



# CITY OF RENSSELAER

---

OFFICE OF  
**THE CITY CLERK**  
CITY HALL  
62 WASHINGTON STREET  
RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144

(518) 462-4266  
Fax: (518) 462-0890

## AGENDA COMMON COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

1. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF VACANT CITY PROPERTY TO ABUTTING LAND OWNER, SUSAN ZEPPELELLI, PURSUANT TO CITY CODE SECTION 57-1- CITY TREASURER
2. A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE CITY OF RENSSELAER YOUTH BUREAU RENTAL AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY OF RENSSELAER
3. RESOLUTION DECLARING PHASE I: NOMINATION STUDY FOR THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAM COMPLETE AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR DESIGNATION AS A NEW YORK STATE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA
4. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND
5. A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE LOCAL LAW #9 OF 2021 AS TO FORM AND SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING THEREON
6. A RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNAGE AND SCHEDULING PUBLIC HEARING THEREON
7. CITY OF RENSSELAER COMMEMORATES THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2021-COMMON COUNCIL

8. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO FILE AN APPLICATION UNDER THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE FOR UP TO \$20 MILLION

# 1

By Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF VACANT CITY PROPERTY  
TO ABUTTING LANDOWNER, SUSAN ZEPPETELLI, PURSUANT TO  
CITY CODE SECTION 57-1. - CITY TREASURER**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to City Code Section 57-1, vacant City Property located at 7 Third Avenue, with a Tax Map Number of 143.67-7-3 and consisting of 0.04 acres, was offered for sale to the abutting Landowners, and the successful bidder was Susan Zeppetelli at a bid of \$500.00, and

**WHEREAS**, such bidding was concluded on July 22, 2021, it is now, therefore,

**RESOLVED**, that the City Treasurer is hereby authorized to execute all necessary documents so as to convey the aforementioned property to the successful bidder, subject to the terms and conditions of the Bid sale specifications.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this      day of              , 2021

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor



Sharon L. Martin, IAO  
COMMISSIONER

## CITY OF RENSSELAER

OFFICE OF  
COMMISSIONER OF ASSESSMENT  
AND TAXATION  
CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET  
RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144

Telephone: (518) 462-5421  
Fax: (518) 465-6803

**July 22, 2021**

### Adjoining Property Owner(s)

Rensselaer, NY 12144

Your Tax Map #: 143.67-7-1

Dear Adjoining Property Owner(s),

The City of Rensselaer owns vacant land located adjacent to your property. The land is available for sale to abutting property owners pursuant to Section 57-1 of the Code of the City of Rensselaer, a copy of which is attached hereto. If you are interested in purchasing this parcel, you now have the opportunity to place a bid to purchase such property. Should two or more abutting property owners be interested in purchasing the parcel, you will be contacted by my office to schedule an informal bidding session. Your signed and dated original agreement to purchase the subject parcel must be received in the Office of the City Clerk within three weeks of the date of this letter. Closing must take place within sixty (60) days of the date of this letter. In addition to the Purchase Price, the Attorney, Closing and Recording costs will be \$750. The City will prepare and file the Quitclaim Deed, TP & RP forms.

Tax Map #: 143.67-7-3

Address of City owned parcel: 7 Third Ave

Purchase Price Offer Amount: \$500.00

Attached is a tax map showing the City parcel being offered adjacent to your property. The vacant parcel will be merged into one tax map parcel with your current parcel. The address of the Rensselaer City Clerk is City Hall, 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, New York 12144, telephone number (518) 462-4266. All property sales must be approved by the City Council.

If you should have any questions and/or concerns please contact this office for further information.

Yours truly,

*Sharon Martin, IAO*

Sharon Martin, IAO  
Commissioner

I hereby agree to purchase the subject vacant parcel for the Purchase Price listed above pursuant to Section 57-1 of the Rensselaer City Code.

Dated: 7/26/2021

Email: NONE

*Susan Zeppetelli*  
Susan Zeppetelli  
Adjoining Property Owner

Contact # 518-462-4266



City of Rensselaer  
62 Washington Street  
Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144

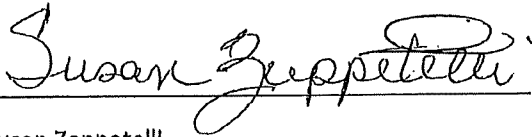
June 21, 2021

To whom It may concern; (Assessor, Treasurer, City Attorney),

I would like to purchase a parcel of vacant city property located at 7 Thlr Ave, Rensselaer. Parcel No. 143.67-7-3, the property is only .04 Acres, 39.24 of frontage and 42.79 in Depth. Currently the property is of itself not large enough to develop.

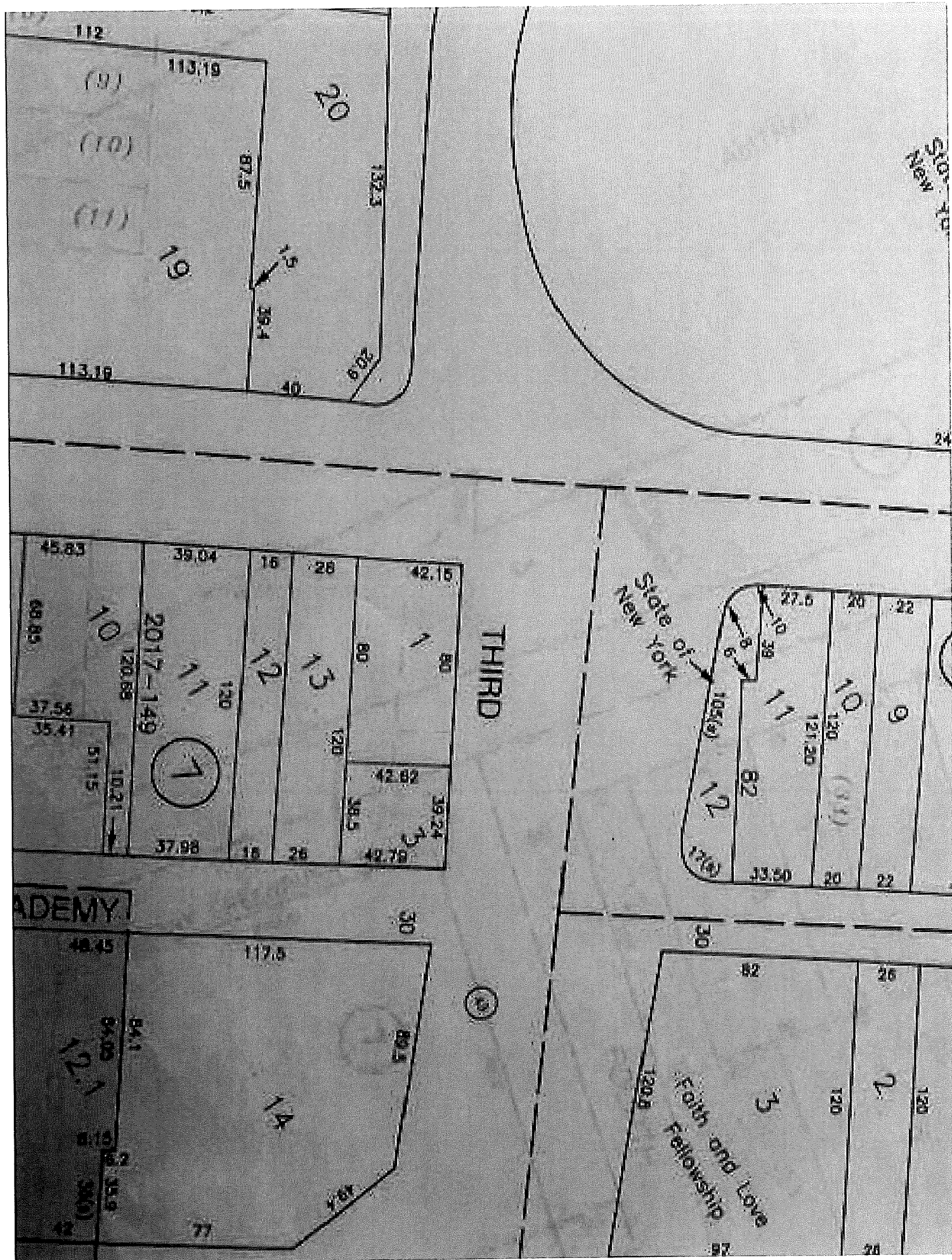
I am the adjacent property owner and prepared to offer the city \$500.00 for the parcel and in conjunction with my properties adjacent to the city parcel I would be in a position to develop the property.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan Zeppetelli", written over a horizontal line.

Susan Zeppetelli

1445 First Street  
Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144  
(518) 434-2378



#2

By Alderperson: Council as a Whole

Seconded by Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution to Approve and Adopt the City of Rensselaer Youth Bureau Rental Agreement for the City of Rensselaer**

**WHEREAS**, the attached “Youth Bureau Rental Agreement” would appear to be in the best interests of the City of Rensselaer to Approve and Adopt; and

**WHEREAS**, such Agreement allows the City of Rensselaer to provide much needed services to the youth of our community; and good cause appearing therefor;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOVLED** the City of Rensselaer Common Council hereby approves and adopts the City of Rensselaer “Youth Bureau Rental Agreement”, a copy of which is attached hereto; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Rensselaer Youth Bureau Director is hereby authorized to execute and transmit the required “Youth Bureau Rental Agreement” to all necessary parties.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this      day of September, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

So Approved!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahy	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
Of Southern Rensselaer County

## FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into this day, June 5, 2021, by and between the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County (hereinafter referred to as "BGCSORENSCO") and Rensselaer Youth Bureau (hereinafter referred to as "USER") concerning the use of the premises and facilities operated by the BGCSORENSCO located at 544 Broadway, Rensselaer, NY 12144.

The USER requests the use of: (Check all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bathrooms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Games Room
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classroom(s) for _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Storage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting Room	_____ Other (specify) _____

To be used for: Summer Youth Bureau Drop-In Day Program

To be used on the following date(s): Tuesday, July 6 through Friday, August 13, 2021

Hours from: 10 AM to 2:00 PM Number of people expected: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe all requests (tables, chairs, electric, other equipment, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

The USER accepts responsibility to see that all facilities and equipment belonging to the BGCSORENSCO are used and maintained properly while under their supervision and control. The USER further agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the BGCSORENSCO, its officers and staff, from any and all claims that may arise from said use of facilities and/or equipment. The User also agrees to provide a certificate of insurance that shows the user has General Liability coverage of \$1,000,000 and also names the BGCSORENSCO as an additional insured on a Primary and Non Contributory Basis.

Person in Charge: Dan Dwyer Title: Rensselaer Youth Bureau Director

Address: City Hall 62 Washington Street Rensselaer, NY 12144

Phone: 518- 462- 4266 Cell: 518- 221- 2846 Other Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Use of the building and equipment is granted to the extent that it will not interfere with the use of the premises by the BGCSORENSCO or any of its programs and/or special events. Access to any and all areas will not be available until such time that any B&GC activity is complete and all persons have left the activity area, as interpreted by the B&GC staff person in charge of that area. Long-term facility uses will be reviewed quarterly. It is understood that the person in charge will remain responsible for possession and proper use of any keys that may be provided. It is further understood that any damage to the premises (other than reasonable and ordinary wear and tear from normal usage) and/or to any appliance, fixture appurtenance, furnishings and/or equipment will be paid to the BGCSORENSCO by the user group or organization in an amount sufficient to adequately repair or replace in kind any such damaged item. Rental in the amount stated below will be paid in a timely manner as described below:

Rent to be charged: \$12,000.00 per agreement shall be paid to the **BGCSORENSCO**.

Signature: Justin Reuter Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director (BGCSORENSCO) Organization/ Individual Representative

Print Name: Justin Reuter Print Name: Dan Dwyer

Office Use: Key Provided to: \_\_\_\_\_ Key Returned on: \_\_\_\_\_ (OVER)

The Boys and Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County, opened in 1952, is a facility based year round on youth development and is an organization with the following mission:

**TO INSPIRE AND ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE, FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE,  
TO REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS PRODUCTIVE RESPONSIBLE, AND CARING CITIZENS.**

Its principal headquarters and Club house is located at 544 Broadway, Rensselaer, New York. When the facilities are not being used by our youth members or for special events supporting our cause, then the organization is willing and anxious to make available our facilities to other community service organizations, agencies or groups. We regard much of what these groups do as an extension of the Boys and Girls Club mission.

In sharing these facilities, however, we are unable to afford incurring extra maintenance, utilities, supervisory and custodial expenses. Therefore, we ask that the groups with which we share our facilities be reasonable and responsible in their use of them. We ask that the person in charge, see to the following:

1. Children with or visiting your group activity shall be supervised at all times by an appropriate number of responsible adults.
2. Areas not specifically rented by your group shall remain off limits to persons within your group.
3. The facility shall be cleaned and ready for your use upon arrival, please leave it in the same condition. If the area is not cleaned properly upon your arrival, please notify the B&GC staff person assigned to your group.
4. Care of the premises shall be the responsibility of the undersigned.
5. Supervisor(s) of youth groups shall be in attendance before the first youth arrive and shall remain until the last youth have left.
6. Clean up prior to leaving, and see that all chairs and tables and equipment are returned to their original areas.
7. Note and report any accident or damage immediately to the B&GC staff person in the building.
8. Horseplay will not be tolerated by youth or adults at any time.
9. Always respect and obey the Club rules as posted.
10. Please clean up any spills or large and unusual messes when made.
11. The Boys & Girls Club is a smoke free property. Please refrain from partaking in the use of tobacco products anywhere on the Club property.
12. The Club parking lot is located to the North of the Building. The parking lot to the South of the Building is privately owned. Park there at your own risk.
13. The Boys & Girls Club will not be responsible for lost or stolen articles brought onto the premises.

The checklist above cannot provide for all situations. We ask that you use your good judgment in dealing with the unforeseen. There should always be a representative from the Club on premises. Forward any questions to him/her.

Please complete the agreement on the reverse side and return to the administrative offices for approval. No approval shall have been made without the signature of the Executive Director affixed on the front of this form.

I have read this entire document and agree to abide by all conditions contained within for rental of facilities owned by the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By Alderperson : COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

Seconded by Alderperson : \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION DECLARING PHASE I: NOMINATION STUDY FOR THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAM COMPLETE AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF RENSSELAER PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR DESIGNATION AS A NEW YORK STATE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA**

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Submit a Grant Application for the New York State Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program (BOA), approved and adopted by the City of Rensselaer Common Council on February 15, 2017, a Draft Nomination Plan was prepared (a copy of which is available for review by the Public at the Office of the City Clerk during normal business hours), and same appears appropriate for approval, and a public hearing having been held on Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 6:30 pm at City Hall, and no credible objections having been made thereat; and

**WHEREAS**, such work for the projects has been completed successfully according to the New York State Department of State Office of Planning, who recommends that the City Common Council accept such work and declare such Projects complete; and

**WHEREAS**, it also appearing appropriate that the City of Rensselaer Planning Department be authorized to submit an application to the New York State Department of State to become a designated Brownfield Opportunity Area in order to become eligible for Phase II and Phase III funding through the BOA program;



**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as follows:

1. That said work detailed above be hereby accepted by the City, and Phase I be declared complete;
2. That the Mayor be authorized and directed to execute a notice of completion as to the subject Project;
3. That the City of Rensselaer Planning Department be authorized to submit an application to the New York State Department of State to become a designated Brownfield Opportunity Area in order to become eligible for Phase II and Phase III funding through the BOA program.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

SO APPROVED!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
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John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				



# City of Rensselaer

NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program

## RENSSELAER ON THE RISE

Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area



## Nomination Plan

Submitted to the NYS Department of State  
Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure



Michael Stammel, Mayor

Updated June 2021





**This document was prepared for the City of Rensselaer and the NYS Department of State, Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure, with State funding provided through the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program.**

Honorable Michael Stammel  
Mayor

City of Rensselaer  
Department of Planning and Development

**Updated June 2021**

# CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	LEAD PROJECT SPONSORS.....	3
1.2	PROJECT OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION.....	4
1.2.1	Characteristics of the Planning Area.....	4
1.2.2	Existing Assets and Opportunities .....	7
1.3	COMMUNITY VISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	10
1.3.1	BOA Vision Statement.....	10
1.3.2	Goals and Objectives.....	11
1.4	BOA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION.....	14
1.4.1	Physical Boundary Description .....	14
1.4.2	Justification for the BOA Boundary .....	15
<b>2.0</b>	<b>COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	17
2.1.1	Project Steering Committee.....	17
2.1.2	Public Information Meetings .....	18
2.1.3	Mail, Email, and Website .....	19
2.2	TECHNIQUES TO ENLIST STAKEHOLDERS.....	20
<b>3.0</b>	<b>EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1	COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL SETTING .....	22
3.1.1	Demographic Context .....	23
3.1.2	Prior Planning Studies and Initiatives .....	28
3.2	PHYSICAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS .....	33
3.2.1	Existing Land Use .....	33
3.2.2	Zoning.....	36
3.2.3	Land Ownership .....	39

3.2.4	Environmental Features.....	42
3.2.5	Transportation .....	46
3.2.6	Vacant, Abandoned and Underutilized Sites .....	48
3.3	ECONOMIC AND MARKET TRENDS ANALYSIS.....	55
3.3.1	Existing Economic Conditions .....	55
3.3.2	Location Quotient .....	58
3.3.3	Cluster Analysis .....	59
3.3.4	Survey of Businesses .....	63
3.4	CONCLUSIONS .....	65
4.0	<b>SUMMARY ANALYSIS, FINDINGS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>66</b>
4.1	SITE SELECTION AND CRITERIA .....	66
4.1.1	Site Evaluation Methodology.....	68
4.2	REDEVELOPMENT SUBAREAS .....	70
4.2.1	City-wide Recommended Actions.....	70
4.2.2	BOA-wide Masterplan Concept and Graphics.....	71
4.2.3	Priority Development Recommendations supported by the Capital Region Economic Development Council Strategic Plan .....	71
4.2.4	Subarea Profiles and Redevelopment Vision .....	75
	<b>Rensselaer Waterfront .....</b>	<b>75</b>
	<b>City Gateway.....</b>	<b>81</b>
	<b>Downtown Hub.....</b>	<b>87</b>
4.3	SUBAREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS .....	93
4.4	CONCLUSIONS .....	94

## MAPS

Project Boundary Map  
Study Area Context Map  
Regional Context Map  
Land Use Map  
Zoning Map  
Land Ownership Map  
Environmental Features Map  
Soils Map  
Geology Map  
Transportation Map  
Vacant, Abandoned and Underutilized Sites Map  
Subareas Map  
Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea Map  
City Gateway Subarea Map  
Downtown Hub Subarea Map

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Community Participation  
Appendix B: Market Analysis  
Appendix C: Site Profiles  
Appendix D: BOA-wide Masterplan Concept and Graphics  
Appendix E: Application for BOA Designation – *(Include after submission to the NYS-DOS)*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Rensselaer in Rensselaer County, New York has received funding through the NYS Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program. This program enables municipalities and community-based organizations to develop a vision for redevelopment in areas with numerous brownfields, vacant, and underutilized sites and to prepare implementation strategies to guide the successful reuse of those properties. This study represents the City's goal to nominate a 192-acre part of Downtown Rensselaer as a BOA, helping encourage new private and public investments and providing the City with future planning and funding tools to promote property cleanup and reuse.

***The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield site as "...a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."***

Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties can relieve development pressure on undeveloped open spaces and recycle land that is already connected to public infrastructure, thereby improving derelict properties and enhancing a community's quality of life more sustainably than would otherwise be possible.

Known as the Rensselaer Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area, large sections of this area contain Hudson Riverfront land used for prior industrial purposes, while other portions of the study area include smaller properties suitable for rehabilitation or infill new construction. With the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station and the sprawling Amtrak Maintenance Facility at the center of the BOA, this distressed area remains a hub of railroad and other transportation modes connecting the City with the Capital Region and Northeast Corridor.

The BOA Program will help the City of Rensselaer mitigate the damaging effects of both perceived and real contamination and the discouragement of investment on a variety of brownfield properties. As the process moves forward, the City will prepare implementation plans to attain redevelopment funding support so both the private and public sector will hit the ground running as sites are proposed for viable, sustainable new uses.

This Nomination Study is the first of two steps in the BOA Program. For the Urban Core BOA, the Nomination Plan involves a baseline of demographic, land use, ownership, and potential brownfield site data, along with a detailed analysis of one or more Subareas targeted by the City for redevelopment. The Nomination Plan also includes a community-wide visioning

process that created redevelopment goals and objectives based on local economic and social conditions. The Plan analyzes the characteristics of the more than 30 brownfields and underutilized sites so the City and stakeholders can prioritize those sites for reuse, in conjunction with the underlying redevelopment vision, goals, and objectives.

The Nomination discusses recommended public and private actions necessary to implement future projects and community enhancements that will promote area-wide revitalization. A preliminary market analysis and the identification of target site profiles are also included in this study. Lastly, the Nomination lays the groundwork for the future environmental review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) of various recommended actions and priority projects so the City as the Lead Agency can make environmental determinations of significance quickly and efficiently to facilitate new development.

The next step of the BOA Program (for the City to pursue in the future) is developing an Implementation Strategy and conducting individual Environmental Site Assessments for priority brownfield properties. Where appropriate, site assessments are used to evaluate the environmental conditions of targeted properties and determine the appropriate remedial efforts, if any, to make those sites shovel-ready – thereby removing obstacles to redevelopment. The SEQR process will also be completed during this next planning step.

As part of a nearly 15-year revitalization strategy, the City has undertaken a comprehensive menu of projects and planning activities to spur redevelopment. The Urban Core BOA is the culmination of those endeavors, combining planning, economic development, and site-specific marketing to rebuild the Downtown core into a vibrant part of the community. By focusing on individual properties and the obstacles that have discouraged their reuse, the City will create the vision and planning framework to encourage thriving local businesses, high quality jobs, pedestrian/bicycle friendly streets and affordable neighborhoods, and trails and recreational facilities connected to people and communities throughout the Capital Region.

## 1.1 LEAD PROJECT SPONSORS

The City of Rensselaer, with oversight and guidance from the NYS Departments of State and Environmental Conservation, is working in coordination with the following community groups, business owners, developers, and residents, to develop this Nomination Plan.

### ***Project Sponsors:***

- City of Rensselaer
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

### ***Project Committee Representation:***

- Rensselaer Common Council
- Rensselaer Planning Board
- Rensselaer County
- Amtrak
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Local business owners and representatives

### ***BOA Steering Committee:***

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| ➤ Ketura Vics     | City of Rensselaer, Planning Director  |
| ➤ Bob Campano     | City of Rensselaer Planning Commission |
| ➤ Chris Van Vorst | City of Rensselaer Planning Commission |
| ➤ Sam Judge       | Business Owner                         |
| ➤ Kevin Dugan     | Business Owner                         |
| ➤ Stephen Despart | Business Owner                         |
| ➤ Jeff Hicks      | Knights of Columbus                    |
| ➤ Dave Ashton     | NYS Department of State                |
| ➤ Tanushri Kumar  | NYS Department of State                |
| ➤ Ross Farrell    | CDTA                                   |
| ➤ Steve Mann      | Office of Senator Charles Schumer      |

## 1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

### 1.2.1 Characteristics of the Planning Area

The City of Rensselaer has received a grant through the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program to conduct a Nomination Plan which is intended to facilitate strategic opportunities to stimulate property redevelopment. Specifically, the City is working to revitalize its Hudson River waterfront and Downtown core as a catalyst for business and residential growth and new and enhanced recreational facilities to attract more housing and commercial investment. An impediment to redevelopment in a former industrial community such as Rensselaer is the existence of perceived or known contamination at brownfield and other underutilized sites.

The Nomination Plan is built from existing site inventories and planning studies to provide a thorough description and analysis of existing conditions, opportunities, and reuse potential for properties located in the proposed BOA with an emphasis on the identification and reuse potential of strategic sites. Key planning objectives for this BOA Plan include:

- Identifying a manageable study area and associated boundaries;
- Establishing a community participation process, including a clear description of a community vision and associated goals and objectives for the BOA, and techniques to enlist partners;
- Completing a comprehensive land use assessment and analysis of existing conditions in the study area, including a market trends analysis, to determine the range of realistic future land uses and types of redevelopment projects suitable to revitalize the BOA;
- Identifying strategic sites that represent key redevelopment opportunities and are catalysts for revitalization;
- Developing key findings and recommendations for desired future land uses and other public and private actions necessary for redevelopment;
- Recommending a scope of work for the future Implementation Strategy to be developed under the next step of the BOA Program.

The City of Rensselaer has established a Steering Committee to guide the formation of the Urban Core BOA. This effort offers an opportunity for community members to assist in developing a long-range vision for Rensselaer's future. During these efforts, the City began the



process of accessing certain distressed properties and strategic sites that are most impacted by real and perceived contamination and other development obstacles.

### *BOA Study Area*

The BOA study area encompasses 192 acres including the community's downtown business core, the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station and adjacent Amtrak maintenance facility, a long swath of Hudson River waterfront, the East Street corridor, and several important gateways from the rest of the Capital Region (I-787), points south and east (Columbia Turnpike), and the City's dense urban neighborhoods along the North Broadway corridor.

The BOA represents a unique mix of commercial, industrial, residential, and transportation-related land uses with multiple vacant, abandoned, underutilized or contaminated sites. There is enormous potential for catalytic redevelopment on sites defined as brownfields, vacant, abandoned, or underutilized and close to the City's more active and productive properties and existing and planned recreational amenities.

### *Development Background*

The City of Rensselaer is located in the heart of New York State's Capital Region on the east side of the Hudson River across from the City of Albany. Rensselaer is a working-class community with charming heritage areas and hilltop neighborhoods close to large regional job centers. The development pattern is defined by the City's early dependence on the Hudson River. However, the City is also home to the ninth busiest passenger rail station in the nation at the confluence of the east-west and north-south arterials that make up the Northeast Corridor rail system.

One of the earliest Dutch settlements was located in Rensselaer. In 1629, Kilean Van Rensselaer established the feudal manor of Rensselaerwyck. The portion of the manor within Rensselaer County ran 24 miles along the Hudson River including what are now the Towns of Schodack, Nassau, North and East Greenbush, Sand Lake, Grafton, Brunswick, Petersburg, Berlin, Stephentown, Pittstown, and the Cities of Troy and Rensselaer. Fort Crailo south of the BOA study area was the early Manor house, and it is the site where "Yankee Doodle" was composed in 1758. The early Dutch history is present throughout the City in the form of family names, architectural building details, and neighborhood designations.

In the 19th Century, the City entered an era of industrial growth that shaped the Capital Region as well as the entire Northeast. The region became a center of distribution with the confluence of the Erie and Champlain Canals meeting up with the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. Rensselaer

grew as an industrial city with companies such as Huyck Mills and the Hudson River Aniline Color Works. Bayer Pharmaceuticals built a major manufacturing center in 1903. BASF Corporation purchased the Bayer site in 1978 and became one of the region's largest employers until 2000 when the company moved its operations out of state. Regeneron is currently located (and growing) on the City's border with the Town of East Greenbush in a large campus facility that includes significant research and development operations for that company.

During the past thirty years, Rensselaer's industrial base has eroded as the region and the State have moved from manufacturing to informational and service-based companies. While the City retains its important role as a shipping and distribution center managed by the Albany Port Authority, the number of large employers within the City continues to decline. Rensselaer has instead become an affordable bedroom community for state workers in Albany and commuters to other parts of the Capital Region, while the loss of tax revenues from former factories has created an increasing financial burden on long-time homeowners.

Quality of life remains high, however. There is an ample supply of affordable housing, much of it located in dense neighborhoods that surround the Downtown core. Budget constraints that make it difficult for the City to keep up with needed repairs on streets, sidewalks, and utilities have become a source of frustration for many residents. In spite of the tight fiscal condition, Rensselaer residents have a proud tradition of multiple family generations who continue to live and work in the City. According to the Census, the population declined significantly (12%) from 1980 to 2000, but then rebounded from 7,762 in 2000 to nearly 9,300 by 2019. Nonetheless, the City's economic struggles are evident in terms of per capita and median household income data when compared to its suburban neighbors.

With significant stretches of land along the Hudson River and a variety of properties within the Downtown that are vacant or underutilized, Rensselaer could become the Capital District's premiere waterfront residential destination. In addition, the availability of well-established industrial areas can be re-marketed as affordable locations for supportive office, research and development, and distribution spaces for the growing high technology industry located throughout the Capital Region.

### 1.2.2 Existing Assets and Opportunities

This BOA Plan includes an analysis of existing assets and opportunities that provide the baseline for future revitalization actions. In recent years, the City has been diligently working to improve access to the Hudson River waterfront, repair aging infrastructure, assist small businesses, beautify the streetscape, and install pedestrian and bicycle amenities. The Nomination Plan seeks to facilitate and expand these diverse project efforts.

The following summarizes the general themes and revitalization strategies discussed by the Steering Committee during the early phases of the BOA planning process:

#### *Create Jobs and Economic Activity*

The potential exists for the City to end its 30-year industrial decline and return to the more prosperous days of the past. Rensselaer is an extremely unique place and the change that is coming to the greater Capital Region and Rensselaer County positions the City to attract new companies, activities, and events to bring residents and businesses to the Downtown.

The following opportunities were identified through a separate Market Analysis and could provide for economic growth within the BOA through the attraction of residents and creation of jobs resulting from new business investment.

- Build specialized infrastructure (transportation, telecommunications, power, regulatory environments) to capitalize on the development spin-off effect from the influx of technology companies that are locating within the Capital Region;
- Fill missing links in supply chains with targeted firm attraction;
- Promote flexibility in terms of transportation access and inherent advantages of passenger and freight rail access;
- Increase workforce skills and training to attract new industries;
- Engage in cluster marketing programs to support local businesses within the BOA;
- Attract young families and professionals looking for an affordable, safe, and convenient urban context to live and raise a family;
- Capture sales tax revenue by filling leakage gaps in the Downtown such as clothing boutiques, essential services, restaurants, and other specialty businesses.

### *Improve Urban Design*

Getting back to quality urban design and building upon the historic street wall in the Downtown is a primary opportunity. The street wall is a term used to describe a continuous line of facades parallel to a street, a characteristic of traditional urban areas. The City of Rensselaer was once a bustling riverfront and railroad community located along the Hudson River with a thriving small business community. Recent main street revitalization efforts and investment in vacant buildings and storefronts to improve the look of the Downtown core can be found along Broadway and Third Street, but there are still many Downtown buildings that are either vacant or have been demolished, creating a patchwork of deteriorated structures, unattractive modern construction, and weed-strewn empty lots.

As a commercial Downtown core and waterfront surrounded by residential neighborhoods, the Rensselaer BOA lacks a unified design theme and pedestrian connectivity. Very few intra-city pedestrian connections exist to allow residents to conveniently walk from the outer neighborhoods to Downtown. The same could be said for connections from the traditional downtown core to the Hudson Riverfront. In recent years, the City has created draft Design Guidelines which start to address the look of building facades, site layout issues, business signage, green space requirements, provisions for separate vehicle and pedestrian access, parking space needs, and vehicle circulation.

The appearance of the City's Downtown also lacks identity and a cohesive frontage even with a handful of recent Broadway streetscape and building façade upgrades. Participating businesses in the streetscape program exemplify positive changes being made to contribute to the overall betterment of the City. However, for the perception of the Downtown to be changed, the outstanding vacant and deteriorated properties need to be rehabilitated to compliment the completed Broadway streetscape improvements.

### *Land Assemblage*

The City has already made significant progress to identify key properties and promote those sites for private redevelopment. However, further property assembly will be necessary to ensure the long-term success of these revitalization efforts. There are other opportunities within the Downtown to create more attractive development sites by strategically identifying and bundling smaller parcels. Further, it will be vital to engage in an aggressive marketing campaign highlighting the Rensselaer BOA's strengths and assets – one being the opportunity

for quality land assemblage packages, as well as the capacity in the City for developing key economic development partnerships with nearby companies and municipalities.

#### *Remove the Perception of Environmental Contamination*

Although there is only one City-owned property listed by the DEC as a “brownfield,” the appearance of vacant and underutilized land creates the perception that the Downtown is blighted and environmentally contaminated. Currently, there are many uses such as old rail maintenance yards, gas stations, and auto body shops that dominate various Downtown parcels and have the potential to have also contaminated other surrounding properties.

#### *Expand Recreational and Cultural Opportunities*

The BOA has many unique recreational and cultural opportunities including the kayak launch in Riverfront Park, the rebuilt Amtrak Rail Station, the Mill Creek pond near Huyck Square, and various pocket parks and open space areas. Most of these assets remain hidden from people passing through the City along Broadway and Columbia Turnpike, which are the primary vehicle routes bisecting the Downtown. One could almost drive through the heart of the City without seeing the Hudson River despite it being only a few blocks away.

#### *Marketing the Development Potential*

There are opportunities to better promote business development and property reuse within the Rensselaer BOA. It will be critical to aggressively market the area’s strengths and assets, as well as the capacity in the City for developing key economic development partnerships. Section 4 of this Nomination Plan discusses in more detail the opportunities for marketing key sites and facilitating potential redevelopment projects.



### 1.3 COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Nomination Plan reflects the perspectives and aspirations that were offered by the community and stakeholders during the BOA study process. Discussions focused on the benefits and drawbacks of particular land uses, the quality of the current streetscape, and the potential redevelopment of certain Downtown parcels and waterfront sites.

At other times, conversations were open ended, exploring themes that were relevant to the entire BOA, such as parking needs, providing new pedestrian amenities to connect to the Hudson River and nearby residential areas, attracting higher paying jobs, expanding existing and creating new recreational and open space opportunities and, generally, improving the overall community's quality of life. Throughout the visioning process, the community stressed that the BOA contribute to community development by promoting a mix of land uses, improving gateways into the City, fostering local business startups and creating attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place connected to the entire City.

#### 1.3.1 BOA Vision Statement

As a result, the Steering Committee offers the following Vision for the Rensselaer Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area.

***The City of Rensselaer is a unique riverfront community that is one of the most attractive places to live in the Northeast, with a beautiful and accessible waterfront, active downtown, and convenient transportation to other regional communities for business and leisure. The traditional downtown main street is alive and vibrant where civic and community entities are clustered, and downtown businesses are teeming with entrepreneurs aiming to attract local residents, commuters and visitors alike. The City enjoys close civic, cultural, and strategic planning ties with other riverfront communities to its north and south. Sweeping vistas of the Hudson River and the NYS Capitol greet those who travel through the bustling Rensselaer Amtrak Station. Access, beauty, activity, and small-town atmosphere make Rensselaer a great place to live.***

### 1.3.2 Goals and Objectives

Building from the BOA Vision, the Steering Committee, residents, and stakeholders have identified several Goals and Objectives to guide future implementation actions to be described in this Nomination Plan to revitalize the Urban Core BOA.

**Goal #1:** *Attract emerging regional high-tech companies to Rensselaer;*

**Objective:** Provide local financial incentives to attract technology support businesses to vacant parcels within the Downtown and the City as a whole.

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**Goal #2:** *Increase the population through home purchases and development of affordable rental housing;*

**Objective:** Use zoning, code enforcement, and financial incentive programs to improve existing housing conditions, promote infill new housing construction on vacant lots, and encourage more riverfront housing options to target professionals, retired couples, and rail commuters to purchase homes within the City.

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**Goal #3:** *Revitalize the Hudson Riverfront to bring new residents, businesses, and recreational enthusiasts to the City;*

**Objectives:** Promote and incentivize mixed-income housing developments along North Broadway and at DeLaet's Landing to create 350 to 400 additional apartments;

Complete Hudson Riverfront regional trail projects and sidewalk connections to the Lower and North Broadway areas;

Encourage a mix of retail, food and beverage, and housing uses at former riverfront industrial sites at the northern end of the BOA;

Create enhanced recreational facilities including boat and kayak launches and riverfront pocket parks along with existing and new multi-use trails to promote tourist and visitor investments within the City.



**Goal #4:** *Encourage small business growth throughout the Downtown and along the Hudson River where former industrial land uses were dominate;*

**Objectives:** Offer “microenterprise” grant funding and promote regional loan programs to assist new startups and existing small business owners with expansion or relocation projects over a three-year period;

Target strategic properties and obtain site control to promote reuse by suppliers and support companies wanting to be close to Regeneron, BASF and other regional employers;

Work with the Town of East Greenbush to expedite the development of Mill Creek at Tempel Lane as a mixed-use area supporting the growing Regeneron R&D and manufacturing campus that straddles the City and Town border.

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**Goal #5:** *Provide off-street parking to support Downtown businesses;*

**Objectives:** Utilize City-owned lots on Washington Street during the weekends for free resident and business parking;

Work with the State of New York to promote MOUs regarding public use of excess parking spaces at office complexes located between City Hall and the Boys and Girls Club on Broadway;

Target dilapidated structures and buildings along side streets or rear lots that could be suitable for demolition, landscaping improvements, and shared parking for surrounding residents and businesses;

Include with site plan approvals for future Hudson Riverfront developments metrics for developers to provide sufficient on-street and off-street public parking (as appropriate for each site) that is connected by sidewalks and trails to the Broadway corridor.

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**Goal #6:** *Promote the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield and vacant sites;*

**Objectives:** Use code enforcement and tax foreclosure, as well as purchase options, to obtain site control of former vacant gas stations on Columbia Turnpike and other dilapidated properties on lower Broadway to facilitate cleanup and resale;

Strengthen funding capacity of a Local Development Corporation (LDC) and/or Urban Renewal Agency to acquire key parcels, issue bonds to developers for cleanup and renovation projects, and make related streetscape and infrastructure improvements to serve new commercial property uses;

Seek state economic development financing assistance (Empire State Development, CDBG) on behalf of small and/or mid-size companies seeking to relocate and expand within the Downtown or North Broadway corridor to help with site cleanup and preparation costs, building renovation or construction, fixtures and furnishings, and workforce training costs;

Provide logistic and technical support, as appropriate, to developers seeking participation in the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) to clean up and redevelop private properties within the Downtown;

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**Goal #7:** *Maximize marketing efforts to promote available retail opportunities in the City;*

**Objectives:** Work with business owners to create the unique branding of Downtown Rensselaer and a strategic marketing plan to promote existing businesses;

Seek funding support for social media campaigns to attract tourists, visitors and new homeowners and renters to the City, focusing on major employers, the Hudson Riverfront, the affordable housing stock, and accessibility to high-value cultural and recreational facilities.

## 1.4 BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

### 1.4.1 Physical Boundary Description

The Urban Core BOA consists of 192 acres that make up the primary commercial, municipal, and Hudson Riverfront properties that are vacant and underutilized and offer the highest potential for reuse and new investment (see the Map on the following page).

The western boundary follows nearly two miles of the Hudson Riverfront, facing the City of Albany and offering a variety of mixed-use developments and public waterfront and recreation opportunities. The southern BOA boundary covers two and a half blocks of the City's once-vibrant downtown business district bordered by Columbia Turnpike. At its center, the BOA includes the massive property used for the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station and the adjacent Amtrak rail maintenance yard to the north. The eastern boundary follows East Street and includes both sides of Broadway north of the Downtown that consists of dense single-and-multi-family housing, small pocket parks, and a mid-sized public housing development towards the northern end at Partition Street and the Lincoln Avenue Bridge.

The BOA Study Area contains extensive land along the Hudson River that can be improved to attract residents and tourists visiting future riverfront parks, trails, and specialty businesses. It also includes a significant number of vacant and distressed commercial properties within the core Downtown along Broadway, Washington Street, and Columbia Turnpike that provide opportunities for retail, restaurants and start-up businesses. The BOA includes the vast train station and adjacent maintenance property to keep Amtrak engaged with City planning efforts, and the North Broadway corridor is a densely populated area adjacent to the Hudson River and source of customers for businesses and users of new and revitalized recreational assets.





CITY OF  
ALBANY

Hudson River

BROADWAY

DOWNTOWN  
RENSSELAER

BROADWAY





#### **1.4.2 Justification for the BOA Boundary**

The Hudson River has historically served as the industrial spine of Rensselaer and the Hudson Valley Region as it flows next to the City in a north-south direction. The availability of water-based transport, and later rail travel via the NY Central and Amtrak, encouraged the development of industry, including mills and manufacturing facilities such as the former Bayer Aspirin and BASF sites. Most of these businesses have since closed for a variety of reasons, and, as a result, the industrial base of Rensselaer has declined without any significant jobs replacement. This has led to increasing disinvestment as more businesses leave the City.

As one of Rensselaer's most significant natural resources, the River has great potential to become one of the City's greatest assets in terms of recreation and tourism and as a place to reconnect residential uses with the vastly underutilized waterfront. Even with the recent Esplanade and the expanding Riverfront Trail that are providing enhanced access along parts of the River, much of the waterfront remains hidden by vacant and underutilized properties and aging industrial buildings. These properties and structures contribute to a negative image for the riverfront and the adjacent Broadway business district.

In light of the Hudson's potential, several obstacles to redevelopment remain. The concentration of brownfield sites is one of the largest obstacles to revitalization, as the economic drivers that exist in many other parts of the State that result in high property values do not exist here. Where in other areas the cost of remediation is low when compared to land values, the low land values within the BOA make remediation costs seem much higher, reducing the ability of property owners to obtain financing at feasible rates to fund cleanups or re-invest in vacant properties. Additionally, the persistence and stagnation of these blighted brownfield sites reduces surrounding property values, so owners often feel that there is little value to be gained in cleaning up and improving their own properties.

Despite these concerns, the BOA boundary presents a number of opportunities. New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program provides lucrative tax incentives for the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield properties, including a boost in the amount of credits available within a designated BOA. The proximity to I-787, the NYS Thruway, and Amtrak's main north-south rail line has great potential to support businesses within the BOA, and many of the former manufacturing sites are well-positioned to take advantage of the more efficient shipping costs associated with the River, the railroad, and even the relatively close Thruway.

The nearly two miles of Hudson riverfront within the BOA pose another excellent opportunity to foster revitalization. These areas could attract residents as well as tourists visiting future river-front businesses and cultural destinations in the community. The amount of vacant open space currently available along the River could be used to enhance recreational opportunities such as walking, biking, and boating, but also be improved in ways that allow the adjacent older neighborhoods to retain their character and close connections to the water.

The presence of real or perceived contamination adjacent to large vacant parcels poses an opportunity as well, because some of these properties may be combined into even larger parcels and then remediated and converted into new mixed-uses (retail, entertainment, low-rise housing and townhouses, public marketplaces and festival spaces) that complement the River's natural setting.

The BOA boundary is therefore strategic to the revitalization of Rensselaer, as the BOA encompasses the three core redevelopment assets that will drive the City's rebirth: 1) the Downtown business district; 2) the vast Hudson Riverfront; and 3) the North Broadway mixed-use neighborhood next to the River.

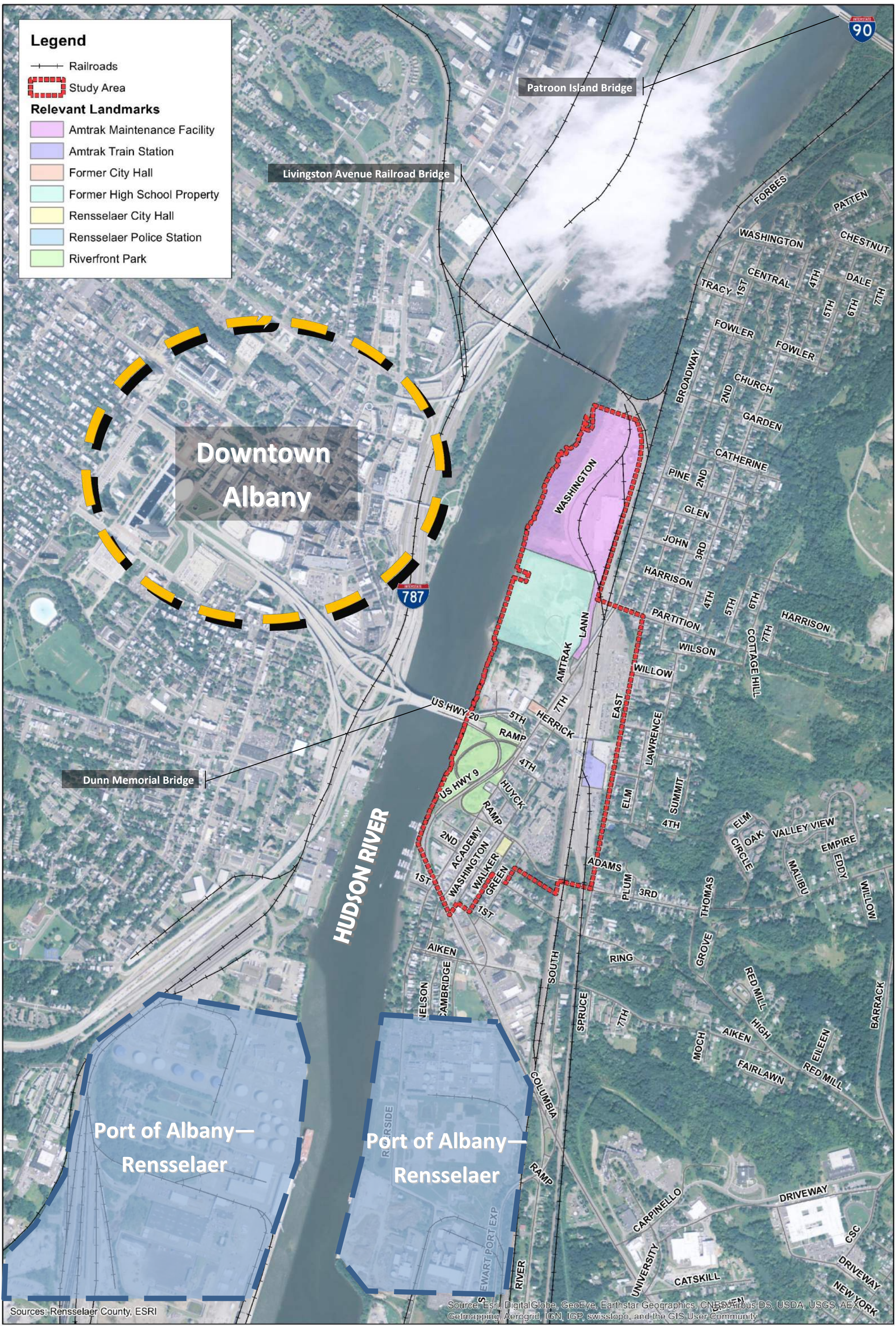
### **Background Regarding the BOA Boundary**

During the early phases of this Nomination Plan, the boundary for the BOA was determined by utilizing the once-bustling central business district on both sides of lower Broadway as the primary target area. From there, the study area was expanded to include potential brownfield parcels surrounding the Amtrak train station, East Street, and the north-central area next to the massive rail maintenance yard.

In August 2014, the Steering Committee met with a representative from the NYS Department of State and determined that the former High School property along the River and west of Broadway should also be included. The site's proximity to both the Hudson Riverfront and Broadway and as a gateway to the North Broadway corridor were recognized as potentially transformative and important attributes by the Committee and the State.

Therefore, the BOA's 192 acres and 215 parcels were selected to encompass the traditional Downtown, the Amtrak Rail Station, and the former High School site. These areas are the focus of the City's plans to increase pedestrian connections to the Hudson River, attract and expand industry, foster new housing and retail businesses, and maximize existing natural resources and available open green spaces.







## **2.0 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

To ensure that the public's concerns and interests regarding various community and economic development subjects were addressed in the redevelopment planning process supporting the BOA, the City developed a Community Participation Plan (CPP) to guide this study. The CPP presents a plan for involvement of residents and stakeholders to help shape the inventory, analysis, evaluation, and formulation of the BOA Nomination Plan. The CPP is consistent with the requirements of the NYS Department of State (DOS) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regarding public involvement in a community-wide planning process, and it was designed to engage the interests and participation of all aspects of the community, business owners, and surrounding neighborhoods. The final CPP is found in Appendix A.

#### **2.1.1 Project Committee**

An integral component of the community participation process was the formulation of the Steering Committee. The Committee consists of various public and private stakeholders and community group members that live, represent, and do business within and adjacent to the BOA. Many committee members were selected by the Common Council specifically for their involvement in the community, understanding of brownfield issues, or their experience and understanding of development opportunities within the various target neighborhoods.

The City has held eight (8) Committee meetings at City Hall and other locations in the BOA during the development of the Nomination Plan. Generally, the Project Committee meetings have been held at key junctures within the Nomination Plan process such as project initiation, upon submittal of the Community Participation Plan, after field visits with local business owners and City representatives to discuss preliminary findings and solicit input, and prior to Public Information meetings to discuss format and content of the public presentations.

The expertise of the Committee members was a critical element, particularly for examining individual BOA sites and testing the feasibility of redevelopment strategies from the perspective of the community and government support. Members of the Committee advised the project team on changes in both the physical and economic environment that proved essential in devising strategies and identifying the BOA's priority areas for future redevelopment. Summaries of these meetings are included in Appendix A.

### 2.1.2 Public Information Meetings

The degree of community participation in recent planning and development initiatives conducted within the City's neighborhoods has been exceptionally high, and residents are generally knowledgeable of community development planning. A significant amount of community participation and neighborhood visioning has already been conducted and summarized in past planning studies listed in Section 3.1.2, particularly the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP), the Comprehensive Plan, and the Route 20 Corridor Study.

Therefore, it was the intent from the onset of this Nomination Plan to build off of those successful outreach efforts and not duplicate them. To do so, the Steering Committee devised three structured public workshop sessions that were held on November 10, 2014, February 19, 2015, and March 11, 2015. The November meeting was the official public kick off that formally introduced the BOA to the public and reviewed project tasks and milestones. The February session included an Open House format for viewing project displays and information, a presentation that outlined the BOA Plan's intent, goals, summarized past planning efforts, and the initial market assessment, as well as an open forum for the solicitation of public input. The March 2015 meeting included a presentation of the BOA's land use analyses, methods for priority site identification, and introduction of the priority site redevelopment scenarios.

The concerns of the community, identified through the BOA public outreach process, focused on issues regarding redevelopment in the general sense. Much of the community's concerns have been the result of lack of action after so many other planning studies have been done.

Primary community concerns include:

- Conflicts between incompatible uses. There are land uses in the area that are not consistent with the Vision established in the LWRP or the Comprehensive Plan. These incompatible uses include rail car maintenance, auto repair facilities, heavy industry, and large swaths of surface parking areas.
- Lack of appropriate design standards on behalf of the City during development review procedures that result in distasteful developments that do not stress or promote key urban design guidelines.
- Lack of investment from the local community in the development of projects. Past efforts to attract investors to Rensselaer have not always included those that live and do business in the community and, therefore, do not have a personal stake in the outcome.



Residents would like to see more community-based ownership of property and more community-oriented uses, such as entertainment venues, youth recreational facilities, and essential community business/retail services.

- Vacant and/or underutilized parcels and buildings are prevalent within the Rensselaer BOA, especially along the Broadway and North Broadway corridor. The presence of these properties has a blighting influence and act as a deterrent to new investment.
- There is community support for more greening of neighborhoods, trail interconnections to the riverfront, and an increase in the number and quality of park facilities.
- A central issue to redevelopment in the Rensselaer BOA is that of land assemblage given the very broad ownership patterns that currently exist throughout all neighborhoods.
- Development models such as the Aldi's Market located nearby are outdated and do not reflect the design and vision for the BOA.
- Build-out of the former High School site (DeLaet's Landing) and nearby waterfront parcels as an area that is a prime location for development will be vital to the success of the three separate subareas.
- City Council members indicated that it was imperative that the City pursue potential developers and retailers for vacant sites that understand the dynamics of dense urban and culturally diverse neighborhoods.
- The City needs to commit to development projects across the entire BOA study area.

The BOA Plan will provide both physical and policy-related recommendations that will help address the above concerns. The overarching consensus gathered at the public sessions and by City officials was that the LWRP and Comprehensive Plans were the adopted visions established by the community and that they should be used as the centerpiece for planning and design during the BOA. Common Council members, staff, neighborhood residents, business owners and community groups all confirmed that these existing plans should be fully included to determine feasible alternatives within the context of this BOA Nomination.

### **2.1.3 Mail, Email, and Website**

The City sent out press releases and made special announcements at Council meetings to advertise the dates and purpose of the three Public Information Meetings. In addition, regular

updates and presentations were made at monthly Rensselaer Revitalization Committee meetings to reach a broader audience and to inform interested parties of progress with the BOA project. Steering Committee members were also emailed regularly to keep posted on project developments, review draft materials, and to advertise and promote various meetings. Meeting summaries and other information were also posted on the City's website to give residents the opportunity to review work products and stay abreast of BOA details.

## 2.2 TECHNIQUES TO ENLIST STAKEHOLDERS

The City and Steering Committee have used a range of techniques to engage the public during the development of the Nomination. In addition to soliciting the public and their active engagement with the BOA planning process, the City since 2014 has also kept in close contact with key stakeholders regarding BOA goals and objectives and formation of recommended project actions to guide future implementation. The primary outlet for reaching stakeholders and soliciting help with BOA planning tasks is the Committee, created at the beginning of the BOA and re-constituted in late 2020 to finalize the Nomination Plan and its recommendations.

Both in the early years of the BOA and now, the Steering Committee consists of various public and private stakeholders and members of community-based organizations that live, represent, and do business within and adjacent to the BOA. Committee members include dedicated volunteers with non-profit public service agencies, local business owners, at least one Common Council member, and liaisons with Amtrak and CP Rail.

Beyond the immediate sphere of the Committee, the City has actively engaged and consulted with other stakeholders, including larger businesses and County and state agencies that have an interest in Rensselaer's revitalization but may not be people who directly live and work in the City. These agencies and individuals need to be informed of BOA planning priorities and recommended actions, and they will be called upon to assist the City with funding support, technical expertise, and coordination of future BOA implementation projects. The list of BOA stakeholders consulted at various milestones during the Nomination planning process include, but is not limited, to the following:

- **Amtrak** – *Largest landowner in the center of the BOA and operator of a transportation hub linking the City with the entire Northeast Corridor*
- **NYS Child and Family Services** – *Major employer with offices and surface parking within the Downtown, between the Lower Broadway business district and the train station*
- **NYSERDA** – *Energy efficiency incentives for municipalities and larger businesses*

- **Capital District Transportation Authority** – *Manages the Albany-Rensselaer Train Station and operates a regional transit bus service*
- **City of Albany** – *State Capital directly across the Hudson from Rensselaer, providing amazing city views for Rensselaer residents, and providing State workers and others who may be seeking more affordable housing options close to their employers*
- **Capital Region Economic Development Council / Empire State Development Corp.** – *Funding support from a variety of State programs and strategic planning assistance and incentives directly to private companies for job creation and retention*
- **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute** – *Four-year college to the north in the City of Troy*
- **Rensselaer County IDA** – *Bonding authority and incentives for development projects*
- **Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce** – *Serves as the regional marketing group and clearinghouse for small business support services and assistance programs*
- **Boys & Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County, Inc.** – *After school care and mentoring for youth in an anchor facility in front of the Amtrak Station and across Broadway from the DeLaet's Landing riverfront housing development*
- **Zappala Block Company** – *Significant business and landowner along the Hudson at a strategic location between Riverfront Park and DeLaet's Landing*
- **U.W. Marx** – *Significant landowner and developer with site control at DeLaet's Landing and parallel to the North Broadway corridor*
- **NYS-DEC** – *Brownfield Cleanup Program, spills response, and other brownfield and site remediation planning and implementation tools to assist the City and private property owners with environmental assessment and cleanup issues*
- **U.S. EPA** – *Could provide future brownfields assessment funding for Phase I and II site investigations or significant site cleanup projects to facilitate new private developments*
- **NYS-DOT** – *Maintains I-787 and the on-and-off-ramps that are above Riverfront Park and provide direct access to the City of Albany and NYS Thruway while also hindering pedestrian mobility along parts of the Hudson River near the Lower Broadway portion of the Downtown; Offers funding through Bridge NY and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) that could help improve and enhance non-vehicular mobility and trail development within the BOA.*

## 3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS

### 3.1 COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL SETTING

The City of Rensselaer is situated along the eastern bank of the Hudson River, across from Downtown Albany and the New York State Capital. Historically, the City was a center of heavy industry, supplying the center of State government in nearby Albany and connected by the railroad to markets throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, long-standing mills and factories were closed and abandoned, leaving Rensselaer with a patchwork of vacant and underutilized properties.

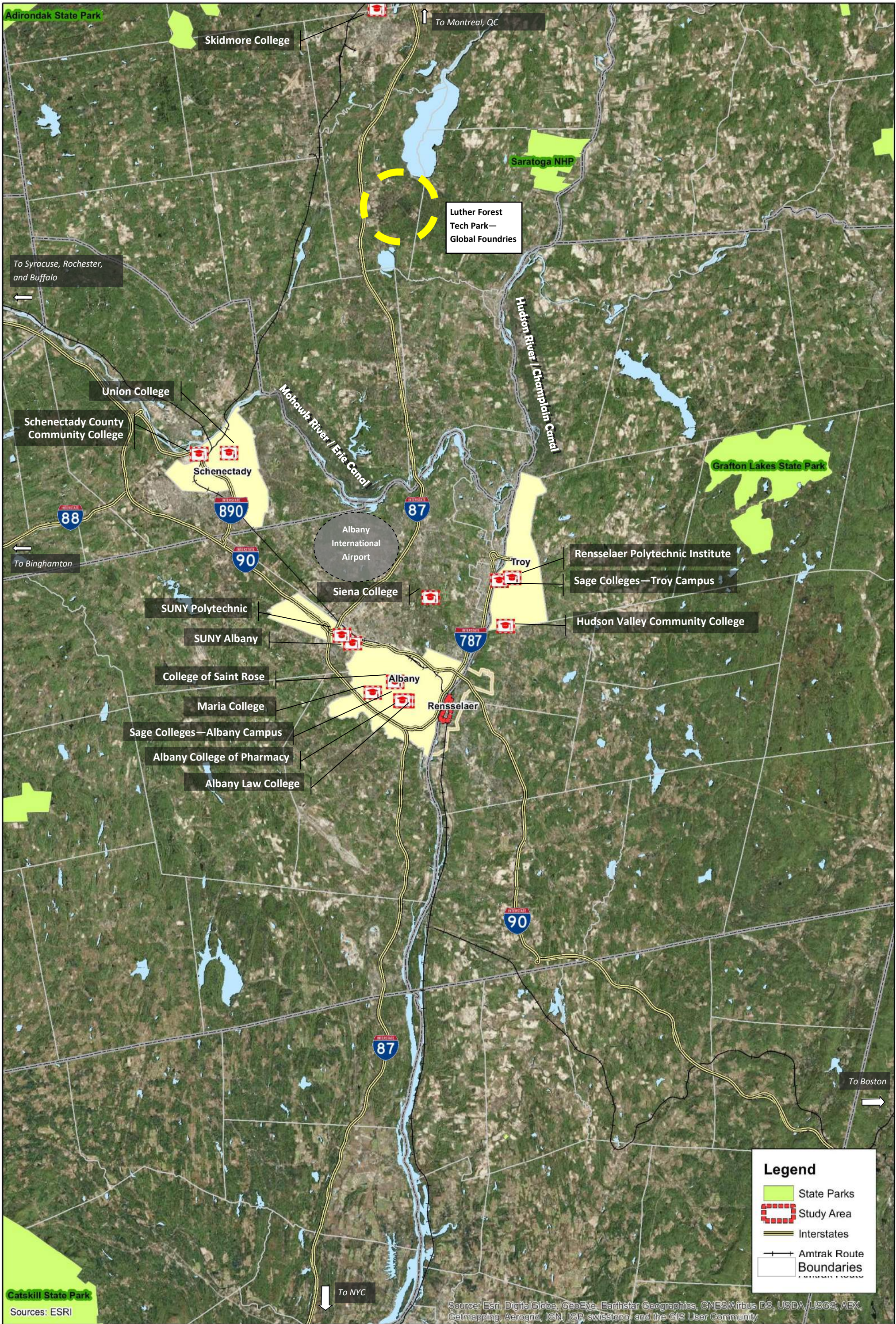
The City has solid “bones,” however, with respect to features that will facilitate economic development and downtown revitalization. Those positive attributes include:

- Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station, the region’s principal passenger rail depot and the ninth-busiest passenger station in the country;
- Hudson River waterfront, which opens up to spectacular views of the Albany skyline and provides new mixed-use development and recreational opportunities;
- Large underutilized waterfront properties, such as the former Rensselaer High School property and the Hilton/Barnette Mill site in the northern part of the City;
- Easy bus and car access to Downtown Albany, the Albany International Airport, and the NYS Thruway heading west (Buffalo) and south (New York City); and
- An active and growing port facility at the City’s south end.

In many ways, these positive building blocks have also negatively impacted the Downtown. The rail lines, roadway rights-of-way, and I-787 on-and-off ramps divide the primary business district, making pedestrian mobility less safe and giving the business district a disjointed feel.

Along the same lines, the City has had significant waterfront acreage tied up in public sector uses including the I-787 approach ramps, the former high school, and a former City Hall building on Broadway north of the traditional business district. In addition, public developments in the past 30 to 40 years including the offices for the NYS Department of Child and Family Services between Broadway and Washington Street have included expansive surface parking areas that diminish the overall building footprint and also hinder pedestrian mobility.







### 3.1.1 Demographic Context

Demographic trends such as population, income level, housing, and education are important attributes for the BOA. Population change has a direct impact on services required at both local and regional levels, and those changes require corresponding adjustments to infrastructure, housing, and community resources such as schools and libraries. Increases in population are usually the result of features that are desirable by residents while declines indicate that certain community needs are not being met.

This section examines several local and regional population trends including overall population change, income levels, housing characteristics, and educational attainment. For population analysis, data from the US Census Bureau was used to examine trends in the City, Rensselaer County, the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA, and New York State between 1960 to 2020. For employment and income, housing, and educational attainment analysis, the same data sources were used but only for 2000, 2010, and 2017 (using the American Community Survey estimates) and excluding the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA as data for that geography was unavailable.

City-wide statistics were generally used to represent the Rensselaer BOA because that data is more complete than attempting to capture specific demographic data only within the Nomination boundary. That said, there are some notable differences between the Census Tract that covers much of the BOA compared to areas just to its south. This Tract covers approximately 25% of the City's population and is slightly more racially diverse than the City. Median household income in the BOA is \$24,700 compared to \$55,912 for the City – very low in both instances. Mirroring that difference is educational attainment. 86% of City residents have a high school degree or higher, compared to 77% in the BOA Census Tract. There is a disparity among those with a bachelor's degree or higher in the City (23%) and the BOA (11%) as well.

Lastly, about 20% of all housing units within the City are located in the BOA. These units are generally older than the City's average housing age, have a median value that is consistently lower than the entire City by 10% or more, consist of more rental apartments in multi-family structures than single-family owner-occupied homes, and are likely to be in substandard condition (55 to 65%) and suffer from one or more serious housing problems (structural or mechanical deficiencies) than the housing stock throughout the rest of the City.

### 3.1.1.1 Population

The City's population has fallen by 12% between 1960 and 2019, from 10,506 to 9,259. The drop was most precipitous between 1960 and 2000 when it fell below 8,000. This is largely due to the significant loss of manufacturing jobs during the 1980s and 1990s when textile and other mills were downsized and shuttered. The population has experienced an impressive rebound since 2000, reaching approximately 9,300 based on a 2019 Census-based estimate.

**TABLE**  
Rensselaer BOA Population Figures

	City of Rensselaer	Rensselaer County	Alb-Sch- Troy MSA	New York State
Population (2019)	9,259	159,185	880,736	19,572,319
Population (2010)	9,392	159,429	870,716	19,378,102
Population (2000)	7,761	152,538	848,879	18,976,457
% Change in Population (2000-2019)	<b>+19%</b>	4.4%	3.8%	3.1%
Population (1990)	8,255	154,429	861,424	17,990,455
Population (1980)	9,047	151,966	795,019	17,558,072
Population (1970)	10,136	152,510	721,910	18,236,882
Population (1960)	10,506	142,585	657,503	16,783,604
% Change in Population (1960-2000)	-35%	7%	23%	12%
% Change in Population (1960-2019)	<b>-12%</b>	12%	34%	17%

Meanwhile, Rensselaer County, as a whole, grew by 12% between 1960 and 2019 from 142,585 to 159,185. Between 1960 and 2000, the County's population rose by 7% (adding 10,000 people) and has grown at a more modest 4 to 5% pace since 2000.

The Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which consists of Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schoharie Counties, grew significantly between 1960 and 2019, rising 34% from 657,503 to 880,736 over the period. Growth was steady between



1960 and 1990 as the population of the area grew by nearly one-third (203,921). The 1990s saw a slight out-migration of 1.5% from the MSA but a nearly 3% increase in the years since 2000.

New York State's population has grown overall at a moderate pace over the last 60 years, approximately 17% from 16,783,604 in 1960 to 19,572,319 in 2019. Rapid population growth in the 1960s (9%) was corrected by a drop in the 1970s (-4%). Since 2000, the State's population has grown by less than 3%, which is similar to the minimal population growth rate of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA.

### **3.1.1.2 Employment and Income**

In 2019, the City of Rensselaer had a higher labor force participation rate (70%) than Rensselaer County (65%) and New York State (63%). Between 2000 and 2013, the unemployment rate increased in all three areas but increased the most in the City where it doubled to 8%, compared to 5.7% and 5.9% in the County and State, respectively. In 2019, the unemployment rate dropped in the City, County, and State to 4.6%, 3.1%, and 3.4%, respectively. The City continues to have higher incidences of joblessness than the County, whose only other dense urban area is the much larger City of Troy surrounded by suburban towns with much lower and more stable job markets focused on retail, administration, and education.

The median household income (MHI) in Rensselaer rose from \$34,730 to \$55,912 between 2000 and 2019. This generally outpaced that of the County and State during the same time period, but the City's MHI has remained about 20% lower than Rensselaer County and the statewide household median income as of 2019.

Over the same time period, individual poverty in Rensselaer rose from nearly 13% in 2000 to 19% in 2013 and has since fallen to 14% in 2019 based on Census estimates. This is still much higher than the County poverty rate but keeping in line with the State as a whole (14%).

Modest household income improvements compared with actual increases in the poverty rate provides conflicting indications of the state of income in Rensselaer. When examining the income level data in 2000, 2013, and 2019 more closely, the nationwide trend of the "hollowing out the middle class" appears more prevalent in Rensselaer. As total population began to grow again in the City from 2000 to 2019, it is believed that many of these newcomers were at either end of the income spectrum (well above or well below median levels) with the majority of them earning what was once considered a decent middle-class living wage.

### 3.1.1.3 Housing Characteristics

The City of Rensselaer is the second most populous community in Rensselaer County (behind the City of Troy), and with limited vacant land and tight population density (2,885 persons per square mile), the existing affordable housing supply is one of the City's most valuable assets to attract new jobs, residents, and private investment.

Housing characteristics help paint a picture of both the quality of life and development health of Rensselaer. For instance, the availability of affordable housing, particularly rental units, can provide an opportunity to attract young families and singles that are just starting out. The conversion of single-family housing to apartments adds to the rental revenue potential of landlords but also increases the supply of housing, usually leading to increased affordability.

On the other hand, absentee landlords can often facilitate the presence of nuisance properties. Also, short-term renters have less incentive to make improvements to property that they do not own and may have less capacity to invest in the surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, it is important to understand the dynamics of housing characteristics, such as vacancy rates and the age of housing stock, and how they interact with trends in the local economic climate.

The overall vacancy rate in the City has risen and fallen during the 2000 to 2019 time period, reaching less than 6% in 2013 to 11% in 2019. Most of the vacancy has consistently been with rental apartments, with the homeowner vacancy rate being less than 1% and holding steady over the years. While homeowner vacancy rates in the County and State have also remained less than 2%, the rental vacancy rates for those larger areas have also remained above 4 to 5%.

Housing stock in Rensselaer is older than that of the County and New York State. In 2019, 45% of housing units in the City were built before 1940 compared to 37% and 33% in the County and the State, respectively. This percentage has continued to fall in the City in recent years, particularly during the 2000s when approximately 1,200 new units (mostly rental apartments) were added to the housing supply.



Of the City's 1,638 owner-occupied housing units, nearly 75% of these units were constructed before 1960, and the City estimates that 55% of all owner-occupied homes are at least moderately substandard with a minimum of one critical problem that could compromise the short-term (three-to-six-months) health and safety of the owners. Assessments conducted by the Department of Planning and Development since 2018 comprising nearly 100 owner-occupied homes have identified at least 20 homes (20%) that have one or more deficiencies that could become a serious emergency if not addressed within the next six months.

#### **3.1.1.4 Educational Attainment**

Educational achievement figures offer insight into the upward mobility of City residents. Where education stops during or after high school, chances of advancing upward on the income ladder grow slimmer. Conversely, areas with a higher percentage of residents with advanced degrees usually indicates a local population that is upwardly mobile, has higher than average incomes, and has had the ability to choose where they would like to live.

In 2000, 80% of residents over the age of 25 in the city of Rensselaer had a high school degree or higher, on par with NYS (79%) but trailing the rest of Rensselaer County (85%). By 2019, graduation rates improved equally across the board with the City improving to 89% and the County and State rising to 92% and 87%, respectively.

The percentage of those with a bachelor's degree or higher in the city rose from 15% in 2000 to 31% in 2019. That figure for the County and State rose slightly more moderately, from 24% to 32% and from 27% to 36%, respectively. Residents with a graduate or professional degree have increase proportionally for all three areas. In 2019, 11% of the 25+ age group in Rensselaer had attained a graduate degree or higher, compared to 14% for the County and 16% for the State.

Overall, the city of Rensselaer has been improving its educational attainment numbers relative to Rensselaer County and the State. But as an urban area close to Downtown Albany and a massive "white collar" labor force, the City would benefit its entire population and continue to reduce poverty by attracting more educated individuals and families to buy homes or rent apartments while creating more demand for locally owned goods and services. This steady trend upward nonetheless bodes well for the City's objective of stabilizing, if not reducing, individual and household income disparities in the coming years.

### 3.1.2 Prior Planning Studies and Initiatives

Prompted in part by the reconstruction of the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station in the late 1990s, community-based planning efforts were jump-started within the City. The reorganization of much of Downtown to make way for the expanded station and its overpass from Broadway prompted more resident thought about future growth and revitalization opportunities. As time passed and people became used to the new station, public attention has also shifted to focus on the waterfront, particularly after Rensselaer High School was relocated further away from the River. Therefore, the City has a wealth of planning documents which provide the framework for reusing vacant and underutilized properties as envisioned by this BOA Plan.

As a result, the City was able to bypass the initial BOA “Step 1” Pre-Nomination Study and instead draw upon these prior adopted plans to provide a unified foundation for this BOA. A brief summary of the recommendations from these plans that are consistent and complementary to the BOA are listed on the following pages.

- **Planning Recommendations for Central Areas of the City of Rensselaer (1999)**  
State University at Albany, Planning Studio
- **City of Rensselaer Downtown Redevelopment Plan (2003-2010)**  
Clark Patterson Associates
- **Route 20 Corridor Study (2004)**  
Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart
- **City of Rensselaer Comprehensive Plan (2006)**  
Clark Patterson Associates
- **City of Rensselaer Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update (2011)**  
Bergmann Associates

#### **Planning Recommendations for Central Areas of the City of Rensselaer**

This report offers recommendations about future land uses in the central parts of the City, which include the underutilized shoreline along the Hudson River, land surrounding the new Rail Station, the expanded Capital View Office Park, the historic Fort Crailo neighborhood south of the traditional Downtown, and infill properties within the City’s compact and low-rise

downtown business district between Third Avenue and Columbia Turnpike. Notable recommendations from this 20-year old plan that remain relevant to the BOA include:

- Enhance the downtown streetscape (following Complete Streets principles)
- Encourage homeownership
- Improve building facades
- Promote infill of vacant lots
- Install a Hudson Riverwalk Trail
- Promote eco-friendly mixed-use development
- Create a waterfront master plan
- Establish a more balanced land use scheme and Incorporate more mixed-use development surrounding the Rail Station within the Downtown

### **Downtown Redevelopment Plan**

The 2003-2010 Downtown Redevelopment Plan builds on the reconstruction of the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station, integrating the goals and objectives of that transit-oriented project into a larger scaled city-wide effort. The Plan focuses specifically on the vision for revitalization of three key areas: the Central Business District, the Rail Station Area, and the North Broadway/Historic Bath Neighborhood (north of the Amtrak maintenance facility).

- Improve safety and traffic efficiency of Broadway for pedestrians and vehicles
- Re-use vacant lots to advance redevelopment efforts and enhance urban form
- Restore the historic character and pedestrian scale of the Downtown
- Help merchants and owners improve their buildings and properties
- Promote redevelopment of parcels around the Rail Station and waterfront for their highest-and-best-uses
- Support multi-modal transportation linkages to other parts of the Capital Region that will enhance the city's position as a central transportation hub, including opportunities and potential locations for ultra-light rail, green buses, and bicycles
  - Create an internal commuter transit system that connects future commuter lots, regional destinations, and local stops to the Train Station
  - Develop a Parking Management Plan to reduce commuter/resident conflicts surrounding the Train Station
  - Secure easements and/or improve linkages for pedestrian and bicycle routes to and from the Train Station

- Actively plan and promote non-automobile links between the City of Rensselaer and certain employment centers within the Capital Region, including the City of Albany, the SUNY East Campus, and the RPI Tech Park
- Ensure that all efforts to expand the multi-modal transportation network include satellite stops or clearly marked links to Downtown Rensselaer

### **Routes 9 & 20 Corridor Study**

This study was sponsored by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) and the City to develop a corridor improvement plan for U.S. Routes 9 & 20 (Columbia Turnpike) which forms the southern boundary of the Downtown and the Fort Crailo Historic District. The study corridor is approximately seven-tenth of a mile in length and runs from the Town of East Greenbush to the intersection of Broadway. The following recommendations are still relevant:

- Re-stripe the bike lane on Route 20 to create a 5-foot wide dedicated strip
- Install raised medians on the north and south side of Broadway and Route 20
- Install a raised median on the south side of Academy Street at Route 20
- Install a raised median on south side of Washington Street at Route 20

Note that while these recommendations have not been implemented in full, the State did invest more than \$1 million in 2014-15 to upgrade the Broadway and Columbia Turnpike intersection with new curbing, handicapped accessible crosswalks, new striping, and pedestrian crossing signals. While this area is still four lanes wide and somewhat difficult to navigate for pedestrians given the amount of vehicle traffic passing through the intersection, the improvements did upgrade safety and more clearly delineate areas for walkers and bicycles.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Rensselaer's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1969. The 2006 version builds on recommendations provided in the aforementioned planning documents and defined an overall vision for the community with a focus on the period to 2025. The following recommendations from this Plan are also relevant to the BOA:

- Create a regulatory framework (zoning, building codes, setbacks, parking) to support mixed-use redevelopment along the Hudson River waterfront
- Establish a Local Development Corporation (LDC) to support and direct orderly development along the river including property acquisition and incentives

- Increase public access to the waterfront
- Actively market Rensselaer to new and expanding businesses
- Provide amenities and services that respond to the requirements of site locators
- Strengthen the City's tax and employment base by encouraging appropriate industrial development in suitable locations
- Focus on high-tech industries to complement higher educational institutions
- Strengthen retail and service centers for residents, visitors, and workers
- Increase regulatory protection of natural resources
- Maximize public and accessible open spaces
- Eliminate hazardous contamination from past land uses
- Maintain the integrity of the City's street grid
- Enhance the city's pedestrian scale and infrastructure
- Ensure the availability of public parking
- Promote bicycle use as an alternative mode of transportation
- Beautify key gateways into the City
- Utilize regulatory measures to preserve and protect historic resources
- Encourage building restoration and historic preservation
- Promote and celebrate Rensselaer's historic story
- Develop a long-term strategic parks improvement plan
- Develop publicly owned land for active recreational uses

### **Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Update**

The City continues to recognize the strong potential of the Hudson Riverfront as the focus of its long-term revitalization efforts. A significant amount of planning and investment has been undertaken along the waterfront since adoption of the original Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in 1986. Consequently, the City recognized the need to prepare an update to its LWRP nearly 25 years later. This effort provided the City with an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable development, to market the riverfront potential to investors, and to discuss opportunities for private and public partnerships. The following recommendations from the updated LWRP are important components of the BOA Plan:

- Create a continuous multi-use waterfront trail
- Promote building façade improvements and infill projects within the Downtown
- Enhance pedestrian linkages between the River and Downtown
- Install pedestrian enhancements at Broadway and west on Third Avenue
- Construct the Mill Creek Pedestrian Bridge within Riverfront Park
- Implement Riverfront Park improvements and new fitness amenities



RENSSELAER ON THE RISE  
Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area

- Promote water-enhanced mixed-use development along Broadway
- Continued build-out of DeLaet's Landing apartments and retail space
- Improved riverfront pedestrian connections to Broadway

*The Esplanade at DeLaet's Landing is the kind of public—private waterfront development with recreational and riverfront access that will attract more residential development and promote community use and enjoyment of the Hudson River.*



## 3.2 PHYSICAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

While the Project Description and Boundary Justification section provided a general overview of the Urban Core BOA, the following Preliminary Analysis provides more detailed information on various factors that influence the location, size, character, and use of future redevelopment and new construction projects within the BOA. The following characteristics will be reviewed under this section: land use; zoning; land ownership; environmental features; transportation and infrastructure; and brownfield, underutilized, and vacant sites.

### 3.2.1 EXISTING LAND USE

The Urban Core BOA comprises 215 parcels encompassing approximately 192 acres, with 168 of those acres attributed to private and public properties excluding roadways and City rights-of-ways or easements for infrastructure and utilities. The top three categories of land area are Public Services (related to the Amtrak rail station and maintenance facility at 69 acres); Vacant Land (38 acres), and Commercial property uses (24 acres).

What is notable about the above statistics is the dominance of the Rail Station and attached rail maintenance yard to the north. Walking from one end of the BOA to the other, the station and its surrounding parking as well as the Herrick Street ramp cuts the Broadway downtown business district into a series of disjointed pieces. Heading north on Broadway across the rail yard overpass is a decent walk, despite recent sidewalk and street lighting improvements. After the overpass, the North Broadway business district begins, with a more cohesive concentration of homes, businesses, and smaller parcels adjacent to a dense neighborhood on the east side of the street and connected to the Hudson River on the west side.

Other than Riverfront Park at the base of the Dunn Memorial Bridge, easy access to the Hudson River from Broadway is virtually non-existent, for cars and pedestrians. Vehicles are directed to the Rail Station in a nearly straight shot after exiting I-787, but there is no apparent public entry to the riverfront from any part of Broadway between Columbia Turnpike at the southern end of the BOA to the rail yard overpass north of the Station. The Esplanade along the River at DeLaet's Landing, just west of the Broadway overpass, provides public waterfront access and some off-street parking, but way-finding signage for this entry point will need to be improved to direct residents and visitors to the River from the southern part of the Downtown.

Despite the physical barrier imposed by the Rail Station and maintenance facility, the nearly 38 acres of vacant land spread among the rest of the BOA represent a significant potential for new development and new thinking about land uses. Some parcels are already large enough to be attractive for new commercial and residential buildings, particularly adjacent to the Hudson River from Zappala Block to the Barnette Mill property in the north. Other smaller vacant properties could be aggregated by a developer, along with selected demolition of derelict homes or commercial buildings, to create properties that would support larger commercial or mixed-use construction along with space reserved for public recreation, open space, and better pedestrian connections to businesses and attractions.

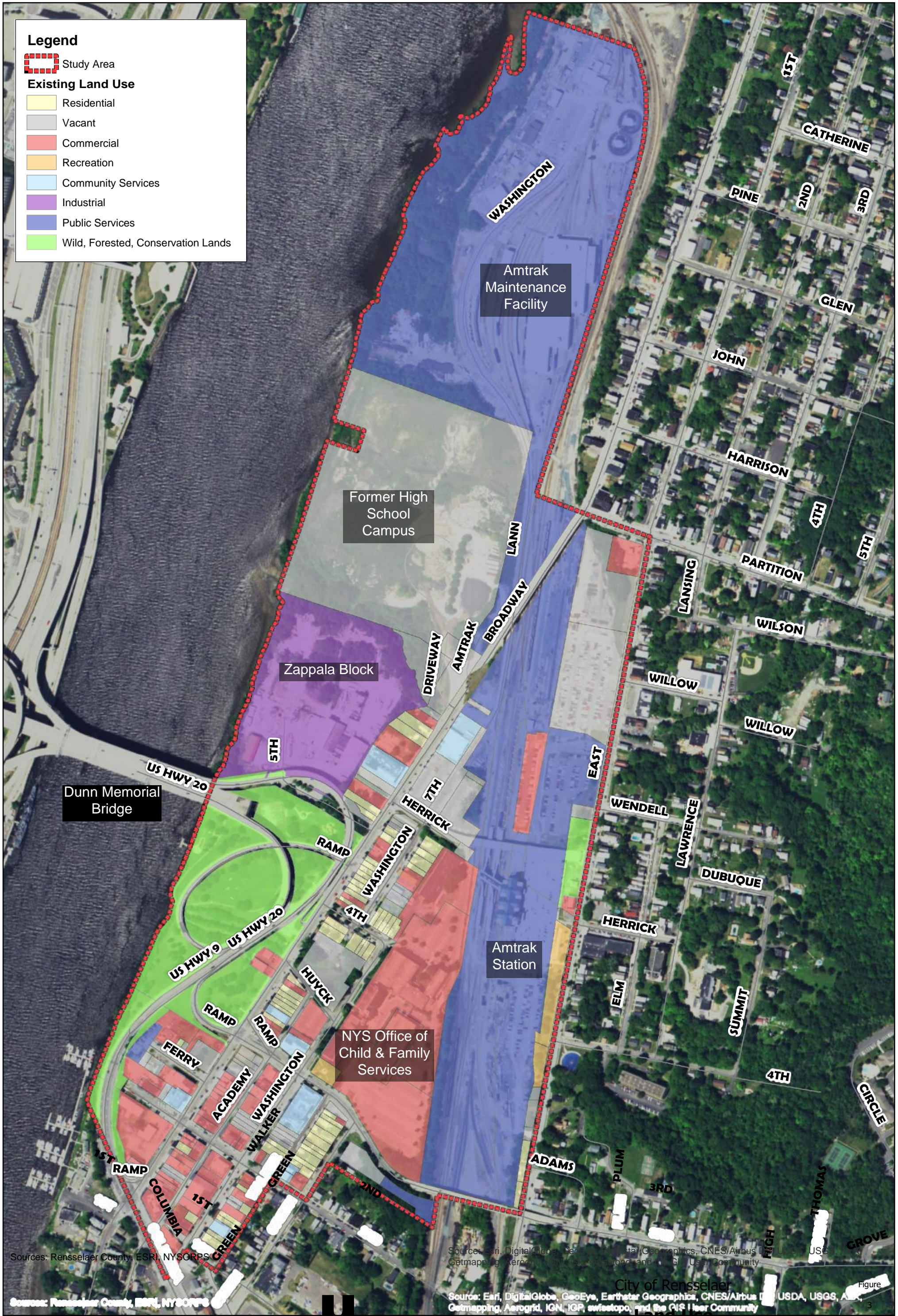
The BOA land uses are depicted in the table below and the accompanying map. The land use classification system used for this analysis is from the NYS Office of Real Property Services (NYS-ORPS) and is based on property tax assessments tabulated by the City. NYS-ORPS has identified nine land use categories used to classify lands within the State. Eight of those nine land use categories are found within the BOA, with Agriculture the only category not represented. This data was also supported by field observations within the City.

**TABLE**  
Land Uses within the BOA


Land Use					
Property Classification	Property Class Code	No. of Parcels	% of Total	Acres	% Area
Agricultural	100s	0	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Residential	200s	65	30.2%	4.84	2.9%
Vacant Lands	300s	58	27.0%	38.54	22.9%
Commercial	400s	65	30.2%	23.80	14.1%
Recreation	500s	3	1.4%	1.37	0.8%
Community Services	600s	9	4.2%	2.59	1.5%
Industrial	700s	1	0.5%	12.48	7.4%
Public Services	800s	9	4.2%	69.25	41.2%
Forested Lands	900s	5	2.3%	15.35	9.1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>215</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>168.21</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*\*After removing right-of-way acreage*






**Legend**

 Study Area

**Existing Land Use**

-  Residential
-  Vacant
-  Commercial
-  Recreation
-  Community Services
-  Industrial
-  Public Services
-  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands

Sources: Rensselaer County, ESRI, NYSORPS

Sources: Rensselaer County, ESRI, NYSORPS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



The largest land use categories are *Residential* and *Commercial*, each comprising 65 of the BOA's 215 parcels (30% each). The commercial parcels are a combination of mixed-use buildings and some commercial-only properties clustered in the Downtown Subarea. The residential parcels consist of large single-family homes that have been converted to two-family apartments located to the north and east of Downtown. The BOA has a housing stock that was predominantly built before 1950, likely accommodating many former factory workers. The majority of these residential units are in substandard condition (estimated by the City to be 60%), based on windshield-type surveys conducted over the past five years.

The *Vacant Lands* category represents 58 parcels (27 percent). However, the *Public Services* category is the largest in terms of acreage, accounting for 69 (41%) of the BOA's 168 acres, largely due to the Rail Station and adjoining maintenance yard. While the station attracts visitors to the Downtown, the tracks and sprawling surface parking lots also bi-sect the Broadway business district, separating the small and compact southern part of the Downtown next to Columbia Turnpike with the much further away North Broadway mixed-use area that starts after the long overpass crossing over the rail yard.

Adding to the disjointed land use pattern is a large, four-parcel commercial site situated between Washington Street and the Rail Station, home to the NYS Office of Child and Family Services (NYS-OCFS). This campus brings jobs to Downtown Rensselaer, but on the Broadway side of the office complex is a large area of surface parking (below) that cannot be used by the public (such as for overnight parking for residents if new apartments were constructed nearby).



### 3.2.2 ZONING

The City of Rensselaer Zoning Code was updated in 2012 to reflect a variety of desired development patterns and expected investments in property reuse within the Downtown and along the Hudson River. The Code is divided into nine districts: Residential (R-1) and (R-2), General Commercial (C-1), Downtown Mixed-Use (MU-1), Waterfront Mixed-Use (MU-2), Light Industrial (I-1), Industrial (I-2), Open Space and Conservation (OS), and Planned Development District (PDD). There is also a separate Historic Overlay District.

Four of the districts are present in the BOA: *Downtown Mixed-Use (MU-1)*, *Waterfront Mixed-Use (MU-2)*, *Open Space and Conservation (OS)*, and *Planned Development District (PDD)*.

Therefore, the City does not believe significant revisions are needed to be able to guide the implementation of the BOA or other recent planning recommendations. Based on lessons learned with the most recent redevelopment projects that have occurred since this BOA project started (i.e. DeLaet's Landing), the City would consider minor zoning and site plan review changes to align future projects with the BOA Vision and related planning documents.

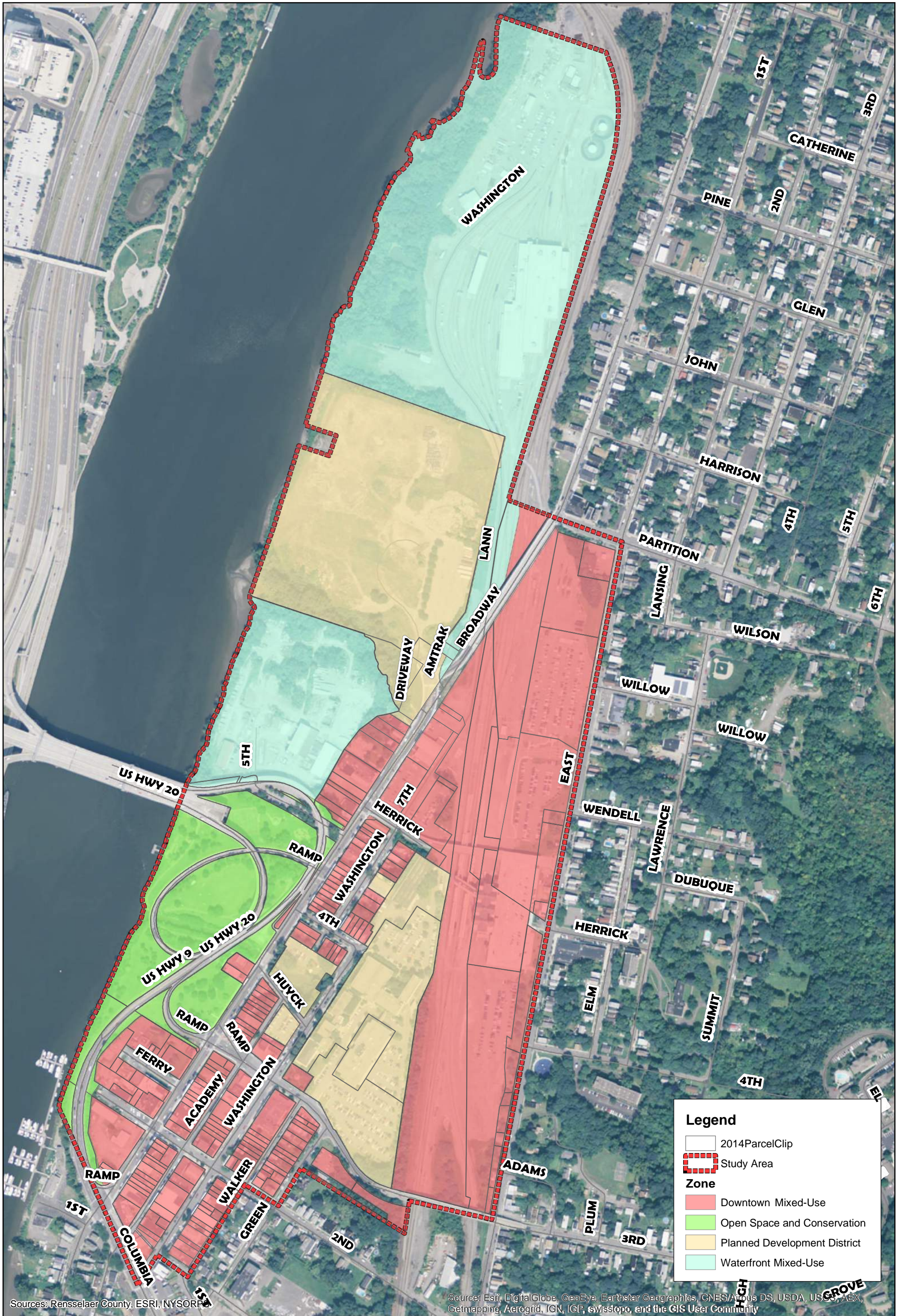
The table below identifies the City zoning breakdown by acreage within the BOA, and the existing zoning map is also included on the following pages. Thirty-six percent of BOA is zoned Downtown Mixed-Use at 61 acres, while 32% is zoned Waterfront Mixed-Use (53 acres). Twenty-four percent of the area is zoned as Planned Development Districts – there are two current PDDs, one with 25 acres and the other with 14 acres – and 9% of the BOA is zoned Open Space and Conservation consisting of nearly 15 acres.

**TABLE**  
Zoning within the BOA

City of Rensselaer Zoning			
Name	Abbrev.	Acres	% of Total
Downtown Mixed-Use	MU-1	61.06	36%
Open Space and Conservation	OS	14.42	9%
Planned Development District	PDD	39.59	24%
Waterfront Mixed-Use	MU-2	53.20	32%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>168.27</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*After removing right-of-way acreage





Sources: Rensselaer County, ESRI, NYSORPS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



A description of each district and how it relates to current land uses found within the BOA:

➤ **Downtown Mixed-Use (MU-1):**

- Stretches from Columbia Turnpike at the southern end of the BOA to Third Avenue (at the base of the Dunn Memorial Bridge) and covers most of lower Broadway, East Street, and part of Washington Avenue in the remaining traditional business district;
- Accommodates a mix of higher-density residential and commercial uses that are intended to encourage more Downtown residents and a vibrant, walkable central core consistent with the historical business district that developed along lower Broadway during the late 1800s and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century;
- Design standards, defined elsewhere in the Zoning Code, seek to further define the form and impact of proposed new developments within this district.

➤ **Waterfront Mixed-Use (MU-2):**

- This district covers the Zappala Block property adjacent to Riverfront Park on the east side of Broadway as well as the Amtrak maintenance facility in the north central part of the BOA;
- Both the Zappala Block and Amtrak maintenance facility do not fit the vision ascribed for this district when it was created in 2012. At this time, the relocation of the Amtrak facility is highly unlikely and cost prohibitive, and the City is more interested in exploring options for Zappala Block property which includes the former City Hall building and several vacant properties on Broadway;
- Capitalizes on the City's waterfront and promotes convenient public access to water and rail transportation by encouraging a mix of residential, commercial, and public recreational uses within walking distance of each other;
- Encourages mixed development of residential units with retail, restaurants, entertainment and other commercial uses to create an active waterfront, enhance the vitality of local businesses, reduce vehicular traffic and incorporate pedestrian amenities into the site design and approval process;
- Encourages building design and wayfinding signage that enhances the proximity of the Hudson River without diminishing views for residents and visitors.

➤ **Open Space and Conservation District (OS):**

- Within the BOA, this district is found only in Rensselaer's Riverfront Park and adjacent to the on-ramps for the Dunn Memorial Bridge (I-787);
- Preserves the historic, scenic, recreational and environmental value of officially designated parkland, environmentally sensitive areas, heavily wooded areas, and other open spaces, which may or may not be accessible to the public;
- Provides areas for the development of new passive and active parks, multi-use trails, and small-scale environmental interpretive sites;
- No minimum lot size is required.

➤ **Planned Development District (PDD):**

- Provides a flexible zoning district to accommodate major new development or redevelopment efforts within the City of Rensselaer;
- Provides the mechanisms necessary to ensure compatibility among varied land uses, promotes innovative and space-efficient land uses, and encourages quality site planning and design practices;
- Encourages a diversity of land uses within a single unified development plan while ensuring adequate standards for public health, safety, and general welfare;
- Within the BOA, this district is found on the NYS Office of Child and Family Services (NYSOCFS) campus and surface parking areas at Third Avenue and Washington Street as well as on the DeLaet's Landing site along the Hudson River (former Rensselaer High School property).

### 3.2.3 LAND OWNERSHIP

Understanding land ownership within the BOA is an important step in formulating future development scenarios. Projects that occur on publicly owned properties can be easier to redevelop consistent with a desired vision than projects on privately held parcels. This is because private property owners cannot be required to conform to a specific community vision unless regulated through the existing zoning code or through other land use controls.

As a result, this planning process emphasizes the importance of building community consensus regarding the future of the BOA study area. When consensus is reached, property owners will be more willing to contribute to the plan's implementation. Support from residents within the BOA is critical to the success of revitalization efforts. While most redevelopment will focus on building rehabilitation and new construction on individual parcels, large-scale development projects may require land acquisition incorporating multiple parcels. Such property aggregation can be complicated and involve lengthy negotiations with multiple landowners.

#### Ownership Facts

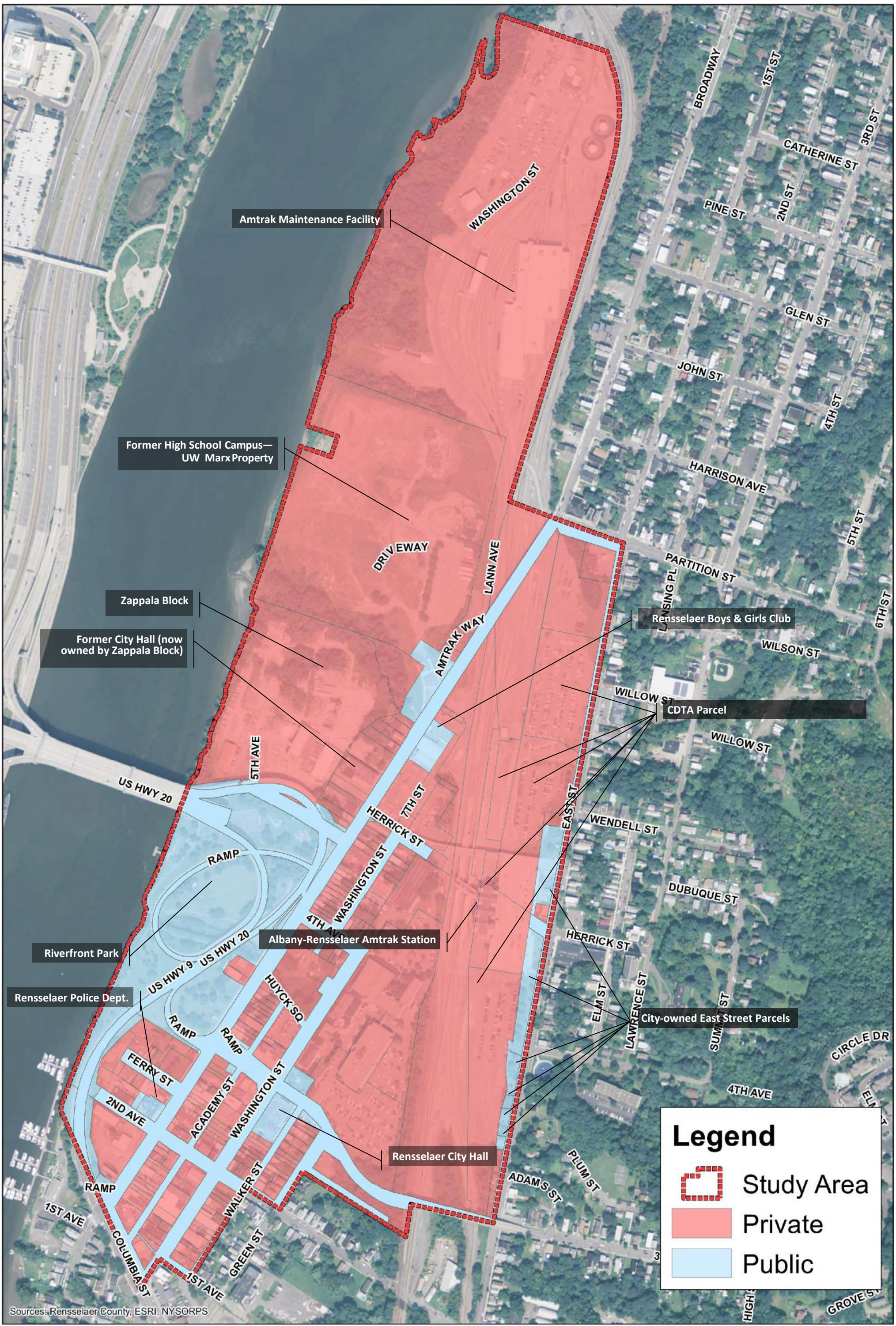
Based on real property data, approximately 78 percent of the land within the BOA is privately owned, with the remaining 22 percent publicly owned (City, Rensselaer County, State of New York). This separation is somewhat blurred by Amtrak's and the Capital District Transportation Authority's (CDTA) ownership of parcels along the railroad right-of-way, the newer Rail Station, and the adjacent parking garage and surface lots, which are collectively considered privately-owned because their use and function is not expected to change significantly (with the exception of building mixed-uses on top of existing parking while preserving those parking spaces as part of a development project). Amtrak owns three parcels totaling 47 acres, while CDTA owns seven (7) parcels consisting of almost 11 acres.

**TABLE**  
Land Ownership within the BOA

Land Ownership Composition		
Ownership	Acres	Percentage
Public	42.1	21.9%
Private	150.0	78.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>192.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Includes right-of-way acreage





Sources: Rensselaer County, ESRI, NYSORPS



Public properties within the BOA consist of roadway rights-of-way, Rensselaer's Riverfront Park, a grouping of parcels along East Street, and a handful of scattered sites on Lower Broadway and Washington Street including the current City Hall (62 Washington), and the Rensselaer Police Department. All private and publicly owned parcels are shown on the prior map.

### **Redevelopment Flexibility and Opportunities**

Because a handful of entities (City of Rensselaer, Amtrak, State of New York) owns a significant amount of land within the BOA, there is tremendous opportunity to influence significant redevelopment projects rather than a more piecemeal approach of reusing smaller individually owned vacant lots and buildings. Based on ownership patterns, there are three (3) distinct and broader development opportunities, which can be categorized as the following:

- *Redevelop a significant amount of waterfront property*
  - Support the completion of Phases 2 and 3 of DeLaet's Landing
  - Relocate the Amtrak maintenance facility north of the Rail Station
    - Would free up nearly 40 acres along the Hudson River waterfront
    - Attract new residents to the City immediately north of the Downtown
    - Increase and enhance recreational access to the Hudson
    - Subdivide sites to encourage new mixed-use developments
    - Complement the existing Downtown Mixed-Use district to the south and the Residential district to the northeast by attracting more residents
- *Expand recreational facilities and improve access to the Hudson River from Broadway*
  - Expand the recreational use and types of facilities in Riverfront Park
  - Upgrade trails, remove brush, and improve views of the River and Albany
  - Secure rights-of-ways for waterfront trail development when mixed-use developments are constructed along the River
  - Maintain Riverfront Park as a gathering place for health and wellness
- *Renovate buildings and promote infill-construction of derelict and vacant properties*
  - Repurpose the cluster of city-owned parcels on East Street
  - Encourage building rehabilitation, new storefronts, and pocket parks and community gardens along lower Broadway and Washington Street

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- Attract a new mixed-use development at the former City Hall and adjacent vacant property with ground-floor retail on Broadway, sweeping riverfront views, and trail access connecting to DeLaet's Landing and the Esplanade
- Facilitate clean up and reuse of brownfield sites on Columbia Turnpike and between Broadway and Washington Street with new construction that builds out the street wall and creates intimate side street and alley space for local festivals, ethnic restaurants, sidewalk cafes, and other locally owned businesses



*There is ample land within the BOA that can serve as a blank canvas for creative new developments to attract residents, new retail, and other uses in conformance to the BOA and existing development plans (Rail Station-left, Columbia Turnpike-below).*



### 3.2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The following sections and maps describe existing environmental factors within the BOA that could affect new development and reuse of certain properties and require potential mitigation during the site plan review and approval projects for new projects.

#### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are areas that form the transition between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and comprise a wide range of hydrologic and vegetative conditions. They are some of the most productive and diverse ecosystems in the world and, as such, provide important habitat for a variety of species along the Hudson River corridor. The ecological importance of wetlands is also supplemented by their impact on water quality. By impeding drainage flow from developed land, wetlands can filter out pollutants and sediment-laden run-off prior to it entering rivers and streams, thus improving surface and groundwater quality.

To accurately account for wetland areas within the BOA, two data sets were reviewed for this analysis – NYS-DEC freshwater wetlands and National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps. The DEC identifies and regulates all freshwater wetlands greater than 12.4 acres in size and generally protects an adjacent area of 100 feet around those wetlands. According to the attached Environmental Features Map, the DEC does not regulate any wetlands within the BOA.

Wetland areas are also mapped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). Four wetlands totaling 6.65 acres are identified by NWI data within the BOA. The largest of these areas is riverine in nature, located adjacent to the banks of the Hudson River and not expected to impact land uses or redevelopment opportunities as long as any construction activities affecting the immediate banks of the River are considered in the site planning process. Two similar but smaller riverine wetlands can also be found on separate stretches of Mill Creek. In addition, a small freshwater pond is located close to the Hudson on the Amtrak maintenance facility property.

#### **Floodplains**

Floodplains are low-lying areas that are most subject to recurring inundation. Development in floodplains is complicated by the increased potential for future flooding, causing damage to the built environment and health and safety risks to people. Floods, and floodplains, are generally

identified based on the statistical frequency of occurrence. The “100-year floodplain,” for example, is an area that is subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in areas at risk of 100-year floods, new or substantially improved dwellings must be constructed with the lowest floor elevated at or above the base expected flood level.

The Rensselaer Urban Core BOA runs alongside the Hudson River and is within the Hudson River Estuary, meaning that the riverfront is affected by rising and falling tides emanating from the Atlantic Ocean. Based on an analysis of FEMA’s Q3 flood data, approximately 64 percent of the BOA is within the 100-year floodplain.

As depicted on the attached Environmental Features Map, the majority of these floodplains are located between the CSX railroad line and the Hudson River shoreline. Certain types of development in these areas are not necessarily prohibited, but new construction may be complicated by the possibility of flooding and a high groundwater table. The City has floodplain regulations in a section of its Zoning Code called “Development in the Flood Fringe,” and the City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program which comes with its own set of regulations and building standards regarding development within the floodplain. Therefore, careful planning would have to occur to account for changes to new or renovated structures to minimize future flooding risks and damage to existing properties.

## **Soils**

As shown in Table 9 and the related Soils Map, soils within the BOA are predominantly loamy or sandy udorthents with 4 to 8 percent slopes. Loamy udorthent soils comprise 84 acres (44 percent) of the BOA while the sandy udorthents make up 44 acres (23 percent). Urban land conditions constitute almost 55 acres (28.5 percent).

Map 8 also groups the soil types by drainage capabilities. The loamy soil areas have low runoff potential and high infiltration rates even when thoroughly wet, meaning that they drain well. The sandy soil areas consist of slightly less fine texture but also drain moderately well. With respect to land along the Hudson River, the soil conditions do not present any significant obstacles in terms of drainage capabilities. The urban land soil designation makes up much of the Broadway and Washington Street corridors, and this hydrologic soil group is more variable than the loamy and sandy soils noted above, but it is still not difficult to work with from a redevelopment perspective.



Slopes are also not a significant barrier to development within the BOA, as the terrain is mostly flat with the exception of the rise in grade approaching East Street from the CSX railroad line. In the far northern part of the BOA, there is also a rise in grade from the CSX railroad line to the Broadway overpass, while the North Broadway corridor generally flattens out after crossing over the massive Amtrak maintenance facility.

**TABLE**  
Soils within the BOA

Study Area Soils			
Soil Type	Abbrev.	Acres	% of Total
Fluvaquents-Udifulvents complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes	FIA	0.5	0.3%
Hudson silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	HuB	1.3	0.7%
Hudson silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	HuC	2.4	1.3%
Hudson silt loam, hilly	HuD	3.8	2.0%
Udorthents, loamy	Ud	84.0	43.7%
Udorthents, sandy	Ue	43.8	22.8%
Urban land	Ur	54.9	28.5%
Water	W	1.5	0.8%
<b>Total</b>		192.3	100.0%

*\*Including right-of-way acreage*

## Geology

An analysis of surface geology was also conducted for the BOA as the type and location of these materials can have important implications for development. Surface geology in the Study Area is composed of essentially two materials – recent alluvium and a small sliver of lacustrine deposits – according to data from the New York State Museum (NYSM). See the following Table and Geology Map on the following pages.

Recent alluvium usually exists in floodplains and within valleys and is defined by the NYSM as oxidized fine sand to gravel and as a permeable material. This material lies along the Hudson River covering over 95 percent of the BOA. Development on alluvium can be complicated by the potential for uneven bearing strength for large building loads in addition to the threat of flooding previously discussed for low-lying structures. These issues would have to be addressed through project design and engineering and during the site plan review process, as was the case for the DeLaet's Landing (Phase 1) apartment project constructed in 2016-17.

Lacustrine deposits consist of well-sorted and stratified sand deposits settled out when lakes were formed, potentially as the result of glaciers in this northern clime. These sands can be found closest to East Street within the BOA on the other side of the Rail Station. This geology is not much more conducive to development than alluvium. However, the lacustrine area is further upland than the alluvium area making it less prone to flooding risks.

**TABLE**  
Surface Geology within the BOA

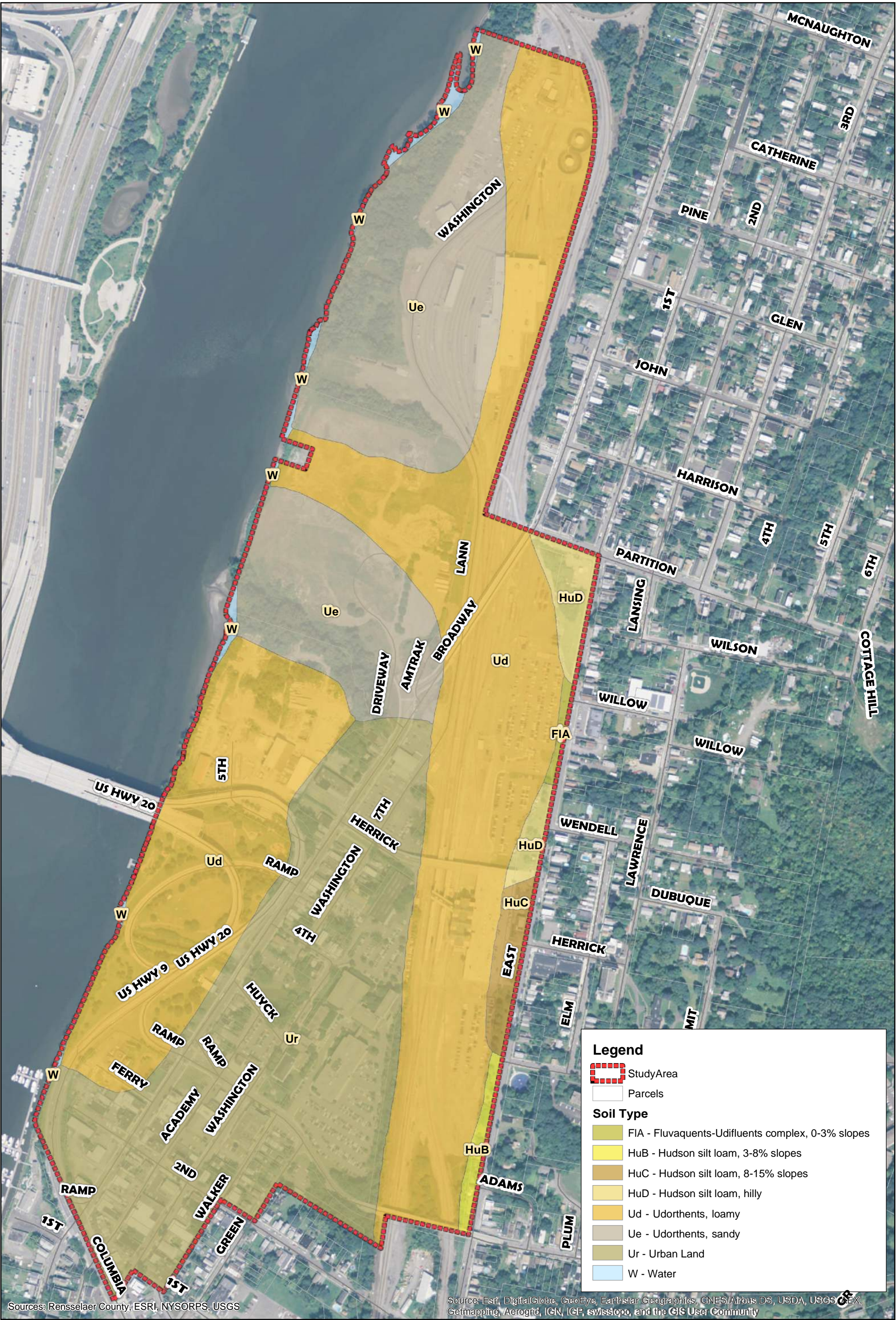
Study Area Geology			
Surficial Geology	Abbreviation	Acres	% of Study Area
Recent alluvium	al	190.4	99.2%
Lacustrine sand	ls	1.6	0.8%
<b>Total</b>		192	100.0%

*\*Including right-of-way acreage*









Sources: Rensselaer County, ESRI, NYSORPS, USGS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community







### 3.2.5 TRANSPORTATION

Analysis of transportation systems is critical for understanding the mobility of people and vehicles within the BOA and connectivity to where people live, work, and other public facilities such as parks, trails, entertainment venues, and local businesses. This infrastructure feature can be significant to the future location of development projects. Federal and State highways and waterways connect local neighborhoods to larger markets. They also funnel consumer traffic to and from certain areas which is important for development decisions.

The City of Rensselaer should be considered the regional transportation hub within the Capital District. It is the only community in the region that boasts of a sizable deep-water port, a regional passenger rail station, extra railroad sidings for storage and maintenance, and multiple interstate highway connections directly connected to the Downtown business district.

Surface roadways are the most prominent form of travel in Rensselaer. As indicated by the Transportation Map, the BOA is traversed by a roadway network that meets the needs of the community despite being complicated by arterial ramps to the Dunn Memorial Bridge (I-787) and the north-south CSX railroad line. The southern end of the BOA is characterized by a street grid format bordered by U.S. Routes 20 and 9 (Columbia Turnpike), which is the primary route to and from Albany for southern and central Rensselaer County (connecting directly to I-787). The central and northern parts of the BOA are significantly covered by the Dunn Memorial Bridge, railroad rights-of-way, and large underutilized waterfront parcels, making the street grid pattern more segmented in the central part of the Study Area.

The Port of Albany-Rensselaer is a major deep-water port that once hosted BASF and Bayer Pharmaceuticals and has approximately 35 acres of developable land within the City. Most of the port facility is located across the River in the City of Albany, with supporting port activities taking place in Rensselaer. The Port also has useable railroad sidings on both sides of the River.

The Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station is located on East Street within the BOA. It is the ninth busiest Amtrak station in the country with services available to New York City, Montreal, Boston, Toronto, and Chicago. The nearly 40-acre Amtrak maintenance facility sits in the northern part of the BOA, separating the Lower Broadway downtown business district with the northern Hudson Riverfront and North Broadway mixed-used corridor. Rail sidings are located throughout the study area, and the rail lines cross the Hudson River at the Livingston Avenue



Bridge at the northern end of the BOA. A north-south railroad spur also connects the Livingston Avenue Bridge with the City of Troy to the north.

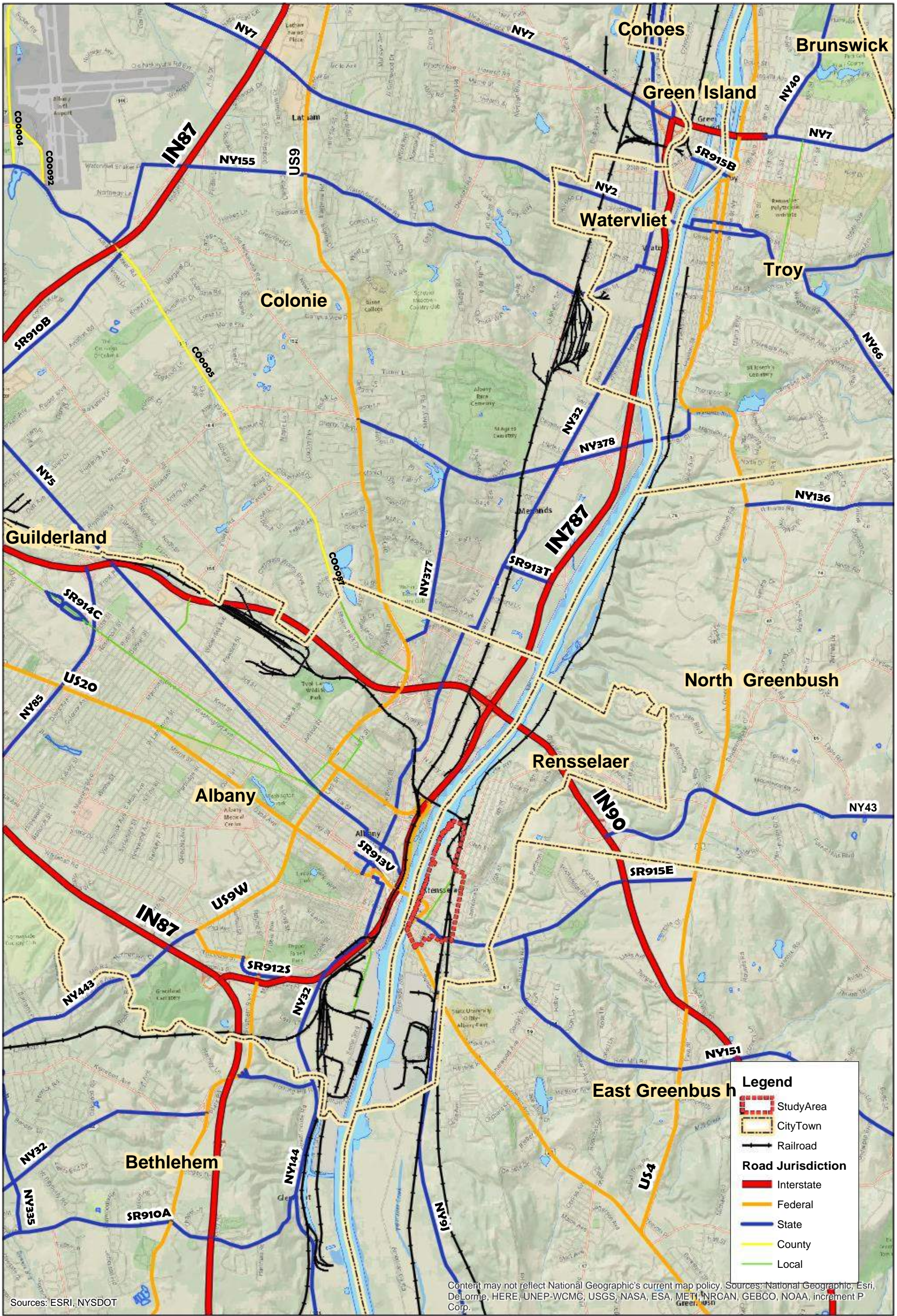
While the City is host to multiple transportation modes, development patterns over the past half-century or more have made vehicle travel more efficient while discouraging pedestrian and bike access and safety. Cars entering Rensselaer from the Dunn Memorial Bridge can easily get to Columbia Turnpike and points east through East Greenbush or the North Broadway corridor and I-90 via the Livingston Avenue Bridge. The Rail Station is literally a few minutes from I-787, as this route was made quicker with the construction of a dedicated on-ramp to the station from Broadway (Herrick Street), less than a block from the Dunn Memorial Bridge off-ramp.

Moving around the Downtown by car is easy, and fortunately the CDTA offers an ample number of bus routes that traverse Columbia Turnpike, Broadway, Washington Avenue, and East Street to connect other parts of the Capital Region to City Hall, the Train Station, the state's large office complex, and North Broadway. A new bus shelter along the access road to the DeLaet's Landing rental housing development north of the Broadway business district helps connect residents of that complex with the City of Albany and other job centers within Rensselaer County and the Capital Region.

Pedestrians and bicyclists are not as lucky as cars. There is no safe or dedicated pedestrian or bike route across the Hudson River to and from Albany, and within the BOA itself, sidewalk and crosswalks are interspersed but in varying condition, creating many stops for pedestrians and the necessity to share narrow roadways with bicyclists. The North Broadway overpass has a decent sidewalk on both sides, but it is not well-separated from the vehicle lanes other than a granite curb. Once over the Amtrak maintenance facility, sidewalks are more consistent along North Broadway but also in varying condition and in need of replacement at many cross-street intersections to improve safety and visibility.

Recent City-sponsored infrastructure work along Broadway that replaced the sidewalks and curbs, installed new pavers and stamped concrete areas for snow storage, and added historical street lights and new handicapped crosswalks has improved pedestrian mobility between the traditional Downtown area near the current City Hall and DeLaet's Landing and the North Broadway corridor described above. The key to maintaining and expanding pedestrian and bicycle access and mobility throughout the BOA will be providing safe and well-lit "off-road" trail segments and connection points closer to the Hudson River when vacant and underutilized properties are proposed for new development. This will help close gaps in the regional trail system and improve safety by relying less on City sidewalks, streets, and crosswalks.







### 3.2.6 VACANT, ABANDONED & UNDERUTILIZED SITES

The presence of brownfields within a community can have widespread impacts, lowering property values, discouraging redevelopment, and potentially imposing health threats on the surrounding neighborhoods. Redevelopment of these properties may be complicated due to the real or perceived presence of contamination.

As a result, one of the main objectives of the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program is to identify the potential presence of vacant, blighted, and contaminated properties that may be impacting the surrounding community and provide a planning framework for future site assessments, cleanup measures and alternatives, and suitable property reuse ideas. Brownfields often can provide redevelopment opportunities that will also spur additional revitalization of surrounding properties and related public and private investments.

All key properties located within the Urban Core BOA were evaluated by the City and its stakeholders to identify prior historical uses, potential sources of contamination (using any available databases and city directories), and current redevelopment opportunities. These sites are generally in various states of ownership, investigation or remediation, and redevelopment.

#### **Brownfield Identification Methodology**

All properties within the BOA were examined to determine past environmental contamination and future redevelopment potential. A preliminary inventory of “target sites” was identified through this process. This inventory will subsequently be utilized and expanded upon in the BOA implementation phase to identify tangible redevelopment opportunities and site-specific recommendations. From there, the City will be able to use that information to guide redevelopment and policy decision-making. The preliminary examination of the BOA was conducted using four sources of information, as follows:

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- NYS-DEC and EPA database records
- GIS-identified vacant sites
- “Windshield” exterior survey
- Community identified sites via citizen participation and the Steering Committee



### **NYS-DEC and EPA Database Records**

The first step in the target site identification process was to query facility and site information from four State and federal databases. Facilities and sites within the BOA boundary were searched and examined to determine likelihood of environmental contamination. Information from the following sources was used to develop this analysis:

- Spills Incident Database (NYS-DEC): Maintained by the DEC, this contains a listing of chemical and petroleum spills throughout New York State, dating back to 1978. Information includes the type and/or volume of contaminant spilled, media impacted, and the status of the spill.
- Remedial Site Database (NYS-DEC) – This database contains listing of all properties that are currently enlisted in one of the DEC’s remediation programs. The DEC programs are distinguished by property ownership, type of assistance, and level of cleanup required.
- Bulk Storage Database (NYS-DEC) – This database contains information on all Bulk Storage Facilities within New York State including petroleum bulk storage, chemical bulk storage, and major oil storage facilities. Facilities are classified by the volume and type of substance stored on-site.
- Envirofacts Database (U.S. EPA) – Information contained within this database is used to identify whether or not a facility is certified to handle hazardous waste. The EPA utilizes specific testing methods to determine whether or not material is hazardous.

The table on the following pages summarizes the list of potentially contaminated sites based on the available database information described above and related site observations. Parcels that are close to each other or could provide the opportunity for reuse as a cluster of multiple properties are shaded with the same color for illustrative purposes (not related to any other parcel shading on separate maps).

**TABLE**  
Potential Environmental Problems within the BOA

Potential Contamination Site Matches				
Facility Name	Site Address	Facility Designation as a Contaminating Site (Enviromapper)	Bulk Storage Tanks	Spills
Zappala Block	501 Broadway	Yes	PBS	1
Former City Hall	505 Broadway	Yes	PBS	2
Martino's Garage	551 Broadway	Yes	PBS	1
Ron's CITGO	201 Broadway	Yes	PBS	0
Amtrak Maintenance Facility	675 Broadway	Yes	MOSF	26
Joe's Garage	3 Columbia St	Yes	PBS	2
Former Hess Station	13-15 Columbia St	Yes	PBS	6
Amtrak Station/Former Price Chopper	625 East St	Yes	PBS	13
Stewart's Shops	12 Partition St	Yes	PBS	1
Xtra Mart	9 Third Ave	Yes	PBS	4
Former Huyck Mills/ NYS-OCFS	52 Washington St	Yes	PBS	7
National Grid – Rensselaer MGP	89 Washington St	Yes	None	0

PBS = Petroleum Bulk Storage facility

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – Identified Vacant Sites

Property classifications filed by the City Assessor with the NYS Office of Real Property Services (NYS-ORPS) were used to identify the types of activities that occur (or have occurred in the past) on individual properties. Parcels listed as “vacant” within this database were identified as potential target sites within the BOA. Additionally, all vacant sites are also considered underutilized for this Nomination Study.

The presence of vacant and underutilized sites can be problematic in communities by discouraging investment, impacting surrounding property values, or imposing health and safety threats on the surrounding neighborhoods. These properties, however, also present an opportunity for targeted and more site-specific infill redevelopment.



### **Field Evaluations - “Windshield” Survey**

Curbside assessments were intended to better identify the types of activities currently taking place on each property. Consideration was given to whether or not known environmental contamination had occurred (i.e. a documented spill of chemical or petroleum products) and to the media that is potentially impacted (i.e. groundwater).

The initial windshield survey conducted in early September 2014 revealed several key findings. Large public infrastructure facilities dominate the terrain within the Rensselaer BOA. The Dunn Memorial Bridge and its ramps consume the viewshed to the west while the massive Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station and its surrounding parking garage and surface lots make up the central part of the BOA. The study area is divided by the CSX railroad line running north and south and is bounded by the Amtrak maintenance facility to the north and the four-lane Columbia Turnpike corridor to the south.

An early 20<sup>th</sup> Century urban fabric still exists between Third Avenue and Columbia Street, with multi-story, mixed-use buildings filling out the grid-like street pattern. Several east-west streets are terminated before the waterfront by the on-ramps to the Dunn Memorial Bridge. Vacant one-story buildings and more modern stores and undeveloped lots are prevalent in this area. Converted two-family buildings are prominent to the east of Washington Street and to the north of Third Avenue. Overpasses at Third Avenue and Broadway provide connections to the BOA Study Area from other parts of the City.

### **Community-Identified Sites**

In addition to sites identified through database research, community input on potential brownfield sites was solicited from stakeholders and the public at-large. One significant site that had generally frustrated many residents for many years was identified beyond those identified on paper or through windshield survey methods. This site was also identified as a potential redevelopment property in the City’s 2011 Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

#### ➤ Former Rensselaer High School / DeLaet’s Landing

To the north of the Zappala Block property along the Hudson Riverfront are the former lands of the Rensselaer Junior-Senior High School, located there until 2007. In 2004 the property was acquired by U.W. Marx for a mixed-use development, called DeLaet’s Landing, aligned with the City’s mixed-use and residential vision for the waterfront.

DeLaet's Landing is a 24-acre redevelopment site along the Hudson River that boasts dramatic views of the Albany skyline. Close to rail, major interstates, and the Downtown central business district, the project will serve as a catalyst for additional revitalization and waterfront development in the City. Construction of the development will be completed in phases, with Phase 1 completed in 2017 and fully leased (94 apartments) by 2019. When fully constructed, DeLaet's Landing is planned to include a mix of office, retail, and restaurant space, a general-service hotel, and at least 150 one-two-and three-bedroom apartments, many having wide river-facing views.

Many of the vacant parcels identified within the BOA do not have a history or known record of any environmental contamination. Yet many of these parcels have been all but ignored for decades, and they therefore contribute to ongoing negative community perceptions about Rensselaer's economy and investment potential. Nevertheless, the many vacant parcels within the BOA present numerous opportunities to the community, including:

- Available and affordable urban properties for redevelopment;
- Potential for land assembly to create economies of scale for new projects;
- Utilizing local and regional development incentives;
- Maximizing use of existing municipal infrastructure (water and sewer, stormwater), much of which has been reconstructed since 2010;
- Potential for expanded mixed-use and commercial development; and
- Waterfront development for professionals, commuters, and aging-in-place seniors and retirees seeking less maintenance and easy access to the rest of the Capital Region.

**TABLE**  
Rensselaer Urban Core BOA

Vacant, Abandoned & Underutilized Parcels		
Classification	Acreage	% of Total
<b>Vacant, Abandoned &amp; Underutilized Parcels</b>	79	46.9%
<b>Utilized</b>	89	53.1%
<b>Total</b>	*168	100%

*\*After removing right-of-way acreage*



## **Brownfield Classifications**

Potential target sites that could be prioritized for future BOA program involvement (site assessments and more specific and detailed reuse feasibility plans) were classified under three categories: Vacant, Brownfields, and Underutilized / Abandoned Sites. These properties are depicted on the prior map. Descriptions of each classification are as follows:

### *Vacant Sites*

Sites that are identified as vacant in the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services (NYS-ORPTS) were categorized for the BOA. NYS-ORPTS defines a vacant property as one that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvements. 23 percent (more than 38 acres) of the Study Area is categorized as vacant by the State.

### *Underutilized or Abandoned Sites*

Properties identified as underutilized are those that are actively used and/or occupied, but their structures or lots are not being used at their full capacity or for their intended use. These sites were primarily identified using a curbside “windshield” survey in September 2014 and updated in late 2020. Public input will also guide the ongoing identification of underutilized sites during future planning and implementation phases of the BOA.

### *Brownfields Sites*

These sites were first identified using EPA and DEC databases as properties where some form of contamination is known to have occurred. Many of the sites were then cross-referenced with private search services that encompass all available data sources in a single search process. Some of these sites may also be in various stages of remediation. Sources of common and known contamination include a history of toxic spills and the presence of underground petroleum or chemical storage tanks presently or in the past. A staggering thirty-two (32) percent (54 acres) of the Study Area consists of potential brownfield sites with known past or perceived current storage tanks, reported spills, and other documented contamination events.

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Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area



*Known and potential Brownfield sites throughout the large BOA study area.*









### 3.3 ECONOMIC AND MARKET TRENDS ANALYSIS

As part of the Urban Core BOA Nomination Plan, a preliminary economic and market analysis was conducted to inventory the current demographic and consumer make-up of the area and to begin to map out the future of its economy. The analysis included an examination of demographics, local, and regional market data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a Shift-Share Analysis, and “Esteban-Marquillas Extension” assessment methods. Economic figures for Rensselaer County and for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) were used as proxies for establishing local market trends and conditions. It was determined that the Rensselaer economy was a reasonable facsimile and component to that of the rest of the County and MSA, albeit on a smaller scale.

The market analysis established existing market conditions using 2013 employment data, and it applied predictive economic measures to address potential industrial and commercial trends for the area over the next 10 to 15 years. A list of potential target industrial sectors was produced, categorized as high-performing sectors or emerging sectors for the Rensselaer County and Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA.

#### 3.3.1 EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The economy of Rensselaer has relied heavily on manufacturing like many similar “rust belt” communities in the Northeast and Midwest. Assets such as the Port of Albany-Rensselaer and the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station help extend the reach of markets for the City’s business community. Proximity to Albany has also played a part the economic makeup of the city. Firms like Bayer Aspirin, BASF, and Huyck Felt once thrived in Rensselaer by manufacturing and shipping their consumer goods to markets around the world.

The larger economy for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA is buoyed by state employment even at times when the national market is in a downturn. Historically, the area has relied on manufacturing just as Rensselaer has. More recently, state incentives, proximity to markets, and institutions of higher learning have propelled the rise of the semiconductor industry in the area. The College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Union College as well as the presence of the GlobalFoundries chip fab campus in Saratoga County and General Electric Research and Development in Schenectady County have led to the area being dubbed “Tech Valley.”

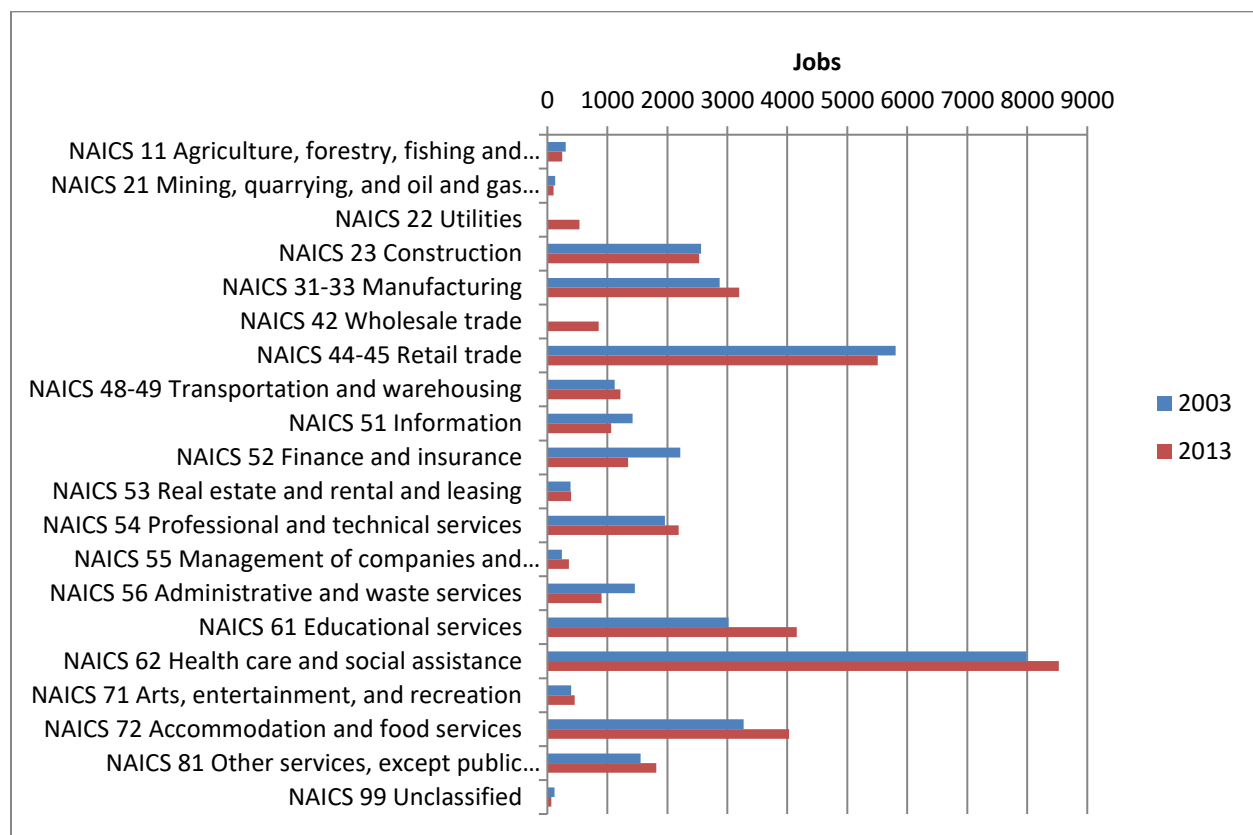


### Rensselaer County Employment Trends – (2003-2013)

Rensselaer County resides within the Capital District of New York State to the east of Albany and along the borders of Bennington County in Vermont and Berkshire County in Massachusetts. The population of the County stands at just less than 159,500 according to the 2010 Census, and the County seat is the City of Troy north of Rensselaer.

Rensselaer County experienced an expansion in employment of nearly 5% between 2003 and 2013. In 2003, the health care and social assistance industry produced the most employment in Rensselaer County at about 8,000 jobs. This sector remained the County's leading employer in 2013 with more than 8,500 jobs. Retail trade jobs were the second most numerous positions in both 2003, at 5,800, and 2013, at 5,500, despite the nearly 5% decrease.

The education services sector grew by over 38% (+1,137 jobs) between 2003 and 2013 while accommodation and food services and the health care and social assistance industries grew by 23% (+762 jobs) and 7% (+538 jobs), respectively. Employment in finance and insurance, information technology, and the administrative and waste services sectors fell by 39% (-873), 25% (-358), and 38% (-557), respectively.



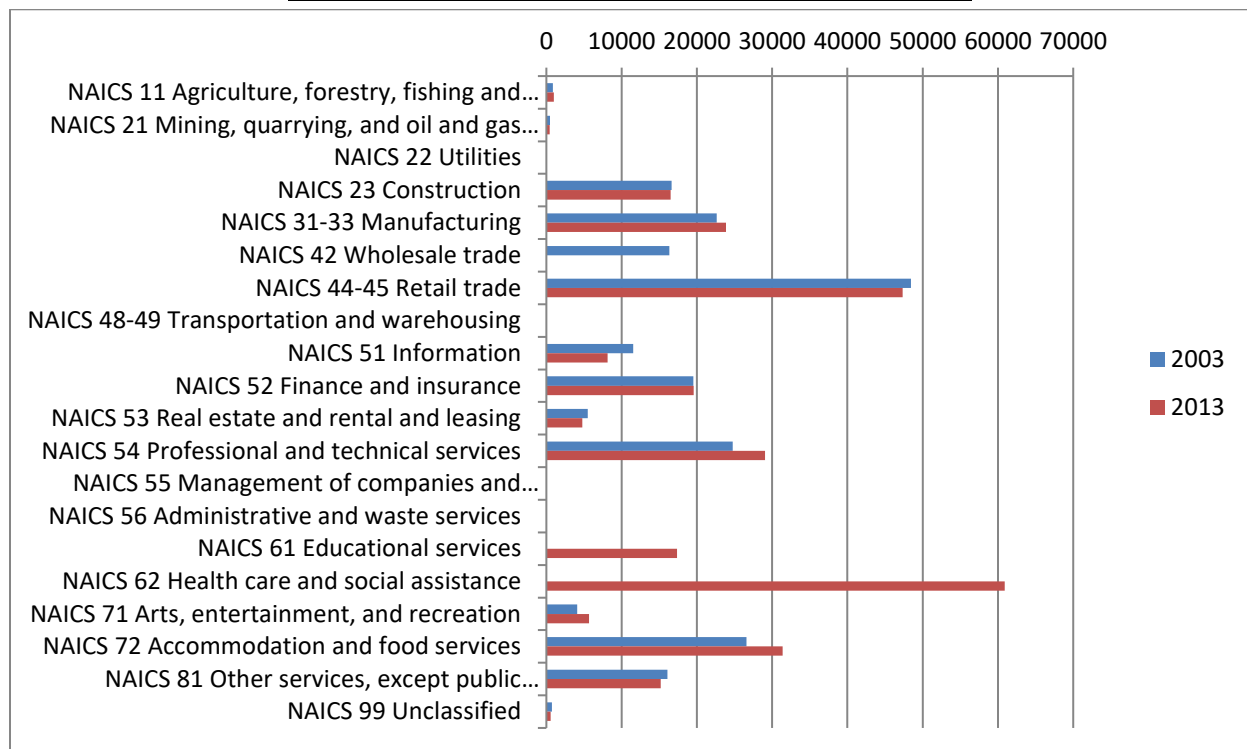
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA Employment Trends – (2003-2013)

The Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA consists of Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, and Schoharie Counties which make up the bulk of the Capital District. The MSA is geographically and economically centered on the four urban centers (Albany, Schenectady, Troy, and Saratoga Springs) and the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. Residential subdivision growth and auto-oriented retail areas dominate the void between the four cities, while smaller villages and rural towns dot the MSA's periphery in the foothills of the Adirondack, Taconic, and Helderberg Mountains. The population of the MSA stands at approximately 875,000.

The MSA experienced an expansion in overall employment between 2003 and 2013 of 3.6%. Over the 10-year period, the accommodations and food services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and the professional and technical services industries expanded jobs within the MSA at 18% (+4,799), 37% (+1,538), and 17% (+4,283), respectively. By 2013, health care and social services claimed the highest employment total at 61,000 jobs. The retail trade industry was next at 47,300 jobs, followed by accommodations and food services and professional and technical services at 31,400 and 29,000 jobs, respectively.

#### Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA Employment Trends



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics



Note that there was no 2003 data available for the health care and social assistance, administrative and waste services, nor the educational services sectors in the MSA in tables from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Thus, changes in employment for these sectors since 2003 were not available as this BOA study was being developed.

### 3.3.2 LOCATION QUOTIENT

Location quotients reveal which industries have a particularly high level of employment relative to the size of the local economy. Using New York State as a basis, the location quotient measured employment share for industries in Rensselaer County and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA using Bureau of Labor Statistics data. While not an indicator of future job growth, the location quotient helps to establish which local industries employ more or less people than would be expected when compared to a benchmark economy; in this case, the New York State economy. Industries with a location quotient greater than 1.0 have a larger employment share than would be expected based on State levels while those lower than one indicate less employment than would be expected.

**Location Quotient by Local Industry in 2013**

Industry	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY MSA	Rensselaer County, New York	New York -- Statewide
Base Industry: Total, all industries	1	1	1
NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.29	0.59	0.31
NAICS 21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.19	0.36	0.08
NAICS 22 Utilities	ND	2.8	1.02
NAICS 23 Construction	0.98	1.24	0.86
NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing	0.69	0.76	0.58
NAICS 42 Wholesale trade	ND	0.43	0.9
NAICS 44-45 Retail trade	1.08	1.04	0.94
NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing	ND	0.82	0.81
NAICS 51 Information	1.04	1.12	1.48
NAICS 52 Finance and insurance	1.2	0.68	1.35
NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing	0.82	0.57	1.41
NAICS 54 Professional and technical services	1.23	0.77	1.16
NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises	ND	0.5	1.02
NAICS 56 Administrative and waste services	ND	0.31	0.84
NAICS 61 Educational services	2.28	4.52	1.86
NAICS 62 Health care and social assistance	1.2	1.39	1.18
NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.96	0.64	1.17
NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services	0.89	0.95	0.86
NAICS 81 Other services, except public administration	1.26	1.25	1.27
NAICS 99 Unclassified	1.15	1.04	2.74
Footnotes:			
(ND) Not Disclosable			

\*Location Quotients highlighted in green indicate high local employment shares.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Both the County and the MSA maintain high location quotients in both educational services and health care and social assistance sectors, which are expected to grow further at the national and regional levels, creating market-driven opportunities in Rensselaer. Arts, entertainment and recreation as well as accommodation and food services did experience job growth between 2003 and 2013, but these sectors generally provide less jobs regionally and within the City than would be expected based on their national averages.

Location quotients in finance and insurance and professional and technical services were above 1.0 in the MSA but were below 1.0 in Rensselaer County. Location quotients in construction and information were above 1.0 in the County but not in the MSA.

### 3.3.3 CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Using these employment figures and location quotients as a starting point, more advanced measurements for predicting future sector behavior were determined for Rensselaer County and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA. The Shift-Share Analysis and Esteban-Marquillas Extension methods were utilized to develop a relevant industrial cluster analysis. This analysis can be used to help guide policy intervention from the municipal level, but it also can be used to assess which industries within the BOA (or within the Capital Region) should be targeted for growth and/or relocation to the City to help advance the City's revitalization plans.

For instance, in both Rensselaer County and the MSA, Shift-Share Analysis indicates that the continued reliance on manufacturing and construction has produced negative overall job growth. On the other hand, while these industries lag in growth potential on a national scale, they still maintain a competitive advantage locally. This indicates that these two sectors remain strong job creators across the Capital Region. The industrial mix component reveals that the sectors of health care and social assistance in Rensselaer County and professional and technical services in the MSA have contributed the most to positive job growth opportunities.

These results were further evaluated using Esteban-Marquillas Extension analysis to more accurately define the competitive component. Traditional Shift-Share Analysis is sometimes criticized for not disaggregating the interaction effect of the local industrial mix from the competitive component, also called the allocation effect. Esteban-Marquillas attempts to separate this effect from the local competitive advantage of a particular sector.

This analysis produces results for four components of local employment growth: homothetic employment (national economic share component), specialization effect (industrial mix



component), comparative advantage (competitive component, which is more nuanced than the Shift-Share Analysis), and the allocation effect.

The magnitudes of these factors allow for a determination of local sector performance and for local officials to determine if intervention in such sectors is needed. “Star” sectors, or industries that possess positive specialization effects and comparative advantages, are functioning close to an optimum, making public intervention not necessary. “Declining” sectors, or industries that lack both specialization and comparative advantages, are operating so poorly that intervention would likely not be worth the public investment required.

“Emerging” sectors, or industries in which comparative advantages are positive but specialization effects are negative, and “transforming” sectors, or industries which hold positive specialization but lack local comparative advantage, are ripe for policy intervention in an effort to turn them into “star” sectors.

### **Cluster Analysis for Rensselaer County**

From a competitive advantage perspective, strong positive indicators were evident for Rensselaer County in industries such as real estate, housing rental and leasing; management of companies and enterprises; educational services; manufacturing; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; and other services, except public administration.

The prevalence of jobs at educational institutions like Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Russell Sage College, and Hudson Valley Community College contributes to a high location quotient and strong local competitive advantage in secondary and higher educational services. The lack of competitiveness from the retail trade; professional and technical services; health care and social assistance; and administration negatively affect job growth within the County.

Industries within Rensselaer County listed as “star” sectors include construction. Suburban areas of the County have been the bulwarks of the construction sector for the last half century as subdivision development boomed. However, the revitalization of Downtown Troy since the mid-2000s has filled its streets with builders, contractors, and cranes. The “other services, except public administration” sector includes firms primarily engaged in activities such as equipment and machinery repair, promoting or administering religious activities, grantmaking, advocacy, and providing dry-cleaning and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, pet care, photofinishing, and temporary parking. These locally concentrated industries are functioning optimally and do not appear to require public policy or funding intervention.

The health care and social assistance sector is the largest employment sector in Rensselaer County, and it is continuing to grow. However, it continues to lack comparative advantage and is considered a “transforming” sector along with retail trade, information, and finance and insurance, needing to reorient or restructure itself in order to be more competitive in the regional and statewide economy. Strategies to address these sectors include specialized training programs for workers and management, improved access to product and consumer markets through transportation and telecommunications, or specialized financing arrangements to pay for new machinery and equipment.

On the other hand, industries involving manufacturing; real estate, rental and leasing; management of companies and enterprises; educational services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services hold a local comparative advantage but lack concentration within the County and the City. These sectors are “emerging,” needing only to expand their business footprints and capacity to capitalize on their comparative advantages.

Strategies to increase job growth for “emerging” sectors may include reducing zoning and land use restrictions to allow business relocation and expansion, land aggregation, and clustering of firms in business parks or “incubator” buildings, as well as making public infrastructure investments to ensure functional and safe roadways and mass transit connections for commuters and pedestrian and bicycle facilities for those wishing to live close to their jobs.

### Rensselaer County Industrial Cluster Analysis

	Not Competitive	Competitive
<b>High Local Concentration</b>	<i>Transforming Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Trade</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Finance and Insurance</li> <li>• Health Care and Social Assistance</li> </ul>	<i>“Star” Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> </ul>
<b>Low Local Concentration</b>	<i>Declining Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</li> <li>• Professional and Technical Services</li> <li>• Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</li> <li>• Administrative and Waste Services</li> </ul>	<i>Emerging Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Services</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Arts, Entertainment and Recreation</li> <li>• Accommodation/Food Services</li> <li>• Management of companies and enterprises</li> <li>• Real Estate, Rental and Leasing</li> </ul>



### Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA Cluster Analysis

Shift-Share Analysis of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA indicated that the local economy's reliance on manufacturing, information, finance and insurance, and construction has tempered job growth in the early 2000s. The shift of employment numbers toward sectors like health care and social assistance, educational services, and accommodation and food services somewhat buoyed the local job market from these moderating effects.

Negative competitive forces have been demonstrated by the retail trade; information; real estate, rental, and leasing sectors; as well as professional and technical services sectors, while the construction; manufacturing; finance and insurance; and arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors showed they were locally competitive in comparison to national averages.

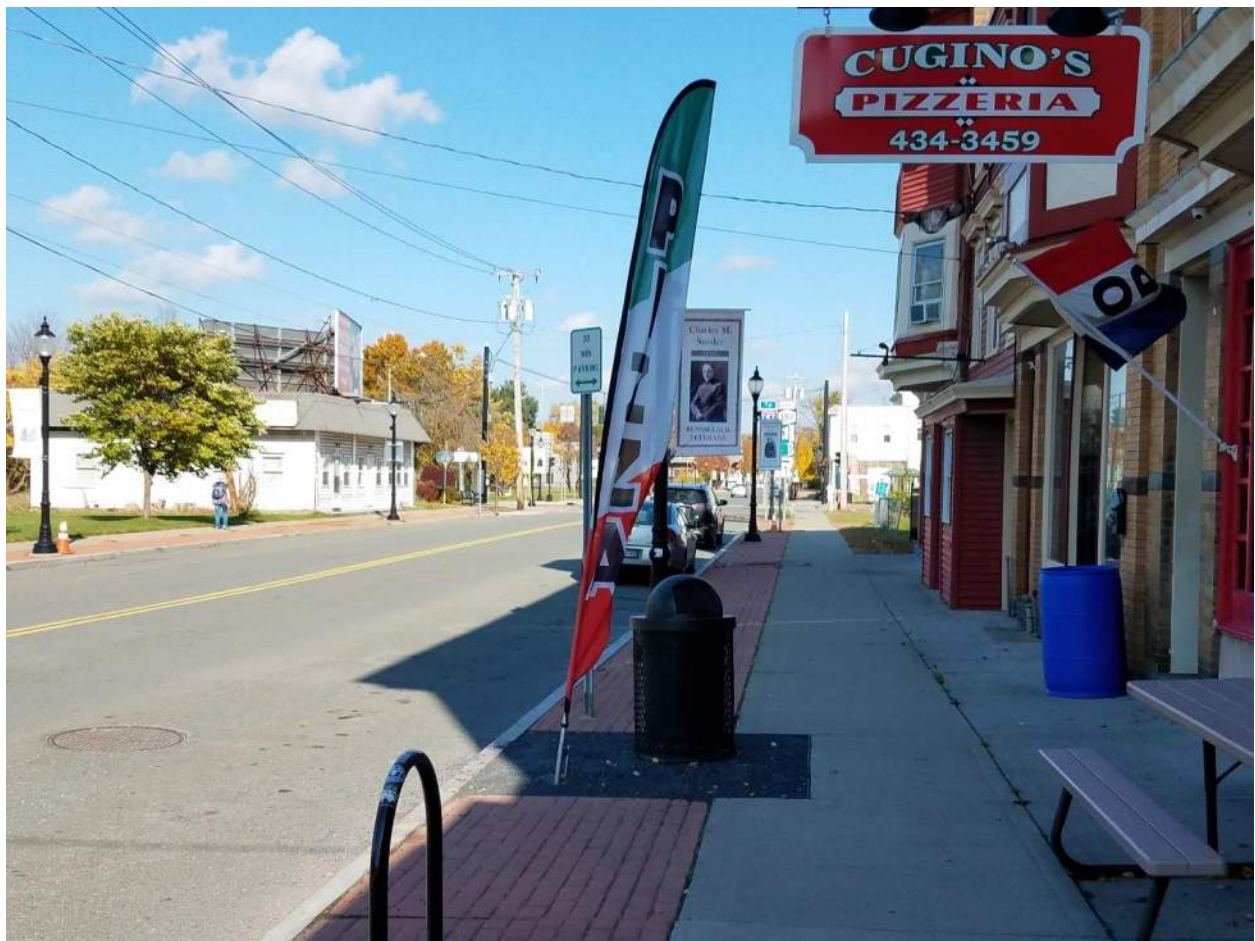
"Emerging" sectors in the MSA include manufacturing; agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; construction; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services. High potential exists regionally in the field of high-tech manufacturing, led by Global Foundries in Saratoga County and the SUNY Nanoscale College of Science & Engineering in Albany. As former industrial areas of Albany, Schenectady, and Troy redevelop and pre-existing infrastructure is upgraded, the stage will be set for manufacturing employment growth via spin-off businesses from the Tech Valley cluster and associated construction.

### Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA Industrial Cluster Analysis

	Not Competitive	Competitive
<b>High Local Concentration</b>	<i>Transforming Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Trade</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Professional and Technical Services</li> <li>• Other Services, except public admin.</li> </ul>	<i>"Star" Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance and Insurance</li> </ul>
<b>Low Local Concentration</b>	<i>Declining Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Estate, Rental and Leasing</li> <li>• Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction</li> </ul>	<i>Emerging Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Accommodation/Food Service</li> <li>• Arts, Entertainment and Recreation</li> <li>• Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</li> </ul>

### 3.3.4 SURVEY OF BUSINESSES

As an addendum to this market study, a brief survey of business owners within the Rensselaer BOA was conducted in October 2014 and updated periodically in 2019-2020. In-person interviews were completed at local businesses that were open during the day. Those who responded were asked simply how many employees worked in the establishment and if they had any suggested improvements that would help their business thrive. The results of the day-time survey are listed in the following table:



*Lower Broadway, south of the I-787 ramps to the Dunn Memorial Bridge, consist of the remaining storefronts and traditional mixed-use properties that make up the City's traditional "downtown" central business district, with both occupied and vacant retail spaces and upper floors within 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings.*



RENSSELAER ON THE RISE  
Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area

Name of Business	Location	Type of Business	# of Employees	Suggested improvements
Rudy's Restaurant	Broadway	Pizza Restaurant	1	None
Dunkin Donuts	Broadway	Fast Food	10-15 PT	-
Monolith Solar	Washington St	Solar Panels	53	None
Super Wash Laundromat	Broadway	Laundromat	1-2	-
Martino's & Sons Garage	Broadway	Auto Body	-	-
Zappalla Block	5th Ave	Concrete products	-	-
Stewarts' Shops	Partition St	Convenience Store, Gas	-	-
June's Restaurant	East St	Restaurant	-	-
Yankee Doodle Taxi	Broadway	Transportation Services	15	grants, loans; parking
Riverside Auto Parts	Broadway	Auto Parts - Retail	8	None
I Love NY on Broadway	Broadway	Pizza Restaurant	4	parking enforcement; tax incentives
Terence Ruso, CPA	Broadway	Accounting Services	5	parking; parking signs; code enforcement
Hi-Tech Automotive	2nd Ave	Auto Body	2	signage
Teagan's Steak and Seafood	Ferry St	Restaurant	8-10	-
Broadway Tire & Wheel	Broadway	Tires	2	None
Strike & Spare	Broadway	Bowling Equipment, Trophies	1	better lighting needed outside
B&D Glass Crafters	Broadway	Home Décor / Crafts	1	better lighting needed outside; grocery
PJ's Café	Academy St	Diner	1	tax incentives
Key Bank	2nd Ave	Bank	4	None
Cornerstone Dentistry	Washington St	Dentist	5	code enforcement, façade improvement
Rensselaer Bird Center	Washington St	Pet Store	2	None
Steven's Market & Deli	Washington St	Convenience Store	2	No Manager
OK MYANG	2nd Ave	Burmese and Pan Asian Restaurant	1	Better lighting
Thorpe Industrial Supply	Washington St	Electrical and Lighting Supplies	-	-
Wainshaf Associates	Washington St	General Contracting, Construction MGMT	30	Parking signage
Documentation Strategies, Inc.	2nd Ave	IT Services	-	-
Sliders Pizza	Broadway	Pizza Restaurant	-	-

### 3.4 CONCLUSIONS

Market study findings can have a variety of impacts on local policy making. It is important for City and County officials to focus their efforts on industries that show growth potential but are not yet saturated within Rensselaer or surrounding communities. Referring to the cluster analysis, focus should first be placed on the “emerging sectors.” Industries that are already competitive and highly concentrated locally are functioning well and may not require any policy or public funding intervention.

“Transforming sectors” are not currently competitive but remain highly concentrated, potentially requiring policy interventions to assist these stalwart industries in rejuvenating their business cycle locally and returning to a growth model within their sectors. Declining sectors lack local concentration but also competitiveness. This may question the sustainability of these industries and the sustainability of any local policy intervention.

Should intervention be deemed appropriate by the City of Rensselaer, Rensselaer County, or Capital Region Economic Development Council, possible strategies to augment the performance of target industries include the following:

- Build specialized infrastructure (multi-modal transportation, broadband and telecommunications upgrades, more efficient regulatory environments);
- Fill missing links in regional supply chains by recruiting targeted and specialty manufacturers and distribution firms;
- Increase workforce skills and job re-training for underemployed persons to prepare for technically advanced industries that are likely to grow within the Region;
- Engage in a cluster marketing program to attract multiple suppliers and service businesses which complement one another’s products and market positions;
- Continue to focus resources on quality of life issues, affordable housing, and recreation and entertainment to provide a vibrant place for emerging industry workers to want to rent an apartment or buy a house and raise a family.



## 4.0 SUMMARY ANALYSIS, FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

City representatives and the project team have reviewed previous downtown plans and cross-checked those plans with data from *Section 3 – Existing Conditions and Analysis*, to further evaluate various priority projects and targeted redevelopment sites. These sites were further organized by the City’s Project Advisory Committee into three distinct **Development Subareas**.

Information about property history and desired new uses obtained from public workshops and the Steering Committee; land use data from Rensselaer County, preliminary market analysis using Census and other labor market data; and windshield property surveys contributed to the development of the list of high priority redevelopment sites. Lastly, the sites and redevelopment options were vetted at public meetings and with the Project Advisory Committee during the formation of the BOA Nomination Plan and at a final Committee meeting held near the end of the BOA planning process.

The primary objective of this Nomination is to identify target sites and the favorable characteristics that make them priority projects for the City and other public and private stakeholders to promote redevelopment. Furthermore, the BOA Plan synthesizes the most feasible recommendations from prior planning documents and helps the City focus attention and public resources on viable cleanup and reuse projects within the Subareas.

### 4.1 SITE SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

As described previously, the BOA planning boundary encompasses 192 acres and 215 parcels. This overall area was selected because of its concentration of residential, commercial, and industrial properties within and surrounding the downtown business district, the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station and Amtrak maintenance facility, and the DeLaet’s Landing and adjacent riverfront land north of the downtown. These areas are the focus of the City’s plans to increase resident and visitor access to the Hudson River, expand mixed-income housing options, attract new retail businesses, and upgrade local parks, natural resources, and open spaces.

Many potential brownfield sites within the BOA have a history of industrial activities that result in the perception (if not already confirmed) of environmental contamination. The list of vacant, abandoned, and underutilized sites on the following pages include sites where contamination has been found or is widely suspected based on past uses or data from available state and federal databases. Other sites on the list are considered targets for redevelopment based on

their current vacancy, strategic location, and other factors that may or may not involve actual environmental problems or known sources of contamination. Overall, the City, the Project Committee, and Steering Committee (public) have identified more than 79 acres within the three Subareas that could be considered for acquisition, demolition, building rehabilitation, and/or redevelopment to advance the City's ongoing revitalization goals.

Table 13									
Rensselaer Urban Core Opportunity Plan									
Target Sites									
Label	Subarea	Parcel Number	Street Number	Street Name	Owner	Size (Acres)	Property Class Code	Property Class	Zoning
1	Rensselaer Waterfront	143.44-1-1.11	675	Broadway	Amtrak	41.77	843	Industrial	Waterfront Mixed Use
2	Rensselaer Waterfront	143.52-4-1.1	555	Broadway	Marx Properties	23.73	330	Vacant COM	PDD
3	Rensselaer Waterfront	143.60-3-9.1	555	Broadway	City of Rensselaer	0.99	330	Vacant COM	PDD
4	Rensselaer Waterfront	143.52-1-1.1	12	Partition Street	National Railroad	2.25	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
5	Rensselaer Waterfront	143.75-3-5	625	East Street	Capital District Trans Auth	3.3	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
6	City Gateway	143.75-4-2	500-538	Broadway	Capital View Office Park	0.8	331	Vac COM w/improve	Downtown Mixed-Use
7	City Gateway	143.75-11-3	660	Broadway	Zappala Land Develop. LLC	0.47	438	Parking Lot	Downtown Mixed-Use
8	City Gateway	143.75-4-1	505	Broadway	V. Zappala & Co.	0.54	650	Government	Downtown Mixed-Use
9	City Gateway	143.67-7-11	501	Broadway	V. Zappala & Co.	0.18	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
10	City Gateway	143.67-7-12	491	Broadway	V. Zappala & Co.	0.09	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
11	City Gateway	143.67-7-3	484	Broadway	Capital District Trans Auth	0.1	311	Vacant Land RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
12	City Gateway	143.67-1-7.1	480	Broadway	B. Sternlight	0.06	312	Vacant with improvement	Downtown Mixed-Use
13	City Gateway	143.67-7-13	476	Broadway	B. Sternlight	0.06	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
14	City Gateway	143.67-1-8	338	Broadway	Capital View Office Park	1.42	340	Vacant IND	PDD
15	Downtown Hub	143.67-7-1	11	Ferry Street	S. Neary	0.04	220	2-Family RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
16	Downtown Hub	143.67-1-14	13	Ferry Street	223 Broadway Inc.	0.04	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
17	Downtown Hub	143.67-1-19	263	Broadway	B. Derenzo	0.23	484	RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
18	Downtown Hub	143.67-1-13	245-261	Broadway	223 Broadway Inc	0.33	312	Vacant with improvement	Downtown Mixed-Use
19	Downtown Hub	143.67-1-20	280	Broadway	A. Zeppetelli	0.08	311	Vacant Land RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
20	Downtown Hub	143.67-1-3.1	7	Third Avenue	City of Rensselaer	0.04	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use



Table 13									
Rensselaer Urban Core Opportunity Plan									
Target Sites									
Label	Subarea	Parcel Number	Street Number	Street Name	Owner	Size (Acres)	Property Class Code	Property Class	Zoning
21	Downtown Hub	143.67-3-7	274	Broadway	A. Zeppetelli	0.07	331	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
22	Downtown Hub	143.60-2-20	266	Broadway	P. Danaher	0.04	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
23	Downtown Hub	143.60-2-19	264	Broadway	A. Zeppetelli	0.15	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
24	Downtown Hub	143.60-2-18	28	Third Avenue	Rensselaer City School District	0.08	311	Vacant Land RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
25	Downtown Hub	143.60-1-14	63	Green Street	A. Zeppetelli	0.03	480	Multi-Use	Downtown Mixed-Use
26	Downtown Hub	143.60-1-13	2	Ferry Street	National Grid	0.26	873	MGP Site	Downtown Mixed-Use
27	Downtown Hub	143.60-2-8	4	Ferry Street	J. Polsinello	0.06	311	Vacant Land RES	Downtown Mixed-Use
28	Downtown Hub	143.60-1-12	4	Ferry Street	J. Polsinello	0.19	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
29	Downtown Hub	143.60-1-11	27	Second Ave	LaPoint Real Estate LLC	0.06	330	Vacant COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
30	Downtown Hub	143.75-9-12	141	Broadway	Broadway Rensselaer LLC	1.25	464	Office Bldg. COM	Downtown Mixed-Use
31	Downtown Hub	143.52-1-1.2	13	Columbia St.	Hess Retail Stores LLC	0.19	438	Parking Lot	Downtown Mixed-Use
32	City Gateway	143.75-4-2	89	Washington St.	Capital View Office Park	0.4	438	Parking Lot	PDD
Total						79.3			
Total BOA Acres						168.3			
% Brownfield, Vacant, and/or Underutilized within the Urban Core BOA						47%			

**NOTE:** The “Label” column on this table is listed for reference only and directly correlates to those shown on Map 10 – Vacant, Abandoned, or Underutilized Sites. “COM” = Commercial; “RES” = Residential Zoning

#### 4.1.1 Site Evaluation Methodology

The City’s methodology to evaluate and prioritize the above sites included consideration of the data gathered for this Nomination Plan. That information includes environmental records about past property uses and known sources of contamination and review of historical business records and aerial mapping from different time periods. The Project Advisory Committee also gathered anecdotal information from residents, business owners, and public officials regarding past site uses and types of businesses, industry, housing, and recreational facilities that the public would like to see more fully developed. Property evaluations were generally based on the following physical site characteristics:

- Parcel size;
- Vehicular and/or pedestrian accessibility;
- Availability of existing infrastructure (water, sewer, and utilities);
- Permitted land uses and current zoning;
- Location with respect to the Hudson River and/or key traffic corridors, truck routes, mass transit, and regional connectors such as I-787 and I-90;
- Potential to redevelop larger properties by easily acquiring adjacent sites.

The following specific environmental conditions were also considered:

- Sanborn (fire) Insurance Maps
- Known or suspected contamination sources (based on historical uses and databases);
- Estimated costs to remediate known sources of contamination;
- Any other known or perceived environmental constraints or reuse obstacles (such as the presence of historical and cultural resources which could involve SHPO consultation as well as potential grants and/or historic tax credits).

Using GIS mapping to identify clusters of target properties, and by synthesizing physical, environmental, and economic conditions impacting those sites, the Project Committee in conjunction with the public Steering Committee and other stakeholders was able to narrow the overall list of priority sites and group them into the following Development Subareas:

- **Rensselaer Waterfront**
- **City Gateway**
- **Downtown Hub**







# LEGEND

- Regional Waterfront Subarea
- Downtown Hub Subarea
- Capital Gateway Subarea



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## Rensselaer BOA Subarea Map City of Rensselaer

CITY OF RENSSELAER

RENSSELAER CO., NY

PROJ. No.17-13200N

DATE:

7/11/19

SCALE:

1" = 425'

DWG. NO. 17-13200N

FIGURE

12



## 4.2 REDEVELOPMENT SUBAREAS

The Subarea Profiles discussed in this section provide redevelopment Goals and recommended Actions summarized from a host of previous plans, which pre-date the development of this BOA Nomination, as well as those recommendations developed in the course of this Plan. Prior adopted plans offer both physical and policy recommendations to facilitate a vibrant, mixed-use downtown and regional utilization of the Hudson River waterfront within the City. Recommendations for improvements within public rights-of-ways, waterfront access enhancement, traffic and pedestrian mobility improvements, and recent zoning changes have laid the foundation for the BOA Plan and the recommendations within each Subarea.

### 4.2.1 City-wide Recommended Actions

Guidelines for tasks the City should undertake to facilitate redevelopment within all three Subareas are listed below. These include activities that will benefit future development projects throughout the City beyond the scope of the BOA and provide additional certainty to property owners and developers regarding the types of projects the City's residents will support. Those overarching recommendations include:

- Adopt enforceable design standards or guidelines for the City and each Subarea (if applicable) including details regarding street furnishings, pavement treatments and location of sidewalks, size and type of business signage, and desired architectural styles and building façade improvements;
- Create channels for ongoing communication (such as periodic public workshops or inter-agency working groups) among Common Council members, neighborhood representatives, and business owners to conduct periodic outreach within each Subarea to determine the ongoing needs and desired development objectives;
- Update as needed the City's Zoning Code to incorporate new types of land uses, form-based building codes, and to allow permitted land uses that meet BOA and related planning objectives;
- Invest in code enforcement training and technology and partner with non-profits to provide landlord training, property maintenance resources, and foreclosure prevention programs to help prevent tax and mortgage foreclosure and deterioration and blight of existing residential and commercial properties.



#### **4.2.2 BOA-wide Masterplan and Graphics**

Early in the BOA planning process, the City and its consultants procured the services of Dalpos Architects & Integrators to develop an overall Masterplan Concept with perspective renderings to showcase the BOA study area's long-term development potential. As a result, Dalpos created an array of large site-specific building concepts to help promote development options within the BOA and engage residents and stakeholders to discuss how future options would look superimposed on current parcels, along with the potential for relocation or removal of certain roadways and on-and-off ramps to free up more land for high-density uses. The Masterplan Concept and Graphics can be found in Appendix D.

#### **4.2.3 Priority Development Recommendations supported by the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) Strategic Plan**

The success of the Urban Core BOA hinges on its ability to be linked to initiatives at the County and regional level that generate investment for projects and attract developers to the City. It is important for this strategy to include doable short-term projects but also focus on long-term goals that produce sustainable growth benefitting all City residents. Most importantly, the Urban Core BOA will prioritize projects that support strategic goals promoted by the Capital Region Economic Development Council. The CREDC administers the State's Consolidated Funding Application process that provides millions of dollars of State and federal funding for local and regional economic revitalization initiatives. To link to the CREDC Strategic Plan, the Urban Core BOA Nomination Plan will:

- Be grounded in the regional economic landscape and aligned to the competitive advantages of the BOA study area and City of Rensselaer;
- Catalyze economic activity that promotes sectors of growth in the City and region;
- Ensure the Urban Core BOA has the flexibility and opportunity to evolve over time;
- Be strategic on where and what land uses are situated in the BOA;
- Target available incentives to attract industries that have the potential for long-term local and regional economic growth; and
- Celebrate, strengthen, and leverage the study area's many assets to establish the City's identity as a small but dense urban community with special amenities that make it a great place to live, work, shop, and enjoy the quality of life.

Guiding the attainment of the CREDC's priority regional goals and transformational initiatives are a series of strategies and proposed investments the REDC developed through engagement with region-wide stakeholders and working groups. It is important to ensure that the Urban Core BOA's redevelopment recommendations deliberately target strategies outlined in the CREDC's plan to leverage projects and public and private funding that will create significant local outcomes and regional economic growth impacts.

The following tables describe the regional strategies outlined by the CREDC that directly relate to BOA priority sites and recommended redevelopment projects in the City.



Support for the Urban Core BOA in the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) Strategic Plan			
The recommended redevelopment strategies from the Urban Core BOA Nomination Plan are compatible with many of the goals adopted by the Capital Region Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan including:			
Rensselaer Urban Core BOA		CREDC	
Goal	Strategy	Goal	Strategy
<b>Strengthen the city's tax base and employment base by encouraging appropriate industrial development</b>	Prioritize the remediation of brownfield sites with the highest economic development potential and aggressively pursue funding	<b>Open New Doors</b>	Create ready access to capital by making it easy to identify existing sources and creating new collaborative sources of funding to stimulate economic expansion.
<b>Conduct coordination and outreach within the subarea to determine the needs and objectives of the local owners and respond with the appropriate funding assistance utilizing state and federal grants</b>	The City should continue to coordinate with local property owners, businesses and stakeholders to oversee all initiatives and activities and to create a fertile environment for entrepreneurialism. Broad-base public input and coordination should be incorporated into preparing applications for supplementary funding, managing future RFP's, organizing collaborative efforts with State and Federal authorities, as well as marketing neighborhood revitalization efforts.		
<b>Provide amenities and services within the city that respond to the requirements of site locators</b>	Strengthen the available employee pool by working with Rensselaer County One-Stop and other local and regional agencies, institutions and non-profits as appropriate to promote existing job training programs and develop new ones if needed to provide necessary skills to city residents.	<b>Prepare for Tomorrow</b>	Leverage the strength of the education system, from Kindergarten through post-graduate, while collaborating with the public and private sectors to create a workforce that gives employers what they
<b>Focus on high-tech industries that complement the region's educational institutions</b>	Meet regularly with officials from the University of Albany, including the SUNY East Campus, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and other regional institutions of higher education to plan economic development projects that could foster new industries in the City		
<b>Establish an LDC to support and direct orderly development along the river</b>	Issue bonds as necessary to construct needed infrastructure improvements to render waterfront property "shovel-ready" and desirable for commercial and residential purposes. Pursue funding for the identification and clean-up of key brownfield sites.	<b>Build a Superhighway</b>	Ensure that a 21st Century infrastructure exists so the Capital Region will become the first destination for business in New York State and be accessible to build, grow, and expand business.
<b>Support multi-modal transportation linkages throughout the Capital District that will enhance the city's position as the region's central hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Work with Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) to determine opportunities and potential locations for multi-modal (ultra-light rail, green buses, bicycles, pedestrians and automobiles) transportation provisions at the Train Station Facility.</li> <li>o Work with the Capital District Transportation Council (CDTC) to ensure the multi-modal transportation network desired is consistent with existing regional plans.</li> <li>o Require all infrastructure related to the multi-modal network have minimal impact to the urban fabric of the City by sharing existing rights-of-way.</li> <li>o Outline an internalized commuter transit system that connects future commuter lots, regional destinations and local stops to the Train Station.</li> <li>o Develop a Parking Management Plan to reduce commuter/resident conflicts surrounding the Train Station.</li> <li>o Secure easements and/or improve linkages for pedestrian and bicyclist routes to and from the Train Station.</li> <li>o Actively plan and promote non-automobile links between the City of Rensselaer and the region, especially the City of Albany, the SUNY East Campus and the RPI Tech Park.</li> <li>o Ensure that all efforts to expand the multi-modal transportation network include satellite stops or clearly marked links to downtown Rensselaer.</li> <li>o Work to secure funds for public sector improvements required to facilitate this implementation item from the State and Federal Government as well as private contributions.</li> </ul>		

Support for the Urban Core BOA in the CREDC Strategic Plan			
The recommended redevelopment strategies from the Urban Core BOA Nomination Plan are compatible with many of the goals adopted by the Capital Region Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan including:			
Rensselaer Revitalization Plan		CREDC	
Goal	Strategy	Goal	Strategy
<b>Infill vacant lots</b>	Guide development to areas already served by public infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in established neighborhoods. The CREDC Strategic Plan describes a strategy to "Make the cities of the Capital Region 24-hour communities: exciting, attractive places not only to work, but to live, with homes, offices, entertainment venues, cultural and educational institutions and shopping. The City of Rensselaer is one of only two cities in Rensselaer County.	<b>Bring Cities to Life</b>	Capitalize on our urban centers within the Capital Region that have a history rich in vibrancy and return them to centers of influence that are alive with business, residential, and cultural programs that will revitalize them as active neighborhoods.
<b>Encourage active and frequent use of the waterfront by all sectors</b>	Require the provision of open space and pedestrian accommodations (e.g. sidewalks, boardwalks, etc.) along the waterfront in all new development.	<b>Showcase Our Beauty</b>	Capitalize on our inherited and created assets, leveraging the beautiful, natural environment, deeply rooted in history, arts, and culture and use them as beacons and anchors to make our communities thrive.
<b>Maximize public accessible open spaces</b>	Inventory existing and potential natural and recreational resources within the city. These should be included in an integrated plan for open space protection and improvements for the city that will guide this vital aspect of urban development. The open space plan should identify existing and new opportunities to plan for conservation and to provide recreational and educational opportunities to all city residents. The plan should also include an environmental inventory that identifies and prioritizes natural lands, regardless of ownership, for protection.		
	Encourage developers to participate in public space development on the waterfront through incentive zoning. This approach would provide the city with flexibility to allow a developer to exceed the limitations of the established bulk requirements of the zoning code if certain public facilities, services or amenities are provided for in the project. Communities utilize incentive zoning to achieve a myriad of community development objectives. In the mixed-use waterfront area, it is likely that several objectives could be identified for incentive zoning, such as the provision of parks or open space (to be used for passive recreational facilities).		
<b>Continuous multi-use waterfront trail</b>	A proposed continuous waterfront trail has been identified as a priority project by the City for over two decades, though only small portions of this trail have actually been designed and installed to date. A trail segment exists in Riverfront Park, public access is guaranteed on the DeLaet's Landing property (former school), and an easement has been granted on the Amtrak property north of DeLaet's Landing for construction of a trail. Future trail development should support the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail and encourage additional opportunities for linkages to established trails, such as those in Troy, NY. All future development proposed along the waterfront should include the provision of a right-of-way or designated easement for development of continuous public access along the waterfront.		
<b>DeLaet's Landing</b>	The vision for DeLaet's Landing proposes reconnecting the City's central business district to the waterfront with an authentic mixed-use development that highlights its waterfront location, public gathering areas, and dramatic open spaces. The design of the project is intended to reestablish the area's connection to the Hudson River and capitalize on the destination-oriented focus that the River can bring to businesses and residential offerings. Within the project will be the start of a "Blue Loop" public promenade and trail that will ultimately connect both sides of the River and will become the central waterfront park for the entire region.		



#### 4.2.4 Subarea Profiles and Redevelopment Vision

The City created the Subarea Profiles by identifying clusters of sites that have the potential to catalyze additional private and public investment, either by themselves or aggregated with other adjacent properties. This included a determination of the most beneficial physical locations in Rensselaer for new development, the market feasibility of potential end-uses, and the possibility of additional and ancillary public and private investments related to the desired end-uses. These factors were also compared to findings and recommendations from previous planning documents to achieve consistency with broad long-term revitalization goals and objectives. The following sections discuss the redevelopment **Goals** and recommended **Actions** to facilitate high-priority projects and physical improvements within each Subarea.

##### Rensselaer Waterfront

**Location and Existing Conditions** - The Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea encompasses the northern part of the BOA and consists of large riverfront parcels, smaller commercial properties, and surface parking areas north of the Amtrak Rail Station. The Subarea is divided by the CSX/Amtrak rail lines that run north-south through Rensselaer. Broadway crosses over the tracks to connect the Subarea with the rest of the City and is relatively accessible for pedestrians as well as vehicle traffic due to recent City-sponsored infrastructure work.

Specifically, target sites include the Amtrak maintenance facility, DeLaet's Landing (the former high school property), and the CDTA parking lots north of the Rail Station. There are also large underutilized parcels west of Broadway and north of DeLaet's Landing that comprise much of the accessible waterfront close to the Broadway corridor and are still accessible to the downtown business district by sidewalks and the pending Hudson Riverfront Trail. The size and strategic location of those parcels represent the potential for regional economic development impacts and the attraction of new homeowners and apartment residents.

The former Rensselaer High School campus, now called DeLaet's Landing and owned by the regional developer, UW Marx, is the centerpiece of this Subarea. The high school has been demolished, and Phase 1 of a mixed-use redevelopment plan approved by the City under a Planned Development District with 96 moderately priced (market rate) apartments and detached garages has been constructed and is generally fully occupied.

Complementing the apartments is a wide public esplanade along the riverfront with sweeping views of Downtown Albany that is accessible to the public with parking along the long driveway into DeLaet's Landing. The esplanade will eventually connect to the Hudson Riverfront Trail heading north along the River that is in the final planning stages prior to construction in late 2021 and early 2022. Phases 2 and 3 of the planned apartments and ancillary commercial space are currently in the review stages with various City departments and the Planning Board.

The Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea is zoned either Waterfront Mixed-Use, Downtown Mixed-Use, and Planned Development District, which are the three zoning classifications that provide a wide latitude of flexibility for developers and property owners seeking to construct larger projects within the area. With the exception of the approach to East Street, the Subarea is substantially flat with limited tree cover except along the riverfront. This Subarea offers the highest catalytic redevelopment potential of any of the three Subareas based on its location immediately north of the downtown and its array of underutilized riverfront property.

**Environmental Conditions** - With the exception of DeLaet's Landing, most of the Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea is located within the 100-year floodplain. National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands are relegated to limited areas immediately adjacent to the Hudson River.

A NYS-designated contaminated site is located outside this Subarea, at the northeast corner of the Broadway-Partition Street intersection. This property was once a dry cleaner. Within the Subarea, a few properties have experienced past contamination events. While no sites are currently listed by the DEC with active problems, the current CDTA parking lot which was a former Price Chopper grocery store and gas station did have an underground petroleum storage tank and 13 recorded spills. The Amtrak maintenance facility is designated by the DEC as a major oil storage facility and has had 26 recorded spills. To a lesser extent, Stewart's Shops on Partition Street and Zappala Block each have a petroleum bulk storage tank and are listed with one prior spill apiece, according to the DEC.

The construction of a potential marina as part of the overall DeLaet's Landing Project has, in part, been delayed by the presence of a rare aquatic plant species located close to the eastern shore of the Hudson River at the project site. The Amtrak maintenance facility has caused complaints from local residents in recent years due to the emission of diesel fumes from idling trains and their potential impact on local air quality. A local community organization, Concerned Citizens of Rensselaer, has conducted air quality tests that showed unsafe levels of diesel emissions near the Amtrak facility. With the help of funding from the Hudson-Mohawk chapter of the Sierra Club, Amtrak equipment has been updated both at the maintenance facility and at the passenger station to reduce idling time and diesel emissions.







**Redevelopment Vision** - The Rensselaer Waterfront will be a regional draw for new housing investment. It is the linchpin to leveraging Rensselaer's rail infrastructure and strategic location for commuting to Albany and Troy. The pending Riverfront Trail will mirror the Hudson-Mohawk Bike Path to the west of the River and will link dense neighborhoods along North Broadway with the downtown business district and also connect employers and stores located in East Greenbush east of the downtown to the southern part of the City.

***Rensselaer's Waterfront is an active and affordable place  
to live and be connected to the entire Capital Region.***

- The area offers expansive views of Downtown Albany and improved walking, biking, and boating (paddling) access to the River, easy access to the Rail Station and regional CDTA bus routes, and a dense walkable neighborhood close to the Downtown.
- Visitors who arrive by train to conduct business in the City or in Albany across the River will be able to find lodging and recreational opportunities. Young families will purchase and renovate older homes on both sides of North Broadway, and kids will take advantage of after-school programs and day camps provided by the rejuvenated Boys and Girls Club just south of the Broadway overpass crossing the north-south rail lines.
- Young professionals will find affordable waterfront apartments and create demand for upscale eateries, brewpubs, and retail shops within the adjacent Downtown and along the southern end of North Broadway at the base of the rail overpass. Buffers will be constructed to limit noise and other negative impacts of the Amtrak maintenance facility while sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian facilities will be constructed or upgraded to promote non-vehicular movement throughout the area.

**Project Successes** – Notable projects within the Subarea include the new East Street sidewalk and green infrastructure that has improved stormwater management around Quackenderry Creek and upgraded pedestrian mobility in a blighted area bordering the Rail Station.

Phase 2 of the DeLaet's Landing mixed-use project is being reviewed by the City, and when underway, will include the construction of approximately 84 apartments situated between the riverfront and the current Phase 1 building and adjacent to the esplanade and sidewalk network that connects the property with the downtown business district to the south. Phase 3 of the project, somewhat in the distant planning stages, could include additional apartments and a retail component on the north side of the Phase 1 building and closer to the Broadway overpass crossing the multiple rail lines that serve the Amtrak maintenance facility.



Additional smaller multi-family housing renovation and construction projects have been completed or are in the planning stages for dilapidated properties along North Broadway, and the Hudson Riverfront Trail is closer to construction in late 2021, connecting DeLaet's Landing and the existing riverfront esplanade with a continuous riverfront walking and bicycle path.

Recommended actions to build on recent momentum and past planning efforts are integrated within this BOA Plan to provide a uniform set of recommendations relative to current development goals for the Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea.

***Rensselaer Waterfront GOAL #1:***

***Develop properties on the north side of the Rail Station and along the Hudson Riverfront parallel to North Broadway, including dense housing, retail, and entertainment venues to leverage existing infrastructure and location strengths and attract residents to the City.***

**Actions:**

- Rank strategic parcels north of the Train Station and along the northern waterfront for private redevelopment potential and readiness to proceed to construction;
- Conduct a best use analysis for the highest-ranking property within the Subarea (included at the end of this Section);
- Coordinate the construction of Phases 2 and 3 of DeLaet's Landing with an emphasis on connecting the entire development with pedestrian access to North Broadway and the overpass leading to the traditional downtown business district to the south;
- Work with CDTA on the possible development of one or more surface parking lots north of the Rail Station and suitable for mid-or high-rise construction of a mixed-use building with apartments and retail (dining, sports bars, brewpubs) that serves both residents and train travelers who do not want to wander far from the Station when making train connections or waiting for arriving or departing trains;
- Develop building and site design guidelines for the waterfront area that can serve as a guide for future development to ensure consistent landscaping design and materials are used throughout the Riverfront. Special attention must be given to buffering requirements between adjacent land uses, landscaping, building mass and scale, and pedestrian mobility and safety connecting to various parts of the City;

- Evaluate and revise the City's Zoning Code as necessary to ensure waterfront related uses are permitted in appropriate locations, including recreation, water-dependent development (e.g. marinas and boat launches), residential, retail, office, and lodging. Active industrial uses should be permitted, and new light industrial uses should be promoted for the southern portion of the waterfront (closer to the Rensselaer Port) with appropriate safeguards;
- Balance development with protection of sensitive shoreline properties and flood-zones and consider zoning guidelines or regulatory limits on new development that provide buffers along the Hudson River, Mill Creek, and Quackenderry Creek within the Subarea.



*CDTA controls surface parking lots off of East Street north of the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station potentially suitable for “transit-oriented development” that also could benefit nearby residents with new restaurants, brewpubs, and entertainment businesses.*



***Rensselaer Waterfront GOAL #2:***

***Increase public access to the Hudson River parallel to North Broadway and encourage multiple types of recreational uses for residents and visitors.***

**Actions:**

- Oversee construction of the Hudson Riverfront Trail and various access points using new or rehabilitated sidewalks and signage connecting to North Broadway neighborhoods;
- Develop or promote public event areas along the River, including large gathering space at DeLaet's Landing, to accommodate concerts, festivals, and other community events;
- Sponsor with stakeholders regular clean-up days to remove debris and litter from the shoreline and promote local buy-in for riverfront preservation;
- Create a continuous wide sidewalk along Tracy Street in the North Broadway corridor that connects adjacent neighborhoods with the Riverfront Trail;
- Acquire right of ways to construct trail linkages at Forbes Avenue and Tracy Street to eliminate current switchbacks and fill gaps in a continuous trail and sidewalk network linking to the northern part of the City;
- Work with CDTA to establish additional bus stops at or near public access points to the waterfront as the shoreline areas become more developed;
- Upgrade the 100-foot wide riverfront portion of the Amtrak maintenance facility provided to the City in 2009 to include trails, benches, and overlooks that at least allow some recreational access to the previously off-limits industrial rail support facility along the Hudson River north of the Rail Station;
- Ensure that pedestrian amenities, such as benches, boardwalks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting are included in private development proposals on or adjacent to the Hudson Riverfront; or at a minimum, that developers provide the City with a 12 to 15 foot right of way along the River to accommodate segments of the proposed Riverfront Trail and other public waterfront facilities such as boat launches, fishing piers, and overlooks.

## City Gateway

**Location and Existing Conditions** - The City Gateway Subarea is a cluster of small parcels directly between the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Rail Station and Riverfront Park in the central part of the City. This is where most cars enter and leave Rensselaer via the on-ramps to the Dunn Memorial Bridge, making this a “front door” to the City. Riverfront Park is located in this Subarea and is the primary municipal park facility serving the entire community.

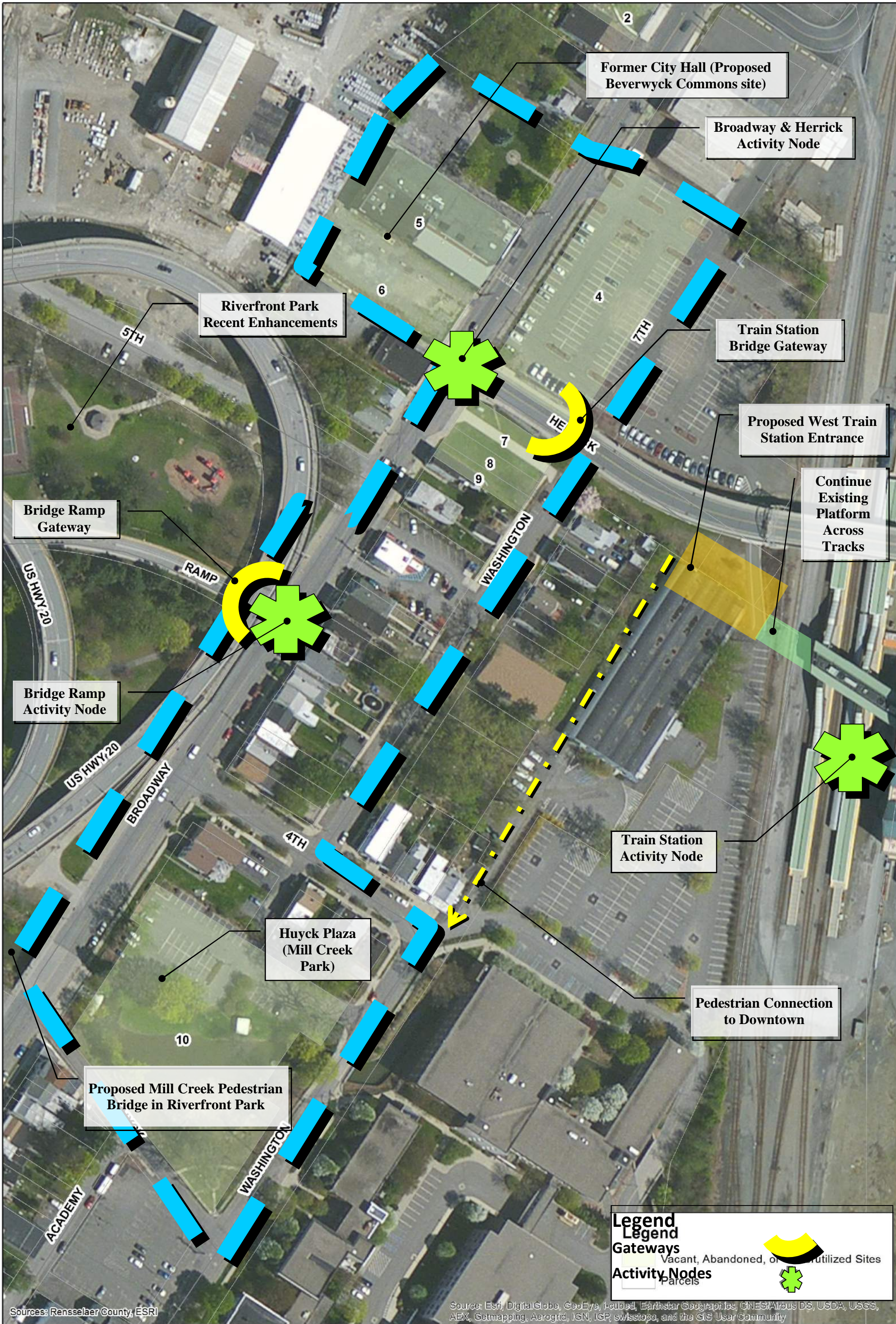
The area includes a mixture of smaller commercial, residential, public services, and vacant properties. Zoning primarily falls under the Downtown Mixed-Use classification, allowing a variety of commercial and residential land uses. The largest amount of land is consumed by the on-ramps to the Dunn Memorial Bridge and Riverfront Park, the Rail Station and attached parking garage, the rights-of-way for the north-south rail corridor, and the NYS Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) office campus and surface parking lots north of the Rail Station. The former Rensselaer City Hall and the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County (constructed in 1949) are also located in this Subarea.

The Herrick Street overpass allows for easy access to the Rail Station from the Dunn Memorial Bridge via Broadway. There is a small single- and multi-family residential neighborhood within the Subarea wedged in front of the station. Huyck Plaza – currently used as parking for OCFS – surrounds a stormwater detention pond that helps drain Mill Creek before that stream enters the Hudson River. The terrain within the area is relatively flat, and the Subarea forms the physical connection between the traditional historic downtown core and larger development opportunities to the north, with the massive Rail Station situated in the middle.

**Environmental Conditions** – The entire Subarea except the Rail Station is in the 100-year floodplain. Wetlands are found along the riverfront as well as the Mill Creek area from Huyck Plaza to its confluence with the Hudson River. The former Rensselaer Manufactured Gas Plant, the only NYS-designated contaminated site in the BOA, is located at 89 Washington Street. The site has been partially remediated and currently serves as surface parking.

Additionally, several sites in the Subarea could be potentially contaminated due to the presence of underground bulk petroleum storage tanks or spills. The former city hall at 505 Broadway has two recorded spills; Martino’s Garage at 551 Broadway has one; the NYS-OCFS complex (former Huyck Felt Mills) at 52 Washington Street has seven, and the Albany-Rensselaer Rail







Station has 13 including the site of the former Price Chopper supermarket north on East Street that also sold gasoline for several decades.

**Redevelopment Vision** - The City Gateway Subarea will be an enticing gateway to the City of Rensselaer that conveys a positive image in terms of community vibrancy, health and wellness, and pedestrian mobility. This neighborhood will connect downtown businesses, historic neighborhoods, and new waterfront housing with the Rail Station for visitors and residents. Motorists and pedestrians will continue to use the Herrick Street overpass to get to the Station from the west, and the enhanced sidewalks on East Street will connect older neighborhoods on the eastern side of the Station.

***Broadway is a vibrant mixed-use corridor and the central spine for business, entertainment, and retail as the heart of the Downtown.***

- Pedestrian and bicycle connections from the Rail Station and downtown to the Hudson Riverfront will be visible, safe, and convenient. Wide sidewalks and bike lanes on Broadway, Washington Street, and Herrick Street and existing paths in Riverfront Park and upgraded sidewalks through Huyck Plaza will make non-motorized travel between waterfront development projects and the downtown business district sensible and enjoyable for residents and visitors.
- The City Gateway will be home to a vibrant, moderately dense residential population living in smaller homes along Broadway and new mixed-use developments clustered near the Rail Station that attract train travelers and those who prefer to keep their time in cars to a minimum. New housing will also support existing downtown businesses and attract new retail and entertainment venues by providing a “critical mass” of potential consumers within easy walking distance of new businesses.
- Light industrial activities and non-conforming land uses will be relocated to more appropriate parcels in the City, opening up the former City Hall and adjacent riverfront properties on the west side of Broadway for new mixed-use housing and retail.

**Project Success** – Recent projects within the City Gateway Subarea include the East Street Renewal project which focused on pedestrian improvements on the northeastern side of the train station and the renovation of the Rensselaer Boys and Girls Club to refresh its important community service function in the central part of the City.



Recommended actions to build on recent momentum and past planning efforts are integrated within this BOA Plan to provide a uniform set of recommendations relative to current development goals for the City Gateway Subarea.

**City Gateway GOAL #1:**

*Remove or rehabilitate blighted properties, create downtown pocket parks, and improve pedestrian connections among and between the Broadway, Washington, and East Street corridors surrounding the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station.*

The intent of this Goal is to clean up the Subarea which serves as the entry point for the majority of visitors to the City, attract new single-and two-family home construction on smaller vacant lots, and promote pocket parks and community gardens to enhance the quality of life for residents between Columbia Turnpike and the Rail Station.

**Actions:**

- Develop Mill Creek Park as a passive pocket park in the center of the traditional business district. The property is privately owned and poorly maintained. The City should either purchase the property outright or encourage the owner to work with the City to improve the appearance of the property and create a passive park for employees and residents (also see Priority Site #14 in the Appendices).
- Improve pedestrian connections between the riverfront and the Rail Station via on-street sidewalk, crosswalk, and bike lane improvements on Broadway, Washington Street, and Herrick Street, including upgraded lighting, crossing signals, and curb bump-outs to reduce crosswalk distances. Maintain walking paths in Riverfront Park and create a new sidewalk through Huyck Square between Broadway and Washington Street to improve pedestrian mobility between Riverfront Park and the Downtown.
- Implement local housing rehabilitation and homebuyer assistance programs targeted to deteriorated and blighted homes along Broadway and East Street on both sides of the Rail Station, to attract new homeowners and promote private housing investment.

**City Gateway GOAL #2:**

*Identify and market to a private development entity one or more larger vacant and underutilized properties on Broadway west of the Rail Station for a new mixed-use project, with retail space on the first floor and upper floor affordable and market rate apartments, with Albany skyline views and an easy walk to the rest of the downtown business district.*

**Actions:**

- Gain site control of Priority Sites 7 through 10 within the Subarea (including the former City Hall on Broadway-see below) using a local development corporation, IDA, or related County agency, to facilitate property stabilization measures and a Request for Developer Qualifications process for new mixed-use concepts.
- Assist the selected developer with funding applications, PILOT Agreement(s), and other local incentives to help support one or more private mixed-use development projects that will serve as a catalyst to bring retail and entertainment businesses and new residents to the City Gateway area concentrated near the Rail Station.



*The former City Hall and adjacent vacant and underutilized land opposite the Herrick Street overpass to the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station offers significant redevelopment potential next to the Hudson River (to the right).*



**City Gateway GOAL #3**

*Transform Riverfront Park into a multi-purpose recreational facility to accommodate a variety of fitness needs, regional festivals, and as a social gathering place to anchor the Rensselaer Waterfront and the City Gateway Subareas connected to the Hudson River with an abundance of arts, health, and wellness activities for residents and visitors.*

The intent of this Goal is to polish Riverfront Park, which is already the City's primary outdoor recreational facility, as a focal point for health, wellness, and related arts and social gatherings with unobstructed access to the Hudson River and trail and sidewalk connections to the Fort Crailo neighborhood to the south and Delaet's Landing and North Broadway to the north.

As the central public park and open green space for the City, Riverfront Park should be upgraded and expanded to provide additional recreational facilities for groups and individuals, seamless connections to the new Hudson Riverfront Trail, and a magnet to attract mixed-use development in the small but dense older neighborhoods surrounding the Rail Station.

**Actions:**

- Explore partnerships for providing additional youth and arts group programming for City residents in Riverfront Park. Consider cooperating with the Boys and Girls Club, for example, to bring children to Riverfront Park after school and on weekends.
- Refresh the murals on the Dunn Memorial Bridge on and off-ramp pillars and promote additional public art installations along the riverfront to draw more interest to the Park;
- Complete the planning, design, and implementation process for a variety of park and recreational facility improvements, including:

*Skate Park*

*Riverfront overlooks, fishing access piers*

*Outdoor education stations and interpretive signage*

*Baseball field upgrades, including field repairs, bleachers and parking lot improvements;*

*Tennis court and basketball court repair and resurfacing;*

*Enhancements to the pedestrian plaza areas on Broadway*

*Community garden space*

*Amphitheater or similar landscaped seating for concerts and festivals*

- Design and construct a short pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek along the southern side of Riverfront Park to create a continuous trail along the Hudson and reduce pedestrian use of the busy four-lane intersection at Broadway and Columbia Turnpike.

While not a high priority because of extensive sidewalk improvements along lower Broadway and signal and crosswalk enhancements at Columbia Turnpike, a short pedestrian bridge extending from the existing trail at the southern end of Riverfront Park across Mill Creek connecting to the Fort Crailo neighborhood would allow pedestrians to avoid the still fast-moving Columbia Turnpike corridor.



*Hucyk Square is a short connector street between Broadway (where this photo was taken) and Washington Street and the large office complex home to the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. This street and the adjacent Mill Creek Pond (to the left) offers the potential for an urban pocket park and pedestrian pathway between a major jobs center and the Broadway business district in between the Rensselaer Waterfront and City Gateway Subareas.*



## Downtown Hub

**Location and Existing Conditions** - The Downtown Hub Subarea forms the traditional urban core for the City, or “East Albany” as it was once called. It includes City Hall, the separate Police Department building on Lower Broadway, and access to the Dunn Memorial Bridge (I-787). Lot sizes are smaller than in the other two Subareas.

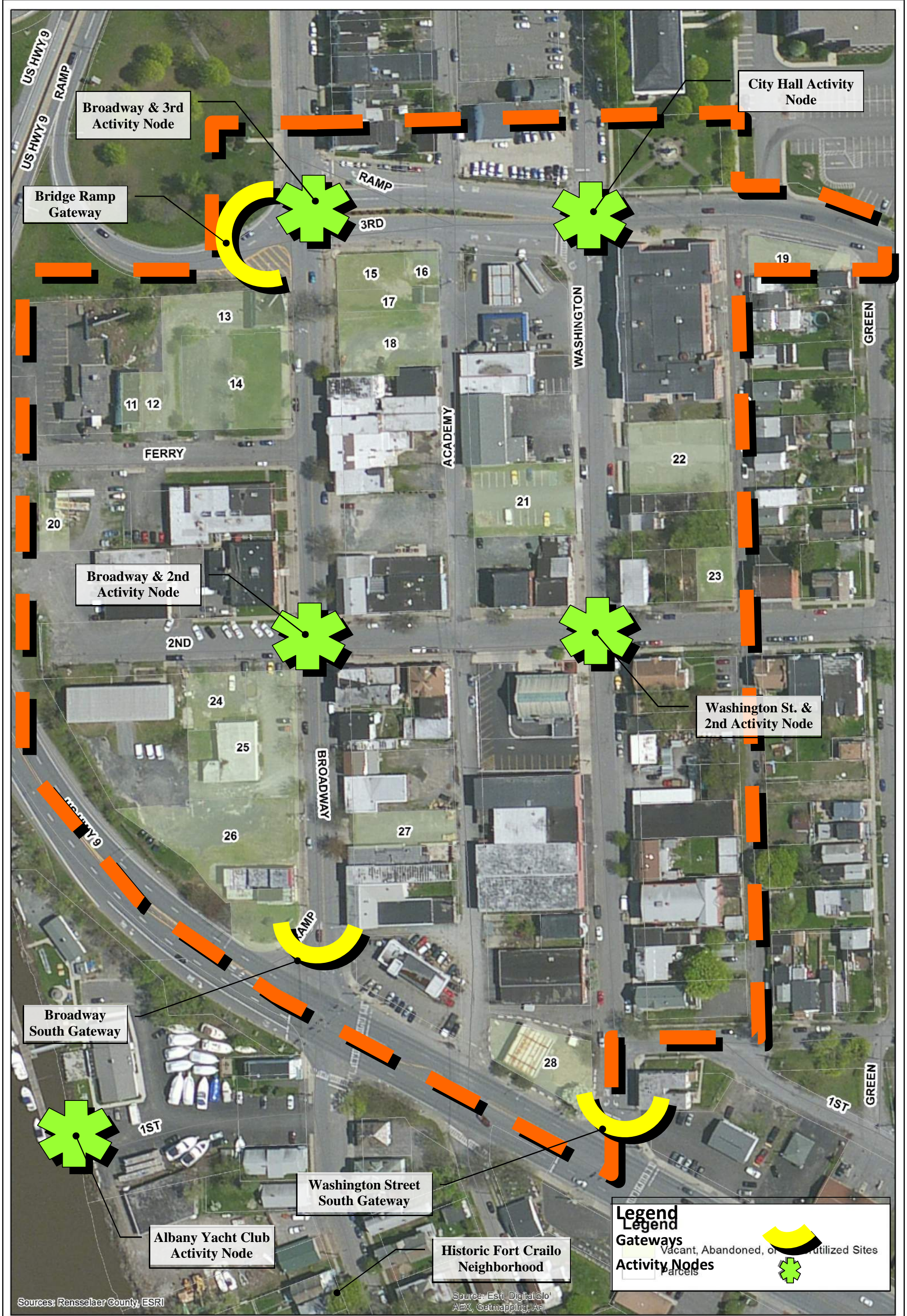
Land uses are varied ranging from multi-family residential to small and medium-sized commercial properties, with numerous vacant lots scattered within the area. Zoning in this Subarea is Downtown Mixed-Use, which provides flexibility in lot sizes and new building designs and configurations. Several locally owned small businesses still call the Downtown Hub home in addition to a large inventory of older housing units and mixed-use structures.

U.S. Routes 9 and 20 (Columbia Turnpike) forms the southern boundary of the Subarea and provides vehicle access to the Dunn Memorial Bridge and I-787 for points east of the City within the Town of East Greenbush. The efficiency of vehicle movement along this four-lane corridor also causes commuters – and potential customers – to bypass downtown businesses during their travel between eastern Rensselaer County and Albany or other Capital Region areas.

**Environmental Conditions** - Just like the other two Subareas, the Downtown Hub is almost entirely located within the 100-year floodplain with federally designated wetlands located along the immediate Hudson River shoreline. There are no contaminated sites in this Subarea according to the NYS-DEC, although the current City police station has a petroleum bulk storage tank and the former Joe’s Garage at 3 Columbia Street, the former Hess Station at 13-15 Columbia Street, and the Xtra Mart at 9 Third Avenue have multiple spills recorded by the DEC.

**Redevelopment Vision** - The Downtown Hub Subarea will be the center of municipal services and small business activities fueling the economic and social life of the entire City. The unique density of the grid-street pattern anchored by City Hall on Washington Street and vacant former gas stations on the north side of Columbia Turnpike provides opportunities for startup retail businesses, new restaurants and sidewalk cafes, affordable housing rehabilitation, affordable retail locations for goods and services such as bakeries and banks, and renovation of multi-family apartments in larger former homes and industrial buildings.







***The Downtown Hub is bustling with business activities and municipal services. The Hub includes locally owned stores and services, breakfast and lunch restaurants and sidewalk cafes, renovated homes and apartments, and pedestrian mobility between the Fort Crailo Historic District and the downtown business district on both sides of Columbia Turnpike.***

- Rehabilitation of deteriorated commercial and residential properties to restore historic building facades and create retail opportunities for entrepreneurs will help attract new foot traffic to the traditional downtown business district;
- Cleanup and redevelopment of medium-sized properties along lower Broadway will create mixed-use building opportunities on a smaller scale than in the Rensselaer Waterfront and City Gateway Subareas, but these types of new development are well suited to provide riverfront access for new residents and new customers for essential downtown stores, restaurants, taverns, and other services;
- Reuse of two adjacent former gas stations and auto repair facilities on the north side of Columbia Turnpike provides the City with an opportunity to transform these suburban-style parcels at the edge of the downtown for new privately-owned buildings that restore the historic building fabric and rebuild the curbs and sidewalks in this area to help slow down vehicles and improve downtown pedestrian connections.

**Project Successes** – Recent projects within the Downtown Hub Subarea include sidewalk and crosswalk improvements at the Broadway and Columbia Turnpike intersection and infrastructure enhancements along Broadway that upgraded curbing and sidewalks and installed historic streetlights and banners honoring the City’s large Veteran population.

Recommended actions to build on recent momentum and past planning efforts are integrated within this BOA Plan to provide a uniform set of recommendations relative to current development goals for the Downtown Hub Subarea.

***Downtown Hub GOAL #1:***

***Promote infill construction on vacant and dilapidated properties to restore the historic character and pedestrian scale of the downtown business district.***

The objective of this goal is to revitalize the traditional commercial and residential building stock in this small Subarea, to promote infill construction of new buildings and encourage restoration of historic facades and unique architectural features to fill vacant spaces and attract new business owners and tenants.

**Actions:**

- Review zoning codes and site plan guidelines to encourage infill building construction up to the existing sidewalk and allow use of sidewalk areas for outdoor retail, restaurants, bars, and other activities that generate a sense of vibrancy and draw people to the area;
- Acquire dilapidated properties and demolish buildings that are unable to be saved to create buildable lots for developers or to provide areas for pocket parks and community gardens for existing downtown residents;
- Adopt building design guidelines to promote historic restoration and renovation activities in conformance to traditional downtown standards and historical building styles unique to Rensselaer's Downtown;
- Provide incentives through the NY Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, and local or County revolving loan and grant programs to incentivize private façade and restoration projects that revitalize the building stock within the Subarea.

***Downtown Hub GOAL #2:***

***Encourage foot traffic within the Downtown Hub as the core municipal and retail part of the City that offers a variety of daily goods and services to residents through a vibrant locally owned business community.***

**Actions:**

- Consider closing side streets connecting to Columbia Turnpike to create pedestrian-only areas for ethnic festivals, outdoor dining areas, and retail and farmers' markets that will attract residents from other parts of the City and surrounding communities;



- Establish a “microenterprise” funding program to support entrepreneurs wishing to start or expand a new business within the traditional downtown business district;
- Implement a street tree planting program and install historic lighting on side streets between Broadway and Washington Street to create a safe, well-lit, and festive Downtown Hub neighborhood;
- Encourage outdoor seating where appropriate for restaurant and related uses through sidewalk encroachment permits or other regulatory approvals that are easy for business owners to navigate;
- Develop brochures and other physical way-finding methods (sidewalk stamps, banners, informational plaques) that identify and describe the historic structures throughout the City and recommend self-directed walking tours of the downtown business district and adjacent Fort Crailo Historic District.



*A variety of underutilized properties adjacent to Columbia Turnpike and nestled between Lower Broadway and Washington Street provide opportunities for narrow and closed streets to create space for sidewalk cafes, galleries, and street festivals.*

***Downtown Hub GOAL #3:***

*Promote mixed-use redevelopment of two vacant gas station properties and another severely dilapidated building on the north side of Columbia Turnpike to provide continuity with the adjacent downtown streetscape and anchor the southern edge of the BOA with new housing and retail businesses that will bring people to the City's downtown.*

**Actions:**

- Obtain site control (tax foreclosure, eminent domain) of at least three vacant and underutilized properties (two of which are former gas stations) or work with development entities to promote cleanup and new construction that provides more building coverage of these parcels and includes retail and housing uses to attract people to the Subarea;
- Work with Rensselaer County and the NYS-DEC to investigate the two vacant gas stations and auto repair facilities on Columbia Turnpike and assess their potential for brownfield cleanup incentives such as the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program or the Environmental Restoration Program if the sites become publicly owned.

***Downtown Hub GOAL #4:***

*Seek funding and technical assistance to investigate riverfront properties within the Downtown Hub currently owned by industrial entities and National Grid to promote long-term planning for eventual cleanup and reuse of large underutilized properties on the west side of lower Broadway and situated near the riverfront.*

There are several smaller industrial properties on Ferry Street and Second Avenue between the Hudson River and lower Broadway that are used for equipment storage, light manufacturing, or are generally vacant and believed to have environmental problems based on past uses. If these properties can be combined in some configuration, the amount of land and close proximity to the Hudson could make these sites enticing for new waterfront uses including a hotel, marina, and upper floor residential options with wide views to Albany.

The objective with this Goal is to seek funding support through the U.S. EPA, NYS-DEC, or Empire State Development to begin to assess these properties to understand and quantify any



environmental concerns and prepare feasibility plans to attract new private investment as other targeted parts of the City begin to revitalize. Although the current ownership of several of these properties is not believed to be conducive to quick redevelopment projects, the location of vacant and underutilized property between Broadway and the Hudson River adjacent to I-787 and Columbia Turnpike should make these parcels more attractive to developers if some of the unknown environmental factors and constraints can be identified.



*Properties such as this former church on Washington Street (above) and other small apartments and office buildings close to City Hall and Columbia Turnpike provide reuse options for rehabilitated housing, art and cultural organizations, restaurants and retail stores, and offices at the southern end of the BOA.*

### 4.3 SUBAREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The following pages include a plausible Redevelopment Concept for two of the Subareas, **City Gateway** and **Rensselaer Waterfront**. The Concepts were created using one or more clusters of priority properties, reviewing the Profile Sheets that are included in Appendix C, and discussion current development trends and ownership issues with City officials. The intent of each scenario is to demonstrate the type of reuse option that is recommended in this Plan for each area and how that kind of project might “fit” within certain strategic BOA properties.

This analysis was also based on a determination of the most beneficial physical locations in Rensselaer for redevelopment (proximity to the Hudson River, Amtrak Rail Station, and commuter access to I-787), the market feasibility of potential end-uses, and the potential for catalytic benefits for reusing other nearby BOA properties. These factors were balanced against the findings and recommendations of previous City planning documents to ensure the scenarios are still relevant with respect to desired future development within the BOA.



# SUBAREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

## City Gateway

- Old City Hall Cluster


## Rensselaer Waterfront

- CDTA Lot Cluster

## SUBAREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The following pages include two Redevelopment Scenarios that are plausible for one or more clusters of priority sites, in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Nomination Plan and the updated vision for each Subarea as outlined in this Section 4.

### City Gateway – Old City Hall Cluster

City Gateway Subarea	Site #	Current Use
	6	Large Parking Lot
	7	Vacant
	8	Former City Hall / Vacant Building
	9	Vacant
	10	Vacant
	11	Vacant
	12	Vacant
	13	Vacant
	14	Parking / Mill Creek
	32	

The City Gateway Subarea is an extension of the downtown business district, importantly acting as a gateway where most travelers coming to and from the Rail Station pass through. Redevelopment along Broadway from the I-787 off ramp to the North Broadway overpass would help fill in vacant lots with new building construction, add retail to an area that is underserved, and bring more residents to properties along Broadway that would have upper floor views of the Hudson River and Albany skyline while being virtually “across the street” from the Rail Station. Priority parcels were assessed with the following desired characteristics:



### Attractive Redevelopment Characteristics:

- Provides significant facade frontage for retail and service businesses;
- Redefines the intersection of Broadway and Herrick Street for maximum visibility;
- Offers walkable retail space for residents of nearby DeLaet's Landing;
- Ample vacant parcels could be "clustered" to maximize new building footprints;
- Land acquisition and parcel assemblage would be potentially affordable;
- Environmental contamination issues not expected to be cost prohibitive.

### Old City Hall Cluster:

**Site #6** (below left) occupies the northeast corner of Broadway and Herrick Street, providing high visibility and 0.8 acres of vacant land. Currently used as a surface parking lot, the property provides approximately 275 linear feet of frontage on Broadway and 135 feet along Herrick.

**Sites #7 through 10** (below right) comprise a cluster of four adjacent parcels with frontage on the west side of Broadway opposite the intersection with Herrick Street and the ramp to the Rail Station. One of these parcels, #8, is currently occupied by the former City Hall building, now vacant. The remaining three are vacant land. Taken together, all four properties would provide 285 linear feet of frontage on Broadway. They are currently owned by the same private entity, as well.





**Site #14** (above) occupies the corner of Broadway and the one-way alley of Huyck Square, providing good visibility with a moderate amount of vacant land area. This site is currently being utilized as a parking lot, with a natural waterway (Mill Creek) bisecting the property. Because about half of the site is occupied by the waterway, the total parcel size of 1.4 acres is reduced to about 0.6 acres of actual useable area.

Given the natural site constraints, this parcel is ideally situated as a small pocket park or pedestrian plaza and gathering place between the Lower Broadway business district and the Herrick Street ramp to the Rail Station. Nestled between Washington Street and Broadway in a partially residential area, the site offers a transitional quality to allow for better pedestrian mobility through the central part of the Subarea. With its 130 linear feet of visible frontage on Broadway, the site deserves to be cleaned up and enjoyed by residents and visitors as passive green space while the rest of the City Gateway Subarea grows.

**Sites #11 to 13** occupy the southeast corner of Broadway and Herrick Street, providing very high visibility but a relatively small amount of property – 0.2 acres. Currently vacant land, the three properties would provide approximately 75 linear feet of frontage on Broadway and about another 135 feet along Herrick. Parking access to the combined site could be provided from a rear entrance on Washington Street. Even with the high visibility near the entrance ramp to the Rail Station, the overall size, need to consolidate three different properties, and no direct vehicle access from Broadway make these sites less compelling than the other clusters highlighted for this Subarea.



HUDSON RIVER



ZAPPALA  
BLOCK

KEY	ADDRESS	SIZE	OWNER
1	660 Broadway	0.47	Zappala Land Devlp LLC
2	505 Broadway	0.54	V Zappala & Co. Inc.
3	501 Broadway	0.18	V Zappala & Co. Inc.
4	491 Broadway	0.09	V Zappala & Co. Inc.
5	500-538 Broadway	0.80	Washington Complex LLC
6	Broadway	0.56	CDTA
7	480 Broadway	0.11	Washington Complex LLC
8	484 Broadway	0.10	CDTA

BOYS &  
GIRLS CLUB

AMTRAK

EAST ST.

DUNN MEMORIAL BRIDGE

RIVERFRONT  
PARK


BROADWAY


HERRICK ST.

WASHINGTON ST.



Priority Sites 6,7,8,9 & 10

 CLUSTER SITE  
BOUNDARY

 2020 PARCELS



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2021  
C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES

APPROVED:

DRAFTED : CCK

CHECKED : JT

PROJ. NO : 20.0597

SCALE : 1"=120'

DATE : 6/25/2021

**OLD CITY HALL CLUSTER PLAN**  
EXISTING CONDITIONS  
URBAN CORE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

CITY OF RENSSELAER  
RENSSELAER COUNTY, NY

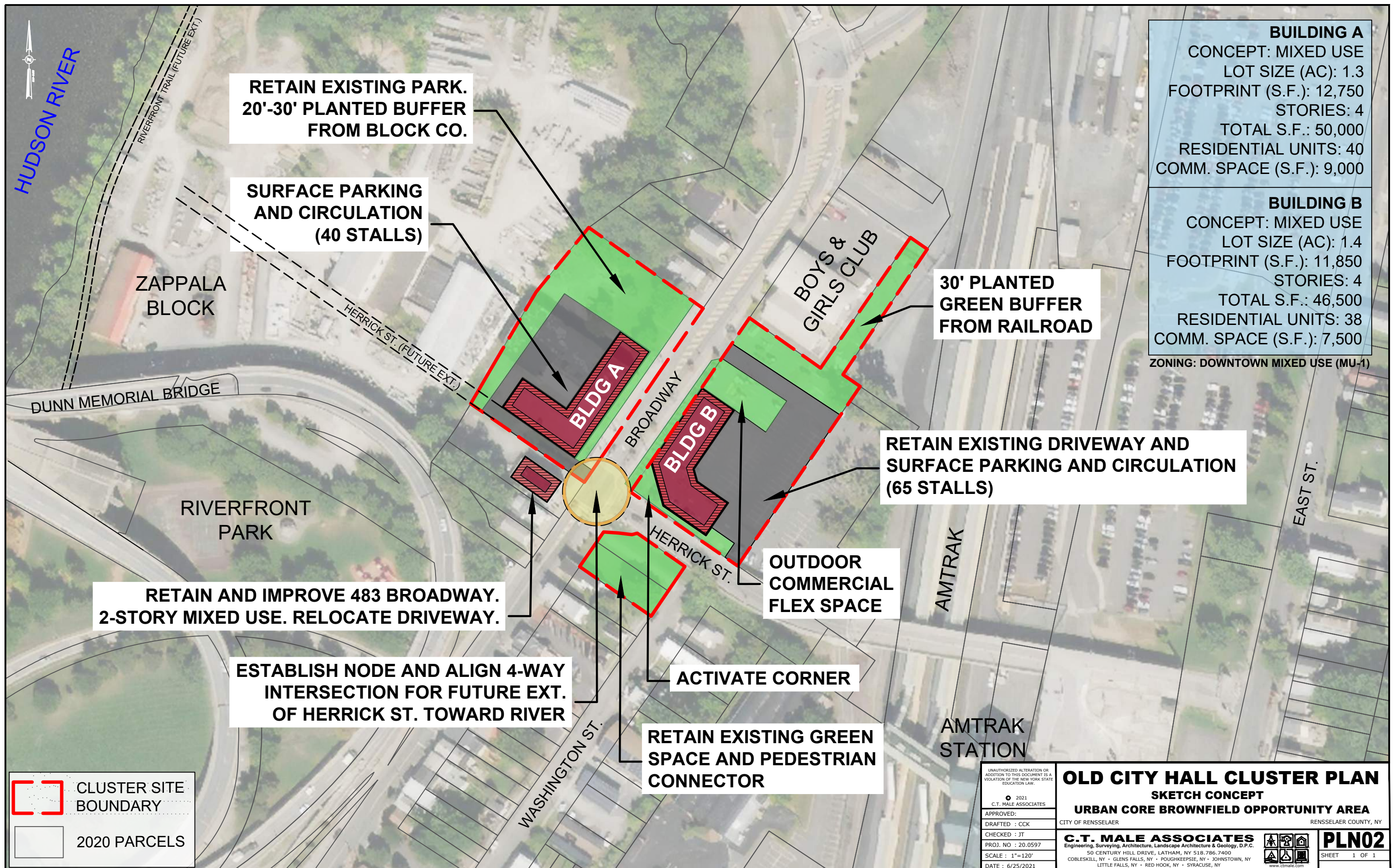
**C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES**  
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www.ctmale.com



**PLN01**

SHEET 1 OF 1







## SUBAREA REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The following pages include the second Redevelopment Concept that is plausible for one or more clusters of priority sites, in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Nomination Plan and the updated vision for each Subarea as outlined in this Section 4.

### Rensselaer Waterfront – CDTA Lot Cluster

Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea	Site #	Current Use
	1	Amtrak Maintenance Facility
	2	DeLaet's Landing (Phase 1)
	3	DeLaet's Landing Access Drive
	4	Amtrak Parking Lot
	5	CDTA Parking Lot

The Rensselaer Waterfront Subarea is defined as the northern extent of the BOA study area, with significant waterfront exposure along the Hudson River. The area is important due to the waterfront access it could provide as an economic generator for housing, tourism, and recreation. Expanding waterfront access for residents also remains a key priority for the City.

This Subarea is where the largest parcels of underutilized land are found, including DeLaet's Landing (former Rensselaer High School) and surface parking lots north of the Rail Station. This relatively open land creates the opportunity for larger-scale development which cannot fit within the compact downtown business district. The proximity to well-established residential neighborhoods along East Street and North Broadway is also important. This portion of the BOA directly abuts these residential areas which are otherwise cut-off from the Hudson River by the existing railroad corridor and Amtrak maintenance facility (Site #1).

Connecting the North Broadway and East Street neighborhoods on the east side of the Rail Station to new retail and commercial development (and ultimately the Hudson River) is a BOA priority. Ideally, this Subarea is best suited to larger-scale projects which could provide a mix of housing, retail, restaurants, entertainment (possibly attracting train travelers) with the enjoyment of the nearby Riverfront and plentiful connections to the rest of the City.

### **Attractive Redevelopment Characteristics:**

- Provides direct waterfront access via DeLaet's Landing;
- Helps to serve adjacent residential neighborhoods with new goods and services;
- Makes better use of underutilized properties currently serving only as outdoor storage or surface parking areas;
- Creates a potential revenue stream for CDTA by building up on their existing parking lots and attracting more residents to the center of the City;
- Transit-oriented development opportunity on north side of the Rail Station could benefit both visitors and residents with much-needed retail, food, and entertainment.

### **CDTA Lot Cluster and Other Priority Sites:**

**Site #5** occupies a large surface lot directly north of Herrick Street and next to the Amtrak-Rensselaer Rail Station, bounded by East Street and the entrance and exit to the large parking complex serving the Station to the north. This site was refurbished in the late 1990s when the new Station was constructed south of its former location. The parking lot offers the potential for transit-oriented development including a multi-story building with apartments on upper floors, a possible smaller hotel serving overnight travelers (who now basically stay in Albany or East or North Greenbush outside the City), and fast-casual restaurants, bars, or other entertainment venues on the same level as the Station or connected by a cross-over walkway above Herrick Street.



RENSSELAER ON THE RISE  
Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area



**Site #5** (above) and to the right of the sidewalk on East Street (right) is well-suited for mixed-uses at a height and scale that could include apartments, a hotel, and restaurants, bars, and/or entertainment-type retail for long-distance train travelers, commuters, and residents from across East Street (left).



## RENSSELAER ON THE RISE

### Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area

**Site #4** (below) also comprises a surface parking lot, adjacent but north of **Site #5** on the previous page. While this lot is currently underutilized, it is less valuable for a multi-story mixed-use building in the near future because of its distance from the Rail Station. As long as sufficient parking is preserved for train travelers and other site users, the property could still support a mid-rise apartment building with first floor office and retail space to fill out the street wall along East Street (to the right in the photo) and attract more infill housing development to smaller vacant lots within the adjacent neighborhood.

This is the also the general location of a former Price Chopper supermarket, which has not been replaced within the center of the City, creating a food desert effect in terms of lower income family's access to fresh and healthy foods.





RENSSELAER ON THE RISE  
Urban Core Brownfield Opportunity Area



**Sites #2 and 3** (above) comprise DeLaet's Landing, including 96 market-rate apartments constructed in 2015-2017 and fully occupied along a large swath of riverfront where the former Rensselaer High School stood for decades. The site also includes the Esplanade, a wide public walkway and gathering place along the Hudson River that will connect to the pending Riverfront Trail north past the Amtrak maintenance facility.

The City is now working with the developer to review and refine design plans for Phases 2 and 3, which would include 80+ additional apartments and possible retail and office space in one or more new buildings to be constructed on both sides of this Phase 1 project.



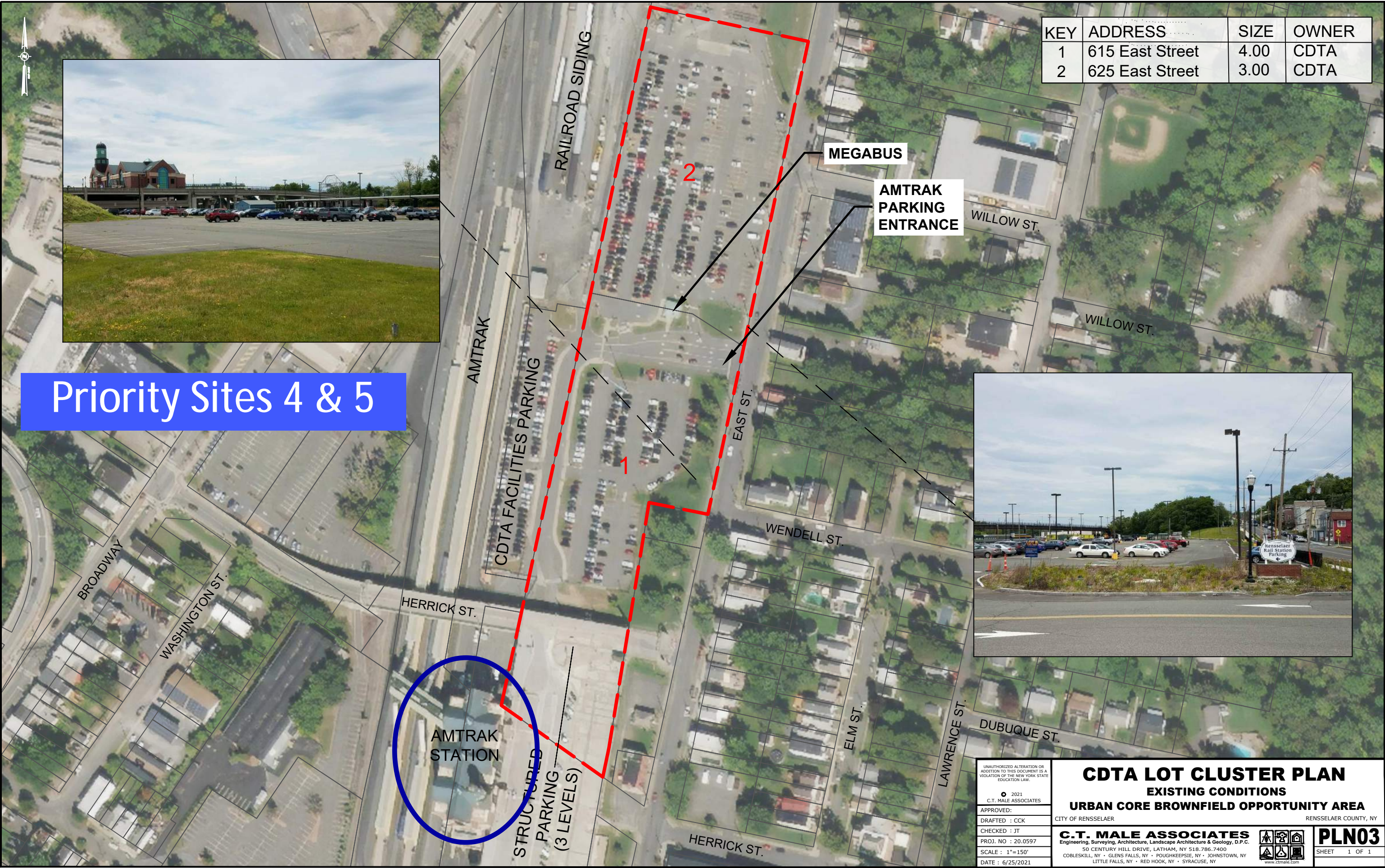
*New construction such as DeLaet's Landing is taking advantage of the significant investments the City has made (left) to rebuild and replace aging municipal water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure along the entire Broadway Corridor.*



KEY	ADDRESS	SIZE	OWNER
1	615 East Street	4.00	CDTA
2	625 East Street	3.00	CDTA



Priority Sites 4 & 5



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APPROVED:  
DRAFTED : CCK  
CHECKED : JT  
PROJ. NO : 20.0597  
SCALE : 1"=150'  
DATE : 6/25/2021

**CDTA LOT CLUSTER PLAN**  
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**  
**URBAN CORE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA**  
CITY OF RENSSELAER  
**C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES**  
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LITTLE FALLS, NY • RED HOOK, NY • SYRACUSE, NY

**PLN03**  
SHEET 1 OF 1



CONCEPT: MIXED USE  
LOT SIZE (AC): 4.0  
FOOTPRINT (S.F.): 15,200  
STORIES: 3  
TOTAL S.F.: 45,600  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS: 35  
COMM. SPACE (S.F.): 6,000

CONCEPT: MIXED USE  
GROUND-LEVEL PARKING  
LOT SIZE (AC): 4.0  
FOOTPRINT (S.F.): 11,000  
STORIES: 4  
TOTAL S.F.: 33,000  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS: 28  
COMM. SPACE (S.F.): 4,700

**ZONING: DOWNTOWN MIXED USE (MU-1)**

**SURFACE PARKING  
AND CIRCULATION  
(100 STALLS)**

**RETAIN DEDICATED  
AMTRAK GARAGE  
ACCESS ROAD**

**RETAIN EXISTING  
SURFACE PARKING**

## RETAIN MEGABUS

**RETAIN EXISTING AMTRAK  
PARKING ENTRANCE**

**ESTABLISH SENSE OF PLACE AND ARRIVAL. SCREEN SURFACE PARKING.**

**ACTIVATE  
CORNER AND  
ADD PEDESTRIAN  
ACCOMMODATION**

**PRESERVE VIEWSHED TO WEST. ACTIVATE  
AND CONNECT ADJOINING GREEN SPACES.**

**GROUND LEVEL PARKING (8,000 S.F.) AND  
2ND STORY CHAIN RESTAURANT (4,700 S.F.)**

## 2ND STORY BRIDGE INTO PARKING GARAGE/TRAIN STATION

AMTRAK  
STATION

STRUCTURED  
PARKING  
(3 LEVELS)

EXISTING  
GREEN SPACE

RAILROAD SIDING

**BLDG A**

[BRIDGE]

WILSON ST.

WILLOW ST.

WILLOW ST.

LAWRENCE ST.

WENDELL ST.

DUBUQUE ST

HERRICK ST

ELM ST.

## CDTA LOT CLUSTER PLAN

## SKETCH CONCEPT

## URBAN CORE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

RENSSELAER COUNTY, NY

**C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES**  
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**PLN04**

SHEET 1 OF 1

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CHECKED : JT

CHECKED : JJ

DDO1 NO. 20-0503

PROJ. NO : 20.0597

SCALE : 1"=150'



## 4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Rensselaer's commitment to planning the revitalization of its Downtown is unquestioned, as evident in the multitude of plans aggregated before the creation of this BOA Nomination Plan. It is now the challenge of local municipal officials, champions and advocates of projects, policies, and causes, and the business community and residents to overcome the obstacles that have muted previous revitalization efforts.

As a result of this Nomination Plan and supporting analyses, over 30 target sites spread across three distinct Subareas have been identified as having the greatest potential for further planning and investigation to promote their reuse and development. These sites and their potential for land aggregation offer a blank canvass to advance recommended projects from previous plans through decisive resource investments (both financial and non-financial). The three Subareas detailed in this Plan offer several investment angles to build off the City's existing attributes: the Amtrak Rail Station, large swaths of undeveloped waterfront property, walkability, transportation connections, and proximity to Albany.

- The **Regional Waterfront** offers large scale opportunities that can capitalize on physical and visual waterfront access, views of Albany, and large lot sizes all within walking distance of the Rail Station. While this Subarea was passed over for regional casino construction in the early 2000s, UW Marx has completed Phase 1 of its redevelopment of the former high school campus.
- The **City Gateway** offers immediate access to the Rail Station as well as services, retail businesses, and recreational amenities in Riverfront Park and passive pocket parks and green space on Washington Street. While still predominantly a residential area, this Subarea is Rensselaer's "front door" in many respects. As such, encouraging infill and mixed-use investments with transit-oriented development in these smaller but conveniently located parcels (and potential clusters of adjacent properties) is critical to enhancing the perception of Rensselaer for visitors.
- The **Downtown Hub** is the City's best chance to capitalize on its walkability and historic structures. If investment in this area can be touched off by increased connections to large scale investments further north on Broadway and infill development that creates a neighborhood buzz around festivals, ethnic restaurants, and sidewalk-type activities, it could catalyze redevelopment across the City. Furthermore, this Subarea would also



benefit from improved connections to the Hudson River to blunt the difficulties navigating the Columbia Turnpike corridor at the southern edge of the Downtown.

This Nomination Plan has produced a portrait of Downtown Rensselaer, which is essentially co-terminus with the BOA study area boundary. The Plan “stands on the shoulders” of previous planning efforts, but it also augments their respective utility by consolidating them into one concise document. Municipal officials, as well as residents and business owners, can use this document as a one-stop source for understanding the direction of Downtown Rensselaer and the most prevalent recommended projects for reaching the City’s vision.

Moreover, prospective developers and government officials can use the priority sites inventory to inspire and direct public and private investments. Ultimately, the ideas and recommendations proposed in the Rensselaer Urban Core BOA will allow its champions to inspire current and future revitalization initiatives to keep **Rensselaer on the Rise**.

# APPENDICES



By Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND

**WHEREAS**, Carhart Properties LLC is the owner of 30-32 Catherine Street in the City Rensselaer, and was charged \$150.00 for late fees, re-levy fees and/or penalties for solid waste services for which the property owner asserts were not owed because the original bill was mailed to a former address even though the City was notified of the new address, and was therefore not received in a timely manner, and

**WHEREAS**, Carhart Properties LLC paid such amount of \$150.00 under protest, and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer Treasurer has confirmed that such amount of \$150.00 should be refunded to Carhart Properties LLC, and it is

**NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the payment of \$150.00 be refunded to Carhart Properties LLC for the above stated reasons.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of Sept, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				

## 2021-2022 City

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

City Treasurer  
62 Washington St.  
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Bill#: 000411  
Tax Map: 144.29-6-27.21  
Bank code:  
Roll section:1

**IN PERSON PAYMENT**

FISCAL YEAR: 08/01/2021-07/31/2022

WARRANT DATE: 8/31/21 EST ST AID:

**OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS:**

Carhart Properties LLC  
10 B Luther St  
Troy, NY 12180

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:**

SWIS/Map:381400/144.29-6-27.21

Total value:80,500

Arrears:

Location: 30-32 Catherine St  
School: 381400 - Rensselaer City  
Prop class:  
Lot size: 1.09Acres

**Exemptions:**

372,685.00  
80,500.00  
21.60

LEVY DESCRIPTION	TOTAL TAX LEVY	% CHANGE	TAXABLE VALUE	TAX RATE	TAX AMOUNT
Rensselaer City Tax	6,802,528	1.70	80,500	54.66	4,399.87
Relevied Solid Waste	0	0.00	0	0.00	271.00

DATE DUE	INTEREST/PENALTY	TOTAL TAX DUE	Total Tax Due:	4,670.87
8/31/21	0.00	4,670.87	DUE BY:	8/31/21
9/30/21	93.42	4,764.29		
10/29/21	140.13	4,811.00		

Apply for Third Party Notification by:

**\*\*\*DETACH AND RETURN BOTTOM PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT\*\*\***

TAXES PAID ARE SUBJECT TO COLLECTION

FISCAL YEAR 08/01/2021-07/31/2022

Bill#: 000411

Carhart Properties LLC  
10 B Luther St  
Troy, NY 12180

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

School: Rensselaer City  
Location: 30-32 Catherine St

Total Tax Due: \$4,670.87

Bank code:  
Tax Map: 144.29-6-27.21



# CITY OF RENSSELAER, NEW YORK

8/16/21

Parcel Status Report: City

Page 1 of 1

District: 381400

Parcel ID: 144.29-6-27.21

Owner: Carhart Properties

Location: 30-32 Catherine St

Known Parcel History.....

Tax year and type	Bill #	Paid Date	Type	Base tax	Interest	Penalty	Total Due	Total paid
<b>2017-2018 City</b>								
Rensselaer City Tax	000433	11/30/17	Paid	\$4,129.21				
Relevied Solid Waste	000433	11/30/17	Paid	\$208.65				
			<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$4,337.86</b>	<b>\$303.66</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,489.69</b>
<b>2018-2019 City</b>								
Rensselaer City Tax	000435	10/30/18	Paid	\$4,201.93				
			<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$4,201.93</b>	<b>\$126.06</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,327.99</b>
<b>2019-2020 City</b>								
Rensselaer City Tax	000429	09/30/19	Paid	\$4,292.29				
			<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$85.85</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,378.14</b>
<b>2020-2021 City</b>								
Rensselaer City Tax	000419	08/31/20	Paid	\$4,299.68				
			<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,299.68</b>
<b>2021-2022 City</b>								
Rensselaer City Tax	000411	08/11/21	Paid	\$4,399.87				
Relevied Solid Waste	000411	08/11/21	Paid	\$271.00				
			<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,670.87</b>
Grand totals as of: 8/16/21				<b>\$21,802.63</b>	<b>\$363.74</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$22,166.37</b>

End of Search

#5

By Alderperson : COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

Seconded by Alderperson : \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PROPOSED LOCAL LAW NO. 9 OF 2021 AS TO  
FORM AND SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING THEREON**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer is desirous of establishing a Local Law to Amend Section 121-71 of the City Code relative to Emergency Actions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council has reviewed proposed Local Law No. 9 of the year 2021, attached hereto; and

**WHEREAS**, such Local Law appears appropriate as to form and it appearing appropriate for a Public Hearing to be scheduled so as to consider public comments on such proposed Local Law.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IS RESOLVED**, that proposed Local Law No. 9 of the year 2021 is hereby approved as to form; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 pm on September 15, 2021, at the City Hall of the City of Rensselaer located at 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, New York, so as to the allow the Common Council to hear Public Comment on proposed Local Law No. 12 of 2021; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to issue appropriate Public Notice of the Public Hearing scheduled herein.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor



**CITY OF RENSSELAER**

**LOCAL LAW NO. 9 OF THE YEAR 2021.**

**A Local Law to Amend Section 121-71  
of the Code of the City of Rensselaer,  
New York, Relative to Emergency  
Actions**

**Be it enacted by the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer as follows:**

**ARTICLE I. INTENT**

This Local Law shall be known as Local Law No. 9 of 2021, and shall amend Section 121-71 of the Code of the City of Rensselaer, New York, relating to Emergency Actions. This Local Law amends and supersedes all previously adopted Local Laws concerning such Section of the Code of the City of Rensselaer. The purpose of this Local Law is to update such Section of the City Code so as to be in conformity with the Laws of the State of New York and specifically detail Emergency Actions and Procedures to be followed in the City of Rensselaer in Emergency Situations.

**ARTICLE II. LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

The Common Council of the City of Rensselaer, New York, hereby amends Section 121-71 of the Code of the City of Rensselaer, New York, so as to read as follows:

**§ 121-71. Emergency actions.**

As delegated pursuant to Title IV, Section 79 of the Charter of the City of Rensselaer, whenever the chief officer, at any stage of the investigations and inspections authorized under the provisions of this code, in particular, Article VI of this Chapter (Property Maintenance Requirements), or pursuant to New York State Actions and Proceedings Law, Sections 1307, 1308, 1309, or 1392, finds that a violation of this code exists which, in his opinion, requires immediate action to abate a direct hazard or immediate danger to the health, safety or welfare of the occupants of a building or of the public at large, he may, without prior notice or hearing, issue an emergency order citing the violation and directing applicable City Officers and/or Employees to take such action as may be necessary to remove or abate the hazard or danger. Such emergency order may include an order to vacate and to authorize entry upon such property to effectuate the necessary

removal or abatement of the imminent hazard or danger. Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, such an emergency order shall be effective immediately, and shall be complied with immediately or as otherwise provided by the chief officer. Any cost incurred by the City in effectuating the aforementioned removal or abatement shall be a charge against the appropriate responsible party, and against the real property itself. The chief officer shall file in his records an affidavit stating with fairness and accuracy the items of expense and date such expenses were incurred, and provide a copy of same to the City Mayor, City Common Council, City Treasurer, City Assessor and City Clerk.

### **ARTICLE III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Law shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Office of the New York State Secretary of State.

#### **1. (Final adoption by local legislative body only.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as Local Law No. 9 of 2021 of the City of Rensselaer was duly passed by the Common Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

#### **2. (Passage by local legislative body with approval, no disapproval or repassage after disapproval by Elective Chief Executive Officer\*.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as Local Law No. 9 of 2021 of the City of Rensselaer was duly passed by the Common Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021, and was (approved)(not approved) (repassed after disapproval) by the Elective Chief Executive Officer\*, Mayor Michael Stammel, and was deemed duly adopted on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

#### **3. (Final adoption by referendum.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as Local Law No. \_\_\_\_ of 202\_\_ of the City of Rensselaer was duly passed by the \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_, and was (approved)(not approved)(repassed after disapproval) by the Elective Chief Executive Officer\*, \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_. Such Local Law was submitted to the people by reason of a (mandatory)(permissive) referendum, and received the affirmative vote of a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon at the (general)(special)(annual) election held on \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.



**4. (Subject to permissive referendum and final adoption because no valid petition was filed requesting referendum.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as Local Law No. of 202\_\_ of the City of Rensselaer was duly passed by the Common Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 202\_\_, and was (approved)(not approved)(repassed after disapproval) by the Elective Chief Officer\*, Mayor Michael Stammel, on \_\_\_\_\_, 202\_\_. Such local law was subject to permissive referendum and no valid petition requesting such referendum was filed as of \_\_\_\_\_, 202\_0, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

**5. (City local law concerning Charter revision proposed by petition.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as Local Law No. \_\_\_\_\_ of 200\_\_ of the City of \_\_\_\_\_ having been submitted to referendum pursuant to the provisions of section (36)(37) of the Municipal Home Rule Law, and having received the affirmative vote of a majority of the qualified electors of such city voting thereon at the (special)(general) election held on \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_, became operative.

\* Elective Chief Officer means or includes the chief executive officer of a county elected on a county-wide basis or, if there be none, the chairperson of the county legislative body, the mayor of a city or village, or the supervisor of a town where such officer is vested with the power to approve or veto local laws or ordinances.

**6. (County local law concerning adoption of Charter.)**

I hereby certify that the local law annexed hereto, designated as local law No. \_\_\_\_\_ of 200\_\_ of the County of \_\_\_\_\_ State of New York, having been submitted to the electors at the General Election of November \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_, pursuant to subdivisions 5 and 7 of section 33 of the Municipal Home Rule Law, and having received the affirmative vote of a majority of the qualified electors of the cities of said county as a unit and a majority of the qualified electors of the towns of said county considered as a unit voting at said general election, became operative.

**(If any other authorized form of final adoption has been followed, please provide an appropriate certification.)**

I further certify that I have compared the preceding local law with the original on file in this office and that the same is a correct transcript therefrom and of the whole of such original local law, and was finally adopted in the manner indicated in paragraph 1, above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the County Legislative Body, City, Town or Village  
Clerk or officer designated by local legislative body

**CITY CLERK**

(Seal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Certification to be executed by County Attorney, Corporation Counsel, Town Attorney, Village**

**Attorney or other authorized attorney of locality.)**

State of New York  
County of Rensselaer

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Local Law contains the correct text and that all proper proceedings have been had or taken for the enactment of the Local Law annexed hereto.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Corporation Counsel** \_\_\_\_\_

Title

**CITY OF: RENSSELAER** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



#6

By Alderperson : COUNCIL AS A WHOLE  
Seconded by Alderperson : \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNAGE AND  
SCHEDULING PUBLIC HEARING THEREON - OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER**

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer has been working with the City Engineer for the last three years in conducting an extensive Traffic and Parking Signage Study, and the City Engineer has now made recommended changes to the signage and parking patterns so as to better serve the City of Rensselaer residents, and

**WHEREAS**, such signage changes would require on the 800 and 900 Blocks of Broadway that "No Parking" take place from 9:00 am to Noon on the East side of the street on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the same on the West side of the street on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer is further advised that the Mayor, Police Chief and DPW Commissioner all concur in the proposed signage changes, and

**WHEREAS**, such proposed signage changes appear appropriate as to form and effect, and it appearing appropriate for a Public Hearing to be scheduled so as to consider public comments on such proposed signage changes,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Rensselaer hereby approves the proposed signage changes as to form and effect, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. on September 15, 2021 at the City Hall of the City of Rensselaer located at 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, New York so as to allow the Common Council to hear Public Comment on the proposed signage changes, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to issue appropriate Public Notice of the Public Hearing scheduled herein.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

SO APPROVED!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				



By Alderperson

:

COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

Seconded by Alderperson

:

#6

## A RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNAGE AND SCHEDULING PUBLIC HEARING THEREON - OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer has asked the City Engineer to reevaluate the results and recommendations of traffic and parking signage study, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Engineer has provided updated recommendations at the Common Council's request, and

**WHEREAS**, such signage changes would require on the 800 and 900 Blocks of Broadway that "NO PARKING" take place from 9AM to NOON on the East side of the street on Monday and Wednesdays, and the same on the West Side of the street on Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and

**WHEREAS**, such proposed signage changes appear appropriate as to form and effect, and it appearing appropriate for a Public Hearing to be scheduled so as to consider public comments on such proposed signage changes,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer hereby approves the proposed signage changes as to form and effect, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a Public Hearing will be held at 6:30PM on September 15, 2021 at the City Hall of the City of Rensselaer, 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY so as to allow the Common Council to hear Public Comment on the proposed signage changes, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to issue appropriate Public Notice of the Public Hearing scheduled herein

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

SO APPROVED!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

By Alderperson:

Council as a Whole

Seconded by Alderperson: \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF RENSSELAER COMMEMORATES THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 – COMMON COUNCIL**

**WHEREAS**, twenty years ago on September 11, 2001, our nation was attacked with unspeakable horror as terrorists commandeered three passenger planes which they flew intentionally into the Pentagon, into a field in Pennsylvania and into both World Trade Center towers in New York City, and

**WHEREAS**, more than 3,000 innocent Americans perished on that September morning. Thousands more were injured in the attacks and in the ultimate collapse of the Trade Center towers. We will never forget their loss and the abiding loss felt by their families and neighbors. Mothers and fathers. Sons and daughters. Grandparents and grandchildren. Co-workers and neighbors. People of all races, religions and backgrounds were lost that day, reflecting the deep pain that America felt as a people, and

**WHEREAS**, in the days and weeks that followed, we witnessed the generosity of spirit and giving by American first responders who helped to rescue those trapped in the rubble at the scenes and who helped to respectfully carry the remains of those whose lives had been taken in the attacks. We can never forget their sacrifices and their heroic and selfless actions.

**WHEREAS**, now, twenty years later, we look back and remember and we celebrate the strength of the American spirit that helped us to recover and rebuild our nation after these wanton and hateful attacks on our soil and our people.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer, joins with all Americans in remembering the events that occurred twenty years ago, in memorializing the lives that were lost and in sharing our gratitude with those who gave of themselves to rescue and recover those who perished, and

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the City of Rensselaer calls on our residents to pause on the morning of September 11, 2021, to remember, to reflect, and to recommit themselves to our American dream

James Van Vorst	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahy	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this      day of      , 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor



# 8

By Alderperson : COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

Seconded by Alderperson : \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO FILE AN  
APPLICATION UNDER THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION  
INITIATIVE FOR UP TO \$20 MILLION**

**WHEREAS**, the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a product of the Governor's office and her effort to transform downtowns into vibrant communities where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work, and raise families; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer is home to the nation's 9th busiest Amtrak Station; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer is centrally located within the geographic and historic heart of the Capital Region; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer is at the center of an employment triangle bounded by the State Capital, RPI Tech Park, Regeneron, Curia Global (formerly AMRI), and the University at Albany Health Sciences Campus; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer possesses the unique distinction of having the most tax exempt property of any city in the state; and

**WHEREAS**, downtown Rensselaer and environs is poised for revitalization as demonstrated by multi-million dollar investment interests in new research and technology development, higher education, and mixed-use development and employment growth in technology, biomedical, health care, and other sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the city of Rensselaer possesses the one downtown best positioned to take advantage of the DRI; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rensselaer downtown meets all of the criteria, specifically, capitalizing on prior and planned future public and private sector investment; and

**WHEREAS**, the DRI will include public involvement in framing a transformative investment strategy for downtown Rensselaer; and

**WHEREAS**, awarding of up to \$20 million to the City of Rensselaer will leverage tens of millions more in private funds, while capitalizing off of the best skyline views in upstate New York; and

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor of the City of Rensselaer is hereby authorized to execute a final application on behalf of the City of Rensselaer, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Common Council of the City of Rensselaer hereby authorizes the filing of said application and hereby authorizes the Mayor to act in connection with the application and execute all necessary documents.

Approved as to form and sufficiency  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporation Counsel

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

James Van Vorst	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Dave Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Bryan Leahy	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
James Casey	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Eric Endres	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Margaret Van Dyke	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John DeFrancesco	<input type="checkbox"/> Aye	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Vote Totals	Aye	No	Abstain	Absent
Result				