

Impact Downtown Playbook

THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN ALBANY



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Introduction

Impact Downtown Albany

Impact Downtown Albany is the game-changing strategy tapping Downtown's power to drive community and economic growth in Albany and the Capital Region. This market-driven, action-oriented strategic plan recognizes and positions Downtown, its adjacent warehouse district and riverfront as the ideal 21st Century urban center—a strong economic hub, a vibrant neighborhood and a modern, dynamic destination.

Impact Downtown Albany embraces public/private collaboration as a proven model for unlocking the potential of great places. More than three dozen key stakeholders—including private corporations, non-profit entities, academic institutions and public entities—have come together to champion the revitalization of Downtown Albany, putting the “pact” in “Impact.” These partners have invested significant time, funding and ideas in the strategic plan, and are poised to produce impressive results through ongoing implementation partnerships. The collaborative approach enables stakeholders to achieve greater impact by aligning their actions around shared purpose. The collaboration also enables learning from previous successes and failures, to understand what's working and where new paradigms are needed, not only for Downtown but for the Capital Region.

This Downtown Playbook serves as a business plan for this collaborative effort providing detailed guidance on:

- The shared **community-based vision** for downtown and principles that should guide actions to achieve it (see chapter 1)
- Why now is a new **time of opportunity** for downtown not seen in decades, with new drivers to overcome historic obstacles and leverage downtown's impressive assets (see chapter 2)
- **Prioritized action steps**, emphasizing near-term initiatives that will produce highly visible results with available resources while building capacity for even more transformative initiatives (see chapter 3)
- An **organizational structure** that will enable more effective, mutually beneficial collaboration by downtown stakeholders (see chapter 4)
- Diversifying and expanding sources of **Downtown economic development** funding to enable the proactive investments needed to unlock Downtown's full economic and community development potential (see chapter 5)
- An **urban design and land use framework** of four character areas, leveraging distinct sense of place and market position to make Downtown a world-class live/work/play/learn destination serving Albany and the Capital Region (see chapter 6)
- Opportunities and standards for **catalyst initiative sites** where new Downtown investment will likely be most feasible and produce the most visible results (see chapter 7)
- **Branding, recruitment and buzz**—the proactive efforts to draw people and investment Downtown by demonstrating all it has to offer (see chapter 8)

Impact Downtown Albany and the Downtown Playbook serve a necessary purpose: overcoming the substantial obstacles that have prevented Downtown from flourishing fully, despite its outstanding assets. The challenges highlighted below will continue to constrain opportunity without concerted action. The opportunities highlighted after them, however, are more achievable than ever because the essential elements to make a difference have come together: clear purpose, market appeal, ready partners, compelling vision and actions, and demonstrated momentum. Learn how Impact Downtown Albany will take Downtown's renaissance to a new level—and how you can be a part of it!

The Challenge

Downtown Albany has benefited visibly from 20 years of concerted efforts to leverage downtown's promise as a center of community and economic growth for Albany and the Capital Region.

Technology sector jobs are coming downtown, unique shops and restaurants are opening, and Downtown is on pace to attract more than one thousand new households.

Despite this progress, downtown stakeholders are keenly aware that we are not tapping downtown's full potential. Despite national demographic and market trends (with visible manifestations in and around downtown) that favor downtowns once again as great places to live, work, learn and play; despite downtown's clear assets like being a major employment center, having river frontage and historic architecture; and despite ongoing efforts by the State of New York, City of Albany, Capitalize Albany and other entities to encourage downtown reinvestment, serious obstacles continue to steer the general public and potential investors away from downtown. These obstacles include:

- Vacant storefronts and buildings in prominent places that disproportionately tarnish perception of downtown as a place of value

- High property tax rates driven by the City's small taxable property base.
- Parking costs that, combined with high taxes, are often uncompetitive with alternative locations
- Market prices for housing, office and retail space that struggle to cover construction costs for rehabilitation and, especially, new construction
- Untapped opportunities to coordinate vision, actions and resources among multiple organizations promoting downtown
- Insufficient resources to make the investments in infrastructure and real estate needed to effectively leverage private sector investment

The Opportunity

Fortunately, new conditions are present that offer unprecedented opportunity to diminish these obstacles and enable much more robust and spontaneous activity and reinvestment downtown.

- Ongoing State investment in the Capital Center convention facility, SCiTI Center, Corning Riverfront Park access improvements and other key downtown assets
- New City and Capitalize Albany structure enabling more efficient and effective application of plan policies, as well as overall City administration and economic development
- A highly motivated downtown and regional stakeholder community inspired to make new investments in businesses and buildings, program public spaces, and forge new working partnerships
- Visible growth in the number of new housing units, locally-based businesses and hotel rooms opening downtown
- A community-based master plan guiding coordinated and synergistic actions to leverage these assets

1. The downtown Albany vision

Downtown Albany is a world-class destination connecting people with economic opportunity, innovative ideas, exciting experiences, welcoming places and vibrant community life.

Five Themes Express Core Qualities of the Vision:



<i>Where people come to explore new horizons</i>	<i>A celebration of the Hudson Valley at Corning Riverfront Park</i>	<i>Where cutting edge technology meets Main Street</i>	<i>A connected live-work-play-learn neighborhood</i>	<i>Where partnerships break new ground</i>
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A FIVE-MINUTE WALK FROM STATE AND PEARL MAKE THESE THEMES REAL BY TAKING YOU...

from **diverse neighborhoods** to New York's Capitol

from an **active, healthy Hudson riverfront** to **collaborative, inventive workplaces**

from **historic exploration** routes to the **frontiers of new technology**

from first class **visual and performing arts** to **vibrant streets** lined with distinctive retail and design

from **your aspirations** to **your future**

Downtown's unique places and neighborhood connections bring

FOUR MAJOR DISTRICTS CONTRIBUTE DISTINCT QUALITIES TO DOWNTOWN

State Street: *Downtown's iconic center*

State Street's grand ascent from SUNY headquarters at Broadway to the State Capitol building creates downtown's most memorable public space. The new Capital Center conference facility on Eagle Street visibly connects with this space via its nearby front door on Eagle Street. Streetscape improvements to State and Eagle (reinforcing recent improvements to State Street) help unify the State Street corridor with repeating public art elements, consistent presence of street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting, signage and additional storefront dining and retail.

Eagle Street's great walking environment welcomes visitors to the **Capital Center** and connects them to downtown's rich variety of hotel, cultural, dining and shopping choices



Downtown's largest development opportunity gathers state-of-the-art workspaces and housing around historic **Liberty Park**.



State Street's underutilized lots and buildings fill with a mix of office space and housing, activating the **front door to New York's Capitol** and showcasing innovative state economic development initiatives like Start-Up NY and Smart Cities infrastructure.

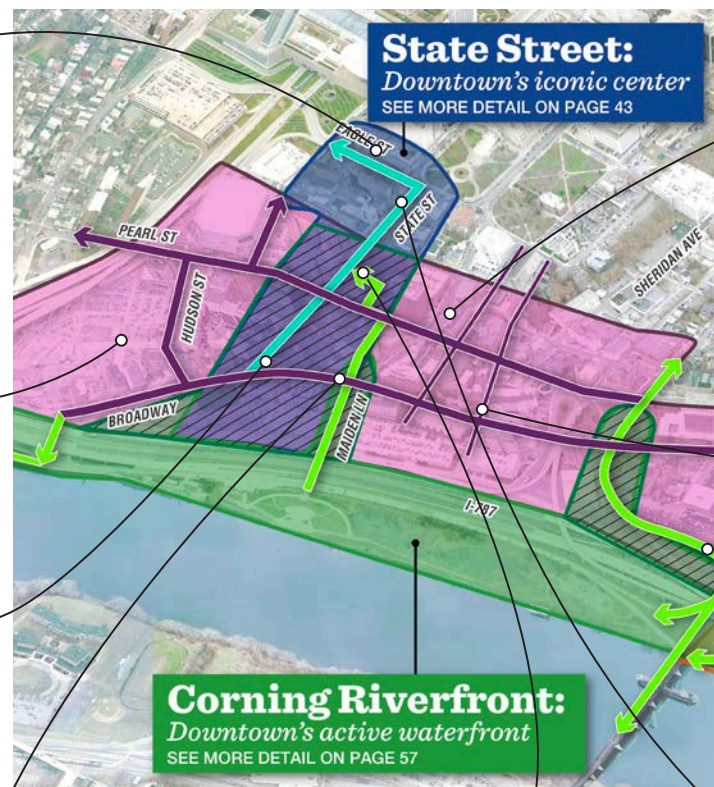


The Corning Riverfront comes to Broadway as a landscaped entrance from Maiden Lane, while signage, lighting and outdoor dining continue the park connection to Ten Eyck Park.



Pearl and Broadway: *Downtown's live/work/play/learn dynamic*

These two parallel street corridors pull downtown's active mix of people and uses into easy walking proximity. North and South Pearl feature downtown's strongest concentrations of retail and cultural venues, and will gain vibrancy as hundreds of additional loft apartments transform the underutilized upper floors of architecturally distinctive former office and hotel buildings. The new SCIT Center takes Broadway's established office concentration to a new level as a hub for tech businesses. New housing and retail along Broadway, "cool" office lofts along Pearl, and Start-Up NY university-business collaboration bring people together to innovate and build community.



State Street:
Downtown's iconic center
SEE MORE DETAIL ON PAGE 43

Corning Riverfront:
Downtown's active waterfront
SEE MORE DETAIL ON PAGE 57



Ten Eyck Park becomes an accessible oasis at downtown's core, energized by adjacent dining, hotel space, workplaces and housing, and direct walking connections to the **Corning Riverfront**, the **Capital Center** and surrounding **neighborhoods**.

people together to energize economic growth and a strong community

CHARACTER AREAS ARE DESCRIBED IN MORE DETAIL IN CHAPTER 6

Corning Riverfront: Downtown's active waterfront

Improved access, new destination activities and improved park facilities make Albany a true river city. New plantings, signage and lighting create clear, inviting walking routes from downtown's core to the Hudson, while waterfront trail and parking improvements improve access from the South End, Arbor Hill and Warehouse District. New or improved facilities for dining, boating, recreation, performances and more make the park a daily destination for people from downtown, all of Albany, the region and beyond.

Warehouse District: Downtown's new frontier

The Warehouse District offers flexible opportunities for growing businesses, housing, retail and entertainment. Building scale varies from small to large, in a mix of historic and new buildings, celebrating past and ongoing industry, but comes together around a common framework of walkable streets anchored by Broadway, Ferry and Erie. Direct connections to Corning Riverfront and I-787 attract a new hub of activity near the waterfront.



Pearl and Broadway:

Downtown's live/work/play/learn dynamic
SEE MORE DETAIL ON PAGE 49

Warehouse District:

Downtown's new frontier
SEE MORE DETAIL ON PAGE 62



North and South Pearl Street gain hundreds of new apartments and

modern work space in downtown's most distinctive architecture, reinvigorating storefronts with demand for authentic local retail.



Pop-up programming around Tricentennial Park, improved

sidewalks and bike lanes, and easy access to the Corning Riverfront make Broadway the hub for the workforce needed to drive Albany's innovation economy.



An active "high line" linear park transforms this underutilized highway ramp into Clinton Square's connection to recreation, dining, culture and nature at The Corning Riverfront.



State Street comes alive as a grand promenade lined with dining, shopping and public art.



New pathways and artwork connect the Corning Riverfront with the Warehouse District and Arbor Hill, attracting reinvestment in retail, workplaces and housing.



The Vision and its themes describe what downtown can be; the Implementation Principles guide how to achieve the Vision. They will enable downtown leaders, key stakeholders and the general public to take the transformative steps necessary to capture downtown's full potential.

Implementation principles



Collaborate efficiently—given scarce resources, avoid actions that are redundant or at cross-purposes

Why: Many people have important roles to play in our dynamic, diverse downtown. Utilize shared purpose and complementary roles to build a powerful team, sharpening our impact.

Empower private & institutional sector with opportunities for major leadership/initiative in downtown growth, with City/public sector as partner

Why: Downtowns thrive best as platforms that invite spontaneous, constructive and creative initiatives by everyone. Welcome everyone to participate.

Demonstrate downtown's value proposition—in economic, community and environmental terms

Why: We need to invest now in the seeds that will grow into downtown's potential. Make the case for why these investments deserve priority.

Maximize leverage of non-City funding sources – capture more private, state and Federal investment

Why: Albany already stretches limited financial resources to invest in its future. Leverage outside investment sources to multiply our impact.

Make better use of downtown's major existing assets—whether parking or people, history or the Hudson

Why: We have a wealth of human and physical resources that remain underutilized. Let's put them into action.

2. Why Downtown and why now

Downtown matters to neighborhoods, the City, and the Capital Region

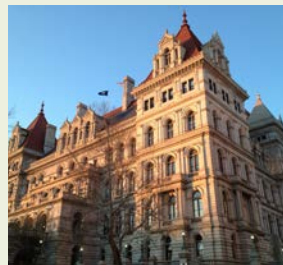


Downtown possesses some of the Capital Region's strongest assets for catalyzing economic and community growth, making its revitalization a uniquely important opportunity. At the same time, significant obstacles that have constrained revitalization must be mitigated to fully realize Downtown's potential benefits. Now is a special time of opportunity, as private sector interest in downtown real estate and business investment

continues to grow, important public infrastructure investments downtown are under way, and regional stakeholders are partnering to gain unprecedented ability to remove obstacles. This chapter outlines first the compelling opportunities downtown offers, then the strategies that can effectively remove obstacles to private investment. This combination will enable truly transformative changes producing tangible benefits for Albany and the Capital Region.

Downtown Albany is *the* heart of economic activity, community and identity for Albany and the Capital Region. Downtown alone has more than twice as many jobs as any Capital Region city. And as businesses and workforce nationwide increasingly seek the connections and choices that dynamic, walkable places offer, downtown is perfectly poised to deliver a **high quality live/work/play/learn environment**. Downtown's employment profile is diversifying from heavy government dependence into the technology, creative and visitor industry sectors. Its growing collection of unique cultural, dining, retail, entertainment and housing choices attracts a **diverse community and talented workforce**. Investing in the development and infrastructure needed to mature these qualities will **deliver new jobs, economic resilience and quality of life** serving all of Albany and the Capital Region.

Downtown defines regional identity



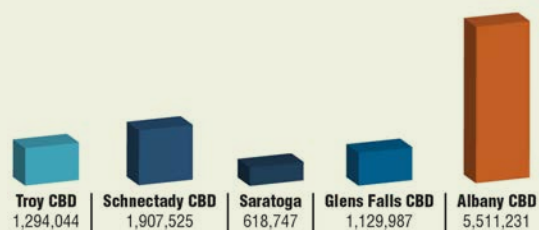
A revitalized downtown Albany provides **forward-moving identity** for Albany, the Capital Region and State of New York.

Downtown generates jobs and economic growth

Market-driven **office and retail** job growth Downtown will produce over **2,600 permanent new jobs, \$136 million** in labor income, and nearly **\$400 million** in economic output over ten years. On top of this, market-driven **real estate construction** downtown will have one-time impacts of **2,300 new jobs, \$129 million** in labor income and **\$465 million** in economic output over ten years.

Even with continued use of tax-abatement incentives, downtown redevelopment will have net **positive impacts on Albany's operating revenues**.

Downtown has more multi-tenant office space than the Capital Region's next four largest downtowns combined.



Downtown offers the region's greatest concentration of **cultural, conference and tourist destinations**.

Downtown provides great places to live and play

Downtown offers the housing choices Albany needs...approximately **900** units today, **300** more loft units on the way, and market potential for **3,000** total existing and new units in ten years.



Downtown provides the opportunity for **neighborhood synergy** in retail, housing, job and park resources among downtown, the South End, Center Square, and Arbor Hill.



Downtown's Corning Riverfront **connects the city** and **regional park network** to the Hudson Riverfront.



Downtown attracts and retains a talented workforce

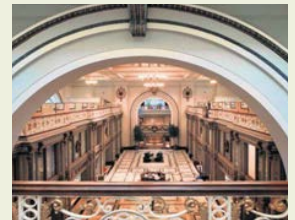
Downtown has the right qualities to **attract and retain the well-educated workforce** vital to the Capital Region's economic future. Improved through ongoing reinvestment, it will attract Albany's "**Talent Dividend**," reinforcing Albany as an innovation hub.

"Places with a well-educated population have seen significantly greater growth in per capita income. Well-educated young adults are about 94% more likely to live in these close-in urban neighborhoods."

"74% of the 2,000+ new households interested in moving to downtown Albany over the next 10 years are younger singles and couples."

FROM THE YOUNG AND RESTLESS IN A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, JOE CORTRIGHT, *CEOS FOR CITIES*, 2005, AND 2011 UPDATE FROM ZIMMERMAN VOLK ASSOCIATES ANALYSIS OF DOWNTOWN ALBANY HOUSING MARKET POTENTIAL, 2014 UPDATE

The new SCiTi Center and SUNY Start-Up NY hubs make downtown an **innovation district** growing ideas, businesses and jobs.



STARTUPNY



COLLEGES OF NANOSCALE
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Challenges and the solutions to overcome them

Five major categories of obstacles have prevented downtown from fully taking advantage of market-driven real estate and business investment opportunity in recent decades, and will continue to constrain opportunity unless they are diminished using new tools and resources. The recommended new tools and resources identified below are described in more detail in later chapters of this document as indicated.

STAGNANT/OPPORTUNITY PROPERTIES

The obstacles:

- Vacant storefronts and dark upper story windows persist amidst downtown's bright spots of active retail and new housing, putting a drag on vitality. Reasons for vacancy vary, and include the financial challenge of adapting buildings to new uses, challenges providing convenient parking for new uses, isolated locations with limited market potential, and/or property ownership focused on other priorities.
- Some properties are too small by themselves to justify developer pursuit of historic tax credits or other sources of outside financing needed to enable sufficient rehabilitation to capture market potential.
- Some properties under State or other public control may offer important potential for new development and/or supportive infrastructure such as parking. Local and State leaders need to find mutual benefit in changing the use of these properties in order to unlock their potential.

The solutions:

- **A strategic property acquisition fund**—enabling Capitalize Albany to proactively acquire underutilized properties (in some cases, aggregating or “bundling” smaller properties to make applications for historic tax credits or other funding sources worthwhile) and offer them for sale to qualified developers ready to proceed with appropriate reinvestment. *See Capacity-Building Action 2 (page 14), Implementation Action 3 (page 18), and Chapter 5.*
- Potential to exercise **tax foreclosure** or **eminent domain** or authority, in partnership with Albany

County or the City of Albany Industrial Development Agency, to assist strategic acquisition and redevelopment of properties to serve local and regional economic development priorities. *See Capacity-Building Action B (Page 14) and Chapter 4.*

- **Acquisition cost write-down**—Incentives should be offered to offset higher than market acquisition costs.
- **Proactive collaboration** between Capitalize Albany and the State of New York to identify state property downtown suitable for new development and/or infrastructure, define mutually supported criteria for reinvestment, and solicit qualified developers to proceed with redevelopment. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14), Implementation Action 3 (page 18), Implementation Action 7 (page 20), and Chapter 5.*

CHALLENGING DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

The obstacles:

- Most downtown real estate development today requires some degree of financial incentive in order to be economically feasible. Without promise of a satisfactory return on investment, developers and their financiers will look to more attractive investment opportunities. Downtown's greatest single economic obstacle is Albany's high property tax rates, a result of the city's relatively small property tax base. Ongoing tax abatement policies have been effective in diminishing this obstacle for some projects, but more must be done. As much as 80% of downtown's market potential goes untapped due to infeasibility of economically creating the spaces for it. Other sources of financial incentive are needed to enable the level of development that would take full advantage of downtown's potential.
- Much downtown office and retail space needs renovation to suit today's business needs. The cost of these renovations can be unaffordable to property owners or their potential tenants.
- Downtown businesses endure higher costs for property taxes and parking than those in suburban locations. Absent compelling business advantages to being downtown, businesses will tend to seek lower cost alternatives.

The solutions:

- **State and institutional contributions toward city operations.** Increased payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT) contributions from Albany's major tax exempt property owners should cover the city's costs of providing basic services (police and fire protection, street maintenance etc.) to these properties, enabling reduction of the city's high commercial and residential property tax rates. *See Threshold Action A (page 12) and Chapter 5.*
- **Low interest loans** from Capitalize Albany development fund, providing supplemental gap financing for projects after other outside sources (Federal and State historic tax credits, private sector loans, etc.) have been fully leveraged. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14), Implementation Action 3 (page 18), and Chapter 5.*
- **Better leverage Federal and State historic tax credits** as sources of development capital.
 - > **Direct developers toward tax credit information and expertise.** *See Implementation Action 3 (page 18) and Chapter 5.*
 - > **Bundle properties** to achieve sufficient project scale to pursue tax credits (see description under solutions for stagnant/opportunity properties, above).
- **Better leverage Federal New Markets Tax Credits** as sources of development capital.
 - > **Direct developers toward tax credit information and expertise.** *See Implementation Action 3 (page 18) and Chapter 5.*
 - > **Partner with financial institutions**, such as banks, that already have New Markets tax credit allocations and are seeking projects for their investment. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14), Implementation Action 3 (page 18), and Chapter 5.*

premium business environment, downtown Albany's locational benefits for business are not as compelling as they could be.

- Current parking systems management has not yet been updated for automatic, flexible scheduling and 24/7 access.
- Building new parking spaces requires use of scarce available land that may be difficult to acquire, deserve priority for higher-value commercial or residential development, and/or pose design challenges in supporting a walkable street environment. Thus structured parking is typically required to maximize space efficiency, imposing higher capital costs and need for attractive design and integration amidst other land uses. Customers may also perceive structured parking as inconvenient or unsafe.
- Many underutilized properties that are well suited to rehabilitation or new development lack opportunity for significant parking on site or on their block.

The solutions:

- **Make downtown a more competitive place to do business** through enhanced amenity and market positioning, by attracting more retail and residential development and strategic business clusters, and improving infrastructure and programming. *See solutions for lack of visible amenity and activity below, as well as Implementation Actions 2 (page 17), 4 and 5 (page 19), and 6 (page 20), and Chapters 6 and 8.*
- **Apply district-scale parking management** to make better use of public, private and institutional structured parking that already exists. Existing structured parking has significant underutilized capacity evenings and weekends, when the major sources of new parking demand—housing, hotel and retail—need it most. Subsidize parking costs or reduce costs of parking. *See Implementation Action 7 (page 20).*
- **Provide 24/7 public access and safety improvements** to enable better use of existing parking. Invest in public infrastructure to connect existing parking structures with activity centers. *See Implementation Action 7 (page 20).*
- **Establish car-share service downtown** by providing parking spaces for partners like Capital Car Share, to expand user options and make more

PARKING

The obstacles:

- Downtown parking costs are perceived by many property and business owners to be uncompetitive with the free or lower-cost parking in alternative suburban locations. While property and business owners in many downtowns accept higher parking in order to access a downtown's

efficient use of parking spaces. *See Implementation Action 7 (page 20).*

- **Utilize available Park Albany bonding capacity** to finance new parking construction when and where needed, supported by anticipated parking revenues. *See Implementation Action 7 (page 20).*
- **Attract other capital sources** for supplemental funding of new parking construction, to the extent additional sources are needed and/or they can reduce or subsidize parking fees for users. Provide after hours parking. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14).*

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The obstacles:

- The combination of high property development, property tax and parking costs noted above combine to impose a relatively high cost premium on locating or remaining downtown.
- Many existing, available downtown office and retail properties need significant upgrades to be competitive for today's businesses.
- Other communities are proactively recruiting some of downtown Albany's existing and potential business tenants.
- Albany or the region may not be perceived as providing the workforce businesses need.

The solutions:

- **Leverage New York's Start-Up NY initiative** to provide tax incentives for businesses that locate downtown. Partner with institutions to help them apply their own Start-Up NY plans downtown. *See Implementation Action 2 (page 17).*
- Offer a **construction sales tax exemption** for tenant fit-out. *See Implementation Actions 3 (page 18) and 5 (page 19).*
- Expand **proactive business recruitment efforts**, coordinated among economic development partners. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14), and Implementation Actions 2 (page 17), and 5 (page 19).*
- Provide **retail fit-out grants**. *See Implementation Action 5 (page 19).*
- Expand **façade improvement grants**. *See Implementation Actions 1 (page 16), 3 (page 18), and 5 (page 19).*

- **Attract and retain vital workforce** by expanding downtown housing development and retail and park amenities. *See Implementation Actions 1 (page 16), 3 (page 18), and 4 and 5 (page 19).*

LACK OF VISIBLE AMENITY AND ACTIVITY

The obstacles:

- Vacant storefronts and dark upper story windows undermine downtown as a marketable development location and compelling community destination, convey the messages that downtown lacks value and may be unsafe.
- Empty sidewalks and parks may be perceived as unwelcoming and unsafe.
- The City of Albany has limited funding for capital improvements to streets, parks and other public spaces.
- There is no central coordinator for events programming in public spaces.

The solutions:

- **Corporate grants and naming rights** for new signature facilities. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14), Implementation Action 1 (page 16) and Chapter 5.*
- **State in-kind contributions and grants** for capital improvements to parks and streets. *See Implementation Action 1 (page 16) and Chapter 5.*
- **Streetscape improvement grants** from the State, utilities and other outside sources. *See Implementation Action 1 (page 16) and Chapter 5.*
- **"Crowdfunding"** capital and programming budgets through community contributions. *See Capacity-Building Action B (page 14) and Chapter 5.*
- Expand cost-effective **"pop up" programming** in parks, along sidewalks and in strategic retail storefronts. *See Implementation Action 4 (page 19) and Chapter 8.*

3. Priority actions and supporting resources

Priority actions: where do we start?



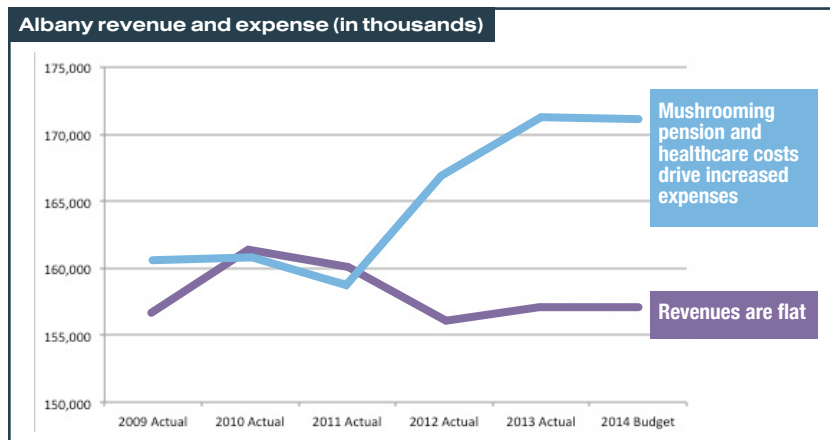
The downtown business plan begins by tapping available resources to drive those actions that will do the most to catalyze progressively more robust cycles of investment and reward. Where do we start? The most important steps to take now are these: A) Threshold Action: fixing the City's structured budget challenge, B) Secure meaningful recurring revenue stream, and, C) Implementation

Actions: eight areas of emphasis sparking specific results.

Each action includes a near-term component achievable with resources at hand, as well as longer-term components that produce greater impacts as resources and opportunities grow.

A Fix Albany's structural budget challenge to create a favorable environment for investment

A STRUCTURAL DEFICIT PREVENTS ALBANY FROM FUNDING BASIC CITY OPERATIONS ADEQUATELY.



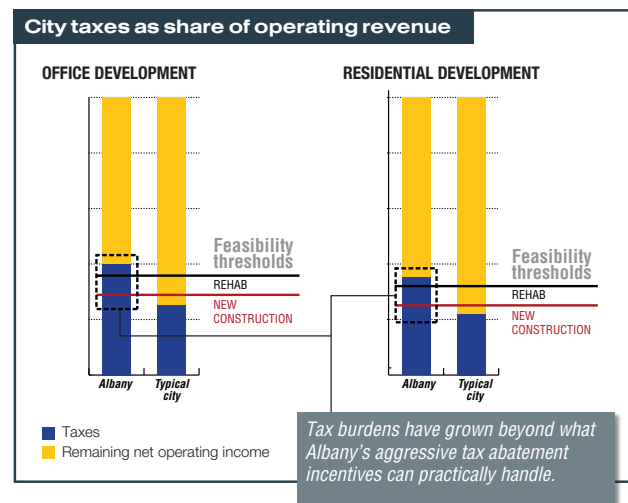
Albany has mitigated budget gaps through 2015 with austere operating budgets, one-time funding sources, and borrowing. With **one-time sources exhausted, borrowing unsustainable, and upcoming loss of \$10 million annual revenue** upon the 2021 closure of Albany's landfill, **new solutions are necessary.**

ALBANY'S BUDGET CHALLENGES BLOCK OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IT DESPERATELY NEEDS.

Albany and its downtown capably offer the active live/work/play/learn environment needed to **attract and retain key workforce and spur innovation**, making the most of New York's smart economic development investments such as:



Yet high city property taxes produce **feasibility gaps making Albany uncompetitive** for the office and housing development & tenancing needed to capture evident private-sector market interest



Without transformative policy change, conditions will worsen, despite demonstrated market interest in living, working and shopping downtown

THE SOLUTION: WORK WITH CITY AND STATE INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP TO SOLVE ALBANY'S STRUCTURAL REVENUE PROBLEM.

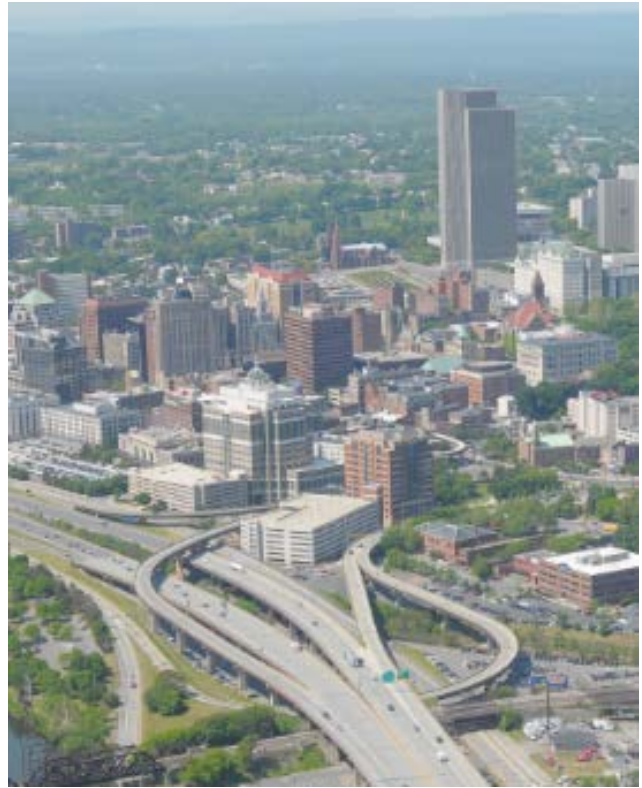
The City's low tax base results in high property taxes that discourage business and real estate investment citywide. A variety of new funding sources can be tapped to put the city on a solid, sustainable footing and invite reinvestment downtown and in every neighborhood.

Already underway: Albany institutions are developing PILOT commitments to the City. The State of New York has provided short-term assistance addressing Albany's budget gap.

Available resources: Prominent regional stakeholders recognize Albany's structural budget challenges put a drag on regional growth; coordinate their voices into a strong joint advocacy to state leadership for greater support for city operations. Secure increased payment-in-lieu-of-taxes contributions from non-profit institutions to support city services.

Future resources: Establish long-term state support to Albany, covering the service costs imposed on the city by the substantial state property there. A variety of state sources are possible, including fee or tax revenue from regional sources.

Milestones: Secure state assistance commitments, and institutional commitments for annual PILOT contributions to assist in balancing the City budget.



B Capacity-building Actions

Expand CAC investments in economic development by tapping new and increased sources of ongoing revenue to establish private- and institutionally-funded incentive funds for downtown real estate development. Upfront investments are critical for the ultimate success and benefit of downtown, and Albany, like any other city in the nation, is lacking much-needed resources. To plant the seeds that will yield larger economic benefits downtown and throughout the City, Capitalize Albany needs a significant revenue increase. Multiple avenues should be pursued to generate this type of recurring revenue. Reach out to Impact Downtown partners and additional partners to pool resources to most effectively target available dollars towards every eligible purpose. Secure commitments from private corporations, foundations and/or non-profit institutions for grants or long-term loans supporting property acquisition, infrastructure or other proactive investments (either specific or general) supporting real estate development. Leverage grants and support from equity partners via three avenues:

1. Appeal to region's tech industries and other private corporations to provide corporate support for economic development activities
2. Appeal to local, state, and national financial institutions to support community and housing efforts
3. Leverage institutional and/or foundation support for downtown as a regional center for technology.

To the extent possible, target investments toward uses that provide eventual return, to help attract contributors to participate as true

equity partners. This will support actions like strategic property purchase and re-sale, gap financing for new building development, façade or fit-out grants, and low-interest (4% or lower) loans, that leverage private sector investment in property redevelopment. Increased revenue will also support ongoing tasks like retail tenant recruitment, marketing and public space programming needed to help bring downtown's storefronts, streets and parks to life.

Already underway: CAC real estate loan program; formal request to State for new revenue sources supporting economic development.

Available resources: Existing Capitalize Albany funding.

Future resources: Direct developers and property owners to seek funding from Federal and State sources (such as Historic Tax Credits and New Markets Tax Credits) first, before requesting assistance from the incentive fund; share of regional fees and/or taxes related to retail sales, hotel visits and/or other sources; institutional matching investments in specific economic development projects; CAIDA/CRC fee revenue (beyond operational needs) transferred for economic development programming.

Milestones: Establish new, recurring revenue streams for catalytic real estate investment and programming, filling a mid-term economic development gap up to \$20 million.

For more detail: See chapters 4 and 5.

PUBLIC SOURCE

SCHENECTADY METROPLEX DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | SCHENECTADY, NY



- **Governance:** The Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority (Metroplex) was established in 1998 as a public benefit corporation by the New York State Legislature to institute a comprehensive, coordinated program of economic development activities in Schenectady County, especially in the downtown region of the City of Schenectady. Metroplex is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors,

consisting of residents of Schenectady County appointed by a majority vote of the county legislature.

- **Structure:** Metroplex is funded through dedicated sales tax revenues, 70 percent of one-half of one percent of county sales tax. This provides approximately \$8 million in resources annually.
- **Use:** Flexible economic development spending through which Metroplex can provide grants and loans; assist with site acquisition assemblage, development and revitalization; and provide cooperative technical assistance and support through its participation in projects, programs and other initiatives. The Metroplex enabling statute allows the Authority to design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage and maintain facilities within its service district.

PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CINCINNATI CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (3CDC) | CINCINNATI, OH



- **Governance:** Formed in July 2003, 3CDC is a non-profit, real estate development and finance organization focused on strategically revitalizing Cincinnati's downtown urban core in partnership with the City of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati corporate community. 3CDC consists of three entities, which have two boards—the 3 CDC board and the board which governs the two separate loan funds:

1. 3CDC (economic development)

2. Cincinnati New Markets Fund (CNMF)—private organization comprised of 13 leading Cincinnati corporations. CNMF focuses on making loans and equity investments that help to revitalize and strengthen the center city of Cincinnati.

3. Cincinnati Equity Fund (CEF)—provides gap financing to real estate development and market-rate housing projects through both a mezzanine loan product and mixed-use construction loan products.

- **Structure:** 3CDC's operations are funded privately, mostly through corporate contributions. Cincinnati is fortunate to have a very strong and engaged base of corporate leadership. More than 30 corporate leaders make up 3CDC's Board of Directors, and are vital to 3CDC's existence and success. This helps 3CDC professionally manage a significant amount of capital and operating funding:
- 3CDC manages over \$250 million in investment funds, which play an important role in downtown development activities by providing financial capital.
- 3CDC's operations are funded privately, primarily through contributions from local corporations and civic institutions, resulting in a total of \$1.3 million.
- 3CDC's consolidated operating assets are \$15 million in annual revenue.
- **Use:** Flexible economic development spending, with the objectives of creating great civic spaces and high density/mixed-use development; preserving historic structures and improving streetscapes; and creating diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods supported by local business. 3CDC has the flexibility to function in a variety of roles: developer, master developer, asset manager, and lender/fund manager.

C Implementation Actions

1 Expand the impact of ongoing state investments in signature downtown destinations—the Capital Center, SCiTI Center and Corning Riverfront Park—with improved streets, and public space programming.

Welcome visitors to the Capital Center by targeting streetscape improvements and retail tenant recruitment efforts to prominent adjacent street blocks: Eagle, State and Pearl. Reinforce the SCiTI Center as a place for tech innovation with streetscape improvements along Broadway and engaging events in Tricentennial Park. Leverage improved access to Corning Riverfront Park by continuing performance events there, seeking funds for pond restoration and recruiting entrepreneurs to provide waterfront dining, bike and boat rentals.

Already underway: Corning Riverfront Park gateway enhancements on Broadway at Maiden Lane. Master plan concepts for park and streetscape improvements, including budgets, ready for grant proposals for areas including: Eagle Street, State Street, Broadway, Maiden Lane, Ten Eyck Park, Tricentennial Park

Available resources: BID and City events programming budgets.

Future resources: Continue City utilization of grants from the New York Main Street Program, New York Department of State, National Grid and/or other sources for street infrastructure improvements. Use new concession revenues to fund associated infrastructure and management or other costs. Sell corporate naming rights to visible investments for Corning Riverfront amphitheater. Use crowdfunding platforms to raise funds for tangible investments with broad public appeal, such as a community-serving boat rental facility.

Milestones: Complete Eagle Street improvements (approx. \$1 million) and prominently install one or more pieces from the Empire State Plaza art collection along State Street by the opening of the Capital Center. Expand event programming in or around Tricentennial Park. Tenant the Corning Riverfront Park visitor's center building with a recreation or retail enterprise.

For more detail: See Streetscape Improvements on the Capitalize Albany website.

2 Strategically recruit businesses to reinforce downtown's position as the region's premier place to do business and elevate university and tech business presence downtown with flagship facilities for New York's Start-Up NY university-business partnership incentive programs. Building upon action #3, recruit businesses in industries that value downtown's advantages as a collaborative, interdisciplinary, accessible and amenity rich place of business. Capitalize Albany and its partners should offer competitive development incentives and parking rates as appropriate, and advocate for additional measures and partnerships that help attract major employers. Work with SUNY and New York State Economic Development Council to increase presence in downtown. Recruit additional tech businesses to establish an enduring cluster anchored by SUNY Poly's SCiTI Center, and leverage New Markets Tax Credits and Start-Up NY as critical vehicles for creating state-of-the-art workspace.

Already underway: SCiTI Center tax incentive designation in place; facility renovations and occupancy starting in September 2014; Capitalize Albany collaboration with partners to recruit tech businesses that can leverage the SCiTI Center. Start-Up NY program in place with target areas of business-university collaboration identified for University at Albany and SUNY Poly. North Pearl occupancy under discussion with SUNY.

Available resources: SUNY funding for office consolidation and improvements; established Start-Up NY program; regional business recruitment partners such as the Albany County Chamber of Commerce, SUNY Poly, and CEG; ongoing operations funding; CAIDA construction sales tax exemption.

Future resources: New recurring economic development revenue stream; ongoing support from SUNY institutions; marketing by growing tech/university-related business cluster; potential designation of Capitalize Albany-controlled space to be eligible to host Start-Up NY participating business; potential corporate, institutional and/or foundation grant funding to fund façade grants and establish space fit-out grants.

Milestones: Expand SUNY's footprint in downtown. Recruit tech-related and other business partners providing a net increase of at least 100 employees.

For more detail: See chapters 4, 7, and 8.

3 Focus actions and incentives supporting real estate development on re-use or rehabilitation of downtown’s existing underutilized architectural gems—particularly converting down-town’s large stock of obsolescent class B and C office space into housing. This approach will most effectively tap current market potential, leverage outside funding sources, fill prominent vacancies, visibly concentrate activity, and market Albany’s great architectural assets. The economics of new construction are much more challenging currently, but will improve over time as existing vacancies fill and market position is established on a large scale throughout downtown.

Already underway: Ongoing tax abatement program through CAIDA. Ongoing use of historic tax credits by developers.

Available resources: Increased use of Federal and State historic building tax credits. Established CAIDA tax abatement programs. Existing Capitalize Albany assets to invest in strategic property acquisition. Albany County tax foreclosure authority and eminent domain authority help to facilitate property acquisition where necessary. Existing Park Albany parking spaces available for off-peak residential use. New Markets Tax Credits for projects with sufficient commercial component. Leverage existing Capitalize Albany Corporation, City and/or State expertise in New York’s Historic Tax Credit program, and expertise of financial institutions with New Markets Tax Credit allocations, to provide application information to developers and property owners.

Future resources: New recurring economic development revenue stream; increased Capitalize Albany funding for strategic property acquisition, fit-out assistance or other gap financing needs identified in this document; façade grants.

Milestones: Initiate efforts to secure control of priority adaptive reuse catalyst site(s) accommodating at least 100 housing units. Achieve production of at least 100 net new downtown housing units per year. Establish new recurring revenue stream for strategic economic development.

For more detail: See chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4 Use “pop-up” programming to bring life to Ten Eyck Park, Tricentennial Park, downtown parks and streets. Communities across the country are discovering the simplicity and effectiveness of encouraging informal, periodic public events in underutilized parks, sidewalks and parking spaces. Capitalize Albany and Down-town Albany BID collaborated on such events as part of the Impact Downtown process and should continue to do so, in order to celebrate the energy of Albany’s creative artists and business entrepreneurs, supplement downtown retail and dining at times, places and markets not currently served, and engage downtown’s growing residential and visitor populations. For instance, explore weekend pop-up restaurant scenarios to support events at Times Union Center and Capital Center.

Already underway: Food truck events at West Capitol Park. Capitalize Albany Corporation pop-up retail events.

Available resources: Established BID, and City of Albany special events funding.

Future resources: New recurring economic development revenue stream; planned Capital Center operations funding. Concession fees from pop-up entrepreneurs.

Milestones: Add pop-up retail and events to Ten Eyck and Tricentennial Parks on at least a monthly basis. Work with the Capital Center to establish four-season location(s) for pop-up retail and events serving conference events by the opening of the facility.

For more detail: See Streetscape Improvements on the Capitalize Albany website.

5 Recruit retail entrepreneurs who define downtown’s unique market position. Recruiting shops and restaurants to fill prominent vacant storefronts will have outsized impact changing perceptions of downtown for the better, and showcase the locally-based and regionally-themed businesses that define the authentic character available nowhere else. Coordinate retail recruitment between Capitalize Albany Corporation and the BID by training staff to work collaboratively for day-to-day retail recruitment and connecting business tenants with available spaces.

Already underway: Capitalize Albany Corporation is actively holding conversations with potential downtown retail anchors with demonstrated interest. BID staff currently help connect potential retail tenants with available spaces, and provide marketing and directory information helping connect businesses with customers.

Available resources: Coordinated use of organizations’ existing budgets to facilitate recruitment training; CAIDA construction sales tax exemption.

Future resources: New recurring economic development revenue stream; new Capitalize Albany revenue (see Secure Meaningful Recurring Revenue Stream on page 14). Potential increased BID revenues from BID membership expansion. Potential corporate, institutional and/or foundation grant funding to expand façade grants and establish space fit-out grants.

Milestones: Attract ten net new retail businesses downtown.

For more detail: See chapter 8.

6 Brand downtown in concert with a city-wide branding approach. Create buzz, proclaim downtown's appealing identity, and align messaging from the various agencies promoting downtown (such as the City, Downtown Albany BID, Albany Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Capitalize Albany Corporation).

Already underway: Impact Downtown creating branding brief for downtown completed. Capital Region Creative Economy assessment in progress.

Available resources: Existing partner organization budgets for branding.

Future resources: Funds from Capitalize Albany Corporation, BID, Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and/or other marketing partners.

Milestones: Implement branding plan or opening of Capital Center.

For more detail: See chapter 8.

7 Support market-driven real estate investment with convenient parking where needed. Near term parking needs can be effectively managed at low cost through greater utilization of existing off- and on-street parking resources: new residents can use spaces that currently sit empty evenings and weekends, and collaboration among Capitalize Albany Corporation, Park Albany, OGS, the county and/or other parking providers can locate these spaces where most needed. Proactively secure sites and funding for new structured parking serving additional development.

Available resources: Current Park Albany parking operations revenues; Park Albany bonding capacity; new property acquisition funding from institutions or state sources; existing parking spaces that can be made available for car-share services like Capital Car Share.

Future resources: New recurring economic development revenue stream; increased parking revenues, potential shared use of spaces owned by OGS or others, potential state capital investment. Park Albany's discounted parking rates for residential and commercial users, plus ongoing parking payment automation enabling 24/7/365 use of parking structures by residents and others.

Milestones: Enable 24/7/365 residential parking payment in Park Albany facilities. Control land or secure underutilized spaces with capacity for at least 500 net new parking spaces.

For more detail: See chapters 4, 5, 6.

4. A structure for efficient, effective policy and actions



Downtowns are complex places, often with many stakeholders and competing interests. Yet, to some degree, all of these stakeholders have shared interest in seeing the downtown succeed. While competing interests can often present a challenge to making meaningful progress, the existence of many invested organizations and stakeholders also provides opportunities for collaboration and pooling of resources and efforts.

Streamlined and better-integrated organizational structures will facilitate a greater level of efficiency around economic development activities in the downtown, providing impetus for more effective policy making and collective action. A critical area of organization change that deserves priority is strengthening day-to-day collaboration among the Capitalize Albany Corporation, City, and the BID in particular.

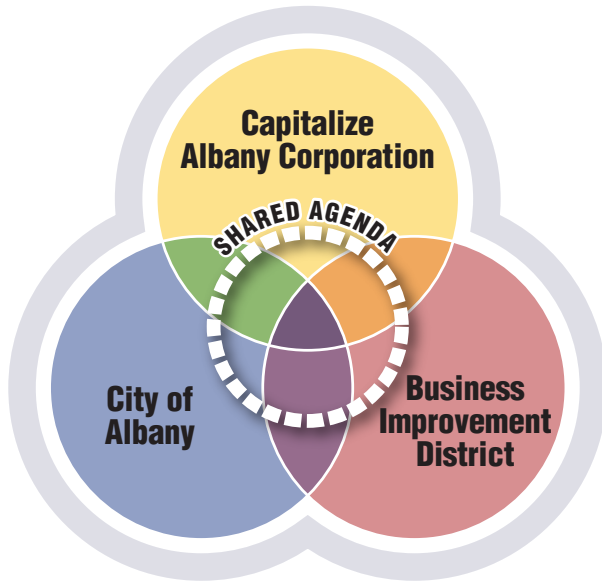
Each of the three entities has particular strengths, interests, missions, and targeted resources.

The downtown BID earns participation and support from an important set of downtown stakeholders because its mission focuses expressly on their interests. To best leverage this commitment, economic development tasks assigned to the BID should provide tangible day-to-day benefits for downtown stakeholders and owners, including enhancing district amenities and activity.

Capitalize Albany Corporation is able to look beyond existing stakeholders to focus on catalytic real estate projects, recruitment efforts, and citywide strategy.

The City has numerous departments responsible for providing basic services and infrastructure improvements serving the public and its tax base.

Collaborative Leadership, Coordinated Actions



ASSETS AND STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN, BUILD UPON, AND REINFORCE

City commitment to the downtown as a critical foundation for sustainable economic and community development

Mission and capabilities of Capitalize Albany and affiliated entities

Established BID and funding stream

State economic development initiatives (Start-Up NY, SCITL, convention center, etc.)

Regional agency partnerships (County, ACCVB, etc.)

Committed private sector participation

Committed institutional participation

Downtown's urban qualities and amenities—river, architecture, walkable street/block network, adjacent neighborhoods, etc.

Infrastructure—parking, transit, parks, streetscape, etc.

Market potential that leverages downtown's unique qualities

PRIMARY CAPABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND COLLABORATIVE

ALL THREE ENTITIES

- Branding and Marketing—*City lead with planning and implementation support from Capitalize Albany Corporation+BID*
- Parking—*City/Park Albany provide parking supply and management ; Capitalize Albany Corporation match development projects with parking resources; BID provide parking access information to customers and businesses*

CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION

- Development catalyst
- Employer recruitments
- Developer recruitments
- Economic impact, market & property info database
- Marketing

CITY

- Basic services
- Infrastructure
- Community representation
- Planning
- Building permitting
- Events

BID

- Clean & safe
- Marketing downtown
- Employer/ business/ resident/ institution forum
- Events
- Developer & tenant referrals to Capitalize Albany Corporation

CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION + CITY

- Development info center
- Property acquisition
- Political advocacy (community, region, state)
- Branding & marketing

CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION + BID

- Retail recruitment
- Parking advocacy
- Collaboration on property info database

BID + CITY:

- Clean & safe
- Events
- Neighborhood issues
- Park & streetscape management, capital improvements, design, and programming

Increased collaboration between the BID and the Capitalize Albany Corporation will result in better coordinated efforts, less redundancy, and more widespread support of economic development activities in the downtown.

Leadership of both the Capitalize Albany Corporation and the BID should work together to focus the two organizations on complementary

and coordinated tasks built upon a great level of collaboration and co-location of offices. Each agency should continue coordination of additional actions with its other partners—e.g. city departments, regional agencies, and others.

See the chart for recommended responsibilities for each entity.

Partnerships

PARTNERSHIP PRECEDENTS

DOWNTOWN WICHITA | WICHITA, KS



- **Economic development structure consists of two agencies** working in close partnership with one another—the City of

Wichita and the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC):

- 1) *City of Wichita*
- 2) *Wichita Downtown Development Corporation—encompasses both economic development and improvement district activities. The WDDC contracts with the City of Wichita on an annual basis to provide downtown development services. The contract is funded through a Self Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) that encompasses a specified downtown geographic. The SSMID advisory board is comprised entirely of WDDC board members.*

CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA | PHILADELPHIA, PA



- **Structure consists of three entities** with separate boards, all doing business under the umbrella “Center City Philadelphia” and co-located in one office:
 - 1) *CCD—Center City District (BID)*
 - 2) *CPDC—Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (Economic Development)*

3) *CPTMA—Central Philadelphia Transportation Management Association (Transportation Management)*

- **Mission:** CCD and CPDC share a common mission: to enhance the vitality of Center City Philadelphia as a thriving 24-hour downtown and a great place to live, work or have fun. CPTMA works to make travel within Center City efficient, reliable, pleasant and safe.
- **Key activities:**
 - > *Publish regular news and research, including an Annual State of Center City Report and various papers on retail, housing, development, job growth and other topics as they pertain to the Center City district*
 - > *Maintain programs to keep the district clean and safe*
 - > *Marketing and events for the district*
 - > *Various economic development activities*

Precedents continue on page 24

DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS | COLUMBUS, OH



- **Structure consists of four entities**—two separate improvement districts working in different downtown neighborhoods, and two economic development agencies, governed by a single board. The two improvement districts are co-located in a single office as are the two economic development agencies:

1) *Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District - formed in 2001 with the goal to help make downtown the*

cleanest, safest and best place to live, work and play in central Ohio. SID property owners agree to pay for their services and determine the organization's focus.

- 2) *Discovery Special Improvement District - formed in 2007 and funded by property owners east of the downtown core with the primary purpose of making sure downtown remains clean and safe.*
- 3) *CDDC & Capitol South—Columbus Downtown Development Corporation and the Capitol South Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation - private, non-profit development organizations led by a single Board of Directors comprised of senior business and institutional leaders. CDDC was created in 2002 to implement the Downtown Strategic Plan, while Capitol South was formed in 1974 with the mission of redeveloping the area just south of Capitol Square. Together, both organizations are committed to downtown revitalization.*

DOWNTOWN LOUISVILLE | LOUISVILLE, KY



- **Structure consists of two entities** with separate boards, co-located in one office:

- 1) *LDMD—Louisville Downtown Management District (BID)*
- 2) *LDLC—Louisville Downtown Development Corporation (Economic Development)*

- **Mission:** Improve the economy of Louisville Metro by coordinating an aggressive public/private program to promote the redevelopment, vitality and economic growth of the Central Business District and surrounding areas and to promote Downtown's quality of life by creating a safer, cleaner and more enjoyable environment.

Partnerships—Key Affiliations to Maintain and Deepen

A wide variety of additional partners play critical roles downtown in more targeted ways and periods. This sample selection of partners is not exhaustive and highlights just some of the principal areas in which they can and do collaborate with the Capitalize Albany Corporation, BID and City.

PARTNER	CATEGORY	MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPACT DOWNTOWN PLAYBOOK ACTIONS	KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
			CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION	BID	CITY
City of Albany Industrial Development Agency (CAIDA)	Development	Decrease tax abatement periods in conjunction with addition of complementary real estate development incentives. Increase fees. Dedicate full share of development proposal fee revenue to Capitalize Albany Corporation economic development activities.	Financial incentives	Referrals, retail tenanting	Incentive investment
Albany Community Development Agency (ACDA)	Development	Support Capitalize Albany Corporation's strategic economic development efforts with economic development funding, including Section 108 program.	Property control	Upkeep issues	Public purpose
Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACCVB)	Branding, marketing, events	Collaborate with City-led efforts to establish and market an updated brand for the City and downtown. Provide creative input to the branding process, advise on opportunities to coordinate and distinguish City/downtown branding from regional branding, and communicate the City/downtown brand as part of efforts to attract visitors and conventions to Albany and the region.	Brand, messaging	Events, pop-up retail	Brand, events

PARTNER	CATEGORY	MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPACT DOWNTOWN PLAYBOOK ACTIONS	KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
			CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION	BID	CITY
Albany Convention Center Authority (ACCA)	Branding, marketing, events, streetscape & program- ming	Collaborate with City-led efforts to establish and market an updated brand for the City and downtown. Provide creative input to the branding process, advise on opportunities to coordinate and distinguish City/downtown branding from regional branding, and communicate the City/downtown brand as part of efforts to attract visitors and conventions to Albany and the region. Help fund streetscape improvements, pop-up retail and retail recruitment supporting convention center environment.	Brand, messaging	Events, pop- up retail	Brand, events, streetscape. PILOT payments toward city services
Center for Economic Growth (CEG)	Branding, marketing, business recruitment incentives	Collaborate with Capitalize Albany Corporation on connecting potential downtown businesses with grants, loans, tax incentives, business growth services and other support. Communicate downtown's updated branding and market position.	Recruitment and tenancing		
Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce	Branding, marketing, business retention & recruitment	Collaborate with Capitalize Albany Corporation on attracting young professionals to live, work, play and learn downtown. Advocate for streetscape improvements, pop-up retail and other investments supporting the Capital Center. Collaborate with City-led efforts to establish and market an updated brand for the City and downtown. Provide programs supporting downtown business growth.	Branding, business recruitment & retention	Retail business support & recruitment	
State University of New York headquarters (SUNY)	Business recruitment & growth, development	Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation on locating any additional SUNY space expansion to other strategic downtown locations. Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation and regional universities and business recruitment partners to connect businesses with Start-Up NY opportunities.	Development, incentives	Stakeholder. Events, pop- up retail	PILOT payments toward city services

PARTNER	CATEGORY	MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPACT DOWNTOWN PLAYBOOK ACTIONS	KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
			CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION	BID	CITY
SUNY College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (SUNY Poly)	Business recruitment & growth, development	Help recruit tech sector businesses to reinforce tech business cluster, leveraging SCiTI Center and Start-Up NY program. Recruit companies to implement Smart Cities infrastructure downtown as demonstration projects.	Incentives, recruitment, contributions towards economic development resources		Smart Cities infrastructure implementation
University at Albany (UA)	Business recruitment & growth, development	Work with CDTA and BID to promote student access to downtown retail, dining, cultural and park amenities. Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation to explore sites for potential downtown student housing. Continue collaboration with businesses leveraging Start-Up NY program.	Incentives, recruitment	Retail/cultural support through student demand	
New York State Regional Economic Development Council (REDC)	Business recruitment & growth, development	Collaborate with Capitalize Albany Corporation on connecting potential downtown businesses with grants, loans, tax incentives, business growth services and other support. Communicate downtown's updated branding and market position. Prioritize projects in downtown Albany as strategic economic development projects.	Business retention & recruitment		City branding
Empire State Development (ESD)	Business recruitment & growth, development	Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation, City and BID on redesign of Ten Eyck Park and adjoining building façades to promote greater use. Collaborate with Capitalize Albany Corporation on connecting potential downtown businesses with grants, loans, tax incentives, business growth services and other support (such as Start-Up NY). Communicate downtown's updated branding and market position.	Property control, business retention & recruitment		Contributions towards economic development resources

PARTNER	CATEGORY	MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPACT DOWNTOWN PLAYBOOK ACTIONS	KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
			CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION	BID	CITY
Albany Parking Authority (Park Albany)	Parking, development	Coordinate leadership and management with Capitalize Albany Corporation as an instrument of City economic development. Continue to expand opportunity for residential use of parking. Work with other public and private downtown parking owners to make additional parking locations available to serve mixed-use development. Accommodate siting of car share services in Park Albany facilities. Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation to unlock mixed-use development opportunities on parking sites such as the Riverfront Garage.	Parking location	Wayfinding	Incentive investment
New York State Office of General Services (OGS)	Parking, development	Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation and Park Albany to explore opportunities for selected OGS parking facilities to serve mixed downtown uses, and for Park Albany facilities to serve OGS needs. Work with Capitalize Albany Corporation to achieve highest and best use for original convention center site through property control and RFP criteria. Work with City and DOT to enable re-location of I-787 Colonie Street exit via OGS property. Share state office space growth needs with Capitalize Albany Corporation to identify opportunity for downtown locations.	State office space placement	Wayfinding, events, pop-up retail at Ten Eyck Plaza	Contributions towards economic development resources

PARTNER	CATEGORY	MAJOR AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR IMPACT DOWNTOWN PLAYBOOK ACTIONS	KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
			CAPITALIZE ALBANY CORPORATION	BID	CITY
New York State Department of Transportation (DOT)	Transporta- tion, river- front	Work with City to enable con- cession businesses (e.g. restau- rants, bike rental, boat rental) in Corning Riverfront Park through City acquisition of park or alternate means. Work with City of Albany to remove Van Tromp Street on-ramp to I-787 and provide site for Clinton Square mixed-use development. Work with the City and CDTA to locate and implement optimal inter-modal facility to free current intercity bus terminal for redevelopment.		Wayfinding	Transportation & park infrastructure
Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)	Transporta- tion, develop- ment	Continue to publicize and improve downtown transit services. Implement Purple Line BRT connecting downtown with UA and SUNY Poly. Work with City, Capitalize Albany Corpo- ration and DOT to locate and implement optimal intermodal facility to free current intercity bus terminal for redevelopment.	Transit, intermodal center	Wayfinding, streetscape	Transit, streetscape
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)	Energy, development, business retention & recruitment	Promote energy efficiency in- centives (for insulation, cogen- eration plants, etc.) available to multifamily residential buildings, businesses and other eligible parties.	Energy efficiency initiatives for business and property owners		Energy efficiency initiatives for business and property owners

5. Downtown Economic Development Funding

Principal Funding Sources and Uses



This chapter outlines a framework for more effective funding of downtown real estate, business, management and infrastructure investments through these sections:

- **Major funding sources and uses.** Overview and matrix of sources and uses.
- **Principal funding flows.** Flow charts of sources, uses and the agencies that administer funding.
- **Priority funding sources with increased utilization potential.** More detailed description of near- and longer-term sources anticipated to fund Implementation Actions.
- **Criteria for funding allocation.** Recommended standards for qualifying applicants and their projects.

Reliable funding sources for real estate and business development incentives, infrastructure and management (such as tenant recruitment and marketing) play an essential role in leveraging a much broader range of private, public and consumer investments that make downtown a primary engine of economic activity for Albany and the Capital Region. Ongoing investments by the Capitalize Albany Corporation and partners such as the downtown BID over recent decades has enabled significant economic growth and improvement downtown, including development of hundreds of new housing units, attraction of new private-sector employers including a variety of small and technology-focused businesses, new retail and restaurants, a range of streetscape and park improvements, and strategically located public parking. As important as these results have been, however, additional proactive investment will be required to leverage downtown's untapped value. This chapter highlights a variety of new and underutilized funding sources that should be harnessed to make more robust investments unlocking new levels of opportunity.

A principal reason behind the need for additional downtown funding is Albany's high tax rates for commercial property (which includes multifamily housing). Tax costs, on top of other development costs including land acquisition, construction and parking, yield development costs that make redevelopment of many sites infeasible today. This is despite demonstrated market interest and an existing set of available development incentives that rely heavily on tax abatement.

Tax abatement policies have been very effective in enabling redevelopment downtown, and a study of their continued application indicated no net negative fiscal effects on the city. However, their usefulness has been already maximized and complementary gap financing tools—particularly tools that focus on capital financing—are needed.

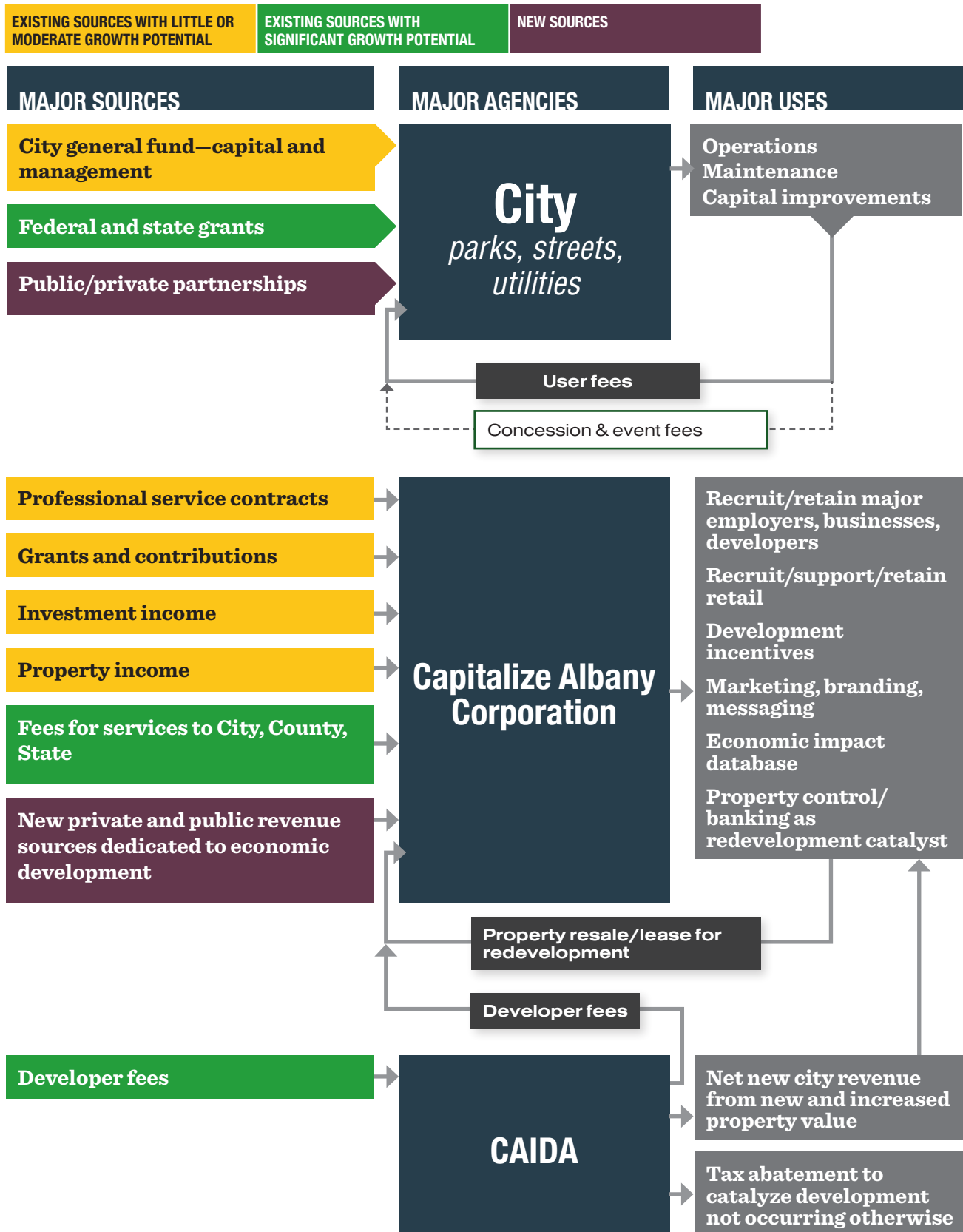
A dual approach is necessary to solve this challenge and make downtown more competitive for real estate development. Per Implementation Action 1 in chapter 3, steps must be taken to increase the City's revenues in general to reduce the tax burden on commercial properties. At the same time, per Implementation Actions 4 and 9, additional incentive sources from outside the City must be tapped to help make more development projects feasible. These include established and underutilized sources like historic rehabilitation tax credits and New Markets Tax Credits, as well as a range of potential new sources.

“Only by re-establishing a private sector real estate market can a downtown prosper. Successful downtown turnarounds have shown that for every \$1 of public investment, there will be \$10 to \$15 of private money. The bulk of the public investment must be made in the early years, however, in order to set the stage for private development.”

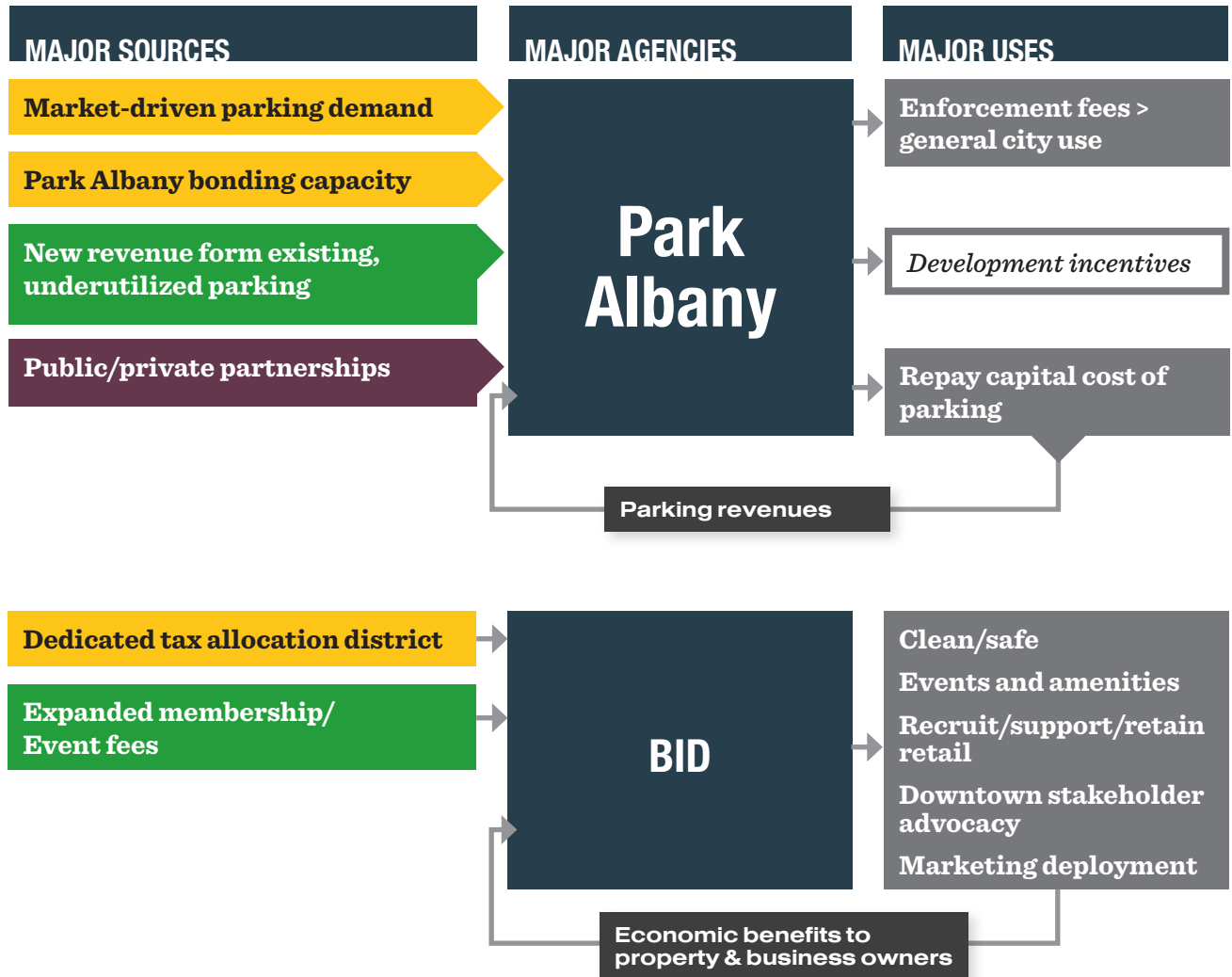
TURNING AROUND DOWNTOWN: TWELVE STEPS TO REVITALIZATION, CHRISTOPHER B. LEINBERGER, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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Funding flows



Funding flows



Priority Funding Sources with Increased Utilization Potential

• **Property acquisition by the Capitalize**

Albany Corporation. Proactive acquisition of certain properties for redevelopment is vital to sparking more action in the downtown real estate market, in cases such as:

- > Prominent location where current underutilization constrains business or real estate opportunity, or public space character and safety, in its surroundings
- > Opportunity to aggregate independently owned sites in order to achieve projects of sufficient size to utilize historic tax credits, New Markets Tax Credits and/or other valuable funding sources
- > Unique size or dimensions especially suitable for a public parking structure, public open space, office building floorplate, or other strategic purpose

This is particularly true because downtown's relatively small area makes any underutilized property a critical missed opportunity. Property acquisition should be carried out by the Capitalize Albany Corporation toward fulfillment of its economic development mission. Acquired properties should be then sold on a competitive basis to developers based on development performance criteria addressing program, design quality and other factors. To enable property acquisition, a property acquisition fund should be established for the Capitalize Albany Corporation. Establishing dedicated funds for certain development projects, rather than for general ongoing use, may have advantages in attracting fund contributions (possibly offering naming rights or other benefits) from stakeholders interested in supporting downtown economic development. The Troy Redevelopment Foundation is a good example whereby five of the City of Troy's largest nonprofit entities contribute an annual voluntary gift to help fund local economic development initiatives. Proceeds from property sales can replenish the fund for reapplication to subsequent projects. Property sale can take the form of the low-interest loan described in the next item below.

Potential sources include:

- > *State grant and/or in-kind property contribution*
- > *Ongoing revenues from IDA fees*
- > *Ongoing revenues from new sources such as a dedicated share of regional state or county revenues from sales taxes, and/or lodging taxes*
- > *Contributions from institutions or other stakeholders promoting economic development*
- > *Existing Capitalize Albany assets*

• **Property acquisition assistance for developers.**

A low-interest loan for property acquisition can significantly assist a developer in creating a financially feasible project. The Capitalize Albany Corporation should make such loans available (recommended interest rate approximately 3.5%, subject to change per market conditions) to developers who demonstrate its need and value in supporting property acquisition and redevelopment on their own initiative.

Potential sources include those cited for Capitalize Albany Corporation acquisition of property:

- > *State grant and/or in-kind property contribution*
- > *Ongoing revenues from IDA fees*
- > *Ongoing revenues from new sources such as a dedicated share of regional state or county revenues from sales taxes, and/or lodging taxes*
- > *Contributions from institutions or other stakeholders promoting economic development*
- > *Existing Capitalize Albany assets*

• **Incentives for historic building restoration.**

State and Federal historic tax credits can together support up to 40% of a qualifying project's development costs. This is the most significant source of incentive available to downtown development projects today, and requires no use of local resources. Given downtown's stock of underutilized historic office buildings with potential for conversion to market-supported housing, projects that can utilize historic tax credits therefore offer many of downtown's best near-term reinvestment opportunities. The Capitalize Albany Corporation should work with

DEVELOPMENT FUND PRECEDENTS

Detroit's **Woodward Corridor Investment Fund** was established by NCB Capital Impact and the Kresge Foundation in 2013 to invest in transformative real estate projects that advance the physical redevelopment of Detroit's Woodward Corridor. With the support of MetLife, Inc., PNC Bank, Prudential, Calvert Foundation, Living Cities and the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, the fund provides capital to projects that are mixed-use, mixed income, transit-oriented and promote density, diversity, vibrancy and walkability in Detroit's core.

The \$30.25 million Woodward Corridor Investment Fund is designed to support Detroit's revitalization by financing housing along Woodward Avenue, a main artery and home to major medical and academic campuses and arts and entertainment venues.

The Woodward Corridor includes Detroit's Midtown neighborhood, where occupancy rates exceed 95 percent and demand is high for hundreds of additional units. By focusing on the Woodward Corridor, home to many of Detroit's largest institutions and employers, the fund will help attract residents and commercial activity, establish a model sustainable corridor, and expand economic opportunity for all residents.

In recent years, Detroit's public, private and philanthropic sectors have worked together to re-establish the city as a place that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and competitive with peer urban centers.

More information is available at <http://kresge.org/news/ncb-capital-impact-and-kresge-launch-innovative-woodward-corridor-investment-fund#sthash.RFJQ02p0.dpuf>

Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (See page 14)

the City's Historic Resources Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, BID, Chamber of Commerce and other partners to ensure that developers understand how to effectively use historic tax credits. Many cities have enabled more developers to leverage this resource by making advice available via a staffed development center, and printed or online guides, to help developers understand standards for historic preservation, practical minimum sizes for projects, and other keys to successful use.

Building restoration projects can also potentially make use of other incentives such as property acquisition assistance, New Markets Tax Credits or others described above and below.

Potential sources specific to historic building restoration:

- > *Federal historic tax credit*
- > *New York State historic tax credit*

- **Incentives for new building construction.**

Currently in downtown Albany, new building construction is typically harder to feasibly finance than building restoration because it lacks opportunity to tap valuable historic tax credits, may pose higher construction costs for a given floor area, and entails longer investment payback periods, given current typical rent levels, than traditional lenders will tolerate. Rent levels can be expected to rise over time as more housing and

office space emerges in rehabilitated downtown buildings, but pose challenges to new construction in the near term. Several potential financing sources, however, may be available to help. The Capitalize Albany Corporation should encourage new construction projects to include programming best suited to leverage these sources, while also cultivating greater access to these sources, as described below.

Potential sources especially important for new building construction (also applicable to historic building restoration):

- > *New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC).* NMTC are particularly desirable in that they are currently available through an established Federal program. NMTC criteria include that the project be in an area determined to be in economic need, for which downtown qualifies, and that the project include a substantial commercial office and/or retail component. In practice, to be competitive for NMTC, projects should include enough commercial space to total at least 35 to 40% of development program, and should include long-term (5 to 10 years+) tenant commitments to this space.
- > *Low-interest private sector loans.* Construction loans from locally-based lending institutions tolerating lower rates of return or higher risk than conventional financing sources can provide a critical share of project funding, typically up to 20% of project costs in aggregate. The Capitalize

Albany Corporation should work with institutions that have expressed interest in offering such loans to help establish and publicize them as resources for developers.

- > *Long-term equity partners. For development projects still requiring additional financing beyond the private and public sources described above, one option is to include an equity partner willing to tolerate a long period of return. This “patient investor” would take long term ownership stake in the project and/or potentially provide funding grants. The Capitalize Albany Corporation could potentially play this role if it can secure sufficient funds from corporate, institutional and/or foundation sources (downtown’s major new development opportunity sites could require \$20 to \$50 million or more of investment with low, long-term or zero return). Independent foundations could also play this role, whether directly or through dedicated funding partnerships such as the Kresge Foundation’s Woodward Corridor Investment Fund serving downtown Detroit (see sidebar on previous page). Equity partners like this have also funded infrastructure improvements like streets, transit and parks.*

• **Façade improvements and interior**

fit-up. Many downtown buildings require just a comprehensive facelift, or fit-out of a retail space, to become competitive again. Some buildings may require an additional elevator or mechanical systems to accommodate growing numbers of office or residential occupants. While costs for these are significantly less than for comprehensive building renovation or new construction, they are often out of reach for a building owner. Façade and fit-out grants fill this gap in many places. These grants typically require a 1:1 match by the building owner. Albany has provided façade grants with funding from the New York Main Street Program; the City and Capitalize Albany Corporation should continue to request and provide these grants. The Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority has the ability to provide a more flexible range of grants, such as for other building improvements and infrastructure, funded through its dedicated sales tax allocation.

Potential sources for façade improvements and interior fit-up:

- > *New York Main Street Program*
- > *Ongoing revenues from new sources such as a dedicated share of regional state or county revenues from sales taxes, and/or lodging taxes*

- **Parking and other infrastructure.** Funding for street, parking and other improvements supporting new development should be sought from separate sources than development finance incentives, as development projects in downtown Albany are not typically able to support them. The City of Albany should continue to seek grants from the state for transportation improvements, from utilities for street lighting improvements, and from other sources as available. For instance, New York Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation or Department of Transportation funding could potentially be available to support restoration of the tidal ponds at Corning Riverfront Park.

Structured parking, for which there will be additional demand with new downtown development, has traditionally been funded through bonds issued by the Albany Parking Authority. Parking revenues repay the bonds over time. Bonding remains a viable method for future parking structure development, but supplemental funding sources would be desirable to enable reductions in parking rates to make downtown office and housing costs more competitive.

More intensive utilization of parking spaces—by residents at night as well as workers by day—may also enable parking rate reductions due to its greater efficiencies. Federal transportation funding could also support new facilities, particularly if new parking is provided as part of a potential new intermodal transit center.

Potential sources for parking and other infrastructure funding:

- > *State transportation, environmental or department of state grants*
- > *Utility grants, such as from National Grid*
- > *Albany Parking Authority bonds repaid (at least in part) by parking revenues*

- > *Federal transportation funding*
- > *Ongoing revenues from new sources such as a dedicated share of regional state or county revenues from sales taxes, and/or lodging taxes*
- > *Before new parking is constructed, however, capital investments in parking should be minimized and delayed by making more efficient use of existing and new parking. Several strategies common in other downtowns should be pursued together:*
 - > *Utilizing existing parking to satisfy growing residential, hotel and retail demand, which typically peaks when existing parking is largely vacant. Park Albany already has policies encouraging residential parking, and planned 24/7 electronic access to parking will further support this use.*
 - > *Applying district-scale parking management. District-scale management involves contracting with a variety of public and private parking locations to broaden the supply and location of parking, while increasing user convenience through universal information and payment systems. An entity such as Park Albany or an independent contractor could apply district-scale parking management by contracting with different parking owners to utilize their parking spaces at specific times.*
 - > *Bringing car-share services to downtown. Car-share services reduce parking needs by enabling more people to use a specific vehicle and its parking spot, while also reducing household transportation costs by reducing need for car ownership. Consider providing dedicated spaces in Park Albany parking facilities and/or private properties for Capital Car Share, already established in other Albany neighborhoods. Parking requirements for private developers should be reduced in return for their provision of car-share spaces.*

- **Downtown management.** Ongoing efforts to keep downtown clean and safe, market its available real estate and events, and conduct other

vital management activities requires regular funding. The Downtown Albany BID's dedicated tax revenue provides an important core of this funding. Funding for such activities can be increased by expanding the BID's boundary area to include more properties (while achieving efficiencies of scale in its operations), and by eliminating any redundant tasks undertaken among the BID, Capitalize Albany Corporation or other partners.

Sources for downtown management:

- > *Dedicated tax allocation district*
- > *Criteria for use of incentives*

Criteria for funding allocation

Establishing clear, consistent criteria for what real estate development proposals merit incentives provides reassurance to public and private funding sources that their investments are being optimized, and provides clarity and predictability for applicants. The following criteria are suggested for determining public/private development partnerships that merit public investment through the quality of the intended project and capacity of the applicant:

- 1) The project's development program and design is consistent with the downtown vision and associated plans and regulations
- 2) The development entity, its principals and team (architect, engineer, transportation/parking, etc.) all demonstrate relevant development experience and references, particularly in the areas of:
 - > Urban Development
 - > Mixed-Use Development
 - > Public/Private Development

Standard: minimum of 2-5 development projects that fit one or more of the development types above
- 3) The development entity demonstrates adequate financial capacity to execute the project, through evidence including:
 - > Financial Statement of Entity and/or Principals
 - > Lender Commitments on the Project

- > Existing Loans and Status
- > Equity contribution to project, definition of equity and sources of equity (with commitment letters)
- > Lender Testimonials on Previous Development Projects (Good Standing)

Standard: minimum “good standing” on existing loans; minimum of 10-20 percent equity in project

4) The development entity demonstrates that the project is infeasible unless the requested assistance is provided (“but for” analysis), utilizing:

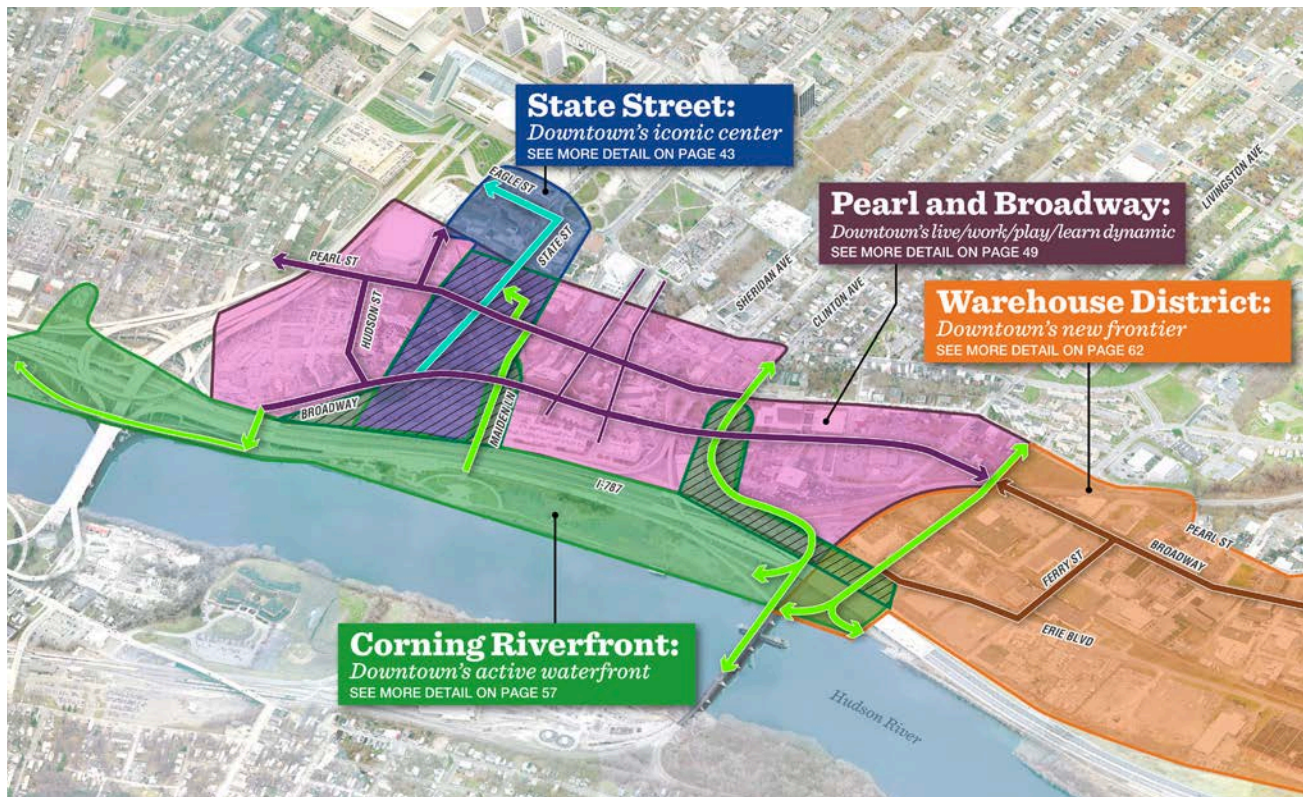
- > Market Analysis
 - > *Product Type*
 - > *Comparables and Performance*

- > *Projected Rents/Prices*
- > *Projected Absorption*
- > Economic Analysis Demonstrating Need for Gap Financing
 - > *Standard Private Investment Returns*
 - > *Uses of Public Funding (Must Be Public Assets, Not Private)*
- > Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis

- **Sample project rating system.** The sample point-based rating criteria in the table below can high-light projects achieving minimum and advanced thresholds for receipt of incentives.

MAJOR CATEGORY	COMPONENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS OUT OF 100
1. Appropriate development program and design	Consistent with Impact Downtown vision, plan and other relevant plans and regulations	20 Prerequisite
2. Experience and Qualifications of the Development Firm and Team	Development Firm A. 2-5 Projects (Mandatory) B. Offeror/ Firm and Principal In Charge C. Key Personnel, including Project/ Contract Manager D. Experience with Similar Projects E. Overall Experience Development Team A. Firm and Principal In Charge B. Key Personnel C. Experience with Similar Projects D. Overall Experience	25 (number of prior successful, comparable projects would drive these points)
3a. Financial Qualifications	A. Financial Statement of Entity and Principals B. Existing Lenders “Good Standing” C. Prior Lenders Testimonials D. Equity Sources and Threshold E. Other Commitments	25 (Strength of financial statement and clear definition and substantiation of equity in deal would drive these points. Weak standing or few testimonials will crater this score.)
3b. References	Minimum of 4 or 5 from lenders and/or municipal partners	15
4. Public Sector Leverage/Business Deal	A. Market Analysis (Mandatory) B. Economic & Fiscal Impact Analysis (Mandatory) C. Gap Funding for Public Use (Mandatory) D. Share of City Funding Compared to Private Funding does not exceed designated maximum E. Business Deal/Public Sector Risk Mitigation	15 (Strong, defensible, and professional market analysis will be very important here as well as the proposed business deal and how risk is distributed)

6. District Framework and Reinvestment Priorities



A flexible but focused approach to land use and the design of buildings and public spaces will help optimize the value of Downtown as a walkable, mixed-use place. Within the larger Downtown study area, four distinct (but in some cases overlapping) districts of distinct character deserve specific attention to cultivate the unique sense of place and market position possible in each (see diagram above):

- **State Street**—downtown's iconic center
- **Pearl and Broadway**—downtown's live/work/play/learn dynamic
- **Corning Riverfront**
- **Warehouse District**—downtown's new frontier

This chapter guides application of development, parks and recreation, transportation, infrastructure and related policies with recommended approaches for each district on land use, transportation and parking, and walkable public streets and parks. The analysis of market-based development potential described in Chapter 2 sets the foundation for land use recommendations, which also reflect best practices for overlapping a variety of residential, retail, hospitality and workplace uses where possible to promote activity throughout the day and week.

For each district, a list priority reinvestments identifies those near-term projects—whether tenanted a prominent vacant storefront, rehabilitating a park or soliciting redevelopment proposals for a strategic property—where proactive efforts promise the most catalytic and cost-effective impacts. A list of ongoing reinvestments identifies additional projects that offer promise, but can be undertaken on a more opportunistic basis as partners and resources emerge.

Land use recommendations aim to both reinforce a well-established land use program, and add new uses where beneficial. Conversion of obsolete Class B and C office space to housing is a general theme

encouraged in the State Street and Pearl/ Broadway districts, where appropriate for the building and its ownership. More than 20% of Class B and more than 60% of Class C office space was vacant as of 2014, due in many cases to small floorplates, relatively low ceilings or other physical building characteristics that pose challenges in today's office marketplace, but can work well for housing. Rehabilitating these spaces for housing will not only tap a much stronger area of market potential, but also help the downtown office market by decreasing perceived vacancy. At the same time, some older office buildings—particularly those with larger floorplates, higher floors and/or significant natural light—deserve to remain as such, for about half of office market demand seeks such “cool space” that offers the rich architectural character of older buildings combined with the state of the art data and power capacity, and flexible workspace layouts, needed by tenants today.

This district-scale guidance provides a broader context for the site-specific redevelopment opportunities identified in Chapter 7. That chapter highlights priority reinvestments with more detail on specific land use program opportunity, parking strategies, and actions or incentives that may be needed to encourage private sector investment.

State Street:

Downtown's iconic center



LAND USE

While the dominance of office and hotel uses along State has for decades quietly complemented the stately presence of the State Capitol building at one end and the SUNY Headquarters (formerly Delaware and Hudson Railroad) building at the other, State Street is ready for additional market-driven uses to help it showcase the life of the state, its capital city and Capital Region.

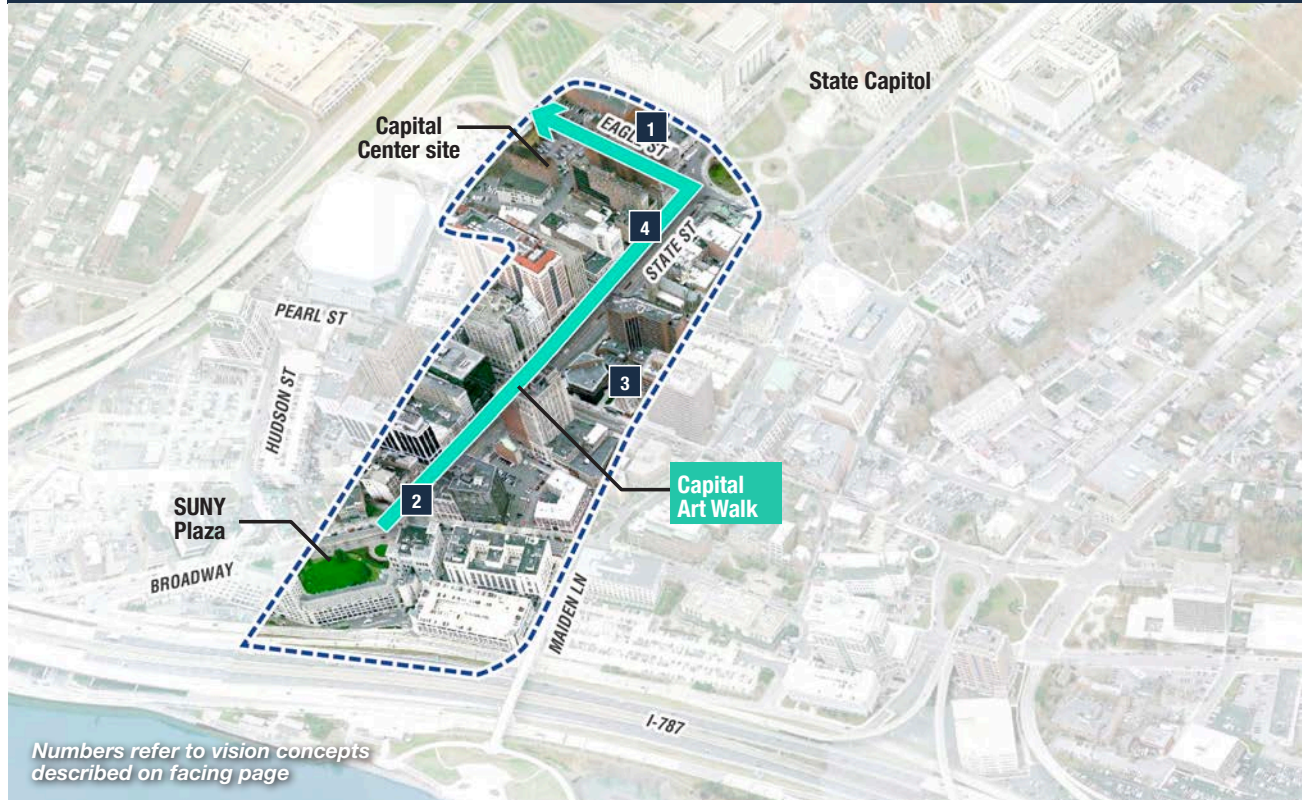
Office and **hotel** uses continue to deserve a major presence here, leveraging the street's premier address and proximity to state government and conference facilities. State Street remains an important Class A and B office address not only for businesses but also public **institutions**, with Albany County already present and SUNY preparing to occupy space at the prominent corner of State and Pearl. The 2015 opening of the Marriott Renaissance Hotel in the historic DeWitt Clinton Hotel building at Eagle and State Streets provides welcome reinforcement of State as a visitor's gateway. This new center of activity at a prominent

corner will help link the new Capital Center convention facility, State Capitol and established hotel, office and retail space along State Street.

Yet the presence of several major underutilized office buildings—architecturally stunning and historic, but uncompetitive in today's office workplace—makes **housing** a strategic new use that can restore economic value to these gems. As many as several hundred housing units could be possible through rehabilitation and conversion of buildings such as 90 State Street, reinforcing downtown's retail, street life and role as a residential neighborhood. (Continued on Page 46)

State Street is ready for additional market-driven uses to help it **showcase the life of the state, its capital city and Capital Region.**

STATE STREET DISTRICT

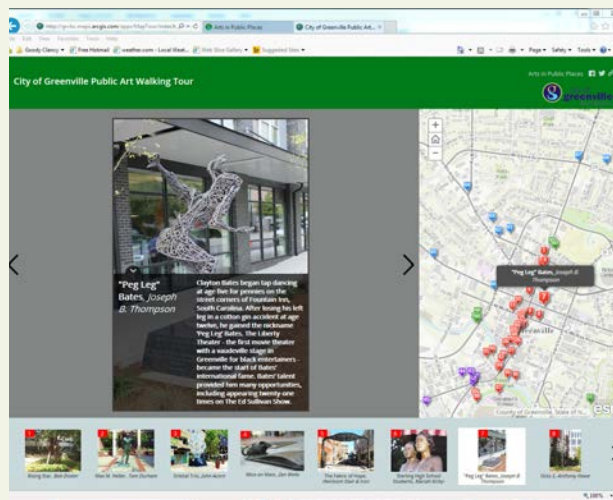


STATE STREET DISTRICT | IMPLEMENTATION PRECEDENT

Greenville, South Carolina and Asheville, North Carolina have Art Walks that offer models for a State Street Capital Art Walk in Albany. Greenville provides an online

guide to its public art. Asheville's Urban Trail artwork tells stories of community history, and is described by a brochure and audio recording.

GREENVILLE, SC



ASHEVILLE, NC



STATE STREET DISTRICT | VISION CONCEPTS

- Eagle Street's great walking environment **welcomes visitors to the Capital Center** and **connects them to downtown's** rich variety of hotel, cultural, dining and shopping choices.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Install lighting, trees and paving
- Install wayfinding signage with attraction information
- Encourage retail tenantry along north side
- Enhance pedestrian crossings



- State Street's underutilized lots and buildings fill with a **mix of office space and housing**, activating the front door to New York's Capitol and **showcasing innovative state economic development initiatives** like Start-Up NY and the Regional Economic Development Council.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Apply historic tax credits, shared-use parking and other incentives to convert historic but obsolete office buildings into housing through adaptive reuse
- Retenating/façade improvements at 10 North Pearl



- Ten Eyck Park becomes **an accessible oasis at downtown's core**, energized by adjacent dining, hotel space, workplaces and housing, and direct walking connections to Corning Riverfront, the Capital Center and surrounding neighborhoods.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Recruit restaurants with outdoor seating in around the Park
- Renovate plaza to have direct walking and visual access to North Pearl Street
- Add signage announcing Corning Riverfront events and Maiden Lane's walking connection to them



- State Street comes alive as **a grand promenade** lined with dining, shopping and public art.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Commission local artists to manifest the Capital Art Walk
- Offer façade improvement grants to enhance and add retail storefronts
- Increase public programming along State Street





The pairing of new housing development with restoration of a historic bank as an event facility at 60 State Street has already established State as a desirable residential address.

Storefront retail, intermittently present today on several blocks, should also be strategically added and clustered on State. Although Pearl Street should remain downtown's primary retail street (due to its existing retail concentrations, flatter topography, and potential for more housing that can support retail), the Capital Center and Marriott Renaissance Hotel open important new opportunity for retail, particularly food and beverage, within one to two blocks of the intersection of State and Eagle. Several active events destinations along State, frequently hosting evening functions, also reinforce retail opportunity. This retail will be a critical amenity serving the Capital Center and making it more competitive in securing events. Thus, proactive efforts to support and attract retail through tenant recruitment, façade and fit-out grants, pedestrian-scale signage for retail and parking, or other tools deserve priority here. Recent new retail on State Street, plus the ongoing presence of Jack's Oyster House since 1913, demonstrates the viability of destination retail businesses there. Retenancing and façade upgrades at the Hilton and 10 North Pearl Street can make a major difference by connecting State and Pearl Street retail into a continuous retail

district. Finally, other **community- and workforce-serving uses** like St. Peter's Episcopal Church and child care deserve an ongoing presence.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

The **parking** needs of office, institutional and hotel uses along State can typically be satisfied by existing private and public parking facilities, as well as the 200 new spaces being built to serve the Marriott Renaissance Hotel. A significant amount of housing and retail can be added without need for constructing additional parking spaces, as they can utilize a portion of the existing worker-oriented parking when it is largely unused evenings and weekends. Because State Street is well served by **CDTA transit** and is within **easy walking distance** of many workplace, residential, retail and visitor destinations, parking demand for all uses along the street already tends to be lower than areas lacking transportation options and mixed uses. In the future, parking demand can be reduced further as the use mix around State Street intensifies and walking, transit and **biking** options become more convenient.

PUBLIC REALM

State Street has already benefited from streetscape investments in quality paving, light fixtures, trees, bus shelters and other elements that promote walkability and support its stature as the front door to the State Capitol. Additional enhancements deserve priority, however, to make it a truly world class gateway to the Capitol and Capital Center and other visitor destinations, and to address remaining challenges to walkability:

- Establish the Capital Walk/Art Walk—a themed walking route along State Street from SUNY Plaza to the Capitol, and turning south along Eagle to the Capital Center. This route will help connect Convention Center visitors to downtown amenities like Corning Riverfront Park, Pearl Street restaurants, hotels and the State Capitol, and will be a destination in itself for the spectacular architecture framing it as well as its own public art. Public art should be installed to have a consistent presence block by block, and could employ a variety of forms and sources such as works from the Empire State Plaza art collection, commissioned

work of local artists, outstanding student artwork from the SUNY system, and/or creative illumination of historic building façades.

- Cities such as Asheville, North Carolina and Greenville, South Carolina provide good examples of how art walks with inspired artwork and convenient printed and online guides have brought streets to life as destinations.
- Enhance Eagle Street between State and the Capital Center as a high-quality, walkable address for the Capital Center and Marriott Renaissance Hotel. Narrow travel lanes to enable widening of the west sidewalk to make space for street trees and planted beds around the trees. Add brick sidewalk and crosswalk accents matching those on State Street. Enhance the pedestrian bridge over Eagle Street with installation of art or distinctive architectural design and/or lighting. Consider planting trees in the South Mall Arterial landscape beyond the bridge as a visual backdrop.
- Relamp light fixtures along State and Eagle Streets with lamps that provide better color rendition (“whiter,” lower color-temperature lamps) than the current high pressure sodium lamps that

produce a characteristically orange light. Using LED lamps for this purpose would also significantly reduce energy use and life cycle costs.

- Enhance major blank walls that diminish the appeal of walking with public art, green walls or, where possible, installation of windows and active ground-floor uses like retail. Portions of 10 North Pearl Street and the Hilton Hotel that face State Street deserve special priority, as they diminish walkability of an entire block right where walkable connections to Pearl Street are especially needed to connect complementary land uses and public spaces. Opportunities include:
 - > Add programming such as music buskers, pop-up food sales, artwork and/or creatively landscaped planters around the pedestrian passage to Ten Eyck Park.
 - > Highlight potential SUNY occupancy of 10 North Pearl with informational displays on New York’s flagship Start-Up NY economic development program.
 - > Install a planted green wall (or artwork) on the tall, blank façade of the Hilton Hotel facing State Street. The southern orientation of this wall makes it a suitable location for a green wall.
 - > Install a direct pedestrian entrance from State Street to the Hilton’s ground floor retail space at the corner of State and Lodge. The current setback of this space from State Street behind landscaping, and entrance via the main hotel lobby, does not contribute to walkability or clustering of retail along State.



REINVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Real estate

- Retenancing of 10 North Pearl Street with SUNY offices. New occupancy in this prominent property at downtown’s “100 percent corner” will benefit both State and Pearl Streets and enhance the walking connection among them.
- Placement of at least two or three additional restaurants with pedestrian entrances on State and/or Eagle Streets within one block of the Capital Center
- Conversion of current ground floor office space at the southwest corner of Eagle and State to

an active, pedestrian-oriented use. This highly prominent location facing the State Capitol on one side, and the Marriott Renaissance Hotel and Capital Center on the other, could leverage synergies with these visitor destinations with tenants such as fine dining, a visitors' information center, and/or "teaser" display of works from the Empire State Plaza art collection.

- Full tenanting of the Wellington Row development project adjacent to the Marriott Renaissance Hotel. Ground floor space should be designed to retail standards, and retail uses assiduously recruited.

Public realm

- Eagle Street streetscape improvements.
- Blank wall enhancement at Hilton Hotel and 10 North Pearl Street.
- Relamping streetlights.
- Adding or enhancing taxi stands along State and Eagle Streets to serve convention and hotel guests.

ONGOING REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Real estate

- Conversion of one or more older office buildings to housing.
- New development on parking lot west of 41 State Street. Parking should continue to be provided on the site, but screened behind active uses such as retail along State. Economic feasibility of new construction, which tends to be more challenging than rehabilitation, will likely improve as more rehabilitation of existing underutilized buildings occurs and downtown's market position matures.

Public realm

- Full design and installation of the Capital Walk/Art Walk.

Pearl and Broadway:

Downtown's live/work/play/learn dynamic



LAND USE

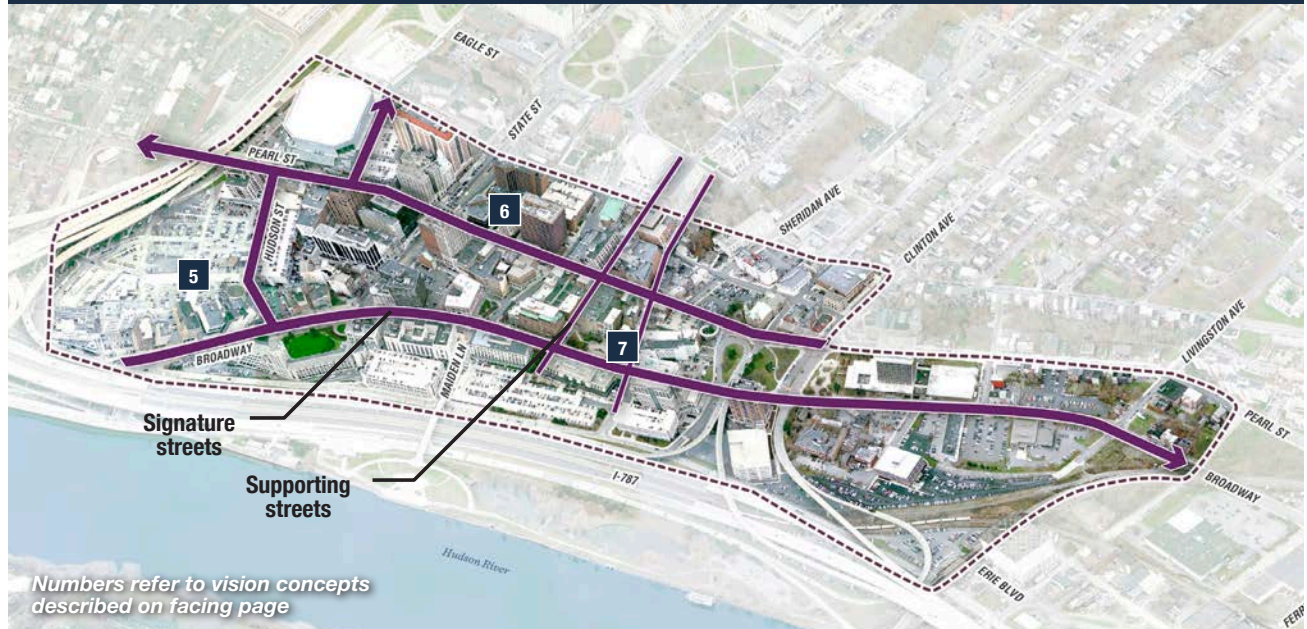
The parallel Pearl and Broadway corridors offer important potential to function together as a bustling place for working, living, learning and playing, stitched together by a ladder of short, walkable cross streets and passages. Development policy should aim to diversify uses along each of the streets to promote activity day and evening, weekday and weekend, and to enable the personal interaction that supports innovation and community. Both streets can leverage several mutually beneficial assets: North and South Pearl's traditional concentration of retail, cultural and entertainment destinations; Broadway's distinction as an established address for office use; the catalytic SCiTI Center and SUNY Start-Up NY hubs; and the emerging presence of housing along each street.

North and South Pearl are entering a new chapter in their longtime role as **downtown's premier retail corridor**. A variety of sit-down restaurants and pubs are reinforcing Pearl as a great dining and drinking

destination. New retailers are coming to Pearl and its side streets selling products sourced locally and regionally. A common theme among these dining, drinking and shopping establishments, including "Albany's oldest store," the enduring B. Lodge & Company clothing store, is authenticity. Pearl Street retail offers products and experiences that reflect Albany's unique local character and can't be matched at more generic shopping opportunities in the region. *(Continued on Page 52)*

...diversify uses along each of the streets to **promote activity** day and evening, weekday and weekend, and to enable the personal interaction that supports innovation and community.

PEARL AND BROADWAY | VISION CONCEPTS

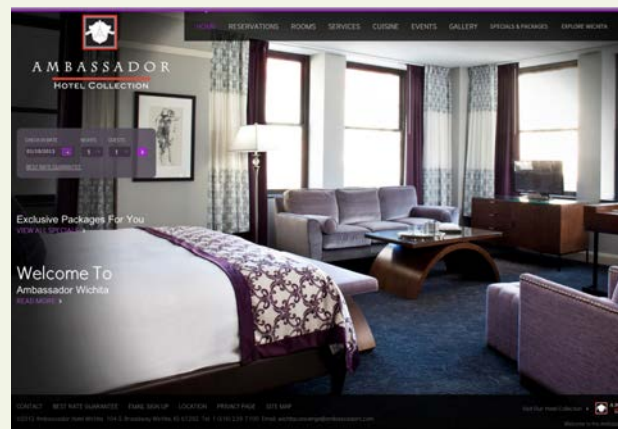


PEARL AND BROADWAY | IMPLEMENTATION PRECEDENT

Wichita brought new life to a largely vacant downtown block by facilitating a development partnership among property owners and building a shared parking structure. The parking enabled conversion of an obsolete, empty 1920's office tower into a boutique

hotel, development of a new foundation headquarters, and adaptive reuse of a vacant department store. Over \$40 million in combined private and public investment has turned "Block One" into a downtown centerpiece.

WICHITA, KS



PEARL AND BROADWAY | VISION CONCEPTS

- 5** Downtown's largest development opportunity gathers state-of-the-art workspaces and housing around historic Liberty Park.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Solicit redevelopment of vacant parcels with an active mix of work spaces and housing
- Relocate intercity bus terminal into an improved facility within a convenient walk of downtown's major destinations
- Improve streets and Liberty Park in parallel with redevelopment



- 6** North and South Pearl Street gain hundreds of new loft apartments and modern work space in downtown's most distinctive architecture, reinvigorating storefronts with demand for authentic local retail.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Create new capital incentives and/or aggregate properties to incent adaptive reuse of underutilized properties into housing and workspaces
- Connect prospective retail businesses with interested property owners
- Help existing public parking serve new housing units with walkability improvements and affordable pricing
- Reinvest in streetscape to compliment walkability



- 7** Pop-up programming around Tricentennial Park, improved sidewalks and bike lanes, and easy access to Corning Riverfront make Broadway the hub for the workforce needed to drive Albany's innovation economy.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Actively recruit businesses to join a growing Tech Sector business hub around the SCIT Center
- Increase "pop-up" retail, recreational and cultural programming at Tricentennial Park
- Install wayfinding signage, improved lighting and bike lanes to highlight connections to the Corning Riverfront





The coming Capital Center, associated renovations to the Times Union Center and new Marriott Renaissance Hotel will also increase visitor demand for retail; this could particularly benefit retail along South Pearl Street. Types of retail with greatest potential to capture market demand and reinforce current retail businesses include upscale dining, coffeehouses, moderately priced fashion boutiques, a small-format grocer, and Millennial-oriented shopping, live music and food.

The Palace and Capital Repertory (“Cap Rep”) **Theaters** have an important synergy with the restaurant concentration along North Pearl and at Quackenbush Square. The Capital Repertory Theater is seeking improved space, which should preferably be located along the same corridor to maintain the concentration of performing arts and dining destinations.

While the authenticity theme and new entrepreneurs are strengthening retail along North and South Pearl, additional retail market demand, particularly outside of weekday working hours, is necessary to truly fill the corridor with active retail. Converting underutilized upper floor space along the corridor to **housing** offers the most opportune and effective means to accomplish this. Housing typically exerts more retail demand (roughly 50% more) than office space per unit area, and spreads

this demand to evenings and weekends, expanding opportunities for existing and new businesses. Much of the older office space along Pearl is more marketable as housing today, and will reinforce the emerging presence of downtown housing on adjacent blocks. More than 450 housing units could be created in underutilized buildings on or close to North and South Pearl and Broadway, making a visible difference in building occupancy, street activity and retail performance.

As a supplement to housing, **“coolspace”** (office space with attractive architectural qualities such as historic materials and details, high ceilings and copious daylight) can be a valuable use along North and South Pearl. It is particularly attractive to small and creative/technology sector businesses that are an important target market for Downtown. Office tenants are expected to seek 100,000sf or more of such space downtown over the next ten years, and the Pearl/Broadway corridor could provide much of it. Class A and B **office** space, already present, also contributes to the mix of uses along the corridor.

Broadway’s new SCiTI Center in the historic New York Central railroad station, and SUNY’s role as a Start-Up NY anchor, are meanwhile turning Broadway from an office corridor into a true **innovation district**. Broadway and Pearl together offer the qualities of successful innovation districts: opportunities for numerous complementary disciplines and businesses to cluster within a five-minute walk; anchor university institutions; retail, dining, cultural and park destinations within an easy walk; transportation choices; and quality housing nearby. These attributes make Broadway and Pearl a great place to do business and make discoveries because they bring people together to collaborate creatively in a variety of formal and informal settings. Encouraging a “makerspace” to join this mix, with capabilities for product prototyping, could further expand innovation and commercialization opportunities, following successful examples from Troy’s Center of Gravity to San Francisco’s 5M Project. Broadway should thus continue to be an prominent address for **office** space, but should increasingly accommodate housing, retail and hotel use as well, to extend activity beyond the workday. Development on the Riverfront Garage site and/or other sites that

can leverage expansive views available along the Hudson River could offer exciting opportunities for any of these uses.

Finally, the east-west streets connecting Pearl and Broadway provide important development addresses and district connections. Complementing the special role of State Street, covered previously, several streets provide an intimate scale well suited to pedestrian-oriented uses. Maiden Lane is of special importance due to its direct connections to the Corning Riverfront and Ten Eyck Plaza, but Pine, Steuben and Columbia are similarly walkable due to attractive views, park connections and low traffic levels. Retail spaces along these streets are increasingly utilized by new businesses seeking affordable rents. Hudson, Van Tromp and Clinton also offer important connections that should be made more walkable over time through a combination of redevelopment on vacant parcels, and sidewalk improvements.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

The corridor contains a significant amount of private and public structured **parking** that adequately serves current uses. Addition of new uses will likely require greater parking availability in certain locations, accomplished through a combination of more intensive utilization of existing parking wherever possible, and new parking development in strategic locations where necessary. North Pearl will likely face greatest need for improved access to parking as its buildings gain more intensive use, because current parking supplies on blocks flanking it are limited in quantity, and may require reconstruction (one parking structure faces structural challenges, another has an inefficient layout, and the prominent parking lot at North Pearl and Sheridan is a priority location for redevelopment with higher value uses). Very few sites for new parking structures are available; the optimal location from standpoint of capacity and location—the block bounded by North Pearl, Columbia and Van Tromp Streets and Broadway—faces challenges of parcel aggregation and demolition of existing structures. Thus demand for new parking should be minimized through several means including:

- Emphasizing new residential and retail uses that can use existing parking spaces that serve workers by day and are underutilized evenings and weekends. Adding housing and retail also enables more people to walk to work or shop without need for driving and parking.
- Adding **bike lanes** and otherwise improving bike facilities to be safer and more convenient.
- Encouraging greater use of **transit**. Consider operating a branded shuttle, with convenient, well-publicized service at intervals of 15 minutes or less, connecting restaurant and nightlife concentrations in Downtown, the Warehouse District, Lark Street and/or other locations with the convention center and/or hotels during peak demand periods.
- Establishing a **car-share service** in the area enabling a small number of parking spaces to serve multiple households and workers.

To the extent additional parking capacity is needed, first expand opportunity to use existing parking by means including:

- Enabling convenient **24/7** use of public parking facilities
- Contracting with owners of non-public parking (such as NYS OGS or private parking owners) to provide parking at off-peak times



- Enhancing safety and appeal of walking to existing parking structures through improved street lighting and other **walkability enhancements**.

Vacant lots and parking lots south of the intersection of Hudson and Green Streets offer several appropriate sites for new parking structures serving the significant amount of new mixed-use development possible there.

PUBLIC REALM

A dynamic live/work/learn/play environment needs quality public sidewalks and parks to support walkability and encourage community interaction. The Pearl/Broadway Corridor already has a good basic infrastructure of streets and public spaces; with relatively modest facilities improvements complemented by new tenants in the most prominent vacant spaces, this corridor can rise to become the Capital Region's most prominent "main street" for great food, shopping and fun.

- **North and South Pearl Streets** have good quality sidewalk paving with brick accents, but should be improved by relamping light fixtures with lamps offering better color rendition, adding benches and trash receptacles, adding street trees where absent, and adding bike parking racks (as needed so that at least two per block are available).
- **Broadway** should be improved by adding sidewalk and crosswalk paving accents (such as the brick theme utilized along Pearl and State), relamping light fixtures with lamps offering better color rendition, adding benches and trash receptacles, adding street trees where absent, and adding bike parking racks (as needed so that at least two per block are available).
- **Maiden Lane** strategically connects downtown's central workplaces and housing with some of its prime amenities—Corning Riverfront Park, retail and restaurants, and Ten Eyck Park—along a beautiful walk of cobblestone paving and historic buildings. Yet the full extent of the walk from the Hudson River to Ten Eyck Park is not easily apparent. Reinforce the continuity of the corridor with consistent street lighting and signage, improved landscaping and other park improvements flanking Broadway, improvements to the

pedestrian bridge over I-787, and a clear signed connection to Ten Eyck Park.

- The intimate scale and architecture of Pine, Steuben and Columbia is compromised by automobile-scale lighting fixtures and signage. Replace these with pedestrian-scaled lighting and signage.
- **Ten Eyck Plaza** is well-sized and located along North Pearl Street amidst housing, hotel and retail uses, but its landscape design and built edges prevent it from attracting the level of activity it should. Remove shrubs and walls that separate the plaza from the North Pearl Street sidewalk, so that internal seating and other features are easily visible. Replace the underutilized fountain space with an operating water feature and/or expanded place for people to use. Add signage indicating the Maiden Lane Walk to Broadway and the Hudson River, including a notice board for performances and other events at Corning Riverfront Park. Encourage retenanting of adjacent ground floor building areas with restaurants or other active ground floor uses, utilizing portions of the plaza for outdoor dining if possible. Encourage replacement of tinted ground floor windows around the plaza with fully transparent windows, unblocked by blinds.
- **Tricentennial Park** would benefit from limbing-up trees as needed to open the park up to better view from surrounding streets. This will further leverage its established use for quiet seating





and events like farmers markets, music performance, open air, dining, pop-up retail and as more work-places, housing and retail open around it.

- **Liberty Park** is Albany's oldest park, but seldom used due to its currently isolated location. As redevelopment occurs on adjacent parking lots, Liberty Park should be restored and improved with additional plantings, pedestrian-scale lighting, interpretive signage on its history, benches and trash receptacles to become a principal amenity and symbolic center for this development.
- **Clinton Square**, at the corner of Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street, has very little presence today, having lost its frame of buildings and walkable streets to the construction of I-787 access ramps. The square should be reconstituted as an important connecting point between concentrations of restaurants on North Pearl and Quackenbush Square/Broadway. Development of housing over ground floor dining on a portion of the lawn area between Clinton Avenue and the I-787 entrance ramp, reserving public plaza space along Clinton and North Pearl, would result in much more useful public open space as well as additional residents and visitors to make it active. Until development is possible, consider implementing an active use in the space, such as a dog park.

- **Clinton Square-Corning Riverfront Park "high-line" connection**—the northbound exit from I-787 to Clinton Avenue is relatively lightly used, redundant to other exits, and could offer much more to Albany as a landscaped multi-use path to Corning River-front Park. The ramp could serve as a promenade, bike route and linear landscape making a valuable connection to the park, dramatically increasing its accessibility from Arbor Hill and downtown.
- **SUNY Plaza** provides a beautifully landscaped lawn at the foot of State Street, against the backdrop of SUNY's historic headquarters building. The plaza now hosts a farmers' market and should be considered for additional programming such as music performances. Install public art as part of the Capital Walk/Art Walk promenade described above under State Street.

REINVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Real estate

- Retenancing of 10 North Pearl Street with SUNY offices. New occupancy in this prominent property at downtown's "100 percent corner" will benefit both State and Pearl Streets and enhance the walking connection among them.
- Conversion of underutilized upper floor space along North Pearl achieving a near term critical mass of at least 75 to 100 units, either in a single property or across multiple properties.
- Tenancing of prominent vacant storefronts along North Pearl, particularly between Steuben Street and State Street.
- Tenancing of prominent vacant storefronts along South Pearl, particularly opposite the Times Union Center.

Public realm

- Maiden Lane
- Ten Eyck Plaza
- Tricentennial Park programming
- Broadway streetscape improvements
- North and South Pearl Street streetscape improvements

ONGOING REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Real estate

- Conversion of additional underutilized upper floor space along North Pearl to housing and/or “coolspace” office space
- Create improved venue for Cap Rep Theatre on current block or other location reinforcing North Pearl’s cluster of cultural venues and restaurants.
- Redevelopment of portions of “Cap Rep” block

Public realm

- Liberty Square landscape improvements and programming
- Clinton Square streetscape improvements (with adjacent development)
- Clinton Square-Corning Riverfront Park “high-line” connection
- Maiden Lane streetscape improvements and landscaping at Corning River Front footbridge
- Ten Eyck Plaza landscape and programming improvements
- Tricentennial Park programming
- Broadway streetscape improvements
- Clinton Square dog park

The Corning Riverfront:

Downtown's active waterfront

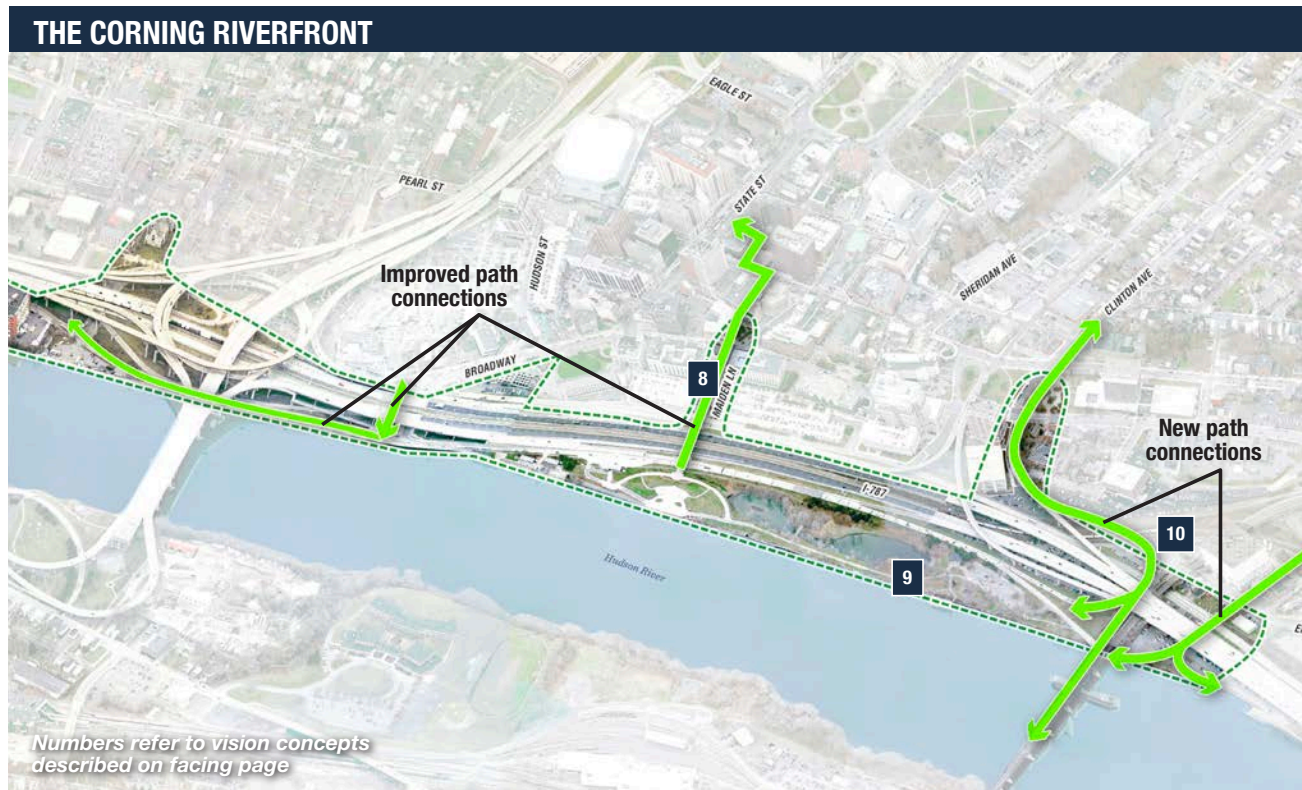


LAND USE AND PUBLIC REALM

The Corning Riverfront offers a unique and so-far underutilized opportunity to engage in a wide variety of recreation experiences on and along the Hudson River. This vision and the accompanying Corning Riverfront Plan enable more intensive use of this resource, supporting a more dynamic working, living, learning and playing environment in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Through greater community use and new signature facilities, the park will become a prominent icon for Albany and the Capital Region. The park plan emphasizes these new and expanded activities identified by the Albany community as priorities:

- Expanded river access for **recreational boating**—including potential added launch and/or rental facilities for rowing, kayaking and canoeing, and added dock capacity for pleasure boats
- Improved, more visible docking facilities for Hudson River **tour boats** such as the Half Moon
- Bike rental, snacks and/or similar **recreation and refreshment services**
- Additional **waterfront dining** in one or more new pavilions
- **Amphitheater** improvements including a landmark stage canopy, expanded seating, better views to/from the river, and better performance support facilities
- Added **walking and biking paths** that utilize more of the park, add access options and reduce movement conflicts
- Interpretive signage and programming providing **education** on the riverfront's important ecological systems and place in Albany history
- **Expanded park area** accommodating events, sports, play areas or other priority activities

Through greater community use and new signature facilities, the park will become a **prominent icon** for Albany and the Capital Region.



THE CORNING RIVERFRONT | IMPLEMENTATION PRECEDENT

Many communities are turning once forgotten, inaccessible waterfronts into centers for community recreation, through partnerships between private recreation organizations and public and private waterfront property owners. Oklahoma City created a community rowing facility and riverfront events space

serving community members of all ages and incomes. In Cambridge, MA, a canoe and kayak rental dock in a former industrial canal is a popular amenity for local technology-focused workforce and the community at large.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK



CAMBRIDGE, MA



THE CORNING RIVERFRONT | VISION CONCEPTS

- 8** The Corning Riverfront comes to Broadway as a **landscaped entrance from Maiden Lane**, while signage, lighting and outdoor dining continue the park connection to Ten Eyck Park.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

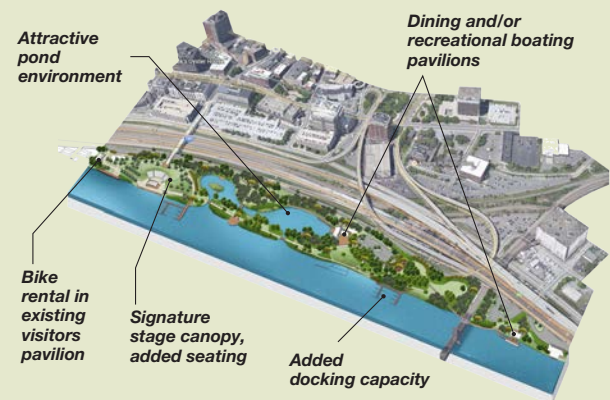
- Install new landscape, lighting and signage marking the Broadway gateway from Maiden Lane (under way)
- Increase bike access
- Make improvement + pedestrian bridge + enhance users' experience, including improved visibility of river from walkway



- 9** Albany gains new opportunities to **dine** by the river, **bike** the Canalway Trail, learn to **row**, understand river **ecology**, and much more.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

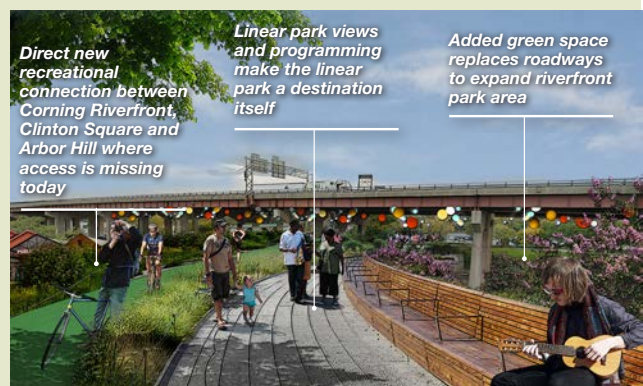
- Complete new recreational path connections to the South End Waterfront and Warehouse District
- Convert surplus Quay Street lane into parking
- Solicit developer and operator partners for new riverside dining and boat/bike rental facilities
- Secure funding to verify and implement appropriate steps to improve pond environment
- Implement waterfront master plan



- 10** An active “high line” linear park transforms this underutilized highway ramp into Clinton Square’s connection to recreation, dining, culture and nature at the Corning Riverfront.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Work with NY DOT to verify feasible design and timeframe for ramp conversion to park
- Work with NY DOT and OGS to implement new street connecting Quay and Centre Streets, enabling conversion of existing Quay Street-Colonie Street segment into added park space
- Apply for state and federal funding for the creation of the linear park



The **ponds** within the park currently have odor and appearance problems due to exposure of mud at low tide. Efforts should be made as soon as possible to study and mitigate these problems by dredging accumulated sediment, increasing water circulation, reducing tidal fluctuation and/or other appropriate means. These pond improvements will enhance the ability to use surrounding parkland by improving the experience of amphitheater events, and open opportunities to enjoy the ponds through adjacent pathways, interpretive signage, new landscape plantings, recreational boating and/or other elements.

The Corning Riverfront Park vision ultimately anticipates opportunity to reduce the park's separation from Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods caused today by road and rail infrastructure. Ongoing analysis of the I-787 corridor may identify strategies to reduce the scale and presence of the highway over a 10- to 20-year timeframe. Meanwhile, a variety of near-term path and parking improvements will significantly improve access. Over time, more intensive use of the park, coupled with expanded mixed-use development along Broadway and adjacent blocks, set the stage for further expansion of development and park areas toward each other as strategies to reduce the road and rail right of way emerge.



TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

A range of multi-modal improvements will make the park significantly more accessible to Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Pedestrian and bike

- Add dedicated bike path through park.
- Extend multi-use path to the South End water-front.
- Extend and improve multi-use connection to Col-
onie Street; then extend further into Warehouse
District and Arbor Hill.
- Transform Quay Street character from a highway
ramp to a street, by adding pedestrian-scaled
lighting, a sidewalk, and converting the eastern
travel lane to on-street parking
- Unify waterfront promenade with consistent
lighting. At minimum, relamp high-pressure so-
dium lamps with the better color-rendition lamps
installed around the amphitheater, from South
End to Warehouse District; consider additional
lighting design opportunities.
- Install gateway elements (such as plantings and
improved paving) at Broadway and Maiden Lane.
Establish Maiden Lane Walk to the park by im-
proving lighting, wayfinding signage and/or other
streetscape elements along Maiden Lane to Ten
Eyck Plaza and State Street.
- Convert the I-787 northbound exit ramp to Clin-
ton Avenue into a multi-use path and “high-line”
park space linking Clinton Square and Arbor Hill
with Corning Riverfront Park.
- Connect park pathways with proposed multi-use
trail along the planned new Livingston Avenue
railroad bridge.

Transit

Improve streetscape and trail access around the bus
stop at the park visitor's center pavilion on Quay
Street.

Automobile

- Add on-street parking along Quay Street as de-
scribed above.

- Utilize shared parking below I-787 to enable conversion of some parking within the park to green space.
- Reconfigure space below I-787 at Colonie Street for more convenient parking and loading of boat trailers. Designate additional temporary off-site trailer parking for large boating events.
- Relocate I-787 northbound exit to Colonie Street via Centre St., to expand riverfront park area at Livingston Avenue railroad bridge and enable direct access to the park from the Warehouse District via Centre Street.

Boat

- Add public docking facilities for pleasure boats toward the Livingston Street railroad bridge to enhance access to waterfront dining and other park program.

REINVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Real estate

- Recruit bike rental, refreshment sales and/or other concessions serving a frequent, active public purpose to the visitors' pavilion on Quay Street. Work with State of New York to reduce or remove limitations on concession revenue to the City.
- Work with Albany Rowing Center to study, confirm and implement proposed rowing boathouse.
- Partner with a restaurant and/or developer to build dining pavilion (with potential to also serve boating and/or educational needs) at ponds or waterfront.

Public realm

- Add dedicated bike path through park.
- Extend multi-use path to the South End waterfront.
- Extend and improve multi-use connection to Colonie Street.
- Transform Quay Street character from a highway ramp to a street, with added parking, lighting and sidewalk.



- Install gateway element at Broadway and Maiden Lane. Establish Maiden Lane Walk to the park by improving lighting, wayfinding signage and/or other streetscape elements along Maiden Lane to Ten Eyck Plaza and State Street.

ONGOING REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Public realm

- Relocate I-787 northbound exit to Colonie Street via Centre Street, to expand riverfront park area at Livingston Avenue railroad bridge.
- Utilize shared parking below I-787 to enable conversion of some parking within the park to green space.
- Convert the I-787 northbound exit ramp to Clinton Avenue into a multi-use path and "high-line" park space linking Clinton Square and Arbor Hill with Corning Riverfront Park.
- Connect park pathways with proposed multi-use trail along the planned new Livingston Avenue railroad bridge.
- Build landmark stage canopy and improved performance support facilities at amphitheater.
- Add dock for historic vessels near visitors' center.

Warehouse District:

Downtown's new frontier



LAND USE

The Warehouse District is transitioning from its longtime role as a place of industry into a new era in which light industry remains, in combination with new office, housing, and retail uses that expand its economic development power. While the district currently lacks the qualities of walkability found in other portions of downtown, it has gained a set of mixed office, light industrial, restaurant and nightlife uses clustered on or near Broadway (particularly within two blocks of North Ferry Street) sufficient to justify improved pedestrian infrastructure that will then draw more business and real estate investment. While care must be taken in locating and managing uses that may have compatibility challenges (such as housing that may not tolerate late night nightclub music or early morning truck traffic), many similar districts in other cities have demonstrated the ability to resolve these challenges and thrive on the industrial character. In many cases, success comes in part through the conversations of an

active association of businesses and residents (such as a business association) that provides a forum to resolve potential conflicts in a direct and informal manner, and collaborate around mutual interests. Warehouse District stakeholders should be encouraged to form such a structure for collaboration.

Broadway for much of the distance from North Ferry Street to Emmet Street consists of **a variety of industrial buildings, some with historic or other architectural qualities.** Some of these buildings are actively used by industry that deserves to remain, and some are underutilized and ripe for conversion to new industry or alternative mixed uses. New development is also possible on a number of vacant or underutilized sites. New and rehabilitated buildings alike should be designed to promote walkability by locating their façades close to the sidewalk, incorporating frequent windows and entrances, and including human scale design elements.

Light industrial uses continue to deserve priority in the Warehouse District, leveraging its relatively large parcels and good highway access. Industry that is already present should typically be enabled to remain, preserving jobs and city tax revenue. New or relocating industry that produces problematic impacts on office, housing or retail uses, such as heavy truck traffic or significant noise, should be located toward the eastern edge of the district, north of North Ferry Street, and utilize Erie Boulevard and Erie Street for primary access, to the extent possible. This will minimize negative impacts on existing housing and potential mixed-use development along and to the west of Broadway. Light industry that fits well with other uses—such as small craft breweries attached to retail outlets—can be appropriately located along or near Broadway as long as their operations also fit well with other neighboring uses.

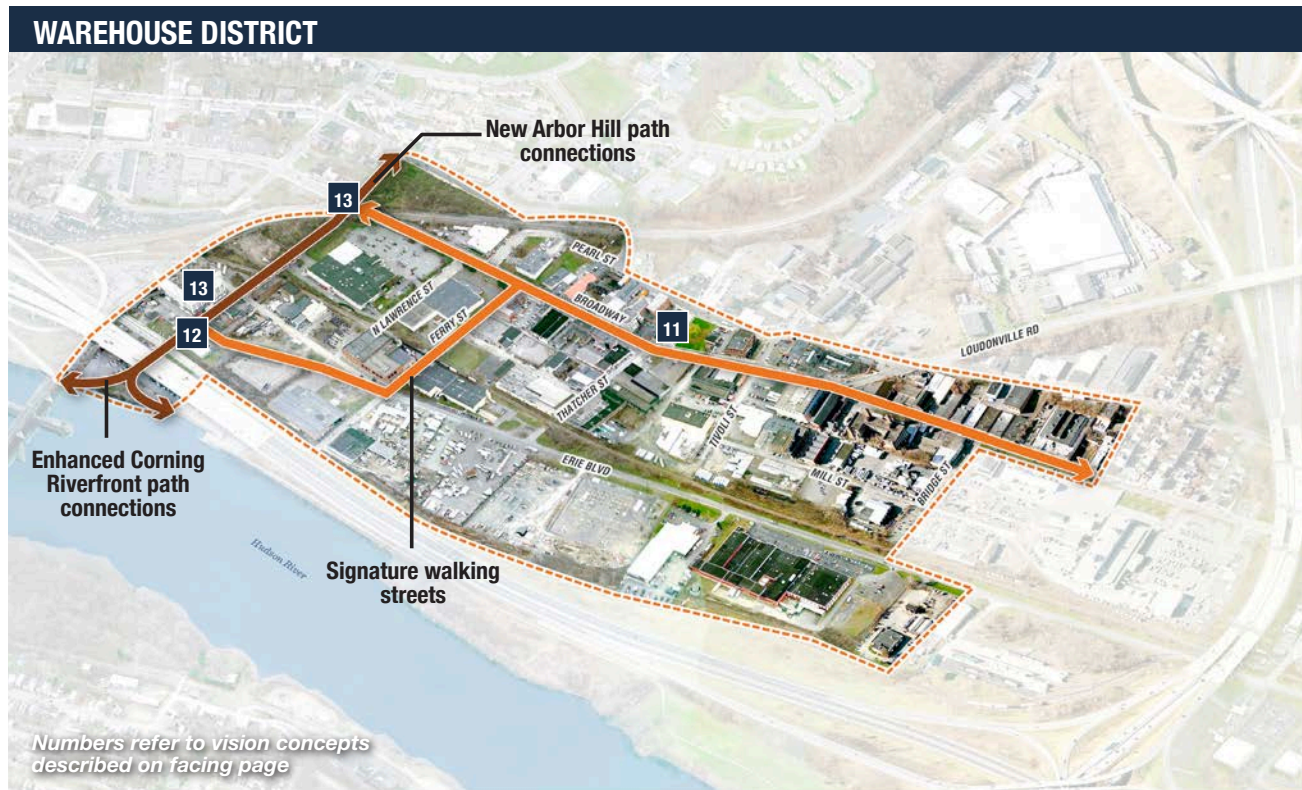
Office use is already present in the Warehouse District. It should remain a priority moving forward, whether located in historic industrial buildings, converted non-historic buildings, or new construction. While office use should also be prioritized in the downtown core, office development in the Warehouse District will generally not be directly competitive with downtown office space and should ultimately reinforce the overall market for office space in downtown, because:

- New-construction office space is more feasible (less expensive, faster and simpler) in the Warehouse District, particularly for the smaller increments of space growth anticipated in the near- to mid-term. Adding state of the art office space at low densities (one to two story buildings with surface parking), will strengthen downtown's office market position overall, while not competing significantly with the higher-density office development that should be pursued, where possible, downtown.
- Traditional downtown areas offer a different set of walkable amenities and proximities than the Warehouse District. Prospective warehouse district tenants will therefore typically be different from those preferring the traditional downtown.

Office development in the Warehouse District will generally not be directly competitive with downtown office space and should ultimately reinforce the overall market for **office space** in downtown.

Retail is present in the Warehouse District in two distinct forms: a collection of wholesale/retail home-improvement, furniture and auto supply businesses along Broadway, and a growing collection of pubs and restaurants emphasizing nightlife and entertainment (a category deliberately relocated from North Pearl Street downtown where it had posed challenges). Live music venues should be encouraged as part of this mix. Regional destination retail, such as an outdoors store or supermarket, would also be an appropriate use as long as the design of the building and site promotes a walkable street network.

Housing, for which there has been significant recent development interest, can be an appropriate use in the Warehouse District if located in walkable areas with little risk of conflict with heavy industrial uses. In the near term, the highest priority location for housing in rehabilitated or new buildings should be within two blocks of Broadway and North Ferry Street, where it will continue to reinforce an emerging sense of neighborhood, help support area retail, and leverage walkability improvements, while avoiding potential conflicts with industrial uses in other locations. Housing is also appropriate near the intersection of Colonie and Erie Streets, where it can take advantage of access to Corning Riverfront Park and river views. However, feasibility of new housing development in this area is likely to be improved by first establishing a greater critical mass of housing along Broadway, where economic feasibility is typically greater. *(Continued on Page 66)*



WAREHOUSE DISTRICT | IMPLEMENTATION PRECEDENT

Somerville, MA manages a mix of light industrial, housing, recreation and artist uses in its Inner Belt/Brickbottom area. The Brickbottom Lofts development converted a former factory building into loft apartments

geared to a mix of artists and other households. A dog park created on abandoned rail right of way has become a well-used destination for city residents as well as workers in adjacent properties

SOMERVILLE, MA



WAREHOUSE DISTRICT | VISION CONCEPTS

- 11** A walkable **mixed-use center** is emerging along Broadway near North Ferry Street, with housing, office space, pubs, and local entrepreneurial light industry.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Install street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting and prominent crosswalks; upgrade sidewalks along Broadway, Ferry and Erie Streets
- Support a regular communications forum among industrial, office, retail and residential users to help manage compatibility of different uses
- Establish a park



- 12** New pathways and artwork **connect Corning Riverfront with the Warehouse District and Arbor Hill**, attracting reinvestment in retail, workplaces and housing.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

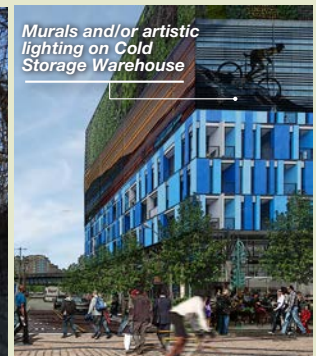
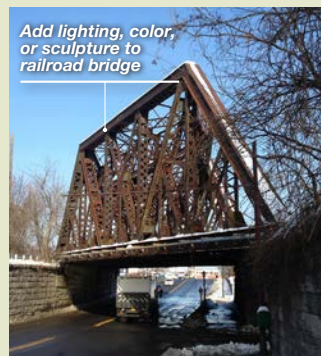
- Extend a recreational path from the Corning Riverfront to Arbor Hill
- Commission artwork to enhance the I-787 overpass at the Corning Riverfront
- Recruit retail and office tenants/developers for whom the Warehouse District's large, flexible sites offer opportunities not available Downtown
- Offer incentives for adaptive reuse of underutilized industrial buildings as housing, retail, office, or light industrial



- 13** Historical relics find a new life as **attractive landmarks** supporting today's market positioning and culture.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Commission artwork to transform the Cold Storage Warehouse, Broadway railroad bridge and/or other prominent structures
- Install signage to identify the district and enhance wayfinding to Downtown and the Corning Riverfront



Much of this appropriate area for housing lies in the C-3 Central Business District zone, generally located south of Ferry Street and east of Erie Street, where housing is permitted. Parcels flanking Broadway north of Ferry Street are in the C-M Light Industrial zone, where housing is not a permitted use. Variances or rezoning permitting housing should be considered on parcels flanking Broadway at least as far north as Bridge Street, to leverage industrial buildings within walking distance of Ferry Street with potential for rehabilitation as housing.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

For the foreseeable future, **surface parking** is expected to be the most cost effective form of parking in the Warehouse District; densities and values do not typically justify structured parking development. The lower cost of surface parking is an important factor making the Warehouse District a feasible location for emerging businesses now. However, surface parking supply is limited and should be augmented and shared to make additional development possible. The City should add **on-street parking** along North Ferry, other streets within two blocks of the intersection of North Ferry and Broadway, and Erie Boulevard, in tandem with intensified development along these corridors. Locate parking to avoid conflicts with established service access, while also seeking opportunity to consolidate service access more efficiently. This will cost-effectively increase supply while enhancing walkability by separating pedestrians from traffic (sidewalks and pedestrian-scale lighting should also be installed where missing). The City should also seek opportunity to provide shared off-street public parking for uses with different peak demands (i.e. housing and restaurants can use spaces used weekdays by employees).

Should high-density development be proposed near the intersection of Colonie Street and Erie Boulevard, consider the feasibility of locating structured parking within the former cold storage warehouse on Colonie and Centre Streets.

PUBLIC REALM

The Warehouse District's four major public realm needs are a network of more **walkable streets**, **prominent gateway signage and/or art** projecting a strong identity, improved **access to the Corning Riverfront**, and improved internal **park and plaza spaces** as mixed-use development intensifies.

- Typical streetscape improvements supporting walkability should include:
 - > New sidewalks where missing
 - > Sidewalk paving improvements where needed, addressing accessibility, broken pavement or other problems
 - > Clearly marked crosswalks at all intersections
 - > Street trees (currently absent in most places except the east side of Broadway between North Ferry and Thacher Streets)
 - > Pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures
 - > On-street parking
- Priority street segments for improvement include:
 - > Broadway, from Tivoli Street south to Clinton Avenue
 - > North Ferry Street
 - > Thacher Street
 - > North Lawrence Street
 - > Learned Street
 - > Pleasant Street
 - > Erie Boulevard
 - > Other streets where new development is occurring
- Broadway improvements should be made as soon as possible, given the significant amount of development already located there, and the street's key roles as the Warehouse District's prime center of identity and walking connection to downtown. Other streets should be improved as development occurs along them.
- Art-inspired gateway elements should be installed to celebrate entrance into the Warehouse District and downtown Albany as a whole, while

turning some of the area's liabilities into assets. Engage local artists and other stakeholders to add creative touches such as sculpture, color, mural painting, nighttime lighting, or other media at these locations:

- > Railroad bridge over Broadway
- > Former cold storage warehouse at Colonie and Centre Streets
- > I-787 viaduct over Colonie Street
- In conjunction with planned and potential Corning Riverfront Park access improvements reaching Colonie Street, improve walking, biking and parking access to the park. Enhance riverfront connections not only to the Warehouse District, but through to Arbor Hill as well.
- Work with Warehouse District stakeholders to establish and improve parks, plazas or other public spaces as needed to serve a growing number of workers, visitors and tourists. The existing city-owned parcel at Pleasant Street and Broadway is well located to serve as a park site. Also consider opportunities for "pop-up" temporary programming in parking lots or other vacant sites when available. Example program opportunities might include food or art festivals, outdoor beer/cider gardens, public art displays or sports/recreation events.

REINVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Real estate

- Development proposals along Broadway compatible with a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented setting

Public realm

- Broadway streetscape improvements promoting walkability
- Gateway art installations promoting district identity
- Corning Riverfront Park multi-use path connection
- Programming of existing city or private parcels with temporary activities

ONGOING REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Real estate

- Rehabilitation of underutilized and/or historic buildings along Broadway
- Adaptive reuse of the former Schaefer brewery at North Ferry Street and Erie Boulevard. Adaptive reuse or demolition of the former cold storage warehouse at Colonie and Centre Streets
- New construction, particularly within two blocks of the intersection of North Ferry Street and Broadway, or along Erie Boulevard/Centre Street between Thatcher and Colonie Streets

Public realm

- New public park/plaza facilities in the Warehouse District.

7. Catalyst initiative sites



The following pages, beginning with a diagram on the page 72 and then describing numbered catalyst sites in detail, highlight a selection of opportunities for rehabilitation and new development that can offer particular value in attracting further investment due to their prominence, scale or other qualities. Among these, some may merit proactive steps by Capitalize Albany or other partners, and support from among the various development incentives identified previously in this document. There are a variety of additional sites with significant reinvestment opportunity that do not deserve proactive efforts by Capitalize Albany to attract investment, but where owner interest in tapping market opportunity through adaptive reuse or new construction should still be especially welcomed.

Redevelopment possibilities shown are informed by housing and office market analysis conducted for Impact Downtown Albany in 2013-2014, which reflect conservative estimates of realistic market interest in the downtown study area. Possible hotel sites and priority retail locations are also identified.

Market opportunity summary

Ten-year market potential for housing can support about 50% more housing units than included on the numbered sites. Thus, a number of additional sites may be able to leverage housing investment.

Ten-year market potential for multi-tenant office space can support all of the coolspace —office space with high ceilings, significant natural light and flexible layouts

conducive to today's collaborative work environments—renovation and about half of the new construction office space total on the numbered sites. This means there is some flexibility in site allocation of this new office space, and that the sites indicated represent a longer-term reserve of office development capacity. Hotel or owner-occupied office development is also appropriate on these sites as an alternative nearer-term use.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 6, **older Class B and C office space offers special opportunity for rehabilitation.** More than 20% of Class B and more than 60% of Class C office space was vacant as of 2014, due in many cases to small floorplates, relatively low ceilings or other physical building characteristics that pose challenges in today's office marketplace but can work well for housing. Much Class B space, which tends to occupy modern buildings needing interior upgrades, offers potential for conversion to "cool space." Much Class C space, which tends to occupy older office buildings with small floorplates and other characteristics unsuitable for current office preferences, offers good potential for conversion to loft housing. Prime examples of such conversion opportunities include 11 North Pearl Street, 90 State Street and 100 State Street; these and similar buildings could supply hundreds more market-supportable housing units adding vibrancy to downtown's core.

Development finance need figures provided for catalyst sites are intended to provide order-of-magnitude guidance only. Specific development proposals or property acquisition actions may determine different figures. Assumptions include:

- Property acquisition costs range \$15-25/sf for new construction and \$25-35/sf for rehabilitation
- New construction finance needs range \$130-175/sf
- Historic tax credits may be available up to \$36/sf (or 40% of construction value).

Similarly, development program figures are estimates and may ultimately vary in a specific project proposal. Sample parking locations are based on an analysis of shared parking opportunities in localized areas of downtown; more detail on this analysis can be found on the Capitalize Albany website.

Market snapshot

See supplemental market study documents at www.capitalizealbany.com.

HOUSING

71% 

of Albany's households contain **one or two persons**—a strong market for downtown living.



73%

of downtown Albany's housing market comes from **outside of Albany**

There is market potential to increase annual housing production **tenfold** over the next ten years.



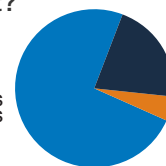
In ten years, downtown could have **1,000 to 2,000** more housing units, representing an investment of **\$150 to \$300 million** or more.



New housing can bring downtown's diverse character to life, with the potential to grow the downtown population from an estimated **1,250 to 3,200**.

Who is the market?

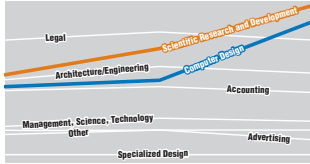
74%
YOUNGER SINGLES
AND COUPLES



21%
EMPTY NESTERS
AND RETIREES

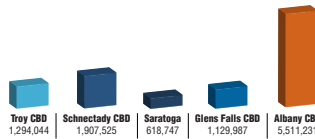
5%
TRADITIONAL AND
NON-TRADITIONAL
FAMILIES

OFFICE



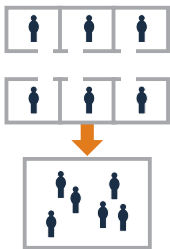
Recent accelerated local job growth in the industry sub-sectors of **Computer Design** and **Science, Research & Development** indicate growth potential in technology-related industries.

Downtown Albany has much **more multi-tenant office space** than other downtowns in the region.



50% of potential market will demand new construction or “Coolspace”—rehabilitated loft space with great architectural qualities.

Downtown offers a growing set of amenities—including **housing, retail, and parks**—important to a downtown workforce and office market.



Dynamics in the office market are changing—energy management and social responsibility are more and more valued by companies, and trends show **less demand for personal office space** and **more for collaborative space**; downtown Albany’s existing office space can accommodate these trends.

RETAIL



Downtown retail opportunity today comes from **targeting a cluster of specific consumer markets**—not the mass-market retail approach of suburban shopping centers or pre-1960 downtowns.

Downtown’s retail mix should be built around **specific consumer personalities**, not a geographic trade area.

The following **factors support retail growth** in downtown Albany:

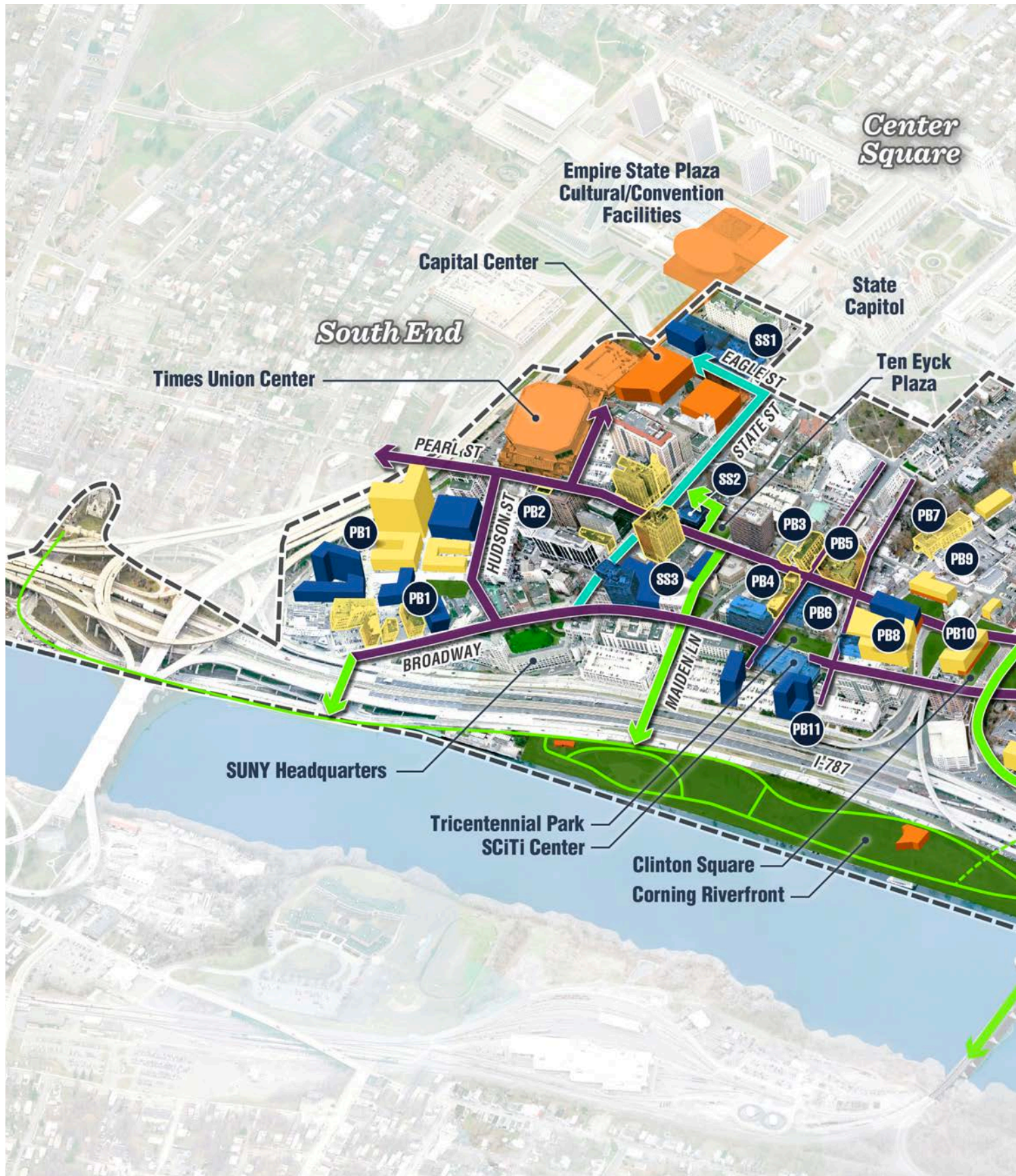
- ▶ Existing destinations
- ▶ Successful businesses
- ▶ Desirable nearby neighborhoods
- ▶ Underplayed points of distinction



Many submarkets are currently underserved, including young professionals, students, residents of adjacent neighborhoods, office workers.

Prime opportunities to add downtown retail include **diversified dining options, boutique/vintage clothing, and outdoor/adventure gear.**





Downtown Albany catalytic investment sites

Sites highlighted here represent some of the most promising potential opportunities for property rehabilitation and development in downtown. However, this designation is not meant to discourage investment interest in other downtown properties, nor to require investment or changes to highlighted properties. Labeled properties deserve special attention as places where reinvestment could bring particularly strong benefits, and are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

This map differentiates rehabilitation opportunities (transparent color tone) from new construction opportunities (solid color tone). A near-term focus on rehabilitation projects is encouraged owing to their typically greater economic feasibility and more visible vacancy. At the same time, new construction for certain projects and sites is expected to be feasible in the near term, and proactive efforts to secure site control for new construction projects may be justified in order to optimize development opportunity.

LEGEND

NEW REHAB

Office, research or other appropriate work space

Activity destination*

Housing

Parks and pathways

Pearl/Broadway signature streetscape

State St/Capitol Walk signature streetscape

Riverfront corridors signature streetscape/pathways

Warehouse district signature streetscape

* Selected new and enhanced convention, hotel, cultural and retail facilities



State Street: *Downtown's iconic center*



146 State Street; 20 Park Street

These parcels have special prominence along State and Eagle Streets opposite the State Capitol building and imminent development of the Capital Center conference facility and Renaissance Hotel. Existing buildings edge State Street and most of Eagle Street, with new building construction possible on Eagle opposite the Capital Center. Encourage conversion of ground floor office space and opaque walls to active, transparent storefronts with retail, dining and/or a potentially relocated Albany Visitors' Center. Consider opportunity to provide a "front door" to the Empire State Plaza art collection on these prominent sites, with a ground floor gallery space, information center or window displays. Existing office space offers opportunity for strategic tenancing with any business seeking a highly prominent location or a 5-minute walk to Empire State Plaza.

	PROGRAM	PARKING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office sf: approx. 300,000sf in two buildings Retail sf: 5,000 	N/A (already available)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$80,000–\$130,000 (retail conversion only)	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$650,000–\$880,000 (retail conversion only)



10 North Pearl (UDAG)

This EDC-owned building at the prominent corner of State and Pearl Streets offers a prime opportunity to expand SUNY's presence downtown with office space consolidated from other locations into currently vacant office space. The SUNY presence can feature signage highlighting Start-Up NY. Building renovations should include activating Ten Eyck Park by replacing opaque windows with transparent ones, and enhancing State Street with attractive signage and sidewalk programming. Ideally, a comprehensive façade replacement or rehabilitation should be undertaken to accomplish these goals.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Rehab: Office with potential tech industry or research/innovation emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office sf: 32,500 Retail sf: 5,500 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 98 Location: Existing parking at Lodge/Pine garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
SUNY Construction Fund, Regional Economic Development Council, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): N/A	Development finance (order of magnitude): N/A



Parking lots adjacent to 41 State Street

State Street's only undeveloped site between Broadway and the State Capitol building, this site offers a prominent address with proximity to the SCiTI Center as well as state offices. This makes it a highly desirable address for new office space development; housing or hotel would also make acceptable alternative uses. The site should include retail space along State Street, behind which it can also accommodate two levels of parking (site dimensions make additional parking challenging). Design should be sensitive to the adjacent historic building at State and James Streets, and to existing windows on adjacent 41 State Street.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New office or research on existing parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office sf: 75,000 Retail sf: 5,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 207 Location: 100 spaces on-site on 2 levels; existing Riverfront or Green-Hudson Garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund, New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$2,000,000–\$2,800,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$9,000,000–\$13,500,000

Pearl and Broadway: Downtown's live/work/play/learn dynamic



Liberty Park/Hudson/ Green redevelopment (former Convention Center site)

Downtown's largest development opportunity, this site should be thoughtfully leveraged to maximize its impact on downtown and the region. Its size enables a large critical mass of new development to reinforce downtown's market position for office, housing and/or other use. Due to current economic challenges of new construction, redevelopment may most feasibly be conducted in phases after significant adaptive reuse has occurred on other downtown sites to raise downtown rental rates. Proactive efforts should be taken with the State and other stakeholders to introduce criteria for land use, density and design to guide redevelopment.

	PROGRAM	PARKING
New construction; Partner with OGS on developer RFP; assist with strategic land acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 550 Office sf: 80,000 Retail sf: 20,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 916 Location: New on-site structures; interim surface parking for early phases
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$0–\$14,100,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$91,650,000–\$123,380,000



40-48 South Pearl

Reoccupancy of this partially vacant property would significantly benefit South Pearl Street in a prominent location opposite the Times Union Center. Due to moderate property size, adaptive reuse may benefit from aggregation with other properties to enable use of Historic Tax Credits. For instance, the property could be bundled with acquisition and redevelopment of 60 South Pearl.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Housing adaptive re-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 14 Retail sf: 8,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 36 Location: Existing Green-Hudson garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, Property acquisition fund, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$590,000–\$820,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$840,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



52-54 North Pearl

Reoccupancy of this vacant property would benefit North Pearl Street in a prominent location. Due to small property size, adaptive reuse would benefit from aggregation with other properties (such as the nearby 61 North Pearl) to make use of Historic Tax Credits practical.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Housing adaptive re-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 5 Retail sf: 2,600 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 12 Location: Existing parking at Lodge/Pine garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, Property acquisition fund, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$200,000–\$280,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$230,000–\$350,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



59 N Pearl (former Jillian's)

This building, formerly occupied by the Jillian's entertainment facility on North Pearl Street, includes a large floorplate with retail frontage on Pearl as well as smaller upper floors. A lower floor facing James Street and Steuben Place offers entrance and signage potential facing Tricentennial Park and the SCiTI Center. The building is suitable for renovation for housing and/or office space with retail facing North Pearl Street. Due to moderate property size, adaptive reuse may benefit from aggregation with other properties (such as 52-54 North Pearl Street) to enable use of Historic Tax Credits.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Rehab as housing or office with retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 30 Retail sf: 10,600 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 61 Location: Existing Riverfront garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,090,000–\$1,530,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$1,256,000–\$1,884,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



Kenmore Hotel/Steuben adaptive reuse

This building ensemble interrupts North Pearl Street's strongest retail hub with prominent vacant or underutilized retail and upper floor space. Rehabilitation and tenancing with housing over retail would have a significant positive impact on this critical North Pearl Street retail cluster by bringing more residents to downtown core. The owner has proposed a rehabilitation concept including housing, retail and fitness facilities. Parking can be provided in the parking structure on North Pearl Street that is currently under common ownership, or on alternative sites within two blocks.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Adaptive reuse: housing; revive ground floor retail/active uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 50 Retail sf: 10,100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 84 Location: Existing Columbia/Pearl block parking (near-term); new North Pearl/Sheridan area structure (long-term)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Historic tax credits; Property acquisition fund, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,630,000–\$2,280,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$2,340,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



67 North Pearl

This vacant office and retail building on North Pearl Street offers a strategic location for office “cool space” given its flexible, modern floorplates and proximity to the SCiTI Center. Capitalize Albany Corporation could help facilitate co-tenancy with tech incubator, “makerspace” and/or other uses. Rear frontage on James Street at Tricentennial Park offers potential for additional entrance and/or signage oriented to the SCiTI Center. Retail frontage on North Pearl Street offers one of the larger retail footprints available downtown. A façade upgrade and targeted interior renovations could effectively reposition this space for tech businesses and retail.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Façade rehab and retail/office/“makerspace” retency; windows/doors on Tricentennial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office sf: 33,400 Retail sf: 8,800 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 108 Location: Existing Riverfront garage, potential parking in basement, existing Columbia/Pearl block parking (near-term); new North Pearl/Sheridan area structure (long-term)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,060,000–\$1,480,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$1,520,000



16 Sheridan Avenue

This former newspaper building offers one of downtown’s most promising opportunities for conversion to downtown residential lofts, owing to its industrial-scale windows, ceiling heights and framing, adjacency to other downtown housing, and large size conducive to use of historic tax credits. Office or other commercial uses could also be possible in this building.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Adaptive reuse for housing and/or office/commercial space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 90 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 108 Location: Existing OGS Sheridan/Hawk garage; existing County Columbia St garage; existing Columbia/Pearl block parking (near-term); new North Pearl/Sheridan area structure (long-term)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$2,480,000–\$3,470,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$2,848,000–\$4,272,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



“Cap Rep” block (Columbia/Pearl)

This block includes historic buildings with viable retail and office space that should remain, as well as other office, parking and Capital Repertory Theatre (Cap Rep) space that should be replaced with upgraded facilities. The block’s relatively large size makes it a strategically important location for an expanded amount of shared-use public parking serving growing amounts of housing, retail and office space in downtown’s core. Any redevelopment should create new, improved space for the Cap Rep on the block or another suitable location nearby. New development should include state-of-the-art office space leveraging proximity to the SCiTI Center tech hub, as well as new housing to the extent economically feasible. Enhance the site’s prominent and unattractive North Pearl Street & Van Tromp Street frontage by replacing existing parking facilities with occupied spaces wrapping internal parking.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction housing, retail, theater, parking structure; rehab of existing office building. Theater costs not included in funding figures below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 100 Office sf: 11,000 Retail sf: 29,700 Theater sf: 15,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 220 Location: New structure on-site or in North Pearl/Sheridan area, on-site structure (including 84 additional spaces for Kenmore/Steuben block)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; Development finance fund, tax abatement bonding capacity for public parking	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$2,260,000–\$3,770,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$19,590,000–26,370,000 (building only); Anticipated parking structure, approximately \$13,000,000



First Church in Albany lot

This site, currently a privately-managed parking lot available to the public, offers a prime infill development site along North Pearl Street enhanced by a concentration of restaurants and shops, Capital Repertory Theater, Palace Theater, Hampton Inn Hotel, and downtown’s largest cluster of market rate housing. Development should enhance walkability along adjacent North Pearl and Chapel Streets and Sheridan Avenue with frequent windows and doors, and ground floor retail facing North Pearl Street. A compact public plaza along North Pearl Street and/or Sheridan Avenue would provide valuable opportunity for outdoor dining, other public activity and green space along this vibrant stretch of North Pearl Street. In the near term prior to redevelopment, lighting, landscaping and management should be improved to enhance walkability of adjacent streets.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction; Redevelop with mixed housing, retail, public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 50 Retail sf: 4,800 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 72 Location: Small on-site structure, or existing Columbia/Pearl block parking (near-term); new North Pearl/Sheridan area structure (long-term)
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$900,000–\$1,500,000	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$900,000–\$1,500,000



Clinton Square development

New retail and/or housing development on portions of this underutilized park would connect downtown's strongest retail/dining concentrations at Quackenbush Square and North Pearl Street. It would restore the form and activity of historic Clinton Square, creating connections between downtown, Arbor Hill, the Warehouse District and Corning Riverfront Park. Avoid net loss of park space by removing the Van Tromp Street loop ramp (traffic destined for I-787 can still access the highway via North Pearl or Orange Streets), and creating park space in the area bounded by Van Tromp Street, Pearl Street, Broadway and I-787 on-ramp.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction; mixed-use development on DOT land between Clinton and 787 Clinton off-ramp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing units: 90 • Retail sf: 17,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand: 149 • Location: On-site, terraced under building; additional parking in existing Quackenbush Garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$0–\$2,320,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$15,080,000–\$20,300,000



Riverfront Garage

Office or hotel use in a tall building (over 3 stories) would leverage this site's strategic location adjacent to the SCiTI center and with excellent upper story views to the Hudson River. Portions of the existing Riverfront Garage may be removed and/or expanded to accommodate new development and parking needs. Potential to utilize available parking capacity at Park Albany's nearby Quackenbush Garage as well.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Office or hotel new construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel rooms: 140 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand: 168 • Location: Existing Riverfront and/or Quackenbush Garage
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,470,000–\$2,450,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$12,740,000–\$17,150,000



Quackenbush Square

Quackenbush Square has capacity to augment the successful retail and office space already on site with a significant amount of additional office, research, housing, hotel or retail space. Program options are flexible, and can realistically include two primary uses in addition to retail. The site benefits from excellent access and visibility from I-787, proximity to downtown's major dining and cultural venues, and surplus parking capacity in the adjacent Quackenbush Garage. New investment on the site will help reinforce the connection along Broadway between downtown and additional Warehouse District redevelopment occurring to the north.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction office, research, housing, hotel and/or retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 120 Office sq: 60,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 300 Location: Surface and structured on same parcel; existing Quackenbush Garage.
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
New Markets Tax Credits, Brownfields Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$4,800,000–\$6,720,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$24,960,000–\$33,600,000



760 Broadway

Potential new construction housing, with parking on surface or tucked below building. Primary building façade should line Broadway to promote walkability along this important connection between Clinton Square and the Warehouse District.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Housing new construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 120 Location: Surface on same parcel
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,650,000–\$2,750,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$14,300,000–\$19,250,000



747 Broadway (current US Post Office)

If the current US Postal Service use leaves this site, new construction housing or office space would be appropriate on this site, with parking on surface or tucked below building. Primary building façade should line Broadway to promote walkability along this important connection between Clinton Square and the Warehouse District.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Housing new construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 85 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 102 Location: Surface on same parcel
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,400,000–\$2,340,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$12,160,000–\$16,360,000

Warehouse District: *Downtown's new frontier*



Cold Storage Warehouse

This large, prominent landmark, easily visible and accessible from I-787, has been vacant since a fire decades ago. Three-foot thick concrete walls may pose cost challenges for either rehabilitation (if windows are installed) or demolition; one development proposal yielded a feasible housing renovation if parking costs are excluded. The building's large floorplates (approx. 54,000sf) are more suitable for retail or light industrial uses than housing or office space, unless light wells are introduced among at least some of the structure's 12 stories, and its vast floor area would take time to fill with any use. In light of these potential strengths and challenges, several reinvestment scenarios are possible, including 1) rehab and occupy one or more of the five lower floors having existing windows with retail, light industrial or other use, potentially including associated parking; paint attractive mural on upper blank walls; 2) rehab a portion of upper and lower floors for housing and/or "cool-space" office/research/studio lofts, introducing a courtyard to create a U- or O-shaped floor plan, featuring views to the Hudson River, and incorporating parking on lower floor(s); or 3) demolish structure (possibly reserving some floors as a parking structure serving area parcels) and build new retail, housing or office/research space.

	PROGRAM	PARKING
Scenario for rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 180 Retail sf: 50,000 Office/research/studio "cool-space" sf: 50,000 	Demand: up to approx. 450 Location: In lower floors of building (potentially 140 spaces per level if access ramp built along Montgomery Street), on-street
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Resources: Property Acquisition Fund, Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$7,450,000- \$10,430,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$10,730,000



1 Erie Boulevard, Warehouse District

This vacant lot offers potential for one- or two-story new construction office or research space with surface parking, which is likely to be economically feasible under current market conditions while higher-density office construction faces greater feasibility challenges. New building design should improve the walkability of Erie Boulevard—and marketability of the site—by meeting a build-to line along the street and making the façade at least 50% transparent. Street infrastructure improvements enhancing walkability (sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting) and on-street parking capacity would provide important support for this project.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction office or research	• Office sf: 50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand: 130 • Location: Surface, on-site and/or on-street
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$750,000–\$1,250,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$6,500,000–\$8,750,000



8 Erie Boulevard, Warehouse District

This former warehouse offers opportunity for office “cool space” with funding assistance from historic tax credits. Its significant size (up to 136,000sf available) and prominence at the corner of Erie Boulevard and North Ferry Street, visible from I-787, would help connect ongoing property reinvestment along the Warehouse District’s Broadway Corridor to Erie Boulevard and the Corning Riverfront Park. Street infrastructure improvements enhancing walkability (sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting) and on-street parking capacity would provide important support for this project. Sample 50,000sf office space area assumes an additional 80,000sf of ground level interior space is utilized for on-site parking; additional office space is possible if less space is used for parking.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Adaptive reuse for office (former Schaefer Brewery)	• Office sf: 50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand: 130 • Location:
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,250,000–\$1,750,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$1,800,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



Ferry and Learned Streets, Warehouse District

This vacant lot offers potential for one- or two-story new construction office or research space with surface parking, which is likely to be economically feasible under current market conditions while higher-density office construction faces greater feasibility challenges. New building design should improve the walkability of Ferry Street—and marketability of the site—by meeting a build-to line along the street and making the façade at least 50% transparent. Street infrastructure improvements enhancing walkability (sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting) and on-street parking capacity would provide important support for this project.

PROGRAM		PARKING
New construction office or research	• Office sf: 50,000	• Demand: 130 • Location: Surface, on-site and/or on-street
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund, New Markets Tax Credits, Development finance fund, tax abatement	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$750,000–\$1,250,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$6,500,000–\$8,750,000



960 Broadway, Warehouse District

This former factory building has drawn interest by its owner and the Preservation League of New York in adaptive reuse for residential lofts and ground floor retail. Its prominence on Broadway near other buildings converted from industrial to office, residential and retail use can significantly reinforce this emerging mixed-use center in the Warehouse District.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Adaptive reuse for housing and retail	• Housing units: 50 • Retail sf: 3,000	• Demand: 67 • Location: Surface, on-site and/or on-street
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property acquisition fund; Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$1,450,000–\$2,030,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$2,090,000 (Historic tax credit potential)



Nipper Sites

991 Broadway, the main building in this suite of 3 industrial buildings, is prominently located (with a landmark RCA Victor dog sculpture on its roof) near Broadway's cluster of pubs, rehab office space and brewing facilities in the Warehouse District. Its upper floors are well suited for rehabilitation as loft housing or office space, and its broad ground floor is well suited for office, research and/or retail use. Surface parking on the main site and/or associated sites nearby could satisfy parking needs. Existing light industrial buildings at 7 Tivoli and 9 Manor Streets may be best utilized for additional light industrial, office and/or research uses. Street infrastructure improvements enhancing walkability (sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting) and on-street parking capacity, along Broadway in particular, would provide important support for this project.

PROGRAM		PARKING
Scenario for rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing units: 180 Retail sf: 50,000 Office/research/studio "coolspace"sf: 50,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand: 211 Location: Surface on-site (multiple sites); on-street
RESOURCES	POTENTIAL RESOURCE GAP	
Property Acquisition Fund, Historic Tax Credits, tax abatement, façade grants	Property acquisition (order of magnitude): \$3,150,000-\$3,975,000	Development finance (order of magnitude): \$4,530,000

8. Branding, recruitment and buzz



As important as the right economic and physical conditions are to downtown revitalization, they depend upon community excitement about downtown to have real impact. Downtown offers exceptional opportunities for prospective businesses, residents, workers, visitors and students to come and pursue their own interests through experience and investment. Yet because downtown's cultural and economic roles have ebbed and re-emerged over the past several decades, its assets are unknown to many people. It is thus critical to communicate downtown's exceptional opportunities to attract people and businesses to participate in them.

This chapter describes how to do so in two important spheres: branding and retail. As downtown takes on new roles it has not had in decades, branding is vital to express all it has to offer. The **creative brand brief** outlined on pages 93-94 provides a launching point to create a more specific downtown brand coordinated with the marketing of the City of Albany and Capital Region. In parallel, the free market struggles to take full advantage of the growing retail opportunity possible downtown. This chapter outlines proactive efforts, with proven results in many other downtowns, that will restore downtown's **competitive retail market position**, bringing new choices and vibrancy that will in turn strongly advance downtown's competitiveness as a place to live, work and visit.

Branding Research and Creative Brief

CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Downtown Albany is rich with assets and opportunities on which to build a compelling brand. As a vital part of the Albany community, it is dependent upon and impacted by the regard internal and external audiences have about the entire city. Many communities will initiate their branding efforts in a particular sector or area of the community. Downtown presents this opportunity for the City of Albany. Many of the key assets for the broader community have or will have a presence Downtown. Starting in a smaller area of focus allows the City to maximize resources for a greater result (higher density of activity and buzz). This can then spread across the community, developing into a cohesive and compelling community-wide brand. Additional research and analysis is warranted both for Downtown and the broader community to sharpen the competitive advantage, but the Creative Brief that follows will illuminate a possible direction for the Downtown (and subsequent citywide) brand. The strategic direction should be confirmed through additional research on behalf of Downtown and the City of Albany.

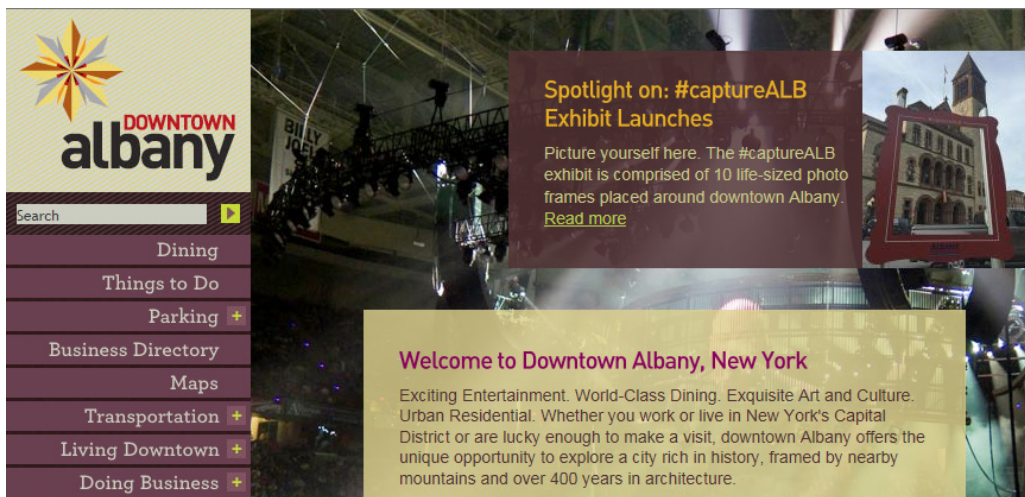
As demonstrated earlier in this document, Downtown Albany has many assets as a place to live, work, and innovate. With nanotechnology, additional intersections of higher education and industrial technologies, and the new SCiTI Center presence downtown, Albany is gaining the reputation as a tech hub and “smart” city. This is a compelling point of difference for Downtown. Together with Downtown’s quality of life advantages appealing to young professionals and empty nesters that make up the Creative Class, this forms a complement that will attract interest and provide a foundation from which to promote Downtown’s diverse offering.

Research on the Creative Class segment reveals that its members consistently crave the following qualities and make decisions about living spaces accordingly. They seek:

- Diverse, compact neighborhoods for living and discovery
- Acceptance and tolerance of differences (Creative Class often are or have been outsiders)
- Authenticity. Environments and lifestyles not manufactured
- Flexibility. Third spaces to extend work, collaborate, and socialize (on own timeframe)
- Density of corporations and jobs
- Independence: ability to go down the street and find another job
- Reliable, convenient public transportation
- WiFi that flows like water
- Walkable, safe city
- Green spaces

So how does Downtown Albany deliver on these? Focus group discussions were held, and current planning and marketing documents reviewed, to gain a preliminary assessment of downtown’s perceived strengths and challenges. While Downtown vacancies have been described as missing teeth, there is a growing density of nanotechnology and other emerging technologies here. Density of opportunity and finding jobs downtown deserve additional focus and effort. Some higher education institutions have a presence downtown, but there needs to be more activity and foot traffic. Classroom instruction in art, entrepreneurship, or applied engineering should consider spaces downtown.

While one should only build a brand around assets and advantages (never building it on something negative), research often reveals some challenges for a place. Downtown Albany is no different. In fact, focus group conversations highlighted far more challenges than assets. This confirms the self-esteem problem many stakeholders discussed. Residents and leaders in Albany are very critical of a lack of progress even though extensive efforts have been invested to enhance downtown, with visible results. Locals need reasons to believe that their Downtown is fun, interesting, and safe even if just for an afternoon. Their comments will impact any



Marketing messages from the websites of Capitalize Albany Corporation and the Albany Downtown Business Improvement District

prospect or visitor. The brand should work towards cultivating enthusiastic ambassadors.

Marketing materials and efforts are disjointed and not cohesive. They do not even seem like they are describing the same place. This reveals the need for a primary strategic direction and a cohesive narrative that articulates that competitive advantage for Downtown and Albany. And it begs for cooperation and collaboration between entities. Audiences don't care about boundaries and turf wars. They expect one Downtown Albany and one Albany. They do not want their gathering of information or their experience interrupted by politics between assets and organizations. Smooth, easy, and enjoyable are their priorities. Downtown's brand needs to deliver that.

Downtown Albany has great momentum going for it with residential demand, the smart cities initiatives

(SCiTI), the commercialization of ideas coming from university researchers and entrepreneurs, and creative retail entrepreneurs. More people need to be aware of these advantages and experience Downtown. Currently, there is no cohesive voice for Downtown or even Albany's narrative. Some of the challenges listed above will dissipate with some easy cooperation and dedication to community (Downtown) goals of growth and improvement. People are weary of previous attempts. This effort will require teeth and commitment from leaders and partners. Much of the success of Downtown's brand regardless of message will be the structure, energy, and resources that can be devoted to the brand and its implementation.

The Next Steps identified on the next page, and Creative Brief proposed on pages 93-94, frame a recommended approach to branding downtown Albany.

NEXT STEPS FOR BRANDING DOWNTOWN

Downtown Albany has a brand today. It may not be exactly what stakeholders would choose or be as far reaching as they hope, but the area has a brand today in the minds of residents and consumers. North Star, the branding consultant for the Impact Downtown planning process, explains that “your brand is what people say about you when you are not around, and branding is what you do about it.” So if people are not saying the right things about you or not speaking about you often enough or at all, then there is a need to work on branding the area and articulating the advantages.

Some concerns have been voiced about waiting to pursue branding until more things are improved or added to the Downtown offering. Uncovering your competitive advantage through comprehensive research will reveal an authentic, compelling strategic positioning based on facts and assets today. Your branding strategy will last a significant number of years and can evolve and be enhanced by new asset development or improvements to Downtown, but the core of your competitive advantage will not likely change dramatically. You are most likely going to draw new assets in line with your current and impending advantages. So it makes sense to uncover your advantages today and develop branding implementation strategies that elevate Downtown Albany in conversations among residents, prospects, and visitors. There is no reason to wait.

It is important to remember that boundaries matter only to those who draw them, so be sure that boundaries do not interrupt your consumers’ experiences. And as you pursue branding, remember that there is no finish line. You have to continue to evaluate your brand through research and always innovate in how people connect with your place by engaging all stakeholders and partners. The goal is for people to emotionally connect with Downtown Albany and then talk about the great experience.

Often downtowns are at the core of the perceived brand of an entire city or town. That is no different for Downtown Albany. In fact, Downtown Albany is at the core of the Albany brand and therefore the brand of the state capital of New York. Downtown

Albany is in a great position with numerous advantages to be told. And through initial research, it appears that many of the key assets for Albany (as a whole) have or will soon have a presence Downtown. So there is a great opportunity for the entire city to partner with Downtown on research and branding. Some communities will implement a brand in a tighter area before putting it to work community-wide. It usually makes engagement more organic and the process can avoid political speed bumps, all while maximizing resources. People get to see it in use and then want to be part of the success. It will gain momentum from Downtown outward into the all of Albany.

Creative Brief



Objective

Provide Downtown Albany partners brand elements including a brand narrative that articulates the strategic advantages of being downtown to residents, business, and visitors.

Target Audience

Downtown Albany has three primary targets with whom it should communicate:

1 Albany residents: *to encourage them to revisit Downtown for an event or social outing which can dispel some misconceptions about the downtown experience leading to greater pride and vocal ambassadors (“there is more to do than I thought” or “it really is safe” or “wow this is beautiful”).*

2 Creative class and entrepreneurs *(including recent graduates/scientists from area universities) seeking to remain near, but not in New York City for economic reasons and promotion purposes (bigger fish in smaller pond gets more attention): to live AND work downtown.*

3 Technology companies and entrepreneurs *particularly in nanotechnology and emerging smart cities technologies: to be part of the density of talent, discovery, and application of ideas in Albany.*

Note: Within these segments Downtown Albany will have significant appeal to 20-somethings and 50-somethings (empty nesters) who value unencumbered lifestyles and will spend disposable income for these pursuits and environments.

Competition

- **Schenectady** and **Troy** in the immediate area (for those having chosen to remain or locate in the Capital Region)
- **Austin, TX** and **Rt. 128 in Boston** for technology companies and talent

Messaging

Primary Benefit: *What do I get by being here?*

Comparatively affordable urban environment with proximity and access to policymakers, artists, inventors, scientists, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders (more direct access than the crowds and chaos of larger metros), a smaller footprint that brings more light to my ideas and interests.

Emotional Benefit: *What do I like about being here?*

Living in stunning architecture and walking to work. Being surrounded by thinkers and doers who share my interests in particular technologies and solutions with whom I can collaborate and relax. Belonging within one of the world's emerging technologies centers. Gaining credibility in nanotechnology pursuits by mere mention of connections with SUNY Poly, Albany, or SCiTI. Enjoying an active lifestyle amidst art, architecture, and natural beauty.

Consumer Takeaway: *What we want people to realize.*

"I get to create my future in a building that is hundreds of years old."

"My neighbors created devices and protocols that have saved millions of lives."

"We are changing the ways cities work. Smarter. Better. Cheaper."

"I share an address with one of the greatest collections of modern art and 400 years of American history."

"The world's thought leaders in my profession are just outside my door."

"I get more attention here. I am not lost in the crowd of chaos."

"Nanotechnology brought me here. My Downtown urban lifestyle keeps me here."

"Have you seen inside these buildings? You could never afford this in the City."

"I go to NYC when I have to. I usually don't have to."

"It's urban here; but on my terms."

Tone:

- > Accessible
- > Historic yet modern
- > Sharp and focused
- > Clean with significant negative (white) space, but not clinical
- > Personal
- > Collaborative

Creative Considerations

- **Celebrate small as the next big thing:** whether nanotechnology; or the small/few steps to policymakers, influencers, and collaborators or the small shifts that can make Downtown and Albany one of the smartest cities in the world; or the small environmental footprint of living Downtown and walking to work. This would reframe the Smallbany nickname and allow graphic creativity with small print, etc. Small can be a major attractor. It is a nice contrast to the Big Apple and appealing to a certain group. Small allows you to categorize many assets and benefits.
- Austin and other **world leading tech hubs associate Albany with nanotechnology.** The general public is becoming aware. Downtown should be at the center of this reputation for technologies in Albany.

Mandatories

- Creativity that takes risks and breaks through clutter.
- Bold and vibrant color palette.
- Sharp, brief copy.
- Intuitive and convenient.
- Imagery showcasing collaboration and activity.

Retail recruitment

Analysis of downtown's retail market potential revealed substantial opportunity to expand the hours of existing retail businesses and add more retail space. Up to 100,000sf or more of additional retail space may be justified over a ten-year period through a combination of adding demand from additional downtown residents, workers and visitors, and capturing more of overall retail demand by making retail more accessible and better targeted to available consumers. This amount of retail is more than enough to transform prominent vacant or dark storefronts into active retail businesses, many open evenings and weekends as well as weekdays. It also is enough to add important new choices like a small grocery store and some comparison shopping.

Achieving this retail potential, however, requires proactive effort. Like many downtowns, Albany's presents some challenges to retail tenancing: retail spaces and ownership patterns that are more fragmented or complex than the conventional suburban-minded retail industry may want to consider; greater potential level of business risk associated with "pioneer" business locations in a downtown that is still re-emerging as a center for dining and shopping; and the need for ongoing growth in downtown's residential population as a critical market. These challenges prevent the free market from achieving downtown's full retail potential on its own. All these challenges will be overcome—downtown has unique assets that help make it competitive again as a retail center in an era with renewed appreciation for walkable, mixed-use districts—but this will happen faster and more effectively as a result of the following initiatives.

Priority retail initiatives fall into these categories, described in greater detail below:

1. **Improve convenience and perceived safety of walking**
2. Continue to **expand downtown's residential base**
3. **Reduce financial and permitting barriers** to establishing and running downtown businesses
4. **Fund proactive retail recruitment and tenancing**
5. **Nurture a unique retail mix** specifically attuned to downtown's market

IMPROVE CONVENIENCE AND PERCEIVED SAFETY OF PUBLIC REALM TO IMPROVE WALKABILITY

Part of downtown's unique retail market position is its location in a walkable environment. This environment makes it easy to arrive by car and park in one place—or arrive by transit, bike, or on foot from an adjoining neighborhood—and enjoy easy access to multiple retail destinations as well as other workplace, visitor and residential destinations. A successful walkable environment depends on good, pedestrian-oriented design of public spaces and buildings. It also depends on building uses that provide occupied, active ground floors that help keep sidewalks safe, and that have sufficient occupant density to supply many pedestrians. Even for retail uses best located in peripheral locations with good highway access—such as grocery or outdoor sporting goods—should also have safe, convenient walking connections from their front door to parking and surrounding streets.

As described in Chapter 6, design and land use approaches that will do the most to enhance this walkable, mixed-use environment should be prioritized.

EXPAND DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL BASE

Each new downtown resident will do more to expand downtown residential opportunity than each new downtown worker or visitor, because residents on average spend more on retail per day than do workers and visitors, and the times they desire retail extend into evening and weekend hours. While efforts to expand downtown's worker and visitor population are important and valuable, efforts to expand housing deserve higher emphasis due to its greater impact.

Earlier chapters of the Downtown Playbook outline a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing downtown's residential population.

REDUCE FINANCIAL AND PERMITTING BARRIERS

The upfront dollar and time costs of establishing or expanding a business pose real hurdles to small businesses. While they may not be prohibitive, they can be enough to push a business owner to select a different downtown or suburban location where the



Filling prominent vacant downtown storefronts with new retail businesses has an outsize positive impact on downtown's image, not just as a place for shopping, but also for working and living.

barriers are lower. The following steps will make downtown Albany an easier place to invest in retail:

- Continue and expand “pop-up” retail programming, such as the “Pop-Place” event that transformed Tricentennial park into a center of emerging retail in September 2014. Pop-up retail, involving temporary placement of retail in a storefront or mobile outdoor structure, offers a low-cost means for business owners to set up operations and be noticed. It similarly offers owners of vacant retail space a low-risk opportunity to test and demonstrate the appeal of their location, which can also benefit marketability of upper-floor residential or office space. Pop-up retail should be employed in particular to meet the significant, but intermittent, retail demand from visitors to the Capital Center. Retail choices are important to marketability of the Capital Center for conventions and other events, yet the periodic nature of those events make it hard for downtown’s permanent retail businesses to satisfy them. A dedicated interior space for pop-up retail adjacent to the Capital Center, supplemented by vendors based in food trucks or other mobile structures, would help both the Capital Center and downtown’s overall retail base.
- Provide financial assistance for tenant fit-out, using means as described in Chapter 5. Focus assistance on physical improvements such as kitchens, mechanical systems or storefronts that

can provide ongoing value even if the initial retail tenant does not last.

- Simplify and speed the permitting process for retail businesses and spaces. In some cases, vacant retail spaces depend on upgrades to be leasable again; ensure building owners are able to receive approvals for renovations in a timely manner. Make it easy for restaurants to add outdoor dining as long as it does not block primary sidewalk circulation areas.

FUND PROACTIVE RETAIL RECRUITMENT AND TENANTING

Downtowns need a more proactive approach to retail recruitment and tenancing than do suburbs because space is more varied, and the market less conditioned to search for downtown space. The conventional commission-based structure by which retail brokers earn revenue favors the recruitment approach typically taken in leasing suburban retail, amounting to little more than placing a space-available sign in a window, and having the patience to await a high-paying tenant. This has disadvantages for re-emerging downtowns like Albany—vacant spaces stay vacant longer, and brokers seek tenants like those already present rather than seeking the creative new businesses and mixes that would better secure downtown’s market position.

In addition, the multiple property ownerships present downtown—typically each utilizing their own broker—prevent the organized approach to gathering groupings of complementary retail that works well in single-owner shopping centers. Downtown retail adjacencies thus tend to be ad-hoc, adding challenge to tenant recruitment and sustainability.

Finding experienced retail brokers in a re-emerging downtown like Albany’s can also be difficult, as many brokers tend to focus on other areas with more conventional retail, addressing downtown only as a sideline.

Many downtown organizations across North America have successfully addressed these challenges and created thriving retail environments by employing a salaried, full-time position dedicated solely or at least partly to retail recruitment. This

POP-UP RETAIL PRECEDENT**TN BREWERY UNTAPPED** | MEMPHIS, TN

Every Thursday through Sunday for six weeks in April, May, and June of 2014, the long-abandoned Tennessee Brewery in Memphis was the site of temporary activation project called *Tennessee Brewery Untapped*. Activation of the space included

a beer garden featuring local craft brews, food trucks, pop-up retail boutiques, live music, and more. Redeveloping the whole complex was economically impossible, but a \$30,000 investment in one main space (for code improvements and basic services) brought activity to a neighborhood and generated \$30,000 of city tax revenue in just 6 weeks, following years of no tax revenue from property. A city/nonprofit team, comprised of activists, planners, and citizens, was instrumental in helping the owner gain approval for programming that would have been hard to do through conventional channels. Overlap between those leading the TN Brewery Untapped initiative and staff in the mayor's office helped to expedite the process to enable the use. For additional information:

<http://www.choose901.com/tn-brewery-untapped/>

DAVIS SQUARE POP-UP DEMONSTRATION | SOMERVILLE, MA

At public meetings for a new greenspace plan, community members voiced strong interest in converting a turn lane and 12-space city parking lot in Somerville's bustling Davis Square into a plaza with pop-up retail. City staff organized a three-day demonstration of the concept and advertised it well. The event was an instant hit, with large numbers of people patronizing food trucks (and established restaurants nearby), and produced a net profit to the city from food truck fees. The city simultaneously used the event as a very successful forum for community discussion of a hotel development proposal in the square. The Pop-Up

demonstration persuaded skeptical business owners of the benefits of sacrificing a handful of parking spaces to create a compelling community destination. It also highlighted the city's own bureaucratic barriers to holding such events, and inspired regulatory changes that now make similar events possible more frequently and with less effort.



position supplements and supports the efforts of landlords and brokers by assuming responsibility for the time, headache and risk often involved in trying to bring more compelling and catalytic tenancies to challenged Downtown settings. Specifically, this "retail recruiter" typically focuses on identifying, pre-qualifying and pursuing prospects that would serve to create and reinforce a synergistic retail mix for the entire business district. If the recruiter develops a promising lead, the lead is forwarded to the appropriate landlord and/or broker, with the latter earning the commission on any deal that is consummated. Albany should follow such an approach as follows:

- The Downtown Albany BID and Capitalize Albany Corporation should jointly establish and fund a dedicated retail recruiter position for downtown, serving the roles described above. Each organization has an important role in this partnership. The partners should work collaboratively to bring additional resources to the enterprise, command the attention of local political, institutional and real estate elites, and take a direct role in helping attract larger-scale retail anchors that can play a significant catalytic role in expanding the economic performance of the downtown and city as a whole.

NURTURE A UNIQUE RETAIL MIX

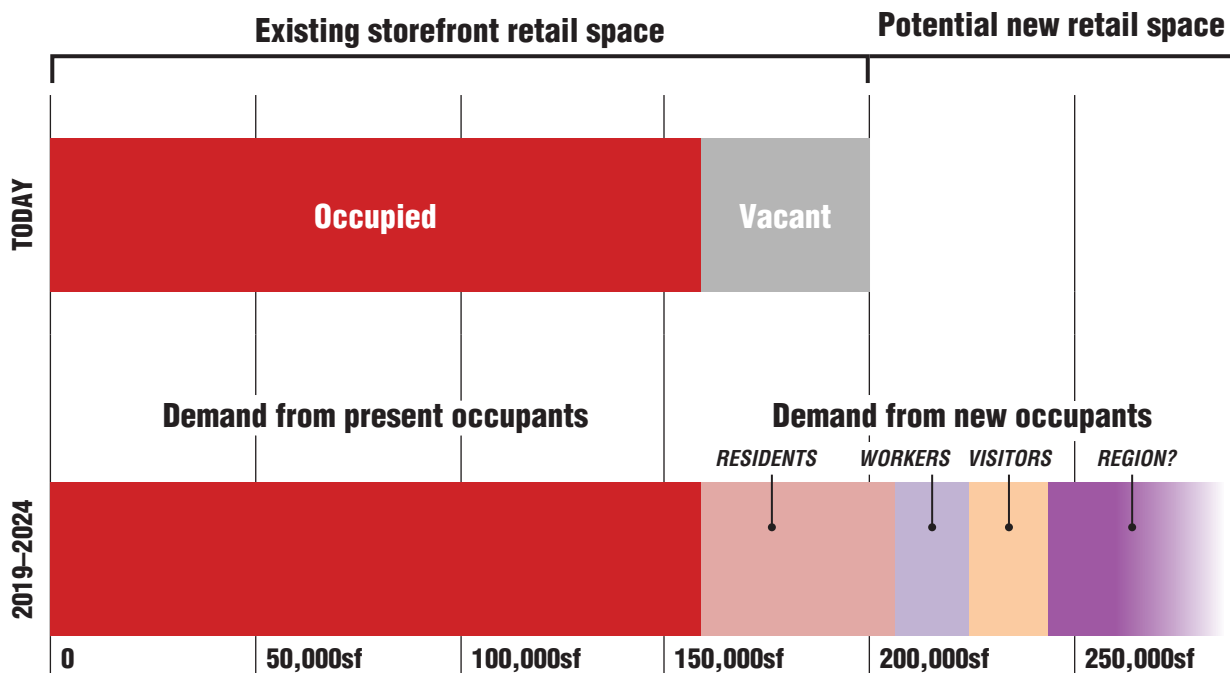
Downtown retail will compete best if it offers a distinct type of product or experience different from what is available in other downtowns or suburban areas in the region. This will help downtown stand out as a retail destination of interest, while also reinforcing downtown’s appeal as a unique place to live and work. To this end, the following types of retail are most appropriate for downtown Albany. These target markets should be publicized to property owners and brokers, and should be a focus of effort by the retail recruiter described above. For each target retail category, key submarkets (customer “psychographics”) and sub-districts (locations within Downtown and Warehouse District study area) are identified.



Angela’s Bridal demonstrated that moving a destination retail business from a suburban location to downtown can improve sales by leveraging downtown’s amenities to help attract customers.

APPLYING MARKET POTENTIAL

How might more people living, working, playing, learning impact downtown’s retail occupancy?



Growing market demand for downtown retail—including latent demand as well as new demand from new residents, visitors and workers—could in principle support enough expanded retail space to fill current downtown storefront vacancies and then fill another 30,000 to 50,000 square feet or more of new retail space. Successful re-occupancy of vacant storefronts will also depend upon whether existing spaces provide the right size, location or other characteristics for potential businesses; whether property owners offer affordable rents; and whether business owners see downtown as a preferable location to other options.



Upscale dining establishments

- Includes artsy and even fast-casual concepts
- *Submarkets:* Yup-sters, Suits, Destination (from beyond trade area)
- *Sub-districts:* North Pearl, State, Riverfront



“Third Place” coffeehouse

- Multiple day-parts
- *Submarkets:* Yup-sters, Students, Suits
- *Sub-district:* North Pearl, Kiernan Plaza



Moderately priced fashion boutiques

- Alternatives to ubiquitous styles at large chains
- *Submarkets:* Students, Yup-sters (young), Destination (from beyond trade area)
- *Sub-district:* North Pearl



Diversified nightlife offerings

- Wine bar (perhaps with coffee-house), dueling-piano bar (chain), “bar-cade”, gaming lounge, etc.
- *Submarkets:* Yup-sters, Middle, Hipsters, Students
- *Sub-district:* North Pearl



“Cross-over” food and retail concepts

- Vintage/thrift, BBQ/soul-food, “artisan” comfort food, etc.
- *Submarkets:* Inner City, Hipsters, Students, Yup-sters
- *Sub-district:* South Pearl



Hipster draws and businesses

- Bars/live-music venues, art supplies, “local pride” concepts, etc.
- *Submarkets:* Hipsters, Students
- *Sub-districts:* Periphery (Warehouse, Lower Broadway), North Pearl



Small-format specialty grocer

- 2,500 to 5,000 square feet
- Up-market product mix
- Multiple day-parts
- *Sub-markets:* Yup-sters, Students, Suits
- *Sub-district:* Periphery (en route to I-787, with parking)



Outdoor sporting goods

- REI, Cabela’s Outpost, etc.
- *Submarkets:* Yup-sters, Hipsters, Students, Middle
- *Sub-district:* Riverfront



Youth-oriented variety store

- Urban Outfitters or similar
- *Submarkets:* Yup-sters (young), Hipsters, Students
- *Sub-district:* North Pearl

Conclusion



Downtown is a place that produces exceptional value. Some of this value is easily evident in downtown's continued importance as the region's largest employment center, and in the growing number of downtown buildings restored with shops and residences. Other untapped value lies masked behind vacant windows. Nothing will do more to remove the hidden obstacles restraining this value than spotlighting all the other places where value is growing evident in many forms. These forms include growing numbers of people attending events in downtown's parks and streets, and bringing the sidewalks alive after work;

growing numbers of buildings under restoration or construction to serve demand for living, working, shopping and visiting downtown; and growing revenues to property owners, businesses and the city from this activity. The next page highlights some of the most prominent investments and qualities present during the Impact Downtown planning process. These are raising the level of downtown's positive impact—not just on downtown as a place, but on the economic and community strength of Albany, the Capital Region and the State of New York.

Build on the momentum: Downtown is the future!

Growing residential development, and more to come

Following national trends, Downtown has become a neighborhood



Over \$200 million of investment is in the pipeline

Including private housing and hotel development as well as State investment in the Capital Center convention facility



Reconnection to the Hudson Riverfront

New recreational paths are coming to connect Downtown and neighborhoods to the water



Growing tech presence

Anchored by the SCiTI Center, a tech business cluster will foster more jobs and economic growth

STARTUPNY



COLLEGES OF NANOSCALE
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE



Unique local retailers

Offering what you can't find anywhere else



Premier destination for art, entertainment and events

Albany's creativity is visible!



