at this time.
6. Regional travel is likely to remain flat.
7. Regional policy shapers see transit mainly as a basic service for those who need it and not a major contributor to their goals and objectives.

Recommendations of the plan include:

1. Develop route classifications system including: premium, trunk, feeder, express, suburban shuttle, and rural routes.
2. Develop a route service evaluation process based on: ridership, ridership per revenue hour, ridership trends, community considerations, and business arrangements that contribute to revenue.
3. Establish service standards that guide where service should be added or subtracted based on objective service evaluation procedures.
4. Involve employees in the process.
5. Develop a branding and marketing program to communicate to the different market segments of the public the various types of service available and how they can be used.
6. Pursue a comprehensive and continuous public outreach program.

Within the study area the plan notes a review and evaluation of Schenectady routes beginning in 2007 and a review of the route classification system for different route types.

Urban Bike Route Master Plan

This study for Schenectady recommends a network of bicycle routes throughout the city, with routes connecting to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail adjacent to the study area. A Downtown/Stockade loop route is proposed connecting the study area to Riverside Park or to the East Front Street neighborhood. A shared-use path has recently been completed from State Street and Washington Avenue to the existing trailhead. An informational kiosk will be constructed near where the path meets State Street.

Canal Square Redevelopment Plan Appendix

The appendix of this redevelopment plan for the area southeast of the study area includes an analysis of current economic conditions, especially related to household income and retail sales. It also lists several themes drawn from stakeholder workshops, among them “clean, neat and safe” areas, adequate parking, independent businesses and linkages with surrounding neighborhoods.

Erie Boulevard Redesign Concept

Erie Boulevard, which intersects State Street at the eastern end of the study area, will be reconstructed using this design concept, the goal of which is to improve the aesthetics and function of Erie Boulevard, strengthening its connection to adjacent areas while highlighting the historic importance of the surrounding vicinity. The design concepts seek to accommodate the high volume of traffic along Erie Boulevard, but at slower speeds more amenable to pedestrian activity.

Schenectady County Community College Master Plan

The Community College’s master plan presents recommendations phased from 2008 through 2014. Among the plan’s elements affecting the campus and external facilities are a proposed relocation of the baseball and softball fields to the area currently occupied by the track, a proposed acquisition of properties adjacent to the college on Washington Avenue and the purchase of the Armory building currently used by the college. All properties between Washington Avenue and Railroad Street are desired for acquisition to accommodate

additional buildings, a new quad and structured parking along (and possibly over) Railroad Street. Pending acquisition of properties along Washington Avenue a raised walkway is also planned across the street to connect with existing campus buildings.

Economic Impact of Schenectady County Community College on New York State

Using a regional economic input-output model, this study attempts to quantify the economic benefit to New York State from Schenectady County Community College. A multiplier is estimated that derives an annual economic output among a number of industry classifications for each dollar of input (from SCCC payroll). The total annual economic output resulting from SCCC's \$12.4 million dollar payroll in 1999-2000 is estimated at \$67 million, with an estimated 981 jobs created as a result of the school.

Downtown Albany Residential Market Potential Update

Analyzing residential potential in Albany, this study determined that potential exists for in-migration to Albany, primarily from nearby counties. Of the 10,400 households estimated to represent the potential market for new and existing market-rate housing units in Albany as a whole, 23 percent were found to represent the potential market in downtown Albany. As suggested by the report, this percentage is consistent among like-sized cities, so a similar share of housing potential may exist in Schenectady as well.

CDTA Schenectady Bus Route Restructuring Plan

This document lays out a plan to restructure bus transit services in Schenectady to better serve existing and developing travel and development patterns. This plan was implemented on May 24, 2010. Services to large retailers like Price Chopper and Walmart and new employment centers like the Niskayuna Tech Park and the Rotterdam Industrial Park, and institutions like hospitals and schools, will be improved while coverage for transit dependent neighborhoods will be preserved. Services in the evenings and weekends, when many people run necessary errands and many service sector employees commute to or from work, will be expanded. The route structure will be modified to provide feeder services to Route 5 BRT and the other trunk lines that serve Schenectady, routes 50, 55, and 70. Overall service hours increase by 30% if the full plan is implemented. CDTA expects that this will result in an increase in passenger boardings by 40%.

New Visions 2030 (CDTC Regional Transportation Plan)

Priorities of the regional transportation plan include transit investments, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, urban reinvestment and economic development. The plan acknowledges local planning efforts through its Linkage Planning Program and seeks to establish a long-term, sustainable goal for the CDTC region, including Schenectady. It cites a regional greenway and BRT service as two of its "big initiatives." Key planning and investment principles included in the long range regional transportation plan relevant to the Schenectady Gateway Transit Study Area include:

- Transportation investments will encourage residential and commercial development to locate within an Urban Service Area defined for the Capital Region. Using transportation investments as a way to support urban reinvestment and infill provides tremendous advantages. Transportation investments that provide pedestrian enhancements and transit centers in high-density urban and suburban corridors improve neighborhood integrity and community livability.

- Encouraging bicycle and pedestrian travel is a socially, economically and environmentally responsible approach to improving the performance of our transportation system.
- In addition to supporting desired land settlement patterns, transit service helps meet multiple regional objectives in the Capital Region.
- Transportation investments will help preserve and enhance the Capital Region's existing urban form, infrastructure, and quality of place.
- Transit facilities and services can be an essential element of the social, economic and cultural fabric if supportive policies and investments are in place.
- Neighborhood-based local planning efforts are important to the success of an overall regional plan that emphasizes livable communities.

Among the large-scale initiatives mentioned is a regional greenway linking the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail with other proposed facilities. A riverfront access program is also mentioned, which may maximize use of the region's riverfront areas, such as Schenectady's. Transit expansion is proposed as a "big initiative," including both on-street and exclusive-guideway BRT service that would foster transit-oriented development (TOD) throughout the region. The rehabilitation of the Schenectady Amtrak station as part of the state High Speed Rail Initiative is also mentioned.

The plan also acknowledges that a significant portion of anticipated transportation revenue is planned to fund the repair and rehabilitation of the regional expressway system, which over the next 30 years is estimated to cost approximately \$3.2 billion in current dollars. New improvements to the expressway system mentioned in the plan are reversible-direction travel lanes, ramp metering to control freeway volumes and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) upgrades to better manage traffic flow. Priority arterial corridors for ITS improvements within Schenectady are summarily mentioned.

TABLE 1.1: SELECTED CENSUS DATA, 2000

Geography	Percent of total population 65 years and over	Percent of individuals below poverty level	Percent of housing units with no vehicle available	Vehicles available per housing unit
Study Area	41%	43%	58%	0.5
Schenectady City	15%	17%	19%	1.3

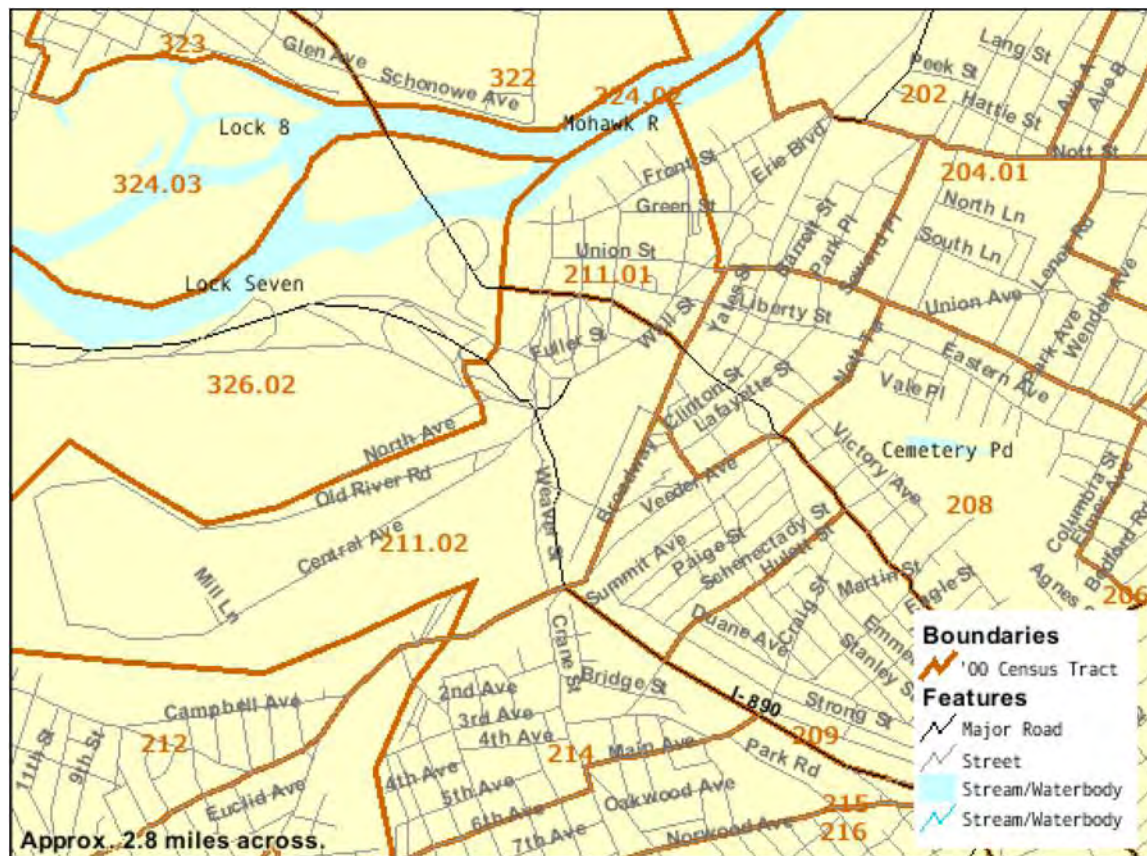
Demographics

The most recent demographic data for the study area comes from the census in 2000. The census tract containing the study area, tract 211.02, also includes the GE plant (Figure 1.2). Since the GE Plant does not include any housing on its grounds, the demographic numbers for tract 211.02 were considered to accurately portray the statistics for the study area.

In 2000, tract 211.02's population was 320 in 205 housing units, an occupancy ratio of 1.6. This compares with a city population in 2000 of approximately 62,000 in 30,000 housing units, an occupancy ratio of 2.0. Forty-one percent of tract 211.02 residents were over the age of 65 in 2000, while 43% of the total population had incomes below the federally defined poverty level (Table 1.1). 58% of tract 211.02's households did not have access to an automobile, compared with 19% for the city as a whole.

Both of these statistics indicate a high degree of dependence on public transit services. While there is a relationship between income levels and age on one hand, and auto ownership on the other, this relationship is also related to transit service quality. The higher the quality of transit service, the easier it is for people to live without autos and so dedicate their income to other items that are of more importance to them. In TODs where a wide variety of land uses and services are located in close proximity to transit service, even people of relatively high incomes will choose to not own a car, or to own just one where they would have owned two in other circumstances.

FIGURE 1.2: SCHENECTADY 2000 CENSUS TRACTS



Land Use

Existing land uses are a mix of commercial, residential and institutional, though many residential structures are located just to the north of the study area (Figure 1.3). SCCC-owned property occupies a large part of the study area. The entire study area is zoned “C-4 Downtown.” The C-4 designation encourages mixed use development and most uses that are not considered auto-oriented, industrial or nuisances are allowed. As the Schenectady Zoning Ordinance states, “The Downtown Commercial (C-4) District is intended to represent the central business district of the City. It encourages a mix of commercial, civic, cultural and hospitality uses in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Increased densities and scale are encouraged in this district while creating a walkable, attractive downtown for residents and visitors.

Land use is more intensive along State Street, where buildings tend to be used for a variety of purposes including ground floor retail, ground floor and above offices, institutions and social services, and residential, mostly on the upper floors of multi-story buildings. The street is an excellent example of the traditional “Main Street” mixed use form that was prevalent in American cities through the middle of the 20th Century.

The western end of State Street near the intersection of Washington includes a number of major institutional uses including the YMCA, which has announced a desire to move their location, SCCC, and the intercity bus station.

Properties facing Erie Boulevard tend to be mostly auto-oriented commercial business, such as gas stations and chain fast food restaurants.

The interior of the study area along Railroad, Church and Ferry Streets, includes a mix of residential, commercial and office uses, mostly in low density one story buildings, and a large amount of surface parking.

Within the study area, some areas already include the mix and density of uses that are encouraged by Transit Oriented Development (TOD), specifically along State Street, while in other areas the land uses will require significant change to support the project’s goals, such as the large amount of vacant and underutilized land in the center of the study area.

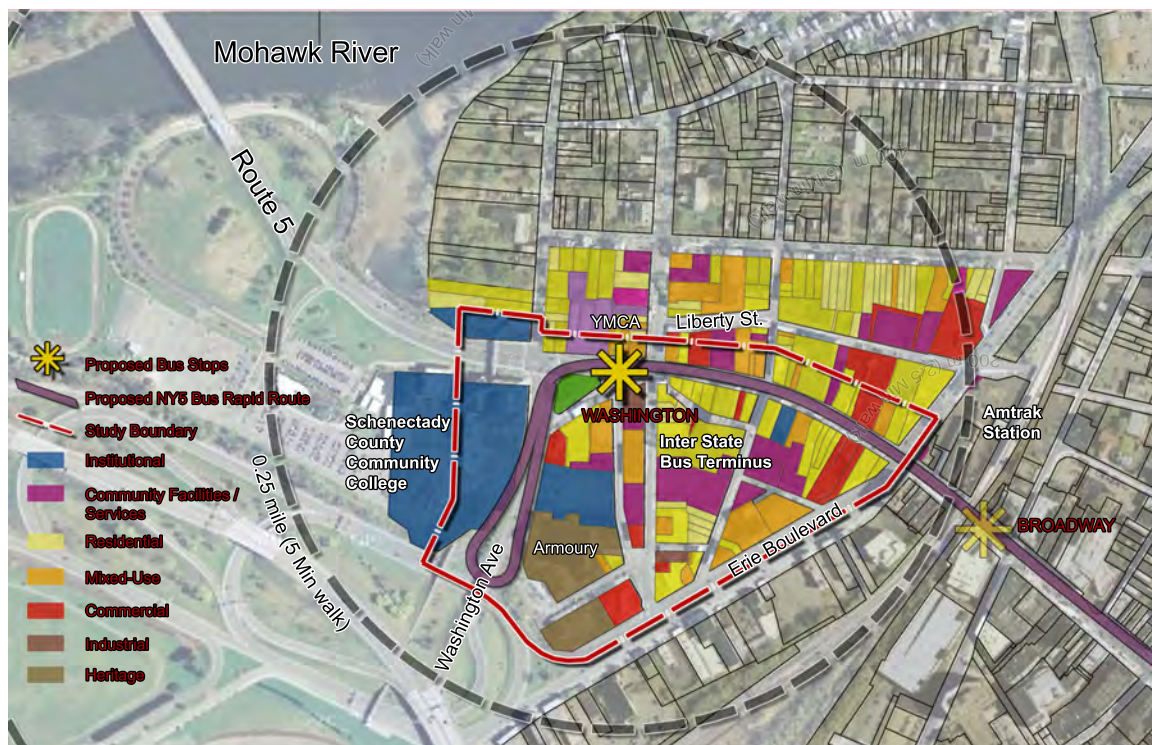


Vacant lots and low-density development are common in the study area



Auto-oriented development along Erie Boulevard

FIGURE 1.3: STUDY AREA LAND USE



Proposed New Development

One potential new development is proposed within the study area at this time. SCCC is planning on building a dormitory across Washington Avenue from the campus on a yet-to-be-determined site. This development will bring up to 320 new residents into the study area and increase the potential market for goods and services.

Just outside the study area at 43 Washington Avenue an existing commercial building is being converted to a mixed use building with residential condominiums and retail.

Built Form

The study area's condition reflects its former industrial base, with major roads engineered for automobile access including an interstate interchange in the Southwest corner of the study area. There are relatively few buildings in the study area and many empty lots that have been converted to surface parking. Buildings that are standing are generally in good structural condition as far as can be identified by a visual inspection and there are few vacant buildings, except for ground floor retail spaces. However, facades and signage tend to be out-of-date.

Within the study area, existing density in terms of site coverage, lot occupancy, and building height are highest along State Street. Lots along Erie Boulevard are consistently developed, but at a lower density than State Street. The interior of the study area, along Railroad Street, Ferry Street, Church Street, Fuller Street, Erie Street, and Washington Avenue, are lower in density, and many lots are vacant or minimally covered by structures.

FIGURE 1.4: BUILT FORM



A built-form framework that supports TOD in the study area would propose an approach for a range of building heights, with the tallest buildings focused around the BRT stations. The proposed development structure would support a variety in building heights and forms, providing visual interest and breathing space. A vertical mix of uses along with horizontal mix with street level retail and uses such as offices and residences above ensures vibrant and safe neighborhoods (Figure 1.4).

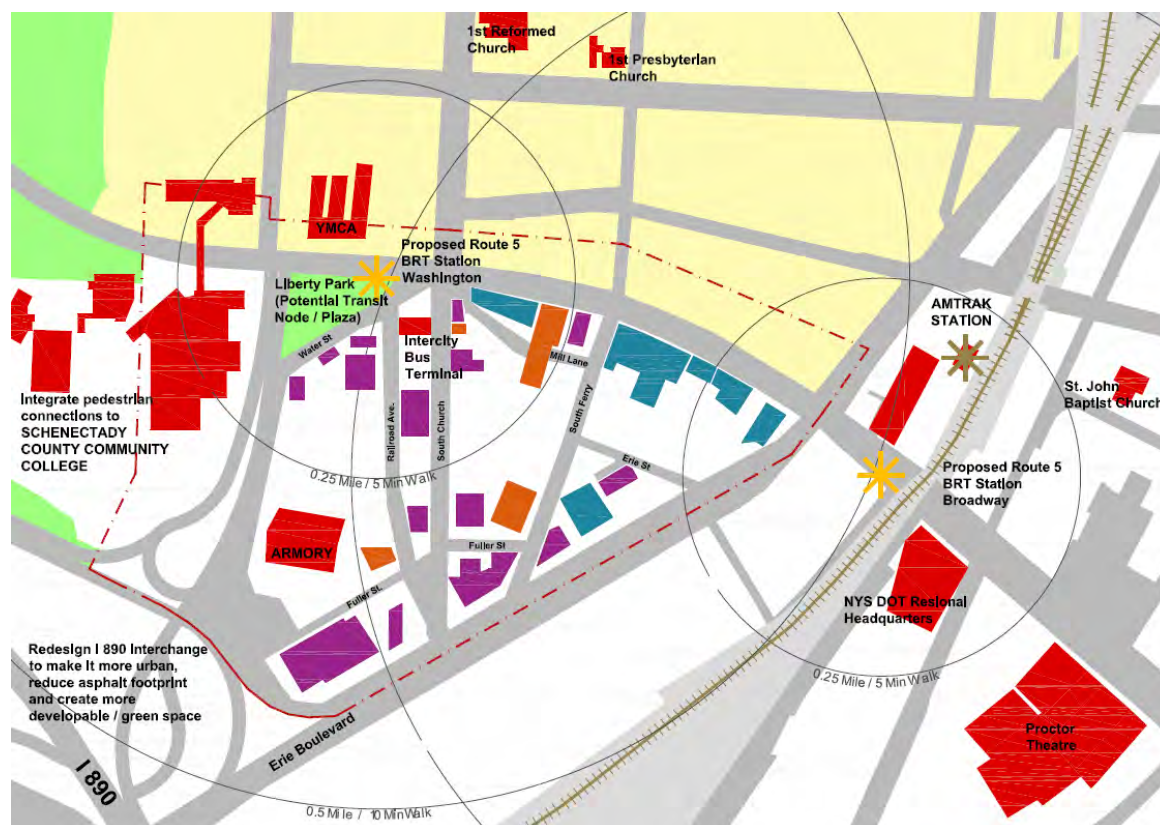
Within the study area, opportunities include orienting buildings above four floors to take advantage of the views of the Mohawk Valley. Historic buildings could be preserved and a range of housing typologies like lofts, mid rises, live-work buildings could be introduced in the development. Further investigation will include refining height and massing objectives and identifying appropriate development guidelines. Incentives will also be explored for mid-rise developments.

Open-Space and Amenities

The study area includes one park at the intersection of State Street and Washington Avenue. Liberty Park is a small triangular public space with mature trees, benches, sculpture, a historic marker and flowers. It is also one of the main transit stops in Schenectady and the future site of the western terminal of the Schenectady to Albany BRT service. There is currently a large shelter here for bus passengers. Liberty Park is located at an important entrance point to the City of Schenectady from the West and from the I-890 interchange, as well as the western entrance to the Stockade via Washington Avenue. The high level of auto traffic surrounding the park and the major bus boarding location, tend to overwhelm the beauty of this small, but strategic green space. Building on this key location could provide not just an attractive entrance to the city for motorists, but a symbolic and useful center for shopping and services, including transportation, for the local community (Figure 1.5).

Another important recreational facility for the study area is the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, which passes to the north and west of SCCC. Providing a well-marked connection to this regional recreational trail system would be an asset for the redevelopment of the study area and reinforce its accessibility by a variety of green transportation modes, both for practical travel and recreation.

FIGURE 1.5: OPEN SPACE AND AMENITIES

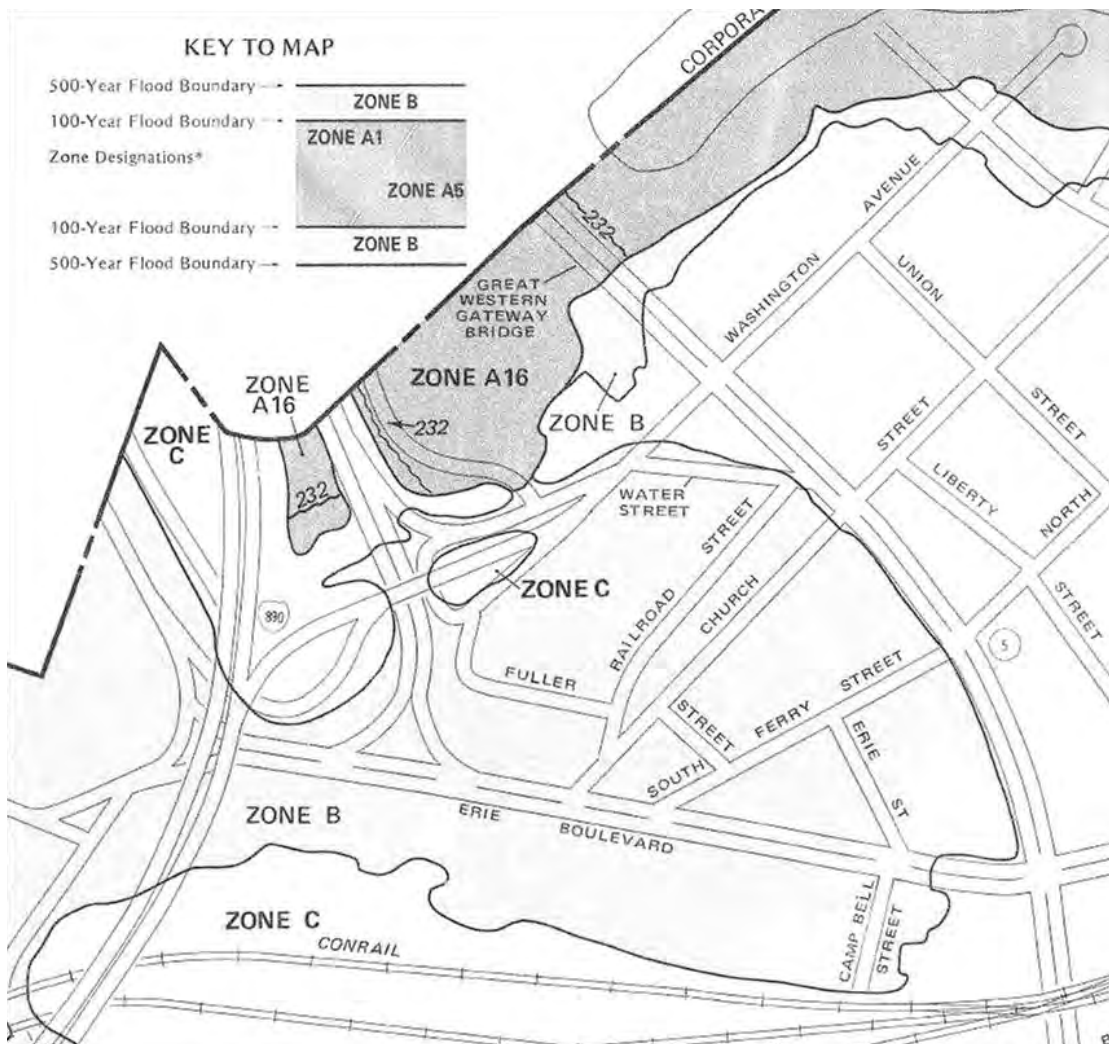


Environmental Characteristics

The study area is located within floodplain boundaries defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). From the latest classification completed in 1983 the majority of the study area is located within a 500-year floodplain, where the level of flood water is expected to be equaled or exceeded every 500 years on average. Part of the study area is located within a 100-year floodplain, where the level of flood water is expected to be equaled or exceeded every 100 years on average (Figure 1.6).

In spite of the official flood plain designations, some study area property owners report more regular flooding of their properties. This issue will have to be explored in greater detail as development plans are formulated. The proposed new FEMA maps place most of the area south of State Street within the 100 year floodplain which will require extensive foundation and ground floor upgrades for new development.

FIGURE 1.6: FEMA FLOOD MAP



Street Characteristics

The study area contains two main roadways State Street and Washington Avenue and six minor roadways: South Ferry Street, South Church Street, Railroad Avenue, Mill Lane, Fuller Street and Erie Street. Below is a brief discussion of the roadways, which are shown in Figure 1.7, Figure 1.8 and Figure 1.9.

Heavily Traveled

1. Washington Avenue provides north/south travel. It is the entrance/exit to I-890. This street is very heavily traveled, especially during peak hours.

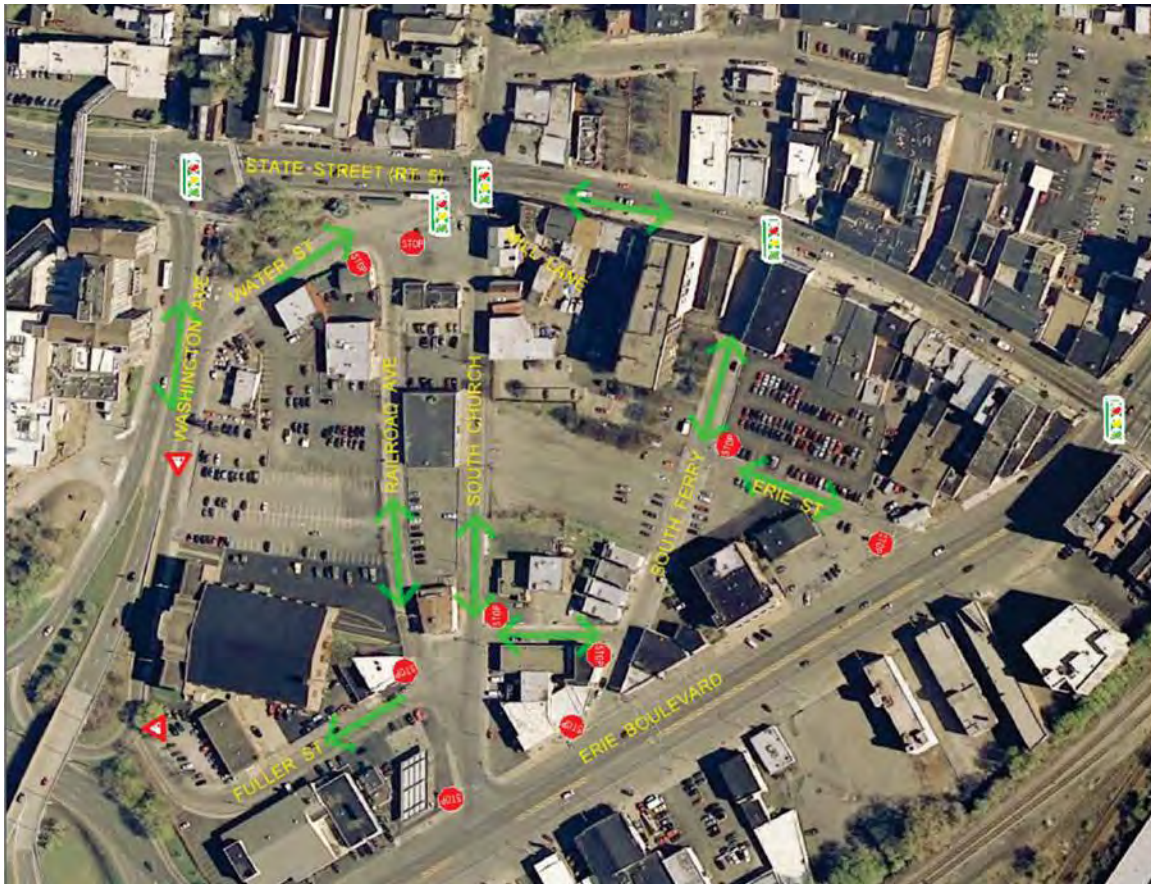
Moderately Traveled

1. State Street (Route 5) provides east/west travel from the City of Albany through the City of Schenectady. State Street is the core of the study area and intersects with Washington Avenue, South Church Street/Water Street and South Ferry Street. All of the State Street (Route 5) intersections are signalized.

Lightly Traveled

1. South Ferry Street provides north/south travel from Erie Boulevard to State Street. South Ferry operates under stop sign control at Erie Boulevard. North of State Street South Ferry provides only southbound travel.
2. South Church Street provides north/south travel between Erie Boulevard and State Street. There is no control at the southern portion of Church Street until the stop control at Erie Street.
3. Railroad Avenue provides north/south travel from Water Street to Erie Boulevard. Railroad Avenue operates under stop sign control at the Water Street and at the South Church Street/Fuller Street intersections.
4. Water Street provides east bound travel from Washington Avenue to State Street and South Church Street. Water Street operates under signal control at the intersection of South Church/State Street.
5. Mill Lane provides north/south travel between State Street and South Church Street to the west and South Ferry Street to the east. Mill Lane is a designated Cultural Urban Park with little vehicular traffic. There is no posted traffic control on Mill Lane.
6. Fuller Street provides westbound travel from Railroad Avenue to Washington Avenue and operates under yield control at Washington Avenue. Fuller Street provides east/west travel between South Church and South Ferry Streets and operates under stop sign control at South Ferry.
7. Erie Street provides east/west travel between South Ferry Street and Erie Boulevard. Erie Street operates under stop sign control at Erie Boulevard.

FIGURE 1.7: STUDY AREA ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS



Utilizing manual turning movement counts provided by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), planning level analysis using the latest version of the Highway Capacity Software (HCS+, version 5.3) was conducted to estimate the level of service for three of the study area intersections: State Street/Washington Avenue, State Street/South Ferry Street, and State Street/N. Church Street.

Analysis was conducted for both the AM and PM peak periods for the intersection of State Street /Washington Avenue. Analysis for the AM peak hour indicates that the intersection is currently operating at capacity. Analysis for the PM peak hour indicates that the intersection is currently operating over capacity.

PM peak hour analysis was conducted for the State Street/South Ferry Street and the State Street/ South Church Street intersections and indicates that both intersections are currently operating under capacity.

In addition to manual traffic counts provided by CDTC, New York State Department of Transportation (NYDOT) Traffic Count Hourly Reports were reviewed. The reports indicate that the estimated average annual daily traffic (AADT) east of Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) is approximately 7,300 vehicles. The estimated AADT west of SCCC is noticeably greater at approximately 24,000.

Overall vehicle volumes on the streets in the study area are low (Mill, Water, Railroad, Church, Ferry, and Erie Streets) to moderate (State Street) with the exception of Washington Avenue which sees heavy traffic throughout the day and especially during the peak hours. Much of this traffic originates or is destined for areas west of the Mohawk River outside of the City of Schenectady. Funneling this traffic through an area of high pedestrian activity at SCCC and the CDTA bus stop, and past the potentially attractive expanded Liberty Park, creates a significant barrier to revitalization in the study area. The study will explore alternative traffic patterns that would reduce this traffic level in the long term. In the near term, traffic calming may be effective at making the area more attractive for development.

FIGURE 1.8: MOBILITY AND ACCESS



Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Accommodations

There are a number of pedestrian accommodations in the study area which include: complete sidewalks on State Street and the west side of Washington Avenue, pedestrian push buttons at the State Street/South Church Street intersection, pedestrian push buttons and indicators at the State Street /South Ferry Street and State Street/Erie Boulevard intersections, and a pedestrian push button, an indicator and a countdown timer at the State Street/Washington Avenue intersection (Figure 1.9). A footbridge connects the main SCCC campus on the southwest corner of the State/Washington intersection with the northwest corner where another SCCC building is located. This bridge is intended for SCCC student use.

Eight bus routes stop within the study area and there are five posted bus stops which are noted below:

1. State Street /South Ferry Street
2. State Street /North Church Street
3. State Street /Washington Avenue (YMCA)
4. State Street /Washington Avenue (Southside)
5. Schenectady County Community College

There are currently no bike lanes or paths within the study area although the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail travels along State and Church Street on-street. The Trail returns to a separate path along the Mohawk River just west of the study area off of State Street before it crosses the Western Gateway Bridge.

A variety of problems are encountered by pedestrians in the study area including sidewalks in a poor state of repair, oddly shaped intersections without crosswalks, missing sidewalks, sidewalks converted to parking use, missing pedestrian links across ramps and busy streets, and heavy auto traffic. Paths through Liberty Park are partially hidden from the street by landscaped berms creating an uncomfortable situation for pedestrians. Significant numbers of pedestrians cross Washington Avenue in front of SCCC at a location without a crosswalk to reach parking on the other side.

The study area is located near the Schenectady Amtrak station, which currently provides service as far as Toronto, Montreal, Chicago, as well as within New York State. Greyhound and Trailways operate intercity bus service from a station located at Water and Church Streets.

In addition, as part of the NY Route 5 Bus Rapid Transit Project, expanded local bus services, and pedestrian improvements at the intersection of State Street/South Church Street are planned.

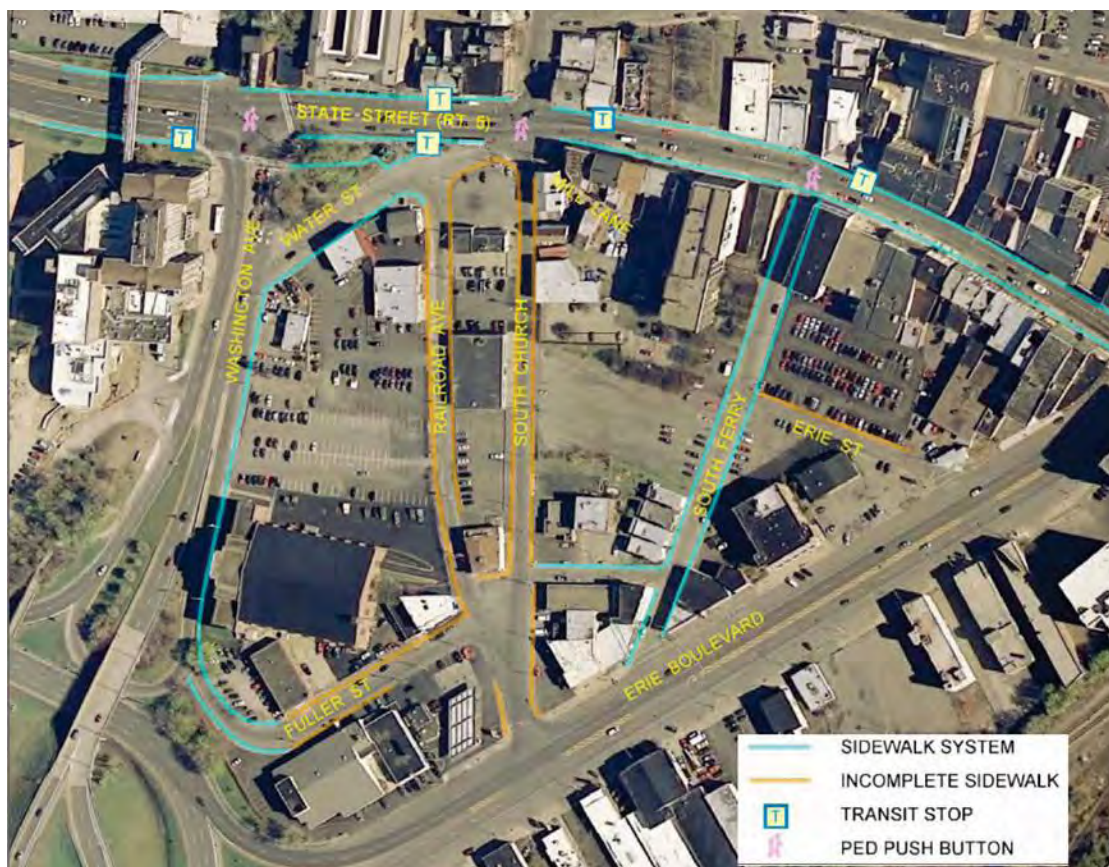
The improvements to Erie Boulevard will solve pedestrian access problems along the eastern edge of the study area. State Street's deficiencies can be solved at relatively low cost. Missing sidewalks along Railroad and Church can be improved as part of development along these streets. The most significant challenges to the pedestrian safety and convenience in the study area are the intersections of State Street and Washington Avenue and State Street and Church Street at opposite ends of Liberty Park, directly at the site of the future BRT station.



Church Street, like most streets in the study area, has poorly delineated sidewalks in a poor state of repair.



A wide roadway, heavy traffic, and lack of crosswalks cuts SCCC off from retail and services in the Gateway District

FIGURE 1.9: PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ACCOMODATIONS

Parking

There is an abundance of both on-street and off-street parking within the study area. Metered parking is permitted on the north and south sides of State Street (Route 5), as well as on some of the minor streets. Parking is not permitted on Washington Avenue, Fuller Street and Mill Lane. Despite the proliferation of parking, some users within the area state that they have a need for additional parking.

In addition to the on-street parking, there are sixteen off-street lots (Figure 1.10). During a field visit, Creighton Manning Engineering staff noted that the parking lots were underutilized. A number of parking lots were completely empty, with some lots being gated to prevent vehicles from entering. Large additional parking lots are found just outside of the study area along Erie Boulevard and at SCCC.

An overabundance of surface parking is a major detriment to urban economic vitality. Parking requires large amounts of space that can't be put to higher and better economic uses like retail shops, restaurants, offices and other employers, or residential development. The environment around surface lots tends to be desolate, uninteresting, and often builds up with trash and unkempt landscaping. Transit Oriented Development helps to overcome these problems by promoting greater use of public transportation, easier walking and bicycling, and structured parking, all of which reduce the need for surface lots.

The high proportion of surface parking within the study area means that few people are attracted to visit the area for any reason other than to seek out a specific business or public agency. Residential uses are discouraged by the unattractive environment. Far fewer pedestrians are observed on the street than just a few blocks farther East along State Street. On a positive note, however, the parking lots in the study area provide opportunities for new development at lower cost than if the lots were covered with existing buildings.

A comprehensive program to reduce the amount of surface parking in phases, replacing it with increased use of public transit, structured parking, and shared-use parking will be necessary to achieve the vision set out for the study area.

FIGURE 1.10: OFF-STREET PARKING





Much of the study area is occupied by underutilized parking lots.

Safety Data

CDTC provided safety information for State Street between Erie Boulevard and Washington Avenue and for Washington Avenue from the I-890 ramp to the end of Washington Avenue for the last three years of available data (January 2005 to August 2008). Table 2 shows the provided data.

Data indicate that there were a total of thirty-two non-intersection crashes on State Street between Erie Boulevard and Washington Avenue. Twenty-one of the crashes resulted in injury. Two crashes involved pedestrians. Data indicates there was a total of two crashes on Washington Avenue from the I-890 Ramps to Columbus Drive (SCCC entrance). One involved a motor vehicle and the second was classified as 'other'.

Intersection crash data indicates that there were a total of thirty-two intersection crashes between Erie Boulevard and Washington Avenue. Nineteen of the crashes resulted in injury. Four crashes involved pedestrians. It should be noted that two fatalities occurred directly outside of the study at the intersection of State Street/Erie Boulevard. This crash rate is above state averages for similar roadways in similar situations.

The largest number of intersection crashes occurred at the State Street/Washington Avenue intersection. Of the nineteen crashes twelve were rear end collisions, two were right angle, one was a right turn against permitted traffic, two were an overtaking and two were classified as "other". None of the crashes involved pedestrians.

Of the six crashes involving pedestrians in the study area, four of them occurred between Church and Washington on State along Liberty Park. This is likely a result of the higher levels of both auto and pedestrian traffic in this area. This location is the gateway to Schenectady from the West, a location of several important institutions in the city, a major CDTA local bus stop, and will eventually see the western terminal of the new BRT service. Improving not just the fundamental safety of pedestrians, but this location's overall attractiveness as a place to walk around, visit new shops and services, and wait for the soon to be improved transit services will be a cornerstone of the study.

TABLE 1.2: CRASH HISTORY - JANUARY 2005 TO AUGUST 2008

Road Segment	No. of Crashes *	Injuries	Fatalities	Crash Type
Link Crashes: State Street: Erie Boulevard to Washington Avenue				
State Street: Erie Blvd to N/S Ferry	10	7	0	10 Motor Vehicle
State Street: N/S Ferry – S. Church Street/Water Street	4	2	0	4 Motor Vehicle
State Street: S. Church Street/ Water Street – Washington Ave	18	12	0	16 Motor Vehicle
2 Pedestrian				
Total Non-Intersection Crashes	32	21	0	30 Motor Vehicle
				2 Pedestrian
Link Crashes: Washington Avenue: I-890 Ramps to Columbus Drive				
Total Non-Intersection Crashes	2	1	0	1 Motor Vehicle
1 Other				
Intersection Crashes: State Street: Erie Boulevard to Washington Avenue				
State Street/ N/S Ferry	6	2	0	4 Motor Vehicle
				2 Pedestrian
State Street/S. Church Street/ Water Street	7	6	0	5 Motor Vehicle
				2 Pedestrian
State Street/ Washington Ave	19	11	0	17 Motor Vehicle
				2 Curbing
Total Intersection Crashes	32	19	0	26 Motor Vehicle
				4 Pedestrian
				2 Curbing
* Note: Total Crashes				

Environmental Justice

Increased attention has been given to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) related to its ability to balance overall mobility benefits of transportation projects against protecting quality of life of low-income and minority residents of a community. President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 to bring attention to environmental and human health impacts of low-income and minority communities – referred to as environmental justice – when federal funding is involved. The goal of environmental justice review is to ensure that any adverse human health or environmental effects of a government action, such as federally-supported roadway or transit project, does not disproportionately affect minority or low-income residents of a community or neighborhood. Environmental justice is a public policy objective that can help improve the quality of life for those whose interests have traditionally been overlooked.

The CDTC staff has completed a review of civil rights/environmental justice impacts of transportation actions proposed under this study. Based on a review of the latest socioeconomic data available, the CDTC staff has determined that there are a total of two Transportation Analysis Zone's (TAZ) in the Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Linkage Study Area that are identified as Environmental Justice Target Population Areas (See Figure 1.11). All of the transportation recommendations for the study would provide fair access and do not result in negative impacts to any minority or low-income residents. However, additional information gathered through the public review process could suggest a different outcome. In addition, examination of regional equity impacts would be necessary if any transportation action is considered for inclusion in CDTC's Transportation Improvement Program.

Equitable access to, consideration within, and effects of the design and implementation of federally assisted projects is also a key aspect of environmental justice. However, design and construction is the responsibility of implementing agencies in the region. For projects identified in this study, implementing agencies would either be the New York State Department of Transportation, Capital District Transportation Authority, Schenectady County, or the City of Schenectady.

EJ Target Population Areas are defined as any TAZ with low income, minority, or Hispanic populations equal to or greater than the regional average.

The regional averages are as follows:

	Regional Average	Study Area
Minority Population	11.2%	26.63%
Hispanic Population	2.6%	4.16%
Low Income Population	8.9%	13.18%

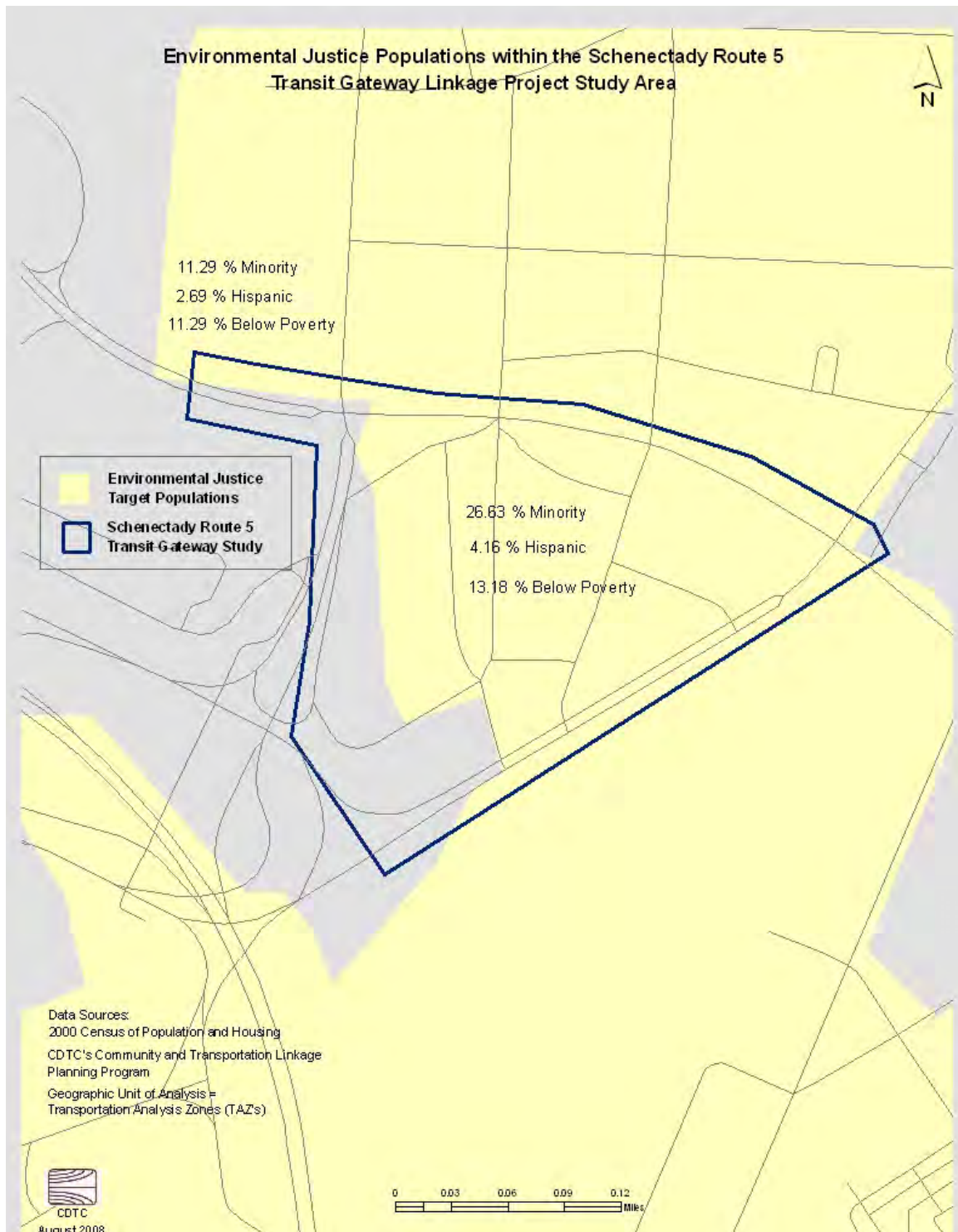
Assessment Summary

Although the study area has been in decline for several decades, there are a number of strengths that give it potential for redevelopment including: excellent access, Schenectady County Community College, General Electric's Renewable Energy Headquarters, the existence of much developable land, the Stockade just to the north, downtown just to the east, several examples of interesting historic architecture, and the rebuilding of Erie Boulevard.

To reach its potential, the Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan must overcome a number of significant issues: an overall unattractive urban environment, little street-level activity, heavy traffic along Washington, Erie, and State, the barrier created by I-890, major intersections that are hostile to pedestrians, sidewalks that are in poor condition, vacant buildings and vacant lots, an overabundance of parking that detracts from other uses, and, except along State Street, a perception of crime, a lack of mixed uses, buildings that front on the street, attractive streetscaping, and services that would attract new residents.

Based on this assessment, overcoming these weakness is an achievable goal over time. Nothing about the problems the study area faces are extraordinary or unique. Many other cities have faced these problems, including Albany and Saratoga Springs in the Capital Region, and been successful at solving them.

FIGURE 1.11: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS WITHIN THE PROJECT STUDY AREA



2. Market Analysis

The purpose of this market analysis is to determine the potential need and demand for newly introduced market rate housing – created through new construction or adaptive reuse of existing buildings – to be leased or sold in Downtown Schenectady as part of the City of Schenectady's overall Route 5 Transit Gateway Study. The target area for the Route 5 Transit Gateway Study is located on the western end of the City of Schenectady, adjacent to the Mohawk River, Interstate I-890, downtown Schenectady and the General Electric Plant, and includes Route 5 (State Street), Erie Boulevard, and Washington Avenue and part of the Schenectady County Community College campus.

The City's recently completed Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan identified the creation of new downtown housing including town homes, condominiums, market and affordable apartments and lofts as a goal for the Downtown neighborhood. The Plan further stated that "Developing a diverse supply of modern housing types is critical to Schenectady's economic revival. Expanding Downtown living options will be a central focus over the next fifteen years. Immediate opportunities include housing development adjacent to the Stockade, the East Front Street Town Home project, conversion of upper story uses, artist space and rental apartments. Creating a safe Downtown and a heightened sense and perception of safety will increase the "feet on the street" and the attractiveness of Downtown as a place to live.

New housing projects must be carefully designed to fit within the Downtown's historic character and be attractive to specific markets such as young professionals, artists and empty-nesters. At the same time it is essential that the City discourage gentrification and the loss of affordable and special needs housing in the Downtown.

Therefore the primary focus of this market analysis is to determine the rental and homeowner housing market for Downtown Schenectady. This analysis will estimate the extent of the area's housing market and its ability to absorb the proposed units.

Methodology

The methodology utilizes the traditional market analysis concept of supply and demand based on demographics, household income, age, etc. But because the project is proposing to introduce some unique housing options, the analysis also considers other factors such as mobility rates, lifestyle patterns and household compatibility issues.

The resultant study analysis determined:

- Where the potential renters and buyers for the new housing units in the Transit Gateway target area are likely to move from
- What the current demographics of the target market area are
- What portion of the target market is likely to move to the Transit Gateway area if appropriate housing is made available
- What the target market's housing preferences are in aggregate (rental or homeownership, size of unit, etc.)
- What relevant housing stock currently exists in the city
- What the market will pay in rents or purchase price to live in the Transit Gateway area
- The capture / absorption rate for the project

Project Market Area

Using a ten mile service radius, a defined market area for the proposed project would encompass the entire City of Schenectady, as well as several surrounding counties. For the purpose of this analysis therefore, the Project Market Area has been defined as Schenectady, Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties. The defined market area had a population of 844,001 in 2000 and had an estimated population of 872,734 in 2008, an increase of 3.4%. Details are shown in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1 - PROJECT MARKET AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

County	Population		Household Income		Poverty Level		Median Income
	Persons	Households	>\$60k	<\$60k	Above	Below	
Schenectady	151,839	61,683	26,415	35,268	36,310	3,001	\$51,403
Albany	297,704	123,819	54,498	69,321	67,694	5,227	\$52,868
Montgomery	49,060	20,255	6,007	14,248	12,051	1,202	\$39,726
Rensselaer	156,068	62,325	27,456	34,869	37,871	2,741	\$53,586
Saratoga	218,063	86,409	43,612	42,797	56,992	2,414	\$61,423
Project Area	872,734	354,491	157,988	196,503	210,918	14,585	
<i>Source: Claritas Pop-Facts: Demographic Snapshot 2008 Comparison Report. Compilation of Household income statistics was prepared by River Street Planning & Development, LLC</i>							

Conclusions of the Analysis

The principal findings with respect to demand for market rate rental and homeowner housing within the Transit Gateway neighborhood in the City of Schenectady are as follows:

Where will the potential renters and buyers for the new housing units in the Transit Gateway target area move from?

Analysis of Schenectady County migration and mobility patterns from 2001 through 2007 (the latest data available from the Internal Revenue Service) shows that total inflows to Schenectady County for the period were 25,322 and total outflows were 25,605 or a net outmigration of 283 households or about 40 households per year. Inflows exceeded outflows in only three years: 2002; 2004; and 2006. Nearly half (49.9%) of the migration inflows came from the immediate Capital Region (Albany, Rensselaer, and Saratoga County), while another 3% came from Montgomery County, which borders Schenectady County to the west. Schenectady County experienced a net gain of 609 households from the Capital Region during the period.

Schenectady County also enjoyed a net migration gain of 170 households from the counties in the Hudson Valley Region. The largest net migration gain came from New York City with 1,025 households. Approximately 585 (net) of these households (57%) migrated from Queens County.

What are the target market's housing preferences (rental or homeownership, size of unit, etc.)?

Based upon the methodology and the analysis conducted, we have calculated that approximately 15,620 households represent the potential market for rental housing in Downtown Schenectady and 432 households for home purchase. Using a coverage ratio of 5 to 1, we have calculated a potential rental market of 3,090 units. The homeownership analysis showed a potential market for the development of 83 homeownership units in the Transit Gateway neighborhood. Table 2.2 below shows the delineated market potential for the target area.

TABLE 2.2 - TRANSIT GATEWAY NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET POTENTIAL

Housing Type	# of Households	% of Total	Projected Rental units
Rental			
One bedroom apartments	9,362	58.3%	1,835
One bedroom apartments-elderly	1,534	9.6%	307
Two bedroom apartments	1,975	12.3%	397
Two bedroom apartments-elderly	96	0.6%	19
Three bedroom apartments	2,652	16.5%	532
Total Rental	15,620		3,090
Housing Type	# of Households	% of Total	Projected Homeowner units
Homeownership			
One bedroom units	108	0.7%	21
Two bedroom units	36	0.2%	7
Three bedroom units	288	1.8%	55
Total Home Purchase	432		83
Total units	16,052		3,173

Who is the potential market?

The ideal target market for urban housing, particularly downtowns consists of two demographic groups - young professional households (under the age of 45) and senior households (60+). Downtowns typically possess a concentrated mix of retail shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment that puts residents within walking distance of most daily activities. Young professional households that have not yet started families and enjoy the urban atmosphere, convenience and entertainment are often interested in downtown housing, especially those that work downtown. Downtown Housing preferences for this population include: apartments on upper floors over retail and live-work units for households under 25 years and live-work units, flats and condominiums for those over 25 years.

Senior households are often looking to downsize as they retire and have children move out of their homes. This population prefers condominiums and high-end rental units as housing options in downtown.

What will the market pay in rents or purchase price to live in the Transit Gateway area?

Housing Prices

Based on the income demographics of the project market area, the rents and purchase prices were identified that could be sustained by the target households. They are shown in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3 - SUSTAINABLE RENTS AND PURCHASE PRICES

Housing Type	Rent / Price Range	Size Range
Rental		
One bedroom apartments	\$ 700 - \$ 1,000	650 – 950 sf
Two bedroom apartments	\$ 800 - \$ 1,100	725 – 1,000 sf
Three bedroom apartments	\$ 900 - \$ 1,200	825 - 1,100 sf
Homeownership		
One bedroom units	\$160,000 - \$280,000	800 – 1,300 sf
Two bedroom units	\$180,000 - \$300,000	1,000 – 1,450 sf
Three bedroom units	\$200,000 - \$320,000	1,200 – 1,600 sf

Housing price for homeownership was generally based on the average price and the median price for homes listed for sale within each of the five counties by bedroom size in 2009 based on Capital Region Multiple Listing Service data.

The capture / absorption rate for the project

Absorption of new units into a market is always hard to predict with any certainty although market coverage ratios and penetration rates are a fairly good indicator of the rapidity of absorption. Coverage ratios for this project are very strong which should insure full lease-up within six months of project completion. The one-bedroom units and apartment units targeted to the 150% and over median population are particularly attractive.

As noted above, the market potential for the Transit Gateway neighborhood is 3,090 rental units and 83 homeowner units. Realistically the neighborhood can only support about 300 additional units given its size (24.3 acres) and the available vacant sites and underutilized buildings that would be conducive to new housing construction and rehabilitation efforts.

The current concept plan for the study area envisions 300 units of housing, about 120 condo units in midrise mixed use buildings in three locations and the remainder as smaller apartment and loft rental units in existing structures. Under this development scenario, we would project the housing mix shown in Table 2.4.

The coverage ratio is 3.5 to 1 instead of 5.0:1, a fairly positive number and may attract interest from potential housing developers.

TABLE 2.4 - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

Housing Type	Projected Rental units
Rental	
One bedroom apartments	105
One bedroom apartments-elderly	18
Two bedroom apartments	23
Two bedroom apartments-elderly	1
Three bedroom apartments	33
Total Rental	180
Homeownership	Projected Homeowner units
One bedroom units	30
Two bedroom units	9
Three bedroom units	81
Total Home Purchase	120
Total units	300

Housing Development Strategies

As part of this market analysis, we have identified a number of strategies the City should consider in developing additional units to meet potential housing demand in Schenectady:

- Inventory the available vacant land and underutilized buildings located Downtown which are appropriate for new housing development.
- Contact property owners to determine their interest in developing housing for this space if grant funds could be provided and secure commitments.
- Contact local housing developers to determine their interest in the identified development sites and the types of housing the City is trying to develop.
- Identify potential sites for infill housing.
- Evaluate and prioritize the identified sites.
- Develop and circulate request for proposals to housing developers to ascertain interest in developing the selected sites.
- Review existing land use regulations to determine what changes should be made to encourage the type of housing that the City of Schenectady desires.

More detail is included in the implementation plan in Chapter 3.

Vision and Principles

The steering committee developed a vision for the Gateway District to focus the development of the plan:

“The Transit Gateway District is the vibrant hub that ties together the Stockade neighborhood, the Central Business District, the Community College, and General Electric. This revitalization is supported and energized through mixed-use development, walkable connections to the adjacent neighborhoods, and a network of excellent transportation services. Biking, transit, intercity rail and buses link the district to the city’s neighborhoods, the Capital Region and the surrounding Northeast.”

The plan is based on a set of principles that were developed over the course of the project through analysis and discussion with the public and stakeholders. These principles are based on sustainability and smart growth in response to the challenges facing the study area, both local and global. The various elements of sustainability and smart growth are much talked about, but putting them all together in a single district where they can provide maximum benefit is still relatively uncommon. The Gateway District plan combines these features into an “EcoDistrict” that capitalizes on the environmental, business, and quality of life benefits that innovative planning provides. The key principles are:



Sustainability

Sustainability in all of its forms including environmental, economic, and social. This overarching principle drives many of the more detailed concepts that follow.



Pedestrian Friendly Design

Pedestrian friendly design for streets, parks, buildings and other infrastructure. Street facing buildings are proposed which make streets more interesting to walk along and provides “eyes on the street” to increase security.



Compact Development

Compact development, which clusters more residents and employees within the study area to provide demand for a good selection of shops, restaurants, services and better public transit.



Mixed Land Use

Mixed land use, expanding the range of activities within easy walking distance of any part of the Gateway District.



Reduced Parking Requirements

Reduced parking requirements to lower the cost of development and avoid the deadening effects of too much parking on urban activity. Innovative parking techniques are encouraged.



Comprehensive Alternatives to the Automobile

Comprehensive alternatives to the automobile, providing easy access to walking, bicycling, transit, car-sharing, and other sustainable modes. New or improved stations for Amtrak, intercity bus, BRT and CDTA regular service create a more pleasant experience when using alternative modes and integrate them into the urban fabric of the District.



High Standards for Streetscape Design

High standards for streetscape design make walking, shopping and sitting at sidewalk cafes pleasant, and signal that people and institutions in the area are committed to its long-term success. Green streets design features will reduce the environmental impact of new development. The intent is to make the Gateway District a pleasant place to be for people.



Create a Live-Work Community

Create a live-work community where people can, if they desire, reach all of their regular daily activities, living, working, shopping, and playing, within a short walk or bike ride of home. Excellent transit service will be available for longer trips.



Open Space

Open space to provide places to relax, play a game, meet with friends and exercise. Attractive open spaces, such as Liberty Park also create central places that build positive images about a place. Connections to the Mohawk River provide easy access to recreational activities and the natural environment.



Attractive Public Gathering Places

Attractive public gathering places large and small provide areas for residents to come together to talk, people watch, and meet their neighbors and see what is new around their homes. They can include coffee shops, parks, public squares, farmer's markets, and anywhere where people gather informally.



Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure that reduces environmental impacts by reducing water usage and managing storm water, reduces solid waste and reuses buildings and materials, reduces building energy consumption and provides renewable sources like wind power, and preserves wildlife habitat.



Build From Strengths

Build from strengths. The study area includes “built in” markets for casual restaurants, convenience retail, and urban residential formats through the employees, students, and residents of SCCC, the Stockade, General Electric, and State Street. The plan focuses on revitalizing locations close to these activity generators first.



Market Acceptance

Market acceptance, important because we want to plan something that is achievable and will move toward implementation in a partnership between the private and public sectors.



Historic Preservation

Historic preservation, not just of specific buildings, but of streets, spaces, vistas, uses, and other elements that convey a strong sense of place in the district. Schenectady is a city with a proud heritage of vibrant urbanism that is still fondly remembered by many residents. Successful cities instill a strong sense of themselves in the people who live and work within them, and history is an important element of this. Reusing existing buildings for new purposes also reduces the environmental impact of providing needed space.

3. The Plan

Sustainable planning is a way of building cities that includes approaches known as Transit Oriented Development (TOD), smart growth, new urbanism and neo-traditional design. All of these concepts have one thing in common, they seek to reintroduce ideas like narrower, more walkable streets, store front retail, mixed-use, higher-density development, and high quality public transportation back into urban development as a way of overcoming our singular focus on accommodating the automobile, rather than the needs of people, in our communities. Where it has been implemented, TOD has been successful. People genuinely enjoy being involved in busy, exciting, interesting, and social places. The issues of rising fuel prices, global warming, the move toward the creative economy, and limited government budgets for infrastructure have reinforced this trend back toward city living and revitalized many formerly run-down districts. The significant market identified for downtown living in this study shows that this is true in Schenectady as well.

Although the study area has been in decline for several decades, there are a number of strengths that give it potential in this new environment including: excellent access by road, rail, transit, walking and biking, a solid historic building fabric still intact along State Street, the presence of Schenectady County Community College as a major and expanding activity center, the arrival of General Electric's Renewable Energy Global Headquarters and Advanced Battery Manufacturing Center, the existence of much developable land, the stable and attractive Stockade just to the north, downtown just to the east including Proctor's Theatre, a major cultural institution for the entire Capital Region and other recent downtown redevelopments including a new movie theater, hotel, restaurants, recently repopulated offices with technology workers and a YMCA, several examples of interesting historic architecture, particularly the Armory, but also other smaller buildings, an interesting industrial heritage dating back to the Erie Canal, the rebuilding of Erie Boulevard, and the study area's proximity to rural areas with beautiful views to the Mohawk Valley above the third or fourth floor.

To reach this potential, the Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan is designed to overcome a number of significant issues: an overall unattractive urban environment, little street-level activity, a perception of crime, heavy traffic along Washington Avenue, Erie Boulevard, and State Street, the barrier created by I-890 and the large amount of otherwise developable land that is consumed by the interchange, major intersections such as State and Washington that are hostile to pedestrians, sidewalks that are in poor condition and discontinuous, vacant buildings and vacant lots, an overabundance of parking that detracts from other uses, buildings that are poorly maintained, an intercity bus station that is poorly designed and perceived as a negative use, and, except along State Street, a lack of mixed uses, buildings that front on the street, attractive streetscaping, and services that would attract new residents. The plan is shown in Figure 3.1. New buildings are outlined in black with a number showing the height of the building in stories. Existing structures are shown with white and black outlines.

Nothing about the problems the study area faces are extraordinary or unique. Many other cities have faced these problems, including Albany and Saratoga Springs in the Capital Region, and been successful at solving them. Similar problems have been solved in Schenectady along Upper State Street. Schenectady has unique strengths in the excellent transportation services, close proximity to rural areas and recreation, SCCC and GE expansion, and the Stockade neighborhood to draw on to begin the evolution back toward a prosperous urban community.

A vision, guiding principles, and an implementation plan are included to show a step-by-step process to put the plan into action. The plan provides practical tools to encourage the large number of people who already come to the study area, such as SCCC students and staff, residents of the Stockade, downtown office workers and people driving through from I-890 to Route 5, to stop and spend some time at new shops, services, and recreation. Many of these people will be familiar with unrevitalized urban places and will not be deterred by the study area's physical environment. This initial influx of activity will "prime the pump" for additional revitalization starting an iterative process of redevelopment. The market analysis shows that the demand is present to support the proposed development, which responds to changing demand for more urban housing and neighborhood types.

Land Use

The land use plan proposes a complete transformation of the study area from an underutilized, largely vacant and undefined tract of land into a sustainable, people-friendly, and urban place. All new development will be encouraged to meet the principles of sustainability by achieving LEED certification, incorporating passive solar and small wind turbines, integrating green infrastructure elements and electric vehicle recharging stations, accommodating walking, bicycle transportation, transit, and car-sharing, and reducing waste and pollution of all types.

The plan includes several new or upgraded green spaces, green streets, new pedestrian and bicycle connections through the district to surrounding areas, and connections to the Mohawk River. Some of the residential buildings will include new forms of urban architecture that have not been seen, or only seen in very limited numbers, in the Capital Region such as midrise point-block residential towers, lofts in existing and new buildings, new-construction urban row houses, housing in mixed use buildings and other architectural types. It fills in the vacant parcels in the study area with attractive and productive mixed use development that increases the City's tax rolls.

The key land use features of the plan, described starting with Liberty Park and proceeding clockwise along State Street to Erie Boulevard and then back to Liberty Park along Washington, include:



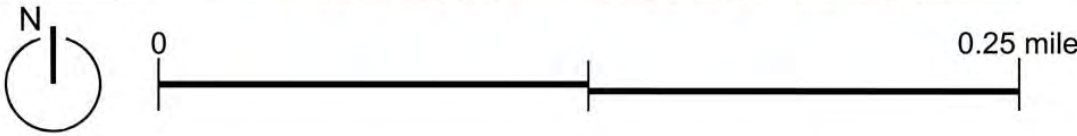
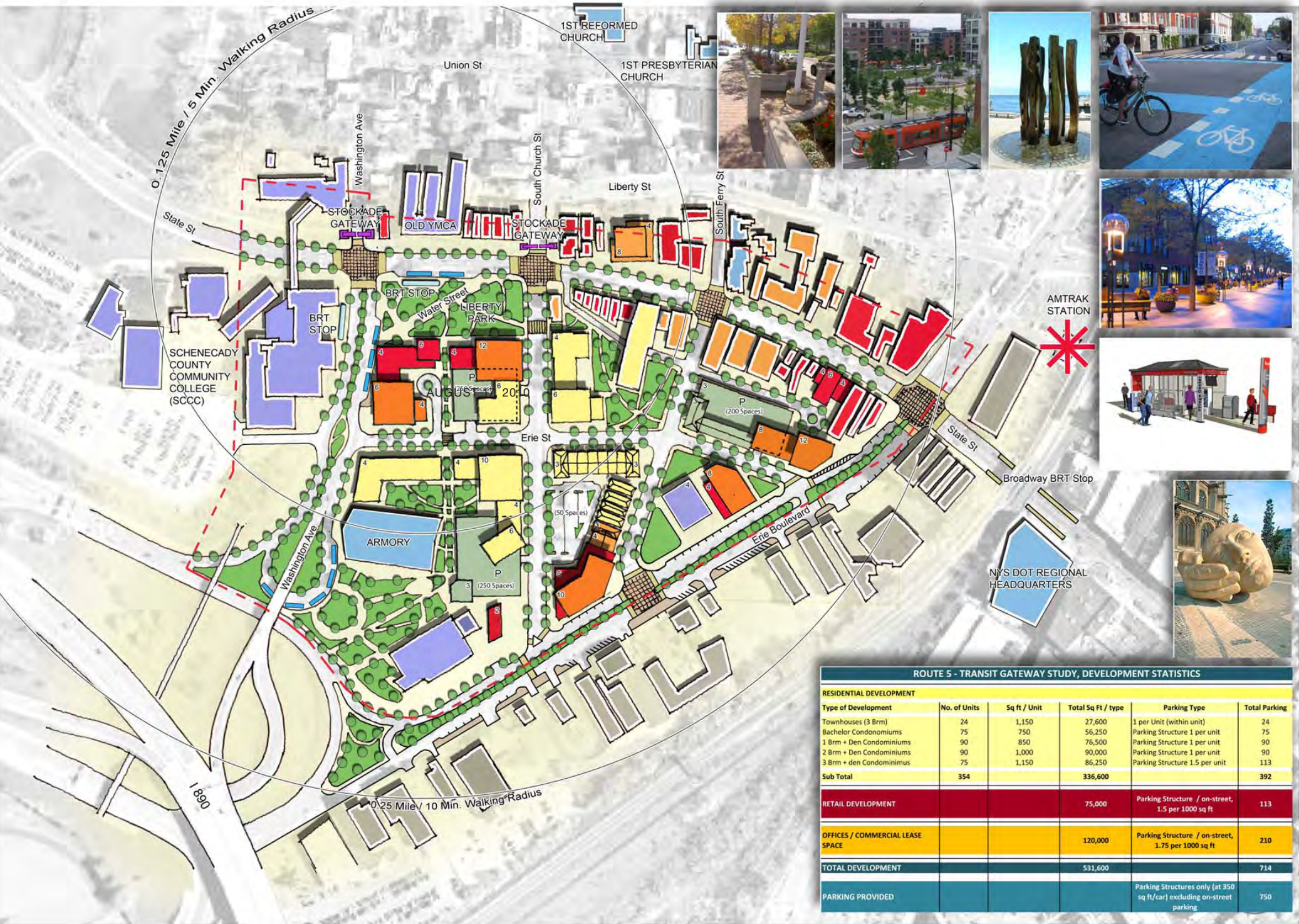
New and improved parks can be catalyst for redevelopment

Figure 3.1 - Proposed Concept

Legend

- Residential (3-8 Fl.)
- Mixed Uses (3-6 Fl.)
Street-level retail, Offices, Live-Work, Residential
- Mixed uses (6-12 Fl.)
Street-level retail, Offices, Live-Work, Residential
- Institutional
- Community Facilities
- Green Open Space
- Retail/Commercial
- Parking Structure
- Study Area
- Existing Building
- P Parking
- 4 Building Heights (New Construction)

Key Plan



Liberty Park South Development

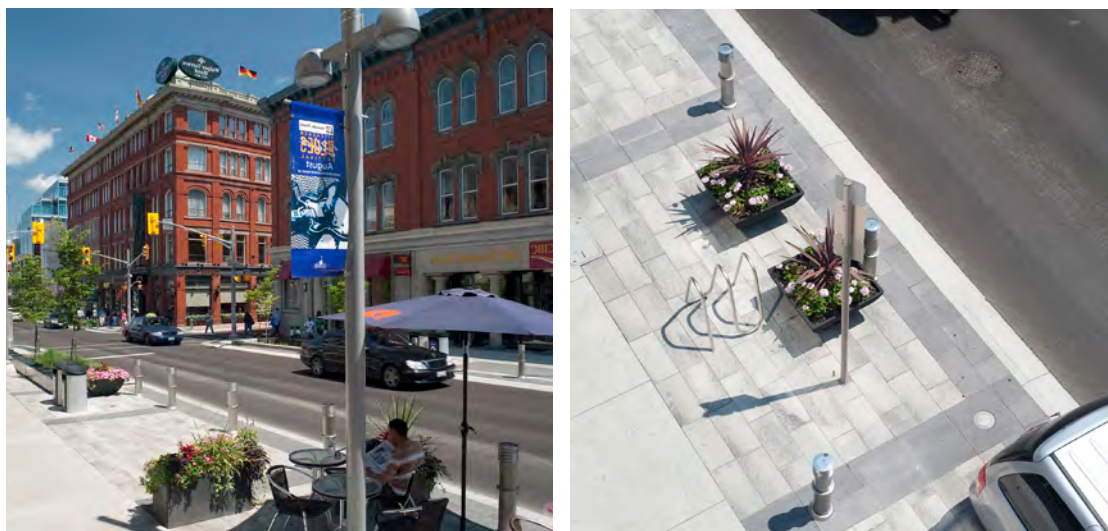
The four building development immediately south of Liberty Park forms the cornerstone of new development in the study area. The mixed use complex will include retail storefronts along the park, ideal for coffee shops, bakeries, or restaurants that might want to take advantage of outdoor seating in a visible and attractive location. The buildings are a variety of heights to provide visual interest, to break up the bulk of the facades and to provide residential units on the higher floors with open and airy layouts and excellent views to the Mohawk Valley and the Helderberg Escarpment. Parking is provided in a three story garage hidden in the center of the block. The development is well located and visible to the large number of commuters and other travelers who pass by every day. Figure 3.2 shows the arrangement of Liberty Park South and other new development within the study area.

Liberty Park

Liberty Park is improved and enlarged to a rectangular shape roughly four times its current size. The right of way that Water Street occupies, a path of significant historical importance, continues as a pedestrian walk through the park. Liberty Park will be the primary open space for the new neighborhood being proposed for the study area and will serve to connect it with the Stockade in a clear and pedestrian friendly way. The park will be quadrupled in size and the raised berms will be removed to allow clear sight lines. SCCC students, Stockade and Gateway District residents, and employees of nearby businesses will find it to be a pleasant place to relax and meet their neighbors. Both intersections on State Street, at Washington and Church Street, will have significant pedestrian crossing improvements. See Figure 3.3 for views of Liberty Park and the proposed development around it.

State Street Streetscape Improvements

State Street would see a streetscape improvement that upgrades sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, lighting, signage, bus stops, street furniture and other aspects of the street similar to what has been accomplished to the east of Erie Boulevard but with a unique design that gives the Gateway District its own identity. This improvement would make walking along State Street or sitting at an outdoor café a pleasant experience and would send a clear message that the City is committed to the area's long term economic health. Similar streetscape projects in Schenectady have been successful.



Improved streetscape design makes older industrialized and commercial areas more attractive for new residential uses

Stockade Gateways

There would be two gateway structures marking the entrances to the Stockade at State and Church and State and Washington each serving a specific purpose. The Church Street gate marks the locations of the main gate of the original Stockade and forms the main pedestrian crossing from the Stockade to Mill Lane, the new Liberty Park, and the BRT station. The gateway at Washington Avenue functions as a deterrent to large trucks entering the narrow streets of the Stockade. Ferry Street would include signage but not a full gateway feature to avoid the impression of a “gated community” and to create its own unique character.

State Street Building Renovations

Buildings along State Street are proposed to be renovations of existing buildings with the exception of several parcels where there are currently vacant lots. At these locations infill buildings would restore the continuous urban street-wall. A mix of uses is proposed with loft and live-work residential units included in the upper floors of the older buildings. This type of space has proven to be very effective in other redevelopment districts, attracting a creative demographic that is interested in urban living. Few other examples of renovated loft space are available in the Capital Region, and none with the combination of features that would be present in the Gateway District. For the most part, new infill buildings are of 4 to 6 stories to maintain the historic height profile.

The Armory

Continuing around the study area, the Armory has been proposed as a possible site for a community use such as an educational institution, a meeting or exhibit hall, or a museum. The area to the south of the Armory is shown as open space, but would not be a formal park. Instead, this space would be partially paved with permeable asphalt or concrete and partially covered with open cell blocks or soil stabilization grids allowing parking and other activities to occur on the lawn. This would provide a space that could be used for outdoor exhibits, festivals and fairs, and parking depending upon the needs in the area, but would also be attractive and sustainable. A parking garage on Church Street behind the Armory would serve the Armory as well as commercial buildings on Erie Boulevard.



Historic buildings can be converted to other uses to create vibrant urban space.

Figure 3.2 - New Developments

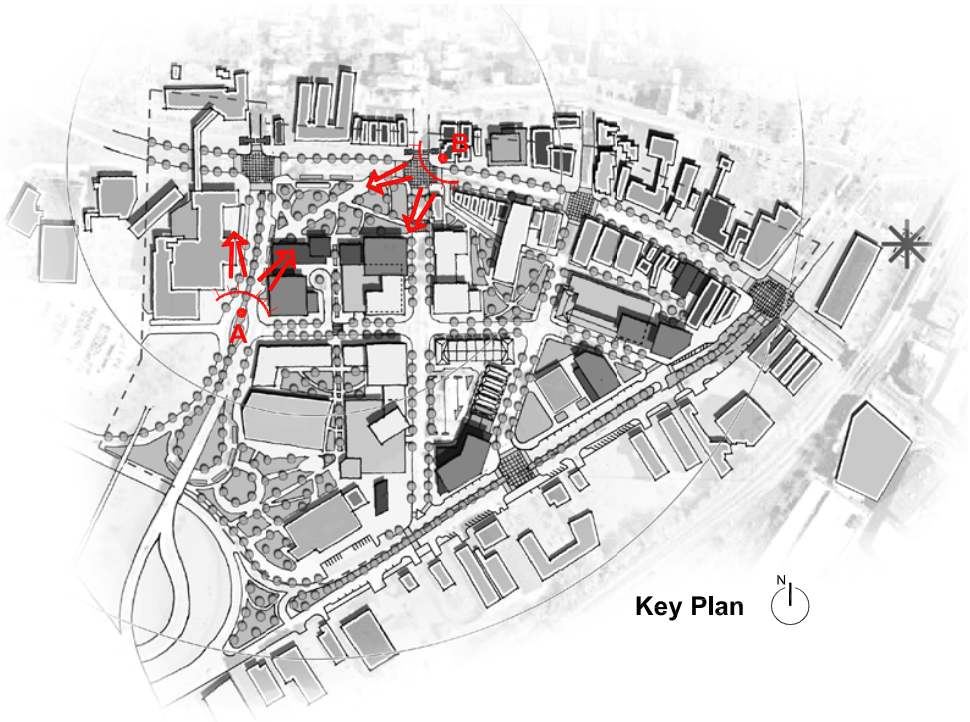
- Legend
- Existing Buildings
 - Proposed Buildings
 - Green Open Space
 - Study Area
 - P Parking
 - 4 Building Heights (New Construction)



Figure 3.3 - Views



A. View from Washington Ave. / State St. looking north



B. View from South Church St. / State St. looking south-west

Erie Boulevard Development

Along Erie Boulevard, several taller mixed-use buildings, between 8 and 12 stories, are proposed. The generous width of Erie Boulevard can accommodate taller buildings without them seeming out of scale. These buildings would include commercial space, primarily office, on the lower 4 to 6 floors and residential units above. This office space would be well-located to General Electric, I-890, and to the Amtrak station, making it ideal for companies associated with green energy technology and other spin off activities that need good access to New York City. The residences above would have excellent views in all directions and would provide a popular type of urban residential building that has not yet been developed in the Capital District. Parking would be provided for the residences on-site either, below grade, behind the buildings or on the lower floors. Commercial parking would be in nearby garages. The former fire station would be retained, as would the gas station at Church and Erie and the Zone 5 training center. Figure 3.4 shows the height and massing of proposed new development along Erie Boulevard and elsewhere in the study area.

Erie Street and Mill Lane Plaza

The area along Erie Street would be primarily residential with some local-serving retail. The primarily residential character would tend to keep noise down and provide an incentive to properly maintain the street. The area would include higher density residential between Washington and Church, town-houses and residential mid-rise between Church and Ferry, and a parking garage between Ferry and Erie Boulevard. This parking garage would serve both the adjacent residential buildings and the commercial buildings along State Street. The parking garage at the Liberty Park South development would also be accessed from Erie Street.

A park or courtyard is proposed for the interior of the block between State Street, Ferry Street, Erie Street, and Church Street. This space would be surrounded by residential buildings on three sides and by Mill Lane on the north and would include both planted and paved areas. An animated sculpture or fountain that would be attractive to children and adults alike could reinforce the distinctive neighborhood feel of the plaza. Mill Lane would again be the site of restaurants, outdoor cafes, and other small scale retail, looking out over the courtyard. Appropriate zoning and other regulations at this location would have to be established to make sure that businesses do not disrupt the neighborhood feel of the location.

Transportation

The transportation system of the Gateway District would be unlike any other in the Capital Region, depending to a much higher degree on sustainable modes. Direct transit service to all major destinations in the Capital District including BRT to Albany and a close-by Amtrak station provide unparalleled options for using transit. Bike lanes in the District and easy connections to the Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail make bicycling a realistic option for both commuting and recreation. Car-sharing and electric vehicle spaces in garages provide environmentally friendly versions of auto transit. And finally comprehensive sidewalks, crosswalks, and urban spaces make walking a pleasant and practical option for daily travel needs.



Bicycles and transit work together to form a comprehensive alternative to solo driving.

The key elements of the transportation plan include:

Transit and BRT

The main BRT and local bus station for the study area and the Stockade will be located at Liberty Park along State Street. This places transit service in an attractive central location between the Stockade and the study area, and just across the park from the centerpiece development in the plan. Transit riders are given a comfortable and attractive place to wait, easily accessible to the Gateway District, Schenectady County Community College, and the Stockade.

Great transit connections are provided from the Gateway District to major destinations throughout the Capital District including:

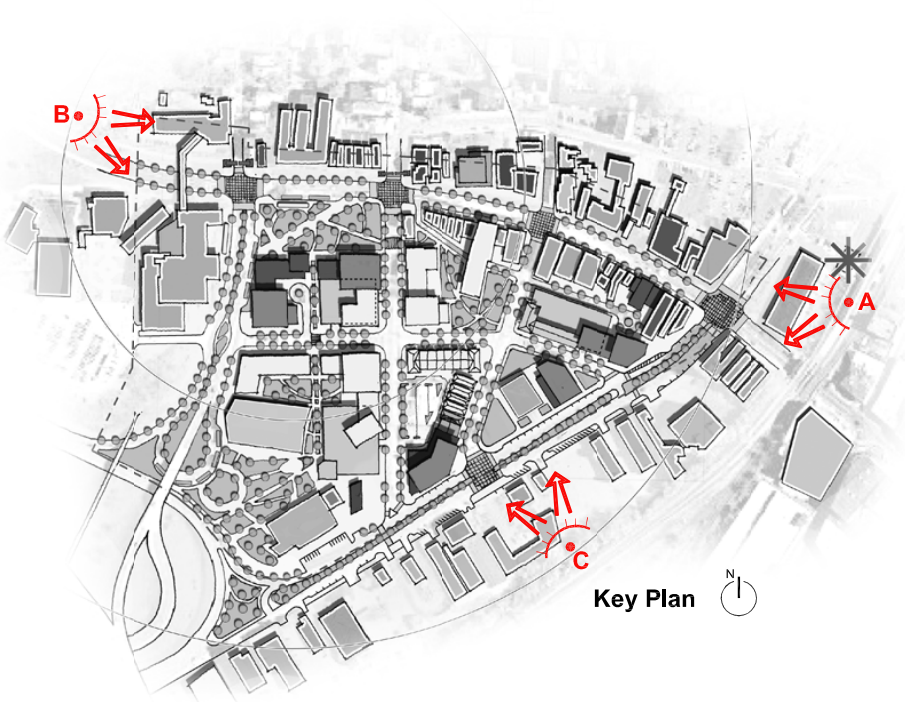
- Route 50 to Ballston Spa and Saratoga Springs
- Route 70 to Latham, Troy and RPI
- Route 55 to Colonie and Albany
- Express Route 55X to downtown Albany
- Various updated routes within Schenectady, Rotterdam and Scotia
- And soon BRT will provide fast all-day service to Albany

Improvements to local bus transportation stops are proposed at all of the local bus stops along State Street within the study area. Layover space for local buses is moved from Liberty Park to the Washington Avenue loop under the I-890 off ramp, which is converted to bus-only use.

Figure 3.4 - Massing Study



A. View from Erie Blvd. / State St. looking south-west



B. View from State St. / Washington Ave. looking south-east



C. View from Erie Blvd. looking North-west



A rendering of Hunters Point in San Francisco, where the city envisions creating a new urban district on the site of former industrial land.

Street Pattern

The street pattern in the study area is modified to improve its operation for all modes of transportation, to create more developable blocks, and to lower the cost of street maintenance to the City. Railroad and Fuller Streets are closed and partially combined with adjacent parcels. The Railroad Street right-of-way is utilized for a tree-lined pedestrian path from Liberty Park through the Liberty Park South development to the Armory. This path will be used as an interpretive experience of Schenectady's railroad, canal, and industrial history. Erie Street is extended as a two-way street through to Washington Avenue where there would be a right-in, right-out intersection. Along with the upcoming improvements to intersections on Erie Boulevard, these changes create a rational grid of streets providing easy access to all parcels in the study area. The changes also reduce the environmental and economic impacts of too much pavement for the amount of development on the Gateway District and the City of Schenectady as a whole. Figure 3.5 shows the green street and trail network proposed for the study area.

Erie Boulevard

Erie Boulevard will be upgraded in the near future as part of a separate project. This improvement will contribute significantly to the desirability of the Gateway District as a place for development.

I-890 Off Ramp

Although there is a long-term desire to remove the Washington Avenue I-890 off-ramp and move it farther west behind SCCC, detailed planning for this project was beyond the scope of this plan. Instead, the ramp is shown with interim traffic calming improvements along Washington Avenue that will slow traffic as it approaches State Street and provide safer crosswalks for pedestrians. Some ideas for how the I-890 interchange could be reconfigured are included in the appendix to this report.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming on Washington Avenue includes narrowing the roadway to two-lanes in each direction, planting trees and other landscaping to create a heightened awareness of movement, narrowing State Street as it approaches the intersection from the west, reducing the turning radii and adding crosswalk and intersection texture at the State Street intersection, and adding a gateway feature to Washington Avenue as it enters the Stockade. A new crosswalk is added at Erie Street to better connect SCCC with the Gateway District and create a safer crossing for the many students who need to cross the street at this location.

Other streets and intersections also receive traffic calming features like textured crosswalks, street trees, narrower lane width, and bulb outs at pedestrian crossings. Converting Mill Lane to a European-style “Woonerf,” where cars are allowed but the pavement is designed to give preference to pedestrians and bicyclists. Figure 3.6 shows cross sections for major streets in the study area.

Sidewalks

New or rebuilt sidewalks are included on all streets in the study area. Sidewalks are a critical infrastructure element for the implementation of the land use vision and should be designed with a variety of urban activities in mind, including walking, shopping, eating, bike parking, socializing, kids playing, dog walking and so on. Sidewalks will be built with permeable pavement and other green streets techniques wherever practical to reduce runoff.



Creating greenspace where there was once asphalt and traffic adds value to surrounding properties.



Parking can be made more attractive and functional through plantings and pedestrian paths.

Figure 3.5 - Green Network

- Legend
- Existing/ Proposed Buildings
 - Green Open Space
 - Parking Structure
 - Study Area
 - Bike Path
 - P Parking
 - 4 Building Heights (New Construction)

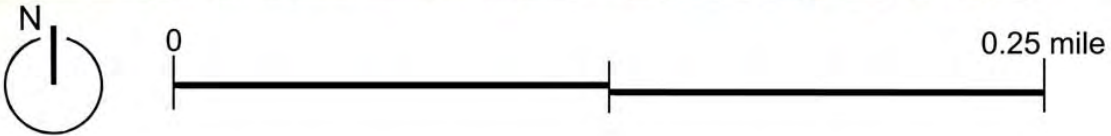
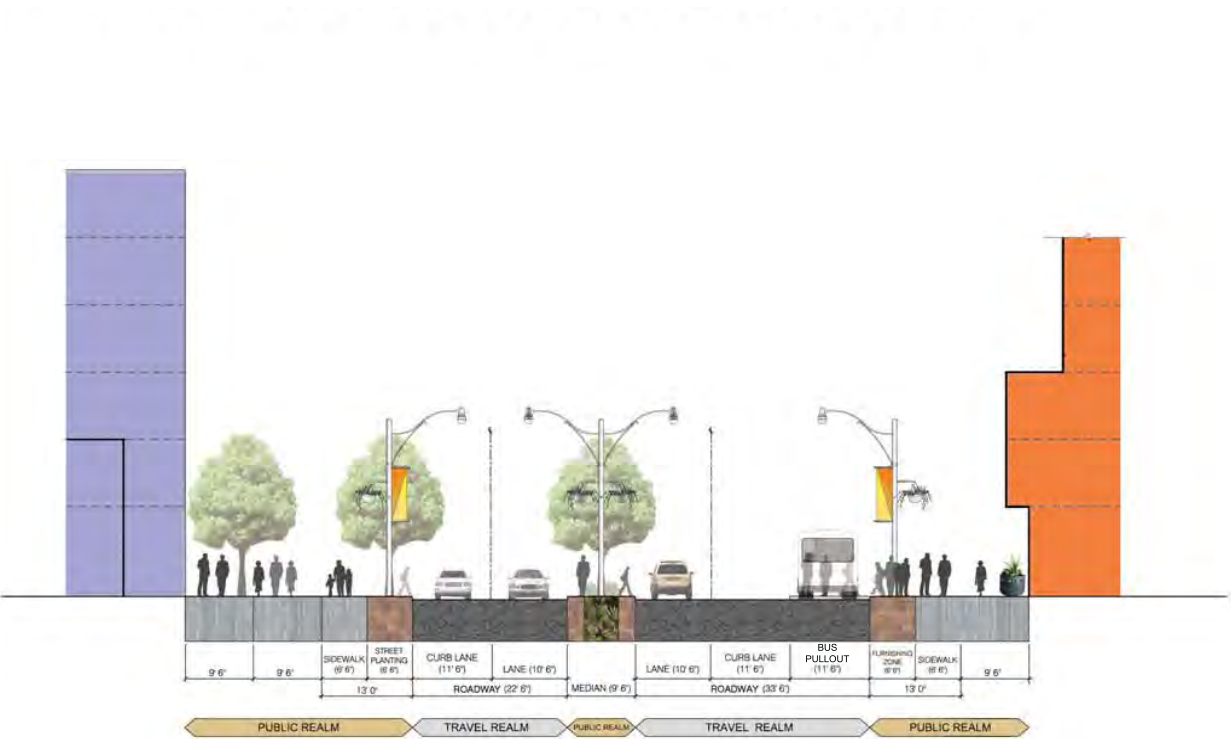
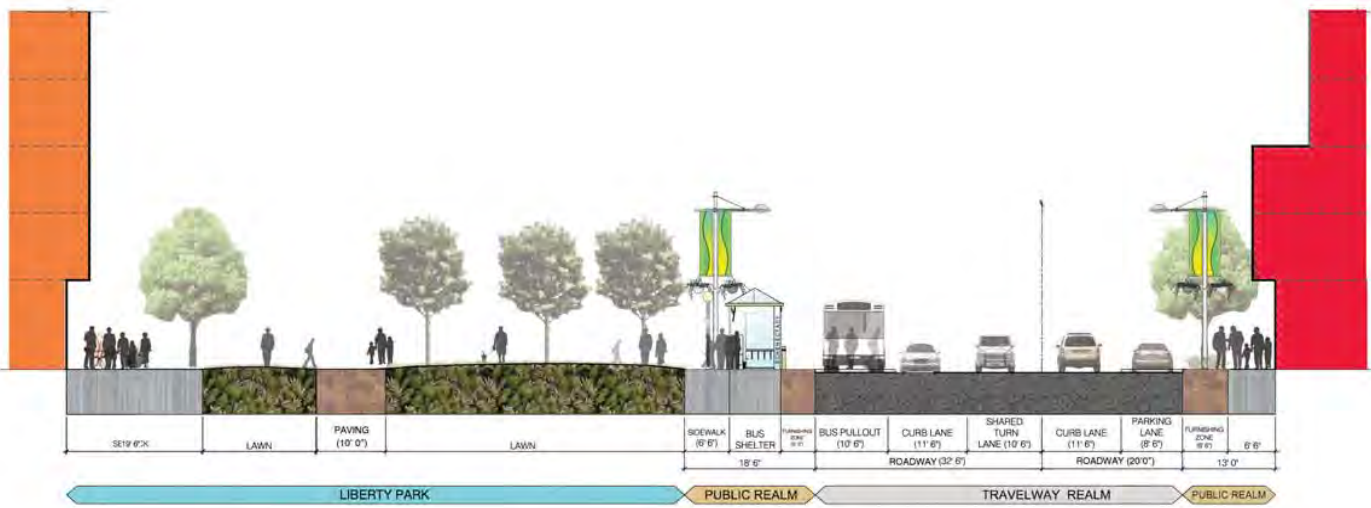
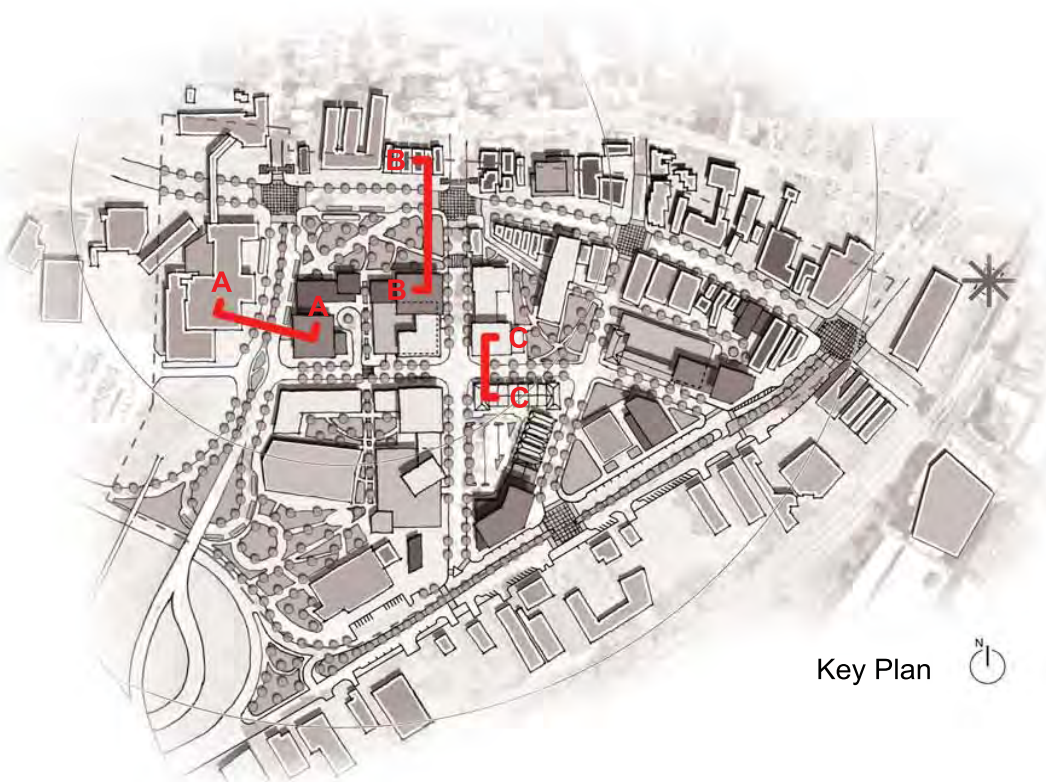


Figure 3.6 - Street Sections



SECTION A-A
Washington Ave. (Looking North)



SECTION B-B
State St. (Looking West)



SECTION C-C
Erie St. (Looking East)

Parking

Parking policy is critical in TOD and sustainable development because too much will ruin the people-oriented nature of the place whereas too little will make it unnecessarily difficult to travel to, therefore limiting development. Parking requirements for the Gateway District are proposed to be reduced to give developers and residents more freedom in setting the best level given the neighborhood's extensive alternatives to auto usage. Parking is provided in three public garages and in several smaller lots and garages associated with specific buildings. Parking in the garages is a mix of dedicated, "unbundled" spaces for specific buildings and businesses and paid open parking.

Erie Street, Church Street, and Ferry Street would have parking on one side. Most of the new buildings will have off-street loading areas. On street parking on State Street would remain the same as today, on both sides of the street.

Off-street parking facilities at the Liberty Park South, the Armory, and at Erie Street and Ferry Street would be implemented in phases, starting as shared surface parking and moving to structured parking as density increases. Provision for electric vehicle plug-ins, car-sharing, and bicycle parking should be made at each location from the beginning. Over time, parking demand in the Gateway District will be less than in similar developments without significant alternative transportation access, so provision should be made to lower minimum parking requirements. This has the additional benefit of lowering the cost of development.

Unique in the Capital Region, the "EcoDistrict" stresses a complete and comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network. All streets have good sidewalks, crosswalks, and accommodation for bicycles. The networks are connected to regional path, trail, and transit systems.

Intercity Bus Station

The intercity bus station is moved to the corner of Erie Street and Washington Avenue with buses stopping in a pull-out on Washington. Ticketing, waiting, and baggage facilities would be located in the ground floor of an adjacent mixed use building.

Amtrak Station and Service

Although not inside the study area boundaries, a new Amtrak station is about to start construction just across Erie Boulevard. Funding has also been secured for the construction of a second track from Albany to Schenectady, greatly increasing capacity along the line and making the reintroduction of morning trains from Schenectady to New York practical. This would have significant positive effects on the Gateway District, linking it to one of the most powerful urban economies in the world.

Specific Actions and Implementation Plan

This section describes the implementation plan for the Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan. It lists a series of steps to be taken, a general timeline for their completion, their cost, what organizations will be responsible for moving them forward, and potential sources of funding.

The implementation plan's purpose is to provide a clear understanding for all involved parties of the steps it will take to put the vision plan into action. This is not a final plan, but a vision to inspire others to work towards its realization. A number of more detailed plans are included in the implementation plan to form the link to final funding and design. Planning is a layered process. From vision and conceptual design to feasibility to program and scope to preliminary engineering to final design and construction is a long path.

Types of Actions

The implementation actions of the Gateway Transit Plan can be summed up in five areas:

1. Public infrastructure improvements that revitalize the physical features of the study area such as sidewalks, crosswalks, bus stops, parks, parking, and street furniture. Well-maintained infrastructure signals to anyone interested in investing in or coming to the study area that there is a strong commitment to its future. These improvements will also make the study area a more pleasant place to be in, to walk around, and to spend time. This strategy has worked well on the section of State Street from Nott Terrace to Erie Boulevard and should be extended farther west.
2. Improvements to public transit to further increase the unique level of access that the study area enjoys. The CDTA is well on the way to implementing a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service from Washington Avenue and State Street to Albany, a realignment of local routes to better serve today's markets, a new train station, and new stop amenities. The New York State Department of Transportation has received funding to add a second track to the Schenectady to Albany rail line, which will allow Amtrak to add additional trains to New York.
3. Support for new development in terms of planning, property consolidation, and public facility maintenance. By planning for new development, issues related to community acceptance can be worked out earlier, facilities that are important to the city can be prioritized.
4. Changes in regulation to facilitate the successful development of the study area including greater flexibility in meeting parking needs and greater building height allowed in some cases. The development of design review standards for the district will give it a unified character, allow the community to express its sense of place, and give developers a clear indication of what will be expected from their buildings from a design perspective.
5. Other programs that support the economic and social health of the study area. These programs include a façade program to improve the appearance of buildings in the study area in the near term, a program to support the development of upper floors of existing buildings as lofts, artist space and apartments, a coordinated parking plan, joint programs with Schenectady County Community College and the YMCA, and regular meetings with business organizations like General Electric, the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Schenectady Improvement District (DSIC).

Existing Programs

A number of plans and programs are already underway in the study area and are integrated into the proposed implementation plan.

- The CDTA has been planning for the implementation of BRT in the Schenectady – Albany corridor for several years. The realignment of Schenectady local routes has been planned over the past two years. CDTA will be a key player in providing services to the most transit oriented neighborhood in the Capital Region.
- The Schenectady Comprehensive Plan included proposals that will help revitalize the study area and two neighborhood plans that provide guidance to this plan including the Stockade Neighborhood Plan and the Downtown Neighborhood Plan.
- The Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority (Metroplex) works to attract new jobs and new investments to Schenectady County. Its efforts focus on key commercial corridors and business parks strategically located throughout the county with a special emphasis on redevelopment of the downtown area in the City of Schenectady. Specific programs include:
 - Loft and façade programs.
 - Grand and loan programs
 - Technical assistance.

Phasing

The implementation plan will be phased in over time:

Phase I – Immediate Actions – These activities can begin right away and are necessary to set the stage for future phases. Included are the basic infrastructural improvements that are necessary before significant investment is likely to be seen in the study area such as improvements to the pedestrian circulation system, streetscape and façade improvements that bring the study area up to an acceptable appearance. They also include setting up the regulatory and organizational elements that will facilitate cooperation and consensus on the parts of the organizations involved in the long term success of the plan.

Phase II – Up to 2 years from adoption – After the immediate actions are committed, these projects complete the public infrastructure improvements and make the area ready for private development. State Street, Washington Avenue, and Liberty Park (including connection to Mohawk trails) plans are completed. The focus turns to the design of larger infrastructure projects like the extension of Erie Street, property consolidation, and marketing. The City would put together an RFP for development of the Liberty Park catalyst project site. This would involve a conceptual site plan and building program including parking off of Erie Street, the new bus station, and mixed use high rise development on the site.

Phase III – Between 2 and 5 years from adoption – Private development is underway and additional public investments are made including the extension of Erie Street, the closure of Railroad Street and its replacement with a pedestrian way.

Phase IV – More than 5 years from adoption – The plan is built out over time.

Table 3.1 shows a matrix of implementation actions to move the Land Use and Transportation Plan toward realization. It provides a listing of the recommended improvements, conceptual cost estimates, potential funding sources, and the phase during which each is expected to be completed. Order of magnitude costs are rough estimates that will require detailed analysis to produce more precise estimates as improvement projects proceed from a conceptual stage through implementation. In addition, estimates and actual costs of implementation may vary somewhat depending on the entity undertaking the project and the funding source used.

Table 3.1 Implementation Action Plan					
Project	Phase	Description	Partners	Budget	Funding Source
Public Infrastructure					
Lower State Street and Washington Avenue reconstruction and Streetscape improvements including crosswalks and bus stops	1	This project would make improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, traffic signals, lighting, street furniture, and paving and bicycle facilities from Erie Boulevard to the City Line just east of the Western Gateway Bridge. It would be similar in scope to the work done on State between Erie and Nott Terrace	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, CDTC, NYSDOT	\$10.94 M	STP-Flex as per Draft 2010-2015 TIP (incl. 20% match). Preliminary design funds slated for 2011-2012
State and Washington Intersection Improvements	1	The State and Washington intersection is the most significant transportation challenge in the study area, being a key connection between SCCC, the Stockade and the new development proposed for the study area, and at the same time a significant arterial with high traffic volumes. Improvements at this intersection are included in the Lower State Street TIP project and may include traffic calming and lane reduction	City of Schenectady, NYSDOT, CDTC, SCCC	Included in Lower State Street Reconstruction	CMAQ, City, Metroplex STP-Flex as per Draft 2010-2015 TIP (incl. 20% match). Preliminary design funds slated for 2011-2012
Stockade Gateway Features	1	Two gateway features are planned at the entrances to the Stockade from State Street at Washington Avenue and Church Street.	City of Schenectady, Stockade Neighborhood Association	Included in Lower State Street Reconstruction	City, Private Sources, OPRHP Heritage Area Program
Erie St Extension Preliminary Design	1	This project creates a new, modern and buildable block structure in the study area by extending Erie Street through from Erie Boulevard to Washington Avenue. It would allow easy access from Erie Boulevard or Washington Avenue to building frontages and parking structures. It creates a new connection to the train station and upper State Street on the east end and a new pedestrian crossing of Washington Ave. at the west end.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers, NYSDOT, CDTC	\$100,000	Enhancement program, CMAQ, City, Metroplex

Create Public Parking Lot	1	Identify and develop a parcel in the Study Area to create a supply of public parking. This parking would be converted to development and structured parking in later phases.	City of Schenectady, Property Owners, Metroplex	\$1.7M	Metroplex
Liberty Park Improvements	2	Liberty Park would become an attractive, usable, urban park and plaza through this project that would celebrate its location at the entrance to Schenectady from I-890 and the Western Gateway Bridge. It would also form the link between SCCC, the Stockade, and new development in the study area. This project would close Water Street and expand and renovate the park to provide a centerpiece public space for the study area.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex	\$800,000	Metroplex, TIF, City, OPRHP Parks Program
Study the Feasibility of Moving the I-890 Off Ramp from Washington Avenue	2	The high volume of traffic on Washington Avenue is a significant barrier to efficient pedestrian circulation and development in the study area. It presents safety concerns for students attending SCCC. The relocation of the exit from I-890 off of Washington Avenue would dramatically reduce the traffic volume and encourage redevelopment.	City of Schenectady, NYSDOT, Metroplex, SCCC	\$100,000	CDTC, NYSDOT
Improve Church Street	2	Upgrade sidewalks, pavement, crosswalks, lighting, on-street parking, and landscaping	City of Schenectady	\$1.4M	Enhancement program, CMAQ, City, Metroplex
Construct Erie Street Extension	2	Implement the Erie Street extension	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers	\$6.6M	Enhancement program, CMAQ, City, Metroplex
Stockade Sidewalks	3	The sidewalks connecting State Street to the Stockade on Washington, Church, and Ferry Street are in poor condition and need improvement to integrate the Stockade with new development in the study area.	City of Schenectady	Included in Lower State Street Reconstruction	Enhancement program, CMAQ, City, Metroplex

Close Fuller Street	3	Closing Fuller Street would have minimal impact on traffic circulation and would make space available for additional parking in a convenient location.	City of Schenectady, Adjacent Property Owners	\$76,000 (Convert to park)	City, TIF, Metroplex
Close Railroad Street	3	Close Railroad Street to traffic and create a landscaped central walkway from Liberty Park to the Armory through key development sites. This will provide an amenity for developers and improve the pedestrian circulation system incorporating heritage aspects as appropriate.	City of Schenectady	\$470,000 (Convert to park)	City, TIF, Metroplex
Mill Lane	4	This project would improve the streetscape along Mill Lane making it suitable for development as a small scale retail and restaurant street. It would create the first Woonerf in the Capital Region, a small scale street that allows auto traffic but focuses on pedestrian movement and street frontage activity.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers	\$1.4M	City, TIF, Metroplex, CDBG
Public Transit					
CDTA BRT Station Improvements	1	Improvements will be made to the bus stop at Liberty Park as part of CDTA's implementation of Route 5 BRT.	CDTA, City of Schenectady	\$100,000	CDTA, FTA, NYSDOT
Develop CDTA Park and Ride Plan	2	Work within the framework of the CDTA park-and-ride study to identify a location in or near the study area to provide a lot for BRT and express bus services. If located within the study area, the lot would be relocated as development progresses.	City of Schenectady, CDTA, CDTC	\$1.3M	CDTA, CDTC Linkage
Temporary Improvements to Bus Station	2	Temporary improvements to the existing bus station would make the facility easier to use and present a more welcoming impression to people entering Schenectady from the west by auto or by bus. Buses could use Washington Avenue, State Street, and Church Street for circulation, stops and loading/unloading packages.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Trailways, Greyhound, CDTA	\$38,000	Metroplex, Trailways

New CDTA Bus Layover	3	This project would be built in concert with closing Fuller Street to traffic and would provide a new CDTA bus layover area along the loop under the I-890 ramp.	City of Schenectady, CDTA, NYSDOT	\$209,000	CDTA, Transit Formula Grants, Bus Discretionary
Build New Inter-city Bus Station	3	Remove current inter-city bus station building and build new bus station using concept plan developed for this study as well as the detailed Liberty Park South Development Plan. This will improve bus circulation, station facilities, and aesthetics of the area.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Trailways, Greyhound, CDTA	\$1.2M	Metroplex, Trailways
Build new Amtrak Station	4	Plans are underway to replace the current Amtrak station with a larger, more attractive and functional design. The new station will be fully ADA accessible. The station, along with other rail improvements underway, will dramatically increase intercity rail service quality and will create a landmark at the Northeast corner of the study area.	CDTA, Amtrak, City of Schenectady	\$11.0M	FTA, NYSDOT, Metroplex, CDTA
Development Support					
Develop Detailed Liberty Park South Development Plan	1	Given its excellent access and highly visible location, the Liberty Park South development would be the subject of a more detailed conceptual development plan to facilitate its financing and construction. Include park expansion plan and Inter-city bus station relocation plan. Incorporate green infrastructure/TOD into this plan.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex	\$150,000	City, Metroplex, CDBG
State Street Infill	1	Prioritizing the development of several empty lots on State Street would restore the continuous street wall, provide additional critical mass for retail and restaurants, and strengthen the first priority for revitalization.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers	N/A	Private, Developers

Support Deli/Food Store at Liberty Park	2	The need for a food store in Downtown Schenectady has been identified in previous plans. Locating this store along State Street near Liberty Park would allow it to serve Stockade residents, SCCC students, and motorists passing through.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Food Store, BID	N/A	Private, Developers
Property Consolidation	2	Begin a program of consolidating properties to create practical developable parcels to implement the development goals of the plan.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex	N/A	City, TIF, Developers, CDBG
Mill Lane	3	Mill Lane provides a unique opportunity and environment to attract higher end restaurants to downtown Schenectady by capitalizing on its quaint European charm. This plan would create a conceptual plan to encourage developers to consider the investing in the project.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers, BID	N/A	Private, Developers
Zoning and Regulation					
Change Building Height Limits in Zoning Code	1	Taller residential buildings in the study area would have excellent views over the Mohawk Valley and beyond and could attract high-end condo and apartment developments. Changing height limits to allow 10 or 12 story buildings as of right in certain circumstances would encourage this development.	City of Schenectady	N/A	N/A

Parking Requirements	2	High density urban development requires flexibility in providing parking to encourage development, provide needed parking, but avoid over parking that deadens street life. Parking standards that encourage off-site parking, shared parking, innovative parking types, and other innovations should be included in the zoning code.	City of Schenectady	N/A	N/A
Develop Design Standards based on Liberty Park South Plan	2	Creating a specific identity for the study area is important to its success. Developing design standards and a process to enforce them would support this goal. Create zoning incentives for developments using shared parking and transit stops.	City of Schenectady	\$75,000	N/A
Planning and Other Programs					
Partner with SCCC to Create TDM Program	1	SCCC is a major driver of parking demand in the study area, is well served by the CDTA, yet does not see significant transit use. A university pass similar to the program CDTA has with UAlbany would provide a major incentive to use transit at no extra cost to CDTA. Other aspects of the program could include enhanced carpooling programs and carshare.	City of Schenectady, SCCC, CDTC, CDTA	N/A	CDTA, CDTC, CMAQ
State Street Façades Program	1	This program provides funding assistance to building owners to improve the facades of their buildings.	City of Schenectady, Building Owners, Metroplex, DSIC	On-going	Metroplex, OPRHP Historic Preservation Program

Loft Development Program	1	Develop a program to encourage loft conversions of the upper floors of buildings along State Street to provide new residential opportunities and bring the buildings into full economic health.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers, Proctor's Theatre, DSIC	\$35,000	City tax abatement, Historic tax credits, New market tax credits, Metroplex, Private Sources, Developers, OPRHP Historic Preservation Program
Develop marketing plan for study area	2	Develop a marketing plan to raise awareness with developers, businesses and the public of opportunities created by the land use and transportation plan in the Lower State Street area.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, DSIC, BID	\$35,000	Metroplex, CDBG
Move forward on plans for Armory	2	Develop program to locate tenant for former New York National Guard Armory.	City of Schenectady, NYNG, Potential Tenants	N/A	City, NYNG, Developers, CDBG
Study the Feasibility of Moving the I-890 Off Ramp from Washington Avenue	2	The high volume of traffic on Washington Avenue is a significant barrier to efficient pedestrian circulation and development in the study area. It presents safety concerns for students attending SCCC. The removal of the exit from I-890 would dramatically reduce the traffic volume and encourage redevelopment.	City of Schenectady, NYSDOT, Metroplex, SCCC	\$50,000	CDTC, NYSDOT
Parking Coordination Plan	2	A successful urban neighborhood requires the careful balance of parking supply to provided needed transportation service without overwhelming the area with vacant parking lots. A car share program would further reduce the overall demand for parking in the study area.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex	\$30,000	CDTC Linkage

Study the feasibility of reorganizing I-890 feeder streets/ ramp system	3	In the medium term, a reorganization of the surface street pattern in the vicinity of I-890 could potentially improve traffic circulation pattern, better integrate the surrounding areas with the City street system and free up land for development.	City of Schenectady, NYSDOT, CDTC, Developers	\$60,000	CDTC, NYSDOT
Grocery Store	3	Previous planning efforts have identified the need for a new grocery store in downtown Schenectady. This plan recommends a continued effort to try to attract new market.	City of Schenectady, Metroplex, Developers	N/A	Tax abatement, Private, Developers
Support SCCC Programs	Ongoing	Work with SCCC to meet their facility needs in the study area.	City of Schenectady, SCCC	N/A	N/A
Work with GE	Ongoing	Hold regular meetings with GE to discuss how the City, Metroplex and GE can work together to revitalize downtown Schenectady.	City of Schenectady, GE	N/A	N/A
Work with BID	Ongoing	Expand the BID's role in promoting and managing the retail health of the study area.	City of Schenectady, BID	N/A	N/A
Involve Stockade	Ongoing	Involve the Stockade Neighborhood in future planning and implementation to assure the integration of the neighborhood with new development in the study area.	City of Schenectady, Stockade NA	N/A	N/A

Appendices

A1 – Phase I Implementation Fact Sheets

A2 – Full Market Analysis Report

A3 – Public Meeting Minutes

A4 – Stakeholder Meeting Notes

A5 – NYSDOT Meeting Notes

A6 – I-890 Interchange Planning Memo

A7 – Intersection Traffic Counts

Appendix

A1 - Phase I Implementation Fact Sheets

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

LOWER STATE STREET RECONSTRUCTION AND STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

GENERALIZED COST: \$10.94 Million

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- State Street is the primary shopping street in the study area
- Sidewalks are in poor condition in many places
- Heavy traffic movement
- Significant transit service including future BRT route

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve pedestrian facilities and add traffic calming measures
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety and vehicular safety
- Improve pedestrian access and vehicular traffic flow
- Support transit-oriented development
- Enhance aesthetics and usability
- Enhance the edge of the Stockade

ACTIONS:

- Prepare an improvement plan for State Street
 - Evaluate roadway characteristics and traffic performance
 - Explore lane reduction, tightening the corners, etc.
 - Explore traffic calming and pedestrian improvement measures
- Carry out stakeholder consultations (NYSDOT, CDTA, SCCC,)
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- City initiated discussions with NYSDOT
- NYSDOT carried out preliminary traffic evaluations
- The project is included in CDTC's Draft 2010-2015 TIP. Preliminary design funds slated for 2011-2012

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • CDTA |
| • NYSDOT | • Metroplex |
| • CDTC | |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Liberty Park Improvements
- State and Washington Intersection Improvements
- Stockade Gateway Features
- Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

STATE AND WASHINGTON INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

GENERALIZED COST: Included in State Street Streetscape Improvement Plan

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- The busiest intersection in the lower State Street area
- Heavy traffic movement from/to I-890 ramp at Washington Avenue
- Transit hub due to BRT station and Inter-city bus station
- SCCC generates heavy pedestrian movement, which has to cross wide roadway

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve pedestrian facilities and add traffic calming measures
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety and vehicular safety
- Improve pedestrian access and vehicular traffic flow
- Support Transit-oriented development
- Enhance aesthetics and usability
- Enhance the Stockade entrance

ACTIONS:

- Prepare an improvement plan for the intersection
 - Evaluate roadway characteristics and traffic performance
 - Explore lane reduction, tightening the corners, etc.
 - Explore traffic calming and pedestrian improvement measures
 - Evaluate transit and inter-city bus circulation
- Carry out stakeholder consultations (NYSDOT, CDTA, SCCC,)
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- City initiated discussions with NYSDOT
- NYSDOT carried out preliminary evaluations related to lane reduction and traffic
- The project is included in CDTC's Draft 2010-2015 TIP. Preliminary design funds slated for 2011-2012

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • SCCC |
| • NYSDOT | • Metroplex |
| • CDTC | • Trailways/Greyhound |
| • CDTA | |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Liberty Park Improvements
- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- Stockade Gateway Features
- Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

LIBERTY PARK IMPROVMENTS

GENERALIZED COST: \$800,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Area is characterized by large expanses of underutilized asphalt
- Existing park is small and odd shaped
- Existing landscaping creates berms that block views into the park leading to security issues
- Water Street is redundant and little-used
- Sidewalk and roadway conditions are poor on the streets surrounding the park

OBJECTIVES:

- Create a signature green space and gateway to the study area, Lower State Street, and the Stockade
- Provide an attractive park for people to relax, eat lunch and meet their neighbors
- Provide an attractive amenity that encourages development of adjacent properties
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety
- Improve the aesthetics of the neighborhood
- Convey a sense of optimism about the study area

ACTIONS:

- Develop concept plan with the participation of stakeholders and the public
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • Metroplex |
| • Stockade Neighborhood Association | • CDTA |
| • CDTC | |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Stockade Gateway Features
- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- State and Washington Intersection Improvements
- Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

STOCKADE GATEWAY FEATURES

GENERALIZED COST: Included in State Street Streetscape Improvement Plan

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Cut through traffic from Washington Avenue creates problems because drivers are unaware of the narrow historic streets of the Stockade
- There are no indications along State Street that the historic Stockade exists just one block north
- Sidewalk and roadway conditions are poor along State Street

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce cut-through traffic
- Improve pedestrian facilities and add traffic calming measures
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety and vehicular safety
- Enhance aesthetics and usability
- Enhance the entrances to the Stockade

ACTIONS:

- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- The project is included in CDTC's Draft 2010-2015 TIP. Preliminary design funds slated for 2011-2012

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • CDTC |
| • Stockade Neighborhood Association | • Metroplex |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Liberty Park Improvements
- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- State and Washington Intersection Improvements
- Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

ERIE STREET EXTENSION PRELIMINARY DESIGN

GENERALIZED COST: \$100,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- The street network of the Gateway District is not conducive to redevelopment
- Street pattern creates small, odd-shaped blocks but poor connectivity
- Erie Street extends just one block from Erie Boulevard, limiting access to the Gateway District

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve access to the Gateway District
- Improve pedestrian access and traffic flow
- Create access to Gateway District parking facilities
- Create new East-West pedestrian and bicycle route across study area

ACTIONS:

- Carry out stakeholder consultations (NYSDOT, CDTA, SCCC,)
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Complete preliminary engineering

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • Metroplex |
| • NYSDOT | • Developers |
| • CDTC | |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Liberty Park South Development Plan
- Create Public Parking Lot

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

CREATE PUBLIC PARKING LOT

GENERALIZED COST: \$1.7 Million

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Significant land in study area is devoted to private parking
- Little public parking is available
- Parking is needed for new businesses and development

OBJECTIVES:

- Create supply of parking for transit oriented development
- Pursue innovative parking strategies
- Pursue sustainable parking strategies
- Provide parking to encourage development of study area
- Consider shared use parking and park-and-ride
- Enhance aesthetics and usability

ACTIONS:

- Carry out stakeholder consultations (NYSDOT, CDTA, SCCC,)
- Identify site
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Schenectady
- Private land owners
- Metroplex

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Erie Street Extension Preliminary Design
- Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

CDTA BRT STATION IMPROVEMENTS

GENERALIZED COST: \$100,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- CDTA riders use existing bus shelter and stop at Liberty Park
- BRT service is planned to be implemented by the end of 2010
- CDTA has designed and funded upgraded BRT station

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve transit waiting facilities
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety
- Encourage transit as a mode of access to jobs and businesses in the study area
- Encourage new residents of the study area to use transit for commuting and other trips

ACTIONS:

- Complete planned improvements

CURRENT STATUS:

- The project is included in CDTA capital plans
- Project is included in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Schenectady
- CDTA
- CDTC

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- Liberty Park Improvements
- State and Washington Intersection Improvements

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

DEVELOP DETAILED LIBERTY PARK SOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GENERALIZED COST: \$150,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- The Liberty Park South location is highly visible to people arriving in Schenectady from I-890 and Route 5 West and sees very high auto traffic volumes
- Area just south of Liberty Park includes a number of underutilized parcels
- Area is auto oriented and unpleasant to walk through
- Existing bus station places large underutilized parking area next to park and development sites
- Location is across Washington Avenue from SCCC and easily accessed from the Stockade, GE Plant and the BRT station.

OBJECTIVES:

- Create plan for anchor development for the Gateway District
- Establish goals and objectives for development program
- Develop consensus amongst stakeholders
- Develop interest in the project among real estate developers in the Gateway District
- "Kick-start" redevelopment of the Gateway District

ACTIONS:

- Create Liberty Park South Development Plan
- Reach out to stakeholders and public to develop consensus
- Secure funding (private developers and Metroplex)

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • SCCC |
| • CDTC | • Developers |
| • Metroplex | • Trailways/Greyhound |
| • Stockade Neighborhood Association | |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- Liberty Park Improvements
- Erie Street Extension Preliminary Design
- State and Washington Intersection Improvements

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

STATE STREET INFILL

GENERALIZED COST: N/A

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- State Street between Erie Boulevard and Washington Avenue currently includes a number of vacant lots that detract from the attractiveness of the area and create semi-hidden spaces that can be used for dumping and other undesirable activities.
- Area could support more productive, tax-paying uses.

OBJECTIVES:

- Create new, up-to-date buildings with a diverse and flexible floorplate to respond to evolving markets
- Restore the continuous row of commercial and residential buildings on State Street
- Develop a “critical mass” of retail spaces to encourage revitalization
- Create a more attractive and pleasant atmosphere for shoppers, visitors, and residents.

ACTIONS:

- Work with property owners to help create development plans
- Secure funding
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| • City of Schenectady | • Developers |
| • Property owners | • Metroplex |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

CHANGE BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

GENERALIZED COST: N/A

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Zoning regulations limit building heights in the study area to 100 feet with special permit
- The construction of taller residential buildings that provide attractive views of the countryside surrounding the study area, increasing development potential and property values.

OBJECTIVES:

- Change building height limits to allow taller buildings in the study area
- Create an economic environment where new types of attractive residential buildings are practical to develop
- Provide residential density that is transit-supportive and sustainable

ACTIONS:

- Complete supportive position paper
- Propose changes to zoning regulations

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Schenectady

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop Liberty Park South Development Plan

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

PARTNER WITH SCCC TO CREATE TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) PROGRAM

GENERALIZED COST: N/A

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- SCCC's busy and successful campus creates a significant amount of travel demand
- Transit and other alternative mode shares are low
- Parking demand is high
- Good alternatives, such as transit routes to much of the Capital District and access to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail exist nearby

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce auto travel demand in the study area
- Reduce the demand for parking, opening up the use of the land to other more productive uses
- Increase transit usage
- Encourage more sustainable transportation patterns
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety and vehicular safety

ACTIONS:

- Carry out stakeholder consultations (NYSDOT, CDTA, SCCC,)
- Secure funding (CDTC, City, Metroplex)
- Detailed design and construction

CURRENT STATUS:

- Project is proposed in Route 5 Transit Gateway Plan

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| • City of Schenectady | • CDTC |
| • SCCC | • CDTA |

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- CDTA BRT Station Improvements

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

STATE STREET FACADES PROGRAM

GENERALIZED COST: \$75,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Design and signage of buildings along State Street is in disrepair or is outmoded

OBJECTIVES:

- Create sense of prosperity and style along State Street
- Attract new customers to retail shops
- Enhance aesthetics and usability

ACTIONS:

- Encourage use of the existing façade program along State Street
- Secure continued funding for program

CURRENT STATUS:

- Program is on-going

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Schenectady
- Metroplex
- Property owners
- Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- Loft Program Development

Projects for Immediate Action Fact Sheet

LOFT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

GENERALIZED COST: \$35,000

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Many older buildings along State Street include upper floors that are not being put to productive use

OBJECTIVES:

- Create new residential and live work spaces that are attractive to a younger, creative demographic that would be interested in living downtown
- Rehabilitate historic buildings
- Increase the residential population of the study area
- Increase economic activity in the study area
- Encourage activity on the street outside of business hours
- Enhance aesthetics and usability

ACTIONS:

- Explore barriers to reuse of upper floor spaces
- Write position paper
- Build on the Main Street Improvement Program to specifically address loft spaces
- Secure continued funding

CURRENT STATUS:

- Program is on-going

SPONSORS/ STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Schenectady
- Property owners
- Metroplex
- Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Lower State Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements
- State Street Façade Program

Appendix

A2 - Full Market Analysis Report

Housing Market Analysis

City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study

INTRODUCTION

Located in the Capital District Region of New York State, Schenectady County has a population of 146,555 according to the 2000 Census. The County is bounded on the south by Albany and Schoharie Counties, on the north and east by Saratoga County, and on the west by Montgomery County. The largest populated municipality within Schenectady County is the City of Schenectady. According to the 1990 census, Schenectady has a population of 65,566 and an area of 10.9 square miles. Data from the 2000 Census indicate that the City's population is decreasing. The City of Schenectady's 2000 population is 61,821. Since 1990 Schenectady's population has declined 5.7%.

The purpose of this study is to determine the potential need for market rate rental housing – created through new construction or adaptive reuse of existing buildings – to be leased in Downtown Schenectady as part of the City's overall Route 5 Transit Gateway Study. The target area for the Route 5 Transit Gateway Study is located on the western end of the City of Schenectady, adjacent to the Mohawk River, Interstate I-890, downtown Schenectady and the General Electric Plant, and includes Route 5 (State Street), Erie Boulevard, and Washington Avenue and part of the Schenectady County Community College campus.

The City's recently completed Schenectady 2020 Comprehensive Plan identified the creation of new downtown housing including town homes, condominiums, market and affordable apartments and lofts as a goal for the Downtown neighborhood. The Plan further stated that "Developing a diverse supply of modern housing types is critical to Schenectady's economic revival. Expanding Downtown living options will be a central focus over the next fifteen years. Immediate opportunities include housing development adjacent to the Stockade, the East Front Street Town Home project, conversion of upper story uses, artist space and rental apartments. Creating a safe Downtown and a heightened sense and perception of safety will increase the "feet on the street" and the attractiveness of Downtown as a place to live. New housing projects must be carefully designed to fit within the Downtown's historic character and be attractive to specific markets such as young professionals, artists and empty-nesters. At the same time it is essential that the City discourage gentrification and the loss of affordable and special needs housing in the Downtown."

Therefore the primary focus of this market analysis is to determine the rental and homeowner housing market for young professionals (under the age of 45) and seniors (60+). This analysis will estimate the extent of the area's housing market and its ability to absorb the proposed units.

PROJECT MARKET AREA

In defining the market area for a rental housing project, several factors must be considered including service area, access to site, availability of services and limiting constraints. Generally a tight service area of ten miles or less is an acceptable standard provided that adequate services are available and locational constraints of the proposed site are minimal.

Housing Market Analysis

City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study

As noted under Description of Services, the site is adequately served by public infrastructure and a significant level of public and community services. There is excellent access to the site via the existing road network. The target area includes Route 5 (State Street), Erie Boulevard, and Washington Avenue. No physical or psychological barriers were identified during the subject study that would constrain the proposed service area.

Using a ten mile service radius, a defined market area for the proposed project would encompass the entire City of Schenectady, as well as several surrounding counties. For the purpose of this analysis therefore, the **Project Market Area** has been defined as Schenectady, Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties. The conclusions drawn from this study are based on these assumptions and limitations. Claritas data is attached in the Appendix.

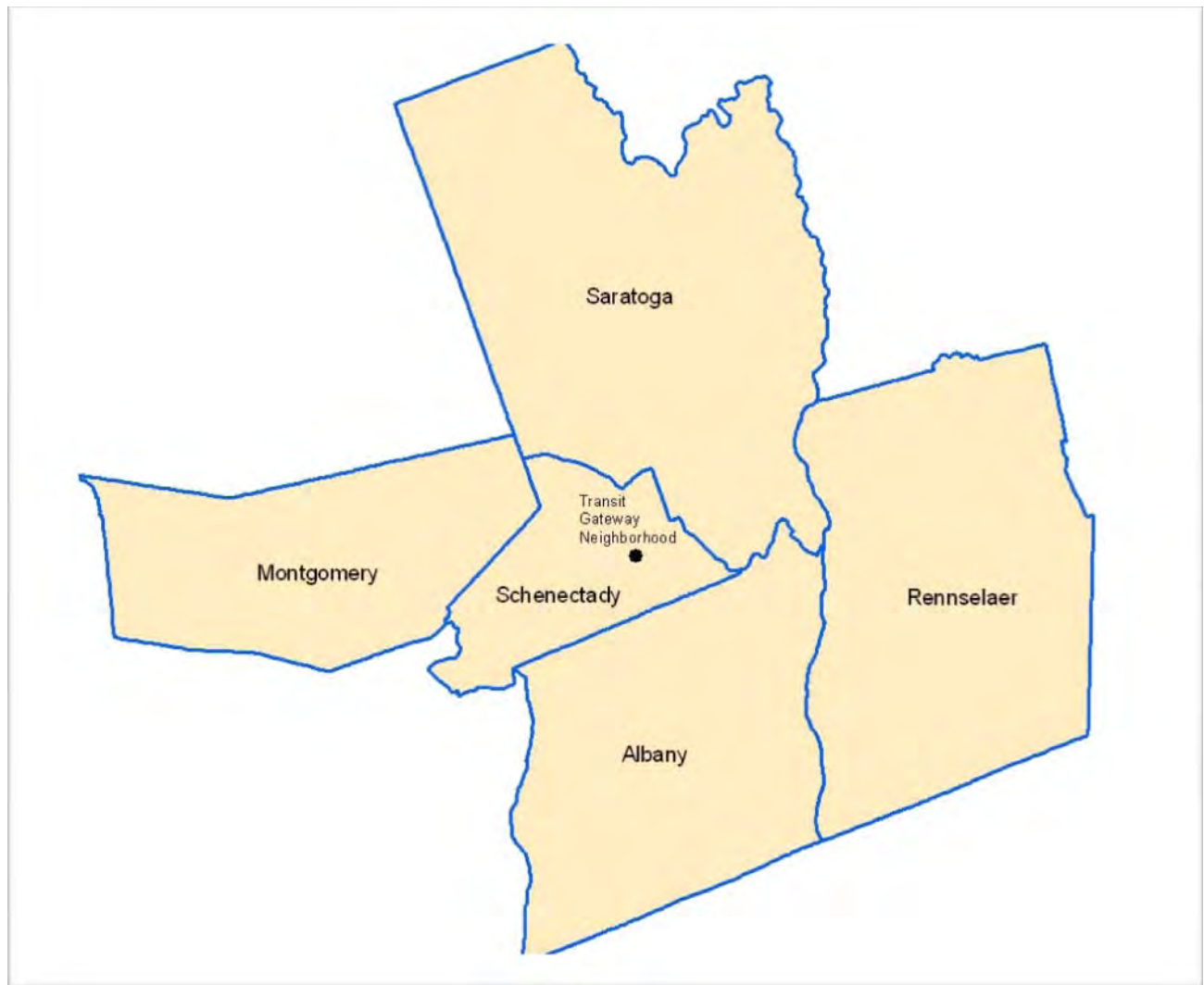
According to 2008 Claritas statistics, the project market area has a population of 872,734. There is a total of 354,491 households in the project market area, of which 17,955 (17.6%) have yearly incomes above \$60,000. Estimated median household income for Schenectady County is \$51,403. A summary of housing and income demographics for the project market area are presented in the table below.

Project Market Area Demographics

County	Population		Household Income		Poverty Level		Median Income
	Persons	Households	>\$60k	<\$60k	Above	Below	
Schenectady	151,839	61,683	26,415	35,268	36,310	3,001	\$51,403
Albany	297,704	123,819	54,498	69,321	67,694	5,227	\$52,868
Montgomery	49,060	20,255	6,007	14,248	12,051	1,202	\$39,726
Rensselaer	156,068	62,325	27,456	34,869	37,871	2,741	\$53,586
Saratoga	218,063	86,409	43,612	42,797	56,992	2,414	\$61,423
Project Area	872,734	354,491	157,988	196,503	210,918	14,585	

Source: Claritas Pop-Facts: Demographic Snapshot 2008 Comparison Report. Compilation of Household income statistics was prepared by River Street Planning & Development, LLC

Schenectady Route 5 Gateway – Project Market Area



DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The project target area is situated in an urban downtown area. A description and location of the specific services desirable to the targeted population is as follows:

- Medical Services. Ellis Hospital (Campus) is located at 1101 Nott Street, approximately 1.65 miles from the target area. Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital is located adjacent to Ellis Hospital at 1270 Belmont Avenue, approximately 1.87 miles from the target area.

Housing Market Analysis

City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study

- **Recreational and Entertainment.** The project market area is served by a number of parks and recreation areas including Liberty Park, Veteran's Park, and Proctor's Theatre located in Downtown Schenectady, and the Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail, Front Street Park and Riverside Park located in the Stockade Neighborhood along the Mohawk River. Liberty Park and Veteran's Park are both located on State Street and are passive parks with memorials.
- **Public library facilities.** The Schenectady County Public Library is located at 99 Clinton Street, within one-half mile of the target area.
- **Houses of Worship.** Several churches are located in Schenectady within walking distance of the target area, including the First Reformed Church, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, and Friendship Baptist Church, among others.
- **Government offices.** Schenectady government offices are located in City Hall approximately one-half mile from the target area. The Schenectady County Office Building is also located at 620 State Street.
- **Post Office.** The Post Office is located at 29 Jay Street and is located approximately one-half mile of the target area.
- **Fire Department.** The Fire Station is located at 360 Veeder Avenue,, about 0.58 miles of the target area. Ambulance service is operated by Mohawk Ambulance, located within one mile of the target area.
- **Police Protection.** The Schenectady Police Department serves the project market area and is located at 531 Liberty Street, approximately 0.62 miles away.
- **Taxi Service.** Taxicab service is available in the City of Schenectady from Capitaland Taxi, Central Brown Taxi, Checker Cab, and Ditoro Taxi, among others.
- **Local Bus Service.** Local bus service is provided by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA). The target area is located on a bus stop route. Additionally, the Schenectady train station is located on Erie Boulevard between Liberty Street and Union Street. AMTRAK provides regular passenger rail service to and from Schenectady on several of its routes.
- **Media.** Daily newspapers serving the area include the Daily Gazette and Times Union. There are numerous radio stations and several television stations that broadcast from the regional area.
- **Supermarket.** Hannaford Supermarket is located at 1400 Altamont Avenue (2.06 miles) and 3333 Consaul Road (3.86 miles), Price Chopper on Eastern Avenue and Wal-Mart (Freeman's Bridge Road in Glenville). Smaller stores located near the

Housing Market Analysis

City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study

target area include, and Gabriel's Super Market (1924 Curry Road - 2.46 miles and Route 5 in Scotia).

- **Banking.** Trustco Bank (320 State Street), 1st National Bank of Scotia (120 Erie Boulevard), First Niagara Bank (251-263 State Street), Bank of America (500 State Street), Key Bank (436 State Street) Citizens Bank (State Street and Barrett Street) and Fleet Bank (216 State Street), are all located within one-half mile of the target area.
- **Pharmacy.** CVS Pharmacy (415 State Street) is within one-half mile of the target area.
- **Other shopping.** Larger malls, such as Rotterdam Square Mall (within two miles of the target area) and Mohawk Commons serve the project market area.

The neighborhood has a number of buildings that are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings include Schenectady City Hall on Jay Street, the United States Post Office on Jay and Liberty Streets, the Schenectady Armory at 125 Washington Avenue, Nott Memorial Hall on Union College Campus, Proctor's Theatre and Arcade at 432 State Street, the Hotel Van Curler at 78 Washington Avenue, Central Fire Station on Erie Boulevard, and Foster Building (Foster Hotel) at 508 State Street.

COMPARABLE HOUSING

Rental Housing

A portion of the market rate rental housing within the City of Schenectady is provided through large apartment complexes. Information on starting rents by bedroom size for these apartment complexes are presented in Table 1. Most of the facilities provide amenities such as utilities, parking, pets, etc. A summary of amenities is presented in the list below:

- **Barney Square Apartments** – Amenities include parking, laundry, and pets.
- **Brookview Court Apartments** – Amenities include parking laundry, and pets. Apartments are located in the Town of Rotterdam, just outside the City of Schenectady.
- **Court Royale** – Amenities include parking.
- **Excelsior Place Apartment Homes** – Amenities include parking, laundry and Time Warner cable.
- **Graystone Apartments** – Amenities include parking and laundry.
- **Hampshire Apartments** – Amenities include utilities, parking, laundry, pool and exercise facilities.
- **Long Pond Village Apartments** – Amenities include parking, laundry, pets, pool, exercise facilities and Time Warner cable.
- **Netherlands Village** – Amenities include utilities, parking, laundry, pets and Time Warner cable.

Housing Market Analysis

City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study

- Sheridan Village – Amenities include utilities, parking and laundry.
- Wade Lupe Towers & Garden – Amenities include utilities, parking, laundry, pets, pool and exercise facilities.
- Wade Lupe Townhouses – Amenities include parking, laundry, and pets.

Table 1. City of Schenectady Market Rate Housing Inventory						
Apartment Complex	Starting Rents					1BR/Den
	Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	Luxury Townhouse	
Barney Square Apartments	\$450	\$550	\$650	X	\$750	X
Brookview Court Apartments	X	\$600	\$725	X	X	X
Court Royale	X	X	\$850	X	X	X
Excelsior Place Apartment Homes	X	\$950	\$1400	\$1740	X	X
Graystone Apartments	X	X	\$880	X	X	X
Hampshire Apartments	\$685	\$810	\$890	X	X	X
Long Pond Village Apartments	X	\$965	\$995	X	X	X
Netherlands Village	X	\$719	\$759	X	X	\$769
Sheridan Village	X	\$770	\$830	X	X	X
Wade Lupe Towers & Garden	\$490	\$640	\$760	\$910	X	X
Wade Lupe Townhouses	\$485	\$630	\$690	X	X	X
Average Rent by Bedroom Size	\$528	\$737	\$857	\$1325	\$750	\$769

Source: The Renters Guide via www.rentersguidealbany.com

For Sale Analysis

The Capital Region Multiple Listing Service is an association of realtors that compiles data on housing sales and market trends within the six county regional area which comprises the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA area. From January to June 2009, there was a total of 492 residential closed sales (new construction and resale) in Schenectady County with an average sale price of \$166,798 and a median sale price of \$150,000. In comparison, 572 homes sold between January and June 2008. The average sales price and median sales price for homes in 2008 was higher than in 2009 at \$178,165 and \$159,000 respectively.

Downtown Schenectady Transit Gateway Study Area Market-Rate Rent and Price Ranges

From a market perspective, the major challenges to new residential development in the Downtown Schenectady Transit Gateway Study Area include:

- Neglected or vacant properties: Derelict and vacant properties are a deterrent to potential urban residents, as they contribute to the perception that downtown and the surrounding areas are neglected, low-value and dangerous neighborhoods. Part

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of the vacancy problem in the Transit Gateway Target Area is the number of surface parking lots which breaks up the cohesiveness of the area.

- High costs: The rising costs of materials, in addition to the typically high cost of adaptive re-use, drive rents and prices beyond the reach of many potential residents.
- Parking misconceptions: In the Transit Gateway Area, most of the parking lots are vacant and underutilized. Regardless of the abundance of parking decks and open parking lots, the local perception is that there is no place to park downtown.

From a market perspective, the assets of the Downtown Schenectady Area that make it an attractive place to live include:

- Historic buildings: There is a large number of civic, commercial, and residential buildings that are architecturally and historically significant and provide a unique identity for the city.
- Walkability: Downtown is compact enough to walk from one end to the other, although, due to the number of open parking lots in the Transit Gateway Target Area, the quality of the pedestrian experience could be improved significantly.
- Tourism: Venues such as Proctor's, GE Theatre at Proctor's, and Schenectady Museum and Suits Bueche Planetarium and events such as Art Night Schenectady, Jazz on Jay, and Schenectady Greenmarket are also great assets to downtown residents.

Unit, Property and Downtown Amenities

Unit Amenities

To meet the expectations of potential urban residents, all multi-family units should be wired for cable television and high-speed internet or, if practical, be served by a building-wide Wi-Fi system. For "hard lofts" or "soft lofts" in adaptive re-use structures, existing floors should be salvaged and refinished wherever possible. Although hard lofts are typically designed without interior walls, with the exception of the bathroom, as much closet and storage space as possible should be provided in both hard and soft lofts. Wherever possible in both types, masonry walls should be exposed.

In the kitchens, buyers in particular will expect countertops to be granite, with integral or undermount sinks, and either matching backsplashes or finished in stainless steel; renters will expect contemporary, durable finishes appropriate to urban living. Cabinets should have flush fronts with integral or contemporary pulls, offered in a variety of finishes, ranging from bamboo to frosted glass. Appliances should be mid-grade with stainless fronts.

In new construction, suburban condominium finishes should be avoided. Larger units should be configured as "soft" lofts, with bedrooms separated by walls or, in cases of interior rooms, partitions that run only partially to the ceiling. HVAC should be designed with exposed spiral ductwork. Lighting fixtures should have clean and minimalist designs,

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capable of accommodating compact fluorescent bulbs. Walls should be drywall finished with simple contemporary baseboards. Doors should be flush, matched-grain wood with stainless handles and hardware.

Bathrooms should have a standard contemporary finish package, including vessel-style sinks, and granite countertops, with separate shower and/or tub enclosures. All fixtures, faucets and lighting should be clean, minimalist and contemporary. Again, lighting should accommodate compact fluorescent bulbs.

Some of the apartments targeted to older households will require more conventional finishes, such as crown molding, chair rails, carpeted bedroom floors, with carpet or hardwood in living and dining areas and tile in the kitchens and baths. Kitchen countertops should be Corian or granite, with integral or undermount ceramic sinks and stainless steel appliances, and a choice of European or traditional cabinets. Bathrooms should have ceramic tile floors and high-style, traditional fixtures.

Property Amenities

Larger rental properties should provide the amenities that have become the norm for investment-grade assets: business center, clubroom with catering kitchen, and some level of exercise facility.

For condominiums, if the property is large enough (at least 50 units), property amenities could include a small fitness center with state-of-the-art treadmills, bikes, Stairmasters, free weights. Building amenities in a large condominium property could also include an owners' club with a full working bar, media area with flat-screen television, chess, backgammon and card room, library and either high-speed internet access or Wi-Fi.

If space within the building is available, other amenities that are not very expensive to provide include storage units, bicycle racks, and recycling bins.

Any additional property amenities would depend on the scale of the development and the proposed price points; the more expensive the units, the greater the number of amenities that the buyers will expect. For very high-end developments, concierge services, accommodating a wide range of personal services, from dry cleaning pick-up/delivery to theater reservations, would be appropriate. However, if these kinds of services generate high condominium fees, there is likely to be buyer resistance. It is for this reason that swimming pools are not recommended; pools are expensive to build and maintain, and are typically infrequently used by residents.

Downtown Amenities

Since the diversity and social and cultural amenities of the city are one of the attractions of urban living, successful downtown housing is not necessarily dependent upon the creation of extensive (and expensive) recreational amenities.

However, locations that are within walking distance of parks and greenways, and entertainment venues—such as theaters, clubs and restaurants, as well as provide convenient access to a variety of retailers, including a grocery store—hold a significant market advantage. Because of the high value placed by the potential market on intimate urban green spaces, additional small “pocket parks” could be created on “leftover” land throughout the Downtown, particularly in the Transit Gateway Target Area. Some of these parks could be specialized, such as “Bark Parks,” where residents can take their dogs, or just a small green area, perhaps enhanced by a sculpture, but including seating that is shaded by trees.

Downtown Neighborhood Housing Strategies

From the perspective of draw area target market propensities and compatibility, a broad range of new construction as well as adaptive re-use of existing buildings will be required to support and sustain residential diversity in the Downtown Schenectady Transit Gateway Target Area. As previously noted there are significant opportunities for both new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings in the area. An effective housing strategy to attract the target households should include:

- Preservation of the built environment: the restoration, repositioning and/or adaptive re-use of existing vacant or under-utilized buildings;
- Mixed-use development: the inclusion of a residential component within mixed-use buildings, either adaptive re-use or new construction; and
- The establishment of general neighborhood guidelines to assure the compatibility of every scale and type of housing. This will be particularly important in creating a physical design link between the Stockade Neighborhood and the primary Downtown Commercial District.

In order to achieve maximum positive impact of downtown housing, three elements—location, design and marketing—must be carefully considered and executed.

Location: Evaluate Buildings/Areas for Residential Development

In general, areas or buildings slated for new development or redevelopment should be evaluated relative to the following criteria for successful urban housing initiatives:

- Advantageous adjacency. It is critical to “build on strength,” not only to provide maximum support for any proposed housing initiatives, but also, conversely, so that housing initiatives will reinforce existing or proposed adjacent developments (commercial, retail, or residential).
- Building and/or land availability. At present, several buildings or parcels within the Transit Gateway Target Area are underutilized or vacant. From the city’s perspective, poorly-located or under-used surface parking lots are better utilized as sites for new infill mixed-use development, not only to enhance the city’s tax base,

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but also to provide a more inviting and interesting pedestrian experience for downtown residents and visitors.

- Potential for expansion. Each housing initiative should be located in an area where, at the successful completion of the initial project, adjacent or nearby buildings and/or land appropriate for the continuation or extension of the neighborhood, either through new construction or adaptive re-use would potentially be available. Each housing initiative should be viewed not as a “stand-alone” project, but rather as a potential catalyst for additional residential development in surrounding areas.
- Anchors/linkage. Each housing initiative must be seen as part of an overall urban strategy to build a critical mass of both housing and related non-residential uses. “Anchor” locations establish the potential for economic activity in an underutilized area; “linkage” locations build on the strength of two or more established, but disconnected assets.

There are a number of important sites throughout the Target Area that have been designated by the city as opportunities for residential or mixed-use development. These include the numerous underutilized parking lots in the target area, the Armory and the YMCA Building.

- Development of residential units on the upper floors of the buildings along State Street should be strongly encouraged and should continue until there are no buildings remaining with vacant upper floors. Several cities have held day-long seminars to assist building owners with the process of residential conversion, which can be complicated even for skilled developers. Because these units are all adaptive re-use, they will be most attractive to the market as hard or soft lofts, with unit sizes comparable to those outlined in the optimum market position. Although the internal configuration of the existing buildings can have significant impact on the size of the units created, wherever possible, smaller units (at comparatively lower rents and prices) should be the goal. Downtown artist housing could be developed through the use of both historic and low-income tax credits: artists do not typically have high incomes and could likely qualify for income restricted units; as has been the case with many tax credit artists’ housing across the country, an additional requirement would be that at least one member of the household have a successful portfolio review by a qualified committee established for that purpose.
- Armory – Built in 1936 the Schenectady Armory, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was once home to the New York National Guard's 105th Infantry Regiment. However, the building no longer meets the modern requirements of the Army National Guard for administrative space, storage space, vehicle maintenance, and training facilities. Located on Washington Avenue, this building will possibly be reused by Schenectady County Community College.
- Schenectady YMCA – Located on State Street, this building could be potentially reused for market rate housing/condos, retail or office space.

In order to achieve the overall neighborhood objective, any single building could be repositioned using one of three general tactics, ranging from single-building rehabilitation,

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to multiple buildings treated as a single condominium association or income property. These tactics include:

- Rehabilitation and repositioning of rental units to serve a broader renter market. Depending on condition, location, immediate context, architectural quality, number of buildings and number of units, rental repositioning can range from a simple cosmetic rehab (with new floor surfaces, cabinets and appliances) to a gut rehabilitation (with reconfigured unit layouts and new kitchens and baths). Given prevailing rents in the market area, it is likely that asking rents would fall between \$450 and \$850 per month. Depending on the size of the units and extent of renovation, these rents could be significantly higher or lower. It is likely that between 10 and 20 of these renovated apartments could be absorbed each year, or 100 to 200 units over 10 years.
- Conversion of rentals to condominiums. As with the rentals, depending on condition, location, number of buildings and number of units, condominium conversion of buildings can encompass minimal changes in individual units in the building to a gut rehabilitation. The extent of renovation will have significant impact on the achievable prices; it is likely that Individual units could be sold ranging in price from \$60,000 to \$120,000. Depending on the property location, immediate context, architectural quality of the building or buildings, size of the units and extent of renovation, these prices could be significantly higher or lower. It is likely that between six and eight of these renovated apartments could be sold each year, or 60 to 80 units over 10 years. “Workforce” ownership housing could be developed as part of the neighborhood repositioning. However, workforce units should not be concentrated in a single location and the overall number of renovated below-market rental and ownership units should be less than a third of all renovated units. Assistance to potential qualified buyers could be provided either as a “soft” second mortgage.

Design: Ensure Appropriate Urban Design

A neighborhood is the sum of a variety of elements: the configuration of the street and block network, the arrangement of lots on those blocks, and the manner in which buildings are disposed on their lots and address the street. Successful residential development in the Downtown Schenectady Transit Gateway Target Area will depend upon the preservation, enhancement, and restoration of the area’s urban character. A downtown residential neighborhood succeeds when its physical characteristics consistently emphasize urbanity and the qualities of city life; conversely, attempts to introduce suburban scale and housing types (or, indeed, suburban building forms in general) into urban areas have invariably yielded disappointing results. Therefore, appropriate urban design—which places as much emphasis on creating quality streets and public places as on creating or redeveloping quality buildings—will be essential to success.

The design of the street network and hierarchy, as well as the block structure and a public realm that accommodates both pedestrian and vehicular traffic comfortably is a complex

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undertaking. Design and streetscape improvements in the neighborhood should intentionally link the Stockade Neighborhood with the Downtown Commercial District.

Downtown Neighborhood Housing Types

Adaptive re-use of existing, non-residential buildings can yield either lofts or fully-finished apartments. The lofts, whether for-rent or for-sale, new construction or adaptive re-use, should include work space as a permitted use.

Building and unit types most successfully used in residential redevelopment or new residential construction in other downtowns comparable in size and scale to the Downtown Schenectady Transit Gateway Study Area include:

- **Courtyard Apartment Building:** In new construction, an urban, pedestrian-oriented equivalent to conventional garden apartments. An urban courtyard building is three or more stories, often combined with non-residential uses on the ground floor. The building should be built to the sidewalk edge and, to provide privacy and a sense of security, the first floor should be elevated significantly above the sidewalk. Initially, parking is likely to be at grade behind or interior to the building.

The building's apartments can be leased, as in a conventional income property, or sold to individual buyers, under condominium or cooperative ownership, in which the owner pays a monthly maintenance fee in addition to the purchase price.

- **Loft Apartment Building:** Either adaptive re-use of older warehouse or manufacturing buildings or a new-construction building type inspired by those buildings.

Hard Lofts: Unit interiors typically have high ceilings and commercial windows and are minimally finished or unfinished.

Soft Lofts: Unit interiors typically have high ceilings, are fully finished and partitioned into individual rooms.

The building's loft apartments can be leased, as in a conventional income property, or sold to individual buyers, under condominium or cooperative ownership, in which the owner pays a monthly maintenance fee in addition to the purchase price.

- **Mansion Apartment Building:** A two- to three-story flexible-use structure with a street façade resembling a large detached or attached house. The attached version of the mansion, typically built to a sidewalk on the front lot line, is most appropriate for downtown locations. The building can accommodate a variety of uses—from rental or for-sale apartments, professional offices, any of these uses over ground-floor retail, a bed and breakfast inn, or a large single-family detached house—and its physical structure complements other buildings within a neighborhood.

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- **Townhouse:** Unlike conventional townhouses, urban townhouses conform to the pattern of streets, typically with shallow front-yard setbacks. To provide privacy and a sense of security, the first floor should be elevated significantly above the sidewalk.
- **Live-work** is a unit or building type that accommodates non-residential uses in addition to, or combined with living quarters. The typical live-work unit is a building, either attached or detached, with a principal dwelling unit that includes flexible space that can be used as office, retail, or studio space, or as an accessory dwelling unit.
- **Cottage:** A one- or one-and-a-half-story single-family detached house on a small lot with rear-loaded parking.
- **Bungalow:** A one-and-a-half- to two-story single-family detached house, with the garage located to the rear of the house and accessed from an alley or auto courts.
- **Traditional House:** A two- or three-story single-family detached house, with traditional architecture, and accessed by a front driveway. If garages are attached, they should be set well back from the front façade; if detached, they should be located to the rear of the house.
- **Condominiums:** A condominium development is a development containing individually owned dwelling units with jointly owned and shared areas and facilities.
- **Cooperatives:** A housing cooperative is a legal entity—usually a corporation—that owns real estate, consisting of one or more residential buildings. Each shareholder in the legal entity is granted the right to occupy one housing unit, sometimes subject to an occupancy agreement, which is similar to a lease. The occupancy agreement specifies the co-op's rules. Cooperative is also used to describe a non-share capital co-op model in which fee-paying members obtain the right to occupy a bedroom and share the communal resources of a house that is owned by a cooperative organization.

Marketing

The Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority was established in 1998 to enhance the long-term economic vitality and quality of life in Schenectady County. Metroplex's original service district of 24 square miles stretches along Routes 5 and 7, which converge near the city's downtown. The Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority's cooperative efforts and investments are focused within the Metroplex Corridor, with a particular emphasis on the downtown area. They are guided by the three criteria developed by the Metroplex Strategic Planning Committee: to expand the county's property tax base; to expand the sales tax base; and to create and retain jobs. The

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Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority is funded through dedicated sales tax revenue (70 percent of one-half of one percent of the county sales tax). It can design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage, and maintain facilities within its service district. It cooperates with Schenectady County and the City of Schenectady, often partnering with them on major capital projects.

Rental Housing Market Analysis

The City of Schenectady requested a market analysis to determine an appropriate mix of rental housing that could be constructed within the Route 5 Transit Gateway Target Area in Schenectady. River Street Planning analyzed the potential market rate rental housing needs of young professional households (under the age of 45) and senior households (60+) in the market area and determined the economic feasibility of addressing that need.

Utilizing traditional market analysis techniques, River Street Planning analyzed the potential need for rental housing for young professional households in the Schenectady Target Area (Schenectady, Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties). The rental analysis included young professional and elderly households from 80% to 100%, 100% to 120%, 120% to 150% and over 150% of the FY 2008 Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA median income. One-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units were analyzed for the young professional target market, while one- and two-bedroom units were analyzed for the elderly target market. Rents were based on the starting average of existing market rate of apartment complexes located within the City of Schenectady. Rents were proposed as follows:

Rent Plan			
#Units	Basic Rent	Rent with Utilities	Income Required
one-bedroom units @ 100%	\$700	\$878	\$21,950
two-bedroom units @ 100%	\$800	\$1,033	\$25,825
three-bedroom units @ 100%	\$900	\$1,188	\$29,700
one-bedroom units @ 120%	\$800	\$978	\$24,450
two-bedroom units @ 120%	\$900	\$1,133	\$28,325
three-bedroom units @ 120%	\$1,000	\$1,288	\$32,200
one-bedroom units @ 150%	\$900	\$1,078	\$26,950
two-bedroom units @ 150%	\$1,000	\$1,233	\$30,825
three-bedroom units @ 150%	\$1,100	\$1,388	\$34,700
one-bedroom units @ >150%	\$1,000	\$1,178	\$29,450
two-bedroom units @ >150%	\$1,100	\$1,333	\$33,325
three-bedroom units @ > 150%	\$1,200	\$1,488	\$37,200
<i>NOTE: Income required based on maximum of 48% of income for rent</i>			

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Utilities were estimated based on the Section 8 utility allowances for the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority. We have also assumed that 48% of annual income is the maximum amount that households would be willing to pay for housing and that eligible households required to pay more than this amount are not likely to be attracted to the proposed project.

Potential Market Support for Young Professional (Under 45) Rental Housing for the City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study			
Rental Unit Market for Households at 80% to 100% of Median Income			
	1-2 Person Household	2-3 Person Household	3-5 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$700	2BR@\$800	3BR@\$900
Estimated Renter Households @ 80% to 100% Median	3899	2198	2677
Currently Served by Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1496	1887	2031
Current Unit Need	2404	311	646
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	485	62	130
Rental Unit Market for Households at 100% to 120% of Median Income			
	1-2 Person Household	2-3 Person Household	3-5 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$800	2BR@\$900	3BR@\$1000
Estimated Renter Households @ 100 to 120% Median	4215	2359	2714
Currently Served by Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1496	1887	2031
Current Unit Need	2719	472	683
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	500	95	136
Rental Unit Market for Households at 120% to 150% of Median Income			
	1-2 Person Household	2-3 Person Household	3-5 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$900	2BR@\$1000	3BR@\$1100
Estimated Renter Households @ 120% to 150% Median	5735	3079	3354
Currently Served in Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1496	1887	2031
Current Unit Need	4239	1192	1323
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	850	240	266
Rental Unit Market for Households at >150% of Median Income			
	1-2 Person Household	2-3 Person Household	3-5 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$1000	2BR@\$1100	3BR@\$1200
Estimated Renter Households @ 120% to 150% Median	13597	6158	5255
Currently Served in Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1496	1887	2031
Current Unit Need	12101	4271	3224
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	2400	800	600

The analysis estimated the number of households in each income category and subtracted out the number already served by the existing housing supply to estimate the number households not served by the current supply of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units to establish the target market for each income category and apartment size. As a general rule, housing developers look for coverage ratios of 5 to 1 or higher to ensure project marketability. Coverage ratios express the number of targeted households within a defined service area considered to be available for each of the proposed units in the study. The ratio is expressed as number of households per unit proposed. A 5 to 1 coverage ratio means that 5 households are available for each unit. The higher the coverage ratios mean a better chance for project success. River Street used the minimum 5 to 1 coverage ratio to estimate the potential market demand for units in each income group and unit size category.

The table above shows potential market demand for young professional (under 45) housing units in the Project Market Area at 80% to 100%, 100% to 120%, 120% to 150% and >150% of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA median income. For each income level, demand is broken down by unit size and price. The table shows significant market support for all scenarios presented, particularly for the one-bedroom units.

The table below shows potential market demand for elderly (60+) housing units in the Project Market Area at 80% to 100%, 100% to 120%, 120% to 150% and >150% of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA median income. For each income level, demand is broken down by unit size and price. The table shows significant market support for one-bedroom units at all income levels and two-bedroom housing in the >150% of median income category.

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Potential Market Support for Elderly (60+) Rental Housing for the City of Schenectady Route 5 Transit Gateway Study		
Rental Unit Market for Households at 80% to 100% of Median Income		
	1-2 Person Household	1-2 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$700	2BR@\$800
Estimated Renter Households @ 80% to 100% Median	1847	1631
Currently Served by Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1303	1645
Current Unit Need	543	-14
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	109	0
Rental Unit Market for Households at 100% to 120% of Median Income		
	1-2 Person Household	1-2 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$800	2BR@\$900
Estimated Renter Households @ 100 to 120% Median	1669	1471
Currently Served by Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1303	1645
Current Unit Need	366	-174
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	73	0
Rental Unit Market for Households at 120% to 150% of Median Income		
	1-2 Person Household	1-2 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$900	2BR@\$1000
Estimated Renter Households @ 120% to 150% Median	1928	1740
Currently Served in Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1303	1645
Current Unit Need	625	96
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	125	19
Rental Unit Market for Households at >150% of Median Income		
	1-2 Person Household	1-2 Person Household
Apartment Size and Rent	1BR@\$1000	2BR@\$1100
Estimated Renter Households @ 120% to 150% Median	2479	2308
Currently Served in Market Rate Apartment Complexes	1303	1645
Current Unit Need	1175	664
Unit Demand at Minimum 5:1 Coverage Ratio	235	133

Homeownership Analysis

In assessing the market for a potential homeownership project, we analyzed the impact on households of various size and income. In developing these affordability models, we looked at typical households within the five county area and determined what they could afford

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for a private mortgage on the average home purchase price. In developing these models, we assumed the following based on the program design:

- Housing price was generally based on the average price and the median price for homes listed for sale within each of the five counties by bedroom size in 2009 based on Capital Region Multiple Listing Service data.
- Closing costs were estimated at 5% of the purchase price of the home.
- Cash down-payment assumed to be 5% of total cost (acquisition plus closing costs).
- Utility costs were based on the average monthly utility allowances estimated by the Section 8 program (i.e. 1BR=\$178; 2BR=\$233; 3BR=\$288).
- Property tax rates and equalization rates (2007) were averaged for the region.
- The analysis assumed that affordable monthly housing costs are limited to 48% of household income and would include traditional PITI expenses (principal and interest on mortgage, taxes, and insurance) plus utilities.
- The analysis also assumed that competition from other areas within the five county region would reduce the potential draw of the Transit Gateway project by 50%.

Based on the above parameters, we have prepared the attached spreadsheet analysis which considers a number of development options for one, two and three bedroom homes at various price points. We can summarize the results as follows:

- The overall analysis showed a potential market for the development of 83 homeownership units in the Transit Gateway neighborhood.
- The majority of the demand was in the lower priced, lower income (80-100% median) category with a projected total of 59 units.
- Based on the parameters selected, the only other categories showing some market support were the 3BR units at 120% of median income (10 units) and the 3BR units at 150% of median (14 units).

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The principal findings with respect to market demand for market rate rental housing targeting young professionals and seniors at the proposed site in the City of Schenectady and the surrounding market area are as follows:

The defined market area (Schenectady, Albany, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties) had a population of 844,001 in 2000. Claritas reports that the market area's 2008 population is estimated at 872,734, an increase of 3.4%.

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- There are two target markets for the Downtown Schenectady Rental Project: young professional households (under the age of 45) and senior households (60+).
- The City's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan identified the creation of new downtown housing (including townhomes, condominiums, market and affordable apartments) as a goal for the Downtown Schenectady Neighborhood which includes the Transit Gateway Target Area.

Non-Elderly Rental

- The study analyzed the need for one-, two- and three-bedroom units targeted to young professional households in the Target Project Market Area at 80% to 100% of median, 100% to 120% of median, 120% to 150% of median, and >150% of median. Based on this data and the analysis contained in this report, the study concludes that there is significant market support for all scenarios presented, particularly for the one-bedroom units.

Elderly-Rental

- The study also analyzed the potential market demand for elderly (60+) housing units in the Project Market Area at 80% to 100%, 100% to 120%, 120% to 150% and >150% of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA median income. For each income level, demand is broken down by unit size and price. Based on this data and the analysis contained in this report, the study concludes that there is significant market support for one-bedroom units at all income levels and two-bedroom housing in the >150% of median income category.

Housing Development Strategies

As part of this market analysis, we have identified a number of strategies the City should consider in developing additional units to meet potential housing demand in Schenectady:

- Inventory the available vacant land and underutilized buildings located Downtown that are appropriate for new housing development.
- Contact property owners to determine their interest in developing housing for this space if grant funds could be provided and secure commitments.
- Contact local housing developers to determine their interest in the identified development sites and the types of housing the City is trying to develop.
- Identify potential sites for infill housing.
- Evaluate and prioritize the identified sites
- Develop and circulate request for proposals to housing developers to ascertain interest in developing the selected sites

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- Review existing land use regulations determine what changes should be made to encourage the type of housing that the City of Schenectady desires.

LIMITING CONDITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The information contained in this study has been obtained from published sources and/or was furnished by others. All source material and information so gathered and presented herein is assumed to be accurate, including the property description, rent plan, and relevant project details, but no implicit or expressed guarantee of data reliability can be assumed. This study has been prepared in the interest of a fair and accurate report, and therefore all of the information contained herein, and upon which opinions have been based, have been gathered from sources that River Street Planning considers reliable.

River Street Planning has viewed and inspected the subject property and surrounding community, and the firm is familiar with the type of property proposed for the site. River Street Planning has no undisclosed interest in the subject property, neighboring properties to the site, or in the corporation for which this study was prepared. Furthermore the firm does not express any opinion regarding the suitability of the physical site with any proposed construction, nor does it guarantee that local regulatory agencies will grant approval to the proposed construction.

The sole purpose of this study is to determine the probable existing and future demand for the proposed project, and to determine the present capacity and availability of commercial and community resources to serve the project. The firm's employment and compensation for rendering this opinion are not contingent upon the values found nor upon anything else other than the delivery of this report for a pre-determined fee.

The contents of this study are for limited private use only. Possession of this report, or a copy thereof, does not carry with it the right of publication nor may it be used for other than its intended use by anyone other than the client and the authorized representatives of the funding agency for which the report is to be submitted, without the prior written of the client or the firm. No change of any item in this study shall be made by anyone other than River Street Planning and the firm shall have no responsibility if any such change is made.

Certified by: _____
John M. Holehan, Principal
River Street Planning & Development, LLC.

SOURCE LISTING AND APPENDIX

Primary source data for the foregoing study was generated by River Street Planning & Development, LLC from Claritas Inc. (2008 Claritas Pop-Facts: Household Income by Age of Householder, Pop-Facts: Demographic Snapshot 2008 Comparison Report, and Pop-Facts: Census Demographic Overview 2008 Comparison Report). Additional data was provided by The Renters Guide and Capital Region Multiple Listing Service.

Transit Gateway Commercial Analysis

The initial intent of the commercial market analysis was to identify needed commercial uses to support the proposed housing development recommended by the housing market analysis. The analysis starts by defining the market area and examining the various demographic trends related to population and



income affecting the neighborhood. Migration trends were also evaluated. An existing land use inventory and analysis was performed to provide some context for what development opportunities might exist to stimulate revitalization of the target area.

An industry trends analysis was conducted to identify the key commercial growth sectors that could be targeted and recruited to the Transit Gateway neighborhood. We also identified key recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan for guidance in selecting commercial uses that would best address the needs of the target area and surrounding neighborhoods.

Transit Gateway Area Demographic Report Summary

Table A. Population Growth by Market Area

Population	1 mile	5 mile	10 mile	<u>MSA</u>	<u>State</u>
2013 Projection	11,224	140,772	260,038		
2008 Estimate	11,389	137,771	253,514		
2000 Census	11,532	133,327	241,924	875,583	18,976,457
1990 Census	11,382	136,336	237,267	874,304	17,990,455

Population Growth	1 mile	5 mile	10 mile		
Growth 2008-2013	-1.45%	2.14%	2.57%		
Growth 2000-2008	-1.24%	3.33%	4.36%		
Growth 1990-2000	1.32%	-2.21%	2.38%	0.15%	5.48%

With residential market analysis, the typical prime service area is 10 miles from the proposed housing development. Given the Transit Gateway neighborhood's proximity to the Downtown with its existing variety of business products and services, we would expect that the area might draw from a larger service area. However, we have conservatively estimated that the prime market area for commercial development would also encompass a service radius of 10 miles in terms of the consumer base for new businesses. For the purpose of this analysis we used the intersection of Washington and State Streets as the center point of the service radii.

We also analyzed smaller service areas of 1 mile and 5 miles. The 1 mile market area population (over 11,000) can be considered within walking distance of the Transit Gateway neighborhood. The 5 mile market area encompasses the City of Schenectady, the Village of Scotia and portions of Rotterdam,

Princetown and Glenville and other surrounding communities. The 10 mile service radius further expands the market area to include the villages of Colonie and Altamont as well as portions of the City of Albany.

Population in the 5-mile and 10-mile service areas has exhibited decent growth since 2000 with projections for continued increases through the next five years. The 1 mile service area has displayed negative growth with projections for continued loss of population. Table A delineates the recent and projected growth of the population in each of the market areas. As the table shows, the 10-Mile Market Area hosts a current population in excess of 253,000 potential consumers for products and services offered by target area businesses. This 10 mile market area comprises approximately 29% of the population of the Capital Region.

Table B. 2008 Population by Age

	1 mile		5 mile		10 mile	
Total Population	11,389		137,771		253,514	
Under 15	1,780	15.63%	25,476	18.49%	44,821	17.67%
Age 15 - 17	310	2.72%	6,028	4.38%	11,491	4.53%
Age 18 - 20	1,606	14.1%	5,917	4.29%	9,888	3.9%
Age 21 - 24	998	8.76%	7,133	5.18%	13,015	5.13%
Age 25 - 34	1,686	14.8%	16,767	12.17%	30,105	11.88%
Age 35 - 44	1,510	13.26%	18,610	13.51%	34,264	13.52%
Age 45 - 49	701	6.16%	10,335	7.50%	20,329	8.02%
Age 50 - 54	615	5.40%	9,846	7.15%	19,735	7.78%
Age 55 - 59	549	4.82%	8,924	6.48%	18,071	7.13%
Age 60 - 64	436	3.83%	7,048	5.12%	13,686	5.40%
Age 65 and over	1,196	10.05%	21,687	15.74%	38,111	15.03%
2008 Median Age	30.93		39.06		40.09	
2008 Average Age	35.15		39.63		39.95	

Table B shows the age cohort distribution of residents of the 1-mile, 5-mile and 10-mile market areas in 2008. Using these age cohorts as indicators of market orientation, it appears that the largest segment of the Transit Gateway Neighborhood's potential market is Under 15 followed by Age 65 and over and then closely by middle-aged adults (ages 35-44) and young adults (ages 25-34) comprising the next largest segments. These indicators suggest that there is a diverse distribution of ages within the populations in the market area giving neighborhood businesses (both existing and potential) a wide range of potential consumers to target.

Table C. 2008 Population by Sex

	1 mile		5 mile		10 mile	
Total population	11,389		137,771		253,514	
Male	5,886	51.7%	66,568	48.3%	123,170	48.6%
Female	5,503	48.3%	71,204	51.7%	130,334	51.4%
M/F Ratio	1.07		0.93		0.95	

As in the nation in general, a slight majority (approximately 51.5%) of the population in the 5 mile and 10 mile market areas are comprised of women. In the immediate 1 mile market service area, 51.7% of the population is comprised of men. This is mainly due to the higher concentration of men in the youth age segments including college aged (18-24).

Table D. 2008 Population by Single Race

	1 mile		5 mile		10 mile	
Classification						
White Alone	11,389		137,771		253,514	
	6,486	56.95%	112,340	81.54%	218,206	86.07%
Black or African American Alone	3,178	27.90%	13,068	9.49%	16,051	6.33%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	85	0.75%	403	0.29%	610	0.243%
Asian Alone	647	5.68%	5,717	4.15%	10,349	4.06%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	6	0.05%	51	0.04%	72	0.03%
Some Other Race Alone	411	3.61%	2,289	1.66%	2,930	1.16%
Two or More Races	575	5.05%	3,904	2.83%	5,297	2.09%

Minority concentrations are greater within the 1 mile service radius than within the 5 and 10 mile market areas. This is a fairly typical distribution pattern that finds higher minority populations in the urban city and less in the suburban areas surrounding the central cities.

Household and Per capita income figures are key indicators of the potential buying power of residents living in the market area. In 2000, Median Household income in the 10 mile market areas was higher than the region and the state as a whole. The 1 and 5 mile service areas were below the MSA and State figures.

Approximately 82% of the 10 mile service area households have annual incomes of \$25,000 or more and about 58% of these households earn annual incomes of \$50,000 or more. Approximately 24% of these households have annual incomes of \$100,000 or more.



Transit stop at State and Washington

Table E. 2008 Average, Median and Per capita Income

	1 mile	5 mile	10 mile		
2008 Average Household Income	\$34,964	\$62,873	\$75,229		
2008 Median Household Income	\$23,862	\$48,923	\$60,601		
2008 Per Capita Income	\$15,989	\$26,178	\$30,643		
2008 Average Family Household Income	\$43,662	\$75,072	\$89,351		
2008 Median Family Household Income	\$29,324	\$63,741	\$76,110		
				<u>MSA</u>	<u>State</u>
2000 Median Household Income	\$20,573	\$40,208	\$48,906	\$43,250	\$43,393
% change 2000-2008 Median income	16.0%	21.7%	23.9%		

Migration Trends

The Internal Revenue Service provides annual statistics that helps show migration patterns throughout the country. The County-to-County Migration data are updated annually and based on the year-to-year changes in the addresses shown on the population of returns from the IRS Individual Master File system.

The data present migration patterns by county for the entire United States and each individual State, including inflows and outflows. The data are available for Filing Years 1984 through 2007, and include the following:

- Number of returns (which approximates the number of households)
- Number of personal exemptions (which approximates the population)
- Total "adjusted gross income" (starting with Filing Year 1993)

For this analysis, we examined migration data for a seven year period from 2001 through 2007 for Schenectady County. The data is another useful tool in targeting populations for proposed new housing and commercial developments. The overall migration data is provided in spreadsheet format in the appendix. The following is a summary of the key data findings.



Total inflows to Schenectady County for the period were 25,322 and total outflows were 25,605 or a net outmigration of 283 households or about 40 households per year. Inflows exceeded outflows in only three years: 2002; 2004; and 2006. Nearly half (49.9%) of the migration inflows came from the immediate Capital Region while 47% of the outflows migrated to the other Capital Region counties. Schenectady County experienced a net gain of 609 households from the Capital Region during the period.

Schenectady County also enjoyed a net migration gain of 170 households from the counties in the Hudson Valley Region. The largest net migration gain came from New York City with 1,025 households. 585 (net) of these households (57%) migrated from Queens County.

On the downside, outflows exceeded inflows by 210 households in the outlying areas of the Capital Region. The largest net migration outflow occurred outside New York State. Schenectady County experienced a net loss of 2,364 households migrating from outside New York State.

Land use analysis of Transit Gateway Neighborhood

Utilizing the City Assessment Database and a visual inspection of the area, we prepared the following analysis of existing land use in the target neighborhood. The neighborhood encompasses approximately 24 acres comprising 102 individual parcels. In terms of acreage the primary land uses in the neighborhood include Downtown Row type buildings (detached); Parking lots; College properties; and properties of the Armed Forces. Combined, these four uses account for 55% of the acreage in the target neighborhood. A fuller description of each of the land use types is provided below. Also a complete spreadsheet of all 102 parcels (sorted by land use type) is provided in the appendix of this report.

Downtown Row Type detached – This land use type is characterized as usually a two or three story older structure with retail sales/services on the first floor and offices and/or apartments on the upper floors with little or no on-site parking. Most of these parcels are located on State Street between Erie Boulevard and Washington Street. There are 26 parcels containing this land use type accounting for 4.73 acres or about 20% of the total acreage in the neighborhood. This land use also accounts for nearly 25% of the taxable assessed value of properties in the neighborhood (\$2.9 million). In general, these buildings appear structurally sound but could benefit from a façade improvement program.



Parking Lot – Typically described as an open (surface) commercial lot for motor vehicles. There are 13 parking lots dotted throughout the neighborhood. Combined they comprise 3.25 acres or about 13% of the neighborhood. In terms of taxable assessed value this use contributes only \$416,300, 3.5% of the total for the neighborhood. One of the existing lots at 117 Washington Street will soon house a new 313 bed student housing facility for Schenectady County Community College (see discussion below).

Colleges and Universities – Schenectady County Community College owns three parcels in the target neighborhood comprising 2.84 acres. The prominent facility is Elston Hall located at 100 Washington Street. At \$11.6 million, the SCCC facilities are the highest assessed valued properties in the neighborhood. But as a public institution, SCCC does not generate any property taxes to local governments.



Elston Hall - Schenectady County Community College

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard – There are two parcels (2.69 acres) in this category: the Washington Street Armory and the Zone 5 law enforcement offices on Erie Boulevard. Combined assessed value of these properties is \$2.97 million. But as with the college, these parcels do not generate any property taxes to local governments.



Washington Street Armory

Office building – There are 8 parcels in the neighborhood that are classified as office building, a total of 1.55 acres. Most of these office buildings are located on



State Street Office Building

State Street. The combined assessed value of these properties is approximately \$3.0 million and the taxable assessed value is \$1.84 million. Most of these structures are in good condition.



State Street Office Building

One story small structure – This category is defined as usually a modern, one occupant, building adaptable for several uses (e.g. retail clothing store, small office, warehouse, pet shop, etc.). There are 8 parcels (1.19 acres) in the neighborhood with this classification. Most of these structures are located on State Street and Erie Boulevard. Combined assessed value of these parcels is \$507,100, all of which is taxable.



137-143 State Street

Apartments

There are 4 parcels (1.19 acres) in the neighborhood classified as apartments. Three of these properties are located on State Street.

The State Street structures are all impressive multi-story masonry buildings. The Fuller Street apartments appear to be a two story frame structure with aluminum siding.

All of the properties appear to be in good condition. Combined assessed value of these parcels is approximately \$1.6 million, all of which is taxable.



State Street Apartments

Revitalization Opportunities

There are a number of revitalization opportunities in the area – the YMCA and the Armory being the most prominent examples that could be renovated for other uses. Both of these buildings would lend themselves to multi-use redevelopment (residential, commercial, recreation). There is also a significant amount of vacant land (mostly surface parking lots) in the neighborhood that presents opportunities for future development.

One of the vacant lots (117 Washington) will be used as the site for the new SCCC student housing facility. This new \$20 million, five-story 105,000 sf student housing facility will provide 313 beds. Students will live in suites with two to six bedrooms, private bathrooms and kitchens. The facility will be managed by United Campus Housing. The SCCC Foundation, Inc., will own the building.

Student housing will allow the College to recruit more students for its specialty programs including Music, Culinary Arts and Aviation Science. “Community colleges all have specialty programs. Since we haven’t had student housing, we really could not actively recruit outside the region as much as we would have liked to for those programs,” said SCCC President Gabe Basil. He added, “Student housing will open the door for us to reach out to international students, as well as to those who could take advantage of our summer specialty programs.”

Construction of the new student facility helps the revitalization effort in two important ways. First the substantial investment of \$20 million may well encourage other potential investors to develop in the area. Second, the student facility itself creates a significant consumer market for new goods and services and may attract new businesses to the neighborhood.

There are also several buildings scattered throughout the neighborhood that are either vacant or under-utilized. Through renovation, these structures will provide additional revitalization opportunities for the neighborhood.

Industry Trends

The U.S. Bureau of Census prepares and releases an Economic Census every five years. This Economic Census provides information on the number of establishments and employees, amount of sales and annual payrolls for the various industrial sectors as shown below.

NAICS Industry Code	Industry Description
31-33	Manufacturing
42	Wholesale trade
44-45	Retail trade
	Information
53	Real estate & rental & leasing
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services
56	Administrative, support & waste management/remediation services
61	Educational services
62	Health care & social assistance
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation
72	Accommodation & food services
81	Other services (except public administration)

The most recent Economic Census data is from 1997 and 2002 (the 2007 report will not be available until 2010). River Street analyzed the economic census reports for 1997 and 2002 for the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA in order to determine which sectors were trending upward or downward for the period. The full spreadsheet of this data is provided in the appendix to this report. The following is a summary of the key trends.

City of Schenectady

For the City of Schenectady, the industries (with at least 1,000 employees) showing the most growth during the period included: Health Care & Social Assistance; Retail Trade; and Accommodations & Food Service. Other Services and Real Estate also showed positive growth but these sectors comprised a much smaller portion of the industry mix.

The Health Care & Social Assistance sector had the greatest expansion during the period increasing from 171 establishments to 260. Sector employment increased from 2,027 to 7,094 adding an average of 1,000 employees per annum to the City's economy. This sector is now the number 1 employer in the City.

In the Retail Trade sector, the number of establishments in the city actually dropped from 235 to 209 during the period but employment increased from 2,169 to 2,264. Accommodations & Food Services showed a somewhat similar trend. While the number of establishments decreased from 182 to 155 during the period, sector employment increased from 1,453 to 1,527

Wholesale Trade was the weakest performing sector during the period. The number of establishments decreased from 57 to 52 and sector employment decreased by 44% from 1,060 employees in 1997 to only 593 employees in 2002.

Schenectady County

In Schenectady County, the industries (with at least 2,000 employees) showing the most growth during the period included: Health Care & Social Assistance; Manufacturing; and Other Services. Real Estate & Rental & Leasing and Arts, entertainment & recreation also showed positive growth but these sectors comprised a much smaller portion of the industry mix.

The Health Care & Social Assistance sector had the greatest expansion during the period increasing from 311 establishments to 440 (numbers that include the City of Schenectady. For Schenectady County outside the City, establishments increased from 140 to 180. Sector employment increased from 4,202 to 10,437 adding an average of 1,247 employees per annum to the County's economy. As noted above 1,000 of these new jobs per annum were attributable to the City. As in the City, this sector is now the number 1 employer in the County.

In the Manufacturing sector, the number of establishments in the county actually decreased slightly from 119 to 115 during the period but employment increased from 5,134 to 5,607. It should also be noted that the City lost a net of six manufacturing firms during the period so there was actually a net gain for the County outside the City of six manufacturing firms for the period. Other services showed positive increases across the board. Number of establishments increased from 196 to 219 and employment increased from 1,239 to 2,007. Of these numbers, the City accounted for an increase of 8 establishments and 584 new employees, or about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the County total increase.

Accommodations & Food Services was the weakest performing sector during the period. The number of establishments decreased from 313 to 263 and sector employment decreased from 3,126 employees in 1997 to 2,963 employees in 2002. About half the establishments lost were in the City. But interestingly, this sector showed a net increase of 74 employees as well as increases in sales and payroll.

Albany Schenectady Troy MSA

The industry sectors in the MSA (with at least 10,000 employees) showing the most growth during the period included: Health Care & Social Assistance; Professional, scientific and technical; Retail Trade; and Accommodations & Food Service. Real Estate & Rental & Leasing and Arts, entertainment & recreation also showed positive growth but these sectors comprised a much smaller portion of the industry mix.

Similar to the City and County of Schenectady, the Health Care & Social Assistance sector had the greatest expansion during the period increasing from 1,578 establishments to 2,224 in the MSA. Schenectady (city and county) accounted for 20% of this increase. Sector employment increased from 17,556 to 51,365 adding an average of 6,762 employees per annum in the region. Schenectady (city and county) accounted for 18.4% of this increase. This sector is now the number 1 employer in the MSA with nearly twice as many employees as the next largest sector (Accommodations & food services).

Professional, scientific and technical showed strong growth during the period. The number of establishments increased from 1,768 in 1997 to 2,131 in 2002, a gain of 20.5%. Sector employment increased by 69% for the period from 16,154 employees in 1997 to 27,294 employees in 2002.

In the Retail Trade sector, the number of establishments in the MSA actually dropped by 11.3% 3,582 to 3,177 during the period but employment increased slightly from 47,672 to 47,963. Accommodations & Food Services showed a somewhat similar trend. While the number of establishments decreased from 1,969 to 1,825 during the period, sector employment increased from 25,692 to 26,205. Sector sales increased by nearly 9% for the period.

Manufacturing was the weakest performing sector region-wide during the period. The number of establishments decreased from 752 to 646 (-14.1%) and sector employment decreased by 22.5% from 31,436 employees in 1997 to only 24,370 employees in 2002.

Issues / Recommendations from Comprehensive Plan

As stated in the City's Comprehensive Plan, developing a diverse supply of modern housing types is critical to Schenectady's economic revival. Expanding Downtown living options will be a central focus over the next fifteen years. Immediate opportunities include housing development adjacent to the Stockade, the East Front Street Town Home project, conversion of upper story uses, artist space and rental apartments. Revitalization of the Transit Gateway Neighborhood is central to these efforts.

Creating a safe Downtown and a heightened sense and perception of safety will increase the "feet on the street" and the attractiveness of Downtown as a place to live. New housing projects must be carefully designed to fit within the Downtown's historic character and be attractive to specific markets such as young professionals, artists and empty-nesters. It is also clear that inducing a creative mix of supportive commercial uses is critical to revitalizing the Downtown and Transit Gateway neighborhood. Some of the initial redevelopment projects proposed in the comprehensive plan include the following:

- Develop a reuse program for the YMCA building including student housing for the Community College, or perhaps market rate senior housing. *Since SCCC is proceeding with constructing a new student facility, the most logical reuse for the YMCA is either senior housing or commercial office space or a combination of both.*
- Identify buildings on State Street that would be eligible for a façade program and select priority properties. *State Street comprises a combination of older "historic" structures and more modern buildings. A concentrated façade program would clearly benefit the street and help fill the empty storefronts and upper floors.*

- Support the establishment of a neighborhood general store or grocery store. Identify appropriate buildings for a potential grocery store - Steer prospective merchants and commercial realtors toward identified buildings for development into grocery store.
- Implement the recommendation from previous studies to develop a supportive retail/commercial zone adjacent to the Stockade Neighborhood along Erie Boulevard and Lower State Street by recruiting merchants and making infrastructure and streetscape improvements which will draw new business to the area.
- Create financial and land use incentives that will encourage housing development.
- Create Downtown senior housing. *See comment re: YMCA above.*
- Adopt tax incentives to encourage conversion of non-residential properties to mixed use.
- Define Downtown's market profile, targets and strategy focused on young professionals and empty-nesters. *The housing market analysis component essentially focused on these target groups.*
- Identify locations for Downtown student housing, with emphasis on meeting the needs of Schenectady Community College students and Union College post graduate students. *See comment regarding YMCA building above.*
- Improve the physical connection between SCCC and the Downtown

Schenectady's Downtown can be a haven for small locally-owned businesses. If efforts can keep rents affordable and create incentives for commercial space revitalization, more start up businesses with strong entrepreneurial drive can be attracted. Schenectady's Downtown and the adjacent Transit Gateway neighborhood can be a natural incubator for small businesses and arts enterprises. Retail continuity, long a challenge on State and Jay Streets, is improving, but retail recruitment and retention are critical tasks in the years ahead. Filling in the missing mix and stretching the impact of Downtown along lower and upper State Street will make important connections to residential markets. This will be particularly important in creating an appropriate physical linkage through landscaping and street improvements between Schenectady County Community College and the Downtown.

The City of Schenectady's future will depend upon the accomplishment of a broad economic development strategy focused on creating work and wealth for local residents and companies. Growing and stabilizing the City's tax base demands growth of retail, commercial, and industrial sectors. Some of this growth will occur on sites identified in the nine residential neighborhoods and along commercial corridors such as Union Street, Broadway, Upper State Street, Albany Street, Nott Street, Brandywine

Avenue and Van Vranken Avenue. But the core for new economic investment is the City's Downtown and the Erie Boulevard corridor. This target area includes the Transit Gateway neighborhood.

Additional recommendations relative to the Transit Gateway neighborhood include the following:

- Ensure development of a compatible Lower State Street commercial area that is supportive of the Stockade neighborhood and the needs of Schenectady County Community College.
- Promote and continually improve the existing small business support framework for entrepreneurial development and provide services including training, technical assistance, marketing support and access to grant and loan capital.
- Develop a sympathetic business zone or an "Old Town" adjacent to the South and East of the Stockade district (State Street between Washington Avenue and Erie Boulevard.)
- Make every effort to attract a grocery store to Downtown to support residential development.

The Proctor's Entertainment District is a jewel in the region. The completion of the Proctor's expansion and development of ancillary arts spaces and groups such as Jay Street Studios have created an anchor for Downtown revitalization. As the entertainment strategy matures with additional clubs, venues and restaurants the City will need to maintain the physical environment and ensure that public safety services are visible. In addition Schenectady will be called upon to address Downtown issues related to retail recruitment and retention. These issues include clustering to achieve critical mass, attraction of specific store types, marketing directly to targets such as Proctor's patrons and Downtown employees, packaging discounts and other promotional efforts and an overall sense of security.

- Implement the next phase of downtown Proctor's Block Entertainment District improvements including expansion of restaurants, small retail on Jay Street, and development of small clubs and music venues
- Continue successful recruitment of high technology companies to the Downtown core which do not compete for retail space and which generate foot traffic all day long and into the evening hours
- Create an antiques district on lower State Street
- Build upon the historic Downtown core and assets like Proctors and the nearby Stockade district to promote heritage tourism
- Encourage additional development of subsidized arts spaces and galleries

Recommendations for the Transit Gateway Neighborhood

Based on market analysis as well as guidance from the Comprehensive Plan, we developed a list of action plans and projects that would revitalize the Transit Gateway Neighborhood:

- < Develop an aggressive program of revitalizing vacant and under-utilized buildings in the neighborhood for mixed income housing and appropriate retail/commercial/office uses. There is a number of existing neighborhood structures including the YMCA and Armory buildings that could be productively rehabilitated into new housing units or commercial office space. A number of other buildings throughout the area are only partial occupied and could be renovated for new uses. In addition, there are a number of vacant parcels that could provide new construction opportunities.
- < Utilize development of the SCCC student housing facility to create needed services and job opportunities for the neighborhood. As noted in the market analysis, the new student facility will create a significant consumer market for new goods and services that could attract new businesses to the neighborhood.
- < Capitalize on the Transit Gateway project planning to promote / incubate businesses that will address resident needs and help stabilize the community.
- < Institute a façade improvement program for lower State Street. This is the key commercial corridor serving the neighborhood. Some of the buildings along the street are run down and there are a number of vacant storefronts. This project should be coordinated with Metroplex's on-going efforts to revitalize commercial districts in Schenectady.
- < State Street is not pedestrian friendly. Existing commercial uses tend to serve the general regional population rather than the immediate neighborhood. Streetscape improvements similar to Downtown should be extended down State Street to increase the pedestrian friendliness of the street and the neighborhood's connection to Downtown. Future development along State Street should consider neighborhood oriented commercial uses or mixed commercial/residential development
- < Incentives. Encourage use of available incentives and tax credits to foster desired development in the Transit Gateway area. Support private and not-for-profit developers with funding procurement, tax breaks and other incentives to stimulate transit-oriented development in the community.

Appendix

A3 - Public Meeting Minutes

City of Schenectady Transit Gateway Public Workshop
June 4, 2009
Meeting Summary

Steve Strichman from the City of Schenectady welcomed people, introduced the consultants and reviewed the scope of work for the Transit Gateway project. Martin Hull from IBI Group outlined the agenda for the evening, explained the planning process, scope of work and public participation elements. He summarized the goals and objectives as well as the schedule and deliverables to be produced. Margaret Irwin from River Street Planning & Development reviewed the background research, studies, regional transportation planning framework and connections to the Comprehensive Plan that create the foundation for this project. She also summarized the results of preliminary housing and commercial market analyses. Using this background, Martin Hull reviewed the existing conditions, land use, opportunities and constraints in the study area introduced concepts of transit oriented development and described how transportation amenities can help revitalize neighborhoods.

The group asked several questions and then broke out to review the concepts and graphics mounted around the room. Each participant was given some colored dots and was asked to put the dots next to the ideas or concepts that they feel are particularly important to pursue in developing the strategy. By far the most interest was shown for the principles of transit oriented development, specifically for concepts like walkability, market based development and narrowed and calmed streets. Reaction to the proposed project ideas included support for ideas of improving the pedestrian connection to the Stockade and improving the retail environment on Lower State Street.

Market Assessment

In general, the audience felt that things are getting better. Schenectady is “on the map” and people are now coming to the City for dinner rather than going to Saratoga. Some participants felt strongly that there is a market for “empty nester” housing, condos and town homes, explaining that their family members had sought such housing in downtown Schenectady and had to settle for more suburban town home locations because the housing “product” was not available. Other participants cautioned not to overlook the existing low income city residents who will still need affordable housing and entry level employment as the redevelopment plans emerge.

There were questions about the use of a ten mile service area used in the market study. One participant felt that this was too large an area because it put the City in direct competition with Albany. Ray Gillen of Metroplex explained that thinking “small” has been a problem in the past and if the service area was to be adjusted it should be larger, not smaller. Plans to “build out” downtown to meet the needs of the existing population have been unsuccessful. Future strategies, like this one, needs to look at creating an environment that will attract people as new residents, business owners and operators and visitors.

Museum District

One participant asked that the City reconsider the development of a museum district to merge the existing museum. It was observed that these uses were tax exempt and might not be the best use of developable land.

YMCA

Discussion of the current and future use of the YMCA drew divergent opinions, with some participants wanting it to be redeveloped to enhance the area and others expressing concern that the type of affordable, supportive housing that it provides for persons with mental illness is needed in the community. Advocates for the YMCA programs seemed to accept that YMCA will eventually be relocated. They strongly advocated that a new location be fully accessible to services. Others observed that visitors are afraid of some of the YMCA residents and that some merchants had specifically mentioned having customers chased away by people who are loitering on the street.

Other participants felt that the recreation resources that the YMCA offers should remain in the area. One participant shared that he swims at the YMCA every morning and hoped that a new facility would be located in the Robinson Furniture block as there is enough land to build on and include a pool. This participant observed that the new YMCA may be located in City Center. He observed that the City Center may be almost too prominent for the Y, suggesting that the best use for the City Center might be for a complementary public atrium for Proctors and Jay Street. Swimming is excellent exercise for older people and if senior housing is to be a component of the housing picture a YMCA with a pool would be an important amenity.

Pedestrian Environment

Participants want a walkable environment including a series of paths and sidewalks in excellent condition. They observed that pedestrian signs are on the wrong side of the pole and that crossing Erie Boulevard to get to downtown is difficult. One suggestion was to get rid of Water Street, or make it for pedestrians as an addition to Liberty Park. One participant observed that the serpentine layout of block by Proctors is less successful though it does accomplish its goal of accommodating more parking, suggesting that a more traditional straight away would be more sensitive to the urban environment.

Transportation

Participants wanted to understand the Bus Rapid Transit concept. They suggested that perhaps some comparable case studies would help them to understand where it had been successful and how it compares to light rail. The main intersection in the target area of Washington and State Street was a major topic of discussion. Some participants felt that too many people are using the Washington Avenue exit of I890 to get to Scotia and that that flow should be relocated elsewhere in order to reduce the traffic and improve connections. Others felt that traffic along Washington can't be slowed too much or it will become more congested. The idea to create a raised pedestrian bridge to cross State Street and/or Washington should be considered to move people rather than slowing traffic through the intersection. Timing of walk lights State Street intersections with Erie and Washington are not pedestrian friendly and improving their function will also improve the environment.

Many participants felt that the Greyhound bus station is an eyesore and poorly located, wasting important space and should be improved. Others felt that all CDTA bus stops should have covered shelters.

One participant suggested what he characterized as a "radical idea" but also an opportunity to consider. He suggested that the City consider closing the last block of Liberty Street between South Ferry and Church Street, observing that historically this would reconstitute the original four block Stockade. The open area created could be used as dense, urban, pedestrian, mixed use development. The next block of Liberty

between Erie and North Ferry could also theoretically be closed for a parking garage adjacent to the arcade anchor development mentioned above.

Bicycle Amenities

Participants also support improved biking amenities. Bicycle lanes should be provided. They were concerned that the new design for Erie Boulevard does not provide a continuous bike lane, which would be consistent with a smart development, green, livable city image. More detail about biking amenities should be provided in this plan. One suggestion was to remove the last leg of Liberty Street between Church and Ferry Streets and use it for pedestrians/bikes/buildings or other uses.

Streetscape and Design

Participants felt that there should be a common design vocabulary in the area and that streetscape, building and façade design, and lighting be harmonious. There should be design standards for the facades on State Street detailing brick, quality of detailing, and maintaining a four story street wall. Steve Strichman mentioned that façade standards are in place. A suggestion was made to use a design review board for improvements. It was observed that recent work on the old Woolworth Building and some aspects of the NY pizza replacement buildings are a big improvement on what was there, but the designs could have been even stronger in execution. On the other hand the DOT, Bowtie and Carl Company Block were identified as being very well executed.

Streetscaping should include more safety elements and more lighting. The City should consider using greater quantity of lighting, lower in height and lower in lighting level than those used on the Proctor block. LED lighting created greater options. RPI Lighting Research Center is a great local resource to design. They are an internationally recognized and widely published. Creative lighting would tie in nicely with GE City image. Whatever is done the utilities should always be put underground.

Urban Parks/Public Space

Participants felt that the introduction of green space/ public space in the city is important. Perhaps another parking garage would help off set the surface parking demand. Some participants felt that the city needs more pocket parks including perhaps increasing the size of Liberty Park using Water Street. Others felt that the City cannot afford to maintain the existing park resources. Participants suggested removing the berms from Liberty Park to make it more useful. In general there was support for more trees and “greening” of the area. Attracting a larger farmers market was also suggested.

The Stockade

The plan needs to outline a clear strategy to link the Stockade to the study area without increasing cut through traffic. Residents felt that too much traffic is cutting through the Stockade now. Changes in road design should decrease, not increase the amount of traffic. They recalled that the Comprehensive Plan talked about timing lights more effectively to slow traffic and wondered what happened to that idea since it seemed like a way to significantly improve the environment without any cost. Residents wondered if an archway/entrance at Washington Street could be introduced similar to the one in Vale Village. Although it would be big enough to accommodate emergency vehicles it would provide the visual impression that the area is not suitable for truck traffic. Residents suggested that a historic gateway could be created at the Church (like at Erie and Union) so you know it's a historic district. Other residents asked if Washington

Street could be made one way “out” to discourage truck traffic entering from State Street.

Historic Preservation

Every effort should be made to protect and promote the landmarks, such as the State Theatre Arcade at Erie/State which still exists. The arcade/facade from the intersection of State Street and Erie is a prominent landmark and should be reactivated. Building a large scale anchor development where the old theatre used to be could be key to its future survival. There is also an opportunity to make connections to other historic resources – taking advantage of the quarto centennial and connecting resources like the Maybee Farm, perhaps by trolley.

City of Schenectady Transit Gateway Final Presentation
February 27, 2010
Stockade Room – Schenectady County Community College

The final presentation related to the City of Schenectady Transit Gateway project took place on February 27, 2009 at Schenectady County Community College. Approximately 50 people were in attendance. Mayor Stratton opened the presentation and introduced city staff, community leaders, advisory committee members and Martin Hull, from IBI Group, the lead consultant for the Project.

Martin Hull gave a presentation which reviewed the purpose of the project and its collaborative approach between the City, CDTA and CDTC to develop a plan to revitalize lower State Street in Schenectady. He reviewed the process, products, vision statement and key findings from the initial review of community assets. He carefully reviewed a graphic series that addressed the overall concept for the 24 acre redevelopment site, planned new development, the proposed green network of parks and public spaces, Street sections showing transportation improvements, views and massing. Specific improvements for various locations in the target area were also reviewed.

For the remainder of the meeting the team received comments from the audience. Margaret Irwin from River Street Planning & Development recorded comments.

- Is the plan for this to be a new urban neighborhood? If so it needs to be integrated more effectively with existing neighborhoods. The areas internal to the redevelopment seem less well thought through than the edges. What defines it as a place?
- Liberty Park is recognized as not being attractive or functional today. It was acknowledged that the planners did not consider its redevelopment due to the history of the property. Concerns from the audience that the new buildings along the enlarged park would have a northern exposure and that the area would be pretty windy and inhospitable in the winter months. Explanation that the assumption was that there would be resistance to redeveloping Liberty Park. Other participants commented that Liberty park could be part of identity if it was handled correctly
- The gateways that are suggested are important but should not be presented as “don’t go there” areas rather than welcoming openings, even though it is recognized that the Stockade neighborhood has long felt that a gateway treatment would deter heavy truck traffic from using narrow neighborhood streets. Comment that “gateways” seem more focused on vehicles than pedestrians.
- The planned Erie Street intersection might be a better location for a “strong center” and location for park and greenspace (like Gramercy Park in New York City).
- Any greenspace must be defensible – concern that Liberty Park will not be while a space more internal to the area would have residential uses all around as well as commercial and retail on the first floor providing more “eyes on the street”.
- This area of Schenectady suffers from separation with development along one single corridor in the area which is State Street- better connections into nearby neighborhoods will be important

- Could the Trailways Bus Station be integrated with Amtrak so that use could be eliminated from the study area? The City should push hard for it despite the service providers hesitancy
- Question about how the City will maintain new development when current code violations on State Street are not being addressed?
- Comment that the plan does a good job of “containing traffic”
- In response to “new development” graphic, concern was expressed that new building design is too modern. Red brick was suggested as alternative that would be more in keeping with character of existing buildings like the community college and YMCA.
- Need to keep existing design guidelines and make them required standards.
- Question about whether the archeology and history of the area was considered? Can we integrate the interpretation of archeology and history into the design?
- Comment that the plan does a good job of opening eastern and western gateways
- Appreciate the grid design and use of cross streets in the residential area
- Support residential/mixed use in center (Erie Street.) Need to think of it as a new urban neighborhood. In doing so, could the row houses be integrated into the core of the area – or is more density needed at Erie Street Intersection?
- Much discussion and concern about the level of service at State and Washington. Cars back up in the evening. Proposal to reduce lanes may make that situation worse – although CDTC and DOT have found that it is not a “fatal flaw” and could be further researched as part of the design. The mid block pedestrian refuge/crosswalk at Erie and Washington looks dangerous, although students do try to cross there all the time.
- Could the ramp be abandoned altogether as has been discussed many times, directing traffic onto Erie Blvd to State Street?
- Concern about maintenance of planned greenspace, since the city struggles to maintain what it has
- Remember that issues related to auto access are significant

After the question and answer session was completed, participants had a chance to review the graphics which were posted on the walls and ask questions of consultants and City staff.

Appendix

A4 - Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Wednesday September 2, 2009 – Martin Hull from the IBI group, and Steven Strichman and Christine Primiano of the City of Schenectady, met the following stakeholders:

- Schenectady County Community College President Dr. Quintin Bullock – 8:30 a.m.
The president expressed an interest in creating a better connection between the Community College and the downtown – both in terms of services and an improved physical connection. Dr. Bullock feels that they have adequate class space and can expand on site by extending their service hours. Student housing is still a priority. Washington Avenue traffic is an impediment, but the cost of a pedestrian overpass exceeds the benefits.
- Mazzone Restaurants – Matt Mazzone 10:00 a.m.
The Mazzone's facility on Church Street is where they stage supplies for their regional catering services. The location suits their current needs but they are willing to discuss redevelopment if opportunities present themselves.
- Zone 5 11:30 a.m.
Met with Board President - Lou Corsi, Treasurer - Tim Bradt, and Director - Patrick Smith. The Regional Training center frequently has insufficient parking and is looking for ways to expand it. Depending on the redesign of Erie Boulevard, they may need access from Fuller Street, but do not need to have it connect through to Washington Avenue as it presently does.
- Schenectady ARC 1:30 p.m.
Met with ARC Counsel - Kirk Lewis. Their clients are users of CDTA and the stop in front of their location is important. Parking is always in tight supply. They share their large lot in the rear with another organization. They are open to discussing the possibility of exploring shared parking arrangements that do not lose any spaces for them or create additional costs.
- CDTA 3:30 p.m.
Anne Benware, Sreekumar Nampoothiri – CDTC, Kristina Younger, Ross Farrell, Mila Vega – CDTA;
CDTA will be making a significant investment in the BRT station at Liberty Park. Several trunk and neighborhood routes use the Liberty Park space for layover, which will need to be replaced with an equivalent location if that activity is moved. Operating costs cannot be increased by any proposed changes. The intercity bus station is an important transportation facility and if replaced should maintain the same function and an equally efficient access route to I-890. Environmental Justice issues may be raised by any changes to the public transportation system.

Thursday September 3, 2009 – Martin Hull from the IBI group, and Steven Strichman and Christine Primiano of the City of Schenectady, met the following stakeholders:

- Holmes and Kugler Service Station 10:30 a.m.
Met with Dennis Kugler – owner. Fuller Street is used as a cut through by the buses, but as long as he has access from Erie Boulevard and Church Street and Fuller

Street, it is not important that Fuller connects through to Washington Avenue. Church Street is important for truck traffic.

- Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority 11:30 a.m.
Met with Chairman – Ray Gillen. Development efforts would be helped by increased green space and redevelopment of buildings between State Street and Mill Lane. The interstate exit ramp is an impediment to development in the area.
- Wednesday Sept 9 and Wednesday Dec 9 – New York State Department of Transportation. See Appendix A5.

Thursday Sept 24 – Steven Strichman from the City of Schenectady met with:

- Albany Valve 10:15 a.m.
Tom Selfridge – owner. Much of their business is with GE. Need truck deliveries and pick-up along Church Street but it is mostly box trucks, not tractor trailer. Open to discussing any future redevelopment issues.

Tuesday, October 27, 2009 – A meeting was held with the following attendees:

Christine Primiano – City of Schenectady; Anne Benware, Sreekumar Nampoothiri – CDTC, Mike Fleischhauer, Regional Vice President of the Northeast and Donald R. Broska, Area Sales Manager, Upstate New York – Greyhound; Anne Noonan – Adirondack Trailways; Kristina Younger – CDTA; Martin Hull – IBI Group via telephone.

The group discussed the improvement or relocation of the intercity bus station on Water Street. The following issues were raised:

- Current station is owned by Adirondack Trailways,
- Intercity bus station needs to be close to CDTA/BRT stop,
- Need space for ticketing, waiting, and storage (shipping),
- Shipping (70/80/90 lb) is important business and storage/loading must be accommodated in any new plans,
- Freeway access and appropriate turning radius at intersections are needed,
- Trailways doesn't need to own the facility but they would like a long-term commitment in any leased facility,
- Two intercity buses might be parked at a time though rare busy day/time might have up to four.

Appendix

A5 - NYSDOT Meeting Notes

Schenectady Gateway Transit Study – DOT Region 1 Stakeholder Meetings:

Write up of meetings held on 9/9/09 and 12/9/09 with NYSDOT, City of Schenectady and CDTC staff to discuss issues, additional information needed and potential solutions at State Street and Washington Avenue, and initial ideas related to a potential future I890 ramp/access roads reconfiguration.

1. Meeting One: held at NYSDOT Region 1 offices, State Street Schenectady, NY, September 9, 2009.

Attendees: George Hodges, Lorraine Barde, Mark Kennedy, Mike Wyatt, Steve Gadowski, Rob Cherry – NYSDOT Region 1; Christine Primiano, Steve Strichman – City of Schenectady; Anne Benware, Sreekumar Nampoothiri - CDTC; Martin Hull, IBI Group via telephone.

An agenda was prepared prior to the meeting covering the following items: meeting purpose and linkage study background, I-890 connections and initial ideas for reconfiguring various ramps/access roads.

NYSDOT, City and CDTC staff discussed the background of this Linkage Planning Study and its objectives. These include creating an attractive, vibrant, walkable mixed use neighborhood that enhances its surrounding neighborhoods and is well connected to them. The study will produce a plan that works to guide development with a focus on a mix of uses, including a strong residential component, and concepts for enhanced bicycle/pedestrian circulation and connectivity supporting the area's transit system. Further discussion described specific tasks/issues being explored as part of the study including:

- Identify improved pedestrian amenities and connections along State Street
- Identify improved pedestrian connections from the Stockade Residential district, the redesigned Erie Boulevard Technology Corridor, the SCCC campus and student housing, and the General Electric facility
- Explore concepts for reconfiguration of potentially obsolete roadway segments that would result in better utilization of land
- Investigate improved linkages to CDTA bus stops and the new bus rapid transit line, and Amtrak
- Identify actions and concepts to integrate the Community College across Washington Avenue (in coordination with the SCCC 5 year Master Plan which included plans for a pedestrian bridge across Washington Avenue)
- Undertake a concept level analysis of I-890 ramps at Washington Avenue in order to see potential redesign or alternative circulation system that will encourage safe pedestrian movement across Washington Avenue

Discussion turned to the potential for changes at the State and Washington intersection to slow traffic speeds in recognition of the pedestrian crossings from the Community College across the Washington Avenue ramp and State Street and the relatively heavy traffic volumes going to/from I-890 using the western part of State Street to access the Washington Ave ramp. In response to an inquiry, NYSDOT was already conducting a review of conditions and potential improvement options at this intersection.

The long term need to reconfigure the interchange in this area was acknowledged; NYSDOT considers the reconfiguration of the interchange to be a desirable long term solution.

NYSDOT staff expressed that near term improvements to Washington Ave to accommodate pedestrians are more problematic due to the speed of traffic coming off of I-890, sight distances, and the need to avoid backups onto the mainline of I-890.

There was discussion about installing a crosswalk at the intersection of an extended Erie Street and Washington Avenue. NYSDOT expressed concern that this probably would not be acceptable in the context of the current situation on the ramp. A more sensitively designed pedestrian bridge might be viable. However, it was pointed out that a means of providing better pedestrian access in this area needs to be explored and that creative solutions should be sought in acknowledgment of the current situation where pedestrians are using this area to cross Washington Avenue between the Community College and the parking areas on the other side of the street; developing concepts for such solutions are an important objective of this linkage study.

DOT expressed a willingness to consider a reduction in lanes eastbound on Route 5 at Washington Avenue to make crossing easier for pedestrians and reduce the high speed of traffic turning right onto Washington from State Street.

The study's implementation plan should include a section on the process for gaining approval for roadway changes at DOT.

To enable analysis of the potential to reduce travel lanes at the Washington Avenue/State Street intersection approaches, and other concepts for improving the pedestrian environment in this area, NYSDOT requested CDTC staff conduct a more detailed set of vehicle and pedestrian traffic counts at the intersection of State Street and Washington Avenue for the AM, Midday, and PM peak hours. The purpose of this detailed survey will be to count the number of vehicles using specific lanes and the attendant turn movements/through movements. The number and location of pedestrian crossings was also asked to be included in these counts. NYSDOT will then use this data to develop a Synchro model of intersection operations under various lane reduction/reconfiguration scenarios to be discussed at a follow up meeting.

2. Meeting Two: held on December 9, 2009 at the NYSDOT Region 1 Offices on State Street, Schenectady, NY. The purpose of this meeting was as a follow up to discuss results of NYSDOT Modeling efforts exploring options for intersection reconfiguration at State Street/Washington Avenue.

Attendees: Paul Casillo, John Coluccio, Christine Primiano, Steve Strichman – City of Schenectady; Mark Kennedy, Mark Pyscadlo, Paul Mayor – NYSDOT Region 1 Traffic & Safety; Sreekumar Nampoothiri, Anne Benware – CDTC, Martin Hull, IBI Group via telephone.

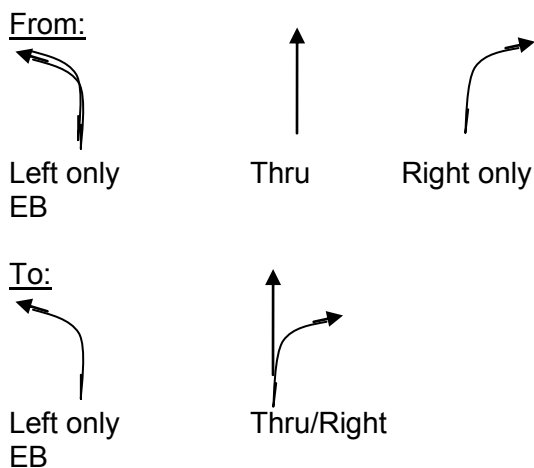
Background: CDTC staff collected manual traffic counts for each approach and departure lane at the intersection of State St/Washington Ave for the morning (7 - 9 am), midday (11 am – 1 pm) and evening (4 – 6 pm) peak travel periods on Wednesday,

September 16, 2009. Classes at the Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) were in session. See Appendix A7: Intersection Traffic Counts. These counts were submitted to NYSDOT staff for use in modeling.

NYSDOT Region 1 Staff used the per lane traffic volume counts as input data for a capacity analysis of Route 5/State Street at Washington Avenue in response to a request to examine the potential for a reduction in curb-to-curb distance on Route 5/State Street in this area.

The purpose of the meeting was to explain the modeling results and discuss preferred options and next steps, if any.

Operations and lane usage at the intersections of State Street/Washington Avenue and State Street/Church Street were examined by NYSDOT staff due to the proximity of these two intersections. The City owns the traffic signals themselves since the corridor-wide fiber project however NYS is still responsible for maintenance. NYSDOT recommended that eastbound at State Street/Church Street the overhead lane signs/lane configuration should be changed from 3 lanes (1 left turn, 1 through lane, 1 right turn only lane) to two lanes consisting of 1 left turn and one through/right lane:



This better reflects the actual lane use and existing configuration at the intersection.

In addition, NYSDOT staff reported that they modeled several options to reduce lanes at the State Street/Washington Avenue intersection as described below:

- **Scenario 1** reduced eastbound lanes to 1 eastbound right turn and 1 eastbound through lane (on State Street) (currently many private motor vehicles avoid it since this eastbound through lane becomes the bus lane/stop area on the east side of the intersection). Modeling results indicate that since there are over 1,200 eastbound right turns in the AM peak period (and 728 in the PM), losing one right turn lane would result in higher levels of delay than currently exists in both the morning and afternoon peak hours, which isn't preferred.
- **Scenario 2** reduced eastbound lanes to 1 eastbound through lane as described in Scenario 1 above, while retaining 2 eastbound right turn lanes (i.e. from State Street to the Washington Avenue ramp to I-890). NYSDOT reported that this

configuration better geometrically aligns the approaches on both sides of the intersection and reduces pavement without increasing delay, making this a reasonable alternative scenario over the existing condition.

Other ideas for reducing the pavement width at this critical intersection were discussed including examining current lane widths for the potential for narrowing where appropriate.

In reviewing the traffic volumes and discussing the concept of providing a mid-block pedestrian crossing on Washington Avenue in the area where numerous pedestrians cross now it was observed that the peak pedestrian crossing times don't directly coincide with the peak motor vehicle volume time periods. The highest pedestrian crossing time occurred during the mid-day period, where the majority of pedestrians crossing Washington Avenue did not do so at the intersection itself, with the pedestrian signal, but mid-block across the ramp. Mid-day pedestrian volumes were 223, with 200 of these coinciding with the peak vehicle volume period. It was noted that during the AM and PM peak vehicle travel periods, pedestrian volumes were less, with 83 pedestrians crossing during the PM peak vehicle travel period and 76 doing so during the AM peak. The highest number of bicyclists using the intersection occurred during the PM period, with 36 crossings. At the intersection, there is currently an all red signal phase meaning all four approaches are stopped while the pedestrian signal head is flashing WALK sometime after the button is pressed by a pedestrian.

NYS DOT staff mentioned that the multiple objectives applicable to any future improvement project in this area should be clearly articulated in the linkage planning study. These multiple objectives (i.e. traffic calming, pedestrian safety/accommodation and access, balancing traffic needs, improvement of aesthetics, etc) would then be used in any upcoming project development process including scoping, preliminary and final design.

Appendix

A6 - I-890 Interchange Planning Memo

Washington Avenue Ramp and I-890 Redesign – A Long Term Option?

Washington Avenue provides entry and exit from I-890 to Scotia, Glenville and the NYS Thruway. The portion of Washington Avenue south of State Street is heavily traveled with an average annual daily traffic of 24,357 vehicles. Traffic counts conducted by CDTC found high traffic during peak hours (2,230 in the morning peak, 1,494 in the mid day peak, and 2,451 in the evening peak). Detailed counts are included in Appendix A7.

Turn movement counts at the intersection of Washington Avenue and State Street show the majority of the traffic on the Washington Avenue ramp is moving to and from Scotia/Glenville to I-890. This fact was raised as a concern as well as an opportunity at the public meeting. The concern is that the heavy traffic movement impedes overall performance of the intersection as well as the pedestrian and bicyclist environment in this important area where an improved pedestrian environment is crucial for revitalization and redevelopment of the study area. The opportunity is that if the ramp were shifted to the west with a potential future connection from I-890 through the SCCC parking lots with a connection in the area of the SCCC access drives to State Street just east of the Western Gateway Bridge, this would remove the heavy vehicle traffic from the Washington Ave/State St intersection in this vital area of State Street.

This concept has other potential benefits too. A redesign of other components of the I890 ramp system in this area can open up some additional land for development along the I-890 frontage roads, which in turn can bring in tax revenue for the City as well as jobs for downtown Schenectady (see the graphic below). Though the City, Study Advisory Committee, and the residents expressed their appreciation of this concept, a detailed analysis of this idea was not within the scope or budget of this study. A simplified interchange design with fewer structures and less pavement would be less expensive to maintain.

Over the years various ideas for reconfiguration of the frontage road and ramp system have been contemplated with the desire being to bring the current system more in line with current traffic demand and development patterns. For instance, when the ramp system was built employment at the main General Electric plant was significantly higher than it is today.

Another goal of a redesign would be to create a more simplified, less confusing circulation pattern and to reduce locations of high speed merges or merges where converging traffic streams are traveling at incompatible speeds. A more simple system may help attract development to the area as well.

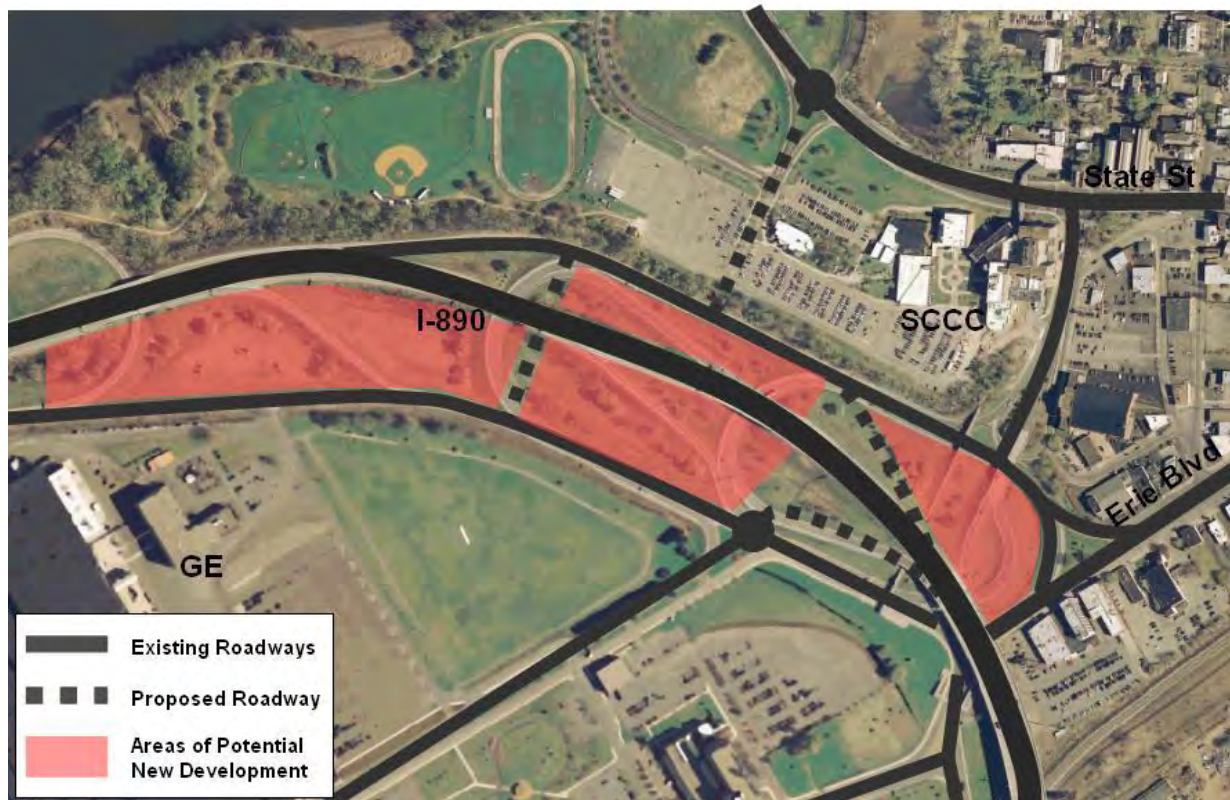
Recently ideas developed independently of this study by Mr. Dennis O'Malley, an engineer and concerned citizen, were brought to the attention of the study team and NYSDOT. According to Mr. O'Malley's sketch level analysis, the access roads on either side of I-890 near the study area could be converted to a grid pattern using two-way streets that will better integrate the area with downtown and provide better circulation options. This concept also envisages release of land for development. These ideas need

further exploration in terms of feasibility, design, land ownership/real property issues, costs, etc., that are beyond the scope of this study.

The study team along with City representatives and CDTC representatives met with the Region 1 staff of the NYSDOT to go over the options for improving the traffic in the study area (see meeting summary on Appendix A5). DOT explained that the life of I-890 is still more than 25-30 years and any plans to redesign ramps should only be considered along with an overall redesign of the I-890 system. This puts the idea of ramp removal, relocation or reconfiguration in the long term vision.

There are other hurdles also to overcome. The potential alternate location suggested to the west, connecting through the “back” of SCCC falls within the flood plain and has an uneven terrain. In addition, SCCC uses this location as their parking lot. Any ramp/access road design here will need to address all of these issues and might result in an elevated roadway. This will likely be a costly structure. All these point to the need to consider ramp removal/redesign as part of a comprehensive I-890 redesign in the long-term.

Schenectady Gateway Study: Potential I-890 Reconfiguration Alternative

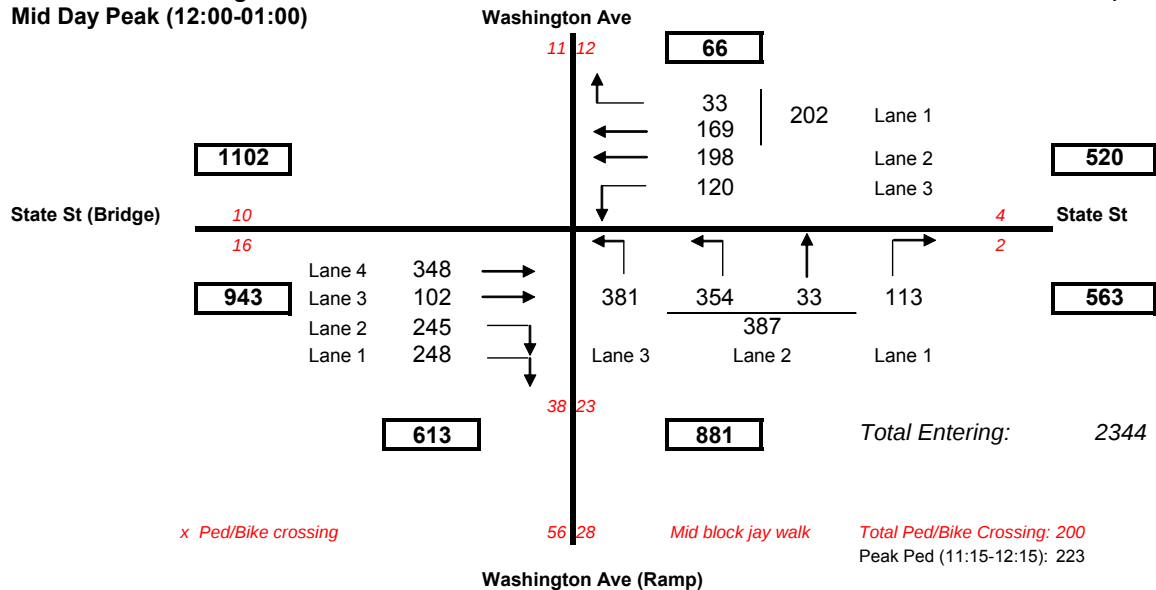


Appendix

A7 - Intersection Traffic Counts

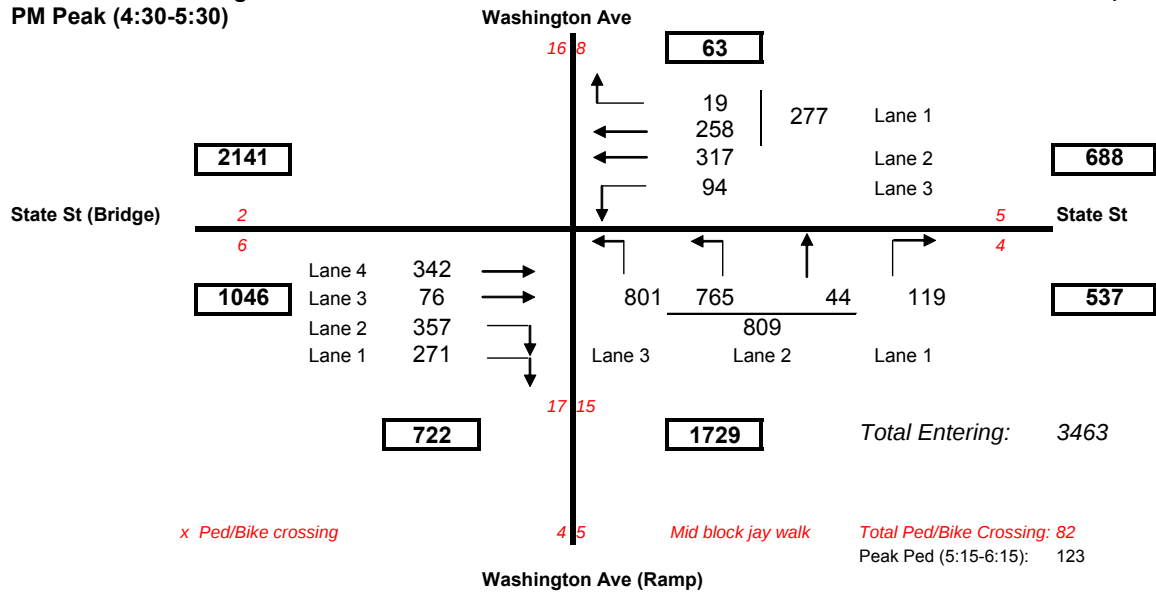
1. State Street and Washington Avenue

Count Date: 16-Sep-09



State St and Washington Avenue
PM Peak (4:30-5:30)

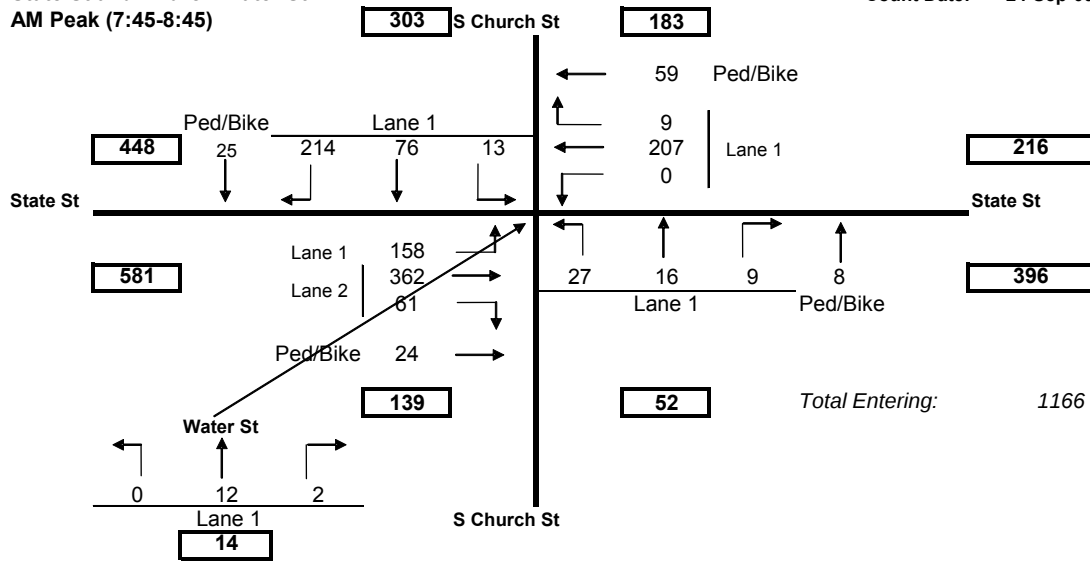
Count Date: 16-Sep-09



2. State Street and South Church Street/Water Street

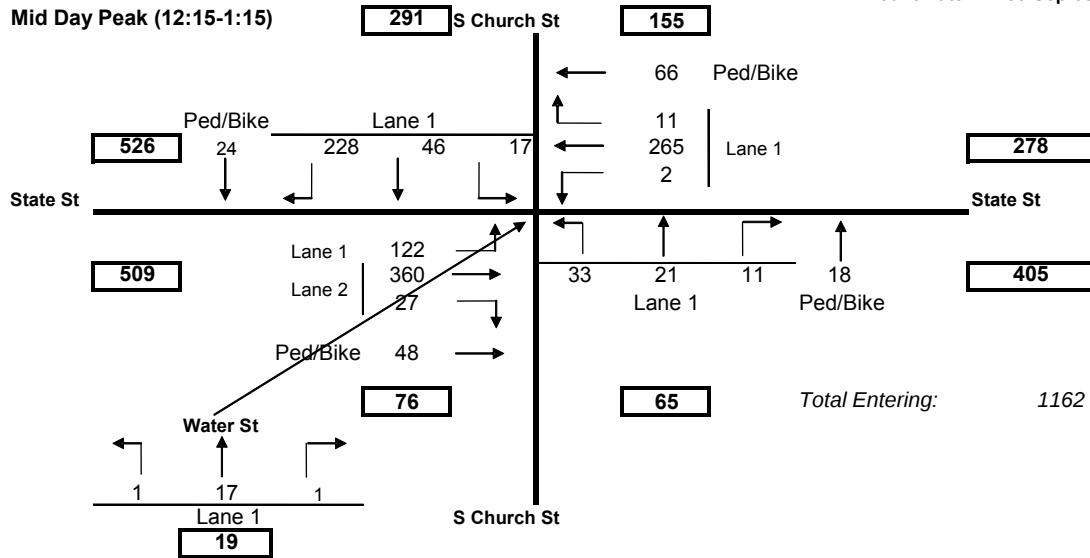
State St and Church/Water St
AM Peak (7:45-8:45)

Count Date: 24-Sep-09



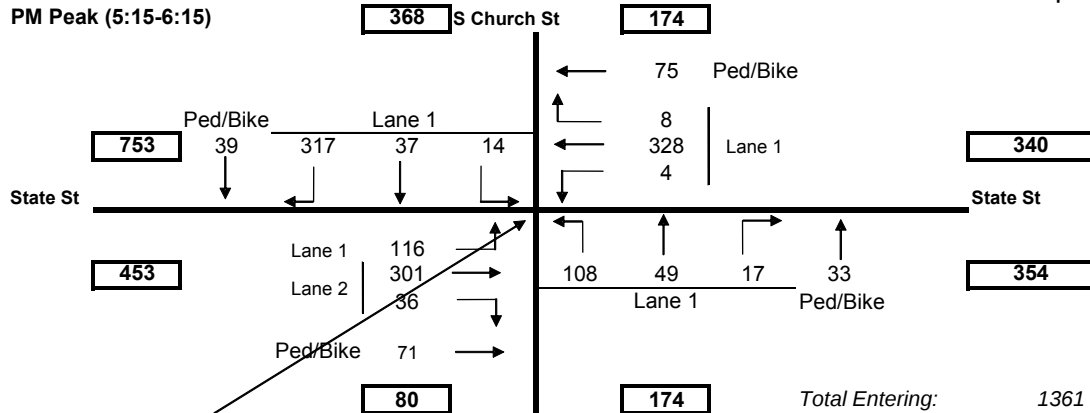
State St and Church/Water St
Mid Day Peak (12:15-1:15)

Count Date: 30-Sep-09



State St and Church/Water St
PM Peak (5:15-6:15)

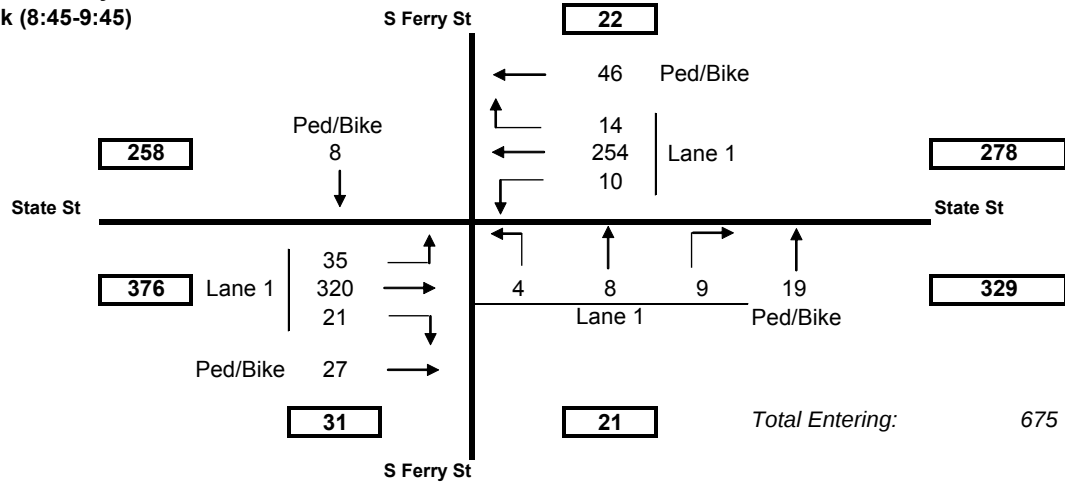
Count Date: 24-Sep-09



3. State Street and Ferry Street

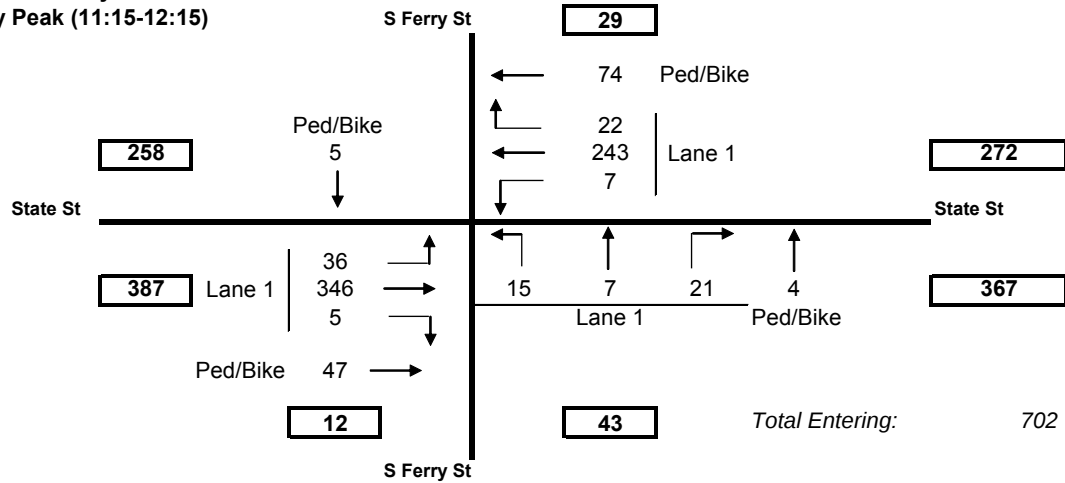
State St and Ferry St
AM Peak (8:45-9:45)

Count Date: 1-Oct-09



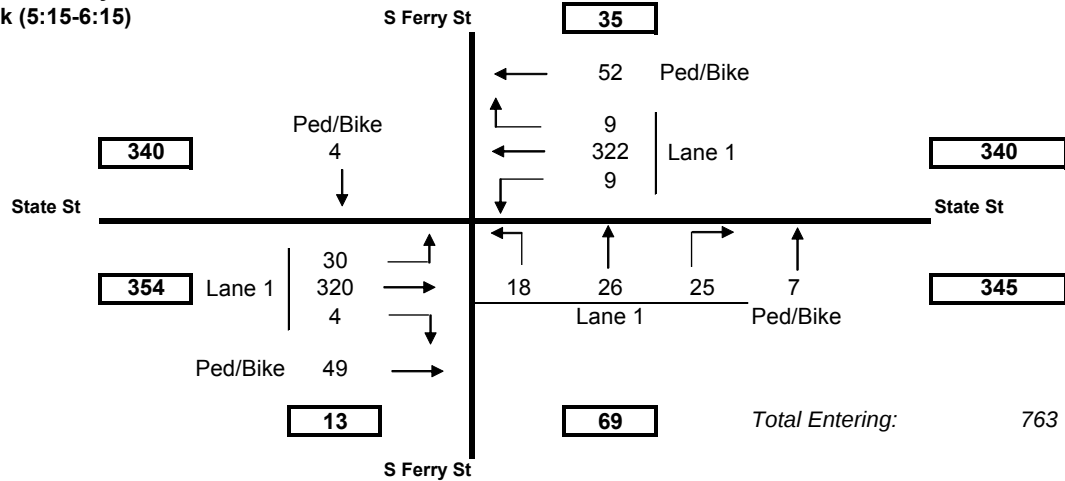
State St and Ferry St
Mid Day Peak (11:15-12:15)

Count Date: 1-Oct-09



State St and Ferry St
PM Peak (5:15-6:15)

Count Date: 24-Sep-09



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