Planning & Design Recommendations
For the West Side Neighborhood,
Saratoga Springs, New York

University at Albany, SUNY
Planning Studio
Fall 2001
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Maps ........................................................................................................................... ii
Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. iii
Section 1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1
Section 2 Historical Background ............................................................................................. 5
Section 3 Land Use and Zoning ............................................................................................... 21
Section 4 Gateways and Connections ..................................................................................... 34
Section 5 Design Guidelines ................................................................................................... 52
Section 6 Beekman Street ......................................................................................................... 79
Section 7 Housing .................................................................................................................... 92
Section 8 Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 106
Glossary of Commonly Used Terms ....................................................................................... 107
References ............................................................................................................................. 110

## Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gateways and Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corridor Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Census Tract Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Housing Affordability Scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Housing Programs Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vacant Buildings Coordinator Job Description and Management Plan for Vacant Buildings Flow Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Zoning Area Requirements Chart (page 38 and 39 from Code)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MAPS

1. Study Area Location Map (*Follows page 4 of Introduction*)
2. Aerial Photograph (*Follows page 4 of Introduction*)
3. Street/Lot Line Map (*Follows page 4 of Introduction*)
4. Zoning Map (*Follows page 33 of Land Use and Zoning*)
5. Land Use Map (*Follows page 33 of Land Use and Zoning*)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning & Design Recommendations for the West Side Neighborhood offers suggestions for improvements to and redevelopment of the West Side Neighborhood of Saratoga Springs, New York. This historic neighborhood possesses great potential for revitalization. Numerous opportunities exist to repair urban design mistakes from the 1960s, strengthen pedestrian connections, improve the housing, add well-designed civic spaces, and improve the visual character of the community. Major principles and recommendations for each of the five themes are listed below.

Land Use and Zoning

This theme addresses the arrangement of land use within the neighborhood from the point-of-view of three-dimensional urban design. The major recommendations are as follows:

• Reconnect the West Side with Broadway to promote mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development and improve the West Side’s connection to the Downtown Business District.
• Redevelop the West Avenue shopping area to provide traditional neighborhood services and shopping.
• Redevelop Washington Street to enhance the pedestrian realm.
• Transform vacant properties into appropriate new land uses such as pocket parks and infill housing.
• Improve the visual character of Railroad Run by using landscaping to screen and buffer trail from adjacent commercial uses.
• Improve the parking options at Saratoga High School by relocating tennis courts and redeveloping that site into additional parking.

Gateways & Connections

Gateways are landmarks, signs, or structures that highlight important access points. Connections are all of the various roads, paths, and transit lines that enable residents of the West Side to access jobs, services, stores, and recreation. The Gateways section recommends ways in which the uniqueness of Saratoga’s West Side Neighborhood can be better defined. The Connections section provides recommendations for calming traffic along important corridors and intersections within the study area.

External Gateways include the intersection of Division Street and Railroad Place, the intersection of Broadway (Route 9) and Congress Street (Visitors Center), the intersection of Broadway, Ballston Avenue and W. Circular Street, and the intersections of West Avenue with W. Circular Street, Grand Avenue, and Washington Street. Key recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Short-term Recommendations

• Improve sidewalks and curbs.
• Add painted pedestrian crosswalks.
• Install street furniture, such as benches.
• Add signs marking the entrances to historic "Franklin Square."

Medium-term Recommendations

• Coordinate a landscape theme.
• Plant canopy street trees.
• Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
Long-term Recommendations
• Create planted "welcome islands," or roundabouts, with signs directing visitors to the West Side Neighborhood.
• Subsequent to Beekman Street revitalizations, add signs directing visitors to Beekman Street.
• Replace highway "cobra" style streetlights with traditional streetlights.
• Bury utilities underground.

Internal Gateways often indicate urban or ethnic enclaves. Gateways surrounding these areas are symbolic in nature and serve as a reminder of a neighborhood’s history. Internal gateways mark the entrance to the historic "Dublin" neighborhood and include the intersection of Grand Avenue, S. Franklin Street and Congress Street, the intersection of S. Franklin, Beekman, and W. Circular, and the intersections of Elm Street with W. Circular and Grand Avenue. Recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Short-term Recommendations
• Add painted pedestrian crosswalks.
• Install “traditional” streetlights.
• Install street furniture and planter boxes.
• Repave sidewalks.

Medium-term Recommendations
• Demolish the Snack Shack and redevelop the site as either a pocket park or infill development.
• Add historic "Dublin" signs at internal gateways.
• Install contiguous sidewalks were they are lacking.

Long-term Recommendations
• Place a directional map indicating points of interest in the "Dublin" neighborhood at the southeast corner of Grand and Franklin.
• Consider closing Beekman and S. Franklin to vehicular traffic during street festivals.
• Bury utilities underground.

Gideon Putnam Cemetery
Aesthetic improvements would help highlight this historic cemetery. Recommendations include the following:
• Upgrade fencing at front and back entrances to cemetery.
• Add planter boxes to cemetery entrances.
• Strategically locate small bushes, shrubs and trees around the perimeter inside the cemetery to avoid reduced visibility into cemetery.
• Install cemetery maps at both entrances.
• Place benches at S. Franklin entrance.
• Coordinate with Visitor's Bureau to include cemetery in walking tours.
• Coordinate with local schools to include cemetery in field trips.

Signage within the study area should be improved. Recommendations include replacing the current "Dublin" signs with signs that have wording consistent with the West Side Master Plan and Action Plan, and upgrading street signs to be consistent throughout the neighborhood.

Connections
Traffic management techniques can help calm traffic, reduce heavy truck traffic, and improve pedestrian amenities in the West Side Neighborhood. Corridors addressed in this section include West Avenue, Washington Street, W. Circular Street, and Grand Avenue. Recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Short-term Recommendations
• Install painted bike lanes on both sides of the street.
• Install pedestrian amenities such as benches, bike racks, newspaper racks.
• Add painted crosswalks to all intersections.
• Paint center lines on roadway.
• Reduce speed limit to 25 MPH.

Medium-term Recommendations
• Plant street trees along both sides of the corridor.
Long-term Recommendations

- Redesign West Avenue as a boulevard.
- Install left turn lanes at major intersections, including left turn signals.
- Install contiguous sidewalks with grass buffers between sidewalk and street.
- Decrease curb cuts.

Additionally, there are a number of key intersections where traffic calming techniques should be implemented. These include Railroad Place at Washington Street and Franklin Street at Washington Street, along with the intersection of Grand Avenue, Congress, and Franklin Street, the intersection of S. Franklin, Beekman, and W. Circular Street, and the intersection of Grand Avenue and Birch Street. Recommended traffic calming devices include crosswalks, stop signs, turning lanes, bulb-outs, and landscaped medians and roundabouts.

Design Guidelines

The West Side has a distinctive character created, in large part, by its historic heritage of houses, sidewalks, streets, and civic spaces. This section presents detailed suggestions for the design of all of the important elements that make up the built environment of the West Side, including building facades, building massing and placement on the lot, roofs, porches, yards, fences, trees, street lights, street patterns, and planting strips. Recommendations include application of overall guidelines as well as specific strategies. Contact information to obtain additional information is also provided.

Architectural Review

The Saratoga Springs Zoning Ordinance contains an Article specifying Architectural Review districts, mostly on important corridors leading into and out of the City. This article should be further incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to cover other areas and perhaps even the entire City.

Historic Review

The City's Historic Review Article regulates massing and layout of building within the City's designated historic districts along with building materials and other details. Currently, local Historic Review mainly covers parts of Broadway and Saratoga's east side. It should be expanded to cover West Side Neighborhood properties already included in the National Register District (Washington and Grand to Birch) along with the "Dublin" area.

Guidelines for Designs that Promote Walkability, including:

- Garage placement.
- Use of alleys.
- Reduction of visual impact of parking lots.
- Multi-unit apartment building layout.
- Street tree planting and maintenance.
- Sidewalk installation.
- Landscaping enhancement.
- Use of fences.

Guidelines for Enhancing Building Design and Preservation, including:

- New commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- New housing.
- Rehabilitation of older commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- Signs for businesses.
- Porches.
- Materials: siding, windows and doors, roofs, and colors.

Beekman Street

Beekman Street was once the commercial area for the West Side's Dublin neighborhood. Although it is no longer a vibrant commercial corridor, Beekman Street's recent designation as a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) presents an opportunity to re-create a well-
designed mixed-use corridor at the center of the West Side Neighborhood. Recommendations for enhancing Beekman Street include, but are not limited to, the following:

Short-term Recommendations
- Mark the Beekman Street corridor with signs and banners.
- Display the Fine Arts Initiative for Studios and Housing (FISH) logo at FISH establishments.
- Improve landscaping.
- Include pedestrian amenities such as trash receptacles and benches.
- Improve sidewalk and street maintenance.
- Increase the number of retail establishments.
- Investigate grants for medium and long-term improvements.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Improve street lighting by installing traditional style, pedestrian scale lighting.
- Encourage cafes to include outdoor seating.
- Renovate/retrofit buildings for commercial and retail use combined with upper story living space; renovations should follow neighborhood design guidelines.
- Improve pedestrian access to the area; consider establishing an "urban trail" or extension of Railroad Run.
- Organize street fairs and festivals.

Long-term Recommendations
- Preserve public spaces by creating small parks and plazas on currently undeveloped parcels.
- Add parking spaces at the rear of commercial establishments, rather than demolishing existing structures to build parking lots, or converting currently vacant parcels into parking lots.

Housing

This section examines current housing in the West Side Neighborhood and proposes strategies for creating a diverse, well-designed housing stock in the future. Housing explores zoning and housing patterns within the West Side Neighborhood, housing types and styles, the housing market, and housing conditions. Recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increase levels of owner occupancy.
- Increase access to home ownership information and promote available housing programs.
- Market the neighborhood.
- Enforce codes and improve conditions of target properties.
- Review code compliance process as coordinated multi-agency effort.
- Maintain existing neighborhood character.
- Consider a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone for the "Dublin" neighborhood.
- Address rising housing costs by encouraging moderately priced housing and mixed-use in the Downtown Business District.
- Promote "re-urbanization" with mixed-income residential development.

Implementation

Saratoga's West Side Neighborhood is at a point in its history when a concerted attempt at community revitalization can have a particularly beneficial effect. Steps should be taken now to begin implementation of the recommendations in this report. The recommendations have been prioritized by difficulty, ranging from inexpensive changes to major capital improvements. The members of the Fall 2001 Planning Studio hope that the citizens of Saratoga Springs, local government agencies, and nonprofit organizations will use this report as a catalog of promising ideas for improving the livability of Saratoga's West Side Neighborhood.
INTRODUCTION

The West Side is a historic neighborhood located in close proximity to the famous downtown of Saratoga Springs, New York. Historically, it was the home of railroad workers, service employees, artisans, and other residents essential to the city's economy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, the West Side is adapting to changes brought about by the increasing popularity of Saratoga Springs as a place to live. This is a particularly opportune time for the neighborhood to plan for the future. Numerous opportunities exist to repair urban design mistakes from the 1960s, strengthen pedestrian connections, insert attractive infill housing, add well-designed civic spaces, and improve the visual character of the community.

Purpose of the Plan

This plan for the West Side has been prepared by students from the Urban and Regional Planning Program of the University at Albany, State University of New York. The 17 students are all members of the Fall 2001 Planning Studio course. This document emerged from a collaboration between members of the class, the community, and the City of Saratoga Springs, working together to identify potential improvements for the West Side neighborhood. The studio addresses five specific areas of concern:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Gateways and Connections
- Design Guidelines
- Beekman Street
- Housing

These five themes emerged from discussions with leaders from the West Side Neighborhood Association, the Saratoga Springs Office of Community Development, and the University at Albany. These topics stood out as the most promising ones for planning efforts at this time. An extensive History section has also been included to provide essential background for the planning recommendations in the report. This plan is not a comprehensive plan covering all aspects of the neighborhood. Rather, it targets just those themes listed above, exploring them in considerable depth. We hope that the recommendations in this plan will be used by the residents of the West Side, the City of Saratoga Springs, and various public and nonprofit organizations as a guide for investments, initiatives, incentives, and regulations that will improve the quality of life in this historic neighborhood.

The members of the Fall 2001 Planning Studio appreciate the earlier work done by the West Side Neighborhood Association to produce the West Side Master Plan and Action Plan (December 1997). Ideas and suggestions from that plan have been incorporated into this studio report.
Study Area
The study area boundaries were also agreed upon after consultation with representatives from the West Side Neighborhood Association, the City, and the University at Albany. The area is roughly bounded by Washington Street on the north, Broadway on the east, W. Circular Street on the south and West Avenue on the west. This covers only part of the area represented by the Neighborhood Association. A smaller study area was selected in order to focus the available time and resources more efficiently on the older section of the West Side closest to downtown. (See Study Area Location Map, Aerial Map, and Street Map at the end of this section.)

Regional Context
Saratoga Springs occupies a very special place in the history and landscape of New York State, and the West Side is an essential ingredient in that story. Saratoga is known as a "European-style" resort town boasting more than 1,000 first class hotel rooms. Visitors continue to come—as they have for over 200 years—for the "waters," the natural springs and mineral baths. They also come for the world-class thoroughbred racing, year-round harness racing, historic architecture, shopping, entertainment, and fine restaurants. They once came to gamble in the "world’s second great gambling casino" (the first was in Monte Carlo), but now come to view museums housed in the former gambling club, walk the grounds of spacious parks, and savor the city life that Saratoga Springs has to offer.

Located just north of the state capital in Albany, Saratoga Springs offers easy access to a wide range of employment opportunities throughout the Capital District. Saratoga has preserved much of its traditional urban fabric. However, many "bedroom communities" have developed along the Interstate 87 (Adirondack Northway) corridor during the past four decades. These have taken the form of suburban sprawl designed exclusively for automobile travel. In this context, the urbane features of Saratoga Springs stand out in sharp relief, attracting people that desire walkable streets, mixed-use neighborhoods, and the civic life that only occurs when residents have frequent face-to-face interactions in the public realm. In coming decades, the qualities offered by the traditional neighborhoods of Saratoga Springs are expected to appreciate in value.

Public Participation
Public participation is critical for any planning initiative, and within the constraints presented by a single-semester graduate course we have tried to provide opportunities for local residents and officials to express their views. The West Side Neighborhood Association has been involved in this project from the beginning. Throughout the fall of 2001, the planning students had numerous discussions with local residents concerning existing conditions, emerging problems, and opportunities for improvement. The students presented key plan elements to the members of the community at a meeting on November 14, 2001. On May 28, 2002, draft copies of this report were distributed to interested neighborhood residents and local officials. Copies were also placed on the web page of the City of Saratoga Springs, and two weeks were allotted for public review and comment on the draft. In June 2002, public comments were incorporated.

The Recommendations
Within each theme, the plan evaluates existing neighborhood conditions, identifies opportunities and constraints, and then recommends improvements in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term time frames (Note: In addition to time frame, these categories also take into account funding requirements, technical difficulty, and political feasibility).
Short-term Recommendations: Actions that can be completed within 1-5 years, typically with only moderate costs involved.

Medium-term Recommendations: Actions that can be completed within 5-10 years. Some elements could be implemented with current resources but additional funding may be required.

Long-term Recommendations: These projects might require 10-20 years for implementation, and typically require large investments on the part of public and private organizations. They reflect a more encompassing, long-term vision for the community.

Components of the Plan

HISTORY: In order to create a plan appropriate for the West Side, the members of the Fall 2001 Planning Studio needed to understand the "sense of place" and historical heritage of the area. With that in mind, a detailed review of the neighborhood's history was created. Saratoga Springs is fortunate to have extensive historical archives, and these proved invaluable in documenting, in both text and photos, the fascinating historical evolution of the West Side. The insights gained from this work support a style of planning that respects the historic fabric of Saratoga Springs and offers strategies to protect and enhance the traditional design elements that give the West Side its special character.

LAND USE and ZONING: This section addresses the arrangement of land uses within the neighborhood, but from the point-of-view of three-dimensional urban design, not abstract patterns of color on a map. The goal is to preserve existing assets while repairing mistakes from the past. Since the 1960s, inappropriate suburban sprawl designs have been inserted into the West Side creating disconnection, fragmentation, and the erosion of the pedestrian realm. We propose to reverse that trend and outline a future characterized by the return of walkable streets fronted by interesting buildings, the mixing of land uses in appropriate combinations, and the careful design of civic spaces tailored to specific sites within the neighborhood. The outcome, over the next few decades, would be a dramatic transformation of the old "urban renewal" zone of the West Side into a lively neighborhood that looks like the universally admired, urbane parts of Saratoga Springs.

Issues discussed in this section include reestablishing pleasant pedestrian connections between the West Side with downtown; the need for new commercial land uses to serve the needs of West Side residents; opportunities for small parks, commons, plazas, or greens at strategic locations; the potential for the insertion of new residential, commercial, office, and mixed-use buildings; redesign of the West Avenue shopping area; a new vision for Washington Street; and the preservation of the visual character of Railroad Run.

GATEWAYS and CONNECTIONS: This section examines the points of entry into the West Side and how they can be made more beautiful, memorable, and functional. Gateways are landmarks, signs, or structures that highlight important access points. Connections are all of the various roads, paths, and transit lines that enable residents of the West Side to access jobs, services, stores, and recreation.

The plan addresses two kinds of gateways. External gateways mark the transition from "outside" to "inside" the neighborhood. They should be designed to let visitors and residents know that they are entering a place with a distinct character. Internal gateways mark transitions within the West Side Neighborhood, from one area to another. An example would be the transition from the outer reaches of the neighborhood into the historic street grid of old "Dublin."
The Gateways and Connections section offers numerous suggestions for improving the safety and appearance of intersections, redesigning important traffic corridors, and reestablishing the importance of pedestrian and bicycle travel on the West Side.

DESIGN GUIDELINES: The West Side has a distinctive character created, in large part, by its historic heritage of houses, sidewalks, streets, and civic spaces. A significant amount of planning to preserve these assets has already occurred, producing outputs such as the City of Saratoga Springs Design Guidelines, prepared by The Chazen Companies, and Guidelines for the Historic Preservation of the Saratoga Springs Historic District prepared by the Saratoga Springs Design Review Commission. The Design Guidelines section carries that work forward by presenting detailed suggestions for the design of all the important elements that make up the built environment of the West Side. These elements include building facades, building massing, and placement on the lot, roofs, porches, yards, fences, trees, street lights, street patterns, and planting strips. Illustrations of preferred choices have been provided, and this section could be used as a detachable guidebook for people contemplating renovations or new construction in the neighborhood.

BEEKMAN STREET: Beekman Street presents a unique opportunity to create a well-designed mixed-use corridor at the center of the West Side neighborhood. Beekman was once a lively neighborhood commercial street with restaurants, corner stores, and community services. It still has some third generation proprietors of small businesses. If the right steps are taken, Beekman Street can emerge once again as a focal point for the West Side, a place where residents can go for shopping, dining, street life, and social interaction. Beekman Street has already attracted a community of artists, and this can serve as an important cornerstone for the revitalization of the area. Recommendations for Beekman Street cover elements such as signage, landscaping, sidewalk improvements, pedestrian amenities, new retail establishments, building renovations, lighting, civic spaces, and parking.

HOUSING: This section examines the current housing characteristics of the West Side and proposes strategies for creating a diverse, well-designed housing stock in the future. Problems of inadequate maintenance, absentee landlords, and code enforcement are discussed. The guiding theme of this section is that traditional urban neighborhoods blend a range of housing types and prices together into a coherent whole, unlike the vast homogenous pods of suburbia. The key is good design, appropriate mixing of types, proper maintenance, and a supporting neighborhood structure of streets, pathways, commercial nodes, and civic spaces.

Recommendations and strategies are offered to increase levels of owner occupancy, market the neighborhood to potential homebuyers, improve code enforcement and building maintenance, ensure that new housing enhances community character, provide new moderate-cost housing near the downtown business district, and incorporate housing into mixed-use infill projects as part of the "re-urbanization" of the fragmented area between Franklin Street and Broadway.

The West Side Neighborhood study area is a historic urban neighborhood with a rich past and a promising future. Its walkable streets and historic architecture, and proximity to downtown Saratoga Springs make it a logical target for revitalization efforts. This plan offers an extensive list of possible improvements ranging from the simple to the complex. We hope that the plan will be used vigorously and effectively in the coming years to guide investments, incentives, and regulatory efforts so that ideas on paper are gradually transformed into realities on the ground.
Historical Background

Long before European colonists ever reached the shores of the New World, Native Americans were utilizing the vast natural resources of the Saratoga region—fertile soils, ancient forests, plentiful game, navigable waters—and, of course, the springs. The city of Saratoga Springs sits on a natural fault line that runs north to south, 500 feet below the ever-changing scenery of the city above. The drinkable, carbonated waters that bubble up from this fault have long been touted as a cure for numerous maladies.

The first white man who visited these springs was Sir William Johnson in 1771. Sir William, ensconced in his great mansion in the wilderness thirty miles west, had been placed in charge of all Indian affairs in North America. Johnson had been brought to the High Rock Spring by his Mohawk friends in 1771, suffering from a stomach ailment, which ultimately caused his death. He noted in a letter that the waters had not helped.


Sir William Johnson could very well be considered Saratoga Spring’s first tourist. Word of these springs spread across the young country after the Revolutionary War. Early entrepreneurs built crude bath facilities, small huts, and shelters to house the visitors that came to be healed by the medicinal waters. The springs—and all those who came to either exploit them or to pursue their cures—are what watered the seeds of settlement and development in the region. Money attracted more money, and Saratoga Springs was well on its way to becoming a destination where fortunes could be made or lost.

In July of 1783, George Washington and his soldiers came to High Rock Springs from the Hudson River ten miles to the east and encamped in Saratoga. He was accompanied by New York Governor George Clinton and Alexander Hamilton, and is believed to have inquired about purchasing land in the area. Other notable men also made the rugged journey here. General Phillip Schuyler built the area's first road, from Schuylerville to Saratoga Springs, along Fish Creek. The road, completed around 1783, connected High Rock Springs to the Hudson River and Schuyler's country home and mills. Robert Joki wrote in Saratoga Lost, "This route provided convenient access to the springs, though travelers would still worry about bears, wolves and the great cats which roamed the swamps and dense forest along the way."

As the number of visitors to the healing spring waters increased, entrepreneurs soon realized that the early accommodations of crude cabins and huts would be unfitting for rich and important clientele. As a result, Alexander Bryan founded the first true inn in 1787.

Pioneer Gideon Putnam and his wife Doanda came to the area in 1789 and settled near High
Rock. Putnam’s initial interest was harvesting the ancient forest to produce wood shingles and staves. The forests yielded abundant loads of wood materials for export, and Putnam quickly became rich.

In 1792, Nicholas Gilman, a New Hampshire representative of the Continental Congress, discovered another spring while on an area hunting trip. The spring was named "Congress Spring," after its discover and was said to have waters superior to those of High Rock Spring.

Gideon Putnam, meanwhile, continued to amass wealth from his lumbering operations. In 1802, as part of a new venture, he secured lands around Congress Spring and built "Putnam’s Tavern and Boarding House." Historians recognize this as Saratoga’s first hotel.

Erected close to Congress Spring, which visitors were allowed to use free of charge, the accommodations were sorely needed, for visitors had long complained about the primitive accommodations at the spring. Although some considered it a folly to erect such a large hotel in the wilderness, Putnam’s venture proved very successful.

Robert Joki, *Saratoga Lost*

The luxurious three-story hotel proved to be very profitable.

Putnam continued to buy land in and around the spring and developed a plan for the village. After clearing the indigenous pines from what was designed as a main thoroughfare, he planted a border of elms and named it Broad Street.

Putnam's street would later be known as Broadway, and his "Tavern and Boarding House" would later be known as the "Grand Union Hotel." As grand and impressive as that hotel was, the number of visitors coming to the "waters" became too large for Putnam's Hotel to accommodate them. In 1811, he began construction of a second hotel across the street. He named it "Congress Hall" because of its closeness to Congress Spring. Other hotels soon appeared on Broadway, built by businessmen eager to cash in on the burgeoning tourist industry.

During the years of early settlement, the area around Putnam's small development was known locally as the lower village. The community forming around the High Rock was called the upper village, and almost a mile of forest and swampy valley separated the two, which consisted of merely a couple dozen buildings each.

Robert Joki, *Saratoga Lost*

In 1912, while constructing his second hotel, Putnam was badly injured in a fall from scaffolding. He later died as a result of his injuries. Coincidentally, he had donated lands for a community burial cemetery two years before his...
accident. He turned out to be the first person to be buried there. The Putnam Family Cemetery is located on Franklin Street in today's West Side.

In the years following Putnam's death, the little village that he laid out to accommodate a few visitors grew significantly. By 1819, the population of Saratoga Springs had reached 1,900 residents.

The Champlain Canal opened in 1823, linking Saratoga County with Canada. This new transportation route quickly brought an influx of northern visitors.

As the population of tourists and residents increased, the village's municipal needs increased as well. The village's first police force, "The Association for the Detection of Horse Thieves and Burglars," was chartered in 1823. It was purely a volunteer organization, with no municipal financial support. The village's first water system was established and maintained as a public-spirited act by developer John Clarke. Upon his death in 1843, the village took over responsibility for the system.

![Figure 2.3 A reproduction (1923) of City Surveyor John Bevan's map, believed to have been lithographed and published between 1848 and 1854. The original map hangs over the reference desk at the Skidmore College Library.](image)
The Erie Canal opened in 1825, making commerce between the Atlantic states and the Midwest more economical and practical. The canal also made it easier for people to reach to the Saratoga region, and its population continued to grow. In 1826, the village was incorporated and the number of local businesses expanded to support the increase in residents and visitors alike. Hotels and boarding houses, carriage makers, blacksmiths, stables, furniture factories, and taverns all quickly sprung up to accommodate the growing number of tourists. Entertainment services such as boat rides, carriage rides, and gambling also began to appear. Many working class people also moved to the growing village to staff the service establishments. The rich and the poor, the skilled and the unskilled came to Saratoga by stagecoach, wagon, canal boat, horse, and foot.

The Saratoga-Schenectady Railroad was built in 1832 with a station near Franklin Square. This was the second railroad in New York State (the first was from Albany to Schenectady) and only the fourth in the entire country. The first rail lines consisted of horse drawn carriages that ran along tracks. By 1833, the first steam locomotive was in use on the Saratoga-Schenectady Railroad. With access to Saratoga now provided by steamship, rail, and other traditional means of transportation, the village began to draw visitors from around the world. The railroad construction encouraged additional growth throughout the village, and
brought in increasing numbers of laborers and visitors.

We find that the decade from 1835 to 1845 the town's population almost doubled, from 2,438 to 4,276; the village around the main street, Broadway, accounted for about two-thirds of those figures.

Theodore Corbett, *The Making of America's Resorts*

Records estimate that there were 6,000 visitors to Saratoga in 1825. By 1839, that number had doubled to 12,000. Immigration also began to increase. 599,125 people immigrated to the United States between 1831 and 1840. In search of work and a better way of life, some of the immigrants made their way to Saratoga Springs, particularly to Saratoga's West Side.

Immigrants played a key role in the development of the West Side. As families and friends arrived in America, they often settled near each other. Like many other neighborhoods in cities across the country, the West Side became a neighborhood web of cousins, relatives, and in-laws all living within a few short blocks of each other. Shared language, customs, friends, history, and traditions made the immigrants feel at home. Thus, the ethnic neighborhoods of Dublin and Little Italy evolved on the West Side of Saratoga Springs.

During the 1840s, Saratoga's Irish population became concentrated in the West Side Neighborhood and the "Dublin" district was born. Many of the Irish immigrants originally came to Saratoga to work for the railroads. Today, there is a marker on the West Side explaining the history of the old "Dublin" district and its connection with the Irish railroad workers.

The "Dublin" neighborhood is generally understood to be bounded Grand Avenue on the north, Franklin Street on the east, West Circular Street on the south, and Birch Street on the West.

From 1845 to 1854, most immigrants were Catholic peasants from south and west Ireland. The latter are termed the potato famine immigrants since they left their homeland because blight fungus had destroyed the potato crops of 1845, '46, '48 and '52. Potatoes were the mainstay of the Irish diet and these crop failures were virtual death sentences for people already very poor and living under miserable conditions. At the time of the 1850 Census, 504 of Saratoga Springs 4,650 residents (11%) had been born in Ireland. There were no Italians in Saratoga Springs at the time of the 1850 Census.

ACC HIS 274/4920, Economic and Social History of Saratoga Springs.

The Irish immigrants lived in modest houses and dwellings pretty much concentrated in the West Side. They provided the labor force for the "visitor" industry in the building and hotel-service trades (waiters, waitresses,
chambermaids, bellhops, porters and baggage boys).


Along with the Irish, African-Americans also played an important role in the history of the West Side Neighborhood. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, incoming African-American residents commonly settled on Congress Street, William Street, Cowen Street, and Franklin Street to be close to the big hotels where many of them were employed. Soon, African-American businesses began to prosper on the West Side.

The growth of the black population of Saratoga Springs varied in relationship to the health of the increasingly gambling-centered economy for two reasons. First, gambling brought tourists, and tourists generated service related jobs. Secondly, some of the African Americans were directly involved in gambling, even if only for peripheral income, as proprietors of permissive 'back room'-equipped bars, clubs, and restaurants on Congress Street, the black business thoroughfare running west of lower Broadway. During the last third of the nineteenth century, the [increase] in numbers among black Saratogians reflected the 'wide-open' nature of the village. Myra B. Young Armstead, Lord, Please Don't Take Me In August

Black Population of Saratoga (According to the above source and Census Data)
1870 -- 4.0%
1880 -- 5.6%.
1890 -- 4.5%
1900 -- 5.2%
1910 -- 4.6%.
1920 -- 3.6%.
1930 -- 3.3%.
Like other immigrant groups, Italians left their home country in search for a better life. Bringing skills from the Old World, they often became bricklayers, masons, and stonecutters, ditch diggers and sod carriers. They contributed labor for the construction of America's growing cities and towns, including Saratoga Springs. Like other newcomers, the Italian immigrants commonly settled on Saratoga's West Side. The newcomers often moved into simple homes vacated by earlier immigrant families that had prospered and moved up in economic status. The new Italian residents opened grocery stores, shoemaker/repair shops, barbershops, and several restaurants within blocks of each other, creating a sort of "Little Italy" on the West Side.

No rigid separation of ethnicity, race, or class between these diverse groups ever really occurred in the West Side. Although the groups had very different backgrounds and cultures, they also had something thing in common: all were newcomers who hoped to make a better life for themselves and their families. Together, these diverse groups wove a socially and ethnically diverse community while providing the labor and the backbone of the rapidly expanding resort town.

The various ethnic groups of the West Side established a number of local organizations. The Ancient Order of Hibernians, an organization of Irish fellowship, met at the Flanagan House and Tom's Lodge (Grand Ave) as a social club and fraternal group engaged in the promotion of their heritage. The Order even provided banking services of a sort: Irish workers were able to hold savings at the Order, which were eventually sent back to Ireland to sponsor additional immigrant families.

The Principessa Elena Society was formed in 1890. This Italian men's club, located at 13 Oak Street on the West Side, still exists today. It promoted Italian heritage and brotherhood through mutual benefit. By this time, "There were as many as 900 Italians living in Saratoga Springs, up to 8% of the total population." (Rik Stevens, "Saratoga Italian Society Engenders a Sense of Belonging."

Schenectady Gazette, 5 March 2000). St. Michael's Feast--honoring the patron saint of the West Side--has been held since 1914. The festival lapsed in 1975 but was revived in 1997.

As Saratoga grew, churches were built within a convenient walking distance to both the upscale hotels on Broadway and the working class homes on the West Side. Congregations were economically and ethnically mixed. Bankers and harness makers, innkeepers and railroad workers, socialites and chambermaids all worshipped together. Many schools were built as well, with enrollments representing the ever-changing class and ethnic makeup of the local area. When retired Appellate Court Justice Michael Sweeney attended old School No. 1, he (according to his own recollection) was the only Irish boy in a class mostly of Italians.

![Figure 2.8 School No. 1, formerly stood on Beekman Street. Pictured here in this photo taken in October 1928, are those in the 8th Grade Class. Many of the names that accompanied the photograph are recognizable as 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generational residents in the West Side Neighborhood today. Note: Michael Sweeney then an 8th grader; today, a retired Appellate Court Judge. Photograph courtesy of the Gene S. Bolster Collection of the Historical Society of Saratoga Springs](image)

By the 1840s, Saratoga Springs was on her way to becoming renowned as the "Queen of Spas," "America's Prime Resort," the "Village of Elegance," "the North's Most Popular Social Resort," and "Delight in August." Naysayers, however, referred to Saratoga as "a sucker’s paradise."
Despite the fact that it was illegal, the first gambling house in Saratoga opened near the U.S. Hotel in 1842.

John Morrissey set the tone. Involved in nefarious crimes in his earlier career, he went straight in Saratoga Springs. Morrissey was instrumental in founding the racetrack and he built the "Morrissey Club House," the world’s second great gambling casino (the first was in Monte Carlo), which still stands in Congress Park.

The Club House was renamed the "Canfield Casino" after Richard Canfield took it over. Located near the Congress Springs and a short walk across Broadway and her fine enormous scaled Victorian Second Empire Style hotels, the casino drew a more sophisticated tourist-visitor...the "pseudo-aristocracy."


In a notable development, the potato chip was invented in Saratoga Springs in 1853. Credit goes to George Crum (Hugh Bradley, Such Was Saratoga). The chip became a specialty at Moon’s Lake House on Saratoga Lake. It is ironic that potato chips and carbonated beverages, which would later become staples of an American "junk food" diet, both got their boost in an upstate New York village originally devoted to the pursuit of good health.

Understandably, the American Civil War (1861-1865) negatively affected tourism and commerce in the Spa Town. Southerners ceased to visit and vacation in the North during the war, and were slow to return afterwards. Despite the economic hardships created by the war, Saratoga's thoroughbred "flat" track opened in 1863. Saratoga's tourism industry continued to grow.

Yet the economic and social fabric of the village held together, barely interrupted by the struggle and suffering. Many local men gave their lives for the cause...the effort to preserve the Union. The Race Course was a new attraction for Saratoga Springs, and came to fruition during the war, due to the efforts of Saratoga’s wealthiest summer visitor, Commodore Vanderbilt, and gambler/club owner John Morrissey.

Robert Joki, Saratoga Lost

Figure 2.9 Adirondack Railroad Company’s W. George Leavitt at Grand Avenue. Circa 1869. Engineer Myers and Fireman Ed Craur. Photograph courtesy of the Gene S. Bolster Collection of the Historical Society of Saratoga Springs.

After the Civil War, there was a national surge in railroad construction. Cities all over the United States were now linked together, making it even easier for visitors to travel to Saratoga Springs. These new visitors came to Saratoga lured by the hype and grand offers of entertainment and excitement.

An expanding post-war economy, and era of rapid technological and industrial advances, had greeted a whole new class of wealthy Americans. In 1850, there were, perhaps, 20 millionaires in the entire country, but by 1890, their numbers would swell to over 4000.

Robert Joki, Saratoga Lost
During this era, a railway trip from New York City to Saratoga Springs took sixteen to eighteen hours. Once in Saratoga, wealthy residents and visitors tended to settle on Saratoga’s East Side. Permanent residents of the blue collar trades tended to reside on the West Side. The railroad, laid on the West Side of Broadway, further separated the two sides.

The Adirondack Railroad Depot, a major West Side landmark, was built on Grand Avenue in 1865 (it is currently the home of Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation). The first locomotive to arrive at the new depot was named the General Hancock after a general who was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg. The Delaware & Hudson Railroad purchased the Adirondack Railroad in 1901 and ran freight from the depot on Grand Avenue to North Creek until the late 1960s. (Information provided by Marvin Olick; Project Manager of Neighborhood Preservation Company.)

Railroads were labor intensive and took a lot of manpower to build, operate, and maintain. Eugene Corsale, a former railroad employee from a family of railroad employees, describes the situation:

There were 13 railroad crossings through the city, SPAC to RT 9 Maple Ave. There were no crossing gates at that time, and so each crossing had to be manned by a watchman twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The watchmen sat in little shanties and awaited their call to stop traffic. My brothers and I all
worked for the railroad. You can imagine how many crossing guards the railroad needed.

Generally, West Side residents had to work hard to make ends meet. Many people living near the railroad supplemented their heating fuel by collecting coal that fell from trains along the tracks.

"West Side" has often been used to mean the wrong side of the tracks. Originally, living near the railroad was considered *de rigueur*, but that changed as more industries began to sprout up and the railroad and industrial laborers needed homes near work. The railroad turned the West Side into a working class area.


Franklin Square was initially one of Saratoga’s earliest prestigious neighborhoods because of its proximity to the passenger station. The Square was sometimes referred to as the "Greek Revival crossroads" because of its notable architecture. Boarding houses, small hotels, private homes, and "cure institutes" were all within a short walk of both Broadway and the train station.

The West Side’s Franklin Square became a fashionable residential development, with its prime facilities, the Schenectady and Saratoga Railroad Station, and the rear entrance to the United States Hotel, as well as the proximity of...the principal street Broadway, extending a little east of north through the entire village, and making the grand drive and promenade, where life, business and pleasure of the place may be seen in a five minute's walk.

Robert Joki, *Saratoga Lost*

Saratoga continued to change and grow as the century moved on. Sadly, some of its most famous landmarks were lost. In 1868, a fire destroyed the Columbia Hotel. The same year, Gideon Putnam’s old Congress Hall met similar fate. However, Congress Hall was rebuilt in 1870, joining the Grand Union as the two largest hotels of them all. "By 1869, there were thirty-three hotels, twenty-two boarding houses, and many other assorted rooms for rent in Saratoga Springs—a village of only 7,516" (Myra B. Young Armstead, *Lord, Please Don’t Take Me In August*).
Saratoga grew rapidly after the Civil War and the first City Hall was built in 1871. In 1850, the little City's population was approximately 3,600 residents. By 1880, it had risen to about 14,000. Population growth continued during the 1880s and included a new wave of immigration, mostly from Italy.

A number of local events in the early 1900s marked the further growth and development of Saratoga Springs and the West Side Neighborhood:

- 1903: Lucy Skidmore Scriber founds the Young Woman’s Industrial Club (later to become Skidmore College in 1922).
- 1904: Gambling is shut down, and Richard Canfield goes into the glass blowing business.
- The springs run dry, depleted by huge gas extraction factories built on South Broadway to carbonate the needs of an ever-growing American soda fountain industry.
- 1909: Spencer Trask of Yaddo leads fight to get New York State to take over the springs by eminent domain. This was eventually accomplished and a state agency was created to oversee the use and management of the springs.
- 1910: Post Office is erected on Broadway.
- 1911: The Canfield Casino and adjoining lands of Congress Park are bought by the City of Saratoga Springs.

The City of Saratoga Springs became incorporated in 1915. However, as with the Civil War, World War I (1914-1918) had a profound effect on the local economy. With the economy in flux, men off to war overseas, less expendable income, and family vacationing on hold, a damper was put on expensive recreational activities. Still, the city's tourist industry found new ways to move forward. A trolley station was built on the corner of Broadway and Congress Streets by the Hudson Valley Railway Co. This development brought in many "day visitors" from the nearby cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy and had a positive effect on the local economy.

In 1918, the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce was formed to expand efforts to attract tourist dollars. At the same time with gambling shut down and Prohibition looming, "speakeasies" began to pop up on Saratoga's back streets. Although these establishments attracted a lot of tourist dollars, they were probably not the type of enterprise that the new Chamber of Commerce had in mind.

Construction of Route 29 began during the 1920s. Local history recalls that the construction workers often lunched at "Scuderis" on nearby Beekman Street. The house special, a "Scudders," was a sandwich made on Italian bread, cut lengthwise, and layered with cold cuts or deli meats. Some say this was the birth of the submarine sandwich. You can still order a "Scudders" today at "Marino's," operating on the original "Scuderis" site.
The 1920s ended on a sour note with the Great Crash of 1929, hurling the country into the Great Depression of the 1930s. As a tourist town, Saratoga Springs took a big hit because discretionary income vanished for many Americans. Jobs dependent on the tourist industry were cut drastically and many West Side residents became unemployed. However, the 1930s were not entirely bleak. As part of his extensive public works program to stimulate the economy, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt pushed for the creation of Saratoga Spa State Park and other local construction projects. These public works projects employed many from the West Side. The tradesmen who had built many private structures in Saratoga Springs now put their skills to use in building the Spa City’s public facilities. The 2,200-acre Saratoga Spa State Park opened in 1935, complete with bath houses, an elegant swimming pool, drink hall, theater, luxurious hotel, bottling plant and many additional service buildings. Soon, people from around the world were visiting these spectacular facilities, and the tourist dollars began to flow like the waters the tourists came to enjoy.

By the 1940s, the Saratoga Springs trolley lines had been ripped up as ridership declined and the automobile became the preferred mode of transportation. This turned out to have been a hasty and untimely mistake because the breakout of World War II led to strict gasoline rationing, and the trolleys were soon missed. Sadly, 11 soldiers from the West Side died in World War II.

After the war, more Saratoga landmarks were lost. The United States Hotel burned down in 1946, and the Grand Union Hotel was razed in 1953.

During the 1950s, the flat track continued to flourish, and National Museum of Racing opened on Union Avenue in 1955. Visitors were drawn to the new Saratoga attraction. At the same time, culture began to rival the racetrack as visitors came to the new Saratoga Performing Arts Center- the summer home of the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Today, Saratoga Springs is nationally recognized as a center of tourism, horse racing, the arts, and education. The strong sense of place created by its many layers of historic architecture and urbanism has turned out to be perhaps the City's
most valuable asset. In fact, the City was honored in 1996 as a winner of the Great American Main Street Award.

Saratoga Springs continues to grow. In 1980, the city’s population was 23,906, in 1990, it had grown to 25,000, and in 2000, it reached 26,186. As a result of this growth, the West Side Neighborhood is experiencing a revival. Both long-term and new residents continue to be attracted to its charm and interesting variety of buildings and streets. The historic buildings of the West Side range from simple modest cottages and apartments above once-thriving storefront businesses to Victorian and Greek Revival mansions. Fortunately, the activities of the preservation movement have ensured that many of these architectural treasures remain.

As discussed earlier, the West Side Neighborhood occupies an important place in the history of Saratoga Springs and residents are deeply appreciative of its contributions. It was here that the working class families lived, opened businesses, started families as new citizens, and supplied much of the service labor that made this resort city successful.

The West Side Neighborhood is deeply rooted in tradition. If its story were to be captured in a book, a good title would be Saratoga’s West Side Story: A Traditional Neighborhood of Classic Proportions. It would be a book of many volumes because of the West Side’s rich history and individual stories.

Over the early decades of the twentieth century, West Siders have witnessed our neighborhood proliferate with many
businesses (mom and pop grocery stores, multiple restaurants, even night clubs with floor shows, lumber yards, Christmas tree sales, meat markets and other business establishments). Today, the geography of the area has changed drastically but as testimony to the ongoing stability of the west side neighborhood and people, some do remain to this day.


Today, many of the original West Side businesses are gone. However, some "survivors" remain and provide the same services today as they did 80 years ago. In these establishments, second, third, and fourth generation descendants of the original shopkeepers now wear the aprons and smocks.

**West Side "Survivors":**

- Figelman & Son Scrap Co., at 77 Franklin Street since 1900.
- Bart Sabino's Shoe Repair, at 55 Beekman Street since 1922/1928.
- Marino's Pizza (former Scudders Grocery), at 78 Beekman Street since 1942.
- Ellesworth Ice Cream Co., at 120 Division Street since 1933.
- Allerdice Building Supply, occupying a full city block within (Cherry, Walworth, Division and Beekman Streets), a lumberyard since 1869.
- Dehn's Florist, at 180 Beekman Street and Walworth Street since 1892.
- Grasso's Italian Ice, at 10 Oak St. since 1924.
- Principessa Elena Society, at 13 Oak St. since 1900.

In the name of urban renewal—or perhaps from lack of care, interest, or money—much of the old has been destroyed. However, there is still much to be preserved, and we have an irreplaceable opportunity to make sure that new additions to the architecture of the West Side enhance its traditional neighborhood character. Old buildings should be re-used in creative ways, and new buildings should support a built environment that is "worth caring about," to use the memorable phrase of author James Howard Kunstler.
Figure 2.21 Franklin Square Railroad Station, Saratoga Springs at Rail Roar Place of West Side Neighborhood. Today a parking lot and Price Chopper Supermarket occupies the area where the railroad station and tracks once dominated the scene. Photograph courtesy of the Gene S. Bolster Collection of the Historical Society of Saratoga Springs.

The West Side Neighborhood has the potential to regain its character as a compact, pedestrian friendly community. Automobiles should be accommodated, but not allowed to dominate. Safe, walkable streets can be rebuilt. Beekman Street can flourish again as a mixed-use commercial zone. The inhospitable urban renewal zone near Broadway can be gradually transformed into an interesting streetscape of mixed-use buildings and new residences. All of this is possible but it will not be easy. In order to make these changes, the West Side will have to display resilience and determination. It has done so in the past, and can do so once again.
LAND USE AND ZONING

Introduction

Every community must deal with changing patterns of land use—the arrangement of homes, shops, offices, civic buildings, parks, and streets. Zoning is a tool that local governments use to control patterns of growth. Cities can portray what they want their various neighborhoods to become through the authority of a zoning ordinance. Currently, two choices of development pattern exist: the conventional suburban model and the traditional model.

The conventional suburban model of development consists of curvilinear streets that lead nowhere and frustrate pedestrian travel, low-density landscapes created by single-family houses on large lots, rigid separation of land uses, and heavy reliance on the automobile as the dominant means of transportation. This is the signature growth pattern occurring in suburban United States communities today. However, for a myriad of reasons renewed attention is being focused on a return to more traditional development patterns.

Traditional neighborhood development is based on communities that were designed before the 1950s. They had walkable interconnected streets, residential land uses in proximity to shops and offices (often within the same building), a wide variety of housing types, and a choice of transportation modes. Increasingly, the virtues of this pattern are becoming clear for all to see.

The West Side Neighborhood is a community that wishes to reinforce its heritage of pedestrian friendly, mixed-use, urban form. While much of the neighborhood retains its appealing historic character, in other places the urban fabric has slowly frayed or has been replaced by inappropriate modern insertions (e.g., strip commercial buildings). The opportunity now presents itself to correct the mistakes of the past and generate a clear vision for the future. The principles of traditional neighborhood development have been portrayed in great detail in numerous books. (See, for example, Suburban Nation by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck; Visions for a New American Dream, by Anton Nelessen; and Home from Nowhere, by James Howard Kunstler.) The West Side of Saratoga Springs is a perfect place to reapply these ideas.

In order to implement the desired traditional neighborhood elements, recommendations for specific redevelopment areas have been created. In general, most of the recommendations follow Saratoga Springs' current land use policy, zoning ordinance, and General City Law. Based on careful analysis of existing conditions and consideration of valuable input from neighborhood stakeholders, key issues facing the West Side Neighborhood have been identified below. These issues are discussed individually in the Recommendations section.

- Reconnection of the West Side Neighborhood with Broadway.
- Redevelopment of West Avenue shopping area.
- Redevelopment of Washington Street corridor.
- Transformation of vacant properties into appropriate land uses.
- Improving the visual character of Railroad Run.
- Relocation of the proposed Saratoga Spring High School student parking lot.

For the specific location and boundary of the areas mentioned above, refer to Figure 3.0

Figure 3.0 Targeted sections for change of the West Side Neighborhood

Reconnecting the West Side Neighborhood with Broadway

The northeastern section of the neighborhood contains the Downtown Business District. The City of Saratoga Springs Zoning Ordinance states, "The purpose of this district is to preserve, protect and enhance the image and vitality of Downtown by encouraging mixed-use infill development with strong pedestrian elements in a concentrated and compact form, and to enhance the balance and diversity of activity through a mixture of retail establishments, high density residential uses, commercial services, and offices" (see Figure 3.1). Currently, those desired qualities of the Downtown Business District are only visible along the neighborhood’s eastern boundary—the Broadway corridor. Moving westward from Broadway, residents, and visitors alike must walk through a rather barren, suburban-style landscape. Visitors who might want to see the historic architecture of "Dublin" are discouraged by the break in the urban fabric, and turn back.

Figure 3.1 Elements desired in the Downtown Business District include interconnected streets, parking in the back, buildings next to sidewalks, 2-3 story buildings, interesting streetscapes, and pedestrian amenities.

Source: City of Saratoga Springs Zoning Ordinance.

Figure 3.1 shows the elements that are desired in the Downtown Business District: interconnected streets, parking in the back, buildings next to sidewalks, 2-3 story buildings, interesting streetscapes, and pedestrian amenities. However, these exact features are currently absent in the area between Broadway and the West Side. The poor pedestrian accessibility follows directly from the "superblock" design that was used when this area was reconfigured by the federal Urban
Renewal programs of the 1950s and '60s. The area bounded by Congress Street, Franklin Street, Hamilton Street, and W. Circular Street was assembled into large parcels and many of the historic streets were removed (see Figure 3.2). Pedestrian routes were cut off, and the streets the sidewalks were lined with parking lots rather than storefronts. The long-range vision to reconnect the West Side Neighborhood with Broadway involves transforming this "superblock" landscape into a more traditional mixed-use district. Through a series of incremental changes, the character of the area can be restored.

Figure 3.2 This graphic shows the super-blocks created by Urban Renewal. The traditional, fine-grained pattern of streets lined with buildings was erased and replaced with parking lots and underused open space.

Figure 3.3 Currently, this area contains large swaths of unused open space that could be redesigned to establish a strong pedestrian realm.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations

- Design new and rehabilitated structures in accordance with traditional urban design standards consisting of 2-3 stories, mixed-use, and architecturally pleasing facades. The recently constructed mixed-use building on the corner of Washington Street and Broadway (Gap & Banana Republic) serves as an example of the right direction. Historically, the difficulty of rehabilitating existing buildings has been attributed to restrictive provisions of New York's building codes. In many instances, these conditions have inflated construction costs beyond the allowance of reasonable market return, or have not permitted the alteration of older buildings to new, desired uses, consequently leaving much of our treasured building stock in peril. The New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council has modernized and enhanced the State's building code by adding provisions specifically designed to encourage the use and reuse of existing buildings. The new
code is effective as of July 3, 2002. These modifications are entitled Appendix K: Rehabilitation of Existing Structures. For further information, visit www.dos.state.ny.us.

- Avoid one-story, suburban-style buildings, including those with uninhabited fake "second stories."
- Place sidewalks, street trees, and traditional lighting fixtures along Railroad Place and Federal Street. Trees reinforce the "street edge" and are crucial for the definition of the pedestrian realm.

Medium-term Recommendations

- Devise and implement new uses for abandoned properties located at the corner of Broadway and Ballston Avenue and Circular Street (gas station), and Ballston Avenue and Hamilton Street (KFC) (see Figure 3.4).
- One possibility is to convert the abandoned KFC property into a pocket park (see Figure 3.4). This would involve the purchase of the property by the City of Saratoga Springs. The pocket park could possibly include walking paths and picnic tables. Alternatively, the parcel could be used for an appropriate commercial or office activity, housed in a well-designed two-story building.
- Make better use of the open space behind the senior housing building on the corner of Circular Street and South Federal Street. Rarely used, it could eventually serve as a site for new housing that complements the existing character of the West Side (see Figure 3.7). A portion of the site could be used for a small neighborhood park or commons.

Long-term Recommendations

- Transform the block bounded by Washington Street, Congress Street, Federal Street, and Broadway into a traditional
mixed-use area. Continue the construction of mixed-use buildings with residential condos or apartments above commercial stores, placed close to the street. This recommendation is backed by the area's current Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning, which specifically encourages "innovation in residential development so that the growing demand for housing at all economic levels is met."

![East Section Redevelopment](image)

**Figure 3.6** Plan of proposed East Section Redevelopment shows the long-term transformation of the area.

- Transform Railroad Place into a traditional mixed-use corridor. Utilize the corridor's zoning of "Downtown Business District" which "encourages mixed-use infill development with strong pedestrian elements in a concentrated and compact form."
- Redesign the shopping plaza at the corner of Congress Street and Hamilton Street into a traditional, mixed-use plaza with interconnecting streets.
- Reconnect Federal Street where it terminates at the shopping plaza with South Federal Street. This would enhance the pedestrian network by creating a new modest-scale, pedestrian-oriented street.
- Construct new buildings up to the sidewalk. Continue the neighborhood's layout of alleyways behind mixed-use buildings. This allows for the rear lots of buildings to offer parking, delivery service entrances, and trash removal hidden from public view.
- Construct mixed-use buildings along the extension of Federal Street.
• Reconnect William Street with Franklin Street where it now terminates at the Senior Housing facility.

![Figure 3.7 Infill housing is a possible alternative for the open space behind the senior housing facility. Source: Peter Katz, The New Urbanism](image)

**West Avenue Shopping Area Redevelopment**

The West Avenue shopping area is currently underutilized within the neighborhood. Located in the shopping plaza are an abandoned grocery store, a Stewart’s convenience store, a Laundromat, a National Bank (under construction), and various other retail establishments. This area is located in the Northern West Avenue Zoning District. The City of Saratoga Springs Zoning ordinance states: “The intent of this district is to provide a neighborhood service and shopping area reflecting a form of the ‘Traditional Neighborhood’ with greater pedestrian use of the street.” Currently, the West Avenue Corridor does not have the qualities of a well-designed neighborhood center. The corridor is not pedestrian friendly and the shopping area contains an abundance of unused parking and retail spaces.

![Figure 3.8 Existing Conditions on West Avenue looking south.](image)

The West Avenue shopping area abuts several residential areas and provides a convenient shopping area to the neighborhood. However, the shopping area would be greatly enhanced by a grocery store to act as an anchor to attract customers. Furthermore, with estimated daily vehicle trips of 12,000 (Saratogan 7/19/97), this area has the potential to become a new business area for the city.

![Figure 3.9 An example of a traditional mixed-use street, with residential or office spaces above commercial establishments. This project, Mashpee Commons, located on Cape Cod, is a redesign of a former conventional shopping center. Source: Peter Katz, The New Urbanism.](image)
Recommendations

The long-range vision for the shopping area is for its redevelopment into a Traditional Neighborhood shopping area as advocated in the City of Saratoga Springs Zoning ordinance.

Figure 3.10 West Avenue Redevelopment Plan

Shopping mall redevelopment elsewhere serves as an inspiration for what could occur along West Avenue. Dover Kohl, a well-known New Urbanist (See Glossary) planning firm, has produced an innovative redevelopment plan for Eastgate Mall, a shopping plaza in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The illustrations in Figure 3.11 show how the mall will be transformed through time. Smaller shopping centers such as the one on West Avenue could also be redeveloped in similar fashion.

Figure 3.11 Proposed reconfiguration of Eastgate Mall, Chattanooga, Tennessee, over a period of several decades. Source: Dover Kohl.
Short-term Recommendations

- Encourage anchor tenants, such as a grocery store chain to locate in the abandoned Grand Union. Also, investigate the placement of a movie theatre for the shopping center.
- Plant trees and shrubs within the parking lot to offset its overwhelmingly large appearance.
- Encourage the use of shared driveways, which serve to curtail congestion along West Avenue by limiting curb cuts, and minimizing the number of opportunities for motorists to turn and enter.
- Continue construction of sidewalks along West Avenue.
- Place hedges, trees, and other traditional devices such as gateway banners, benches, and planters along the corridor to define a formal but friendly street relationship.
- Use the West Avenue Design Guidelines created by the LA Group as a reference guide. The guidelines offer alternatives for residents and property owners along the West Avenue corridor to create and maintain an attractive and pedestrian friendly shopping destination in Saratoga Springs.

Figure 3.12 West Avenue Redevelopment in cross section. Mixed-use buildings placed against the sidewalk.

Medium-term Recommendations

- Construct mixed-use buildings against the sidewalk. Residential units can be located above commercial or office spaces.

Figure 3.13 Proposed reconfiguration of West Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood center.

Long-term Recommendations

- Redesign the West Avenue shopping area into a traditional plaza for the neighborhood.
- Create a pedestrian friendly area between the fronting buildings and West Avenue so visitors, residents, and shoppers can socialize along the corridor.
Washington Street Redevelopment

Washington Street, running east to west, is the northern border of the West Side Neighborhood study area. The section of the corridor between Birch Street and West Avenue is also within the Northern West Avenue Zoning District. The current layout of buildings along western Washington Street creates an environment that is not friendly to pedestrians. The corridor lacks street trees, which act as buffers to protect pedestrians from automobiles.

Recommendations

Listed below are the short, medium, and long-term recommendations of the redevelopment process.

Short-Term Recommendations

- Plant large deciduous shade trees at 20-foot intervals to reinforce the street edge.
- Construct wide, continuous sidewalks to improve and encourage pedestrian travel.

Medium-Term Recommendations

- Utilize the current West Avenue District zoning as grounds for the creation of a "Traditional Neighborhood" shopping area.
• Construct buildings close to the sidewalk rather than behind parking lots. This will create a more interesting and attractive street edge. traditional commercial area for the neighborhood is the desired end product.

Transformation of Vacant Properties into Appropriate, New Land Uses

Another issue concerning the West Side Neighborhood is the status of vacant and abandoned land. After touring the neighborhood, it was determined that some vacant parcels are used as the back and side yards of adjacent residential lots.

Figure 3.16 A sketch of what the corner of Birch Street and Washington Street could look like.

Figure 3.17 Rendering of Washington Street in the future; representing a traditional neighborhood shopping area.

Figure 3.18 A Vacant Parcels Map of the West Side shows where new development can occur on existing lots.

Long-Term Recommendations

• Create a public commons area along the corridor between the fronting buildings and Washington Street for visitors, residents, and shoppers to socialize. The creation of a Local residents have mixed opinions concerning the joined lots. Some residents support splitting up the large lots and constructing additional housing within the neighborhood. Other residents prefer that the large lots remain undeveloped.
Other vacant and abandoned parcels within the residential districts could be developed into parks, playing fields, community gardens, or additional residential housing. The current vacant and abandoned land parcels include: the intersections of Franklin Street and Beekman Street, the triangular parcel created by Flower Lane, Joseph Street and Elm Street, Ballston Avenue and Broadway, the triangular parcel created by Ballston Avenue, Circular Street and Hamilton Street, and Grand Avenue and Franklin Street. All of these vacant lands could support alternative land uses.

**Recommendations**

**Franklin Street and Beekman Street**

- Convert the parcel into a pocket park.
- Convert the triangular parcel bounded by Joseph Street, Flower Lane, and Elm Street into a recreational park.
- Another alternative is to construct single-family housing on the parcel. The parcel's current Urban Residential-2 (UR-2) zoning allows for both single-family housing and residential recreation facilities.

**Grand Avenue and Franklin Street**

- The Snack Shack located at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Franklin Street has generated varied public opinion on the future use of this property. The establishment’s location serves as a major point of access to the West Side Neighborhood and therefore should be utilized as an appropriate gateway welcoming residents and visitors alike to the West Side Neighborhood.
- The Snack Shack could be purchased by the City of Saratoga Springs, the structure demolished, and the parcel converted into a pocket park.

**Improving the Visual Character of Railroad Run**

Railroad Run is a multi-use community trail within the City’s urban core. The trail is currently utilized by city residents and will eventually be connected to the Saratoga Spa State Park, the new YMCA, and regional trail networks. However, a proposed storage facility along the 3,000-foot eastern section of the trail would remove 1,200 feet of forest cover. The current zoning is Warehouse District, which allows for the utilization of storage facilities.

![Railroad Run](image)

**Figure 3.19** Railroad Run is an aesthetically pleasing walking and biking trail.

**Recommendations**

- Screen and buffer any commercial, industrial, or warehouse uses along Railroad Run using both existing and additional vegetation. The presence of trees, shrubs and plants will help shield the facilities from the vision of trail users.
- Encourage the Planning Board and City Council to re-evaluate this "warehouse" district. This area has grown increasingly
residential the. Consequently, the warehouse district may no longer an appropriate use.

Figure 3.20 Existing landscape of Railroad Run. Under the current proposal for a new self-storage facility, this forested area would be removed.

Figure 3.21 The development plan shows the proposed parking lot’s location.

**Parking Options for Saratoga Springs High School**

The Saratoga Springs School Board recently proposed construction of a student parking lot along Empire Avenue and Joseph Street. The proposed 125-spot parking lot is a response to the parking congestion occurring along Empire Avenue. The proposed lot would destroy 7-acres of White Oak, Red Oak, Pitch Pine, Quaking Aspen, Big Tooth Aspen, Black Cherry, Sugar Maple, and Red Maple trees- some of which are over 100 years old. Some West Side residents have concerns about this proposal, and asked the members of the Planning Studio to provide alternative recommendations.

**Recommendations**

- Relocate the tennis courts behind the school, where they will be protected from high winds and direct sun.
- Redevelop former tennis court location into an on-campus parking lot. This would provide a safe, supervised, contiguous, on-campus student parking lot of 200 spaces adjacent to existing student facilities (see Figure 3.22). This design allows three fields to be irrigated efficiently with the new planned irrigation system and all fields except one softball field to be oriented in the preferred north/south axis. This design provides an adequate number of parking spaces without replacing trees with asphalt, does not force students to cross a busy road, and reduces the traffic impact on the adjacent residential neighborhood.
Figure 3.22 The alternative concept plan involves moving the tennis courts behind the school. The space liberated by that move can then be used for additional parking.
Introduction

This section on Gateways and Connections explores ways in which the uniqueness of Saratoga’s West Side Neighborhood can be better defined, and explores the roads that provide connectivity within the neighborhood itself as well as connecting it to the rest of Saratoga Springs. Pedestrian and bicycle travel are considered along with automobile and truck traffic. Emphasis is placed on increasing intersection safety and the quality of the pedestrian experience. Connection improvements and gateway enhancements can complement each other in the definition of a neighborhood’s boundaries.

A gateway is a visual landmark that indicates a change in the environment, such as a transition from a high-speed arterial to a slower local road, or from a commercial district to a residential neighborhood. Gateways provide the sense that one has entered a new neighborhood or a special place. Enhancing the gateway entrances of the West Side Neighborhood will help define the neighborhood’s edges as well as create a “sense of place” or identity. The following section discusses and analyzes specific conditions of the West Side Neighborhood’s gateways and connections and provides recommendations for improvement.

Figure 4.0 Map of gateways and intersections covered in this section. A larger version of this map can be found at Appendix 1.
EXTERNAL GATEWAYS

Intersection of Division Street & Railroad Place

Existing Conditions
The intersection of Division and Railroad, near historic Franklin Square, represents a northern gateway into Saratoga’s West Side Neighborhood. However, in its current condition the intersection does not give one any indication that they have entered a special place: the sidewalks and curbs are neglected, the crosswalks are fading or nonexistent, street lighting is poor, and the intersection is unnecessarily broad. These conditions can be improved upon by applying the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Add painted pedestrian crosswalks.
- Coordinate a landscape theme such as flowerbeds or sidewalk planters.
- Add sign marking historic “Franklin Square.”
- Subsequent to Beekman Street revitalization, add sign directing traffic down Franklin Street to Beekman Street.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Improve sidewalks and curbs, including use of textured pavement to highlight pedestrian pathways.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Install additional “traditional” streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install landscaped roundabout or “welcome island” in middle of intersection with signage to announce entrance to “Historic Franklin Square” and the West Side Neighborhood.
- Bury utilities underground.
- Ensure that design and development proposals for vacant lot fit the character of the neighborhood.

Figure 4.1 LEFT: Textured crosswalk. RIGHT: Use of interesting paving stone along University Avenue in Rochester, New York.

Figure 4.2 TOP: Existing conditions at the intersection of Division Street and Railroad Place. BOTTOM: Example of how a landscaped roundabout can serve as a welcome island, while also calming traffic. Source: Portland Office of Transportation.
Intersection of Broadway (Route 9) and Congress Street (Visitors Center)

Existing Conditions
This intersection is extremely wide and barren. It does not fulfill its potential as a gateway to the West Side Neighborhood because of the large amount of open space and the "big box" Kinkos building on the western side of the intersection. The street signs are located too high up the street poles, cobra lights dominate the corners, and the sidewalks and curbs appear neglected. The fact that the Saratoga Springs Visitors Center is located here should provide incentive to improve the look of this intersection by applying the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Lower the position of street signs to make them more visible (currently too high).
- Implement a coordinated landscape theme such as flowerbeds or sidewalk planters.
- Install additional street furniture such as benches.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Improve sidewalks and curbs; include use of textured pavement to highlight pedestrian pathways.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Remove "cobra" lights and install traditional streetlights and signal lights.

Figure 4.3 Flowerbeds along Broadway in Saratoga Springs, NY

Long-term Recommendations
- Construct a planted "welcome island" or roundabout, possibly with a sign directing visitors to the West Side Neighborhood.
- Narrow the intersection through use of curb extensions.
- Bury utilities underground.

Figure 4.4 TOP: Existing conditions at the intersection of Broadway and Congress Street. BOTTOM: Mid-intersection median will act as a gateway. Source: The LA Group, Saratoga Springs, New York.
Intersection of Broadway, Ballston Avenue, and W. Circular Street

Existing Conditions
This busy intersection should naturally function as a southeastern gateway into the West Side Neighborhood. However, left-hand turns onto W. Circular Street are currently prohibited to northbound Broadway traffic, affecting circulation. In addition, the intersection lacks any identity, or "sense of place." The vacant KFC building and vacant gas station gives the intersection a worn-down appearance.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Improve sidewalks and curbs, including use of textured pavement.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Increase the amount of traditional streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Bury utilities underground.
- Find new use for vacant commercial building, or tear down and install "pocket park" (See Land Use & Zoning section for details).
- Redesign full intersection to establish two-way traffic on W. Circular (may require land acquisition).

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Place clearly visible street signs on each corner.
- Install gateway signs on W. Circular announcing entrance into West Side Neighborhood.

Intersection of West Avenue and W. Circular Street

Existing Conditions
West Avenue is currently undergoing reconstruction and reconfiguration so it is difficult to accurately comment on the existing conditions. However, it is noticeable that sidewalk and curb improvements are necessary on both sides of the street. Intersections along West Avenue, such as this one at West and W. Circular Street, could be visually enhanced to serve as gateways to the West Side Neighborhood.
Figure 4.6 TOP: Existing conditions at the intersection of West Avenue and W. Circular Street. BOTTOM: Photo-simulation showing recommended improvements.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Install street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles.
- Implement a coordinated landscape theme such as sidewalk planters.
- Add painted crosswalks.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Replace "cobra" lights with traditional streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Create planted medians to enhance pedestrian crossing safety.
- Bury utilities underground.
- Investigate the possible addition of fence or stone or brick wall along northeast corner of West and W. Circular to visually enhance corner.

Intersection of West Avenue and Grand Avenue

Existing Conditions
The intersection of West Avenue and Grand Street is a very broad intersection that makes pedestrian crossing difficult and undesirable. As at the intersection of West Avenue and W. Circular Street, the current construction makes it difficult to visualize the remedies being put in place. The following recommendations should be considered in the improvements.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Install street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles.
- Add painted crosswalks.
- Implement a coordinated landscape theme such as sidewalk planters.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Replace "cobra" lights with traditional streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install planted medians on West Avenue to provide pedestrian refuge.
- Bury utilities underground.
Zoning section for additional recommendations regarding West and Washington Avenues.)

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Install street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles.
- Add painted crosswalks.
- Implement a coordinated landscape theme such as sidewalk planters.

Intersection of West Avenue and Washington Street

Existing Conditions
Washington Street is a heavily traveled road making this intersection an important gateway to the West Side Neighborhood. One of the difficulties in making design improvements to the intersection of West Avenue and Washington Street is the preponderance of one-story commercial development with large, front parking lots. The following recommendations can improve the function of this intersection as a gateway to the West Side Neighborhood. (See Connections in this section, and the Land Use &

Medium-term Recommendations
- Plant canopy street trees.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.
- Replace "cobra" lights with traditional streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install planted medians to provide pedestrian refuge.
- Bury utilities underground.
Intersection of Grand Avenue, S. Franklin Street, and Congress Street

Existing Conditions
The Snack Shack restaurant and a dangerous three-way intersection distinguish this area. The Snack Shack is an eyesore; either massive renovation or demolition is recommended. This intersection is also the eastern border of the West Side's historic "Dublin" neighborhood. There is a historical marker noting the Dublin neighborhood at the intersection; however, the sign is not clearly visible, and its wording is not consistent with the wording recommended by West Side Neighborhood Association.

Figure 4.10  LEFT: Entrance to Menomonee River Valley Milwaukee, Wisconsin.  RIGHT: Entrance to the riverfront of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Figure 4.11  TOP: Existing conditions at the intersection of Grand Avenue and S. Franklin Street.  BOTTOM: Photo-simulation showing recommendations.

INTERNAL GATEWAYS

Internal gateways often indicate urban or ethnic enclaves. These enclaves are distinct in their cultural or social heritage and often have historical significance related to the city in which they are located. Gateways surrounding these areas are symbolic in nature and serve as a reminder of neighborhood history.

Gateways can be enhanced through the installation of features such as colored pedestrian crosswalks, uniform street signs, traditional streetlights, benches, repaved sidewalks, and planter boxes. The goal is to create a welcoming edge or boundary for the neighborhood announcing to visitors and residents alike that this is an area of distinct character.
Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Add painted pedestrian crosswalks.
- Install benches and planter boxes.
- Place a directional map indicating points of interests in the "Dublin" neighborhood at the southeast corner of Grand & Franklin.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Install traditional streetlights.
- Reconstruct or rehabilitate sidewalks.

Long-term Recommendations
- Demolish the Snack Shack and re-use the site, either for a pocket park or an attractive building that enhances the neighborhood character.
- Install a triangular median creating a distinct right turn lane onto Grand from Franklin and a wider left turn from Grand onto Franklin.
- Add historic "Dublin" sign to median and landscape median with indigenous vegetation.
- Bury utilities underground.

Intersection of S. Franklin, Beekman Street, & W. Circular Streets

Existing Conditions
Located at the southeastern entrance of the Dublin area, this intersection is in need of traffic calming and gateway improvements. The northern section contains a fork in the road where Beekman and S. Franklin split. There is a triangle of open space within this fork. This intersection is not pedestrian friendly. Sidewalks are non-existent around the fork and traffic approaches the intersection from four different directions—one of which has a stop sign, none of which have crosswalks. The site of the old railroad station is located south of the intersection, as is the Railroad Run bike path.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Improve sign for Railroad Run; include map of proposed bicycle path (See Beekman Street section).
- Consider closing Beekman & S. Franklin to vehicular traffic during street festivals.
- Include former railroad station site and Railroad Run in local history tours.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Construct continuous sidewalks.
- Inquire about acquisition of the privately owned open space at intersection fork and development into a pocket park.

Long-term Recommendations
- If a pocket park is developed here, erect a small monument commemorating the
achievements of immigrants to the West Side.

- If a pocket park is developed here, erect sign describing history of "Dublin" neighborhood, including map of historic buildings.
- If a pocket park is developed here, hold an opening ceremony/festival at park.
- Extend pocket park south to W. Circular, opening up the possibility of greater usage by residents for holiday (e.g. Columbus Day and St. Patrick’s Day) festivals.

![Figure 4.13 TOP: Existing conditions at the intersection of S. Franklin, Beekman, and W. Circular. BOTTOM: Photo-simulation showing possible enhancements including landscaping and an interpretive marker.](image)

**Elm Street and W. Circular, and Elm Street and Grand Avenue**

**Existing Conditions**

Elm Street and W. W. Circular and Elm Street and Grand Avenue complete the Dublin neighborhood boundaries on the west side. There is nothing at this intersection to mark entrance or exit from the Dublin neighborhood. Crosswalks are non-existent and traffic is fast and heavy during morning and afternoon rush hours.

**Recommendations**

**Short-term Recommendations**

- Install street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles.
- Implement a coordinated landscape theme such as sidewalk planters.
- Add painted crosswalks.

**Medium-term Recommendations**

- Plant canopy street trees.
- Install textured pavement to highlight pedestrian crosswalks.

**Long-term Recommendations**

- Bury utility lines underground to remove the visual clutter of poles and wires.

**Gideon Putnam Cemetery**

Aesthetic improvement would help highlight this history cemetery.
Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Upgrade fencing at front and back entrances of cemetery.
- Place benches at the S. Franklin entrance—these should match the fence design (e.g. antique wrought iron style).
- Install a large, metal-framed map of the cemetery for visitors at the S. Franklin entrance, with a second, smaller map located at the back entrance.
- Add planter boxes to cemetery entrances.
- Improve landscaping within the cemetery, including indigenous, low-maintenance perennials, shrubs, and trees.
- Plant shrubs and trees within cemetery perimeter to visually screen out commercial uses outside the cemetery and to provide a sense of visual closure to visitors inside.
- Coordinate with the Visitor’s Bureau and local libraries to include the cemetery in walking tours.
- Coordinate with local schools to include cemetery in field trips for history classes.

Medium-term Recommendations
Replace "cobra" lights with traditional streetlights.

Existing Conditions
Current signage in the study area is not consistent with the recommendations included in the West Side Neighborhood Association’s "West Side Master Plan and Action Plan." The Association specifically identified the Dublin neighborhood to be one area in which they would like to see improved or relocated entrances and markers.

Recommendations
- Replace current "Dublin" signs (e.g. Grand Avenue) with signs that have wording consistent with West Side Neighborhood Association’s recommendation. For example:

In 1832, the arrival of the railroad and tracks along West Circular Street attracted immigrant workers who tended to settle along the railroad route. The Irish who settled the area in the mid-1800s, followed by Italians in 1870, named the neighborhood “Dublin.” By 1930, the neighborhood became predominantly Italian, but retained the name “Dublin.”

- Upgrade street signs to be consistent throughout the area. (See Design Guidelines section for more details.)

CONNECTIONS
The West Side neighborhood has experienced many problems such as heavy truck traffic on local streets, lack of traffic calming techniques,
inadequate signage, and lack of pedestrian amenities. The purpose of this section is to:

- Identify the major traffic/pedestrian corridors that connect the West Side neighborhood to other areas of the City of Saratoga Springs.
- Identify the major intersections that need improvement.
- Propose traffic management techniques that can be implemented to make the West Side neighborhood a safer, more enjoyable and recognizable place to travel through.

The recommendations proposed in this section expand upon proposals set forth in the West Side Master Plan and Action Plan and The Saratoga Springs Comprehensive Plan. Additional information on corridor management and traffic calming can be found in Appendix 2.

**West Avenue Corridor**

Within the study area, land-use on the western side of West Avenue is predominantly commercial. Single-family residences and commercial uses characterize the eastern side. West Avenue is heavily used for truck traffic. However, traffic calming devices are needed to discourage truck traffic through the residential areas east of West Avenue.

**Existing Conditions**

- Major road construction is occurring at the time this plan is being developed.
- Mix of commercial and residential land-uses.
- Sidewalks being installed on both sides of West Avenue.
- Two-lane street, with turn lanes at intersections.
- Painted lines for a median strip.
- No street trees for street canopy.
- No protection between roadway and sidewalk.

**Recommendations**

**Short-term Recommendations**

- Prohibit on-street parking.
- Install painted bike lanes on both sides of the street.
- Install benches at bus stops.
- Coordinate landscaping on both sides of West Avenue.

**Medium-term Recommendations**

- Construct continuous sidewalks with a 4 to 5 foot wide grass strip between sidewalk and shoulder.

**Long-term Recommendations**

- Redesign West Avenue as a boulevard.
- Install a planted median (8 to 10 feet wide), which will provide a mid-intersection pedestrian refuge.
- Install left turn lanes at major intersections, and, where possible, install traffic signals with left turn signals.
- Decrease curb cuts.

*Figure 4.15* Arterial streets designed with generous medians, planter strips, and street trees preserve the pedestrian realm and enhance community character. This is extremely effective on Union Avenue.
Washington Street Corridor

Land-use along this corridor includes commercial use, single and two-family residences, vacant areas, and community services. Washington Street is wide enough from West Avenue to Birch to allow the installation of amenities such as a median, planting strips, and street trees. However, the road narrows east of Birch Street, which makes it more difficult to implement traffic calming devices (bulb-outs, traffic circles) and other improvements. In addition, the heavy truck traffic along Washington Street is inappropriate for a city street of this size and should be eliminated so that the street can be reclaimed as a neighborhood thoroughfare.

Existing Conditions

- One of two major east/west corridors for traffic to travel between Broadway to West Avenue.
- Major corridor for heavy truck traffic.
- Painted traffic lines from West Avenue to Birch Street.
- No painted traffic lines from Birch Street east.
- Corridor is anchored on either end by commercial land-uses; residential land-use is predominant in the middle.
- Lack of defined on-street parking areas (painted lines, bulb-outs, etc.).
- Lack of crosswalks at intersections.
- Lack of turning lanes at intersections.
- Street becomes narrower east of Birch.
- Utility lines hang very low to the ground in certain areas.
- There is a lack of street trees from West Avenue to Birch Street.

Figure 4.16 Looking east on Washington Street, from Pope's restaurant.

Washington Street from West Avenue to Birch Street

Although West Avenue and the southern side of Washington Street are lined with commercial businesses, many single-family residences are also located in this area. The addition of sidewalks and bike lanes might encourage residents to walk or bicycle to the nearby businesses.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations

- Install pedestrian amenities along this section of the street, such as benches, bike racks, newspaper racks.
- Add painted bike lanes on the street.
- Add painted crosswalks at all intersections.

Medium-term Recommendations

- Plant street trees along both sides of the corridor.

Long-term Recommendations

- The street is wide and possesses sufficient shoulder and sidewalk widths to install a 6-foot wide median with low growing bushes.
plants, and flowers. Trees are not recommended in the median, at least as long as there is heavy truck traffic on Washington Street.

![Figure 4.17 Example of street with median and traditional light fixtures.](image)

**Washington Street from Birch Street to Broadway**

Mixed land-use includes one and two family residences, vacant lots, commercial areas, and community services areas. Street width narrows from Birch Street to Franklin Street.

**Recommendations**

**Short-term Recommendations**
- Paint centerlines.
- Install left-turn lanes at major intersections.
- Post the speed limit at 25MPH.

**Medium-term Recommendations**
- Install bulb-outs at major intersections to slow down traffic and provide pedestrian refuge.

![Figure 4.18 TOP: Existing conditions at intersection of Birch Street and Washington Street. BOTTOM: Example of an intersection that has been redesigned to calm traffic, increase pedestrian safety, and improve the visual character of the street. Source: Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.](image)

**West Circular Street Corridor**

The major land-use from West Avenue to Beekman Street is single-family and two-family residential use. From Beekman Street to Broadway the major land-use is commercial use.
Existing Conditions
- One of two major east/west corridors for traffic to travel between Broadway to West Avenue.
- Predominantly a residential area.
- Lack of sidewalks on western end of corridor.
- Lack of traffic calming techniques to slow down traffic.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Plant street trees along both sides of the corridor.
- Restrict on-street parking to one side of street and install a painted bike lane on the other side.
- Add painted crosswalks at all intersections.
- Post speed limit at 25 MPH.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Install left turn lanes at the major intersections.
- Replace "cobra lights" with traditional streetlights.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install a 6 to 8 foot wide median to narrow the street and discourage truck traffic from using the street.
- Install bulb-outs at each intersection, with painted crosswalks. Bulb-outs will help to narrow the street and may discourage trucks from using this route.

Existing Conditions
- Primarily a residential street with some commercial use.
- Adequate amount of trees along roadway.
- Lacks sidewalks or pedestrian path.
- Lacks traffic calming techniques to slow down traffic through residential neighborhood.
- Street is wide enough to implement traffic calming techniques and to install a median strip to help to slow down traffic.

Grand Avenue from West Avenue to Birch Street

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Restrict on street parking to one side of the street and install a painted bike lane on the other side.
- Post speed limit at 25 MPH.

Figure 4.19 Intersection of Grand Avenue and Benedict Street.
Long-term Recommendations
- Install sidewalks with a 5 foot wide grass strip between the street and sidewalk.
- Install a median strip (6 to 8 feet wide) to narrow the street and discourage truck traffic.

**Grand Avenue from Birch Street to Franklin Street**

**Recommendations**

**Short-term Recommendations**
- Add painted crosswalks at intersections.
- Install left turn lanes.
- Post speed limit at 25MPH.

**Long-term Recommendations**
- Install bulb-outs at major intersections and add painted crosswalks.

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**KEY INTERSECTIONS TO IMPLEMENT TRAFFIC CALMING TECHNIQUES**

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**Intersections of Railroad Place and Washington Street and Franklin Street and Washington Street**

**Existing Conditions**
- No center islands or median strips.
- High traffic flow through intersections.
- Either no crosswalks or fading crosswalk lines.
- Adequate room to install roundabout or a center island to serve as a pedestrian refuge.
- Intersections are large enough to have a small traffic circle.
- Intersections are wide enough to install turning lanes.
- Heavy truck traffic needs to be taken into consideration when considering traffic calming techniques.

**Recommendations**

**Short-term Recommendations**
- Paint crosswalks at all intersections.

**Long-term Recommendations**
- Install roundabouts at both intersections to slow traffic and serve as a pedestrian refuge.
- Install historic markers or monuments and landscaping at each roundabout.
Existing Conditions

- Blind corners of intersection due to differences in street grade/elevation.
- Awkward convergence of streets.
- Difficulty turning for traffic northbound on Franklin Street.
- Poorly positioned traffic signals.
- Mix of residential and commercial land-uses.
- Adequate amount of space to implement turn lanes.
- Adequate amount of space to install a center island on South Franklin Street.
- Narrow intersection where Congress Street and North Franklin Street converge will make it difficult to implement certain traffic calming techniques such as bulb-outs.

Intersection of Grand Avenue, Congress Street, and Franklin Street
Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Install a right turn only lane at Grand Avenue onto Franklin.
- Place stop line for the traffic signal on Grand Avenue close to Franklin Street to lessen blind corner.
- Add painted crosswalks to each intersection.
- Install turn lanes at the intersections of Franklin Street, Congress Street, and S. Franklin Street.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install a landscaped median (grass and low growing shrubs are recommended, due to short line of sight at this intersection).
- Install bulb-outs at S. Franklin Street.

Intersection of S. Franklin Street, Beekman and W. Circular Street

Existing Conditions
- Very broad intersection; a lot of pavement.
- No center median.
- No turning lanes.
- No traffic signals or other vehicle control measures.
- No crosswalks.
- Primarily a residential area.
- Pedestrian trail access.
- Adequate room exists to add turning lanes.
- Adequate room exists to extend a center island or median from the open space area to W. Circular Street.
- Awkward street convergence may make it difficult to implement certain traffic calming techniques.
Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Add painted crosswalks.
- Install a right turn lane westbound on W. Circular Street.
- Install left turn lanes on Beekman Street and eastbound on W. Circular Street.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Install a traffic light at this intersection.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install a median between point of convergence of S. Franklin and Beekman Street to W. Circular Street.

Existing Conditions
- Broad intersection with blind corners due to differences in street grade/elevation.
- Large painted median.
- No crosswalks or pedestrian refuge.
- No sidewalks.
- Mix of residential and commercial land-uses.
- Awkward convergence of streets at this intersection hampers sight.
- Wide streets allow vehicles to speed through intersection.
- No traffic signals.

Intersections of Grand & Walnut, Grand & Beekman, and Grand & Elm

These residential area intersections would benefit from traffic calming devices to slow down through traffic.

Recommendations
- Add four-way stop signs at all intersections.

Intersection of Grand Avenue and Birch Street

Figure 4.27 Intersection of Grand Avenue and Birch Street.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations
- Increase signage to help slow traffic down, e.g. "Children at Play," "Yield," etc.
- Add painted crosswalks at each intersection.

Medium-term Recommendations
- Construct continuous sidewalks.

Long-term Recommendations
- Install turning lanes.
- Install a median strip along Grand Avenue from Birch Street to West Avenue.
• Install a landscaped center island to provide pedestrian refuge.

Figure 4.28 Example of a neighborhood roundabout.  
Source: Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.
DESIGN GUIDELINES

Introduction

Design features of each part of the West Side Neighborhood reflect the priorities and standards of the times in which they were developed. The goal of these Design Guidelines is to encourage both the City of Saratoga Springs and current and future owners of properties in the West Side Neighborhood to appreciate and enhance the character of the physical environment of the neighborhood by preserving its most valuable design elements, both in terms of aesthetics and function, and by using those attributes in the design of new buildings and public space.

The section of the West Side Neighborhood that is the subject of this Plan is comprised of three sub-neighborhoods that can be distinguished by different existing uses, design, and general character.

The blocks between Broadway and Franklin Street were redeveloped for commercial and multi-unit residential uses in an automobile-oriented fashion in the middle decades of the 20th century. A great deal of land between Division and Washington Streets, Washington and Congress Streets, and Congress and Circular Streets between Broadway and Franklin Street was cleared of its historic buildings, uses, and street patterns in the mid-20th century and is now either vacant or being redeveloped with upscale townhouses. About half of this area is occupied by Congress Plaza. Built in the early 1980s, the L-shaped shopping center has a vast parking lot and several freestanding fast-food franchises, and sits adjacent to a housing complex built sometime after the 1950s.

The area that comprises “Dublin,” between Franklin and Birch Streets, is an intact 19th century urban neighborhood that is mostly residential but has pockets of small-scale commercial uses. “Dublin’s” development was defined and characterized by the railroad that once passed through it.

The section of our study area west of Birch Street seems to have been rural for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. Several 19th century vernacular Victorian farmhouses remain but most of the land in the area was developed out in the mid-to-late 20th century with large residential lots in the fashion of an automobile suburb. West Avenue and the south side of Washington Avenue west of Birch have several strip-style commercial buildings separated from the street by large front parking lots.

General Recommendations

The following are general recommendations based on our research and the West Side Master Plan and Action Plan (1997), a synthesis of the needs and desires of neighborhood residents. Issues covered include Architectural Review and Historic Review. Later in the chapter, there are recommendations about specific building and landscape design features accompanied by many illustrations.
Architectural Review

The Saratoga Springs Zoning Ordinance contains an Article specifying Architectural Review Districts, mostly on important corridors leading into and out of the city. This sensible and not overly restrictive measure should be integrated further into the Zoning Ordinance and applied to other neighborhoods in the city. Doing so would strengthen the Ordinance and improve the quality of design throughout Saratoga Springs. The Ordinance already has the tools to encourage the kind of development that most residents of and visitors to Saratoga Springs would agree makes it an attractive and desirable city. Those tools should be utilized throughout the City of Saratoga Springs.

Historic Review

The City’s Historic Review Article regulates not only massing and layout of buildings within the City’s designated local historic districts but also regulates building materials and other details. Historic Review covers much of Broadway and Saratoga’s east side.

The only properties in the West Side Neighborhood now protected by Historic Review are on Franklin Street between Division Street and Grand Avenue. As is the case in Saratoga Springs’s other neighborhoods, one of “Dublin’s” greatest assets is its historic building stock. Most of the Greek Revival, Italianate, and vernacular Victorian homes and commercial buildings in this older section of the West Side tell the story of the Neighborhood. They are important physical links with its rich past, and most are worthy of preservation.

The original materials found on most houses that are part of historic districts are either no longer widely available or are much more expensive than the materials used in most new homes. For example, slate and copper or tin roofs can be found on older houses throughout Saratoga Springs. In most cases, it would be less expensive in the short-run to replace those roofs with asphalt shingles than it would to repair them with original materials. However, repairing or restoring with similar high quality materials can increase the building’s value in the long run.

Figure 5.0 Existing Historic Review and National Register Districts.

Figure 5.1 Proposed extension of Historic Review District.
Historic districts also protect the investments homeowners have made in their properties. Inappropriate alteration to historic houses lowers area property values over time; conversely, historic district designation nearly always results in an area becoming more desirable, eventually raising the values of properties in the district and nearby.

West Siders need only look as far as Broadway and Saratoga’s east side for an example of a correlation between historic district designation and higher property values.

The West Side Historic District, which extends west on Washington Street and Grand Avenue to Birch Street, is a National Register Historic District, but is not part of the local historic district. In other words, though the properties have been designated historic, they are not legally protected against alteration that will compromise their historic character. The September 2001 Working Plan for Historic Preservation in Saratoga Springs recommends including all properties on and eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in the City’s local historic districts.

Figure 5.2 Suburban sprawl landscapes are designed for automobile travel only. This form of development is especially inappropriate in historic cities such as Saratoga Springs.

We agree that the local historic district should be extended to include the additional properties in the West Side National Register District, and the properties south to West Circular Street—roughly the 19th century “Dublin” area—as well.

The policy in Saratoga Springs for expanding Historic Zoning and Architectural Review Districts is for the City Council to propose the designation following a public hearing provided there is not significant opposition from residents of the proposed new districts. Properties that are either on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places can be made a part of one of the City’s Historic Zoning Districts. Properties that do not meet those criteria can be made part of one of the City’s Architectural
Review Districts. Those "Dublin" properties that are not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and are therefore not eligible for Saratoga's Historic Zoning designation, should be included in an Architectural Review District. Creating such districts will celebrate the character of the West Side.

Saratoga Springs's Historic Review Article is effective and fair—as with every such ordinance, there is a hardship clause. And, though up-front costs of appropriate preservation are sometimes daunting, property owners are often rewarded for their investment with higher returns and better quality materials and results. City grant and loan programs should take into account the potentially higher initial maintenance costs owners of historic buildings must contend with and provide owners who require such assistance with modest grants and special low-interest loans. Saratoga Springs has also adopted the Real Property Tax Incentive, which rewards owners of buildings in historic districts that take on ambitious restorations with temporary freezes on their property taxes.

It is critical for owners of older buildings, whether or not they're in the historic district, to have access to these Design Guidelines as well as to craftspeople and, if necessary, to architects who have the skills and appreciation to work on historic buildings. Both the September 1998 Building Maintenance Preservation Program and the recently printed Historic Preservation Plan discuss the importance of the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation's development and distribution of an "Old House Resource Kit," which would include information about historic districts and where to find technical and financial assistance. A directory of local craftspeople and specialists who work on older buildings would also be part of the kit. The City could assist such a program at the Foundation by underwriting part of the cost of production, and assisting with directory updates every four years or so. In addition, the City's planning and community development offices could help facilitate communication between homeowners with questions about what is and what is not appropriate for their properties and members of the Design Review Commission. Commissioners should have the opportunity to offer advice and recommendations early in the rehabilitation process, before it comes time for them to review the final plans.

Both the Preservation Plan and the Design Review Commission's Building Maintenance Preservation Program underscore the need to pass more effective local legislation requiring property owners to take better care of their buildings. One proposal is for owners of severely deteriorated properties to be given the opportunity to sign an agreement with the City to make repairs within a specified period. If the work is not completed in that time, the City should be authorized to make repairs and pass the expenses to the property owner's tax bill. Another measure is to forgive back taxes on deteriorated properties if those properties are donated to the City. In addition, if property owners cannot be contacted or identified, their properties should be taken by eminent domain. In each case, new owners of "bargain" purchase properties must be made aware of funding assistance (such as the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation's Revolving Loan Program, which the Building Maintenance Preservation Program called for to be expanded) and of requirements to make appropriate repairs to older and historic buildings.

The pages that follow illustrate our recommendations with detailed explanations of critical and defining design features of the building types that are found in the West Side Neighborhood.
Guidelines for Designs that Promote Walkability

The quality of the experience derived from walking around a neighborhood is critical to the success and quality of life in a city. Unfortunately, for much of the 20th century, cities have undergone a series of changes that maximize convenience for people arriving by car at the expense of pedestrians. This has been the case in much of the area of the West Side Neighborhood between Broadway and Franklin Street. This area could be made much more appealing to pedestrians while still accommodating automobile traffic if buildings fronted the sidewalk and parking lots were constructed in back of those buildings.

Garage Placement
Driveways to residences should be off alleys or on the sides of houses. Garages should be recessed from the front of houses or, preferably, in the back. Guidelines for the location of garages of new homes should be included under the Architectural Review Article throughout the West Side Neighborhood, not only in the "Dublin" area.

Figure 5.4 The door for the family car(s) should not overwhelm the door for the family or, for that matter, the entire front of the house.

Figure 5.5 The garages of new houses should be placed behind or at least recessed from their facades.
Use of Alleys

Much of the West Side Neighborhood has a valuable system of alleyways that is currently underutilized. Alleys are perfect for providing off-street parking (as well as deliveries, trash pick-up, etc.) without building parking lots or congesting streets and sidewalks.

The established right-of-ways that the alleys maintain could also be used for power line placement if Neighborhood residents and the City agree something should be done about the clutter of the power lines along Washington Avenue, for example, and burying them is deemed too costly. Not only should the City upgrade its maintenance of these alleys, it should relax setback requirements to encourage alley construction, and further, encourage the rehabilitation and use of existing alley garages and construction of new alley garages by exempting them from property taxes.

Figure 5.6 The important functions that alleys serve has been “rediscovered” by some planners. This alley is in Kentlands, a New Urbanist development in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Figure 5.7 TOP: Cobb Alley off Beekman Street is typical of the alleys in "Dublin" and was probably used more intensively in the early 20th century than it is now. BOTTOM: One suggestion to increase alley use is to encourage property owners to build garages.
Parking Lots - Reducing Visual Impact

Parking lots sometimes dominate their surroundings and the pedestrian environment, but they don’t have to. Planting trees and other landscaping would not only make the lots less imposing, but trees would also shade cars and shoppers from the sun during summer months. Screening the perimeter of parking lots with landscaping reduces the negative impacts they have on their surroundings. Expanses of parking should also be broken up by trees and shrubs to make the experience shoppers have walking to and from their cars somewhat more pleasant.

Figure 5.8 TOP: This parking lot off Hamilton Street is a vast expanse of asphalt that almost entirely lacks landscaping. BOTTOM: Landscaping and building low walls along some of the medians would reduce the negative impact of the lot.

Figure 5.9. These parking lots are screened from the sidewalk by fence wall and hedges. The landscaping around the lots also creates a better environment for the pedestrians.

Figure 5.10 Where parking cannot be placed behind buildings, fences and landscaping can help to screen front and side lots from view.
Multi-Unit Apartment Layout
The overall appearance and human environment around several of the multi-unit dwellings in the West Side Neighborhood could be greatly improved if parking lots were less prominent and courtyards and landscaping enhanced. Longer-term recommended improvements—in Figure 5.12 to Steeplechase West, the housing complex at Grand and West Avenues—include moving parking areas to the rear of building units and converting the space currently used for parking to a public courtyard.

If property owners were to involve their tenants with landscaping decisions around their units, tenants would have greater "ownership" of their apartments. Regardless of the involvement of tenants, a relatively modest investment in landscaping can upgrade the overall appearance of an apartment complex.

Figure 5.11 The preferred solution for parking is to place it behind buildings so that the fronts of the buildings face the sidewalk and street, creating an attractive and interesting pedestrian experience. This is a design for Mashpee Commons on Cape Cod. 
Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.

Figure 5.12 TOP: Plan view of Steeplechase West, the multi-unit complex on Grand Avenue near West Avenue. Parking lots are too prominent in many apartment complex layouts of this kind. BOTTOM: Moving parking to the rear of the buildings would create a more friendly and usable courtyard.
Street Tree Planting and Maintenance

The need for a greater number of trees to line the streets of the West Side Neighborhood was raised several times in the West Side Neighborhood Master Plan and Action Plan. Street trees provide shade to keep pedestrians, houses, and parked cars cool in summer months and can enhance the appearance of any neighborhood. The streets of the West Side were once lined with stately elms, and the City should explore the possibility of replanting disease resistant American Elms.

In addition, planting trees that will eventually form a canopy over parts of the streets they line will make those streets seem narrower and encourage drivers to slow down. Trees and other landscaping should also be used to reduce the extent to which parking lots impose on their surroundings and nearby pedestrian activity.

Figure 5.13 There are few trees lining Washington Street and other important corridors in the West Side Neighborhood.

Figure 5.14 Planting street trees and adding planting strips would make these streets more attractive and improve pedestrian safety by creating a buffer between the sidewalk and street. Street trees also make streets seem narrower which has a traffic calming effect.

Figure 5.15 Oak Street is lined with maples, which provide a thick, dense shade.

Figure 5.16 Elms are perhaps better street trees for their less dense but wider spread canopies. This Waukegan, Illinois, street was lined with elms in 1962, prior to their falling victim to Dutch Elm disease. Source: Elm Research Institute.
Sidewalk Installation

To improve the walking environment west of Birch Street, the installation of sidewalks is highly recommended, particularly along Washington Street and Grand Avenue. This would serve to buffer pedestrians from car and truck traffic and also to encourage traffic to travel at slower speeds. It is also important for planter strips lined with trees to separate the sidewalk from the street. Once again, new commercial buildings on Washington Street and West Avenue should front the sidewalk with parking in the back.

Figure 5.17 LEFT: Some streets in the neighborhood don’t have sidewalks. Other sidewalks are in poor repair.
RIGHT: Photosimulation showing how installing and repairing sidewalks can improve both the visual character and walkability of a neighborhood.
Landscaping Enhancement

Enhanced landscaping of all properties should be encouraged. Obviously, such improvements are difficult to mandate. Persuading residents to plant additional trees and shrubs in their front yards is probably a task the Neighborhood Association, perhaps with City assistance, should take on by organizing annual or biennial tree and shrub plantings on Arbor Day. Members of the Neighborhood Association should invite local nurseries and garden stores to participate by coordinating sales and discounts for such an event by selling trees and shrubs off the back of trucks that circulate through the neighborhood.

Use of Fences

Use of appropriate fencing material can also influence the character of a neighborhood. Homeowners should use fencing materials that relate to the materials of their housing and surrounding buildings. The level of fence ornamentation should also fit the level of ornamentation of the house or building behind it. Wood, iron, and natural fences such as shrubs would probably be best for most of the properties in the West Side Neighborhood. Additionally, brick fences would be appropriate in parking lots and commercial buildings closer to Broadway and along West Avenue.

Figure 5.18 LEFT: This house has almost no front-yard landscaping. RIGHT: This photosimulation shows how trees and shrubs can help to define the semi-public realm between the sidewalk and the house.

Figure 5.19 The material and level of ornamentation of fences should be consistent with the materials in and level of ornamentation of nearby buildings. Source: TNdhomes.com
Guidelines for Enhancing Building Design and Preservation

The buildings in any neighborhood tell that neighborhood’s story and define it. The West Side Neighborhood contains a mix of 19th century vernacular styles, including Italianate, Victorian, and Greek Revival. Examples of new buildings that don’t necessarily look old but fit well among older surrounding buildings are more common in Saratoga Springs than they are in most upstate New York cities.

Under the Architectural Review Article, which we recommend be more fully integrated into the Zoning Ordinance and, in some form, applied to the entire city, “the relationship of width of windows and doors to their height shall be compatible with surrounding buildings.” It is recommended that a minimum of one-tenth of each façade of each story of all houses be windows or doors on all new construction. Alteration of existing structures should not reduce the ratio of window and door openings to the façade area.

New Commercial and Mixed-Use Buildings

All new commercial buildings should front the street and sidewalk with parking in the rear. Buildings should be at least two stories, allowing for office or residential space on upper floors.

There is great opportunity for the construction of new commercial and mixed-use buildings in the eastern section of the Neighborhood and, perhaps eventually, along West Avenue. New buildings should be two or (those close to Broadway) three stories and should complement existing buildings on Broadway in proportion and material. Several new buildings have been constructed on Broadway in the past few years that fit their context beautifully and functionally. If the Congress Plaza area can be “re-urbanized” over the next ten to thirty years, these buildings on Broadway should serve as a benchmark for designing new structures on Hamilton and Congress Streets.

Figure 5.20 Façades of new structures should be consistent with those of neighboring buildings, but they do not have to be exactly the same.
Figure 5.21 This new building on Division Street follows the design recommendations of in this study: it fronts the sidewalks and parking is located in the back.

Figure 5.22 Free standing, single-use big-box stores with a 20-year useful life surrounded by an excessive amount of parking, like this one, should not be permitted anywhere in the city.

Figure 5.23 Despite this building’s close proximity to the sidewalk, its blank wall prevents the building from having any relationship to its surrounding environment. The addition of Victorian street lamps does not help to make this part of Congress Street more inviting.

Figure 5.24 Just west of the blank wall in Figure 5.23 is a building that meets many of the criteria this study recommends for new commercial structures: multi-story, mixed-use, built to the sidewalk with parking in back, constructed of quality materials, and built in a fresh new design.
Street Lights and Street Signs

Franklin Street between Division and Washington Streets is part of an existing local historic district and a 1973 National Register District. Individual houses retain their historic details, which enhances the overall quality of the neighborhood, as do well maintained and nicely landscaped front yards. The City has also re-introduced historic street lighting and signage to many of Saratoga’s historic districts.

New Housing

Infill development (new single-family residential homes in the older section of the neighborhood) should be compatible in design and materials to the surrounding traditional styles of homes.

Design requirements for new housing west of Birch Street should be less specific than those within the proposed expanded historic district because there is generally less cohesion of styling of homes in that part of the neighborhood. Setback of new homes should, however, be required to be consistent with the existing setback line, and garages should not be permitted in front of any new home anywhere in the West Side Neighborhood.

Other aspects of traditional styling, such as placement and materials of windows and doors, front porches, and roof and siding materials and details should be recommended but not required in residential sections west of Birch Street. Owners of older houses in this part of the neighborhood seeking to protect the historic character of their homes can deed easements to the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation to
prevent inappropriate alterations by future owners.

exceed 30% or 100 square feet, whichever is less, of the area of window interiors.

Figure 5.29 Hanging signs with external lighting are attractive in any commercial district.

Figure 5.28 These are plans for neotraditional homes. Their timeless styling features would fit in relatively well anywhere on the West Side, including in older parts of the neighborhood.

For businesses on streets where the speed limit is less than 45 miles per hour, freestanding signs cannot exceed 12 feet in height. Freestanding signs in much of the downtown business district cannot exceed 12 square feet; signs in other areas where speed limits are less than 45 miles per hour cannot exceed 24 square feet. In most cases, the Ordinance allows for only one freestanding sign per parcel.

Figure 5.30 The Wendy’s at Congress and Hamilton Streets used its standard backlit freestanding sign, but Pizza Hut’s subtle, exterior-lit logo will be spotted just as quickly by loyal customers.

Signs for Businesses

Saratoga Springs has an effective article on signs in its Zoning Ordinance. As a result, there are many Saratoga examples of well-designed signs that are appropriate to their surroundings, and few examples of poorly designed signs that cover or obscure important building details, are too large, or are too brightly illuminated. Important provisions of the article on signs include restrictions of logos and lettering to 18 inches or less on signs in historic districts. Window signs are not allowed on window exteriors and cannot
These Guidelines recommend that signs on older buildings be placed according to the building type and style. Signage should not dominate the façade of any building or compromise details such as arches, moldings, cornices, or windows. Signs should be made of historically appropriate materials or of quality materials that are compatible with historic materials. Signs should not be internally illuminated. Illumination should be projected onto signs.

Figure 5.31 The saying "less is more" is especially true when it comes to effective signage. Much of the information cluttering the windows of this small business is lost on people passing by as well as on regular customers. The best signs tell potential customers what the business is all about in just a few words or with a simple and creative design.

Figure 5.32 Signs that look temporary and cover large areas of storefront windows should be avoided.

Figure 5.33 Signboards of historically appropriate materials ought to be used to designate businesses in older neighborhoods.

Rehabilitation of Older Commercial and Mixed Use Buildings

New York State's current building code restricts many possible uses of older multi-story buildings including several old buildings on Beekman Street. Fortunately, the New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council (the Council) has formally adopted new rules for the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. The new rules include a new code chapter called Appendix K, which will increase permitted uses for such buildings. The Council is also expected to produce a guidance document to help interpret the new code.

There are several large 19th and early 20th century commercial and mixed-use buildings in the West Side Neighborhood that are in need of rehabilitation. Private investors should be encouraged to invest in their rehabilitation and reuse. Rehabilitation should respect the original design integrity while maintaining current and potential future uses. Rehabilitation that is sensitive to the original design of the buildings would result in great aesthetic improvements to the area, and could help define neighborhood "gateways."
Income-producing buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for rehabilitation tax credits. The City should consider targeting buildings that are significant to the Neighborhood but are not listed on the National Register (there are several) for a tax abatement program to assist owners and developers in financing improvements. Key commercial buildings should be researched and, if possible, accurately restored. The Saratoga Springs Public Library and the Saratoga Springs Historical Society have extensive photographic collections and other resources on the history of the City.

The building on the southwest corner of Congress and South Franklin Streets in which the S&M Meat Market once operated is a late 19th century Italianate on a prominent neighborhood corner. The building has an unfinished elevation and, aside from its deteriorated condition, there is no continuity of color or style. Removing aluminum siding, restoring and replacing wood clapboards, restoring original upper floor windows and (to some extent) the cornice, replacing non-original first floor windows, and enhancing the entrance would begin to reveal this building's potential. If restoration of this building is infeasible, any replacement structure should be of a design that defines this critical corner as well as this building once did.

Figure 5.34 The rehabilitation of former S&M Market at the corner of Congress and South Franklin Streets would greatly improve the image of this important corner for the entire West Side Neighborhood.

Figure 5.35 This architect's rendering restores what was probably its original design, with appropriate and consistent materials, and colors.

Figure 5.36 A curved window like this one might be considered if the first floor space is used as a café or for retail.
The second floor porch line of the buildings along Beekman Street is an attractive architectural feature not usually found in this region of the United States. These examples should be preserved and celebrated.

Figure 5.37 This building retains its attractive original character and materials on its south side but has undergone some changes on the north part of its front facade.

Figure 5.38 These renderings illustrate two levels of restoration: the first restores the consistency of styles in the two parts of the building. And the other both restores that consistency and re-establishes the original setback of the first floor under the second floor porch.

Figure 5.39 This architect's rendering restores the consistency of the porches of these connected buildings on Beekman Street.
The Porches Inn near the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, Massachusetts is comprised of a restored row of housing that was originally built for local factory workers. Details such as wood-sash windows, wood porch railings, brackets under the eaves above second story windows, and wood clapboard and fish scale shingle siding celebrate the design and craftsmanship of what were at one time very modest residences. This upscale inn commands rates that hover around $200 per night. Property owners whose buildings retain historic features such as these should appreciate their value and preserve them.

Irreversible Alterations

The two originally 19th century houses with Italianate and vernacular Victorian features in Figures 5.41 and 5.42 once looked very much alike. The one in Figure 5.42 retains, on its exterior, many of the original design features that give it character. Removal of asphalt shingling and repainting of wood siding, which is likely still under the shingles, and replacing the triple-track aluminum storm windows with interior storms would enhance the appearance of this house. The removal of the porch (assuming this house was originally very similar to those on either side of it, which it seems to be) and reconfiguration of the windows and door of the house in Figure 5.41 are, for all practical purposes, irreversible alterations.

This is unfortunate, especially since the house seems to be one of a series of houses like it. The absence of a front door and second floor windows facing the street shut this house off from the neighborhood, which is a design not compatible with the recommendations of this plan or what most residents of the West Side want their neighborhood to look like.
Porches
The porches and details in Figure 5.43 have been beautifully maintained. Porches are recommended on new houses of styles on which front porches are common. Existing porches would be protected from removal in “Dublin” if the historic district is extended to include that neighborhood.

![Image of two well-maintained houses.]

Figure 5.43 What are presumably original porch details on each these two houses have been well maintained.

Materials: Siding
If wood clapboards are properly stripped or scraped and primed and painted with a good quality paint, that paint should last eight to ten years on the exterior of a house. Any new vinyl siding in historic districts is not permitted, and it is not recommended on houses outside historic districts.

"Vinyl Siding: The Real Issues," by Jan Cunningham, a historic preservation consultant, is available online at: www.cttrust.org/documents/cttrust_vinylsiding_guide.pdf or by calling the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation at 203-562-6312.

Much has been written about the inaccuracy of many of the claims made about the merits of vinyl siding in the aggressive marketing campaigns of companies that manufacture and install vinyl siding. A particularly clear write-up about vinyl siding with an extensive list of recommended articles for further reading was written in 2001 for the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and the Connecticut Historical Commission.

![Image of a house with aluminum siding and shutters.]

Figure 5.44 The trim on this house has been replaced with wide aluminum siding and shutters.
**Materials: Windows and Doors**

People frequently fail to appreciate the enormous impact windows have on the overall appearance of buildings. Original wood sash windows possess a beauty and craftsmanship that is very expensive to reproduce today.

Sometimes an older building just does not look quite right. Often, that is because its windows have been replaced with a window style that does not match the building's architecture.

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**Figure 5.45** This 1900's house still maintains its simple porch columns, transom over the door, wood windows and cedar lap siding and trim.

**Figure 5.46** Aluminum and vinyl siding strip older buildings of their character and, rather than solving them, can hide problems below the surface, as is the case in this building in Troy.
The Italianate house in Figure 5.49 is a model for houses in the "Dublin" historic district. It probably dates to the 1860s or 70s. Decorative molding around the windows has been preserved beautifully, particularly in the window cornices and along the eaves of the porch.

Vinyl replacement windows should not be allowed in the "Dublin" historic district. Existing windows should be repaired, if possible, or replaced with wood-sash windows. Good quality interior storm windows are often as effective at conserving heat as vinyl replacement windows, more effective than exterior aluminum or vinyl storms, and they don’t detract from the appearance of the building.
Figure 5.49 This Italianate house retains many of what are likely its original details, including bracketed eaves and two-over-two windows, which are most common on Victorian and Italianate buildings. The "triple-track" exterior storm windows on this house detract slightly from the appearance of the façade. Interior storm windows, which are less intrusive and more effective in conserving heat, are preferable.

Figure 5.50 Steel doors lack the charm of original wood doors. Their artificial sleekness, inappropriate on older homes, quickly dulls to shabbiness.

Figure 5.51 Older wood doors can be beautifully restored, as often can their hardware. Reproduction parts for old doors are widely available.
Unfortunately, some of the wood windows on the house in Figure 5.52 have been replaced with vinyl. When vinyl windows fail, they cannot be restored. They must be discarded and replaced.

Figure 5.52 This house on the West Side is similar to other later vernacular Victorians in the neighborhood. Constructed in the 1890s or very early 1900s, the clapboards, shingles, side bay, and oval window are representative of the period and style. The one-over-one wood windows are very likely original. (Undivided lights were popular when it first became possible to manufacture large panes relatively inexpensively.) Note how the vinyl replacement window alters the character of this side facade of the house.

**Materials: Roofs**
The original roofline with brackets under the eaves has been maintained on the house in Figure 5.49. The original roofline and materials have also been maintained on the house in Figure 5.52. Homeowners should consider the cost of making repairs using original materials, rather than completely replacing with inferior materials. They may be surprised to discover that the cost of using original materials for repairs may be more cost effective in the long run.
Colors
Trim colors should complement base colors in all parts of the neighborhood, as do the colors on the buildings in Figures 5.40, 5.43, 5.49, and 5.52. In historic districts, paint colors should be selected from palettes of historic home colors that Pratt and Lambert, Benjamin Moore, and other paint companies have available. The historic areas of the West Side Neighborhoods are generally comprised of buildings in the Greek Revival, Italianate, and vernacular Victorian styles. Owners of historic buildings should use the tables below (compiled by the Concord, Massachusetts Historic Districts Commission) as a guide when selecting new colors for their building exteriors.

Greek Revival (1820-1850)

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Vernacular Victorian (1850-1870)

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw/Sand</td>
<td>Dark base</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buff</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick Pink</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>
### Italianate (1840-1880)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Colors</th>
<th>Trim Colors</th>
<th>Door Colors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pale Beige with Darker Beige</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Sand with Lighter Sand</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Brown with Darker Brown</td>
<td>Unpainted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Light Gray with Darker Gray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Gray with Lighter Gray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Green with Lighter Olive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Ochre</td>
<td>Dark Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Brown</td>
<td>Old Gold</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue/Gray</td>
<td>Med Brownstone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buff</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Information

There is a growing awareness of the design limitations and flaws of most U.S. communities developed during the second half of the 20th century. Many of today's planners and architects are turning toward the past and reconsidering the elements of urban design that worked so well for so many generations. We can learn a great deal from traditional street patterns and from the design and craftsmanship of older buildings that is as relevant to our needs today as it was when the streets of Saratoga's West Side Neighborhood were first laid out and its first buildings constructed.

Ambitious building owners and residents of the neighborhood who are looking for additional information on old buildings and how to use historic preservation as a tool to revitalize the West Side Neighborhood might consider joining local, statewide, and national preservation organizations for the information those groups provide in regular newsletters and in special publications.

Local Organizations

Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation
PO Box 442
117 Grand Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
587-5030

Historic Albany Foundation
89 Lexington Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

Historic Parts Warehouse
89 Lexington Avenue
Albany, NY 12206
465-2987

Statewide Organization

Preservation League of New York
State
44 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12206
462-5658
www.preservenys.org

State Agency for Historic Preservation

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188
237-8643
www.nysparks.state.ny.us/hist/

National Organizations:

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-588-6296
www.nthp.org

Preservation Action
1350 Connecticut Avenue, NW, #401
Washington, DC 20036
www.preservationaction.org
BEEKMAN STREET

Introduction

The Beekman Street study area encompasses the blocks from Grand Avenue to Ash Street. Beekman Street was once the neighborhood commercial corridor for the original “Dublin” neighborhood of the West Side. It was home to a large number of shops, restaurants, and other commercial establishments that catered to the Irish and Italian laborers that lived in the area. Although a few businesses still exist along Beekman Street, it is no longer a vibrant commercial corridor serving the needs of the neighborhood. However, since its recent designation as a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD), there is hope that revitalization will once again create a lively focal point for the West Side neighborhood.

Existing Conditions

The housing stock is generally comprised of two-story wooden structures with balconies. The street is one way, relatively narrow, with on-street parking on one side. The street is in fairly good condition, but the sidewalks are in disrepair and there are no benches or trashcans along the entire stretch. Highway-style “cobra” light fixtures are overhead but do not provide abundant night lighting and detract from the historic character of the street.

There are a few existing businesses on Beekman Street including Bart’s Shoe Hospital (since 1922), a sign shop, and Marino’s Pizza. The Elks Lodge has community gatherings on a regular basis.

While much of the street has fallen into disrepair, there are also signs that the street is benefiting from revitalization work. The Fine Arts Initiative for Studios and Housing (FISH) is an artist group that is strongly advocating community revitalization of the corridor. They are currently rehabilitating 62 Beekman St. in order to create affordable artist workspace and an apartment. The group has approximately 35 members and four members already own buildings on Beekman Street.
A New Vision for Beekman Street

The City zoning ordinance was recently amended to establish a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) that allows for the possibility of mixed-use and commercial establishments. The portion of Beekman Street between Grand Avenue and West Circular Street was the first to be labeled a NCD. Section 240-2.6 of the ordinance defines the acceptable uses allowed in the area and includes both single family and two family residences. Commercial enterprises are permitted pending a special use permit and site plan review. Permitted special uses include boutiques, service establishments, eating and drinking establishments, business and professional offices, neighborhood convenience stores, day care centers, artist studios, art galleries, and sign design and fabrication facilities. This type of zoning provides the means for Beekman Street to transform itself into a vibrant neighborhood commercial district reminiscent of the historic streetscape that once existed here.

Another important factor in creating a viable neighborhood commercial district is the establishment of a cohesive identity. This is a unique character or charm that sets an area apart from other places. While improvements are made to enhance the physical appearance of Beekman Street, it is important that all changes remain consistent with the historic nature of the Dublin area and reflect a unified theme for the area as a whole. Many of the steps toward establishing a cohesive identity are basic such as insuring that pedestrian amenities have a uniform appearance. Others are more comprehensive such as maintaining consistent architectural styles when refurbishing and incorporating a particular design element into the many different facets of revitalization.
Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations:

- **Signage and Banners:** Signs and banners should be used to mark the Beekman Street corridor, convey its rich history, and celebrate the distinctive character of the neighborhood.

- **One suggestion is FISH member businesses displaying the FISH logo within their establishment to promote recognition of the organization.**

- **Signs should be geared toward pedestrians and should not be overly large or obtrusive. Small hanging signs may project out from the front of buildings; other small signs may be painted on store windows.**

- **As a rule, the area of signage should be limited to approximately no more than two percent of a ground level facade or 9 sq. ft. for a hanging sign.**

- **Landscaping:** Tasteful landscaping can dramatically improve the appearance of a street. Distinctive plantings may be used to create a unique identity for the Beekman Street corridor and set it apart from the surrounding neighborhood. However, plantings should be chosen carefully to minimize maintenance.

- **Planter boxes along the sidewalk are easy to install and require minimal care. Hanging flowerpots may also be suspended from light poles or brackets attached directly to building facades. Street trees, flowerbeds, shrubs and other plantings also improve the pedestrian environment by providing shade, color, buffering the sidewalk from automobiles, and screening parking areas.**

Figure 6.2 Signs and banners such as these add character to a neighborhood and help distinguish it from other parts of the city. Source: http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lc/slidecol/pubart/other/hull/index.html

Figure 6.3 Decorative planter boxes and planting beds can improve the appearance of the streetscape.
- **Pedestrian Amenities:** At present there are no amenities to create an attractive environment for pedestrians. Trash receptacles should be placed at regular intervals along the corridor. These help control litter and can contribute to the cohesive identity of the street.

- Benches provide resting places along the street and add to the feeling that people are welcome to stop and spend time in the neighborhood. Benches should be placed at key intersections such as Oak Street, West Circular Street, and outside of commercial establishments.

- Pedestrian amenities are essential in the creation of a public realm. Encouraging natural social interaction is an important foundation for the establishment of a successful neighborhood commercial corridor. Encouraging social interaction and expanding existing commercial and retail facilities are complementary actions.

![Figure 5.5 Benches provide opportunities for people to linger and watch activity on the street.](image)

![Figure 6.4 Trash receptacles are available in a variety of attractive styles, and help to keep a neighborhood neat and clean.](image)

![Figure 6.6 Bike racks should be provided in neighborhood commercial districts. They can be fanciful, like the one at left, or more conventional.](image)
• **Crosswalks:** To further accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, crosswalks should be placed across Beekman Street at the intersections with West Circular/South Franklin Street, Ash Street and Oak Street.

• Textured brick or paver crosswalks may be used to make these more visually pleasing. Stamped pavement is a less costly alternative but is sometimes not as aesthetically pleasing as a well-constructed brick crosswalk.

![Figure 6.7](image)

*Figure 6.7* Brick or concrete pavers can be used to create textured crosswalks such as this one. *Source:* City of Albany Dept. of Development and Planning.

• **Sidewalk Improvements:** The sidewalks on Beekman Street are generally in poor condition. Sidewalks are essential to the success of a neighborhood commercial corridor. In the case of Beekman Street, the installation of new sidewalks is an opportunity to further establish a cohesive identity for the street. Patterned or textured brick sidewalks are more expensive, but create visual interest and provide a distinctive look. Brick pavers come in a broad array of shapes, sizes, and colors and may be utilized to create a unique design for Beekman Street.

• The installation of sidewalks also provides a chance to set a distinctive tone for the corridor. They can be of various styles or textures to further define the area.

![Figure 6.8](image)

*Figure 6.8* This photo of Beekman Street illustrates the poor condition of many of the sidewalks.

![Figure 6.9](image)

*Figure 6.9* This photo simulation shows how the street might look after installing brick sidewalks and replacing missing street trees.
sweping, leaf and snow removal, and weeding. The neighborhood association and FISH should also encourage further revitalization of the area through public and private property improvement efforts. Many properties along this corridor require basic maintenance such as painting and minor repairs. Funding programs offered through the City should be investigated and utilized when possible.

- **Attracting More Retail Establishments:** At present there are a few diverse commercial establishments along the corridor. The neighborhood association and the City should actively seek out complementary businesses to set up shop along Beekman Street. Potential businesses should focus on servicing the needs of the local residents and might include a bistro, an artist supply shop, restaurants, or a gourmet corner store. Fostering an appropriate mix of compatible uses will help insure the vitality of the commercial corridor.

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**Figure 6.10** Annapolis, Maryland has installed brick pavers on a bituminous setting bed over asphalt to create a pleasing and durable sidewalk surface. *Source: Landscape Architecture 86, no. 12 (December 1996): 36.

**Figures 6.11** A diverse mix of uses will provide a variety of services, employment opportunities, and housing options for residents of the West Side. Storefronts with large, inviting windows are also an essential ingredient for a lively pedestrian realm.
- **Investigate Grants for Medium and Long-term Improvements**: Although many of the short-term recommendations are relatively low cost, long-term improvements such as the addition of decorative sidewalks, burying of power and utility lines, and the installation of improved pedestrian lighting will require additional funding. Grants and other funding sources should be identified as early as possible in order to allow time for the application process. While an exhaustive search should be conducted to locate all sources of possible funding, the table below provides an overview of potential sources that typically fund revitalization efforts such as those recommended for Beekman Street.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Funding Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner City Venture Funds</td>
<td>Community Revitalization</td>
<td>(202) 588-6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America Fast Track</td>
<td>Arts education and outreach</td>
<td><a href="http://arts.endow.gov/guide/Challenge/overview.htm">http://arts.endow.gov/guide/Challenge/overview.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ford Foundation</td>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fordfound.org">www.fordfound.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surdna Organization</td>
<td>Community Revitalization, Arts</td>
<td><a href="http://www.surdna.org">www.surdna.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gunk Foundation</td>
<td>Non traditional public art programs</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gunk.org">www.gunk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pew Charitable Trusts</td>
<td>Culture, Miscellaneous</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pewtrusts.com">www.pewtrusts.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James C. Penney Foundation</td>
<td>Community Renewal</td>
<td>(212) 463-6047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance</td>
<td>Various Categories</td>
<td><a href="http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/">http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/cfda/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation</td>
<td>Various Categories</td>
<td><a href="http://aspe.hhs.gov/funding.htm">http://aspe.hhs.gov/funding.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medium-term Recommendations

- **Lighting Improvements**: At present there are only six cobra-style light fixtures for the entire three-block stretch of Beekman Street. Traditional style, pedestrian-scale lighting should be installed at regular intervals along the corridor to insure adequate nighttime illumination. As with the street furniture and sidewalk pavers chosen, the lighting style should be distinctive while remaining compatible with the historic character of the street.

- **Cafes** with outdoor seating may be utilized to help make the commercial area more vibrant. Outdoor seating on porches or patios with awnings should be added as an enhancement to the streetscape and public realm. In addition to providing a friendly atmosphere to pedestrians, more people also provide “eyes on the street” security.

- **Building Renovations**: This medium-term goal extends beyond basic maintenance, and includes the renovation and retrofit of existing buildings for commercial and retail uses. Wherever possible these uses should also be combined with living space to create a true mixed-use environment. Older buildings such as those along Beekman Street typically require major updates in order to be utilized as modern commercial enterprises. However, when undertaking these projects it is imperative that the appearance of the structures remains consistent with the historic architectural style of the area so as not to degrade the appearance of the street as a whole. There are at least three businesses undergoing rehabilitation work on the street and all attempts should be made to conform to the neighborhood’s design guidelines (See the Design Guidelines portion of this document for more detail). Artist housing and gallery space will help provide a framework for the future commercial and retail activity of the street.

**Figure 6.12** Traditional human-scale lighting posts are visually pleasing and the extra lighting increases the pedestrian’s sense of security. Highway-style lights are inappropriate for neighborhoods like the West Side and should gradually be replaced.

**Figure 6.13** Outdoor seating adds to the character of the neighborhood and makes for a more vibrant streetscape.
and Congress and then extend up Congress to Beekman. Decorative sidewalk markers and signs may be used to guide pedestrians as they move along the trail. The trail will then proceed south along Beekman. A loop may be formed by extending the trail down Ash, and then along the Gaslight Apartments access road behind the Gideon Putnam Cemetery and back to Congress. A sidewalk should be added along the access road and perhaps some signage with information on the cemetery.

Figure 6.14 TOP: This photo illustrates the deteriorated condition of many of the structures on Beekman Street. BOTTOM: This photo simulation shows the area after renovations, with commercial uses at street level and residential above.

Figure 6.15 A decorative brick sidewalk such as this can be used to guide pedestrians along an urban trail.

Figure 6.16 This map shows a potential route for an urban trail (shown in red) centered on the Beekman Street area. It also indicates a possible path for extending the Railroad Run (shown in green).

- **Improve Pedestrian Access:** As commercial activity begins to expand and flourish on Beekman Street, pedestrian access to the area must be improved. This will help ease the demand for parking and increase patronage at shops and restaurants by making them easier to reach. Improving sidewalks, adding crosswalks and bike racks, increased lighting, and using street trees as traffic buffers can all aid in this effort.

- A walking tour or “urban trail” may also be established to help draw pedestrians from Broadway. The trail should begin at the Visitor’s Center at the corner of Broadway
- Railroad Run should also be extended to create a continuous linkage from West Circular Street to Congress and provide additional pedestrian access to the area. Installing crosswalks and possibly a traffic light at the intersection of West Circular, Beekman, and Franklin would enable pedestrians to cross over to Beekman or Franklin safely. Railroad Run should then be extended using a bike lane along the east side of Franklin Street to Ash and then continuing along the access road behind the cemetery.

- Street Fairs and Festivals: Street fairs can draw people in from outside the neighborhood, provide a boost for local commercial enterprises, and promote the distinctive character of a neighborhood. This three-block portion of Beekman Street is ideal for a street festival. The street is narrow and can easily be closed off for pedestrian safety and to allow arts, crafts, and entertainment to take center stage. Live musical performances may also be held. Street fairs should involve the entire community and should be organized in conjunction with local businesses and neighborhood groups.

Long-term Recommendations

- Burying the Utilities: Burying the power lines would greatly enhance the appearance of Beekman Street, decreasing street clutter and providing for a more aesthetically appealing streetscape. Since the process is costly, complicated, and requires coordination between Niagara Mohawk, Verizon and the Time Warner Cable, this is considered a long-term recommendation.

Figure 6.17 A street fair helps promote the special character of a neighborhood and generate commercial activity.

Figure 6.18 TOP: This photo shows a tangle of utility lines typical of the West Side. BOTTOM: This photo simulation shows how the appearance of an area can be significantly improved by placing the utilities underground.
• **Public Spaces:** The preservation of functional, properly located public spaces (parks, greens, commons, squares, plazas) can enhance the charm of Beekman Street and add further diversity to the mix of uses found there. The parcel of undeveloped land at the corner of Oak Street and Beekman Street offers an excellent opportunity for a small plaza or neighborhood square. Although the site could also be employed effectively for infill development, its location at the center of the Beekman Street corridor makes it a focal point for the neighborhood. The space may be better utilized as a community gathering spot—a haven of rest and recreation. A fountain or gazebo could be placed there, or a kiosk that communicates the happenings of the community. Another option would be to create a pocket park with an artistic theme, including a unique neighborhood landmark such as a sculpture garden or a wall of mosaics.

![Figure 6.19](image) This lot at the corner of Oak and Beekman Street would be ideal for a small neighborhood square or a pocket park.

• Also of interest is the conversion of the triangle shaped parcel at Beekman, West Circular and Franklin Streets into a small urban park or monument area. The parcel is an ideal gateway location and is also discussed in the Gateways and Connections portion of this document. All civic spaces should be designed carefully to ensure that the community really uses them.

![Figure 6.20](image) Diagram showing the lots and approximated building footprints for the Beekman Street corridor.
Figure 6.21 Neighborhood parks, commons, plazas, and greens should be carefully designed so that they will be used. They are not just undefined “open space.” Traditional models from great towns and cities, as well as successful contemporary examples, should be studied and emulated. Sources: Landscape Architecture 90, no. 4 (April 2000): 30, and Landscape Architecture 91, no. 5 (May 2001): 132.

• Parking: Public parking will no doubt become more of an issue as Beekman Street develops into a neighborhood commercial corridor and visitor destination. Improving pedestrian access will help alleviate some of the automobile traffic, but the parking issue will ultimately need to be addressed. As the demand rises, parking spaces should be added at the rear of the commercial establishments on Beekman Street. These areas would be accessible via the existing system of alleyways. Many of the lots along the corridor currently have back yards that may be converted for parking purposes. It is not advisable to demolish existing structures or convert open space along Beekman Street into parking lots. This disrupts the natural streetscape of the area and creates an aesthetically unpleasant car oriented environment.

Figure 6.22 This lot and several others along Beekman Street have backyards adjacent to alleyways that could be converted to parking areas if necessary.

Another option is the expansion of the lot at the corner of Cobb Alley, which is currently being used for private parking. If this option is chosen, landscaping should be utilized to screen the lot as much as possible. A short distance away is the warehouse lot adjacent to Railroad Run. With the potential to hold a high capacity of vehicles, this could be an acceptable location for Beekman Street parking in the more distant future.
Final Note:

It should be noted that implementation of these recommendations will create change and that some changes may provoke controversy. Listed below are potential issues to consider in this regard:

- **Change in the Character of Beekman Street:** At present Beekman Street is quiet and primarily residential in nature. There is limited automobile traffic on the one-way street and most pedestrians are from the neighborhood. If Beekman Street becomes a more vibrant mixed-use corridor, the character of the street will undoubtedly change. Although the recommendations suggested in this document emphasize creating a neighborhood commercial corridor, the creation of a unique place will likely bring in curious visitors from outside the neighborhood. Auto and foot traffic will increase, and an increased number of pedestrians will frequent the shops and restaurants at different times of day.

- **Parking:** Beekman Street has only a limited amount of off-street parking, but most residents and visitors are able to find on-street parking with little difficulty. However, demand for parking is likely to escalate as commercial and retail activity increase on the street. Residents should be aware that the availability of on-street parking will likely decrease as a result of the commercial revitalization of Beekman Street.
HOUSING

Introduction

The West Side Neighborhood contains a variety of housing styles and types ranging from units on small 19th century lots to larger, post World War II suburban parcels. The variation in housing is evidence of Saratoga’s development: older homes are located closer to the city’s center.

Residents of the neighborhood have identified issues pertaining to affordability of housing, maintenance of properties, levels of owner occupancy, aspects of the zoning ordinance that are not compatible with existing conditions, and the condition of sidewalks and other infrastructure as affecting housing. This section details concerns about housing issues and offers possible solutions.

Prior to discussing what must be changed to improve housing conditions in the West Side Neighborhood, it was critical for us to discuss what we considered opportunities and constraints with regard to housing in the Neighborhood. Beginning here, we can move on to make recommendations later in the chapter.

Opportunities

- Saratoga has an active downtown business district that is attracting developers.
- There is strong demand for housing in the area.
- Areas close to the downtown business district are suitable for higher density development.
- The neighborhood has a variety of housing types and styles.
- The neighborhood is within walking distance of the downtown, schools, and parks.

Constraints:

- Many of the vacant parcels are unsuitable for infill development under current zoning and lot requirements. Others may be excluded from infill opportunities given their current use as garden plots or parking for multi-family structures.
- Sections of the neighborhood have low levels of owner occupancy and are disconnected from those sections with higher levels.
- Many properties are in need of maintenance.
- Aspects of the zoning ordinance are incompatible with existing land uses or historical building patterns.
- Increased demand for housing in Saratoga is increasing the cost of housing in the city.

Existing Conditions

Who Owns and Who Rents? Have Rising Housing Costs Outpaced Growth in Household Income?
The area of the West Side Neighborhood that is the focus of this Plan includes Census Tracts 610, Block Group 6 and 612, Block Group 2 (see Tract maps in Appendix 3). According to the 1990 United States Census, those tracts had a total population of 972 households, approximately 10% of the total number of households in the City of Saratoga Springs. The following table details demographic statistics most relevant to the recommendations, such as the homeownership goals:

### Table 7.0 Demographic Information for Census Tracts 610 and 612

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Saratoga Springs</th>
<th>Census Tract 610</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Persons</td>
<td>25001</td>
<td>4467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>9673</td>
<td>2393</td>
<td>458</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 1 person in household</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% same residence in 1985</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% works in county of residence</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median household income in 1989</td>
<td>$30,938</td>
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<td>$8,629</td>
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<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
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<td>505</td>
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<tr>
<td>% occupied housing units</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% renter occupied</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>median value of owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>$108,500</td>
<td>$107,400</td>
<td>$87,500</td>
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</table>

Source: 1990 Census, Census Bureau

The level of owner occupancy in the two block groups is quite different: renters comprise 98% of the population of Block Group 6 in Census Tract 610, while only 39% of the residents in Block Group 2 in Census Tract 612 are renters. The large public housing facility in Tract 610 is partially responsible for that Block Group's high rate of non-owners. But even the highest owner-occupancy percentage (61% for BG 2 in Census Track 612) falls below the national average, which justifies investigation into the barriers to homeownership and programs to increase homeownership. Ironically, the block group with the higher levels of owner occupancy also had lower property values. Comparing data from 1970 and 1990 Censuses, trends in Census Tract 610 and Census Tract 612 can be identified. Once again, the picture within the two Tracts is slightly different. While the population in Census Tract 610 declined by 256 persons, the population in Census Track 612 increased by 1,426 persons.
Table 7.1 Demographic Trends, 1970-1990, for Census Tracts 610 and 612

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Census Tract 610</th>
<th>Census Tract 612</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Persons</td>
<td>4,723</td>
<td>4,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td>2,083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Families</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income**</td>
<td>**8,165</td>
<td>**10,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>1,799</td>
<td>2,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Owner-Occupied</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Value of o.o. housing units</td>
<td>$12,400</td>
<td>$34,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau

While incomes have risen from $8,165 to $21,741 in Track 610 & $8,781 to $23,812 in Track 612.

housing values have risen from $12,400 to $107,400 in Track 610 & $13,200 to $89,600 in Track 612.

* Not available
** calculated as Median
"family" income in 1970

Most notable, however, is the percentage increase in median income over that 20-year period compared to the percentage increase in the median values in owner-occupied housing. While the income levels in Census Tract 610 have risen from $8,165 to $21,741, the housing values increased much more dramatically from $12,400 to $107,400.

Ideally, increased investment in the West Side Neighborhood should be balanced with some protection of existing demographics.

Zoning and Housing Patterns

The West Side Neighborhood can easily be broken up into three distinct areas for this chapter’s discussion of zoning.

Broadway West to Franklin Street has three zoning districts: Downtown Business District (DTBD), Urban Residential-5 (UR-5), and Urban Residential-7 (UR-7). The DTBD allows uses necessary to achieve a vibrant and economically successful central business district. UR-5 zoning is designed to accommodate new and existing residential housing in low-rise structures at moderate- to high-densities and to improve and enhance these areas of the city with a mixture of housing types. UR-7 delineates an area of the city where publicly subsidized two-family housing is encouraged. This segment is also referred to in this Plan as the Re-urbanization Zone.

Franklin west to Birch Street, the traditional “Dublin Neighborhood,” is zoned mostly UR-2, which allows for single-family homes at a higher density than UR-1 (minimum lot size of 6,600 square feet compared to 12,500 square feet in UR-1). This area also includes a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) on Beekman Street, which allows mixed uses.

Most of this area from Birch Street to West Avenue is zoned UR-2, with the exception of
Washington Street and West Avenue. (These corridors are zoned North West Avenue District.) The housing stock in this residential area is newer and most likely will remain unchanged in the near future, though the North West Avenue District designation allows for two- to four-story mixed-use buildings, which could include apartments on upper floors.

**Housing Types and Styles**

Housing types and styles vary based upon their location within the neighborhood. Between Broadway and Franklin Street, there is a concentration of large, multi-unit apartment buildings. The blocks between Franklin and Birch Streets contain a variety of housing types, including single-family residences, duplexes, and three-family dwellings, generally in older buildings. Most of the houses west of Birch Street are single-family, built after 1950 on larger lots along curvilinear streets.

![Figure 7.0](image-url)
Housing Market:

Understanding the supply and the demand for housing is important in determining how to raise the level of owner-occupancy and to preserve the West Side’s existing housing stock. The demand for rental housing in Saratoga Springs in general is high, which has caused rental prices in Saratoga also to be high, relative to other cities in the region.

Current sales figures provide one measure for evaluating the local housing market. A preliminary search on Roohan Realty’s web site to identify housing for sale in Saratoga Springs below $100,000 provided a listing of six properties in the City, two of which were townhouses. Housing for sale in the $100,000--$150,000 range included 12 properties.

It is unclear how many of these properties are located on the West Side. The eligibility scenario in the Appendix demonstrates the limitations of the existing market.

Housing Conditions:

Housing conditions also vary by location, property type, and building age. A building condition survey performed by Shelters of Saratoga Neighborhood Preservation in 1999 revealed that substandard properties were concentrated in areas with high numbers of multifamily properties and absentee landlords. These properties also tended to be older. The map below shows the development patterns of the West Side. Structures built before 1990 are in shades of red; structures built after 1990 to the present are in shades of yellow.

Figure 7.1 Source: Office of Real Property (ORPS) 2000 data
Recommendations

Increase Levels of Owner Occupancy

High levels of homeownership stabilize communities and encourage private investment. Generally, owners have greater interest in the buildings in which they reside than in those they own strictly for investment purposes. And most people are naturally more concerned about the health of the neighborhood in which they live than in neighborhoods in which they own rental properties.

Increase Access to Homeownership Information: In many communities, the general public might not be aware of existing programs already in place to increase homeownership, so many potential buyers might not even know about specialized mortgage products for pre-purchase assistance, rehab, or for primary mortgages. A lack of information on the part of buyers who might not qualify for a conventional mortgage could prevent those people from owning their own home. Educated buyers can more readily reach their homeownership goals and the revitalization goals of the neighborhood.

![Image](resources_to_help_you_buy_a_home.png)

*Figure 7.2 Source: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services Newsletter.*

Communities both large and small are developing homeownership centers to fill this information gap. Albany and Rochester have Home Stores; Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (TRIP), a non-profit housing provider, opened Troy's first Homeownership Center in early November of 2001. Other communities provide home buying assistance to potential homebuyers through one-on-one credit counseling and group training seminars. Saratoga Springs could also benefit from such a program. With three real estate agents and a number of lenders located on Broadway, which has heavy foot traffic, especially during the summer months, people often gaze at realtors' window displays to shop for houses. If and when the community chooses to increase owner occupancy though such a program, Broadway is the natural place to advertise it.
Promote Available Housing Programs

The chart in the Appendix 4 provides a listing of housing programs currently available in the City of Saratoga Springs for housing rehab and home purchase assistance. The chart lists programs funded by the City’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation (approximately $450,000 each year), as well as the housing rehabilitation program of Shelters of Saratoga (SOS) funded by the federal HOME program through the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). Funding is available from other DHCR and federal (primarily HUD) sources for new construction and tenant-based rental assistance.

In addition, the variety of mortgage products offered through conventional lenders, including affordable mortgage products, has increased dramatically over the last decade and are too numerous to list here. Conventional mortgage products combining a rehab loan component are a little less common but are available in the Capital District. The Mortgage Rate Chart from the Sunday Albany Times Union provides an overview of the current conventional mortgage offerings.

Market the Neighborhood

Another strategy employed by other communities is the neighborhood open house, a one-day event when all properties for sale in the community are available for viewing on the same day (Figure 6.4). An event such as this show cases not only those properties for sale, but also the neighborhood itself to interested buyers as well as real estate agents and lenders who might not be familiar with the West Side.

A number of property listings in Saratoga Springs available through the Multiple Listing Service describe their East Side locations. Once real estate agents understand the assets of the West Side, they will be able to more adequately describe the benefits of the neighborhood and sell both the properties and their neighborhood. The neighborhood open house could be an important phase in a marketing strategy developed with residents, city leaders and real estate professionals to effectively introduce potential homebuyers to the West Side.

Figure 7.4 Source: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services Newsletter.
Enforce Codes and Improve Conditions of Target Properties

Without immediate and ongoing attention, minor code violations can add up and lead to a steady decline of any neighborhood. Properties with major code violations can bring down the values of adjacent properties, limit the ability of their owners to obtain property insurance, and destroy the image and health of the neighborhood—especially if code violations ultimately result in fires and property damage. It appears that Saratoga’s code enforcement program, not unlike those of many communities, is stretched. Without additional resources to ensure intensive code enforcement activities, the unspoken message to property owners is that a certain level of disrepair is acceptable or has not been noticed. The local code enforcement agency must be allocated sufficient resources to maintain compliance.

Preliminary surveys indicate that a number of problem properties in the West Side neighborhood are located in distinct pockets. While each of the properties with major code violations should be recorded, by targeting a smaller area with intense resources, improvements can be more effective in reversing decline. Using neighborhood statistics (including condition surveys), the resources from funding agencies (both the City and local housing organizations), the consolidated planning process, and the neighborhood association, strategies can be developed to identify and address target areas on a coordinated basis.

Areas such as the portion of the Congress/Grand Avenue corridor from East Beekman to Elm Street contain a number of properties that need attention. The improvement of this area could stimulate investment along Beekman Street from Grand Avenue to W. Circular Street. A target area strategy could encourage a coordinated effort to provide infrastructure improvements necessary to attract the interest of private developers and ensure the success of housing improvements. A target area coordinating committee could work within existing or proposed community design standards to encourage consistency in standards appropriate to that specific area.

Review Code Compliance Process as Coordinated Multi-Agency Effort

Currently, the City of Saratoga Springs spreads the various tasks of enforcing private property maintenance standards among several departments. The Building Inspector cites violations on the interiors and exteriors of residential and commercial buildings, the Department of Public Works cites cases of poor maintenance of yards and sidewalks of private property owners, and Code Enforcement is an office in the Department of Public Safety.

While additional resources for maintenance and code enforcement are needed, existing resources might be maximized through increased communication and collaboration between city departments responsible for enforcement and those involved in neighborhood revitalization. A review of chronic code offenders by committee, which could include appointees employed by the City as well as volunteers from neighborhood associations, could ease some of the burden for code enforcement in the Department of Public Safety. Appointing a City employee to serve as a coordinator among departments responsible for maintenance and code enforcement and planning and development, as was done recently in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is another option. The job description for the “vacant buildings coordinator” and a “Management Plan for Vacant Buildings Flow Chart,” which outlines some of the organizational changes possible, are provided in the Appendix 5.
Maintain Existing Neighborhood Character

In addition to preserving the architectural details of individual properties, the historic layout of the "Dublin" area is also a resource worth protecting. Street layout often provides the underlying fabric of the neighborhood and the context for the individual properties. Sometimes it is unclear how important it is to maintain the original historic layout until it is gone.

Consider a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone for the "Dublin" Neighborhood

Much of the development that has occurred over the 19th century in the "Dublin" neighborhood would not occur now in the same manner with the existing zoning code of the City of Saratoga Springs because the zoning code does not permit the same level of density (See Table 7.2).

Table 7.2- Zoning Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Acres*</th>
<th>Frontage*</th>
<th>Depth*</th>
<th>Total Sq. Ft.</th>
<th>Property Class*</th>
<th>Zoning**</th>
<th>Min. Lot Size in Code**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120 Grand Ave.</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>56 feet</td>
<td>65 feet</td>
<td>5,320</td>
<td>411 (apartment)</td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124 Grand Ave.</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>44 feet</td>
<td>95 feet</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>210 (one family year-round residence)</td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 Grand Ave.</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>93 feet</td>
<td>4,650</td>
<td>411 (apartment)</td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No info. Listed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136 Grand Ave.</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>144 feet</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>411 (apartment)</td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 Grand Ave.</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>50 feet</td>
<td>99.5 feet</td>
<td>4,975</td>
<td>220 (two family year-round residence)</td>
<td>UR-3</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: * Office of Real Property Services
** Saratoga Springs Zoning Code
*** Compare to Total Square Feet
The building at 128 Grand Avenue is slated for rehabilitation in 2002. The adjacent parcel to the west is currently vacant. It appears to be the same size as the parcel at 128 and could easily hold a building of the same size. However, the City Zoning Code currently requires a minimum of 8,000 square feet in UR-3 (see Appendix 6 for zoning area requirements; pages 38 and 39 of zoning ordinance). As a result, the vacant lot cannot be developed with infill housing, which would maintain the traditional neighborhood layout and building pattern. The traditional layout with dense housing development makes the community more walkable and is more compatible with historic housing types and scale.

During real estate booms, market pressure sometimes leads to the demolition of existing housing stock in order to combine lots and construct one large house on one large lot. Individual cases of this phenomenon are sometimes referred to as “teardowns.” There are regulatory protection mechanisms designed to prevent this practice. These mechanisms should be implemented in Saratoga’s West Side.

Traditional neighborhood zoning that would protect existing housing and its compatible layout should be considered. One option involves adding a “Traditional Neighborhood Development” (TND) article to the zoning code that covers any development within a TND district. An overlay zone (See Glossary) may be appropriate since the TND design principles such as small blocks and a range of housing types already exist in “Dublin” and should simply be maintained.

**Address Rising Housing Costs**

The area of the West Side Neighborhood closest to Broadway has seen development of condominiums and apartments above retail stores and offices in recent years. The mixed use environment that results will both add vitality to Saratoga’s downtown and provide residents with the fulfilling urban lifestyle that people who choose to live in the city seek. However, expenses are high—some of the two bedroom units rent for approximately $1500 per month. Using 30% of gross income as a standard for recommended housing costs, a household in this unit should be earning at least $60,000 per year (see Appendix 7).

**Encourage Moderate Priced Housing and Mixed Use in the Downtown Business District**

The median household income of residents of Saratoga Springs was $31,938 in 1990 (see Table 7.0), so the monthly housing cost should be, based on the above formula, approximately $798 per month for a mortgage payment including taxes and insurance. Often, a bracket for moderately priced housing is created between 60 and 100 percent of the median income. Using this range, target costs between $479 and $798 per month should be achieved for moderately priced housing. The following chart illustrates typical housing costs at the 30% level for incomes ranging from $20,000 to $60,000.

![Housing Costs Chart](image)

**Figure 7.7**

One way to encourage the development of these units is to create incentives for developers so that they will include a mix of residential units in new projects. Some possible incentives that can be implemented right away include granting density bonuses to developers, waiving development fees, and expediting review processes for projects that include housing for a range of incomes. Density bonuses are granted by the City of Saratoga Springs and allow the developer to build...
a greater number of units than would be allowed by the zoning code, which will compensate for the lower prices and rents of the units. The other incentives create a faster approval process, by which the developer benefits from a shorter construction time. Figures 7.8 depicts the before and after photosimulation of a mixed-use development on Railroad Place that might result from such incentives.

The City should also consider creating a Housing Plan that would analyze the needs of the community and ensure that an appropriate mix of units are built. In addition, the establishment of a housing trust fund is one option to moderately priced housing. Table 7.3 suggests a percentage of each housing type that might be considered a healthy mix for a community the size of the section of the West Side Neighborhood.

Table 7.3 Example of Housing Plan, Optimum Residential Mix—1,200 Units. *Merrill Farm Traditional Neighborhood Johnson County, Kansas.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSING TYPE</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
<th>NUMBER OF UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family for Rent</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family for Sale</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Attached For Sale</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Range Single Family Detached</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Range Single Family Detached</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Range Single Family Detached</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.8 TOP: Railroad Place today. BOTTOM: Photosimulation of Railroad Place showing new moderately priced apartments placed over retail
To sustain healthy local economies and to provide housing opportunities for the general population, communities need a variety of housing types available in a range of prices. In Table 7.3, nearly 25% of the units were rental; the remaining properties were attached for-sale units and low, medium, and high cost single-family detached units. A similar study for Saratoga might take into account specific factors that affect housing, such as seasonal populations, and then determine demand for rental units. Something close to an ideal mix of housing types and costs can then be estimated.

**Promote “Re-urbanization” with Mixed-Income Residential Development**

In the late 1960s, the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority developed the property on Federal Street and W. Circular Streets to be a “tower in a park.” The underutilized open space surrounding the ten-story main structure (which is out of scale with most other buildings in Saratoga Springs) will likely require significant rehabilitation in the next 30 years or so. The need for significant public investment in the property could represent an opportunity to rebuild the complex on a neighborhood scale.

Current zoning in the area allows existing or new residential development in low-rise structures of moderately high density. Apartment buildings and closely spaced townhouses are allowed, as are alleys that can be used for parking.
Another nearby opportunity for re-urbanization is the Gaslight Square Apartment complex, which will soon require rehabilitation. Some of the most successful new apartment complexes incorporate several key attributes of traditional design, including building on a walkable scale with well-designed sidewalks and an interconnected network of streets. These designs provide landscaped semi-public courtyards, or a commons, where residents can interact, and the buildings themselves are a variety of housing styles and sizes that serve a range of income levels.

Some examples of recently successful mixed income housing developments are the Battle Road Farm in Lincoln, Massachusetts and the Open Doors project in Los Gatos, California. Battle Road Farm consists of 120 two- and three-bedroom units serving a mix of affordable units and market rate units ranging in price from $86,000 to $235,000. The Open Doors project consists of 64 two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments arranged to create a village setting. The target population for Open Doors was families earning between 25 and 60% of the annual mean income.

The parcels that make up the Congress Plaza are zoned Downtown Business District, which permits multistory buildings with commercial space on the ground floor and residential or office space on upper floors. Congress Plaza has the potential to be transformed, over the next decade or so, into a collection of mixed-use buildings, with retail, commercial, and residential units that would extend Saratoga’s urban downtown area. Garages for residents should be provided in the rear of buildings, and parking for employees and patrons of businesses in small lots between or behind buildings.

Successful examples of “Greyfield” redevelopment include Villa Italia in Lakewood, Colorado, in which a 100-acre shopping mall was demolished and the land redeveloped.
Figure 7.14 TOP: A Greyfield shopping mall in California. BOTTOM: Redesign of the mall to create a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood center. Source: Urban Advantage, Berkeley, California.

Figure 7.15 Redeveloping Congress Plaza as a collection of mixed-use buildings would extend Saratoga’s downtown.

Figure 7.16 A rendering of Santana Row, a redeveloped greyfield in San Jose, California.
CONCLUSION

The West Side Neighborhood Plan has been divided into sections—History, Land Use and Zoning, Gateways and Connections, Design Guidelines, Beekman Street, and Housing—in order to address the issues that city officials, stakeholders, and the members of the SUNY-Albany Planning Studio considered to be the most significant issues pertaining to the physical character of the area. Each section, as you have read, contains specific information about the neighborhood, ranging from recommendations for conversion of underutilized lots to small parks and installation of landscaped medians to encouraging the use of historically appropriate materials in business signs on older buildings and balancing the number of new high-end residences built in the neighborhood with attractive but more modest dwellings.

Common themes run throughout the Plan as well and are present in most sections. Perhaps the most common theme is that future planning and development efforts should focus on improving the environment in and around the West Side for pedestrian activity. Building to the street, encouraging mixed uses, slowing automobile and truck traffic, improving the aesthetics of parking lots, and planting additional street trees are among the repeated recommendations in the Plan that will make the West Side more walkable and human-scaled: two qualities that are difficult to measure but are present in every neighborhood that has sustained itself for any length of time as a desirable place to live.

It is our hope that this Plan will serve the City and the West Side Neighborhood as a clear and focused guide for the future of the neighborhood's built environment. Most of the recommendations in the Plan can be carried out over the next decade—some can be implemented immediately and inexpensively. Others will require greater time and resources. For example, it might be 15 or 20 years before many of the streets in the southeastern section of the neighborhood are reconnected and "re-urbanized."

Many of the assets of the West Side Neighborhood are discussed in this Plan, but one of its greatest assets is not specifically discussed. The graduate students who worked on this Plan would likely all agree that the value of committed and enthusiastic residents, such as the West Side has, is a tremendous help in bringing about change. If the cooperation and professionalism among West Side residents and City officials that we experienced during our Studio project is any indication of what will follow during the West Side Neighborhood revitalization efforts, we are confident that revitalization will continue to move forward both rapidly and effectively.
GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

Bulb-out: A traffic calming device consisting of a semi-circle or longer curb extension that invites drivers to slow down, and provides narrower intersection for pedestrian crossing.

Business Improvement District (BID): An organizing and financing mechanism used by property owners and merchants to use the city's tax collection powers to create a source of funds for economic development.

Canopy street trees: Trees that provide an enclosing "canopy" of branches over the street. Elms and maples are commonly used as street trees. See chapter on Design Guidelines for illustrated examples.

"Cobra" light: Descriptive name given to streetlights, commonly used on highways, with a lighting unit shaped similarly to a cobra head.

Corridor management: Methods used to improve the safety and efficiency of traffic operations and preserve the character of roads and highways through application of land use control measures and design standards.

Curb cut: A cut in the curb of a street to accommodate a driveway or other entrance. The placement of curb cuts can have significant impacts on the safety and quality of life of the surrounding neighborhood.

Curvilinear: Consisting of or bounded by curved lines.

Density bonus: An increase in the allowable number of dwellings that may be built on a property. A developer who wishes to take advantage of a density bonus may be allowed to increase the total number of units that can be constructed in a new project over that otherwise allowed, provided that a certain percentage of the total number of additional units are reserved for low or moderate income households.

GIS: Geographic Information System; a means of producing, analyzing, and storing computerized maps.

Greek Revival: Architectural style popular in the U.S. from approximately 1820 to 1850. Characteristics include gabled porticos or temple façades, recessed entrances, columns and/or pilasters, low or flat roofs, heavy cornices, symmetrical plan.

Greyfield: Older, economically obsolete development. The term is commonly applied to malls that are past their prime and are experiencing declining levels of occupancy.
Hardship clause: Provision in certain ordinances (such as a Historic District Ordinance) that gives relief to property owners when pressure caused by regulations becomes too burdensome.

Housing Trust Fund: A fund generated from a dedicated source of revenue, such as the interest on escrow accounts or real estate transfer tax that is committed through legislation or ordinance. The fund is committed to producing and preserving housing affordable to lower income households.

Infill housing: Housing developed on vacant, orphaned, or underutilized lots, often with the goal of repairing the urban fabric, increasing density, and increasing stability in a neighborhood.

Italianate: Architectural style popular in the U.S. from approximately 1840 to 1880. Characteristics include low-pitched or flat roofs, large eave brackets under the roof, tall arched and hooded windows, paired windows, tall first floor windows, square or rectangular towers, cupolas, long porches, balustraded balconies, two or three stories, and a square or rectangular building footprint.

Mixed-use development: Development designed to include a variety of uses, such as commercial, retail and residential use, in close proximity in order to increase pedestrian mobility and cut down on the need for automobile travel.

New Urbanism: A community design movement that borrows from traditional city planning concepts, particularly those of the years 1900-1920, and applies them to modern living. New Urbanism integrates housing, shops, workplaces, parks, and civic facilities into close-knit communities that are walkable and have ready access to transit. See "Traditional Neighborhood Development," this Glossary.

Overlay zone: A mapped zone that imposes a set of requirements in addition to those laid out by the underlying zoning regulations. Overlay zones are most frequently used to address special features or distinct areas such as historic districts or wetlands.

Paving stone (or paver): Individual stones (e.g. cobble) or building material (e.g. brick) often used to highlight sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

Pedestrian-oriented: Being humanscale in proportion and perception and well as accessible and walkable.

Planned Unit Development (PUD): Diverse land uses, such as residential and recreational uses, adhering to a comprehensive plan in one development or subdivision.

Pocket park: A park or garden located on a small parcel of land. Examples include the numerous small playgrounds found in Manhattan's Lower East Side.

Roundabout: An intersection control device. The modern roundabout was developed to rectify problems associated with traditional traffic circles and rotaries. Characteristics that distinguish a roundabout from a traffic circle include yield control on all entries and right-of-way given to circulating, rather than entering, vehicles.

Setback: The required minimum horizontal distance between the
building line and the related front, side or rear property line.

**Superblock:** Neighborhood planning design that centered a large block of dwellings around a large, internal central space or "green" rather than the boundary streets. Superblocks completely segregated vehicle and pedestrian circulation. Superblocks were applied somewhat successfully by Stein and Wright in the 1920s and 30s (e.g. Radburn, NJ) and applied unsuccessfully in the large-scale urban renewal developments of the 1950s and 1960s.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND):** A human scale, walkable community with moderate to high residential density and a mixed-use core, and an interconnected network of pedestrian-oriented streets and paths that provide a variety of routes for local traffic. TNDs are based on "traditional" town development patterns, rather than the current suburban model. A goal of a TND is to reduce automobile dependence. TNDs are also referred to as "neotraditional" developments.

**Traffic calming:** Engineering solutions that alter driver behavior to achieve reduced vehicle speed or volume or that enhance pedestrian safety. Examples include physical design features such as street trees, textured pavement, and bulb-outs.

**Urban renewal:** A massive federal policy program of the 1950s and 1960s. The goal of urban renewal was the "revitalization" U.S. cities by taking an "out with the old, in with the new" approach. Traditional neighborhoods were demolished and replaced by superblocks and housing "projects" in the form of towering superstructures. Today, the program is generally regarded as controversial and a failure.

**Urban fabric:** The physical form of cities, towns, and villages.

**Victorian:** Includes architectural styles developed from approximately 1840 to 1900, during the reign of Queen Victoria. Characteristics include gabled roofs, angled bay windows, turrets or towers, and spacious, wide-open porches. Features often include ornate trim and cheerful pastel colors.
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Corridor Management

What Is Corridor Management?

Corridor management improves the safety and efficiency of traffic operations and preserves the character of roads and highways through application of land use control measures and design standards. It requires the coordination of land use and transportation planning to ensure that existing and future roadway environments are accessible, safe, and provide adequate traffic control. Proper access management provides a balance between mobility and access.

Why Use Corridor Management?

Corridor management can improve safety, maintain mobility, preserve capacity of the transportation system, preserve public investment of infrastructure, and encourage visual enhancements of property abutting travel corridors. Access management plays an important role in controlling the existing and future operations of roads and highways. Lack of corridor management can result in a decrease in mobility and access.

Corridor management can include pedestrian and bicycle amenities to encourage non-motorized trips and ease congestion.

The application of corridor management techniques can help a community avoid the pitfalls of poorly planned development and of transportation "improvements" that only provide a temporary (and expensive) solution to traffic problems.

Where Is Corridor Management Applicable?

Corridor management is particularly applicable to roadways or highways that have problems with frequent curb cuts and traffic congestion. Strip commercial areas with numerous driveways are one of the most common locations to apply corridor management, however, management techniques can also be applied to residential streets. Corridor management may also be implemented to prevent future traffic problems.

Basic Principles

Basic principles to consider when implementing Corridor Management techniques include:

- Limitation of access points on high volume roads.
- Application of proper site driveway design and location criteria.
- Minimization of vehicle conflict points along roadway corridors.
- Utilization of appropriate roadway design and traffic control devices (signs, pavement markings, traffic signals) to maintain or improve traffic flow and safety.

Corridor Management plans and/or programs may be introduced in a variety of ways. A common method is through development of a community Master Plan. Another is through transportation improvement projects. An individual site plan development review is a prime opportunity to ensure
that new or redeveloped sites conform to required corridor management programs and policies. Implementation of corridor management will most likely require inter-agency cooperation on local, regional and state levels.

It must be noted that some improvements associated with corridor management techniques can increase the cost of project design and construction. However, quality corridor management will save money in the long run.

**Overview Of Corridor Management Techniques**

There are two classifications of corridor management techniques: "policy" tools and "design" tools.

**Policy** tools use a regulatory or legal framework to establish how corridor management will be implemented. Examples of policy tools include zoning regulations, access codes (i.e. state and/or municipal requirements for access control and design such as driveway permitting), and the use rights-of-way or easements for access control.

**Design** tools relate to the physical design (i.e. engineering) of the roadway and to site development features. Design tools apply physical changes to roadways. Examples of design tools include curb-cut consolidation, lane and median treatments, driveway standards and landscaping.

**Managing Truck Traffic**

While increased traffic can be a welcome sign of economic growth, truck traffic can cause problems in residential neighborhoods. In older cities and towns, with their close mix of homes and industry, truck drivers often have no choice but to use local streets. Trucks must perform difficult maneuvers, delaying local traffic. Houses tend to be close to the road, where residents will be most affected by truck noise. Trucks can present a danger to children and pedestrians. Heavy trucks also cause more wear on roads than automobile traffic and which can lead to severe damage. Even in suburban areas with relatively light truck traffic, industrial expansion or new development may eventually create traffic problems.

**Management Techniques for Truck Traffic**

To reduce truck traffic conflicts, local governments may adopt one of several traffic management techniques. One common strategy is to designate a "preferred" truck route, using advisory signs. While use of a "preferred" designated truck route is not mandatory, advisory signs encourage truck drivers to follow that route. Truck routing signs also help drivers to avoid hazardous obstacles, such as low underpasses. They are particularly helpful to drivers unfamiliar with an area.

Another strategy for reducing truck traffic conflicts involves working directly with business leaders. Community organizations may request voluntary control efforts from those companies generating truck traffic. Voluntary measures include limiting deliveries to daytime hours or limiting truck speeds on certain public access roads. While a cooperative effort may
Establish a Truck Exclusion Zone

In some situations, the best option may be to exclude trucks from a residential street entirely. Setting up a truck exclusion zone may require the permission of the municipal Public Works Department (DPW). A truck traffic study to document truck traffic levels and justify the exclusion zone will be required.

Truck exclusion zones can be authorized only if a suitable alternate route is available for truck traffic. The alternate route must have the appropriate width and pavement strength to accommodate truck traffic and bridges along the route must provide an adequate height clearance and weight allowance for trucks. It is also important to note that under NYS law, trucks cannot be excluded from a state highway or from a highway connecting one town to another.

An exclusion zone may be justified if trucks account for at least five percent of the street’s total traffic and if the truck traffic reduces the safety and carrying capacity of the street. Exclusion of trucks may also be warranted when pavement condition is so poor that repeated heavy wheel loads would cause severe deterioration.

Enforcement of a truck exclusion zone falls under local jurisdiction. Use of the excluded streets by a heavy vehicle (other than exempt vehicles or those owned by residents) constitutes a traffic violation and may be subject to a fine.

Preparatory Study for a Truck Exclusion Zone

A truck traffic study is used by the DPW to evaluate a request for a truck exclusion zone. Elements of the study include a traffic count, a map and description of the affected area, and a written statement providing justification for the zone.

Traffic Count: A 24-hour count of all vehicles using the street to be zoned. The traffic count must be recorded in half-hour intervals and show both the number of heavy trucks and other vehicles.

Map: A map of the area with the proposed exclusion zone outlined in red and the alternate route outlined in green.

Description: Detailed physical characteristics of the streets within proposed exclusion zone and alternate route. This should include length, width, type and condition of roadway surface and sidewalks. Descriptions of traffic controls, buildings and properties abutting the street, and zoning characteristics of the streets should also be included.

Written statement: Usually submitted by municipal officials, this statement justifies the need for the exclusion. The statement should specify the hours the exclusion will be in effect.

Traffic Calming Devices

Traffic calming measures are street design or regulatory devices designed to increase driver attentiveness and
compel motorists to slow down. It should be noted that the application of traffic calming devices might induce some drivers to select alternative routes. The effect on surrounding routes and neighborhoods should be considered.

Traffic calming measures may also have negative impacts on snow removal, bus and commercial traffic and emergency response, etc., which should be considered.

**Traffic calming actions and devices**

**Narrowing the pavement:**
- Stripe lanes,
- Street parking,
- Rebuilding the street,
- Bulb-out mid-block – a mid-intersection extension of the roadway curb, which creates a narrower adjacent travel area,
- Bulb-out intersection – an intersection extension of the roadway curb, which creates a narrower adjacent travel area.

**Deflecting the vehicle path by introducing curvature into the vehicle path:**
- Chicane,
- Modified intersections,
- Roundabout,
- Traffic circle.

**Sharing the pavement:**
- Centered mid-block yield point,
- Offset yield point,
- Intersection yield point,
- On street parking one side,
- On street parking both sides.

**Rerouting the driver.**

Intensifying the enforcement of traffic control measures.
Housing Affordability Scenario

- Entry-level teacher (Bob) at Saratoga Springs High School (in the West Side neighborhood) with master's degree has a gross salary of $34,057*. (An entry-level teacher with a bachelors degree starts at $31,857*).

- If Bob were shopping for a local mortgage, he might try The Adirondack Trust Company, which offers a "first-time homebuyer mortgage for qualified individuals with a 3% down payment and lender financed closing costs".

- At underwriting ratios of 28%/33% as determined by Adirondack Trust Company, Bob would not be permitted to spend more than 28% of his gross monthly income on housing expenses. With a salary of $34,057, that would mean no more than $794.66/month on housing expenses, which includes principal, interest, taxes and insurance (PITI).

- If monthly expenses for taxes and insurance are estimated at $167 and $33, respectively, the monthly amount available for debt service (or principal and interest on the mortgage) would be $595 ($794.66 - $167 - $33)

- Therefore, if we assume that the monthly mortgage payment does exceed $595, the term of the mortgage is for 30 years, and the interest rate is 7.50%, Bob would be eligible for a total mortgage amount not to exceed $84,326. With a down payment of 3%, Bob would be eligible for a house costing no more than approximately $87,000.

- Only three properties are currently listed for sale on the Roohan Realty website for the entire City of Saratoga Springs that are less than $87,000. One of these is called a "handy-man special" and another listing calls the property an "exciting opportunity to renovate a home..." which requires additional rehab funds.

* provided by Saratoga Springs High School Personnel Office 10/5/2001
# Housing Programs Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Rehabilitation</td>
<td>Rehab program available for income qualified owner-occupants in targeted West Side area. Grants (deferred loans) of $15,000 available from Shelters of Saratoga as part of $400,000 award from State Division of Housing and Community Renewal of federal HOME funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DHCR-funding agency</td>
<td>HOME dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS Owner-Occupied Rehab. Program</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Saratoga Springs Residential Rehab. Loan Program for Owner-Occupied Housing</td>
<td>Low-interest loans to qualifying City homeowners of no more than 4 separate dwelling units to improve safety and security of their homes. Low-income homeowners may be eligible for up to $8,000 at 0% interest and moderate income homeowners may be eligible for up to $10,000 at 3% interest.</td>
<td>admin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>CDBG dollars, HUD funding agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Saratoga Springs Residential Rehab. Loan Program for Rental Property Owners</td>
<td>Low-interest loans to encourage rental property owners to improve housing conditions for low and moderate income tenants. Rental property owners may be eligible to receive a low-interest loan of up to $5,000 for each unit within the same building that is occupied by a low or moderate income household. Loans will be issued at an interest rate 3% below the prime rate offered by New York City banks at the time of Loan Committee approval with terms generally no longer than 5 years.</td>
<td>admin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>CDBG dollars, HUD funding agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adirondack Trust Co. West Side Revitalization Program</td>
<td>One million available for residential, commercial, or other community development projects. Loans available at 7% for up to 25 years. Not available for financing existing debt. There are no income requirements.</td>
<td>admin. &amp; funding agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Saratoga Springs Down Payment Assistance Program</td>
<td>Details of program not currently available on web site</td>
<td>admin.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
VACANT BUILDINGS COORDINATOR
CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MASS. (POP. 48,600)

RESPONSIBILITIES

Reduce/eliminate the number of vacant & abandoned buildings in the City by administering the management plan for vacant buildings.

1. Serve as the City's primary contact for issues relating to vacant buildings and report to Mayor.
2. Maintain & pursue contacts with groups or individuals, both from the public & private sectors, to maintain an early identification of vacant buildings.
3. Undertake research on vacant buildings.
4. Maintain a computerized database which will track vacant buildings from inception to resolution.
5. Classify buildings according to established categories.
6. Working with City department heads, determine disposition strategies for buildings such as rehabilitation, homeownership, or demolition.
7. Track on-going enforcement efforts of the City for each building.
8. Coordinate the enforcement/inspection efforts of City departments and maintain regular contact with department heads regarding vacant buildings. Lead a small committee of department heads to determine strategies for disposition of structures and monitor the status of individual properties.
9. Work directly with building owners towards problem resolution.
10. Negotiate with property owners to donate/convey buildings to the City.
11. Oversees the maintenance, preservation, reuse, and disposition of vacant lots resulting from demolition.
12. Lead the Vacant Buildings Advisory Committee and convene periodically.

QUALIFICATIONS

Must have strong interpersonal skills in working with municipal government employees and persons from the private sector including individuals, neighborhood groups, and business persons. Requires strong verbal and written communication skills and good leadership skills. Requires ability to create and maintain records, documents, files, etc. Must have a high degree of skills in coordinating activities and people. Should be imaginative in problem solving and creative in conflict resolution. Bachelor's degree in public administration, urban planning, or related field plus relevant experience preferred. Experience in residential real estate a plus. Must have current Massachusetts drivers license. Access to a personal car for business use is desirable.
Current residency in or relocation to Pittsfield preferred.

**SALARY**

Starting salary $32,979. City benefits provided.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Cover letter and resume are to be received by the Department of Community Development, City Hall, 70 Allen Street, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201, no later than 4:00 P.M., Friday, August 12, 1994.

The City of Pittsfield is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified females, minorities and handicapped persons are encouraged to apply.
### Area Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Size</th>
<th>Minimum Front Dimensions (Feet)</th>
<th>Minimum Rear Dimensions (Feet)</th>
<th>Total Size</th>
<th>Principal Buildings</th>
<th>Accessory Buildings</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Size</th>
<th>Minimum Front Lot Size</th>
<th>Minimum Rear Lot Size</th>
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<td>PR-1</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN-6</td>
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<td>100</td>
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*Amended 11/1/80, 9/11/85, 11/1/87, 9/1/88, 11/1/89, 9/1/89, 9/1/89, 9/1/90, 9/1/91, 9/1/92, 9/1/93, 9/1/94, 9/1/95, 9/1/96, 9/1/97, 9/1/98, 9/1/99, 9/1/00*
### Area Requirements - QMDB through NSBD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Size</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Width (Front)</th>
<th>Principal Building</th>
<th>Accessory Building</th>
<th>Principal Building Minimum Distance To Lot Line</th>
<th>Minimum % of Lot To Be Permeable</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

**NOTES:**

1. Twenty thousand (20,000) square feet without central water supply or sanitary sewers.
2. Forty thousand (40,000) square feet without central water supply and sanitary sewers.
3. Same as URA-3 for single family residences.
4. Fifty (50) feet if lot abuts a residential district.
5. Thirty (30) feet if lot abuts a residential district.
6. Forty (40) feet if lot abuts a residential district.
7. Includes accessory structures.
8. One hundred (100) feet for equestrian and stabling or fifty (50) feet for other principal uses.
9. Minimum lot size for Parks & Rides is 40,000 square feet.