

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan

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City of Albany
and the
Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee

By:
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Chapter I: Introduction

A. Purpose of this planning effort

With the support of an existing grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB) began in mid-2002 to facilitate the completion of a participatory neighborhood planning process for the Arbor Hill neighborhood in Albany, New York. The Community Builders worked closely with the City of Albany and TCB's subconsultant, Behan Planning Associates, to ensure a successful planning process. The goal of the planning process was to garner consensus on a vision and a roadmap for comprehensive neighborhood revitalization. The Mayor asked a broad group of local stakeholders, including residents, property owners, elected and public officials, non-profit group leaders, historic preservation advocates, developers, church officials, and bankers to serve on a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (see Appendix A).

B. Study area

The planning area roughly encompasses Census Tract 2. It is bounded by Tivoli on the north, Sheridan on the south, Broadway on the east, and Henry Johnson Boulevard on the west. While the Plan addresses the neighborhood as a whole, more intensive land use research and specific recommendations were focused on the historic core bounded by Clinton Avenue on the south and Livingston Avenue on the north.



C. Organization of the plan

This Plan is built upon a solid foundation of prior planning efforts as described in Chapter II. Since existing real estate conditions will dictate the pace at which the plan can be achieved and the public and private resources needed, we have reviewed the market for housing and commercial activity in the area, and the issue of abandoned properties in Chapter III. Chapter IV describes the extraordinarily active public input process. In Chapter V, we describe the Guiding Principles and Recommended Actions for Revitalization organized around four topical areas: Homeownership and Rental Housing, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Business and Job Development, and Quality of Life. The Action Plan described in Chapter V supports all these topical areas as well as infrastructure and other leveraged improvements necessary for the success of the recommended actions.



Chapter II: Prior Planning Efforts

The planning effort was able to concentrate on alternate visions for the future in part due to the planning work that had preceded it. Those prior planning efforts are summarized below.

A. Synopsis of Prior Henry Johnson Boulevard Initiatives

In 1989, the City engaged in a participatory planning process which resulted in a plan for mixed use, urban style development for Henry Johnson Boulevard. Over the past ten years, investments by the Albany Community Development Agency (ACDA) in buildings for several small business (e.g. Roy's Caribbean) and residential strips (e.g. between Sheridan and Orange on the east side of Boulevard) have preserved some of the urban, mixed use history of the street. However, due to market conditions, changing shopping patterns, and the loss of density and buying power during this period, the efforts failed to have the hoped-for spillover effect of leveraging private investment.

Certain private initiatives, such as the location of the former Dunkin' Donuts/Rite Aid strip center at Livingston Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard, along with significant City investments along the Boulevard (including the ACDA building and the North District Police Substation) removed some of the blighting influences on the street. However these efforts, along with the Urban League's Gateway Commons office building project, also changed the architectural character of the street. Gateway Commons, located on the west side of the street between Second and Third Street was developed to house a private sector employer. The development failed when employer's business failed. The City's Public Safety Department ultimately moved into the modern office space.

Gateway Commons was just one element of the Urban League's ambitious plan to bring commercial activity to Arbor Hill. The League had hoped that the more than 20,000 cars and 32,000 individuals passing along or crossing the Boulevard every day and the more than 24,000 persons living within a one-mile radius of the Boulevard, would make the strip an attractive location for commercial development. The League tried in particular to attract a large grocery store. However, as will be described more fully in the market analysis section of this report, the demographics and buying patterns in the area surrounding the street do not support the large grocery store model chains are developing in the current era. Most planners and developers believe smaller scale efforts, coupled with improved housing and increased density in the area, will ultimately be more successful.

B. Synopsis of Albany Housing Authority Swan Street Plan

Recent work had been undertaken on behalf of the City and the Albany Housing Authority (AHA) on a housing project that was intended as a response to drug and crime problems that had become chronic and debilitating by the Year 2000. The Albany Police force made progress in shutting down the worst of the drug and violent crime activity that had overtaken Swan Street with some key arrests and traffic pattern changes. The Mayor and AHA put forth the idea of using \$5 million in HOPE VI funds to leverage an \$18 million revitalization effort, primarily located on Swan Street. This original, largely new-construction, housing plan was criticized by neighborhood activists for a perceived insensitivity to historic preservation and grass-roots support for arts and culture. It was also criticized for an insufficient public process, an insufficient income mix and ratio of rental to homeownership units. As a response, an advisory committee was formed and a Swan Street planning study articulating the project was completed.



However, a lawsuit challenging the development's adherence to SEQRA procedures stopped the project. The March 2001 plan drafted with that advisory committee consisted of 120 housing units: 20 for-sale homes and 73 apartments in 61 new townhomes and 27 rental units in 7 rehabilitated buildings. Ultimately, the City and the AHA decided to engage the community in the subsequent Arbor Hill participatory planning process described here to place the Swan Street development in the context of a more comprehensive neighborhood revitalization effort.

C. Synopsis of Dennison Draft Needs Report

In March of 2002, Dennison Associates, a Washington DC-based consulting firm, produced a draft Needs Assessment Report based on the technical assistance they had provided the City over the previous nine months. Coming on the heels of the demise of the ambitious Urban League plans, a wave of crime in the neighborhood, and a controversial proposal to transform Swan Street with a HOPE VI housing project, the Dennison report reflected frustration and cynicism in the community. At a community-wide meeting at the onset of the Dennison work, residents and community activists demanded strong action. One resident who addressed the group conveyed the importance of community responsibility for its part in the revitalization effort. It was suggested that residents look to the future and not let past disappointments hinder their willingness to participate in this initiative. The Dennison team supported these statements by explaining that the best way the community can be assured of a positive outcome is to diligently pursue goals and objectives that will have a positive impact on the neighborhood. The community discussion focused on weaknesses, or problems, facing the neighborhood as well as, strengths or positive attributes that make the neighborhood attractive. The following list of issues and draft recommendations were the results of the community meeting and Dennison work:

Problems/Issues of the Neighborhood

Youth and Family Services

- Expanded Programs for Youth – Day Care/After School Activities/Early Age (1-3)
- Better Information Flow/Communication with Residents-Satellite Office in Arbor Hill
- Develop Continuity in Programs
- Support Art/Cultural Programs for Youth

Employment Opportunities and Job Training

- Develop Programs to Assist Local Contractors-Training/Job Programs
- Assist Contractors in Obtaining a Greater % of Community Construction Jobs
- Keep Community \$ in Arbor Hill by Employing Residents
- Provide More job Training for Residence – Develop Apprenticeship Programs
- Resurrect Urban League JT Programs
- Promote Skill Training that Leads to Job Advancement and Higher Living Wage
- Expand Job Opportunities – Employee Tax Credits

Infrastructure and Public Improvements

- Streetscape Improvements/Maintenance – Sidewalks, Street Lighting/Cleaning, Trees
- Maintenance of Vacant and Underutilized Lots – Remove Trash and Debris
- Water/Sewer Utility Lines Require Upgrade and/or Replacement
- Removal of Abandoned Vehicles from Streets
- Install Traffic Controls to Hinder Speeding in Neighborhood



- Zoning Code Enforcement – Should Not be Applied Selectively in the Neighborhood

Housing

- Homeownership in Neighborhood and Develop Programs to Encourage Homeownership
- Stop Demolition of Housing Units and Promote Rehab/Reuse of Existing Structures
- Encourage Projects/Programs that Support Infill housing
- Loss of Equity/Value in Property

Business and Economic Development

- Retain Community-Based Wealth by Promoting Small Business Development
- Expand Small Business Technical Assistance Programs
- Encourage Loan/Grant Funds that Provide Minority/Small Business Access to Capital
- Lack of Neighborhood Retail Stores – Access to basic Necessities (food, laundry)
- Develop and Promote Tourism Linkages w/Downtown – Cultural Center Black Heritage, Museum, Restaurants

Neighborhood/Historic Preservation (NPP)

- Retrofit and Re-Use Historic Structures/Landmarks – Saint Joseph Church/41 Ten Broeck
- Reuse of Saint Joseph’s School
- Capitalize on Neighborhoods Unique Historic Environment

Citizen Participation

- Nature of Planning Effort – Master/Comprehensive Plan
- Realistic Action Strategy for Implementation
- Commitment of resources
- Community Role in Revitalization Effort
- Participation in Funding Decision – Resource Allocation
- Meaningful Role in Program Development and Operation

Recreation/Parks/Community Amenities

- Expand Community Gardens – Utilize City/County-Owned vacant Lots
- Give Residents Greater Access and Input in the Arbor Hill Community Center
- Reinstate Funds for Soccer Program
- Restore Access and Control of the “Field of Dreams” to the Neighborhood

Strengths of the Neighborhood

- Active, Strong Resident Participation
- Environmental Program at Tivoli Park
- “Field of Dreams” Baseball Facility
- Youth Soccer Program
- Community Gardens

Established, Organized Community Association Network

- Arbor Hill Community Center, Inc.
- Arbor Hill development Corporation
- Albany Housing Coalition, Inc.
- W. Heywood Burn Environmental Education Center, Inc.
- Historic Albany foundation



- Ten Broeck Triangle Preservation League
- St. Joseph's Housing Corporation
- Affordable Housing Partnership/Albany Community Land Trust
- Capital District Habitat for Humanity
- Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens

Cultural and Historic Heritage

- Underground Railroad
- African-American Heritage
- Ethnic Restaurants

Neighborhood Landmarks

- Ten Broeck Mansion
- Tivoli Park
- St. Joseph's Church/Park
- Arbor Hill Park

The Dennison team never completed a final report as they withdrew from the process after the first public meeting when the City sought to expand the scope of the planning work.

D. Synopsis of Existing Conditions Report

In late summer, 2002 the City of Albany Department of Development and Planning provided more expansive and updated demographic, land use, regulatory and infrastructure information in an Existing Conditions report (see attached Appendix B). The 200-acre Arbor Hill neighborhood lies north of Sheridan Hollow, which creates a natural separation between Arbor Hill and the central business district. Lying east of Arbor Hill is I-787, a regional highway which provides north-south bound traffic from southern Albany to the city of Cohoes and separates Arbor Hill and Downtown Albany from the Hudson River. A mix of industrial and residential uses terminate with the I-90 highway and railroad corridors that form a northern boundary to the area. Dense urban residential neighborhoods, beginning with West Hill, lie to the west of the neighborhood. Within the Arbor Hill community are two smaller neighborhoods, Sheridan Hollow and Ten Broeck Triangle. Three neighborhood associations have served the community: Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens, Sheridan Hollow, and Ten Broeck Triangle Neighborhood Associations.

Arbor Hill is primarily a residential area, graced with several historic districts and outstanding architectural streetscapes in the Ten Broeck Triangle and along Lark Street and Clinton Avenue. The southern half of the neighborhood contains most of the historic heart of the area and is closest to the center of Albany. It was developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, mostly with one to three family homes on urban (25-foot wide) lots. Despite a concentration of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, the area still retains pockets of well-maintained and owner-occupied homes. The neighborhood north of Livingston Avenue is more like a new town. It was developed on larger land parcels created under an urban renewal plan of the 1960s. This area contains large, subsidized apartment complexes, new single-family homeownership developments, the Whitney Young Health Center (the neighborhood's largest employer) and Arbor Hill Elementary School. Almost half the neighborhood's population, and more than half the neighborhood's youth, live in this northern area. The table below summarizes the demographic characteristics described in the Existing Condition report:



Arbor Hill Demographics based on 2000 U.S. Census

	Arbor Hill	City of Albany	County of Albany
Population	5491 vs 6167 in 1990	95,658	294,565
Black	4218 (77%)	26,915 (28.1%)	32,624 (11.1%)
White	814 (15%)	60,383 (63.1%)	245,060 (83.2%)
Hispanic	401 (7.4%)	5,349 (5.6%)	9,079 (3.1%)
Median Age	29.1 years	31.4 years	36.8 years
Persons under Age 18	1900 (35%)	19,085 (20%)	77,252 (26%)
Persons over 65	534 (9.7%)	12,781 (13.4%)	42,594 (14.5%)
Median Household Income - 1999	\$16,222	\$30,041	\$42,935
Households in Poverty – 1999	34.8%	16.0%	10.6%
Over 16 in Labor Force	56.8%	63.6%	65.8%
Unemployment Rate for 2001-02*	7.8%	4.0%	2.9%
Housing Units	2914	45,288	129,972
Percentage Vacant	28%	10.1%	7.3%
Percentage Built < 1939	42.9%	49.9%	31.9%
Percentage Single Family	17%	31.6%	53.8%
Percent Homeownership	20.9%	37.6%	57.7%
Average Household Size	2.34 persons	2.11 persons	2.32 persons
Median Home Value	\$68,900	\$98,300	\$116,300
Reliance on Public Transit	17%	13.1%	5.6%

* Unemployment data from Capital District Regional Planning Association based on U.S. Department of Labor updates from 2000 U.S. Census.



Chapter III: Conditions Affecting Real Estate Investment in Arbor Hill

A. Market Conditions

As mentioned in the previous chapter, real estate market conditions have generally been extremely weak in Arbor Hill during the past 12 years. This weakness has been somewhat alleviated in the past few years by record low interest rates that have spurred a hot regional housing market and made homeownership a more viable option for lower income families. Still, despite these low interest rates and the neighborhood's proximity to an improving downtown, the real estate market in Arbor Hill has suffered from real and perceived problems of crime and housing abandonment. Three areas with unique characteristics have been exceptions to this trend:

- The Ten Broeck Triangle area where committed individuals continue to make investments that might not seem economically justified due to their love for the unique character of the structures and streetscapes in this lovely historic area. It is not unusual to see an abandoned building next to a home in which a property owner has invested \$300,000 or more. Clearly, to the extent that neighborhood-wide problems are alleviated or solved, property owners in the Ten Broeck neighborhood will greatly benefit and market values can be expected to escalate rapidly. To a lesser extent, investors along historic Clinton Avenue who have been able to buy selected smaller properties in decent condition at a discount are able to renovate and sell those historic properties on a timely basis for under \$100,000.
- The area directly north of Downtown along Broadway and Pearl which is characterized by a mix of rental and owner-occupied properties as well as professional offices and businesses. Improvements at the Palace Theater and in the Quakenbush Square area continue to attract interest in the historic townhomes in this area. To date, the mix of uses has harmonized well, and only the most dilapidated structures remain abandoned. Still, as is the case for rehabilitated structures Downtown, market rents for office space remain relatively low. A typical single office with utilities included, shared receptionist and parking rents for around \$500 per month or \$20 per square foot. This cap on market rents limits property owners' investments in their buildings. Similarly, market rents for residential properties in this area are still a relative bargain, with one bedroom rents not exceeding \$600;
- The newer area of the neighborhood north of Livingston Avenue has been able to sustain both rental and home-ownership development activity. The Albany Housing Coalition's homeownership project on Lark Drive has sold homes faster at \$79,900 than their similar project in the South End. The Skyline Gardens complex off Livingston Avenue rents at \$442 and up for a one-bedroom apartment and \$521 and up for a two-bedroom apartment. The Capital Woods development, which boasts very affordable rents, has almost no vacancies. Clearly, to the extent an attractive and affordable project can be financed and brought to market, demand is high.

In the remainder of the core area of Arbor Hill and Sheridan Hollow, deeper subsidies are needed to attract a market. Most housing market analysts define residential market areas widely – for example, analysts determining the marketability of a housing project in Arbor Hill might define the market area as the City of Albany. As the City of Albany has lost population, neighborhoods facing the challenge of maintaining an aging housing stock and perceived and real crime problems have lost out to neighborhoods further west in the City, as



neighborhoods of choice for working families. To attract market rate renters, developers need to deliver a higher quality product than is generally available in the Albany-wide market place. But properties in neighborhoods like Arbor Hill are typically targeted to very low income households (at or below 50% of area median income) since there are larger potential pools of tenants available for these properties than for properties targeted to households with higher income levels. Analysts have concluded that almost half of the City of Albany's rental households are cost-burdened, or paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

Due to the same factors, the for-sale marketplace in the core area of Arbor Hill has also been targeted to the low and moderate-income population. Programs typically target households with incomes around 80% of Area Median Income (As of 2003, \$47,850 for a family of four). According to a recent analysis by River Street Planning and Development, there were 3,539 families in Albany under 80% of Area Median Income based on 2000 Census data that could potentially qualify for modest for-sale homes. The difficulties in selling such homes, even at prices as low as \$50,000, are driven by:

- In real estate, buying decisions are based on “location, location, location”. Even at bargain prices, buyers are reluctant to invest their scarce savings in areas where other property owners on the block are not maintaining properties well, where there is a high degree of vacancy and abandonment, and most of all, where criminal activity is apparent. Indeed, it is even difficult for homeowners of decent properties to procure insurance when they are located next to severely deteriorated or abandoned structures.
- In addition, buyers at these modest income levels are often heavily burdened by past credit issues and difficulty in saving enough money for down payments and closing costs. While the City of Albany and the Affordable Housing Partnership have a sophisticated set of supports available to address these issues (such as Individual Development Accounts and homeownership counseling), the path to homeownership at modest income levels is still not easy.
- It is difficult to obtain mortgages at the modest levels the market supports. Most lenders and mortgage companies active in the local market do not find it profitable to make loans for amounts less than \$50,000.

Given these difficulties in similar market areas, The Community Builders and other experienced developers have concluded that one must create a market that does not already exist to create sustainable change in a neighborhood as distressed as the core area of Sheridan Hollow and Arbor Hill. This can only be achieved by securing enough control of properties in a given block or set of blocks so that the future can be driven by strategic targeted investments. Scattered efforts at rehabilitation or in-fill new construction on a one or two unit basis work in areas with existing strength (i.e. Ten Broeck Triangle) but do not make enough impact to change market perceptions in more devastated areas. Once larger-scale site control is obtained, it is critically important that the quality of what is produced is significantly higher than the surrounding marketplace. Similarly, it is important that positive change be signaled by a widespread marketing campaign of the neighborhood as a “community of choice” offering developments and services to a full range of renters or owners, not just low-income renters or owners who have no other choices. Announcing developments as affordable housing programs for low-income people does nothing to create positive market change in neighborhoods like Arbor Hill.

Signaling dramatic change is also important to attract commercial development. Retailers look for positive demographic trends including population and income gains, when making site selection choices. Commercial improvements tend to follow rather than lead,



improvements in inner-city neighborhoods. The fact that more than 20,000 cars and 32,000 individuals pass along or cross Henry Johnson Boulevard every day and more than 24,000 persons live within a one-mile radius of the Boulevard, creates a very significant commercial opportunity for Arbor Hill. However, leveraging that opportunity depends on waiting until the housing market improves so that when sites are made available to retailers, higher quality stores will be attracted. Retailers currently believe that even if 24,000 persons live within a mile, few people other than the 5,000 neighborhood residents are likely to stop and shop in a troubled neighborhood. The exceptions to this rule are: 1) retailers and professionals that appeal to a very local or specialized market (such as Roy's Caribbean, barber and beauty shops), 2) convenience-driven retailers such as Stewarts, Subway or McDonalds that cater to both regional and local markets and are sited so customers can move in and out for very short visits, and 3) value retailers such as Family Dollar or Payless Shoe Stores that cater to moderate income households.

Given how long the neighborhood has been deteriorating, it is difficult to ask for patience from local citizens. However, long-term, sustainable success can only be possible with fundamental changes supported by real market strength. It is probably better for the long-term health of the Arbor Hill community to assemble sites, maintain them well and *turn down* opportunities for low-end retailers that might signal negative impressions of the neighborhood until the residential and community change that is envisioned in this Plan becomes a reality. While neighborhood demographics are still not likely to support large supermarkets like a 70,000 square foot Hannaford or Price Chopper, the right timing and location should attract and sustain a more modestly-sized grocer such as the local Co-op, Buy Low, A&P or an entrepreneurial spin-off from a wholesaler.

In thinking about retail demographics and potential retailers, it is helpful to compare expenditures within a likely one-mile market area to expenditures in areas similar in size and income. Most retailers along Henry Johnson Boulevard would be attracting customers from the Arbor and West Hill neighborhoods north of Central Avenue as customers south of Central and north of the City line have plentiful retail alternatives. The Market Research Department at the Times Union generously provided 2002 data extrapolated from the 2000 Census by Applied Geographic Solutions about the Arbor Hill / West Hill market area, in comparison to Capital District Communities similar in size and income (see table below):

	Arbor Hill	Cohoes	Amsterdam
2002 Population	17,230	15,204	17,845
1990 Population	19,232	16,825	20,714
2002 Households	7,120	6,871	7,819
1990 Households	7,964	7,133	8,777
Apparel	\$3,008.09	\$2,934.34	\$2,573.45
Contributions	\$1,494.58	\$1,554.16	\$1,364.36
Education	\$1,005.40	\$987.21	\$860.00
Books and Supplies	\$149.08	\$147.03	\$128.97
Tuition	\$856.32	\$840.18	\$731.02
Entertainment	\$2,775.45	\$2,786.11	\$2,446.02
Fees and Admissions	\$712.08	\$725.87	\$638.43
Video/Audio Equip	\$1,056.13	\$1,025.55	\$900.47
Rec. Equip/ Supplies	\$1,007.25	\$1,034.70	\$907.12
Pet Supplies and Services	\$290.27	\$292.88	\$257.10
Other Recreational Equipment	\$716.98	\$741.82	\$650.02
Food and Beverages	\$8,884.39	\$8,848.90	\$7,779.34
Food At Home	\$5,275.04	\$5,183.99	\$4,553.42



Food Away From Home	\$3,089.47	\$3,133.73	\$2,759.75
Alcoholic Beverages	\$519.87	\$531.17	\$466.17
Gifts	\$1,628.39	\$1,644.79	\$1,442.31
Health Care	\$3,266.89	\$3,252.38	\$2,864.09
Household Furnishings and Equipment	\$2,126.29	\$2,153.82	\$1,892.96
Shelter	\$8,903.13	\$9,294.39	\$8,174.92
Household Operations	\$1,601.79	\$1,658.56	\$1,456.19
Misc. Expenses	\$614.70	\$615.72	\$541.00
Personal Insurance	\$611.48	\$625.58	\$552.11
Reading	\$290.17	\$290.71	\$254.87
Tobacco	\$481.10	\$490.67	\$430.21
Transportation	\$11,007.72	\$11,049.32	\$9,731.45
Utilities	\$4,372.76	\$4,209.71	\$3,687.90

Source: Applied Geographic Solutions

One of the interesting facts that emerges from this data is that households actually spend more than their reported income. This is increasingly true across income bands where credit use has become more prevalent, but it is especially true in lower income neighborhoods where more employed individuals are engaged in jobs that provide non-reported income (i.e. waitresses, hair stylists etc). Thus, it is important to look at total expenditures when assessing buying power. Another fact that emerges from this data is that certain basic goods and services – food, clothing, and health care – must be purchased, regardless of income. Businesses that address these basic needs have historically prospered in lower income neighborhoods (e.g. grocers, medical clinics, affordable apparel chains such as Payless Shoe Stores).

B. Abandoned Properties Initiative

Any planning effort in Albany’s inner-city neighborhoods must address the deleterious effect of abandoned buildings and vacant lots on the City’s historic neighborhoods. The age of the City’s housing stock (ranging from 100 – 170 years old in Arbor Hill) is at once the City’s greatest asset and its greatest challenge. Unfortunately, weak housing market conditions have not supported the dramatic need for wide scale and constant restoration and rehabilitation of the aging housing stock. Abandoned structures are the result of disinvestment in neighborhoods. When paying mortgages and/or property taxes exceeds the personal measure of value to a property owner, delinquencies begin to accrue. In the course of mortgage or tax foreclosure, after due process is provided, the lender or County takes title to properties with unpaid mortgages or tax bills. Recent windshield surveys have revealed that there are close to 200 abandoned buildings in Arbor Hill and 800 Citywide. Approximately 30% of these abandoned properties are County-owned, with the remainder in lender or other private hands, often on their way to foreclosure. By contrast, New England cities like Boston which also have an aging housing stock, have experienced hyper-inflation and an incredibly strong housing market over the last 20 years that has worked to preserve the historic physical stock while severely limiting affordability. Given the overriding importance of this issue for all City neighborhoods, a subcommittee was formed to focus on the issue. The subcommittee brainstormed about possible actions that could be taken to address the problem. Their input was incorporated when the City’s Department of Development and Planning issued the Abandoned Properties Report attached as Appendix C.

Abandoned buildings are scattered in Arbor Hill south of Colonie Street. The table and map below summarize the results of a visual survey completed in September 2002. Most of the



buildings are rowhouse structures containing apartments. A comparison of ownership in April 2001 and September 2002 found that 74 of the 179 buildings changed hands over that 18-month period. Albany County was party to forty-one (41) of the transfers. The County sold 19 of the buildings to private individuals. The County took ownership of 22 buildings over the period, largely the result of foreclosure actions.

Survey of Abandoned Buildings In Arbor Hill, September 2002¹

Buildings in Arbor Hill planning area		1497
Buildings identified as Abandoned		179 (12% of total)
Land Use	One Family Residence	22
	Two Family Residence	73
	Three Family Residence	37
	Containing 4 or more apartments	13
	Commercial	33
	Church	1
Ownership	Private Individual/Corporation	131
	Finance Company	7
	Albany County	29
	Nonprofit (including ACDA)	12
	City of Albany	0

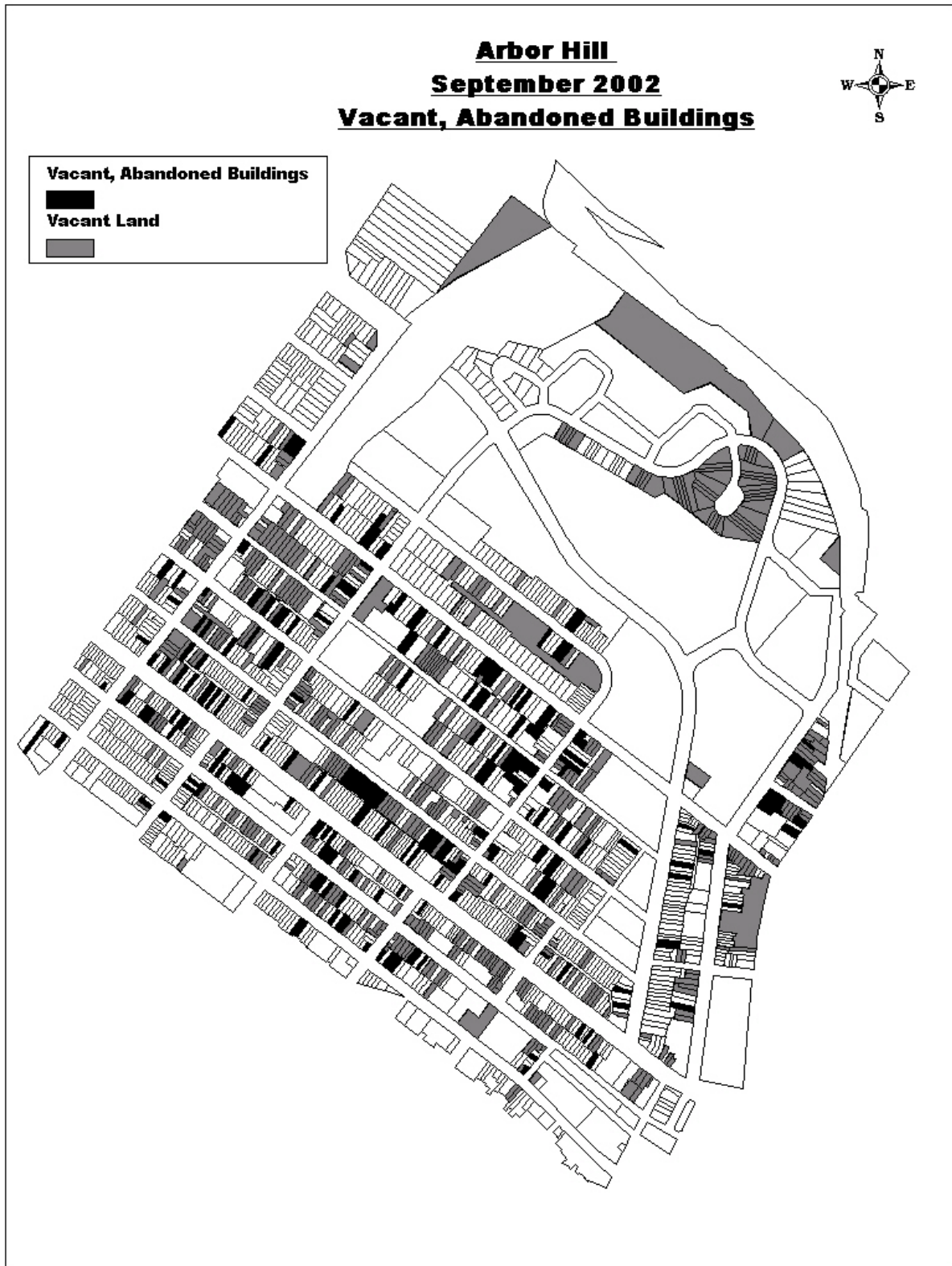
The expense of renovating an abandoned building can vary greatly. The City pegged costs at \$15,000 to \$65,000 per unit, depending on the condition of the building.² However, the experience of TCB and other organizations that utilize the necessary forms of public assistance that allow for the rehabilitation of the most deteriorated or “shell” buildings suggests that costs can rise to as much as \$125,000 per unit. The total investment required to rehabilitate 179 structures would thus be in the range of \$ 7-29 million, resulting in 350 to 500 newly rehabilitated housing units. Since real estate market values are low in the neighborhood, developers face substantial gaps between the costs to rehabilitate buildings and the value of the properties in the rental or for-sale market. This gap translates into a need for subsidy.

The high cost of renovating some of the vacant building stock in Arbor Hill with its resultant draw on scarce subsidy resources speaks to the importance of establishing guidelines for weighing the economic utility of the building against its preservation value. The cost to remove a structure now averages \$17,000/building making the cost of demolition of 179 structures approximately \$3 million.³ Such demolition in Arbor Hill would result in scattered plots of vacant land, presumably ready for development, with a cumulative total area of 13 acres.

¹ Historic Albany Foundation, City of Albany Department of Development and Planning, and The Community Builders survey in September 2002. City of Albany Tax Assessment Record (September 2002) provided ownership information. Tax Assessment record of April 2001 provided land use and number of total buildings in the neighborhood.

² According to the recent experience of the Community Preservation Corporation.

³ According to Albany Community Development Agency staff.





In addition to abandoned buildings, there are 100 to 150 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill considered to be abandoned. These are suitable for reuse or ongoing maintenance and are not currently used for parking or yard space, or designated for construction. Most of the lots are owned by Albany County or private individuals. The vast majority of these properties are classified as unimproved, residential lands. These lots are scattered in all areas south of Colonie Street. Many are vacant as a result of demolition.

The Abandoned Properties Report further describes the existing refuse collection, dumping, anti-litter, snow removal and other code enforcement and Vacant Building Registry activities through the Public Safety Department's Divisions of Fire Safety, and Building and Codes. While the City recognizes the importance of strong code enforcement and the demolition of structures found to be unsound, resources for these activities are limited. Further, the City has recognized that demolition of abandoned buildings in several areas of Arbor Hill – including the Ten Broeck Triangle and along Clinton Avenue - is not desirable. On the contrary, restoring these buildings is a pressing need because these are early urban settlements designated for preservation and lie within historic districts (Downtown Albany District, Broadway/North Pearl Street District, Ten Broeck Historic District, Clinton Avenue District). In these areas, the City desires, when feasible, to stabilize these structures.

The Abandoned Properties Report also describes the property tax collection, lien, foreclosure and disposition processes. Since the disposition of County-owned tax foreclosed properties can have a significant long-term effect on the future of older City neighborhoods, it is critical that the City and County continue to work effectively together to ensure that properties end up in the hands of parties with the resources to properly care for the properties over the long term. The City and County have made this a high priority and their short (Pilot) and long-term plans are further described in the Action Plan (Chapter VI).. In addition, the County continues to adjust the auction process to further assist development efforts. For example, the County is seeking to block repeat code violators from bidding and to place deed restrictions on buildings sold at auction and listed on the Vacant Buildings Registry. The County is also working on methods for addressing delinquencies on chronic eyesores. The Abandoned Properties Subcommittee set forth the following goals (see detailed objectives for Goals in Appendix C):

Goal 1. Educate the public about abandoned properties.

Goal 2. Develop and maintain an inventory of abandoned buildings in the city.

Goal 3. Manage abandoned property to secure public health and safety, and to minimize the blighting influence upon neighboring property.

Goal 4. Encourage the reuse of abandoned properties.



Chapter IV: Planning Process

A. Neighborhood Advisory Committee

In June 2002, Mayor Jennings reached out to neighborhood stakeholders including those who had been critical of prior plans for Swan Street. The Mayor charged the 23 members of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee (see Appendix A) with the task of developing consensus amongst stakeholders on an “Action Plan” which makes the best use of resources to improve the neighborhood. Thus, a diverse group of stakeholders participated as Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee members representing: Arbor Hill residents, homeowners, renters, housing developers, public safety officials, lenders, community advocates, religious leaders, environmental justice advocates, historic preservationists, local economic development representatives, and local elected officials. These committee members and other committed neighborhood activists volunteered hundreds of hours to meeting together, attending public meetings, and reviewing materials and otherwise dedicating their time, energy and talent to help achieve a better future for Arbor Hill.

City staff members who provided technical support to the planning process represented: The Albany Home Store, Albany Community Development Agency, Albany Housing Authority, Department of Public Safety, and the City of Albany Department of Development and Planning. Technical assistance to the advisory committee and the City of Albany was provided through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funded Technical Assistance Provider, The Community Builders, Inc. and its planning and design sub-consultant, Behan Planning Associates, LLC.

The Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee met from June 2002 through May 2003. The schedule of meetings was posted on the Internet at the City of Albany website, www.albanyny.org and distributed to all committee members. The meetings were open to the public. Members of the public were invited to sign in, and then given an opportunity to speak directly to the advisory committee. Over time, members of the public became more active in helping to formulate the plan by serving on subcommittees and working with Committee members in regular meetings.

B. Public Meetings

In addition to the open monthly meetings of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, two public meetings were held:

1. A Project Kickoff Meeting was conducted on June 25, 2002 to inform community members about the planning and public involvement process, introduce the members of the advisory committee, and provide an opportunity at the beginning of the planning process for public input. Sixty residents attended; several residents expressed concern about the quality of life in the neighborhood. Attendees at this meeting expressed some cynicism about the outcome of the planning process since several previous processes had been suspended over the past few years. The Committee invited the public to attend their regular meetings and to stay informed by reviewing Committee meeting minutes. Committee members and planners also offered to attend neighborhood meetings and to spread the work of the Plan through other neighborhood grass roots organizations.
2. On Saturday morning, September 14, 2002, the City, TCB and Behan Planning Associates hosted a hands-on Design Workshop at the New Covenant Charter School. More than 45 residents and stakeholder attended in addition to staff and consultants. The workshop opened



with an introduction to the planning process explaining its goal, followed by a discussion of neighborhood challenges and opportunities, and concluding with ingredients for great neighborhoods.

The second part of the workshop, was a “hands-on” working session. Planners asked participants to break into five groups; each focused on a different geographic area. These areas were: 1. Henry Johnson Boulevard Corridor; 2. Typical Residential Block, with First Street as an example; 3. North Swan Street - between Clinton Avenue and Livingston Avenue; 4) the Ten Broeck Triangle – “Downtown Connections” area; and 5. Neighborhood as a Whole - this group would look at issues affecting the whole neighborhood.

Groups were asked to discuss their vision for the neighborhood, and what strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities they saw for the area they evaluated. The culminating exercise for each group was to mark-up maps with their ideas for physical improvements for revitalizing that area. Each group prepared written notes to accompany their maps with physical and programmatic ideas. The workshop concluded with representatives from each group presenting their collective ideas to all workshop participants for additional discussion.

The workshop was very successful in providing a forum for residents, property owners and other stakeholders to roll up their sleeves and put on paper their positive ideas for what they wanted the community to look and feel like in the future. Ideas like “putting the ARBOR back in Arbor Hill” and celebrating the neighborhood’s African American heritage were put forth with great energy and enthusiasm. Many participants in this September workshop became regular visitors to the Neighborhood Advisory Committee’s monthly meetings or stayed informed about the process through informal or formal contact with Committee members and planners.

From public input at designated public and committee meetings, some key messages were delivered to the neighborhood advisory committee. One strong message was to recognize the great human resource Arbor Hill has in individuals and local, grassroots groups who are passionate about the neighborhood.

Residents and committee members urged that revitalization strategies include ample opportunities for private and not-for-profit entities to be part of the solution. Citizens in the neighborhood are wary of “big projects.” Citizens are seeking diversity in their neighborhood in as many senses of the word as possible: incomes, ethnicities, housing sizes and types, and architectural designs in keeping with the neighborhood context. Residents advocated for a mix of rehabilitation of existing structures with complementary new infill construction. Citizens are also interested in a mix of neighborhood commercial uses and a diversity of cultural opportunities. Citizens are interested in more engagement with existing cultural institutions that want to reach out to and involve the community to a greater degree, as well as grassroots cultural groups and individual artists.

C. Input on Draft Conceptual Plans

Based on the public input from the design workshop, advisory committee comments, and other feedback obtained through committee meetings during the Fall 2002, The Community Builders, Inc., with their sub-consultant, Behan Planning Associates, LLC, drafted principles and descriptive conceptual plans for each of the five geographic areas discussed at the public workshop. These concept graphics were meant to generate discussion and debate about alternate physical manifestations of the vision articulated at the Design Workshop, and to



obtain feedback for further refinement. The ideas obtained at the public workshop were used to help guide the development of land use concepts and planning principles appropriate for Arbor Hill. The public comments were also reviewed and evaluated by the advisory committee and technical advisors to identify specific revitalization projects and programs. These draft conceptual plans were reviewed by the neighborhood advisory committee at its December 2002 and January 2003 meetings.

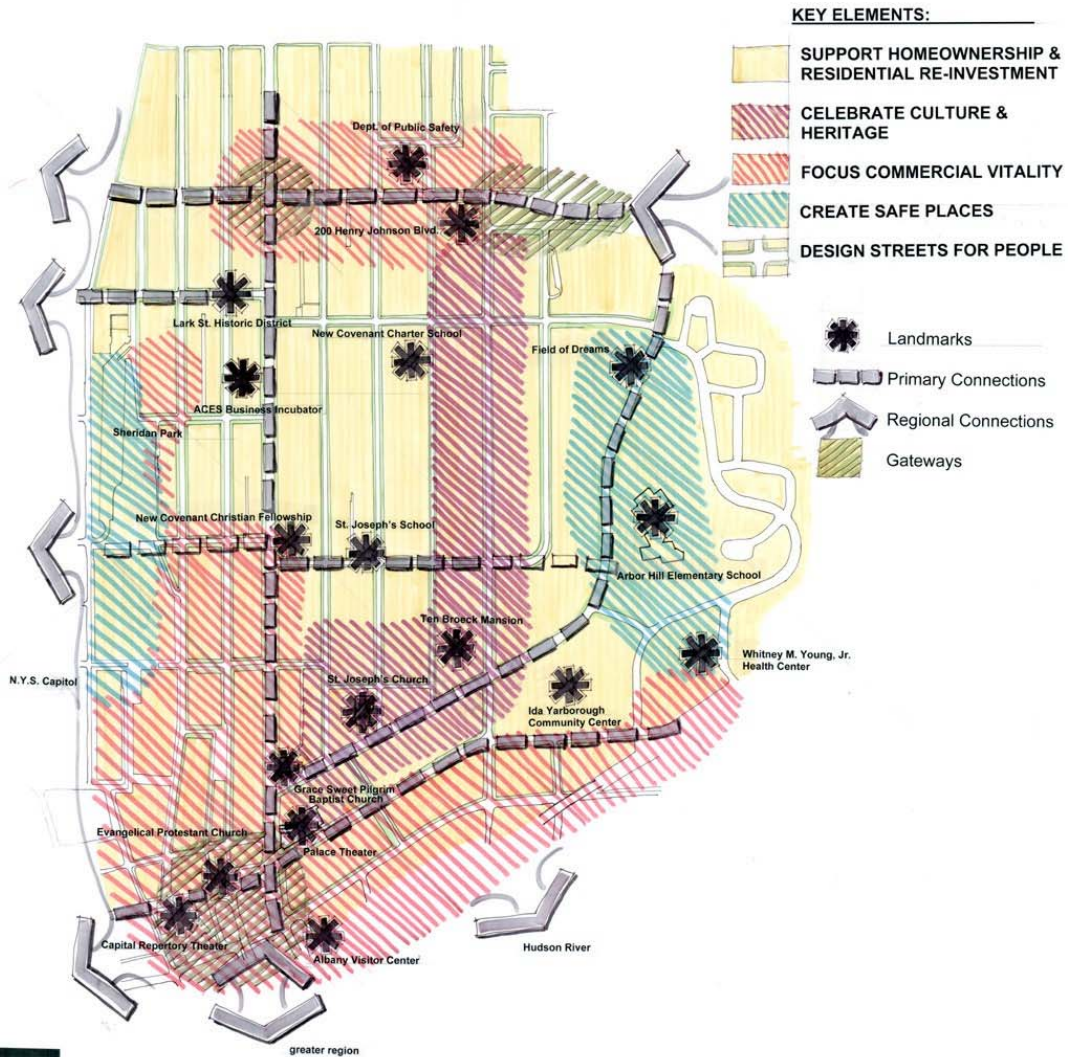
1. The Planning Team developed a “Concept Plan for Arbor Hill” – a big-picture vision – that was presented to the neighborhood advisory committee on December 18, 2002. It summarized key principles that the public and the committee had developed to date. The graphic follows. Arbor Hill has significant assets that serve as foundations for the neighborhood’s revitalization. These include its historic structures, a diverse population that adds richness to the whole city and region, a beautiful hill-top setting that offers magnificent views and vistas, valuable institutions and potential for a healthy commercial base. The concept plan was meant to build upon these assets. Thus the four key elements of the vision for Arbor Hill to emerge were:

- Support Homeownership and Rental Housing
- Celebrate Arts, Culture & Heritage
- Support Business and Job Development (Focus Commercial Vitality)
- Strengthen Quality of Life (Create Safe Public Spaces and Design Streets for People)

Other important elements of the vision include the importance of connecting the neighborhood to the greater region, especially to the Riverfront and the Downtown and State Capitol. In addition, there was interest in portraying a positive image of the neighborhood through the establishment of gateways at Henry Johnson Boulevard’s intersections with Livingston Avenue and Clinton Avenue, and at Clinton Avenue’s intersection with Broadway.



CONCEPT PLAN FOR ARBOR HILL



ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN FOR THE CITY OF ALBANY

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee
 Albany Local Development Corp.
 U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

Prepared by: Behan Planning Associates, LLC
 With: The Community Builders, Inc.

Scale: 1" = 200'



December 18, 2002

Map not intended for site-specific work.



2. The planning team developed a “Residential Street Concept Plan (Example using First Street)” to show graphically the principles expressed by the neighborhood advisory committee and the public. These include a desire for high-quality homeowner and rental housing, with high-quality streetscapes for pedestrians, and an emphasis on rehabilitation. Historically, Arbor Hill has been a primarily residential area supported by neighborhood commercial uses. The neighborhood developed to serve residents ranging from wealthy to average workers in the nascent industries along the Erie Canal. The following principles summarize a vision of a future “typical residential street” that would be applicable for any residential street in Arbor Hill:
 - Recognize and Support Ongoing Investment by Residents
 - Fit New Residential Construction to conform with historic districts
 - Where feasible, rehabilitate abandoned buildings – if not feasible, demolish blight
 - Calm Traffic through Residential Areas
 - Perform Streetscape Improvements in Coordination with Future Investments: Sidewalks, Plantings, Lighting
 - Explore Creative Solutions for Off-Street Parking

Creative solutions should be explored for increasing off-street parking for existing properties, as well as for new investments. This could mean looking at existing alleys that may need improvements to increase usability and access, as well as installing “paper” alleys shown on historic Sanborn maps and tax parcel maps. Additional planning and design options should be explored for providing outlets for alleys onto streets at new locations, as well as for discussing management issues with involved property owners and the city. Alleys could enhance both the residential and commercial properties they might serve. Safety issues should be explored with the Department of Public Safety. Initial comment from Public Safety indicated that through alleys are preferable to dead-end alleys. In addition, existing institutions, such as the numerous faiths and churches located in Arbor Hill, as well as the commercial properties throughout Arbor Hill, should be invited to discussions of redesigning and improving alleys and access for off-street parking. By expanding the planning and design to include these neighboring uses the opportunities for finding solutions may be greater.

Streetscape improvements should occur with investments. This strategy would help avoid damaging and having to redo any of the improvements. Street trees would be desirable for both sides of the street for any replanting program.

3. The core of North Swan Street from Clinton Avenue to Livingston Street was one of the focus areas of the public design workshop in September 2002. The consultants and planners developed a Draft Concept Plan for this four-block area. The purpose of the graphic was to summarize the public input and refine it into a realistic portrayal based on existing conditions. Given the past controversy about the AHA’s Swan Street project, the plan was meant to capture neighborhood residents’ desire for more of a mix of uses with an emphasis on rehabilitation. The graphic represented a planning level design, and not any specific development proposal. The graphic illustrates the conceptual planning principles for revitalizing this area of Arbor Hill and should be used only as a guide to creating and evaluating future proposals.



One comment on the plan was that conceptual new infill buildings would block the view of two murals that were painted by a local artist in summer 2002. The murals depicting peace and community unity were sponsored by the Social Capital Development Corporation's Restorative Justice Initiative and were part of a grassroots effort by numerous community organizations, youth and adults. Given these efforts, any future actual development proposal that involves the sites in question would involve the notification of those involved. Another, more general, comment, was that the density was too great as shown on the conceptual plan. This comment was considered and integrated into the Action Plan recommendations as well as a revised graphic depicting the conceptual plans for North Swan Street (included in Appendix E)

In summary, for any specific development proposal on North Swan Street, or throughout the Arbor Hill neighborhood, stakeholders such as directly affected landowners and neighbors, neighborhood associations, and any other involved community group or individuals should be given the opportunity to be involved in the planning and design review process. The guiding principles for the future revitalization of North Swan Street from Clinton to Livingston Avenues that the committee achieved consensus are the following:

- Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings where feasible
- Demolition of abandoned buildings that are not economically feasible for rehabilitation nor of prime historic importance in the neighborhood
- New Buildings Reflect Historic Character
- Mix of Homeownership and Rental
- Attached and Detached Buildings
- Sidewalk Improvements, Lighting, and Trees
- Create Off-Street Parking
- Sunlight to Homes
- Yards and Greenspace
- Consider introducing Access Lanes

In addition, the North Swan Street Concept Plan depicted a land use vision that included the following concepts:

- Commercial Rehabilitation at the Corner of N. Swan Street and Clinton Avenue. Reuse existing buildings for mixed-use commercial at this intersection. A supporting concept for the mixed-use commercial rehabilitation is to allow access and off-street parking behind the buildings, if feasible. Providing access behind the mixed-use commercial would open the possibility, if feasible, for off-street parking in support of the New Covenant Christian Fellowship building, for its use or any other future use. The amount of parking would be determined at the time of actual design for specific development.
- Access Lanes – Alleys behind Clinton Avenue. Improvements of existing alleys, and provision of new alleys behind and through Clinton Avenue properties would enable stronger uses of Clinton Avenue properties for mixed uses and housing as applicable. Alleys would open the possibility to off-street parking options at the rear of Clinton Avenue. This concept would support the proposed rehabilitation investment in the Clinton Avenue housing.
- Study potential for Adaptive Reuse of St. Joseph's School. Potential options for re-use are: senior housing, private initiative such as an artists' live-work loft space, educational, etc. However, the limiting factors for any adaptive reuse are the cost of rehabilitation and a future project sponsor's capacity to leverage funds to pay for such rehabilitation costs.



To the extent adaptive reuse concepts are not feasible in the near term, the options of mothballing or demolishing the building should be considered.

- An improved park space is shown on the site of what is currently a basketball court site in disrepair. The final program and design any improved park space would be determined in the future.
 - Rehabilitation of Sound, Existing Residential Structures for Residential Reuse. The concept depicted reuse of most of the residential buildings, while allowing that a few in severe conditions would likely need to be demolished.
 - New Residential Infill Construction. The concept is to provide infill housing to match the scale and density of the area.
 - Maintain Existing Mixed-Use Commercial from Second Street to Third Street, particularly on the east side of the street. This concept would support rehabilitation of these mixed-use commercial buildings.
 - Cultural Connection to Ten Broeck Mansion is depicted by showing a tree-lined pathway from North Swan to the Ten Broeck Mansion. The funding, design and implementation of this concept would need to be worked out with all affected property owners and project sponsors, particularly with the Ten Broeck Mansion.
 - Commercial Uses and a Cultural Center were suggested on the North Swan Street Concept Plan between Ten Broeck Place and Livingston Avenue as an opportunity and vision expressed by the public. The exact configuration of such cultural space is dependent upon interested organizations' ability to secure resources and site control of the buildings.
 - An additional vision of a concept depicted on the original plan was the "New Signature Building at the southwest corner of North Swan Street and Livingston Avenue. The design team proposed a significant building be placed there to anchor this highly visible corner site that is visible all along the drive up the hill along Livingston Avenue. This idea was rejected because the density was thought too much for the area. Stakeholders preferred the idea of a dedicated green space, possibly with public art, as a better alternative. No matter what the future use, project sponsorship will be needed, whether it is public or private or some combination
 - Finally, an improved pedestrian streetscape is depicted by trees along North Swan Street as well as the side streets.
4. Henry Johnson Boulevard is an unusual commercial thoroughfare: it combines qualities of local convenience shopping with opportunities for capturing the significant drive –through market that passes through the neighborhood. At the public workshop, participants recognized that the street is currently devoted to residential use as well as commercial and institutional uses. The institutional uses include the Department of Public Safety and the North Station for the City of Albany Police. A copy of the conceptual street plan is included in the Appendix E of this report.

Opportunities exist for commercial redevelopment and commercial infill along Henry Johnson Boulevard, primarily at three locations where the properties are publicly held: between Clinton and Second Street (not all contiguous); a small location between Second Street and Third Street on the east side of Henry Johnson Boulevard, and on the west side of Henry Johnson Boulevard between the Department of Public Safety site and the newly opened Family Dollar store at the Livingston Avenue intersection. The area between Public Safety and Family Dollar offers opportunities for the reconfiguration of the space for



introducing potentially a new commercial building, redesigning shared parking and access, reopening Oak Street onto Livingston Avenue, and making traffic lights/traffic safety improvements. New developments would likely develop near core areas of public safety.

To assist in the continued revitalization of the boulevard, improved access and additional off-street parking would be highly desirable. In addition the existing businesses and residents would be supported and benefit from additional access and parking opportunities.

In addition, two close-up concept plans were prepared to illustrate two visions of how commercial opportunities could be developed on the east side of Henry Johnson Boulevard from Clinton Avenue to Second Street in the vicinity of abandoned properties. The intersection of Henry Johnson Boulevard with Clinton Avenue, particularly the northeast corner holds potential for commercial redevelopment. Yet the corner buildings are part of the Clinton Avenue Historic District and thus the historic preservation of these buildings is a value to the community. Thus the planning team depicted on the preferred concept plan: two building masses that would not disturb the corner historic buildings along Clinton Avenue and that would involve shared parking, use of alleys that are coordinated with the surrounding residential neighborhood, vegetative buffering between the commercial uses and the adjacent residential. The second alternative showed presented what would be a more controversial concept of a new corner building at Clinton Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard that could only potentially be meritable if the community was to gain an outstanding commercial entity with the highest quality of design – such as a neighborhood grocery store that is so highly desired. Again, notably this alternative would have the burden of proof not only to the community but also to the state historic preservation officer.



Henry Johnson Boulevard East Side Commercial Development Conceptual Site Plan

FOR THE CITY OF ALBANY – ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Prepared by: Behan Planning Associates, LLC
The Community Builders, Inc.
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Albany Local Development Corp.
Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee

January 22, 2003

Not to Scale



Note: This concept plan illustrates the planning principles for revitalizing the area of the Arbor Hill neighborhood and should be used as a guide to create and evaluate future proposals.



Existing residences are concentrated along Henry Johnson Boulevard between its intersection with Sheridan Avenue and Clinton Avenue. From Clinton Avenue to Livingston Avenue, fewer buildings are used for residences, and with this part of the boulevard in the C-1 zoning district, it is likely that future re-use would likely not be new infill residential. Residences along Henry Johnson Boulevard and along the interior of the side streets on both sides of Henry Johnson Boulevard should be shielded from commercial and traffic impacts using such techniques as vegetative buffering, and other constructed elements that protect the privacy of homeowners.

Other concepts for Henry Johnson Boulevard include the creation of gateways at both ends of Henry Johnson Boulevard within the Arbor Hill Neighborhood. Planners have created a vision for the greening of the former Furlani's garage site as a gateway at the northern edge of the boulevard (see graphic images in Appendix E and Chapter V).

5. The Ten Broeck Triangle – Downtown Connections Concept Plan (see Appendix E) shows that this area has numerous assets to build upon for the future revitalized Arbor Hill. These assets include: St. Joseph's Church and park, the Ten Broeck Triangle historic district, the Grace Sweet Pilgrim Church, the Palace Theater, the First Church of Albany, buildings to be rehabilitated and used by the Capital Repertory Theater between Monroe and Orange Streets, the remaining section of historic Clinton Square, historic Quackenbush Square that houses the Albany Visitors Center and the Albany Pump Station restaurant and micro-brewery, the economic potential of the Leo O'Brien Federal Building, the historic North Pearl Street, and the Ten Broeck Mansion on the hilltop.

The edge of Arbor Hill at Clinton, Pearl and Broadway is a significant city gateway entrance for residents and visitors arriving from Interstate-787. The concepts for refining this city gateway included:

- Keep a clear view of the Palace Theater and the Salvation Army Building site from the highway exit.
- Create an aesthetically pleasing connection for pedestrians and vehicular traffic from the Albany Visitors Center at Quackenbush Square up to the Palace Theater and its Cultural District.
- Enclose and guide (frame) the view and the excessive openness of the arrival space to the Palace Theater with a new building(s) as edges ("stepped back" as needed) along Clinton Avenue.
- Use streetscape features such as at the Palace, Capital Repertory Theater, and other locations.
- Use year-round lights on trees to create a festive atmosphere.

A summary of the plan's principles and concepts are listed below:

- Protect the Residential Community
- Support reuse options for St. Joseph's Church that strengthen the neighborhood. Consider re-use options that are low-impact to neighborhood
- Improve Residents' Access to Off-Street Parking and continue to advocate for a Residential Parking Permit system so residents are not blocked from parking by downtown workers
- Support Creation of Palace Theater Cultural District that Complements the Neighborhood
- Increase Off-street Parking for Cultural District and Professional Office Uses



- Recognize the Federal Complex and the Salvation Army building as opportunities to Diversity Uses and Support District Revitalization
- Support Infill Development that Complements the Historic Neighborhood Character and Scale
- Expand Opportunities for Residents to Connect to the Waterfront
- Seize opportunity to expand on ethnic retail district building upon proposed Asian market
- Attract Visitors to Historic and Cultural Neighborhood Features: Link to Emerging Way-Finding Efforts.

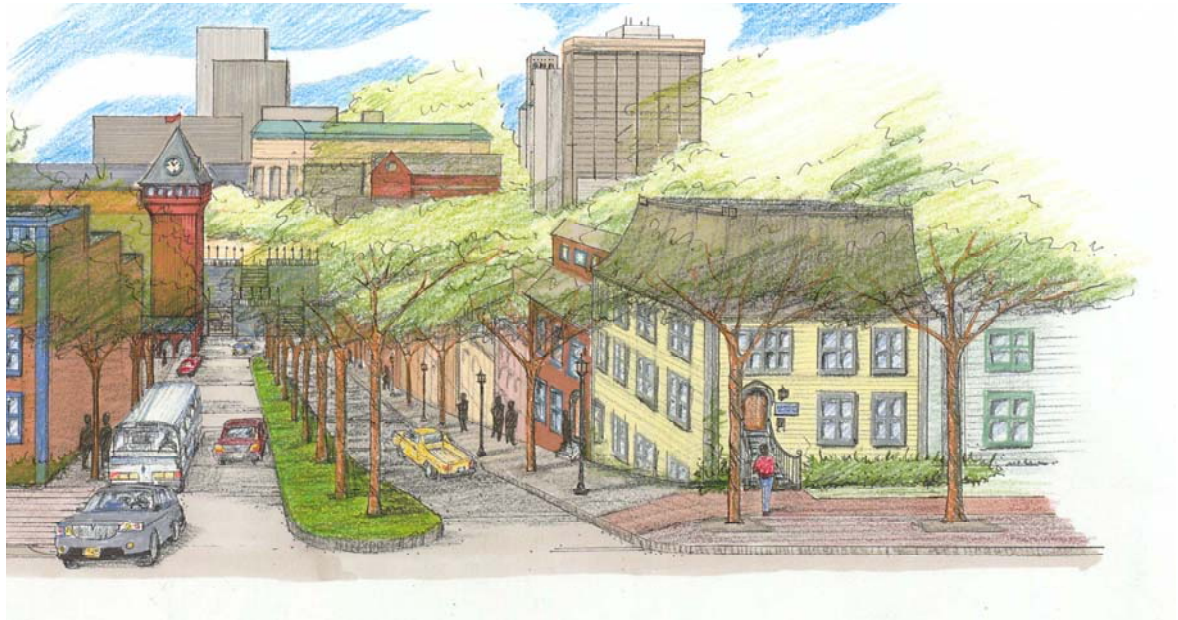
In addition, specific concepts were developed for consideration in future revitalization within this focus area. For Ten Broeck Mansion the concepts include: enhancing the visibility from the corner of Ten Broeck Place and Ten Broeck Street looking up the hill towards the mansion; and the idea to create a stronger cultural connection to the North Swan Street cultural area (considered at this time to be between Ten Broeck Place and Livingston Avenue) and the Underground Railroad heritage.

Ten Broeck Street provides an opportunity with its specific width and setting – for slowing traffic and improving its pedestrian character. One option for strengthening pedestrian character is to widen sidewalks. Another option to consider is addition a double row of street trees on both sides of the street. Yet another option would be a center green space median. Any such option would require sponsorship for funding and additional planning and design processing involving the neighborhood.

Wilson Street lends itself to the concept of improving its aesthetics and utility by strengthening the connection between Ten Broeck Street and parking facilities on North Pearl Street and below. The potential benefits of looking more closely at Wilson Street may be more apparent in the future as a potential part of solving the need for more off-street parking to service both the neighborhood residential uses as well as the rehabilitation and re-use of St. Joseph's Church. Recognized issues concerning Wilson Street that must also be factored in are its substantial steepness, as well as its active use for vehicular travel and specifically for garages and some other current limited off-street parking.

Increasing the economic potential of the Leo O'Brien Federal Complex conceptually would consider improving the public parking access in the immediate future, as well as exploring revitalization options such as retail and corporate offices with street-level shops and restaurants. Another consideration for this site would be to locate additional parking garage levels at the south end, above an active ground floor use.

Another important area in establishing strong connections to downtown and the State Capitol is the Sheridan Hollow area. The topography tends to isolate the neighborhood, but overtime, key building projects meant to service downtown's Washington Avenue area could also be important in providing a better visual and pedestrian link between the neighborhood and downtown. The view shown below is meant to convey potential concepts for improved connections to downtown Albany and Capitol Hill government offices and places of employment. Road improvements help create a slightly wider "boulevard" feeling with a green median lined with street trees. The image also depicts pedestrian amenities such as street trees on both sides of the street, pedestrian-scale lighting, and improved pedestrian access up the hill via an elevator tower (in this case with a public observatory) accompanied by a well-designed staircase. The view also shows rehabilitated historic buildings along the improved streetscape connections.



D. Subcommittee Meetings and Efforts

In late January, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee decided to break into Subcommittees formed around the leading topical themes that were emerging from comments on the Planners' work. The goal of these subcommittees was to achieve consensus around the guiding principles and Action Items in the four thematic areas: Support Homeownership and Residential Reinvestment, Celebrate Unique Culture and Heritage: People and Places, Expand Business and Job Development and Strengthen Quality of Life. The Subcommittees invited public participation in their meetings, thus widening the circle of ideas that emerged from the planning efforts and making broader grassroots connections with people who care about the neighborhood.



These groups met numerous times, both during the regular Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings and in supplementary meetings during the days and evenings of February and March 2003. The individual groups made great progress and presented their ideas back to the whole advisory committee. The Project Planning team took the consensus ideas from the subcommittees and used this work as a basis for this Plan, its conceptual graphics and Action Plan Outline, as described in Chapter V.

E. Final Public Meeting

Before finalizing the Plan as described in this report, the planning team solicited input from the Neighborhood Advisory Committee during the month of April and from public during the month of May, 2003. The final results of this effort were presented to the public at an evening meeting on June 10, 2003.



Chapter V: Action Plan: Guiding Principles and Revitalization Recommendations

A. Action Plan Summary and Map

This chapter outlines the consensus Action Plan for Arbor Hill through the narrative outline below, the attached graphic, and the Action Plan Grid. The following map illustrates where key actions will occur. The background base color of light brown is shown to depict that residential land use is the core land use for Arbor Hill. The intent of the graphic is to highlight certain important action items – it is not meant to be inclusive of all the proposed future actions and initiatives for Arbor Hill. For example, many programmatic initiatives are not amenable to graphic depiction. Labels on the map highlight special land use ideas for particular areas, although the purpose of the map is not to show comprehensive land uses. Below is a list of the concepts depicted on the map:

Key Actions Shown on the Map

- Abandoned Properties Initiative, Residential Rehabilitation & Infill Development
- Clinton Avenue Residential Rehabilitation. Palace Theater Renovation.
- Re-Open Child Care Center.
- Connections to “Downtown” and Capitol Hill.
- Commercial Infill Opportunities on Henry Johnson Blvd.
- Three gateways are indicated on the map as dashed, gray-colored circles.
- Lark Street Improvements.
- Potential Park/Playground Sites near School.
- Business Incubator Expansion
- Overlook Park Near Housing Reinvestment.
- St. Joseph’s School – Feasibility Study.
- Adaptive Reuse St. Joseph’s Church
- Cultural Connection: Ten Broeck Mansion to N. Swan St
- Capital Repertory Theater: Actors Housing & Performance-Educational Space.
- Visitors Center – Increase Neighborhood Links.
- Support Research on Underground Railroad Locations
- Historic Ten Broeck Triangle Area
- North Pearl Street and Broadway Revitalization:.
- Rehabilitate Salvation Army Building and Redevelop Site for Commercial / Cultural Uses.
- Safe Connection to School.

The sections following the map describe more fully the Guiding Principles and Revitalization Recommendations agreed to by the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee. These principles recommendations are broken into the four core topical areas: Homeownership and Rental Housing, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Business and Job Development and Quality of Life. The Action Plan Grid in the final section lists the recommendations with associated costs.



B. Homeownership and Rental Housing

Guiding Principles:

- Support new lower density housing. Expand affordable home-ownership opportunities. Create and attract new homeowners to strengthen families and the neighborhood as a whole.
- Rehabilitate existing housing and build compatible infill housing. Increase investment, both public and private, in the neighborhood in an effort to restore a workable real estate market. This residential reinvestment strategy is a vehicle for improving private market conditions and as a strategy to redevelop vacant buildings and lots.
- Provide a variety of housing types for all ages and family sizes and incomes. Develop Arbor Hill as a community of choice whose residents are comprised of a full spectrum of families economically, racially, chronologically, etc..
- Use high quality designs and materials that fit the neighborhood context. . New homes should respect the historic context of existing structures, neighboring uses and scale. Infill housing should be built around intact, sound existing housing in order to achieve long term success and catalyze private investment.
- Support existing homeowners. Improve the quality and affordability of housing stock for Arbor Hill and City residents. It is important to note that the improvements must come in the form of development of new and rehabilitated housing as well as providing support for existing homeowners and with quality of life improvements and homeownership and rehab funding opportunities.



An Elevation View of a Typical Residential Street in Arbor Hill: This image reflects the following guiding principles for the rehabilitation of existing housing, new infill construction that complements the residential character; and the addition of street trees to provide shade. In addition, at the far right, the edge of a neighborhood park is indicated to convey the importance of complementary investments in the pedestrian streetscape and parks as residential reinvestment occurs.



A Visionary Plan View of a Residential Street in Arbor Hill: This drawing illustrates principles to guide future residential area re-investment in Arbor Hill. Attached and detached houses are shown on lots slightly larger than standard Arbor Hill lots. Alleys show opportunities for off-street parking in rear garages or on parking pads as an option, in addition to off-street parking through individual driveways. Depending on economic feasibility, garages may be desirable in a future housing market, so some garages are shown. Through-way alleys are preferable from a policing and safety perspective than dead-end alleys. While the concepts described above are replicable to other blocks, this drawing of First Street includes an “overlook park” concept at mid-block because of the unique views available from that elevated First Street site which affords great views of the downtown skyline.

Recommendations: The recommendations comprise existing housing programs as well as planned and ongoing real estate developments as follows:

1. The most important housing initiative is the Abandoned Properties Initiative. This effort will further the other residential reinvestment goals. The Abandoned Properties Initiative is taking shape on two important parallel tracks:
 - a. In the short term, the City, planners and Advisory Committee members felt it was important to move immediately to launch a pilot program to move available buildings and vacant lots from the County’s Auction list into responsible hands that will support the residential reinvestment strategy. So as not to lose the opportunity to quickly implement recommendations coming out of this planning effort, The City asked the County to hold approximately 30 buildings that would otherwise have been auctioned off to the highest bidder in December, 2002 for potential transfer to the City. The County agreed to this request and subsequently worked with the City to organize a tour of these buildings. City staff and a group of neighborhood stakeholders, historic preservation advocates and private and non-profit developers evaluated the redevelopment potential of these County-owned properties. The tour revealed that by the time many properties are foreclosed by the County, they have suffered very significantly from disinvestment by prior owners. Some of the properties had been through previous foreclosure cycles and were structurally unsound and deemed infeasible for redevelopment. However, there were 13 buildings and 45 vacant lots that the City and Neighborhood Advisory Committee asked the County to consider



transferring to the Albany Community Development Agency. The County agreed to the request and will transfer the properties for the redevelopment opportunities described below. The planners and Neighborhood Advisory Committee consider this transfer critical to the success of the residential reinvestment strategy because it will allow for a coordinated and thoughtful reinvestment strategy. The group has already preliminarily evaluated which buildings and vacant lots will likely be best candidates for homeownership opportunities. The Request for Proposals for the properties (draft attached as Exhibit D) is scheduled to be widely marketed after the County transfers the properties during the summer, 2003. Given the interest expressed so far, the City expects great response from committed and experienced non-profit groups as well as private investors and potential homeowners. Responses to the Request for Proposals will be evaluated by ACDA staff and key stakeholders to ensure that respondents' plans for the buildings or lots will conform to the Plan's Guiding Principles and that respondents have the experience and financial capacity to complete proposed development efforts. The Albany Community Development Agency has agreed to commit funds for limited stabilization and maintenance of the properties so further deterioration can be avoided pending transfer and development. The City intends to deed the properties to successful respondents with a reverter clause that will allow the properties to be re-taken by the City if a respondent does not complete their redevelopment effort on a timely basis.

Our recommendation is that the City and County implement this first phase of the pilot program and replicate this effort as the next County foreclosure list is published – such replication should allow the City to place a pipeline of properties in the hands of entrepreneurs who are able to redevelop properties on a streamlined basis. As currently planned, the program calls for the transfer of 30 buildings over a three-year period. These buildings will be rehabilitated with a combination of private funds, and existing ACDA resources from the Tenant Rental Assistance Program (TARP), Home Owners Assistance Program (HOAP) and the Lead Assistance Program (LEAD). Buildings in significantly deteriorated condition will require that additional state, federal, or foundation resources also be leveraged.

- b. The City is also looking beyond the Pilot program to replicate the success cities such as such as Rochester, Cleveland and Chicago have had in bringing the program to scale. The City of Chicago has seen dramatic success with its program, which it calls “Tax Reactivation” both from a residential reinvestment and tax base perspective. Thousands of housing units as well as commercial development and cultural sites have been developed in that City's inner-city neighborhoods since the program was launched 15 years ago. This has resulted in improved housing markets and far less tax delinquency - in some neighborhoods, instead of almost universal tax delinquency in the late 1980s, it has been hard to find tax foreclosed properties since the year 2000.

Similarly, The Enterprise Foundation, a national non-profit community development organization, has helped the City of Rochester administer a \$10 million public/private financing pool. The Rochester Housing Development Fund Corporation is a partnership of the City, private lenders, Enterprise and non-profits. The Fund holds title to HUD-foreclosed properties, organizes the properties into rational clusters and prepares financing packages and rehabilitation specifications to ensure that approximately 300 properties expected in the pipeline are redeveloped. Enterprise has agreed to provide similar assistance to the City of Albany in order to create a long-term strategy to enable the Pilot program described above to be sustained over time and spread to other City neighborhoods. We recommend that the City place a very high priority on this work.



2. As shown on the summary map, the center of the Arbor Hill neighborhood is targeted for very significant public, private and not-for-profit reinvestment. The yellow color on the map shows the area east of North Swan Street across to east of Henry Johnson Boulevard, and north to Colonie Street and south to about Clinton Avenue. The core area housing plan will leverage over \$20 million in public and private investments in housing and mixed-use buildings with and up-front investment of \$5 million in HOPE VI capital funds. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee endorsed the work of the housing subcommittee in adopting the following Core Area Residential Reinvestment strategy:
 - The Residential Reinvestment strategy would rely on various sponsoring entities from the community to further portions of the plan. ACDA would oversee the initiative with AHA focused on certain core components of the plan.
 - A three-phase investment strategy will focus on the areas between Swan Street and Henry Johnson Blvd. Each phase will include rental and for-sale housing. Development by the Albany Housing Authority under its HOPE VI initiative will proceed along a parallel path at the same time as properties are redeveloped through the RFP process described above by non-profits, experienced and reputable private investors and potential homebuyers.
 - The redevelopment of parcels will be focused on those currently publicly owned and/or abandoned (see map of properties currently publicly owned in Appendix E). Redevelopment will take place in rational clusters along First, Second, Third, Lark, Swan and Colonie Streets. The locations and clustering will be designed to create critical mass and momentum that will support private investment rather being scattered too widely or concentrated on any one block.
 - Density of units will be an important consideration with an average of two new housing units per lot and no more than three new units per lot in specific instances. If at all possible rehabilitation of buildings should strive to achieve unit reduction. For example, certain historic 3-story townhomes could be redesigned as a duplex two or three bedroom unit over a smaller flat.
 - Attention should be placed on making units that serve modern families. This includes designs that contemplate off-street parking through driveways, garages or alleys.
 - A mix of home ownership and rental housing. The Plan contemplates nearly 190 units of housing with 90 units being targeted for home ownership. From a building perspective, this would mean approximately 90 buildings for home ownership and perhaps 40 buildings for rental housing. Achieving this mix will depend on accomplishing very successful, very high quality rental and for-sale housing in the first phase so that private market activity is catalyzed to support far higher sales activity than has occurred in the neighborhood in recent years.
 - The income levels of the occupants would be tiered. Although the subcommittee acknowledged the importance of safe, decent and affordable housing, it was also noted that the effort shouldn't concentrate poverty or persons of a particular income strata. Therefore, it was important to create developments that allowed for families of many different economic circumstances. The subcommittee proposed that, if possible, any new development create a significant number of the units at market.



- The proposal has a concentration of both new construction and renovation. The current break down assumes that 40-50% of the buildings in the core housing area redevelopment will be the renovation of existing structures.

The subcommittee stressed that the above initiative should have opportunities for all developers whose plans meet the guiding principles. There should be a mechanism to foster both public and private development in the neighborhood. Toward this end, the subcommittee stressed the importance of strategically deploying the City's resources to meet the goals of the neighborhood and achieve the greatest impact.

3. Other Neighborhood Initiatives. The subcommittee discussed the other initiatives and acknowledged that certain developments were also of specific importance:
 - a. The Clinton Avenue redevelopment/stabilization of 216 apartments. The Clinton Avenue area is highlighted on the summary map to indicate a specific public/private funding initiative of approximately \$3 million to rehabilitate residential properties along Historic Clinton Avenue. Although not shown on such a large-scale map, the concept of improving the alleys on both sides behind Clinton Avenue (existing or future alleys between Orange and Clinton, and likewise, between Clinton and First Street) would help support the revitalization of these historic structures over the long-term, as well as help to improve the residential side street conditions of Orange and First Streets.
 - b. Capital Repertory Theater: Artists lofts at the corner of Orange and Monroe Streets; see more complete description in Arts and Culture section.
 - c. Feasibility testing regarding the potential redevelopment of important, but difficult to develop, historic structures such as Saint Joseph's School and Church, 41 Ten Broeck Street and the King Building, among others. The recommended first action to evaluate the potential adaptive re-use of the historic St. Joseph's School is to perform a feasibility study that would tie into a market analysis for adaptive reuse. Many ideas have been discussed, but before any vision can be realized, economic feasibility must be assessed. Any future re-use should consider in synchronization – the creative opportunities for providing off-street parking and improving / redesigning the park space across the street. The City could also solicit ideas about the feasibility of adaptively reusing this structure by issuing an Request for Proposals that asks respondents to prove project economic feasibility.
 - d. Continue efforts to create more homeowners through the services of the Albany Home Store and other programs such as Habitat for Humanity, Quality Affordable City Homes, Rehab America, The Land Trust, etc. To make the homeownership component successful, the subcommittee stressed the importance of sound new-homeowner counseling both before, during and after purchase with an emphasis on outreach to existing Arbor Hill residents. Specific focus should be placed on credit readiness and other financial counseling.
 - e. The subcommittee identified the need to support and expand the landlord training program offered by the Albany Housing Coalition at the Albany HomeStore. Marketing could be targeted to Arbor Hill landlords. The program assists with a myriad of rental property issues from feasibility to purchase and ultimately to management issues.



- f. Seek financial incentives for property owners to rehabilitate their properties, e.g. through support of the pending NYS Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, municipal programs such as the Residential-Commercial Urban exemption and 421f Residential Improvements exemption.

In addition to these direct housing recommendations, the planning team and Neighborhood Advisory Committee also recommend that:

- Infrastructure investments in the neighborhood should be targeted to support the strategic residential reinvestment program in a way that will leverage investments. For example, providing parking and a quality streetscape, in some cases by building or rehabilitating alleys, will both improve housing values in the neighborhood and improve quality of life by providing for more attractive forms of parking and utility placement. New and rehabilitated alleys could be designed and located behind new residential and commercial development as well as behind existing residential and commercial areas.
- City agencies and the developers, non-profits agencies and entrepreneurs implementing housing improvements should ensure that extensive outreach and linkages to training are provided so that minority firms' and local residents' participation in the contracting and construction work force opportunities are maximized.

Finally, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and housing subcommittee recommend that a more permanent committee be formed to guide, support and oversee implementation of the Plan.

B. Arts, Culture and Heritage

The Arts, Culture & Heritage subcommittee was guided by the following statement: culture is shared. The expression and appreciation of culture and arts must have a place, and individuals must have opportunities for participation in both creative endeavors of arts and culture, and knowledge of the resources in the community.

“Arts can channel energy into positive quests for better education, stronger family life and rich community” – Jane Alexander, National Endowment for the Arts.

Guiding Principles:

- Preserve the historic integrity of the neighborhood by maximizing the reuse of historic buildings.
- Support cultural institutions' applications for grant funding within or about Arbor Hill.
- Promote Arbor Hill as a place for arts, culture and heritage, recognizing the neighborhood's rich history, including the African American experience.
 - i. Strengthening neighborhood ties to city and regional arts & cultural organizations and institutions.
 - ii. Increasing opportunities for neighborhood youth and adults to participate in arts and culture programs.
 - iii. Promoting the neighborhood as a regional arts center and place of historic significance.



Recommendations:

1. Creation of Arbor Hill Arts & Culture Committee and strengthening ties to cultural organizations throughout the City of Albany. Arbor Hill residents feel the growing arts and culture momentum building throughout the City. By building ties to artistic, cultural, and heritage organizations in Arbor Hill and other parts of the city, residents will have greater knowledge about and involvement in new and existing arts programs. Arbor Hill is one of Albany's earliest intact historic districts. The committee recommended that a concerted effort be made to make the fullest use of the neighborhood, especially in terms of matching physical and financial resources to the human resources that want to save Arbor Hill's rich past and its huge potential for future growth.

Since it is valued for its heritage, documentation should be a key goal for the preservation and development of Arbor Hill. Through this process, the historic value of structures can be assessed. By keeping the neighborhood intact, cultural organizations will have the material to work with in deepening an appreciation of its value. The public library, Ten Broeck Mansion and the Albany Visitor's Center will maintain an information area where Arbor Hill residents can obtain literature about arts and culture activities offered in the area. Ongoing support and networking are important for many groups.

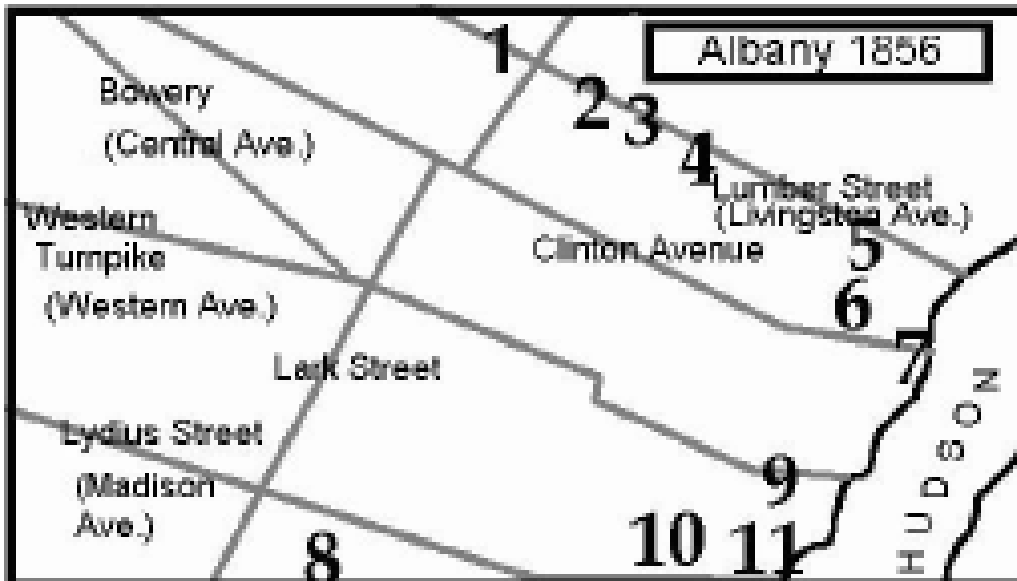
2. Support reuse of historic buildings where possible. Notable buildings include St. Joseph's Church, 41 Ten Broeck Street, St. Joseph's School on North Swan, the Salvation Army Building on Clinton Avenue, The King Building at 27-29 N. Swan, and Holy Innocents Church on North Pearl Street. Major emphasis should be placed on the stabilization of St. Joseph's Church. A feasibility study should be undertaken to evaluate the potential reuse of St. Joseph's School – the option of its potential use for arts and cultural purposes should be explored. Historic structure reports should be undertaken for the King Building on Swan and 41 North Swan Street in order to assess the potential for reuse. The disposition of architecturally and historically significant buildings in historic districts should be open to the public. The process should involve stabilizing the buildings, publicizing the availability and suitability of abandoned buildings and their potential for reuse. The process should include arts and cultural organizations and individuals.
3. Support ongoing Underground Railroad research and other research pertaining to the African-American Experience in Arbor Hill. Link this research to the long and rich history of the many cultures in Arbor Hill, past and present. Culture and heritage should be used to promote a shared sense of community and history in Arbor Hill. Supporting the many small organizations that contribute to this sense of community is important. Existing green spaces should be maintained and improved as necessary. These include Van Rensselaer Park, S. Joseph's Park, the grounds around Ten Broeck Mansion and surrounding lots, and St. Joseph's School playground. All these spaces act as the green "ribbon" that ties the neighborhood together.
4. Support new library services in Arbor Hill.
5. As shown on the neighborhood plan graphic, the "Key Gateway" at Clinton Avenue's intersection with Broadway and North Pearl is a major "entrance" to the City of Albany, and is an area where revitalization efforts are underway. Wayfinding signage in the "Downtown Albany BID" is slated to reach this gateway area and points within the Arbor Hill neighborhood. Pedestrian improvements were recently installed along North Pearl from Sheridan Avenue to Livingston Avenue. This gateway welcomes not only residents, but many visitors to the area and should reinforce the linkages between Arbor Hill's cultural gems and the City as a whole.



The Neighborhood Advisory Committee's Arts, Culture & Heritage subcommittee found great value in networking with others in the arts community. To promote the neighborhood in this way, it is important to review existing activities as follows:



Reuse of St. Joseph's Church: Following the City of Albany's expenditure of \$150,000 to stabilize this historic landmark built in 1860, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation committed \$300,000 (which must be matched) for further stabilization work. After decades of neglect, the property has been transferred to the Historic Albany Foundation. The Foundation has launched a public planning process for the Church's reuse, which will be documented, on the web at www.historic-albany.org. The Foundation would like to do slideshows and link the Church site to existing Underground Railroad walking tours during the summer of 2003.



Map Source: Albany's Underground Railroad Workshop website: www.ugrworkshop.com



Underground Railroad History Project: In addition to providing walking tours of Albany sites, including 10 Lark Street, 168 Third Street and 198 Livingston Avenue in Arbor Hill, the Underground Railroad History Project is conducting ongoing research and lectures to document and interpret sites related to the Underground Railroad. The Capital Region was visited by thousands of fugitives seeking freedom in the years prior to the Civil War. Important figures in the Underground Railroad and Abolitionist movement like Stephen Myers were based in and near Arbor Hill. The map below illustrates locations that were involved in the Underground Railroad movement.

During Black history month in February 2003, the Ten Broeck Mansion and the Albany County Historic Association hosted lectures by The Underground Railroad Project and a NYS Museum fellow and community organizer on the history of Albany's Rapp Road settlers from the Great Migration. In addition, the Mansion displayed an exhibit by an Arbor Hill resident and photographer entitled "Arbor Hill Portraits: Putting a Human Face on My Neighborhood" These efforts are part of the Mansion's ongoing work to be a more active partner in the neighborhood. The 3-acre site of the Ten Broeck Mansion is owned and operated by Albany County Historic Association . Attendance at the Mansion increased from 2,000 visitors in 2001 to 7,000 visitors in 2002. The Mansion is building on its ongoing field trip programs for 3rd and 4th grade students tied into school curriculums. In addition, the Mansion is involved in an ongoing photography program for Arbor Hill Elementary students with a local photographer who has recently had a book published of images of Arbor Hill buildings and streetscapes. There is a plan to expand the photography program to focus on portraits of people in Arbor Hill. In 2004, the Mansion plans to focus on programming around "Baseball and Breweries" –which will include the Arbor Hill neighborhoods' history of African American baseball in the city, with items on loan from Cooperstown. The Mansion is also currently focussing on three capital improvement projects: the rehabilitation of the spiral staircase, restoration of the second floor hallway and creation of additional gallery/exhibition space.



**Ten Broeck Mansion and the Albany County Historical Association welcomes neighborhood residents and all visitors to enjoy the mansion and its grounds.
(All Photos are courtesy of the Albany County Historical Association.)**



Neighborhood activists are also calling for physically and thematically linking the history of the Mansion to grassroots arts and cultural activities on the block of Swan Street between Third Street and Livingston. Over the past two years, neighborhood residents and a local artist worked with the Social Capital Development Corporation on a successful mural project on North Swan Street. The artist believes kids need a place “off the streets” where they can be nurtured and given opportunities to grow and express themselves under the guidance of dedicated African American role models. Outreach to community youth was conducted by Restorative Community Justice, Cocozz Cottontails, and Youth Development Services. There is local interest in developing space dedicated to the arts in Arbor Hill.



A colorful public mural created by a local artist with the help of neighborhood youth in 2002 welcomes residents and visitors at the corner of Livingston Avenue & N. Swan Street.

Other grassroots arts activities include Poetry Happenings at Clayton's, the Arts Center on Central Avenue, and a dance program, which is currently using space at the Firehouse on Quail Street. In addition, the youth drum group, Chocolate Thunder, served 65 students in 2002 from neighborhoods throughout the Capital District, including Arbor Hill. The groups' leader is interested in spreading the word about his group both to improve the image of the neighborhood and to attract more students to the positive activities, especially during after-school hours. The group's website is www.chocolatethunder45@hotmail.com.

Neighborhood artists expressed an interest in performing at local venues such as the refurbished Palace Theater. Located at the nexus of Arbor Hill, Downtown and I-787, the Palace is a critical asset for the neighborhood and Capital District as a whole. During 2002, the City-owned theater completed Phase I improvements including new seats, painting, mechanical and electrical repairs at a cost of \$3 million. Phase 2 improvements are slated for 2003 to include a new marquee and air conditioning and electrical improvements. The Board of Directors has considered expanding programming with special local interest including the recent and successful Gospel Night at the Palace. They are also considering a movie series for the Palace – which many stakeholders believe would be a great benefit to neighborhood residents, especially in the summer months.



Renovations to the Palace Theater are in progress. With interior restoration completed, the next phase is a new marquee to welcome concertgoers and city visitors.

The Capital Repertory Theatre, located at 111 N. Pearl, is also at the edge of Arbor Hill and currently serves Capital District residents, including Arbor Hill families through:

- Programs geared for high school students within Albany and at other area high schools
- A school tour program for younger kids – tours go “on the road” directly to the schools
- Star (for youth 12-18), and Starlight (for youth 8 to 12) programs at Capital Rep and The Egg
- Intensive programs:
 - A residency program at Harriet Gibbons High School, the alternative high school for the City of Albany. Lessons are based on the theme of a particular play.
 - Art Break (February vacation break program)
- A career day workshop
- Private performances and receptions for fundraisers for not-for-profits
- Making space available to other groups

Staff leadership and the board of directors are keen on implementing the theater’s community mission and are willing to make space available for other groups’ activities. The group has a strong interest in developing an after school program. They are also in the process of planning, designing and constructing improvements to 60 Orange/23 Monroe (former city arts building), a 36,000 square foot, 4-story warehouse-type elevator building. Reuse plans call for:

- Top 2 floors: housing for actors.
- Ground floor: lobby, rehearsal space, education department, conference rooms, telemarketing space, restrooms
- Second floor: second performance space for theater, off Orange Street entrance. Large room planned to seat 100 – 125 people. Could be used for alternative performances, avant garde. 3,200 s.f. of open space could also be made available to other groups for use. This space would be



available to Arbor Hill groups at reduced rates. Also on the second floor would be rehearsal space, classrooms, and conference space.

- Within 3 to 6 years, the organization plans on building a new theater with a larger performing space at a location to be determined.

C. Business and Job Development

Guiding Principles:

- Support Henry Johnson Boulevard as the neighborhood's primary commercial corridors with Clinton Avenue as an important site for mixed-use commercial and key nodes at important intersections.
- Promote the growth of quality small businesses which serve and employ neighborhood residents.
- Support the development of marketable retail sites.
- Build upon the emerging cluster of ethnic restaurants and grocers.
- Make streetscape and other enhancements to improve the image of Arbor Hill's commercial corridors.

The subcommittee devoted to Commercial Vitality quickly came to consensus about action items that would best support commercial vitality in the neighborhood. There was strong interest in Small Business Development Workshop where existing small businesses located in the neighborhood and small business service providers would discuss their programs and services with interested members of the public. It was agreed that the Albany Center for Economic Success (ACES) would be the appropriate organization to facilitate such workshops and to act in the ongoing capacity as a neighborhood resource for small business development. With the City's help, the Arbor Hill Business Institute, a seven-week series of business development workshops was launched in July, 2003 and will run through August 2003. The group determined that the best business building approach in the neighborhood would be to work with the existing businesses to encourage their expansion and growth. A concerted effort has been made to reach out to existing businesses to attend the workshops. Workshop topics include Credit Repair, Business Plans, Establishing a Business, Business Location, Record Keeping, Workforce Development, Financial Resources and Business Empowerment (public safety and quality of life).

Workshop elements are directly tied to the expressed needs of local entrepreneurs. For example, a local entrepreneur currently employed by Price Chopper has expressed a desire to open a neighborhood grocery – workshop participants could help with technical assistance and practical advice. The workshop hosts and trainers expect to introduce existing and potential entrepreneurs to the larger network of supports in the Capital District, including loan funds, credit repair supports, Individual Development Account (IDA) opportunities, etc.



The Action Plan includes the idea of holding small business workshops to support existing businesses such as this business on Henry Johnson Boulevard.

The group felt that nearby downtown development projects could help foster connections between the neighborhood and the vibrant downtown district and could potentially create service and employment opportunities. The group indicated strong support for the Asian Market project on North Broadway and the ACES Expansion project that would bring the “face” of the Orange Street incubator up to Clinton Avenue with store frontage for incubating small retailers. The group supported the work of the Abandoned Properties Initiative as it applies to obtaining and stabilizing properties on commercial strips to ensure their proper maintenance prior to redevelopment..

Recommendations:

1. Foster small business development: Rather than creating new organizations, efforts should be focussed on supporting, publicizing, and coordinating existing businesses and small business support groups such as ACES and the Capital District Community Loan Fund. The Arbor Hill Business Institute has been organized to acknowledge the fact that entrepreneurs who have already made the decision to locate in the neighborhood are more likely to expand their businesses, start up new businesses, or know other like-minded entrepreneurs who are likely to locate in Arbor Hill. Building off existing knowledge of the neighborhood is far likelier to produce success than “fishing” for general interest.
2. Support the expansion of ACES and the work of the Capital District Community Loan Fund. ACES provides inexpensive start-up space at its incubator on Orange Street and technical assistance to residents of the incubator and other small businesses. The subcommittee recommended support for ACES’ proposal to expand its space to Clinton Avenue. This expansion should make the group more visible and more able to support businesses that need storefront space. Technical assistance is also readily available from the Small Business Development Center and the Capital District Community Loan Fund. The Loan Fund, a \$5 million community fund located in the Orange Street incubator, targets financing to small and micro businesses including many in Arbor Hill (child care, accounting services, security firm, etc). The Loan Fund sees a steady flow of applications from neighborhood businesses and has



been able to significantly increase capital available for lending in recent years due to the infusion of federal CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions) funds. The group is working with Albany County to finalize a \$400,000 HUD contract that would be dedicated to financing businesses with strong job development potential. Staff members at the loan fund also offer a small business training course at a very nominal fee in cooperation with a business professor at the College of St. Rose.

3. Build upon emerging ethnic restaurant and grocery theme. With the Caribbean restaurants on Henry Johnson Boulevard and the proposed new Chinatown Plaza at 329 North Pearl Street, Arbor Hill may have an exciting opportunity to emerge as an appropriate, affordable and well-located area for ethnic restaurants, grocers and related products. While the base is small, the immigrant population of the City is growing and efforts should be made to capitalize on the existing businesses and proposals. Chinatown Plaza (see graphic image below) is a very large and exciting catalyst project that should leverage other activities. A group of investors are currently seeking financing to support a 85,000 square foot Asian-themed shopping center at North Pearl and Colonie Streets. Space in the center is reportedly 95% leased and among other activities, the \$9 million project will include a restaurant and both retail and wholesale groceries. The Plaza is expected to serve the regional Asian market as well as local Arbor Hill residents with its mix of specialty goods and staples such as fruits, vegetables, fish and meats.



*The Asian Center / Chinatown Plaza
Albany . NY . USA*

Graphic image courtesy of Nine Dragons City Center LLC

4. Market potential commercial sites on Henry Johnson Boulevard. The planners have prepared an overall concept plan for Henry Johnson Boulevard (see Appendix E). In addition, two conceptual site plans were developed for a specific site on Henry Johnson Boulevard from Clinton Avenue to Second Street (see preferred plan on page 21). As discussed above, the planning team believes City planning and economic development staff should strategically target marketing of the sites to high quality, highly needed commercial uses. Sites should be bundled to allow for the best possible reuse rather than allowing disparate attempts prior to the time the surrounding residential neighborhood market is able to support the type of businesses any neighborhood wants and needs (grocery, drug store, bakery, bookstore, sandwich shop, etc.)

Commercial activity on Henry Johnson Boulevard should complement and support higher property values in the neighborhood. As shown on the accompanying graphics, streetscape improvements and landscaping should buffer commercial activity from neighboring residences. Given the high visibility of Henry Johnson Boulevard, with its significant traffic counts, it is important for the future of the City as well as neighborhood residents that quality retailers be attracted to the street. On the neighborhood plan graphic, two circles are located along Henry Johnson Boulevard: one at the intersection with Sheridan Avenue, and the other at the



intersection with Livingston Avenue. These two gateways are important as residents and visitors approach the neighborhood. Improvements such as cleaning up the brownfield associated with each area, providing well-designed landscaping, signage and fencing treatment, and opportunities for locating public art or memorials may be appropriate in some combination for these two locations on Henry Johnson Boulevard. Green spaces should be accommodating and inviting to pedestrians. Connecting to nearby existing green spaces, particularly the Livingston Avenue/Henry Johnson Boulevard gateway with Department Of Transportation property, offers an opportunity for creative reconsideration of the traffic configuration and green space. Each site will require additional site planning and design by sponsors and neighborhood partners.



Vision of a Gateway. This image shows one concept for an enhanced gateway welcoming visitors and residents. The intersection of Livingston Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard could be designed with an improved greenspace, welcome to the neighborhood sign, and attractive pedestrian features such as street trees, benches, and fencing. The area could support a piece of public art.

The Henry Johnson concept plan can be used to evaluate future project proposals. Abandoned properties and vacant land in public ownership are highlighted as potential commercial infill opportunities. All future redevelopment along Henry Johnson Boulevard needs to be sensitive to the street's continued residential land uses, especially the segment between Sheridan and Clinton Avenues. Likewise, a major action espoused by the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee is to strengthen the existing housing "core" east of Henry Johnson Boulevard as well



as the historic residential and mixed use structures on Henry Johnson Boulevard.. Thus, the concepts depicted also include streetscape improvements including new and improved crosswalks.

5. The graphic map also shows the location of the former Robin Day Care Center on Second Street. Re-opening of the Center would be an important support for job creation as access to quality day care is a proven factor in job retention for adults with children. The Albany Housing Authority is anticipated to be a future partner in the proposed re-opening of this day care facility through its HOPE VI funds.
6. Finally, the area of the neighborhood near the intersection of Clinton, Pearl and Broadway is ripe for revitalization. The mixed-use North Pearl and Broadway district near downtown and the Palace Theater holds great potential for private reinvestment in mixed-use, cultural and commercial reuses. Through flexible zoning, the City should continue to support the lively mix of offices for cultural programs, professional offices, and market-rate housing that co-exist in the area. There are also several notable larger development sites in this area, such as the Salvation Army building and lots near the Quakenbush Square area. Ideally, these sites would be reused for job-creating commercial uses and uses that support the area's emerging arts and entertainment theme.

D. Quality of Life

Guiding Principles:

- Foster understanding, cooperation and trust between the community and the police department to improve public safety.
- Make physical improvements to enhance public safety.
- Support efforts to clean and beautify Arbor Hill.
- Improve existing and develop new neighborhood green spaces.
- Calm traffic and make other improvements to make Arbor Hill more pedestrian friendly.
- Give priority for on-street parking to residents, particularly where off-street parking options do not exist.
- Encourage stronger physical connections to downtown.

This Plan supports the idea that quality of life improvements must work hand-in-hand with physical housing and commercial development efforts. As mentioned above, these concerns are most important to existing and prospective neighborhood residents. Demand for quick action with regard to these items is understandable but in order for these quality of life improvements to be sustainable, careful and strategic implementation of the planned housing and commercial developments is needed so that they will ultimately produce a mixed-income community of choice. Recent improvements that contribute to quality of life in the neighborhood include the positive collaboration between the Department of General Services and neighborhood residents in cleaning up four lots and planting tulips on Livingston Avenue last summer and the ongoing Lark Street Improvement Project, including streetscape, sidewalk and lighting improvements from Madison Avenue to Clinton Avenue that will be complete by fall, 2003.

Recommendations:

1. Support the Public Safety Committee formed by members of the Quality of Life Subcommittee, a group of Neighborhood Advisory Committee members and Public Safety officials. In early April, 2003, the public safety subcommittee circulated a neighborhood-wide petition for support of a public safety declaration attached as Exhibit F. The purpose of the declaration is to increase



understanding, cooperation and trust between the community and police department through education and interaction to achieve quality of life goals outlined in the Declaration. The subcommittee hopes to get a large number of signatories on the petitions attached to the Declaration. They are also asking stakeholders to display the Declaration broadly in the neighborhood to send a message throughout the community that there are many who wish to improve the quality of life in Arbor Hill and that there is a neighborhood watching. The subcommittee hosted a kickoff event in early April that will serve as the first of regularly scheduled events to promote the education and cooperation process. Future events will focus on Education. The subcommittee plans to hold quarterly forums to present information on the broad topics included on the Declaration and to give opportunities for dialogue on related issues, they plan to collaborate with the current Community Police Council (CPC) to update their brochure to include information on these topics and contacts, and they plan to explore other current written information on topics and make available where applicable. The subcommittee also plans to look for opportunities to expand and reinforce youth programming and crime prevention and to provide coordination among the following efforts:

- a. A Community Accountability Board for Arbor Hill, comprised of people from the community, comes up with alternative justice for misdemeanors committed by community members, e.g. certain number of hours of community service – working with seniors, cleaning up vacant lots, etc. The assistant district attorney decides which misdemeanors are eligible for review by the board.
- b. Another alternative justice program works with troubled children (as young as 7 or 8 years old). This program offers a “one time break” for children in trouble and works closely with the parents to achieve results. This program stems from the work of the Albany African-American Clergy United for Empowerment, which meets every other Tuesday
- c. Operation Peer Pressure is a group of six residents who go to neighborhood ball fields and other recreational areas to exert pressure on youth to stop negative behaviors like smoking.

2. Other Public-Safety-oriented recommendations include:

- a. Improve Lighting and/or Provide Electronic Surveillance in Targeted Areas
e.g. better lighting on the south side of Sheridan Avenue from Dove down which serves as a transition area between downtown and Arbor Hill. Consider asking NYS to install camera for public safety for steps up from Sheridan to Elk.
- b. Clear Vegetation in Targeted Areas to Increase Visibility
- c. Improve Traffic Flow and Safety: The clear priority of the group was Henry Johnson Blvd though concern was also expressed about slowing cars on 3rd Street near the New Covenant Charter School. The subcommittee recommended that a traffic study be conducted with the goal of improving traffic flow on Henry Johnson Boulevard while facilitating pedestrian crossings over the boulevard. The study might consider the following:
 - Diverting traffic headed for downtown from the boulevard bridge onto Clinton Avenue perhaps through new signage and/or signal adjustments. This could help alleviate bottleneck at the bridge where the street narrows to two lanes.
 - Consider the addition of signals on Henry Johnson Boulevard, e.g. at 3rd Street.
 - Consider the consolidation and improvement of pedestrian crossings to provide safer crossings.
 - Review the design speed of the street. Perhaps a design speed of 40 mph could be reduced to 30 mph.
 - Add more crossing guards for school crossing hours.



- Add a “Do Not Enter” sign for cars heading west on 3rd Street prior to reaching intersection with Swan Street.
 - Improve the timing of the traffic light by the firehouse (Lark/Manning; it is very slow).
3. The Quality of Life subcommittee recommended that the eventual entity to implement the City’s Abandoned Properties Initiative have a community participation process and its governance structure have representatives from the neighborhood. The subcommittee identified poor visual appearance, abandoned buildings’ frequent use for nefarious purposes and fire hazards as quality of life issues related to abandoned buildings. Additionally, the subcommittee felt that vacant lots were a concern because they are often poorly maintained and provide a space for criminal activity and egress. Thus the committee felt the strong need for such lots to be placed in responsible hands.

4. Green Spaces

The subcommittee recommended the following actions:

- a. Improve playground on Swan Street by St. Joseph’s School.
- b. Develop a gateway park at Henry Johnson and Livingston Ave. Include public art/sculpture.
- c. Improve playground on Colonie Street.
- d. Examine feasibility of turning the southeast corner of Lark and Clinton (which may be a brownfield) into a landscaped buffer zone between Henry Johnson and the residential neighborhood.
- e. Consider placement of a playground near the New Covenant Charter School. The School is adjacent and connected to the Arbor Hill Community Center, but currently has no provision for adequate outdoor play space for school children. In concert with the core area housing reinvestment strategy, playground space near the school should be identified and set aside for the potential use of the school.



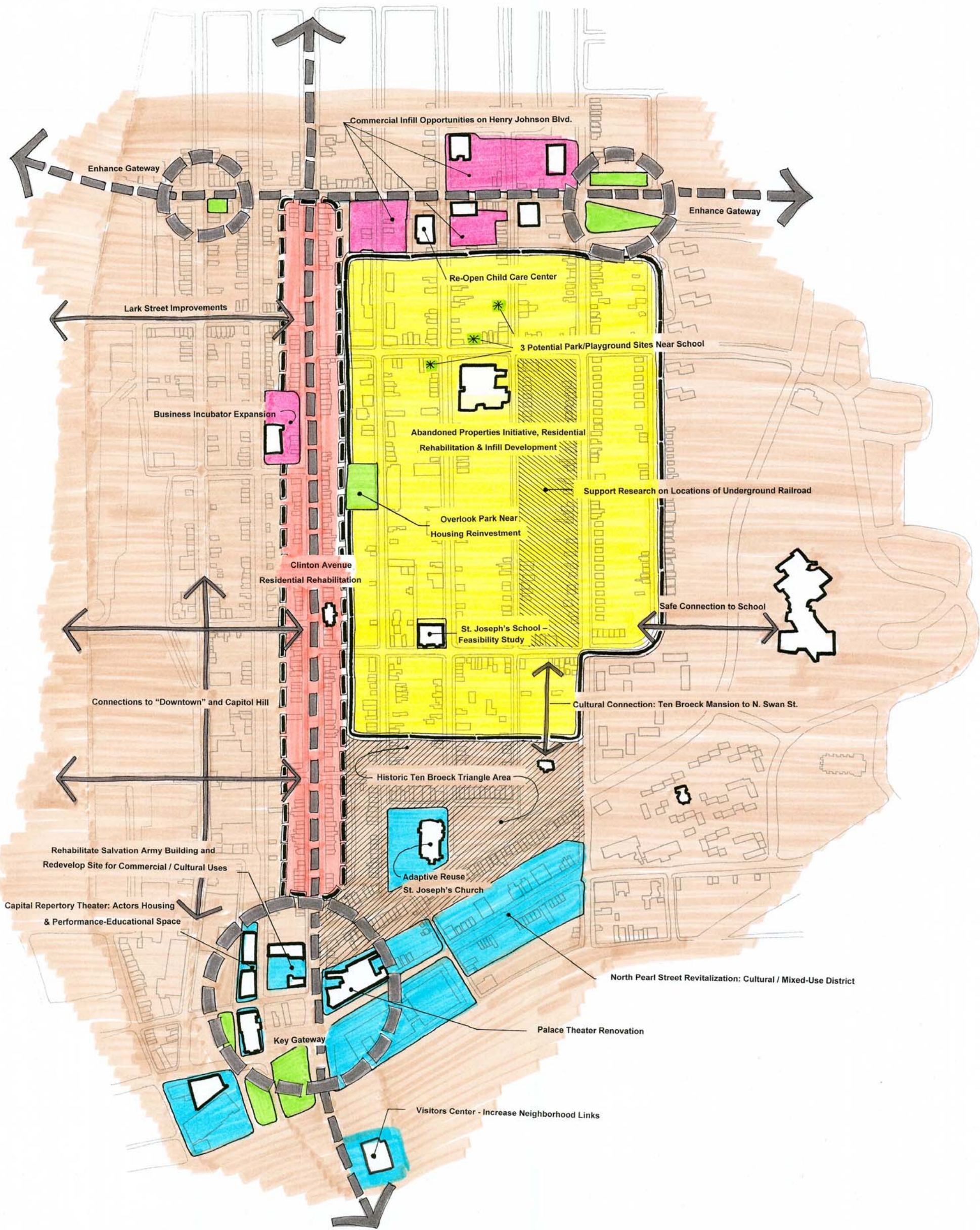


5. Overlook Park – Arbor Hill’s hill-top location offers fantastic views of the surrounding city and natural areas. Locations in Arbor Hill, like the one shown below on First Street just west of Swan, offer opportunities for consideration of an “overlook park” as re-investment in the residential areas occurs. Park improvements support existing neighborhood investments as well as future residents and visitors.



The park or green space could serve the immediate neighbors with a few “outdoor rooms:” an active play area, a quiet sitting area that may be desirable by elderly residents, and an overlook area for all ages to enjoy the city’s views.

6. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee and planners strongly endorse a residential permit parking system for the area. The quality of life and desirability of the residential neighborhood would be enhanced if the State would allow a residential parking permit system. Neighborhood residents are currently forced to compete with commuters for scarce on-street parking spaces in Sheridan Hollow and Ten Broeck Triangle. The State OGS is currently planning a \$25 million parking garage to be located between Elk and Sheridan on the downtown edge of the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents have expressed concern about the environmental impact of the garage. They have asked that the state ensure that the garage has a positive net impact on area parking issues and that the garage is architecturally sensitive to its location as a “bridge” between the residential neighborhood and the high-rises on Washington Avenue.



Action Plan for Arbor Hill Key Elements

CITY OF ALBANY – ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Prepared by:
With:

Behan Planning Associates, LLC
The Community Builders, Inc.
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Albany Local Development Corp.
Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Note: This concept plan illustrates the planning principles for revitalizing this area of the Arbor Hill neighborhood and should be used as a guide to create and evaluate future proposals.

April 11, 2003

Not to Scale



ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN				Estimated Leverage Budget	Est. City Funds Needed	Notes / Other City Support Needed
Proposed New Actions						
ESTABLISH ARBOR HILL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE TO SEE PROJECTS THROUGH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLAN'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES						
I	Homeownership and Rental Housing			\$ 26,131,800	\$ 480,000	
	1A Abandoned Properties Initiative: Short-term thru ACDA and/or CHDO			\$ 2,491,800	\$ 300,000	
		Transfer of First Group of Properties from County as Pilot		\$ 556,800	\$ 10,000	Assumes County support
		Properly board doors and windows - consider community involvement			\$ 10,000	Cost higher if run community program
		Stabilization of Properties			\$ 50,000	Approx. 5 buildings at \$10,000
		Targeted Demolitions		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	Shared cost between City & County
		Running RFP/RFQ Process; Rationalization of Clusters of Land & Buildings			In Kind	
		Transfer of First Group (15) of Properties to Non-Profit and Private Entities for:				
		Rental Rehab		\$ 600,000	\$ 100,000	8 buildings, 5 require subsidy
		Homeownership - Rehab		\$ 350,000	\$ 20,000	AHDC potential alternate subsidy source
		Other Reuses Options (community facilities)		\$ 40,000		
		Neighborhood Clean-Ups			In Kind	
		Abandoned Properties Primer			In Kind	
		Facilitate Transfer of Vacant parcels to adjacent owners			In Kind	
	1B	Transfer of Second Group (15) of Properties to Non-Profit and Private Entities for:				
		Rental Rehab		\$ 375,000	\$ 60,000	5 buildings, 3 require subsidy
		Homeownership - Rehab		\$ 500,000	\$ 20,000	AHDC potential alternate subsidy source
		Other Reuses Options (community facilities)		\$ 40,000		
	2	HOPE VI Revitalization Initiative		\$ 12,500,000		
		Rental Phase I		\$ 7,500,000		Political support; site control
		Homeownership Phase 1		\$ 2,500,000		Political support; site control
		Rental Phase 2		\$ 5,000,000		Political support; site control
		Homeownership Phase 2		\$ 2,500,000		Political support; site control
		Reopening of the Robin Daycare		\$ 300,000		Political support; site control
	3	Clinton Avenue Apartments Stabilization		\$ 3,000,000	\$ 180,000	TARP funds plus CPC loan & PILOT
	4	Reuse of St. Joseph's School		\$ 5,440,000		
		RFP Process			In Kind	Potentially thru CHDO TA
		Feasibility Study		\$ 40,000		Funded by CHDO TA or DHCR TA
		Stabilization; Possible Abatement of UST and SACMs		\$ 200,000		Abatement estimate low
		Adaptive Reuse		\$ 5,200,000		Residential - Cost depends on use
	5	Section 202 Elderly Housing		\$ 2,700,000		Metropolitan New Testament
	6	Capital Rep Temporary Housing for Visiting Artists/Actors		\$ 1,000,000		
	7	Programmatic and Existing Endeavors				
		Develop a Housing subcommittee to Arbor Hill Implementation Committee			In Kind	
		Establish Landlord Training Program				Potentially CPC sponsored
		Expand Pre and Post Purchaser Counselling				Through HOME Store and/or AHP
		Reinvigorate and Reorganize Capital City CHDO		\$ 50,000		Through HUD TA
		Promote Homeownership Repair (HOAP) Program				Through ACDA
		Support for Existing Groups (such as AHDC, AHC, UTA, ACLT, HOME STORE, AHP)				See Existing Resources

II Arts, Culture and Heritage		\$ 5,315,000	\$ 260,000	
1	Planned Use of Capital Rep Building (former City Arts Building) for arts/culture activities/youth programming	0		Costs to be determined
2	Support Underground Railroad Research and Linkage to Neighborhood Identity	To Be Determined		Cost to be determined
3	City-sponsored events at the Palace Theater: ideas for new events	In-kind		\$3 million in Phase I improvements completed
4	Encourage cultural performances in parks by St. Joseph's Church	In-kind		
5	Visitor Center displays on Arbor Hill, on African-American experience	\$ 25,000		Seek additional outside funding
6	Participation in Downtown BID wayfinding signage project	\$ 250,000		Cost is for entire trail - Arbor Hill is a key component of whole
7	Arts/Culture Workshop: coordination of artists/historians in the community – understand needs and identify potential partners; integrate arts/cultural with needs of youth.	In-kind		
8	Support adaptive reuse of St. Joseph's Church	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 250,000	Cost depends on use; State \$300,000 EPF must be matched
9	Include a cultural component developed by neighborhood for the HJB/Livingston Gateway (see brownfield below)		\$ 10,000	Cost depends on scope - includes demo, remediation
10	Pursue concept of cultural center in the neighborhood	\$ 40,000		Seek additional outside funding
11	Pedestrian access & Improvements to Ten Broeck Mansion from Swan Street	\$ 50,000		Public Improvement Funds from City and State; cost depends on scope
12	Support reuse of St. Joseph's School, 41 Ten Broeck, Salvation Army Building (Clinton Avenue), The King Building (27-29 N. Swan), and Holy Innocents Church (North Pearl)			Costs to be determined
13	Support new library services in Arbor Hill			Costs to be determined
14	Develop a Culture & Heritage subcommittee to Arbor Hill Implementation Committee		In Kind	
III Business and Job Development		\$ 12,100,000	\$ 20,000	
1	Prepare and maintain HJB Commercial development sites for development		\$ 20,000	Annual Cost
2	Host Small Business Development Workshop		In-kind	
3	Host Developers' Workshop to garner interest in available sites		In-kind	
4	Improve interaction between existing businesses to help grow existing businesses and attract new businesses		In-kind	
5	Support SEFCU-Arbor Hill Credit Union Partnership - provide banking in neighborhood		In-kind	
6	Reuse the Salvation Army Building on Clinton Ave. to complement Theater Arts District and neighborhood	\$ 1,500,000	In-kind	Re-use driven by market forces
7	Expand ACES incubator to frontage on Clinton Avenue	\$ 1,200,000		Fundraising underway
8	Expand CDCLF Micro and Small Business Lending	\$ 400,000		HUD grant thru County; funds county-wide but can be specially targetted to
9	Support development of 64,782 sf Asian market at 329 North Pearl Street	\$ 9,000,000		Funds and zoning secured
10	Develop a Commercial subcommittee to Arbor Hill Implementation Committee			

IV	Quality of Life	\$	110,000	\$	305,200	City has up to \$500,000 in bond funds
	Abandoned Properties Initiative: Long-term					
	1 Establish good community participation process				In-kind	
	2 Evaluate buildings for demolition or stabilization				In-kind	
	3 Capitalize an entity focused on abandoned properties	To Be Determined				Syracuse (\$5 M) Rochester(\$10M)
	Public Safety					
	4 Public safety committee: actions; coordination with other entities dealing with crime				In-kind	
	5 Lighting improvements and/or public surveillance in targeted areas	To Be Determined				City funds for public buildings, NIMO for Streets
	6 Clear vegetation				In-kind	
	Green space recommendations					
	<i>Improve existing playgrounds/green space (select locations)</i>				In-kind, \$	
	7 Swan Street			\$	20,000	
	8 Colonie Street			\$	20,000	
	9 Sheridan			\$	20,000	
	<i>Create new playgrounds/green space</i>					
	10 Arbor Hill Gateway: HJB/Livingston (a/k/a Felani's Garage)			\$	150,000	See also costs in Arts/Culture; funds from brownfield remediation, site control from Albany County
	11 By New Covenant Charter School: the school had funds for this purpose	\$	80,000	\$	20,000	Split between City and School TBD
	12 HJB between Sheridan and Orange			\$	50,000	Potentially brownfield remediation
	13 Overlook Park on First Street	\$	30,000			Potentially part of HOPE VI project
	Improve Traffic Flow and Safety					
	14 Slow cars on 3rd Street near school via use of Driver Feedback System			\$	24,000	
	15 Conduct a traffic study to improve traffic flow and facilitate pedestrian crossings on HJB.				In Kind, \$	
	Residential Parking Permit Programs					
	16 Transitional zones, i.e. Sheridan Hollow and Ten Broeck Triangle			\$	-	
	Other					
	17 Arbor Hill Brochure (part of citywide effort to market neighborhoods)			\$	1,200	
	18 Develop a Culture & Heritage subcommittee to Arbor Hill Implementation Committee				In-kind, \$	

V	Leveraged Improvements		\$	305,200	Also eligible uses for Bond Fund
	1 <i>New streets and/or sidewalks: DGS approved Street Resurfacing</i>				
	2 1st Street/Ten Broeck to Swan		\$	50,000	
	3 Ten Broeck Pl/Ten Broeck to Swan <i>Sidewalk Reconstruction</i>		\$	170,000	
	4 Lark/2nd to 3rd, west side only		\$	37,200	
	5 Lark/Livingston to Colonie, west side only <i>ADA Sidewalk Ramps</i>		\$	30,000	
	6 Sheridan/intersection with Dove, all corners		\$	12,000	
	7 Sheridan/intersection with Swan, NE & NW corners <i>Other</i>		\$	6,000	
	8 Traffic signal improvements on HJB and near new OGS garage				Plans and costs to be determined
	9 New off-street parking, e.g. Lots or alleys				Plans and costs to be determined
	10 C-1 Bond Money: targeted investments - mixed use on HJB or Swan				Plans and costs to be determined

Acknowledgements

The Community Builders, Inc. would like to thank all of those involved in the development of the plan for Arbor Hill. There were many people and organizations that played a vital role in the development of this plan. Without their contributions, completion of the plan for the future of Arbor Hill would not have been possible. Many of those involved, including Mayor Gerald Jennings, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, residents, officials from the City of Albany, and representatives of various stakeholder organizations, provided hours of their time and offered numerous valuable suggestions and recommendations for the plan for Arbor Hill.

The Community Builders would also like to thank Behan Planning Associates for the important work that it performed in the planning process. As an experienced urban design and planning firm, Behan played a critical role in all stages of the development of the plan.

Finally, we would like to thank the many residents and individuals who may not be listed but who also made valuable contributions to the planning process. The involvement of these residents and concerned individuals allowed this effort to become a truly comprehensive planning process. These contributions were made in many ways including comments at meetings of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and participation at public meetings for the planning process, including the hand-on design workshop.

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:

Pastor Donald Stuart, New Covenant Christian Fellowship
Anders Tomson, Community Preservation Corporation

Committee Members:

Reverend Beresford Bailey, Star of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church
Honorable Betty Barnette, City Treasurer
Vaughn and Delia Baptiste, Residents
Helen Black, Ten Broeck Triangle Association, Resident
Honorable Michael Brown, Common Council, 3rd Ward
Brian Buff, Ten Broeck Mansion
Paul Cohen, Ten Broeck Mansion & Resident
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Tyrone Ferguson, Charter One Bank
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Elizabeth Griffin, Historic Albany Foundation
Johertha H. Lynah, Resident
Roger Markovics, United Tenants of Albany
Jack Nielsen, Commissioner, City of Albany, Department of Public Safety
Bob Rogers, Arbor Hill Community Credit Union
Mayra Santiago, Albany Center for Economic Success
Jim Sinkoff, Whitney M. Young Health Center
Charlie Touhey, Touhey Associates
Hon. Wanda F. Willingham, Albany County Legislature

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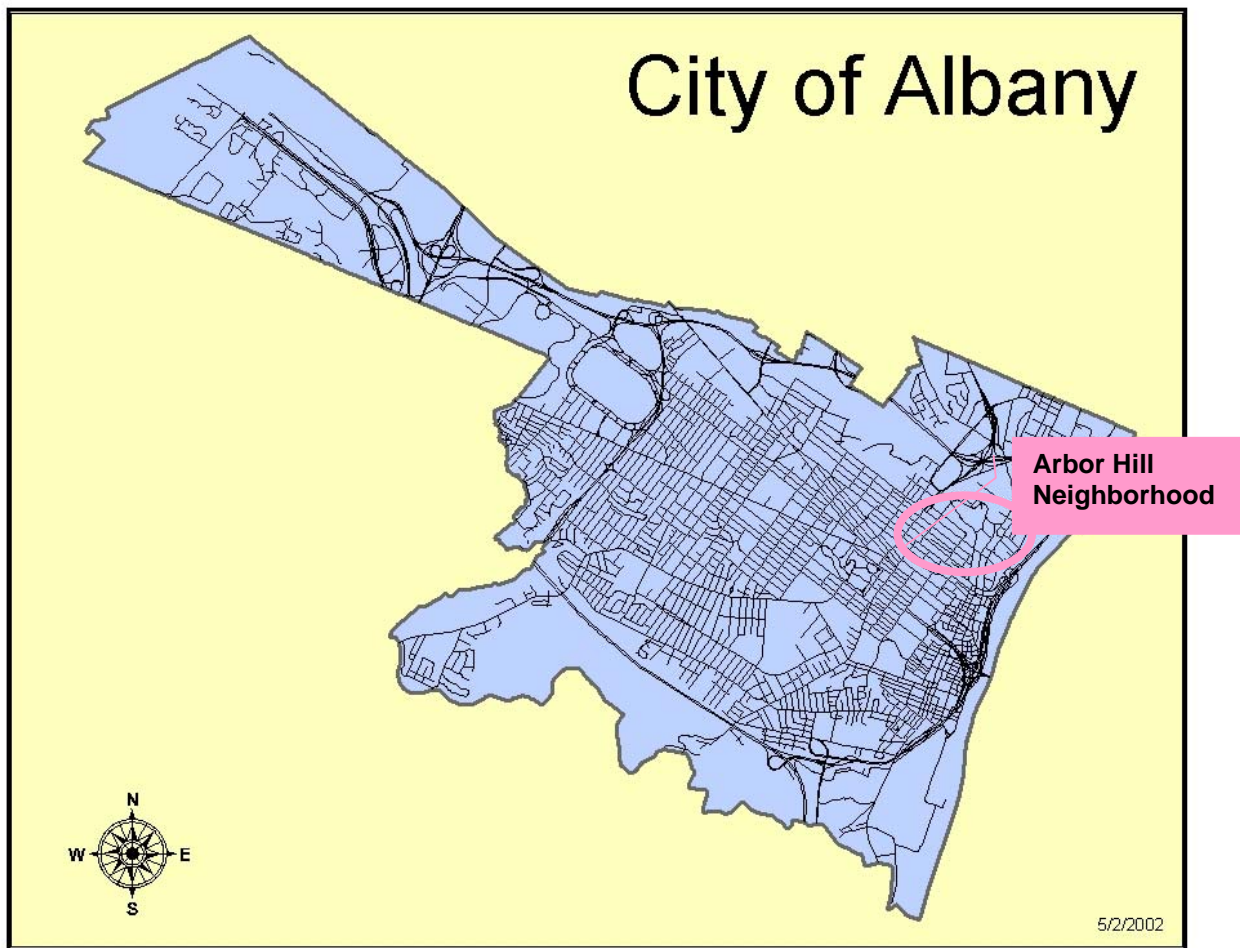
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Allen London
Arlene Barnes, Resident
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Barbara Cohen, Resident
Beverly Padgett, Resident
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Arbor Hill Neighborhood

Existing Conditions



October 2002

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Executive Summary

Arbor Hill is an older urban area located in the northeastern section of the City of Albany. Sheridan Hollow and Ten Broeck Triangle are two smaller neighborhoods within the larger area. There are three neighborhood associations: Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens, Sheridan Hollow, and the Ten Broeck Neighborhood Associations.

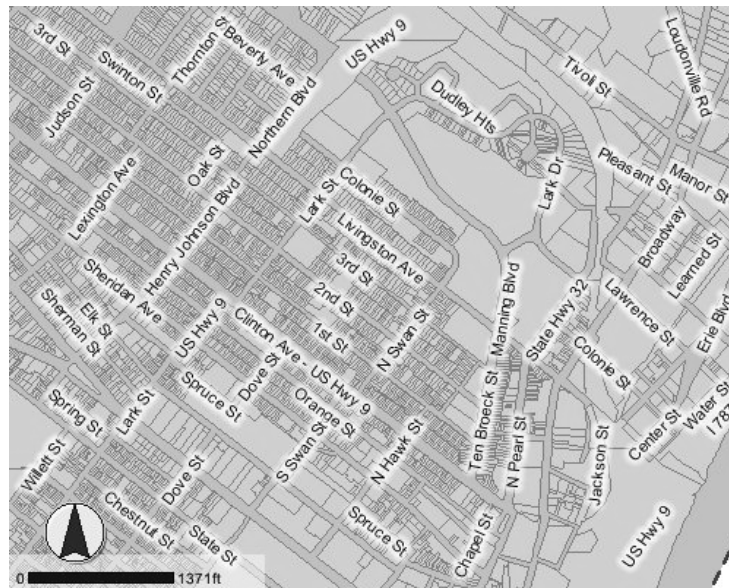
Arbor Hill is primarily a residential area with few commercial services and no employment centers. Arbor Hill has several historic districts and outstanding structures and streetscapes in the Ten Broeck Triangle, and along Lark Street and Clinton Avenue.

The southern half (south of Livingston) of the neighborhood is closest to the center of Albany. It was developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, mostly with one to three family homes on urban lots. What remains of a formerly vital urban neighborhood is a mixed bag of maintained homes, run down structures, vacant buildings, small overgrown lots and too frequent evidence of abandoned real estate.

The northern neighborhood area is more like a new town. It was developed on larger land parcels created under an urban renewal plan of the 1960s. This area contains a fire station, the Whitney M. Young Health Center, Arbor Hill Elementary School, and large housing complexes. Almost half the neighborhood population lives in this northern area.

The 2000 US Census reported a total neighborhood population of 5,491 persons. 77% are black, 14% white, and 7% Hispanic. Indicators of distress in neighborhood demographics include higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and young residents within the population. Most of the housing is rental. The owner occupancy rate is 22%, compared to a citywide rate of 38%.

Arbor Hill has been designated for improvement by social and economic development programs sponsored by federal and state agencies, including the Community Development Block Grant, Enterprise Community, and Empire Zone programs. There have been several attempts at redevelopment and revitalization in the past. The Northern Boulevard Redevelopment Plan (1989), Gateway Commons and Partnership Homes Initiative by the Urban League (c. 1998) and proposed North Swan Street Redevelopment (2001) are examples.



Arbor Hill Neighborhood Boundaries

I. Location

A. Arbor Hill Neighborhood Boundary

The Arbor Hill neighborhood covers approximately 200 acres in the City of Albany beginning at Broadway on the east and Henry Johnson Boulevard on the west. The elevation change between central Albany and Sheridan Hollow creates a natural separation between Arbor Hill and areas to the south. Topography, highway and railroad corridors create a natural boundary the north.

B. Context within City of Albany and Capital Region

Arbor Hill is north and north west of the City’s central business district. Central Avenue is a regional commercial spine that begins in Albany and ends in the City of Schenectady. West of Arbor Hill are dense urban residential neighborhoods. Directly north is North Albany with a mixture of industrial and residential uses. East of Arbor Hill is I-787, a regional highway that provides north-south bound traffic between southern Albany and the City of Cohoes. I-787 is located directly west of the Hudson River and serves to separate Arbor Hill and the City in general from the river.

The City of Albany is part of the Capital Region, encompassing four central cities and surrounding communities. The region’s assets include high quality air and water resources, open space and recreational opportunities, a convenient transportation network, excellent educational and cultural facilities, and proximity to other major cities. The economy is primarily rooted in government, wholesaling, retailing, and services. Like other communities across the nation, there has been a gradual shift away from manufacturing to a service-based economy.

The City of Albany is approximately 150 miles north of New York City, 215 miles south of Montreal, 165 miles west of Boston, and 290 miles east of Buffalo.

Capital District Minor Civil Divisions



Prepared by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission

C. Proximate employment, recreation, shopping, and cultural centers

Albany is the capital of New York State and host to government agencies, legislative operations, and accessory economies. Albany is also a regional center for banking, health care, and manufacturing. The central city of Albany is 1 mile from Arbor Hill. It contains the Empire State Plaza and State Capitol and is a regional center for office space.

Like other neighborhoods in Albany, Arbor Hill does not contain a major grocery store – such stores are located along Central Avenue in the City or on major routes in the suburbs. New York Grocery is a recently opened medium-sized grocery store on Henry Johnson Boulevard that offers a smaller selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, and other convenience items.

The closest large grocery store to Arbor Hill is the Price Chopper on Delaware Avenue in Albany (@1 mile). “Super center” grocery stores are to the west and north. The closest are Westgate Plaza and Hannaford Plaza on Central Avenue (about 2 miles from Arbor Hill). Compare Market on Quail Street in West Hill is also nearby.

Strip commercial retail development is located along Washington Avenue and Central Avenue, beginning just south of Arbor Hill and continuing west. The southern end of Lark Street is another commercial corridor adjacent to Arbor Hill. The closest stores are on Lark Street and Central Avenue (Townsend Park) as near as .25 miles for residents on the south side of Arbor Hill (Sheridan Hollow) and as far as 2 miles for those on the north end. There is strip retail development on Northern Boulevard near Memorial Hospital about 1 mile from residents in the northern edge of the neighborhood. Farther away are neighborhood commercial establishments along Delaware Avenue. The large area shopping malls are 5 or so miles to the west located on the outskirts of Albany.

Businesses in Arbor Hill are limited and are scattered in Sheridan Hollow and along Broadway Avenue. The Albany Center for Economic Success is located on Orange Street and is the only business incubator in the City.

Albany is a center for cultural life and there are cultural outlets - museums, libraries, theatre – near Arbor Hill. Several large public parks are a short drive or a longer walk including Washington Park, Tivoli Park, the Corning Preserve on the Hudson River, and Swinburne Park. Smaller recreational spaces are interspersed throughout the community and provide open space and recreational opportunities to the community.

D. Vehicle and pedestrian linkages to and through the neighborhood

Four roads – Henry Johnson Boulevard, Lark Street, Pearl Street, Broadway, and Clinton Avenue - connect Arbor Hill to other areas of the city including downtown Albany, and commercial and retail destinations.

The Ten Broeck area is easily accessible on foot or by vehicle from downtown Albany. Ten Broeck is adjacent to North Pearl Street and Broadway and you can walk south into the City’s downtown in minutes (less than .5 miles). This puts the neighborhood within walking distance of major employers (State, finance), cultural centers (Palace Theatre, Capital Repertory Company, Quackenbush Square), and the Corning Preserve. Clinton Avenue is a major east/ west road with sidewalks on both sides that provides this linkage to downtown and the rest of the city.

Sheridan Hollow is directly north of Central Avenue, a major corridor through Albany. Central Avenue is accessible from Sheridan Hollow by foot and vehicle via Henry Johnson Boulevard.

The Northern portion of Arbor Hill is more remote for an urban area. I-90 forms a northern boundary and cuts off access. The area is 2 miles or more from Central Avenue and downtown Albany. Residents typically need to drive or take public transportation to reach employment and shopping.

II. Neighborhood Description

A. Neighborhood Development History

The name Arbor Hill was given to the area because the land sloped upward from the Hudson River. Most of the neighborhood - north of Clinton Avenue and east of Henry Johnson Boulevard - was developed between 1825 and the turn of the century by the wealthy Van Rensselaer family in a grid street pattern. Arbor Hill served as a home to industrialists, business owners, and lumber barons conducting commerce stemming from the Erie Canal. Later, emergence of the City as a major transfer point for east-west shipping increased the demand for residential and commercial construction. Greek revival and early Italianate predominate as the architectural styles of the neighborhood. Arbor Hill is said to have been a major stopover point for the Underground Railroad in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The neighborhood's historic fabric has eroded in the last 50 years as suburbanization, aging structures and facilities, the automobile, and construction of regional highways have taken a toll.

B. Sub-neighborhoods

Two sub-neighborhoods within Arbor Hill have established an independent identity. Sheridan Hollow is the southern side of Arbor Hill encompassing roughly all the area south of Clinton Avenue. It is the area closest to Lark Street and Central Avenue. This area includes the length of Sheridan Avenue and Orange Street within Arbor Hill.



Ten Broeck Triangle Playground

Sheridan Hollow got its name from the steep topography on the south separating Arbor Hill from Washington and Central Avenues in Albany. This area has a population of approximately 800. The streets are narrow and in a grid pattern. Development dates to the 19th century. There are still many row structures providing apartments and single unit dwellings. Lark Street is the only area with an historic designation within Sheridan Hollow. The Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association represents the interests of this sub-neighborhood.

The Ten Broeck Triangle is another distinct sub-neighborhood in Arbor Hill. This area roughly coincides with the Ten Broeck National Register Historic District and has an outstanding architectural quality. (See Ten Broeck photo, left). Most of the former ornate row house mansions are now multi-unit rental properties. Deterioration is a real threat to many of the buildings. There is a Ten Broeck Triangle Neighborhood Association.

C. Population characteristics: household composition, race, sex, age, income, employment

The boundaries of Arbor Hill overlay with the boundaries of US Census Tract 2. The 2000 census for the area provides a snapshot of population characteristics. (see attached tables as well).

Arbor Hill Population Character (2000 U.S. Census)

2000 Population	5491 [from 6167 in 1990]
Black	4218 (77%)
White	814 (15%)
Hispanic	401 (7.4%)
Persons Under the age of 18	1900 (35%)
Persons over 65	534 (9.7%)
Median Household Income (1999 data)	\$16,222 [vs. \$42,935 in Albany County]
Households in poverty (1999 data)	34.8% [vs. 10.6% in Albany County]
Over 16 in labor force	56.8% [vs. 65.8% in Albany County]
Unemployment	10.4% [vs. 6.8% in Albany County]

The neighborhood population has decreased over the last decade. This is a consistent trend in Troy and Schenectady as well. Arbor Hill has a concentrated minority population where 84.4% are either black or Hispanic. The neighborhood has a high percentage of persons under 18 years of age. Compared to Albany County, Arbor Hill had slightly higher rates of foreign born but not new residents, and residents who moved from elsewhere in New York State in the last 5 years.

The income data describing household characteristics display a population living in poverty in both absolute and relative terms. Neighborhood median incomes are strikingly low compared to the surrounding county, and the poverty rate is very high. The poverty rate is even higher for households with children under 18 at 42.8%.

Unemployment (10.4%) is higher than in the surrounding county (6.8%) but not outstanding. Despite the neighborhood’s proximity to managerial, professional and government jobs in downtown Albany, the 2000 Census portrays neighborhood residents who commute by car or bus to employment elsewhere in Albany County. Neighborhood residents tend to be employed in traditionally lower paying sectors. 30% of residents worked in the service sector (2000 US Census) as compared to 14% of all Albany County employed persons. 25% are professional and managerial, compared to 42% countywide. Only 20% worked in government compared to 28% countywide.

The population data can be broken down further into Arbor Hill’s four block groups. Block group 1 covers everything north of Livingston Avenue. Block group 2 encompasses Second Street to Livingston Avenue. Block group 3 lies between Clinton and Second Street, and Block group 4 lies between Clinton and Sheridan Avenues.

Data displays that half of the neighborhood population lives north of Livingston Avenue in Block group 1- primarily in the Ida Yarborough and Skyline Gardens complexes. In Block group 1, 85% of housing units are rented, which is even higher than in the neighborhood overall (79%).

The highest owner occupancy rate (35%) in Arbor Hill is in the area along Livingston Avenue south to North Second in Block Group 2. This is an area where many affordable infill housing projects were developed in the last 15 years with state and federal subsidies and private development partners. Owner occupancy in Block Group 3 containing the Arbor Hill Historic District (Ten Broeck) is 22%, which is equal to that of the rest of Arbor Hill.

Neighborhood Demographics by Block Group

Block Group	Location	Population	Owner Occupancy Rate	Rental Housing Rate
1	North of Livingston Avenue	2534	15%	85%
2	Second Street to Livingston	730	35%	65%
3	Clinton to Second Street	1436	22%	78%
4	(Sheridan Hollow) Sheridan to Clinton	791	23%	77%

D. Land Use

Arbor Hill is primarily a residential area, with commercial uses located along Clinton Avenue, Henry Johnson Boulevard, Lark Street and Swan Street. Most of the area south of Livingston Avenue was developed with one to three family attached, semi-attached and detached residences with lots measuring approximately 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep (2500 sf). Today, many vacant lots disrupt the streetscapes; these are the result of demolition of hazardous structures.

In contrast, the area north of Livingston Avenue has an auto dependent, new town character. Large apartment complexes, an elementary school, and a health center were developed as part of urban renewal plans starting in the 1970's.

1. Residential

The 2000 US Census reports that Arbor Hill has 2914 housing units. 639 or 28% of those units are vacant due to turn over or abandonment. 42.9% of units were built before 1939 and less than 10% of units were built after 1990. Most housing in the neighborhood is within structures containing 2 to 9 units. Only 17% of units are single family home within large apartment buildings co



Pieter Schuyler Court, owner –occupied housing.

The area south of Livingston Avenue is developed with one to three unit homes. Over the years, many structures have been demolished as they have deteriorated beyond repair. In many cases vacant lots remain. But there have been several infill housing projects that have resulted in new housing construction at an urban density to fill in the voids left by demolition. These rows of housing (1 to 2 family structures) built after 1980 are scattered along Livingston Avenue, Lark Street, First Street and other areas.



The Capital Woods complex resulted from redevelopment of the former Dudley Apartments with a \$15 million investment.

North of Livingston Avenue there are 4 large apartment complexes built after 1950. Robert Whalen Homes and Ida Yarborough are traditional public housing complexes managed by the Albany Housing Authority. Capital Woods is a newly reconstructed complex owned by a limited partnership created by the Albany Housing Authority. Skyline Gardens is privately owned. The Housing Authority and Skyline Gardens report a low vacancy rate at these properties.



Lighter parcels along Livingston Avenue and Lark Drive denote large apartment complexes.

Seventy historic row buildings on Clinton Avenue, some contiguous, some not, were redeveloped in the mid-80s with public and private funding. This ambitious Clinton Avenue project involved construction of streetscape amenities, off-street infill parking lots, and 216 rental units. The project has had ongoing financial and management challenges evidenced by several bankruptcies and a number of owners over the last 15 years. It is currently rented but the vacancy rate is in the range of 30% and turnover is high. These properties have had substantial renovation in the last five years and more work is planned.



Clinton Avenue rehabilitated apartment units.

Apartment Complexes and Owner

Name and Address	Owner	Number of Units/Type	Occupancy Descriptions	Vacancy Rate
Robert Whalen Homes North Lark Street	Albany Housing Authority (AHA)	108 family units	Public housing	5%
Ida Yarborough High and Low-rise Livingston Avenue and North Pearl	AHA	353 units family and single adult	Public housing	3%
Capital Woods (formerly Dudley Heights) Lark Drive	Limited partnership	140 family	Private	0%
Skyline Gardens Livingston Avenue	Private	80 units family	Private	3%
Clinton Avenue (70 buildings)	Private (CPC)	216 units	Private	30%

2. Vacant Buildings and Lots

In September 2002, Historic Albany, Community Builders and the City of Albany compiled an inventory of 179 abandoned buildings between Henry Johnson Boulevard, Orange Street, North Manning Boulevard, and Broadway. This is 12% of structures in the area.

Abandoned buildings are scattered in Arbor Hill south of Colonie Street. Most of the buildings are row type structures containing apartments. Only 33 of the buildings had any commercial space in them and one was a church. (See Abandoned Buildings section for more information).

Private individuals owned one hundred thirty-eight (138) of the abandoned buildings. No single private entity was listed as owner of more than three or four properties. Only 7 properties were owned by private mortgage finance companies. Twelve (12) buildings were owned by nonprofits; including five owned by the City’s Albany Community Development Agency. Twenty-nine were owned by Albany County.

A comparison between ownership in September 2002 to ownership in April 2001 found that 74 of the 179 buildings changed hands over that 18-month period. Albany County was a party to forty-one (41) of the transfers. Nineteen of the buildings were sold by the County to private individuals. The County took ownership of 22 buildings over the period, presumably the result of a foreclosure action.

There are 100 to 150 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill considered to be abandoned. These are suitable for reuse or ongoing maintenance and are not currently used for parking, yard space, or designated for construction. Albany County or private individuals own most of the lands. The vast majority of these properties are classified as unimproved, residential lands. These lots are scattered in all areas south of Colonie Street. Many remain from demolition.

3. Parks and Recreational Facilities

The neighborhood has notable recreational programs including: a City operated Community Center and pool (attached to the New Covenant Charter School built on Lark and First Streets in 2001), and baseball fields run by the Kids Improvement District on North Lark Street (operated by the YMCA in 2002).

Recreational Resources Serving Arbor Hill

Name	Programming	Operator
Community Center at New Covenant North Lark Street	Pool, gym	City of Albany
Arbor Hill Community Center North Lark Street	Youth Programs operated by Trinity Institute	Trinity Institute
Kids Improvement District Manning Blvd. below Lark Drive	Basketball courts, tennis courts, ball fields	City
Arbor Hill Courts 73 N. Swan Street	Basketball courts	City
Lark Park	youth baseball leagues, basketball, tennis	YMCA

2 Lark Street	courts, ball fields	
Oak Street Playground Oak and Second Streets	Playground	City
Bayhill Park Sheridan and Dove Streets	Wading pool, playground	City
Livingston Community Center 315 Northern Blvd.	Pool, fields, gym, game room, weight room	City
Livingston Ball Field Northern Blvd.	Fields	City
Livingston & Lake Playground Livingston and Lake Streets	Wading pool, playground, basketball courts	City
Wilkie Playground Colonie and Lark Streets	Wading pool, playground, and basketball courts	City
Playground at Ten Broeck Triangle	playground	City

Recreational Resources Near Arbor Hill

Washington Park Bounded by Madison Avenue, State and Willett Streets and Lake Avenue	Fields, gardens, ampitheatre, playground, carriage paths	City
Tivoli Park Entrances at Judson Street and Manning Blvd.	Nature sighting, birdwatching, swimming in lake	City
Swinburne Park Clinton Ave. & Manning Blvd.	Wading pool, ice skating, playground, basketball courts, ball fields	City

4. Stores and Retail Services

A shortage of and variety of quality neighborhood commercial businesses is common among Albany’s residential neighborhoods regardless of income. Retail shopping and services within Arbor Hill are limited. Clinton Avenue, Henry Johnson Boulevard, and North Swan Street, zoned C-1 to accommodate commerce, include neighborhood retail uses. Stewart’s Convenience Store and Dunkin’ Donuts on Henry Johnson Boulevard are chain stores in Arbor Hill. Rite Aid Drug Store was there until Spring 2002 when corporate problems forced its closing. In September 2002, 14 of 29 businesses were categorized as grocery or convenience stores. There were also 5 hair salons and 1 beauty supply store.

Shopping and Services in Arbor Hill (September 2002)

Name	Address	Type
Sanitary Barber Shop	59 N. Swan St	Hair
V.J. Franze and Sons Market	51-53 N. Swan St	Grocery

A & M Grocery	32 N. Swan St	Grocery
Keith's Bait and Tackle Store	101 1/2 Clinton Ave	Convenience
R & J Grocery and Deli	277 Clinton Ave	Convenience
AKA New York Supermarket	184 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Stop and Shop	21 Lark St	Convenience
Colonie Market	188 Colonie St	Convenience
The Silver Slipper	97 Henry Johnson Blvd	Bar
Kenneth's Tastebud	177 Henry Johnson Blvd	Restaurant
Roy's Caribbean	185 Northern Blvd	Restaurant
Stewart's	202 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
NU "UZ" Salon	176 Henry Johnson Blvd	Hair
Boulevard Grocery/ Golden Fried Chicken	139 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Taysha Florist	191 Henry Johnson Blvd	Florist
Clinton Ave Grocery	153 Clinton Ave	Convenience
Star Market	203 Livingston Ave	Convenience
Hair Fashion by Roma	180 Clinton Ave	Hair
Modern Barber Shop	152 Clinton Ave	Hair
Barber Shop (No Name)	Eastern Corner of Swan and Livingston	Hair
Corner Store (No Name)	157 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Dunkin' Donuts	201 Henry Johnson Blvd	Fast Food
Advantage Limo	139 Lark St	Limo Service
Shahnee's Caribbean	127 Lark St	Caterer
Michigan Market	108 Lark St	Convenience
Cell Phone Store (No Name)	275 Clinton Ave	Retail
ARED	273 Clinton Ave	Beauty Supply
Tailorama	178 Clinton Ave	Dry Cleaner
New York Grocery	155 Henry Johnson Blvd.	Grocery

5. Institutional (Healthcare, Education, Childcare, Churches, Social Service Agencies)

a. *Healthcare*

Healthcare in Arbor Hill is available at Whitney M. Young Community Health Center and Memorial Hospital on the fringe of Arbor Hill. The Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center is dedicated to the health and well being of infants, adolescents and adults. The Health Center was founded in 1971 to provide comprehensive health and dental services to the residents of Arbor Hill and North Albany. Providing services to a variety of patients from the cities of Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady, Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center today offers a wide range of health services and special programs on an outpatient basis. The center is on Arbor Drive. There is also a Family Alcoholism & Chemical Dependency Treatment Service (FACTS) on Lark Drive.

Albany Memorial Hospital is a 165-bed facility located at 600 Northern Boulevard. It has been located in Albany since 1868, and at its present location on Northern Boulevard since 1957. Albany Memorial Hospital was recently named as one of the *100 Top Hospitals' Intensive Care Units*.

These healthcare institutions are within walking distance and are also sources of employment for the neighborhood.

b. Education

The neighborhood is within the geographical area served by Arbor Elementary School, a public school at 1 Arbor Drive. School enrollment as of May 31, 2001 was 541 students and 100% of children were free lunch eligible. The 4th grade English passage rate was 21%; the math rate was 36% in 2000 (Source: Times Union School Report Card). The school is composed primarily of students from the immediate vicinity with lower turnover than other elementary schools within the district.

The Albany City School District offers an open enrollment policy for students to attend other elementary schools within the district if parents so choose. The guidelines stipulate that the child going to a different school cannot displace a child from the neighborhood where the school is located, nor upset the racial balance within the school. An estimated 25 requests to move students to a different school under this policy were granted in 2001. This policy will continue with the federally mandated ‘No Child Left Behind’ program set to start in 2002-3. Students from

Arbor Hill can also participate in the lotteries used to determine enrollment in the City’s 3 magnet schools. Livingston Middle School (786 students) at 315 Northern Boulevard and Albany High School provide public secondary education for students from Arbor Hill.



Arbor Hill is host to one of the State’s first charter schools. The New Covenant Charter School (see photo) was chartered in 2000 and moved to a new building (50 N. Lark Street) in September 2001. The school provides K-6 education. Enrollment of over 800 is expected in 2002-3. Students from anywhere in the Albany City School District can apply for admission at New Covenant. There is also a

New Covenant Charter School on Lark Street

second charter school (Brighter Choice) that opened in Albany in the fall of 2002 and neighborhood students can participate in a lottery for those spots as well.

St. Casimir Regional Catholic School at 309 Sheridan Avenue and Blessed Sacrament on Central Avenue are Catholic schools nearby providing K-8 education.

The Albany Public Library main branch is located on Washington Avenue adjacent to Arbor Hill. It is within walking distance for residents of Sheridan Hollow, but far from northern Arbor Hill and the Ten Broeck Triangle.

c. Childcare

Arbor Hill residents rely on family, home care or daycare centers within the neighborhood. Demographics indicate a need among the population for 716 childcare spots. A severe shortage of licensed care, convenient to Arbor Hill, is demonstrated (from an analysis conducted in a 2001 grant application for a daycare center at Capital Woods). Robin and Masterson daycare centers have also recently closed, exacerbating the problem in the area.

Daycare Facilities in Arbor Hill

Daycare Facility	Children Enrolled
Beginnings 25 Monroe St.	74 children/ 25 with special needs

Club Fed N. Pearl St.	75
Arbor Park 96 Second St.	68
Downtown Daycare Center 110 N. Pearl St.	40

Total 257

There were nine family care homes as of 11/30/00. These offer an estimated 221 spaces for infants, toddlers, and pre-k children. There is a full day pre-k program at Arbor Hill Elementary School.

There are several childcare centers south of Arbor Hill in the central part of the city and in downtown available to and used by Arbor Hill families. These families also use childcare around the region depending upon their commuting patterns.

Head Start is a federal program managed by Albany County Opportunity, Inc. for preschool children from low-income families. The program provides comprehensive health, dental, mental health, education and family services. Parent training classes are offered on child rearing, health, and nutrition. Assistance is provided for parents wanting to earn their GED, learn to read, English, or in obtaining job training.

d. Churches

There are a number of churches and storefront ministries in Arbor Hill and nearby West Hill serving neighborhood residents.

Churches and Ministries, March 2002

Name	Address
New Life Revelation	252 Orange Street
Victory Christian Church	118 Quail Street
Triumphant Fellowship Ministry	150 Sherman Street
Apostolic Gospel Church	101 First Street
Mount Moriah Baptist Church	269 Spruce Street
Metropolitan New Testament Missionary Baptist Church	105 Second Street
Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church	236 No. Pearl Street
Bethany Baptist	59 Second Street
Grace Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church	Corner Clinton & Ten Broeck Streets
Christian Memorial Church of God in Christ	381 Sheridan Ave
The First Church in Albany	110 North Pearl Street
St. Casimir's Church	309 Sheridan Ave
Church of God in Prophecy	57 Lexington Ave
Arbor Hill Church of God in Christ	40 Lark Street
Revelation Church of God in Christ	248 Orange Street
New Covenant Christian Fellowship	165 Clinton Ave
Sojourner Truth AME Zion Church	351 Livingston Ave
New Jerusalem Home of the Saved Church	160 Sheridan Ave

Evangelical Protestant Church

Clinton Ave

e. Social Service Agencies

The neighborhood has many families and individual residents eligible for social services available through State, County, and City governments, non-profits, and institutions. While many of these providers are located in other areas of the City, particularly on Central Avenue, Washington Avenue or downtown Albany, or in a few cases in outlying areas, several service agencies are housed in right in the neighborhood.

Social Services Agencies Located in Arbor Hill, June 2002

Agency Name	Address	Mission
Arbor Hill Community Center	Lark Street (firehouse)	Youth programs
Albany Boys and Girls Club Satellite	Ida Yarborough Complex	Youth programs
Albany County Head Start	Robert Whalen Homes	Early Childhood Enrichment
United Tenants of Albany	33 Clinton Ave	Tenant Advocacy
Historic Albany Foundation	81 Lexington Ave (West Hill)	Historic preservation
Capital District Community Loan Fund	255 Orange Street	Community development financing
Albany Guardian Society Home	553 Clinton Ave	Adult assisted living home
Arbor House Day Treatment Program	340 First Street	Case management for women 16-21 involved in legal system
Arts Councils	19 Clinton Avenue	Assistance to artists and arts organizations, arts advocacy
Mercy House	12 St. Joseph Terrace	Emergency shelter for women and children
Circle of Hope	454 N. Pearl Street	Counseling, therapy for troubled adolescents
Albany County Community Services Board for Mental Health	245 Lark Street	County operated mental health outpatient clinical services
Employee Ownership Project	340 First Street	Business, legal, and technical assistance to low income entrepreneurs
Grace and Holy Innocents	498 Clinton Avenue	Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen
First Church in Albany Food Pantry	110 N. Pearl Street	Food Pantry, counseling, referral
Healthy Capital District Initiative Covering Kids	315 Sheridan Avenue	
Food Pantries for the Capital District	340 First Street	Coordination of food distribution to shelters
Hope House Adult Residential Program	261 N Pearl Street	Long term substance abuse treatment
NAACP	93 Livingston Avenue	Minority rights advocacy
Everly Cromwell Community Center	Ida Yarborough High Rise 260 N Pearl Street	Senior counseling, information and referrals

Trinity Institution- Homer Perkins Center	76-82 Second Street	Drug treatment residential program, HIV, group and family counseling
Whitney M. Young HIV Program	Lark and Arbor Drives	Case management, counseling, education
With a Little Help from My Friends	226 Clinton Avenue	Furniture, clothing exchange and bartering
Women, Infant, Child Programs (WIC)	Lark and Arbor Drives	

Housing Related Institutions

Arbor Hill Development Corporation	241 Clinton Avenue	Housing Development Corp.
Albany Housing Coalition	278 Clinton Avenue	Affordable Housing Development and Management
St. Joseph’s Housing Corporation	341 Clinton Avenue	Housing
Albany Community Development Agency	200 Henry Johnson Boulevard	Housing, economic development, neighborhood improvement
Albany Community Land Trust	341 First Street	Homeownership counseling, purchase/lease opportunities

E. Existing Regulation Affecting Use of Property

1. Zoning

The zoning in Arbor Hill implies a neighborhood comprised of residential areas served by three primary commercial districts.

The northern section of Arbor Hill is primarily zoned R-3A multi-family low-density residential. Permitted uses include garden apartments, single and two-family detached dwellings, and houses of worship. The central part of Arbor Hill between Henry Johnson Boulevard and N. Swan Street is zoned R-2A. Permitted uses include single and two family detached dwellings and houses of worship.

R-2B- one and two-family medium density residential zoning is located in the southern part of Arbor Hill extending from Henry Johnson Boulevard to N. Pearl Street. R-2B includes R-2A permitted uses and also permits semi-detached dwellings, and single and two-family rowhouses.

An R-4 multifamily high-rise residential district is located between Manning Blvd. and N. Pearl Street bounded by Lark Drive on the north and Livingston Avenue on the south. Principal permitted uses are multifamily/ high-rise dwellings, garden apartments, and two-family rowhouses.

North Swan Street and Henry Johnson Boulevard are designated C-1 Neighborhood commercial districts. C-1 is characterized by mixed-use commercial and residential spaces, with the commercial space meant to primarily serve the surrounding neighborhood.

A C-3 district (central business district) is located on North Pearl Street in the eastern portion of Arbor Hill and includes C-1 permitted uses as well as a number of commercial and office type facilities. A C-M- light industrial

district is located between S. Swan and N. Hawk (east to west boundaries), and Sheridan Avenue and Orange Street (north and south boundaries). Permitted uses include commercial business facilities and light manufacturing.

2. Urban Renewal Designations

Two areas in Arbor Hill have been designated in the past under New York State Law as Urban Renewal Areas to facilitate redevelopment.

Henry Johnson Boulevard (Clinton Avenue to Livingston Avenue), was designed for special attention in 1990 (Northern Boulevard Redevelopment Plan, 1989). The plan for this area was to create mixed-use retail and residential development to line the corridor. It was developed after a participatory community planning process in 1989 where alternatives were evaluated and mixed use, urban style development was chosen.

There has been significant development on the boulevard north of Second Street in the last decade in attempts to bring economic development and retail space. The Dunkin' Donuts/Rite Aid Building and Stewart's were retail projects. Gateway Commons, south side between Second and Third Streets, was launched and developed to house a private sector employer. 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard, east side between Third and Livingston, was constructed as office space and now houses the Albany Community Development Agency.

Arbor Hill Project No. 1, 1960's- Bounded on south by Livingston Ave, west by Henry Johnson Boulevard, east by N. Pearl Street, and north by the railroad tracks. It includes Lark Drive, and Manning Drive. This area has been developed with large land uses including Arbor Hill Elementary School, Arbor Hill Firehouse, Skyline Garden Apartment Complex, Ida Yarborough Housing Complex, Whitney M. Young Health Care Center, and Capital Woods Housing Complex (formerly Dudley Heights). This area covers most of census block group one which had a population of 2534 in 2000.

F. Public Bus Transportation and Pedestrian Safety

1. Public Transit and Bus Shelters

The 2000 Census indicates that over 17% of the population relies on public transportation to get back and forth to work. This is over 3 times the Albany County rate. Arbor Hill is served by the Route 8 bus (Arbor Hill-Mount Hope) that travels north-south and provides access to major transportation hubs (such as Washington and Lark). From these major hubs, an Arbor Hill resident can easily reach work, shopping or other commercial destinations- downtown, Central Avenue, Crossgates Mall, Colonie Center, or adjacent communities such as Menands, Troy, Rensselaer or Latham.

Bus shelters are located at the following locations in Arbor Hill:

- North Pearl Street and Livingston Avenue
- Broadway Avenue and Livingston Avenue
- Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street
- Broadway Avenue and Livingston Avenue
- Livingston Avenue and North Lake Street
- Livingston Avenue and Northern Boulevard (2)
- Henry Johnson Boulevard and Second Street

2. Streets and Sidewalks Infrastructure

Street and Sidewalk condition for most of Arbor Hill is good to fair. There are a handful of specific locations that were identified as needing repair. For much of the project area maintenance is a problem. Litter, broken glass, and weeds on private property and sidewalks contribute to the conclusion that divestment of property is commonplace.

a. Northern Portion of Arbor Hill (North of Livingston Avenue)

The redeveloped portion of Arbor Hill enjoys newer public infrastructure and sidewalks which are all in good condition. Curbs are fully intact. North Pearl Street between Clinton Avenue and Livingston was completely rebuilt in 2001 and features new brick pavers, sidewalks, curbs and pedestrian lighting. Colonie Street's (east of Lark Street before it turns into N. Swan) roadways and sidewalks are in poor condition. Maintenance is also an issue.

b. Ten Broeck

Sidewalks and streets in the Ten Broeck area are generally in fair condition, with some instances of asphalt patching or cracked sidewalks. Sidewalks are even, and curbs fully intact. Along Ten Broeck Street and Clinton Avenue decorative pavers are also present. North Swan Street has very poor sidewalk and street infrastructure. Sidewalks are missing in places, or asphalted over. The Lark St/ Clinton Avenue intersection is in poor condition with numerous patches, uneven surface. There is a maintenance issue for much of the area. Littering and weeds are present in many parts of the area, adding to a sense of neglect.

c. Sheridan Hollow

Sheridan Hollow generally has fair to poor street and sidewalk conditions. Orange Street (from Chapel Street to Dove Street) has streets and sidewalks in poor condition. Sheridan Avenue from Chapel Street to Henry Johnson Boulevard has generally fair condition street and sidewalks. Maintenance overall is decent here, although there are sections where weeds and litter detract from the appearance of the block.

Henry Johnson Boulevard marks the western boundary of Arbor Hill. The street is in good condition, while the sidewalk is in fair to poor condition. The block between First and Second Street has poor condition sidewalks. Dove and South Swan Street both have fair to poor sidewalk condition. Heavy weeds and blacktop on both sides of the sidewalk are also present.

Fair to Poor Street and Sidewalk Conditions Identified in Arbor Hill, September 2002

Street Segment	Street condition	Sidewalk condition
Orange Street (Lark to N. Hawk)	Poor	Poor
North Swan Street (First to Colonie)	Poor	Poor
Colonie Street (North Swan to Lark)	Good	Poor
Livingston Avenue (Ten Broeck to Henry Johnson)	Excellent (Newly repaved)	Fair to Poor
Dove Street (Sheridan to Clinton)	Fair	Poor
Sheridan Avenue (Henry Johnson to S. Swan)	Fair to Poor	Fair to Poor
Lark Street (Second to Colonie)	Fair to Poor	Fair to Poor
Henry Johnson Blvd. (Sheridan to Livingston)	Fair	Fair to Poor

3. Lighting

Niagara Mohawk is under contract for the supply and maintenance of lighting for the entire City. The main thoroughfares of Clinton Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard are both well lit during nighttime hours.

4. Crime and Prevention Tactics

Crime and related issues of drug dealing and gangs are expressed as problems confronting the Arbor Hill community. The Public Safety Department offers general programming and specific initiatives for the neighborhood to address issues such as this. With the combination of law enforcement, fire department resources, and building inspections, the department has made significant improvements in addressing absentee landlords that rent to drug dealers, abandoned houses that are used for criminal activity, and the clean-up of several streets cluttered and littered with debris. The Albany Police Department has also implemented a community-policing program since 1999 that involves the patrol of officers on foot, bike and vehicle on a regular basis through the neighborhood. Creating a visible presence and improving the working relationship between the police department and Arbor Hill residents are primary goals of this program. In addition, the Community Response Unit of the APD (formed in 2000) has been tasked with addressing a wide variety of specific neighborhood problems.

G. Underground Utilities (water, sewer, fiber)

There is no compiled assessment of infrastructure conditions in Albany. The City Water Department reports that the waste and sanitary sewer lines along Livingston Avenue were separated in the 1970s. There is a dedicated storm sewer system and there have not been incidences of breakage or complaints.

The Water Department reports that the neighborhood water system is in good condition and there are major transmission mains in the area. No obstacles to development have been identified in the area of water and sewer utilities.

It is noted that utility repairs and accessing underground infrastructure have left a patched-over uneven surface at many locations on the roadways and sidewalks.

H. Environmental Factors

The land's natural geography has defined Arbor Hill's physical form. A ravine on the south creates a natural boundary. The steep slopes north of Clinton Avenue complicate development conditions.

All the land area in the neighborhood has been developed at one time or another. Most of the development has been residential as opposed to industrial or commercial. There are former commercial uses scattered throughout the neighborhood, and former and current commercial and industrial uses with unknown waste disposal or hazardous substance storage facilities.

Arbor Hill has an active environmental advocacy. The mission of the Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation is to serve the community as an environmental and public health advocate, conduct environmental testing, and rehabilitate green and open space. From 1984 until 1994, the State of New York operated a regional trash incinerator in the heart of the Arbor Hill community. Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens was instrumental in closing this incinerator in Sheridan Hollow, and the Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation grew out of the settlement.

There are no wetlands and flood plains in Arbor Hill presented on the NYSDEC Wetland and FEMA Floodplain Map.

I. Historic Districts and Sites

Arbor Hill was the most inconsistent of Albany neighborhoods, once a place of wealth, and a mix of aristocrats and workers. Originally part of the Patroon’s area, called The Colonie, and later the site of the Ten Broeck Mansion, the neighborhood was named Arbor Hill because of its grape arbors and its lofty position on a hillside. Ten Broeck Mansion was built for Brigadier General Abraham Ten Broeck; the general later became State Senator and two-time Mayor of Albany.

Arbor Hill was also one of the fastest growing industrial areas in New York. Its fast growing industry produced more jobs and led to a greater influx of residents to Arbor Hill.

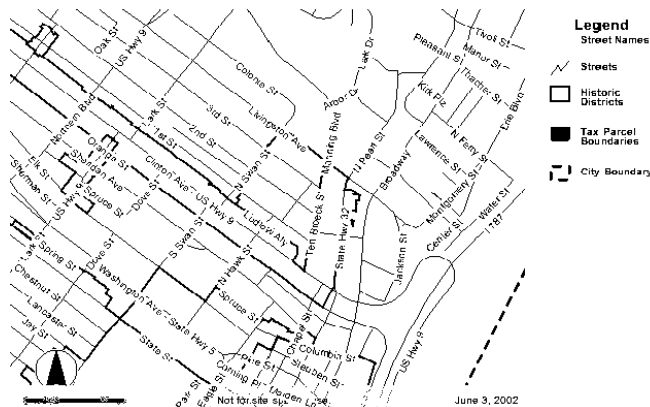
The majority of Arbor Hill developed in the nineteenth century. It is part of a large area just north of the central business district which generally extends about one mile northward along the Hudson River and more than one and one half miles west from the riverbed. Many of the historic districts established to recognize and protect nineteenth century historic fabric overlay upon properties and areas in Arbor Hill. The area retains much of its nineteenth century historic character, although demolition and redevelopment have taken its toll in some parts. What once consisted of unbroken, separate historic districts has deteriorated into remaining historic properties- many in poor condition and interspersed vacant lots.

There are four distinct areas in Arbor Hill which have been recognized for historic quality and placed upon the National Register of Historic Places. Once designated, properties in these areas proposed for modification utilizing State or Federal funds must undergo review by the State Office of Historic Preservation prior to construction.

Two of the districts are designated by the City of Albany’s local historic district ordinance. The Historic Resources Commission must review proposed exterior building modifications for historic consistency prior to issuance of a city building permit.

National Register Historic Districts in Arbor Hill

National Register Name	Local Name If Different	National Register Status	Locally designated?
Broadway/Livingston		y	n
744-755 Broadway		y	n
Clinton Avenue		y	y
Arbor Hill	Ten Broeck	y	y



Broadway/Livingston Historic District

This district is situated a few blocks west of the Hudson River and two blocks north of the central business district at the intersection of Broadway and Livingston Avenue. There were 20 commercial and residential buildings in the district when it was listed on the register.

The Broadway/Livingston Historic District represents the last surviving concentration of early to mid-nineteenth century commercial/residential buildings along what was formerly a long uninterrupted streetscape of homes and businesses stretching from Clinton Avenue to the New York Central Railroad Bridge at Colonie Street. These structures provided commercial space associated with Hudson River commerce and elegant housing for middle and upper middle class businesspersons.

744-750 Broadway

This district includes 4 buildings on the east side of Broadway near Wilson Street. These are remaining structures from what was once a long uninterrupted commercial and residential streetscape on Broadway from downtown north to Colonie Street. Today demolition has isolated these buildings. 774 and 746 are identical three-story Greek revival row houses; 748 is the oldest structure; 750 is a three-story Italianate style building.

Clinton Avenue Historic District

The Clinton Avenue Historic District was listed on the national register in 1981 because its development is characteristic of row house fabric of the 1900's. The largest section of the district is nine blocks along Clinton Avenue beginning at North Pearl on the east and ending at Quail Street on the west. The district also includes short adjacent segments of North Pearl Street, Elk Street, Lark Street, First Street, and Lexington Avenue. This shape of the district illustrates Albany's unrelenting westward growth following the opening of the Erie Canal through the end of the 19th century.

There were 576 buildings in the district when it was nominated for the register. The vast majority of these buildings are brick row homes, two and three stories high with front stoops. The buildings were developed between c1830 and c1919 as speculative middle class housing.

In the early 1980s many of the row homes along Clinton Avenue were rehabilitated with private and public funding under a large development project managed by Vulcan Development. Rental management of these buildings passed from Vulcan to others in a series of transactions and project bankruptcies. The Community Preservation Corporation now owns most of the buildings.

The Palace Theatre, a local landmark, is located within the district and is on individual State and National Register listings.

Arbor Hill Historic District (locally known as the Ten Broeck Historic District)

The original district is triangular in shape and encompasses all row homes surrounding two small urban parks and the monumental St. Joseph's Church along Ten Broeck Street, Hall Place, and St. Joseph's Terrace. There were 97 structures in the district when it was originally listed on the National Register in 1978 under the name "Ten Broeck Historic District". In 1985 an expanded district containing a total of 220 structures was listed in order to include areas west of the triangle proper along First, Second, North Swan, Ten Broeck Place, and North Hawk Streets. The district's name was changed to the Arbor Hill Historic District at that time.

The district includes St. Joseph's Church, Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church, and the Ten Broeck Mansion. St. Joseph's Church and the Ten Broeck Mansion are listed individually on the State and National Register of Historic Places in addition to being contained within recognized districts.

The Ten Broeck Mansion is owned, operated, and maintained by the Albany County Historical Association as an historic site. It is one of several mansions in the City of Albany open to the public and to school groups to showcase this area's history.



St. Joseph's Church.

The Ten Broeck Mansion is set on spacious grounds. It is a federal style house which was built for Abraham Ten Broeck in 1798, a prominent Revolutionary War Figure, delegate to the Continental Congress and later State Senator and Mayor of Albany. The mansion featured an uninterrupted view of the Hudson River when it was built.

Construction of St. Joseph's Church began in 1855. St. Joseph's School occupied several buildings before the structure on North Swan Street was constructed in 1905. North Swan Street developed as a commercial corridor in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Construction of row homes surrounding the church, by Albany's wealthy Irish, "lumber barons" and other industrialists followed during the latter half of the 19th century. In the Mid 19th Century the area was known as Millionaire's Row.

The Ten Broeck Preservation League is an organization established to be an advocate for historic preservation with a particular focus on this Arbor Hill area. The organization also conducts house tours and community beautification projects.

Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad is said to have utilized properties in Arbor Hill and other Albany neighborhoods. Particular properties said to have been of importance to the Underground Railroad are listed as: 10 Lark St, 168 Third St., and 198 Lumber St.

The Underground Railroad Workshop is a non-profit organization that is working to research and further document Underground Railroad ties within the community. They currently lead walking tours within Arbor Hill and are a source of confirmed and unconfirmed information for Underground Railroad activity in the region.

Sources

2000 US Census

City of Albany Tax Assessment Information

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Needs Assessment Report, Dennison (2001)

City of Albany Consolidated Plan

Site Visits and Infrastructure Inspections (2002)

City of Albany Zoning Ordinance

Urban Renewal Plans and Legislation

Historic District Registry Information

Abandoned Property: Statement of Existing Conditions, Goals and Objectives

I. Introduction

Albany's older urban neighborhoods have a number of empty, boarded buildings and scattered vacant lots remaining after structures have been demolished. These properties are not inhabited. Most do not appear to be maintained. Garbage, overgrown grass, broken windows, and structural failures pose a public safety concern. If the structures are not secured (i.e. protected by sound roofing and boarded windows and doors) they can become havens for squatters and crime. These "abandoned" properties are both symptom and cause of neighborhood decay.

Arbor Hill is in one of the weakest real estate markets in the region making the market return on private investment insufficient to make large-scale rehabilitation and new construction activities feasible. There is no dedicated source of public funding to deal with abandoned properties in a comprehensive manner and limited federal and state funding. For these reasons, the city is challenged with mobilizing available municipal resources and where possible, leveraging other public, private and institutional resources to respond to the problem.¹

II. Definitions

"Abandoned properties," as referred to in this paper, cover "abandoned buildings" and "abandoned lots." "Abandoned buildings" are clearly vacant and not immediately inhabitable and typically have boarded doors and windows. "Abandoned lots" are vacant lots not in apparent use for example, as side yards or off-street parking. Both types of property have a blighting influence on the neighborhood.

III. Existing Conditions

In September 2002 the project team conducted a visual survey of the area contained between Henry Johnson Boulevard, Orange Street, North Manning Boulevard, and Broadway to identify abandoned buildings. 179 such buildings were identified. This is 12% of structures within the area.

Abandoned buildings are scattered in Arbor Hill south of Colonie Street. Most of the buildings are rowhouse structures containing apartments. See the table on the following page summarizing the results of the visual survey.

As of September 2002, private individuals owned 131 of 179 abandoned buildings (73%). No one private owner was listed as the owner of more than three or four properties. Only 7 properties were owned by private mortgage finance companies. Twelve (12) buildings were owned by nonprofits; including the five owned by the City's Albany Community Development Agency. Twenty-nine (29) were owned by Albany County.

A comparison of ownership in April 2001 and September 2002 found that 74 of the 179 buildings changed hands over that 18-month period. Albany County was a party to forty-one (41) of the

¹ John Kromer, *Vacant-Property Policy and Practice: Baltimore and Philadelphia*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2002.

transfers. The County sold 19 of the buildings to private individuals. The County took ownership of 22 buildings over the period, presumably the result of foreclosure actions.

**Survey of Abandoned Buildings In Arbor Hill
September 2002²**

Buildings in Arbor Hill planning area		1497
Buildings identified as Abandoned		179 (12% of total)
Land Use	One Family Residence	22
	Two Family Residence	73
	Three Family Residence	37
	Containing 4 or more apartments	13
	Commercial	33
	Church	1
	Ownership	Private Individual/Corporation
Finance Company		7
Albany County		29
Nonprofit (including ACDA)		12
City of Albany		0

Abandoned buildings can be secured (i.e. properly roofed and boarded), demolished or rehabilitated. The expense of renovating an abandoned building can vary greatly, \$15,000 to \$65,000 per unit, depending on the condition of the building.³ A ballpark estimate for renovating a two to three unit structure therefore ranges between \$37,500 and \$162,500. The total investment required to rehabilitate 179 structures would be in the range of \$ 7-29 million, resulting in 350 to 500 newly rehabilitated housing units. The high cost of renovating some of the vacant building stock in Arbor Hill speaks to the importance of establishing guidelines for weighing the economic utility of the building against its preservation value.

The cost to remove a structure now averages \$17,000/building making the cost of demolition of 179 structures approximately \$3 million.⁴ Such demolition in Arbor Hill would result in scattered plots of vacant land, presumably ready for development of housing and other land uses, with a cumulative total area of 13 acres.

In addition to abandoned buildings, there are 100 to 150 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill considered to be abandoned. These are suitable for reuse or ongoing maintenance and are not currently used for parking or yard space, or designated for construction. Most of the

² Historic Albany Foundation, City of Albany Department of Development and Planning, and The Community Builders survey in September 2002. City of Albany Tax Assessment Record (September 2002) provided ownership information. Tax Assessment record of April 2001 provided land use and number of total buildings in the neighborhood.

³ According to the recent experience of the Community Preservation Corporation.

⁴ According to Albany Community Development Agency staff.

lots are owned by Albany County or private individuals. The vast majority of these properties are classified as unimproved, residential lands. These lots are scattered in all areas south of Colonie Street. Many are vacant as a result of demolition.

Property ownership trends and mapping indicate that there are many additional vacant lots in Arbor Hill. All totaled there were 621 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill in April 2001 (Source: Real Property Service Data). The majority of these are not abandoned properties in the true sense of the term. Much of the vacant land is owned by private, nonprofit, or quasi-nonprofit corporations, as part of the Gateway Commons, Pieter Schuyler Court (now known as the Albany Family Housing Initiative), and the New Covenant Charter School development initiatives. Other vacant lots are used as parking or side yards. They are land locked slivers of land or public alleys.

The Arbor Hill Planning Initiative established four guiding principles for the development of actions for the neighborhood:

- Support Homeownership and Residential Reinvestment
- Celebrate Unique Culture and Heritage: People and Place
- Expand Business Development and Job Creation
- Strengthen Quality of Life.

Based on these principles, preliminary plans for addressing abandoned properties call for a combination of rehabilitation of existing structures and new infill construction compatible with the neighborhood context.

To assist in the Arbor Hill Planning Initiative, the inventory of abandoned buildings identified in the visual survey combined with vacant lots as identified by the Real Property Service data is presented in a map at the conclusion of this paper.

IV. Code Enforcement Pertaining to Abandoned Property

The City of Albany's Public Safety Department's Divisions of Fire Safety, and Building and Codes are the agencies responsible to inspect property and enforce codes where necessary. In the case of abandoned property, inspection takes account of a building's structural condition, security (boarding of the first floor is required), and other public health and safety hazards. Early code intervention is especially important to address problems such as water damage early before significant deterioration to the building occurs.

Structures found to be unsound can be demolished or partially or fully stabilized, if feasible, by the City of Albany, if the property owner fails to respond to notification from the city. However, city resources for demolition are very limited. Demolition of abandoned buildings in several areas of Arbor Hill – including the Ten Broeck Triangle and along Clinton Avenue - is not desirable. On the contrary, restoring these buildings is a pressing need because these are early urban settlements designated for preservation and lie within historic districts (Downtown Albany District, Broadway/North Pearl Street

District, Ten Broeck Historic District, Clinton Avenue District). In these areas, the City desires, when feasible, to stabilize these structures.

The Common Council established a Vacant Building Registry in February 2000. It established a requirement for registering vacant buildings with the City. In addition to identifying the property and its owner or owners, the registration requires a vacant building plan calling for the property to be demolished within a specified time frame, secured and maintained, or rehabilitated within 365 days. The owner is required to notify the Enforcement Officer of any changes in information supplied as part of the vacant building registration within 30 days of the change. Further, any revisions to the plan or timetable for the vacant building must meet the approval of the Enforcement Officer.

The Department of Fire, Emergency and Building Services is responsible for enforcement of these plans. Any person violating any provision of the Vacant Building Registry or providing false information to the Enforcement Officer will be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 per day of violation, and/or imprisonment not exceeding one year.

The Department of General Services is responsible for enforcing several sections of the municipal code of the City of Albany which contribute to quality of life in Arbor Hill. Among these are codes relating to refuse collection, illegal dumping, anti litter, snow removal, streets and encroachments.

V. Property Tax Collection, Lien, Foreclosure and Disposition

Many abandoned properties fall delinquent on annual municipal tax payments, resulting in tax liens, and sometimes foreclosure. In the City of Albany, the property tax assessment and collection process begins when the City issues tax bills each year for each taxable property. The municipal bills include municipal property tax and additional costs incurred for the property in the prior year, which can be added to the property tax bill under State Law. These include the cost of actions taken by the locality to clean or secure the property, and water and sewer charges.

The local tax bill is payable to the City Treasurer. At the end of each tax year, outstanding property tax bills are tallied and forwarded to Albany County. Albany County reimburses the City of Albany for outstanding tax bills. This effectively provides the City with 100% of the revenue due from property tax levy. A similar practice is in place for the school tax.

Albany County then takes over tax enforcement for the outstanding amount due in taxes. A penalty of 5% is added to the bill as soon as it becomes payable to the County. An additional 1% per month is added to the bill if left unpaid at the end of each month.

Albany County undertakes efforts to collect outstanding taxes including targeted mailings, informational packets on the delinquent property tax installment plan to taxpayers who qualify, and notices of the foreclosure action specified by law. In

addition, each year the County provides the City Treasurer with a list of unpaid taxes so that a notice can be added to the current City bill indicating that a tax remains unpaid.

If left unpaid after those notices, Albany County can foreclose on the property under State Law. Foreclosure on a residential property can occur once a real estate tax bill is delinquent for three years, while foreclosure on a nonresidential property can occur after delinquency of two years.

The County inspects, secures, and when warranted, demolishes structures it owns, to protect public health and safety. However, properties are moved to auction as soon as possible after foreclosure to reduce costs to County taxpayers and return the properties to productive use.

The County of Albany disposes of these properties in accordance with the County Real Property Disposition Plan. Accordingly, public auctions have been held regularly and over 1500 properties have been sold since 1995. The County requires a 20% down-payment at the time of auction, and reserves the right to reject any bids. Bidders that have delinquent taxes with Albany County must pay those in full before closing on the property.

Albany County will consider the private sale of parcels (instead of public auction) in limited circumstances to nonprofit organizations and municipalities for community use and public benefit. Unlike the public auction sales that carry no deed restrictions requiring rehabilitation, the deeds transferring properties by private sale often include conditions for improvements. There is also a very limited provision for sale to an adjacent owner, but that property must have no value to any other interested party.

Former delinquent owners can reacquire the residential property under very limited circumstances. All taxes, fees, and interest due through the closing of that sale must be paid in full, and the owner must be living in the structure at the time of the foreclosure action in order to qualify.

Relevant Laws: NY State Real Property Tax Law (see sections 942, 1166, 1330, 1332, 1442); County Law section 215; Albany County Charter; Albany County Local Laws (see #2 of 1998, Resolution 111 of 2002); Albany City Charter and Laws.

VI. Goals for Abandoned Property

Recognizing the blighting influence of abandoned properties on Arbor Hill and the mechanisms presently in place to address this problem, four goals have been established to address this issue:

1. Educate the public about abandoned properties.
2. Develop and maintain an inventory of abandoned buildings in the city.
3. Manage abandoned property in a manner to secure health and safety, and to minimize the blighting influence upon neighboring properties.
4. Encourage the reuse of abandoned properties.

Pursuit of many of these goals will require substantial investments in code enforcement and neighborhood beautification activities. It will also require targeted construction investment and collaboration among diverse and numerous private and public stakeholders to direct the use of available public subsidies. Albany County, Albany City, housing developers, public safety interests, neighborhood leaders, and other stakeholders have to engage in strategic planning to identify, target and dispose of tax delinquent and publicly-owned property in a manner which supports neighborhood redevelopment.

Stronger institutional, nonprofit, or private partnerships are needed to stabilize, rehabilitate, and sell property in Arbor Hill. Tax collection, lien, foreclosure and disposition processes of the City and County should be evaluated and modified to improve financial management and time efficiencies. Specific objectives under each goal are listed in the work plan below.

Abandoned Property Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Educate the public about abandoned properties.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Publish a City of Albany Abandoned Properties Primer which explains the extent of the problem, why properties become abandoned, and the roles of various stakeholders in addressing the problem, including nearby residents and businesses.
- 1.2 Circulate the primer to public agencies, neighborhood associations and neighborhood not-for-profit organizations.

Goal 2. Develop and maintain an inventory of abandoned buildings in the city.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Build on the efforts of Historic Albany Foundation and SUNY Albany to develop and maintain a citywide inventory of abandoned properties.
- 2.2 Support the Historic Albany Foundation in the development of a technical advisory committee to work with neighborhoods to develop consensus on the treatment of abandoned properties.

Goal 3. Manage abandoned property to secure public health and safety, and to minimize the blighting influence upon neighboring property.

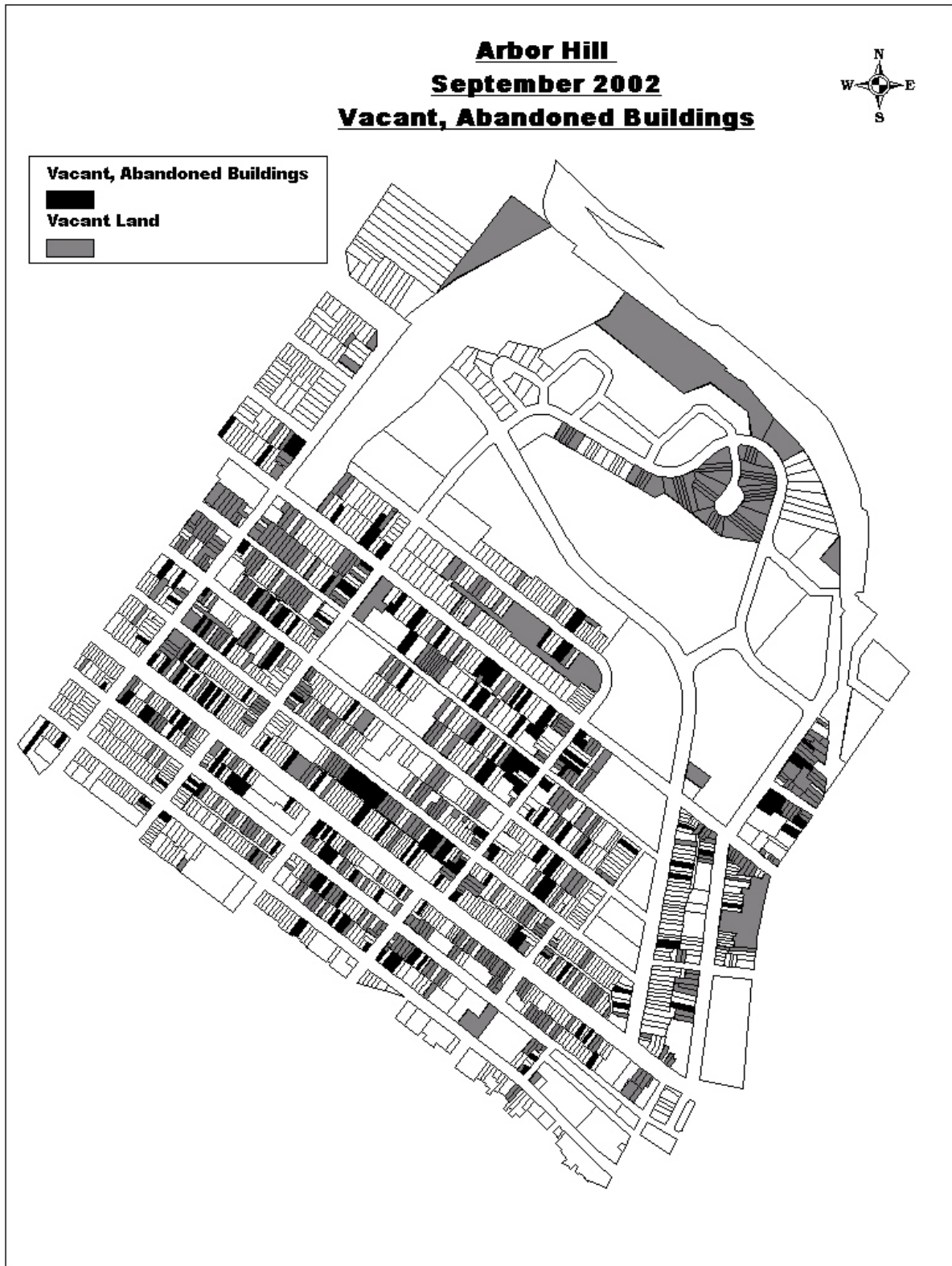
Objectives:

- 3.1 Inspect all abandoned properties to assess water damage and other structural threats.
 - 3.1.1. Stabilize and secure abandoned structures with historic, architectural or community value for rehabilitation in the future.
 - 3.1.2. Repair or demolish structures that threaten public health and safety.
- 3.2 Enforce applicable building codes, Vacant Building Registry Legislation (requiring the securing of first floor windows and doors) and property maintenance standards to improve the safety and appearance of abandoned buildings and lots.
- 3.3 Promote community projects and owner education to improve the maintenance of properties in Arbor Hill.

Goal 4. Encourage the reuse of abandoned properties.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Launch a marketing campaign to promote the reuse of abandoned properties.
- 4.2 Identify or create an entity (or collaborative) focused on abandoned property renewal to acquire, redevelop (through demolition or rehabilitation) and dispose of abandoned properties.
- 4.3 Create a proactive partnership of key stakeholders in abandoned property renewal: City, County, lenders and others to support the efforts of the entity.
- 4.4 Reuse abandoned property as part of development initiatives.
- 4.5 Facilitate the reuse of abandoned properties outside redevelopment areas.



Note: Abandoned Buildings as identified in visual survey.

Vacant land as identified in Real Property Service data.

City of Albany
Community Development Agency
Request for Proposals

PROPERTY ADDRESS _____

PROPOSER NAME (specify if individual, joint venture or corporation. If joint venture list name, address, & phone number of each entity and percentage of partnership interest:

ADDRESS OF PROPOSER _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

PURCHASE PRICE _____

A. PROPOSED USE - Indicate number of uses/units per building and specify if units will be leased or owner-occupied. Indicate use: residential or commercial or not-for-profit. If commercial tenants, please list corporate name.

B.SCHEDULE

Time required to complete rehabilitation will be _____ months from conditional closing. Upon selection of the RFP proposal, a complete schedule must be provided. (Please note 8/1 properties subject to conditional reversion provision; the City of Albany has the right, but not the obligation, to repossess with damages, if the schedule is not met.)

C. FACADE PLAN

Describe in detail below the proposed street facade of the building, including:

1. Exterior siding material;
2. Type, size and number of windows and doors;
3. Proposed color of exterior;
4. Exterior lighting plan;
5. Security measures, if any; and
6. Size, location and number of exterior signs.

Please note that the facade and rehabilitation plan must be completed as approved prior to the transfer of title.

D. REHABILITATION PLAN BUDGET

Please develop an itemized estimate of anticipated rehabilitation or construction costs based on the **Cost Estimate Outline** below:

<u>EXTERIOR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COSTS</u>
1. Chimneys -point Of rebuild	\$ _____
2. Roof -repair or replace	_____
3. Cornice and trim repairs	_____
4. Siding -repair or replace	_____
5. Gutters & downspouts	_____
6. Exterior door -repair or replace	_____
7. Steps & porch repairs	_____
8. Foundation wall pointing & repair	_____
9. Exterior protective covering	_____
10. Storms & screens	_____
11. Accessory Building repairs	_____
12. Service walks repairs	_____
13. Driveway/Parking Lot	_____
14. Landscaping	_____
15. Fence	_____
16. Other: _____	_____
<u>SUBTOTAL EXTERIOR:</u>	\$ _____
<u>INTERIOR</u>	
16. Joist or beam repairs	\$ _____
17. Wall changes	_____
18. Wall & ceiling treatments	_____
19. Electric	_____
20. Heating	_____
21. Plumbing	_____
22. Window repairs	_____
23. Door repairs	_____
24. Stairways & railings	_____
25. Insulation – attic/sidewall	_____
26. Kitchen cabinets & counters	_____
27. Floor repairs	_____
28. Cellar enclosures	_____
29. Other: _____	_____
<u>SUBTOTAL INTERIOR:</u>	\$ _____
<u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:</u>	\$ _____
<u>PURCHASE PRICE:</u>	\$ _____
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE:</u>	\$ _____
Cost per sq. ft. \$ _____	
Cost per unit \$ _____	

Name source of estimates:

Architect: _____ Contractor: _____

E. FINANCING -SOURCE OF FUNDS

1. Personal Funds
 \$ _____

Provide current financial statement for each application and each principal in the partnership. Attachment 2, Credit Authorization Form and Attachment 3, Assets Statement must be submitted with this response.

2. Bank Financial (commitment Letter from bank must be included if financing is required.)
 \$ _____

3. Grant Funds/Donations (evidence of grants/donation must be provided;
 Grant agreement or award letter) \$ _____

*TOTAL \$ _____

***Total amount of financing must be greater than or equal to the proposed amount of cost estimate expenditure.**

F. Qualifications/Experience - Describe in detail previous experience in completing similar projects. Include key personnel involved in project, references and photographs if possible.

<u>ADDRESS</u> <u>TELEPHONE#</u>	<u>SCOPE OF PROJECT</u>	<u>COST OF PROJECT</u>	<u>REFERENCE</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

G. CONTINGENCIES

1. Zoning _____ or _____
 Yes No
 Reason for Contingency _____

2. Financing _____ or _____
 Yes No
 Time required to obtain bank commitment _____

3. Other _____

H. EVALUATION CRITERIA

In evaluation the merits of the proposals submitted for this property, the following items will be among the factors considered. The order of importance of magnitude is not necessarily reflected by the order of this list.

A. Proposed Plan: The overall quality of the proposed physical elements of the development plan and the degree to which the project will contribute to the continued redevelopment of the immediate neighborhood.

B. Compatibility: The compatibility of the proposed plan with existing zoning, land use, density, and building rehabilitation standards.

C. Schedule: The timetable for the project, including evidence of capability to carry out the project in an expeditious manner.

D. Financial Capability: Evidence of financial ability to complete project;

E. Public Assistance: The requirements for a reliance upon public (City, State, Federal) program assistance in undertaking the project.

F. Use of Property: The proposed use of property (i.e. is proposed use identified as priority in neighborhood plan)

G. Long-term ownership of Property: Is property proposed for home ownership or investment purposes;

I. RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS AND WAIVE INFORMALITIES

City reserves and may exercise the following rights and opinion with respect to this selection process;

1. To reject any or all proposals and reissue the RFP at any time before execution of a final contract.
2. To supplement, amend, or otherwise modify this RFP at any time before selection of one or more Respondents for negotiation and to cancel this RFP with or without issuing another RFP.
3. To accept or reject any or all of the items in any proposal and award the contract, in whole or in part, if it is deemed in the City's best interest to do so.
4. To reject the proposal of a respondent that, in the City's sole judgement has been delinquent or unfaithful in the performance of any contract with the City , is financially or technically incapable, or is otherwise not a responsible respondent.
5. To waive any minor informality, defect, or deviation from this RFP that is not, in the City's sole judgement, material to the proposal.
6. To request that some or all of the respondents clarify, modify or supplement proposals.
7. To conduct concurrent contract negotiation with multiple respondents if it is in the best interest of the City to do so.

J. CLOSING

Upon selection of the RFP submission by the City of Albany, a non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 will be required. Prior to the transfer of the deed, the following must be submitted to the City;

1. Approved plan and sample for completion
2. Insurance documentation
3. Documentation of financing; documents must show that 100% of costs are covered.

K. CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION

Applicants or principals identified on page 1, or any principal, general partner or corporate officer with ownership of more than 10% of the shares of the organization will be disqualified for adverse finding with respect to:

1. Any City or County mortgage foreclosure proceedings or currently more than 90 days in arrears on any City or County loan;
2. Ownership or management interest in any property that was taken In Rem by the City or County or any tax arrears;
3. Owning any properties within the City of Albany that are in violation of the City building code or are the subject of enforcement actions;
4. Any record of building code violations or litigation against properties owned by the proposer or any entity or individual that comprises the proposer;
5. Any felony conviction or pending case; 6. Arson conviction, or pending case;
7. Previous record of default or non-performance on work affiliated with a public contract;
8. In the last 7 years, filed a bankruptcy petition or been the subject of involuntary bankruptcy proceedings
9. In the last 5 years, failed to file any required tax returns, or failed to pay any applicable Federal, State, County or City taxes or other charges.

CITY OF ALBANY – RFP Attachment 1

Environmental Assessment Form

SHORT FORM

For City Use Only			
File No(s):	_____		
Project Title:	_____		
Date Filed:	_____		
Lead Agency:	_____		
Review By:	_____		
Determination Recommendation:	[]	1.	No significant impact
	[]	a.	No mitigation required
	[]	b.	Mitigation required
	[]	2.	EIS required
	[]	3.	Long form required

AFFIDAVIT

"I affirm that the information provided herein is true and I understand that this application will be accepted for all purposes as the equivalent of an affidavit, and if it contains a material false statement, shall subject me to the same penalties for perjury as if I had been duly sworn."

Completed by:

Name (type or print)	Signature	Date

1. **APPLICANT/INITIATOR INFORMATION**

A. Name of Applicant(s)/Initiator(s): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

B. Name of Agency and/or Individual preparing this form: _____

Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____
Contact Person: _____ **Phone:** _____

2. **PROJECT INFORMATION**

- A. Attach a detailed project description including a project location map and/or site plan.
- B. Property location is on N S E W (circle) side of _____
 Between _____ and _____
 Street Address (if any): _____
- C. Total Land Area: _____ acres or sq. ft.
 (for linear projects, i.e. pipeline, transmission line, highway, etc., indicate total project length)
- D. Tax Account No (Assessor): _____
- E. Section-Block-Lot No. (Maps & Records): _____

2. ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Are any of the following land uses or environmental resources either to be affected by the proposal or located within or adjacent of the project site(s)? Check appropriate box for every item of the following checklist:

	YES	NO	UNKNOWN		YES	NO	UNKNOWN
a. Industrial	[]	[]	[]	t. Freshwater Wetlands designated by DEC	[]	[]	[]
b. Commercial	[]	[]	[]	u. Floodplain as designated by Federal Insurance Administration	[]	[]	[]
c. Office	[]	[]	[]	v. Within 100' of Genesee River, River Gorge, Barge Canal, Lake Ontario	[]	[]	[]
d. Residential	[]	[]	[]	w. Scenic views or vistas of importance to the community	[]	[]	[]
e. Utilities	[]	[]	[]	x. Wildlife, including critical Habitats of endangered/threatened species	[]	[]	[]
f. Recreational	[]	[]	[]	y. Air quality including ambient noise levels	[]	[]	[]
g. Transportation	[]	[]	[]	z. Historic, Archaeological sites (listed on National Register or eligible for listing) and/or designated City Landmarks/Preservation District	[]	[]	[]
h. Parks	[]	[]	[]				
i. Hospitals	[]	[]	[]				
j. Schools	[]	[]	[]				
k. Open Spaces	[]	[]	[]				
l. Steep Slopes (15% or greater)	[]	[]	[]				
m. Heavily Wooded Area	[]	[]	[]				
n. Shoreline	[]	[]	[]				
o. Erosive Soils	[]	[]	[]				
p. Energy Supplies	[]	[]	[]				
q. Solid and/or Hazardous Waste	[]	[]	[]				
r. Natural Drainage Course	[]	[]	[]				
s. Stream or other Water Body	[]	[]	[]				

4. Are any facilities under ownership, lease or supervision to be utilized in the accomplishment of this project, either listed or under consideration for listing on the Environmental Protection Agency's List of Violating Facilities? [] Yes [] No

5. Is there public controversy concerning the project? [] yes [] No

6. PRIOR REVIEW

A. Has an environmental impact statement (EIS)/analysis been prepared for this project or a project inclusive of this project, or for another agency at an earlier date? [] Yes [] No

If yes, identify the EIS/analysis, including the date of preparation, or attach a copy.

B. Has the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) been provided a detailed project description and been requested to comment thereon? [] Yes [] No

Date submitted to SHPO: _____

7. Identify all governmental actions (i.e. funding, permits, approvals, leases, etc.) Necessary for project implementation:

<u>Level of Government & Agency</u>	<u>Type of Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Project ID#</u>
Federal			
State			
Local			

8. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

List the potential environmental impacts/issues as identified by responses to sections 3, 4 and 5 above. Discuss alternatives and mitigation measures for these issues.

CITY OF ALBANY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CREDIT REPORT AUTHORIZATION FORM - ATTACHMENT 2

I authorize the City of Albany Community Development Agency to obtain a credit report for:

Individual _____

Company _____

Tax ID Number _____

Date of Incorporation/Joint Venture Formation _____

Name _____

Principals, List all names _____

Address _____

Social Security # _____

Date of Birth _____

Prior Address _____

Former Name (if Applicable) _____

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

**CITY OF ALBANY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS -ATTACHMENT 3 - FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Assets Statement must describe financial status within the last twelve months.

Financial information is submitted for:

- _____ Individual
- _____ Corporation
- _____ Limited Partnership
- _____ Not-for profit
- _____ Other

A. Personal Information

Name: _____
 Business Name: _____
 Business Phone/Fax: _____
 Residence Address: _____
 City, State, Zip Code: _____
 Business Address: _____
 City, State, Zip Code: _____
 Position (Title): _____
 Years of Service: _____ Annual Salary: _____
 Bonus/Commission or other Income: _____

Are you a defendant in any lawsuits or legal action? If yes, provide details:

Have you ever declared bankruptcy? If yes, provide dates and details:

Do you have any contingent liabilities? If yes, please describe:

B. Statement of Financial Condition

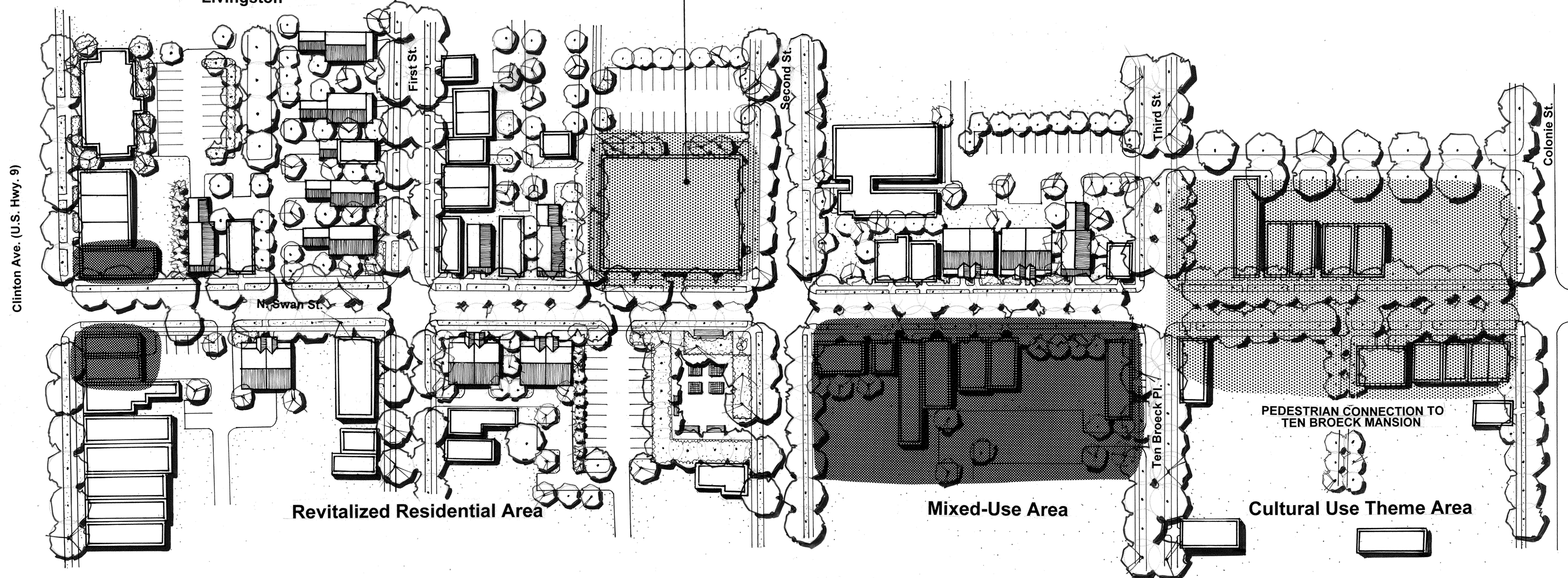
ASSETS	DOLLARS (Omit Cents)	LIABILITIES	DOLLARS (Omit Cents)
Cash on Hand and in Bank		Note Payable to Banks - Secured	
		Notes Payable to Banks - Unsecured	
Notes Receivable		Notes Payable to Others - Secured	
Real Estate (List)		Notes Payable to Others - Unsecured	
Mortgage Owned indicate Primary residence (list Separately and check those pledges as collateral		Debt Balance in Margin Accounts with Brokers	
Securities		Mortgages	
Total		Total Liabilities	
		New Worth	

Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Print Name: _____

GUIDING USES FOR NORTH SWAN STREET:

1. **Revitalized Residential:** Focused Between Clinton Ave. and Second St.
2. **Mixed-Uses:** at Intersection with Clinton Ave. and between Second St. and Ten Broeck Place
3. **Cultural Use Theme:** Between Third/Ten Broeck Place and Livingston

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL ADAPTIVE REUSE:
SENIOR HOUSING, ETC. (DEMOLITION AND
NEW CONSTRUCTION IF NOT FEASIBLE)

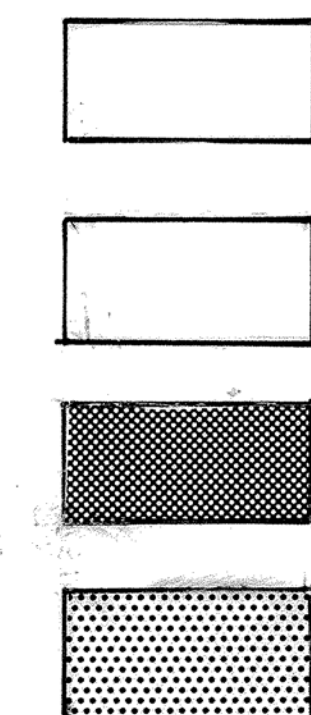


GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NORTH SWAN STREET:

- Rehabilitation of Existing/Historic Buildings
- New Buildings Reflect Historic/Streetscape Character
- Sidewalk Improvements, Lighting, and Trees
- Create Off-Street Parking
- Sunlight to Homes
- Yards and Greenspace
- Introduce Access Lanes

Legend:

- Residential: Examples of Potential New Construction Opportunities
- Existing Buildings/Rehabilitation Opportunities
- Existing Buildings/Mixed-Uses/Rehabilitation Opportunities to be determined by market conditions
- Existing Buildings/Residential, cultural and mixed use opportunities to be determined by market conditions



NORTH SWAN STREET CONCEPT PLAN

FOR THE CITY OF ALBANY - ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Prepared by: Behan Planning Associates, LLC
With: The Community Builders, Inc.

May 29, 2003

THIS CONCEPT PLAN ILLUSTRATES PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR REVITALIZING THIS AREA OF THE ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD AND SHOULD BE USED AS A GUIDE TO CREATE AND EVALUATE FUTURE PROPOSALS.



Not to Scale











Guiding Principles for HJB:

- ✓ Buffer Residential Areas from Commercial Uses and Traffic on Henry Johnson Blvd.
- ✓ Strengthen Residential on Clinton Avenue
- ✓ Support Existing Businesses
- ✓ Allow for New Commercial Development Opportunities (Retail or Offices) by Using Vacant Parcels from Clinton to Livingston
- Redevelop Corner at East Side of Second St.- Open Line of Sight for Public Safety
- Re-assemble and Re-use Vacant Parcels

- ✓ Improve Access and Create Attractive Parking
 - Utilize Alleys for Additional Access
 - Consider Opening Streets for Emergency Access
- ✓ Enhance Pedestrian Streetscape and General Street Character for Arbor Hill Residential Community
 - Develop Streetscape Beautification Program- Signage, Landscaping, Decorative Pavers
 - Widen Sidewalks and Improve Crosswalks
 - Install Pedestrian-Activated Traffic Lights
 - Install Traffic Light at Intersection of First St. and Henry Johnson Blvd.

LEGEND:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|  | Residential Uses |  | Existing Structures |
|  | Commercial Uses |  | Neighborhood Gateway |
|  | Potential Commercial Infill Area |  | Gateway Open Space Area |
|  | Potential Commercial Infill Structure |  | Potential Streetscape Improvements |

Note: This concept plan illustrates the planning principles for revitalizing this area of the Arbor Hill neighborhood and should be used as a guide to create and evaluate future proposals.



Henry Johnson Boulevard Concept Plan

FOR THE CITY OF ALBANY – ARBOR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Prepared by: Behan Planning Associates, LLC
 The Community Builders, Inc.
 U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
 Albany Local Development Corp.
 Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee

April 11, 2003

Not to Scale



Arbor Hill Public Safety Declaration

We the people of Arbor Hill, including Arbor Hill residents, neighborhood associations, places of worship, schools, businesses and property owners, with the support of the Department of Public safety, believe the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness include the right to live in a community that is clean and safe for our children. We demand a community that is free of:

- Illegal Drugs, Violence and Intimidation
- Gambling and Prostitution
- Traffic and Parking Violations
- Vandalism, Litter and Graffiti
- Unleashed and Unlicensed Dogs
- Other Unlawful/Disorderly Behavior

The purpose of the Arbor Hill Public Safety Declaration is to increase understanding, cooperation and trust between the community and police department through education and interaction to achieve our common goals outlined in the Declaration: “the right to live in a community that is clean and safe for our children...”

It is our hope that all stakeholders will sign their names to the petitions attached to the Declaration and that stakeholders will display this Declaration to send a message throughout the community that there are many who wish to improve the quality of life in Arbor Hill and that there is a neighborhood watching. The support of neighbors (strength in numbers) helps to reduce the fears of reporting illegal activities.

Police/Fire Emergency call	911
Police/Fire Non-emergency	438-4000
North Station	462-8684
Community Service Officers	447-8763
Commander Christian D’Alessandro	434-1316

**Summary of Public Comments Received on the
Arbor Hill Draft Neighborhood Plan
by June 24, 2003**

The comments below are primarily those voiced at the public meeting on the plan held on June 10, 2003 but also include other comments received on the plan. The comments, indicated by "C," have been clustered by topic. Responses, denoted by "R," have been provided.

Homeownership and Rental Housing

C: Residents should be given preference for new housing opportunities in the neighborhood. There should be rent-to-own opportunities. People are afraid of being displaced.

R: Residents of Arbor Hill are recognized as having made a significant commitment to their community by choosing it as their home. As with all other aspects of the Plan, housing initiatives are first and foremost intended to benefit those persons who already live in the community. The Plan calls for multiple housing initiatives within the Arbor Hill community over the next several years. They will employ various combinations of public and private financing, each with their own specific guidelines for whom, what purpose, and where the funds may be used. The types of housing initiatives being proposed have been thoughtfully selected to meet the economic, social and physical needs of current Arbor Hill residents. Within the financial guidelines of each funding source, opportunities for preference and benefit to current Arbor Hill residents will be maximized. The housing plan also anticipates the improved quality of life Arbor Hill residents will experience as a result of the proposed actions and, therefore, anticipates providing families choices enabling them to grow while remaining in the community they call home. Such an example may be in moving to modern rental housing down the street while saving for the opportunity to purchase a home being built around the corner. Rent-to-own opportunities will be explored as another means to realizing the dream of homeownership. A group of housing providers will continue to work not only to develop new affordable housing but also to inform and assist Arbor Hill residents so that they may take advantage of those opportunities within their own community.

The proposed housing initiatives are located in such a way as to not displace or otherwise adversely affect existing residents of Arbor Hill. The selection of sites will focus on abandoned buildings and vacant lots. The removal of existing rental and homeownership housing will be avoided. In limited situations an exception may be necessary to address the irreversibly dilapidated living conditions of some renters and homeowners who seek to take advantage of housing opportunities being offered to others in the community. In those situations, under agreement with those renters and homeowners, benefits including new rental and homeowner opportunities within the community would be made available to them and the dilapidated housing replaced with new.

C: Minorities should be involved in construction. That's where the money is. Those jobs will help enable people reach the goal of homeownership.

R: The proposed housing initiatives are intended not only to provide improved housing for residents of Arbor Hill but will be used as an engine to create economic opportunity for community businesses and residents. The Albany Housing Authority has a long and successful history of developing and utilizing the talent of each community where housing is provided. The programs and personnel that make contracts and jobs available to minorities and community residents will be an integral part of all Housing Authority initiatives in Arbor

Hill. Specifically, job readiness programs, employment and career development services, and minority contractor outreach will be made available. Many minority contractors and Arbor Hill residents are already on AHA's employment database. Outreach to residents has already begun and informational seminars will be conducted to further explain opportunities and preferences that will be available. In the meantime, information may be obtained by calling The WAGE Center at 641-7451 and asking for Mr. Tyler Trice. Non-profit and private entrepreneurs engaged in housing activities will also be encouraged to offer employment opportunities to residents.

C: Additional exploration of the causes and prevention of abandonment is needed. The changes in County procedures will be significant but other intervention and early warning systems are needed to limit the problem in the future.

R: Yes, additional exploration of this matter is needed and should be a long-term goal of the initiative to return abandoned properties to productive use. However, the current initiative is focused on more immediate and easily implementable measures to achieve results in the short-term. We expect to learn a great deal from this initiative that can potentially be used to expand our efforts in the future.

C: What is the timeline for the housing proposal outlined in the plan? What resources are available?

R: An overview of all residential construction contemplated by the Plan will be developed with the Arbor Hill Housing Committee prior to construction. In doing so, an effort will be made to identify all development sites and buildings for rehabilitation consistent with the Homeownership and Rental Housing Guiding Principles. It should be recognized that some sites and buildings may change as implementation proceeds as insurmountable obstacles are encountered and new opportunities arise. For that reason, the Arbor Hill Housing Committee will remain part of the process through implementation.

For the 100 rental and 20 owner-occupied homes to be built under the auspices of the Albany Housing Authority, locations, plans and elevations will be developed with the Arbor Hill Housing Committee over the late summer and fall of 2003 with an anticipated construction start in Spring 2004. Two subsequent phases of 20 owner-occupied homes apiece, also under the primary sponsorship of AHA, will begin construction in Spring of 2005 and 2006 respectively, pending the award of grant monies. Approximately \$4.5M of HOPE VI funding is currently available for rental housing, the balance of \$10M will be leveraged through the State tax credit program and other State housing programs. Approximately \$700,000 in State funding and \$400,000 of HOPE VI funding is available for the first phase of 20 owner occupied homes, the balance of \$2M will be obtained through bank financed private mortgages to prospective homeowners.

A program for the rehabilitation of thirty (30) existing homes will be handled over the period of three years according to a schedule developed and implemented by the Albany Community Development Agency using funding from existing programs, e.g. Tenant Assistance Rehabilitation Program (TARP), Home Owners Assistance Program (HOAP), and Lead Assistance Program (LEAD).

Housing developed by other providers, be they for- or not-for-profit, individual or group, is highly likely as interest has already been indicated to the members of the committee and staff. However, none outside that which appears in the Plan has been sufficiently coordinated to the point of having any degree of certainty. It is anticipated that, as now unforeseeable initiatives

develop, they will be integrated into the Plan's Guiding Principles and overall timetable and be subject to review by the Arbor Hill Housing Committee.

C: I am also interested in seeing mixed-use housing included in the plan, i.e. housing units placed within buildings that are developed as local businesses. Incentives could be provided to those interested in developing small businesses in the community when the individual is also willing to live in the community.

R: Mixed-use housing is already established on the commercial streets in this community and there are existing opportunities to further develop this concept. The committee and staff have already heard of three such initiatives which are in now in the conceptual stages and will make their way through the review process as details develop. Key to the success of this type of housing is to identify compatible business and housing needs and combine those resources. The housing and business committees will continue to investigate any and all opportunities.

C: I would also like to see more non-profits included in further development and implementation of the housing strategy.

R: Each of the proposed housing initiatives is identified by a primary sponsor responsible for funding, construction and occupancy. However, each initiative is planned as a team effort wherein opportunities for collaboration amongst for- and not-for-profit businesses will be sought. The purpose is to draw upon the strengths of each organization and deliver a higher quality and more sustainable housing product for the community. One foreseeable example is in the marketing of homes for sale whereby a neighborhood group with a good track record and close ties to residents may be best suited to make sure residents take advantage of the ownership opportunity. Collaborations may also take place formally and informally with service providers related to housing, e.g. to provide counseling for credit repair, job-skill training, and long-term employment.

The Plan identifies only projects and their related sponsors known at this time. However, it sets forth guidelines for future housing initiatives by both for- and not-for-profit project sponsors. The spirit and value of inclusiveness and collaboration are inherent throughout the Plan and the Arbor Hill Housing Committee will be tasked to see that future initiatives are conceived and implemented in that same manner.

C: What is the timeline for issuing a Request for Proposals for the abandoned properties expected to be transferred from Albany County to the City of Albany?

R: A concern raised during the public comment period was the time necessary to affect the transfer of thirteen (13) tax foreclosed properties from Albany County to the Albany Community Development Agency. While the concern is legitimate, it has been necessary to develop a process that will ensure equity and fairness to all interested parties. The City's Department of Development and Planning will finalize the Request for Proposals (RFP) during the first part of July. The RFP will be presented to Albany County for their consideration and approval. Upon successful transfer of the properties during the summer of 2003, ACDA will solicit proposals from individuals interested in purchase of the properties.

C: Physical redesign and housing rehabilitation/development will be major assets but do not appear to be sufficient by themselves to change the market dynamics of the neighborhood.

More market research seems needed to determine the mix of amenities and conditions needed in order to attract the income groups mentioned in the Plan (i.e., households at 80% of median income or \$48k for a family of 4 and households at and above the median income of approximately \$60k). Perhaps SUNY's business school could prove helpful to this goal. If higher income residents are not realistic, then greater emphasis needs to be placed on improving the income of current residents and enhancing the quality of life for a more modest income population.

R: Good point; we believe that it is important to both improve the income of current residents and continue to attract new residents of a higher income.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

C: There needs to be an African Arts and Cultural Center. Others' heritage is being preserved, e.g. Dutch, but not the Africans. Please support African arts, culture and heritage in the plan.

R: The plan speaks to the neighborhood's interest in preserving and expressing African heritage. New language has been added to the Executive Summary to highlight this point.

C: The plan should acknowledge that Arbor Hill's best resource is its residents. The plan should support maximizing human resources, not just maximizing the reuse of buildings.

R: The plan acknowledges this resource. New language has been added to the Executive Summary to underscore this point.

Business and Job Development

C: The Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan should support the clustering of African-American oriented businesses at Livingston and Broadway.

R: Agreed, we believe the Plan is supportive of this concept.

C: The neighborhood needs to draw substantial job centers, not just boutiques providing 1-2 jobs, to have an impact on the neighborhood.

R: Substantial job centers are more easily located on the fringes, rather than in the heart of the residential neighborhood. Examples include the businesses and State offices located in Sheridan Hollow and east of Broadway as well as Whitney Young.

Career Central, located at 175 Central Avenue can link Arbor Hill residents with those job opportunities. Career Central operates a variety of federal, state, and locally funded activities designed to assist job seekers secure employment. Services are designed to be self-directed. All services are free. Services include: assistance with resumes and cover letters, job search workshops, job referrals, employment readiness training, vocational counseling, academic skills assessments and support services for persons with disabilities. In addition, Career Central has a CDTA representative on hand to help individuals physically access job opportunities.

C: *More needs to be done to help young black men in the community so they aren't tempted by the profits of drug dealing. There should be efforts to hire young black men coming out of jail to give them job experience.*

R: In April 2003, the Albany County District Attorney's office began the Community Prosecution Initiative in response to the increasing volume of quality of life crimes in Arbor Hill. This initiative empowers a Community Accountability Board, comprised of members of the Arbor Hill Community, to hear cases referred to it by the District Attorney's office and render alternative sentences to incarceration that can include additional education, training or community service. One common community service sentence is to clean up green spaces in Arbor Hill. These sites now bear signs crediting clean up activities to the Community Prosecution Initiative. In addition to involving the community, this initiative partners with many agencies, including Social Services, the Albany Housing Authority's Section 8 Program, Albany County Probation Department, the Parole Office and the Liquor Authority to take a more holistic approach to addressing the causes of crime. The community prosecution office is located at 289 Clinton Avenue.

In addition to this initiative, 175 Central Avenue, the site of Career Central, also houses the Glenmont Job Corps. Job Corps is a free, residential education and training program for youth aged 16 through 24. The program offers individuals the opportunity to learn a trade, get a high school diploma or GED, and get help finding a job. It also provides a Career Transition Specialist who can help graduates for one year after completion of the program. It is a federally funded program which is free to participants. Those who join Job Corps receive a biweekly allowance. The longer a person stays with the program, the greater the allowance. Job Corps will even provide transportation to the center to which a person is assigned, if needed. To learn more, contact Jennifer Bogovic, Outreach and Admissions Counselor at Glenmont Job Corps at 462-7600 x181.

C: *What will the Asian Market (on N Pearl St) do for Arbor Hill? Will youth training programs be provided? What's the timing on the project? Will overhead utility wires be buried? New streetlights should be provided across the street from the development on the Ida Yarborough side to match the lights installed as part of the project.*

R: The project calls for an approximately 60,000 square foot, one-story building housing Asian-themed businesses, including a grocery store, a restaurant, multiple vendors, and parking facilities. Construction is to begin in the fall. Raymond Xu of the New York Asian Business Development Council is very interested in working with the City and the County to establish job-training programs within the neighborhood, specifically at the police station on N Pearl Street to be renovated as part of the project. The development will include new streetlights on the east side of N Pearl Street. It does not include new streetlights on the west side of the street as this property is not owned by the council. Given the neighborhood's interest, **Mr. Xu has agreed to discuss the project and answer questions at an Ida Yarborough Tenants' Association meeting on Thursday, August 7th at 6 PM at 260 N Pearl Street. For more information, contact Tyler Trice at 434-0663.**

C: *Training and employment opportunities are needed to increase the skills of the people of Arbor Hill so they can afford to own their own homes.*

R: A number of resources are currently available to assist residents in skill building. Among these are Career Central at 175 Central Avenue and the Wage Center at 200 Green Street. The latter specializes in career development, job readiness preparation, and individual case

management. The Department of Development and Planning will be working to compile a list of these resources to help make them known in the community.

C: *Minorities should be involved in construction. That's where the money is. Those jobs will help enable people reach the goal of homeownership.*

R: See response provided under Homeownership and Rental Housing.

C: *Arbor Hill unemployment and under-employment is a major weakness for the overall community. Labor Force participation is 20 percent lower than in the City; median income is just \$16,000 (family of 4), almost half the amount for the City of Albany and just 40 percent of the County. In addition to attracting new higher income residents, there should be a specific Arbor Hill job development unit to increase the income of the existing residents.*

R: We agree with the description of the problem but do not necessarily agree with the solution of creating another agency. We believe fostering job opportunities for local residents at both small and large businesses and on construction sites is more likely to produce results in the short-term. Over the longer term, education, which was not the subject of this plan, is of course, critical.

C: *Arbor Hill's proximity to State employment appears to be an underutilized asset. Almost 60% of renter households in Arbor Hill do not own cars. The State is the natural employer for Arbor Hill. The State provides substantial tax credits for private business to develop jobs; it may now be the State's time to address the employment needs of nearby neighborhood residents. The Committee and local legislators should seek to open up coveted summer internship job opportunities to the sons and daughters of Arbor Hill and bring state job information and training right into the neighborhood and quantify a goal of State employment participation.*

R: This point underscores the importance of making workforce development resources, such as Career Central known to residents. State job opportunities are listed at Career Central.

C: *Is there any venture capital for new businesses?*

R: There is more low-cost debt capital available than equity. In addition, there are a number of loan sources available from the City, the County, the Chamber of Commerce and the Capital District Community Loan Fund.

C: *How is the City preparing for the arrival of new technology firms (Sematech and others)? How will this development affect Arbor Hill?*

R: Preparation for the arrival of new technology firms is taking the form of increased emphasis on quality of life enhancements citywide to the benefit of all City residents – from investments in regional assets such as the Riverfront and the Palace Theater to improvements to local parks and playgrounds.

The impacts of this development are likely to be indirect and evolve over time. It is anticipated that the arrival of new technology firms will spur growth in related industries needed to serve the new businesses and new population coming to Albany. This growth is expected to lead to more job opportunities. The City and other interested groups are very aware of the need for a strong linkage so that Albany residents are aware of job opportunities.

C: What kinds of marketing efforts are planned to attract needed services? A sound marketing plan for business development would greatly enhance the current planning process.

R: The marketing efforts planned involve identifying key commercial development locations to attract the services identified as priorities as part of the planning process. The Business Committee will work on developing such sites.

C: Much more could be done to support existing businesses and identify what support can be provided to residents interested in developing a business. One of the biggest concerns for many residents starting a small business is lack of a credit history. A comprehensive resource packet on small business development would be useful.

R: A key action identified in the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan under Business and Job Development is to hold small business development workshops to encourage the growth of existing businesses and improve communication amongst them. Implementation of this action is taking the form of an Arbor Hill Business Institute, a seven-week series of workshops, running Mondays, July 14 - August 25, 2003, offered for new and expanding small business owners. Topics to be covered include developing a business plan, establishing a business, record keeping, and credit repair/credit counseling. All sessions will be held from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard. They are free and while targeted to the needs of Arbor Hill, are available to anyone interested in doing business in the City of Albany. For more information, call the Albany Local Development Corporation at 434-2532 x12.

Quality of Life

Public Safety

C: How does blocking streets in the neighborhood improve public safety and enhance quality of life?

C: I would like to see the City review the dead ending of Colonie Street (above Lark Street below Henry Johnson Blvd). It has created a dangerous parking problem for residents that park on the streets. Cars are making dangerous U-turns and my own vehicle was already hit. The signage is inadequate. Otherwise, the plan is a good one.

R: Sometimes it is in the interest of public safety to take drastic measures such as blocking streets even it may inconvenience residents. Hopefully, as the Plan is implemented, housing improved, and community life strengthened, a more cohesive street grid can be restored.

C: The Quality of Life Committee should speak with SUNY about its community policing program.

R: Great suggestion. We've passed it on to Public Safety.

Recreation and Green Space

C: There is no place for youth in Arbor Hill to go. Organizations like the Boys Club should be reinstated. The children of Arbor Hill need things to do, e.g. recreation, computer skills.

R: Many organizations came forward to offer descriptions of programs for youth during the course of the planning effort. While the City commitment to the Arbor Hill Community Center (offering free access to computers, a weight room, a gymnasium, a swimming pool, locker room facilities, game rooms and a kitchen) has been realized, it is also true that there is a desire to do more for youth.

C: *Why is there nothing about the Tivoli Preserve in the plan?*

R: It was outside the scope of the study area.

C: *Livingston Avenue needs street trees. Ten Broeck Street used to have islands of grass. I would like to see the greenery restored.*

R: The Plan speaks to the need to “Put the Arbor back in Arbor Hill.” It suggests that green space improvements be timed with other improvements, such as commercial and housing developments. Further, the Quality of Life Committee is committed to neighborhood beautification as well as neighborhood cleaning, and will continue to work to try to match existing resources to such beautification activities.

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety

C: *Pedestrian safety for children is a concern, particularly on Clinton Avenue at its intersections with Lark and Swan Streets.*

R: Both the school district and charter school were surveyed regarding "walkers", demographics of those walkers vs. bused children and they both responded that children did not walk that way to get to school. The guard at Clinton Avenue and Henry Johnson Blvd. assists children in getting to/from St. Cashmir's. The desire for a crossing guard at those locations should be voiced to the school district and charter school.

C: *Put sidewalks in so children have a safe place to walk. Clear sidewalks of snow so children aren't forced to walk in the streets.*

R: The installation of new sidewalks will be coordinated with new construction. Problems with particular sidewalks can be reported to the Department of General Services. The owners of property adjacent to sidewalks are responsible for clearing them of ice and snow.

C: *Livingston Avenue is too narrow to have cars parked on both sides and have a bus running down it.*

R: Further exploration of this issue is warranted but please be aware that having parking on both sides of the street tends to slow down traffic. A wider thoroughfare would encourage speeding, which has also been cited as a problem on this street.

C: *Whitney Young needs bus shelters on both sides of Arbor Drive, adjacent to the facility. CDTA said there would be action this spring.*

R: Previous Whitney Young shelters had been repeatedly vandalized which resulted in their ultimate removal. However, recognizing the need for bus shelters at that location, CDTA will be ordering new vandal-resistant shelters. They will take 4-6 months to arrive as they are being ordered from Arizona.

Implementation

C: How will the Implementation Committee be brought together? Can anyone join?

R: Implementation of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan has been structured to meet the following goals: 1) Continued emphasis on the plan's four areas of focus, and 2) Provision of different opportunities for involvement and networking with other individuals and organizations working in the same field. Accordingly, implementation of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan will be guided by three independent, yet interrelated bodies. The primary responsibility for implementing the plan will lie with the committees in the plan's four focus areas: Homeownership and Rental Housing; Arts, Culture and Heritage; Business and Job Development; and Quality of Life. These committees will meet as needed, to carry out their respective actions and evaluate development opportunities for consistency with the principles. Participation in these committees will be open to all interested parties. Representatives from each of the committees will attend monthly coordination meetings to share progress in each of the four focus areas. In addition, there will be a larger Friends of Arbor Hill organization, whose periodic meetings will provide a forum for interested parties to hear about progress in implementing the plan, and provide additional opportunities for the stakeholders of Arbor Hill to share information and network.

C: How much funding is there for Arbor Hill? What percentage will be allocated to each focus area of the plan?

R: There is a \$5 million HOPE VI award dedicated for implementation of the neighborhood housing strategy outlined in the plan. There are no other outside sources of funding. However, in identifying four areas of focus, the plan speaks to Arbor Hill's priorities, enabling the City to find ways to better leverage existing resources to help revitalize the neighborhood.

Additional Comments

C: The plan seemed to over-emphasize the physical redevelopment of the area with less emphasis on the major social services needs of the community i.e., crime prevention, school improvements, job development and day care.

R: Funding for the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan came from a US Department of Housing and Urban Development technical assistance grant. That grant required that the focus of the plan be on physical improvements to the neighborhood. However, the Arbor Hill Advisory Committee was quick to point out that physical improvements would be pointless without attention to certain social issues. As a result, one of the four areas of focus for the plan became Quality of Life which emphasizes coordination and cooperation in addressing issues of public safety, neighborhood cleanliness and beautification, etc.

C: It would be helpful to have some type of inventory of the current social service needs of Arbor Hill, an assessment of how well those needs are being met and how to address the gap. An assessment of at least some of the needs were included by The Albany Partnership (the University at Albany (UA) and Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC)) in their funding proposal to U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to establish a Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) for West Hill and Arbor Hill. It would be worthwhile to examine this and other assessments to identify the potential for addressing the social service needs facing Arbor Hill.

- R: While this was outside the scope of the current plan, we agree that further assessment of social service needs and additional funding at higher levels of government to meet those needs are crucial.
- C: *Quality of life cannot be improved without improving the quality of the schools. Get the schools involved. Let them know about the plan.*
- R: We will continue outreach to neighborhood schools to keep them informed about the plan and its implementation.
- C: *Why is Sheridan Hollow not included in the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan? The plan needs to be responsive to the needs of the elderly and the children of Sheridan Hollow.*
- R: Sheridan Hollow is included in the Plan. While the AHA housing plan is focused north of Clinton Avenue, other housing, business and quality of life goals of the plan apply equally to Sheridan Hollow.
- C: *West Hill and Arbor Hill are linked geographically and demographically and have many of the same problems and assets. The Plan may need to either identify how/when West Hill's needs will be similarly addressed or incorporate more of West Hill into the current Plan.*
- R: These areas did not fall within the scope of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood planning effort. However, it is hoped that lessons learned in the current process can be applied to other similar neighborhoods.
- C: *The radio station, JAMZ 96.3 should be used to help get the word out about Arbor Hill activities. Everyone is plugged into this radio station.*
- R: Great suggestion. We'll try to use them as a resource to help us get the word out.
- C: *The neighborhood should embrace its diversity and work together. We need to take the energy of tonight's meeting and watch our kids, report problems to the police, talk to our neighbors. This is a great plan. Please support them (the Planning Team) and ourselves/our community.*
- C: *We need to improve quality of life in Arbor Hill – pick up trash, reduce noise, get rid of marijuana, etc.*
- C: *Neighborhood residents need to take care of their kids; the police can't do everything. Unless we attack the underlying problems, nothing will change.*
- C: *I like the plan and its principles. The plan is very good. It's very important that the neighborhood support it.*
- C: *I commend all members of the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Advisory Committee for their commitment and their vision for the redevelopment and improvement of Arbor Hill. The viability and health of every neighborhood is critical for the economic, social and cultural health of the entire City.*