

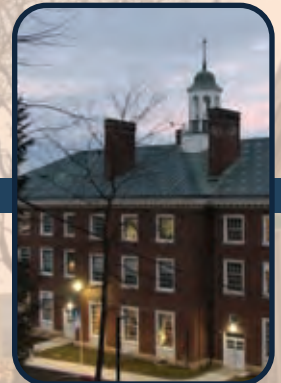
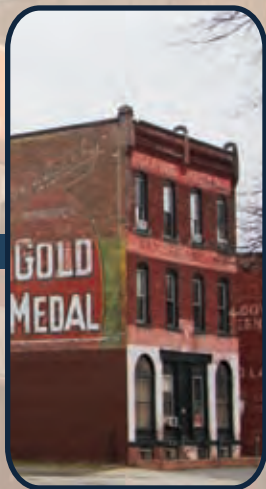
OPPORTUNITY ONEONTA



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Oneonta, New York

2019 Update



Acknowledgements

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This report has been formatted for two-sided printing.



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Introduction

Section Contents:

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1. Introduction

Oneonta, also known as the City of the Hills, is located along the Susquehanna River in the northern foothills of the Catskill Mountains in Central New York. The City, which is home to approximately 14,000 people, features a walkable, historic Main Street, a beautiful park system, and a diverse array of arts and cultural amenities.

Oneonta has a rich history linked to the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. In 1906, the world's largest locomotive roundhouse was built near downtown. This helped to establish the City as a railroad center and spurred economic development by attracting new industries to the area. The City's economic success continued until the latter half of the twentieth century when the use of steam power gave way to diesel and the City's Roundhouse was rendered obsolete. Demolition of the Roundhouse began in the 1950s and was completed in 1993. The closing of the rail yard, along with the subsequent loss of industrial jobs in the area, had a dramatic impact on downtown and the City's economy overall.

Today, the local economy has transitioned to a focus on education, health care, and tourism, but it has yet to reach the full potential of its workforce. The City's major employers include two higher education institutions (the State University of New York at Oneonta and Hartwick College) and A.O. Fox Hospital, which is a part of the Bassett Healthcare Network. Baseball, which is one of the region's biggest attractions, drives the sports tourism market. Regional data indicates that more than 300,000 people visit the area. This includes visitors who attend area baseball camps, visit the Village of Cooperstown, located within a 25-mile drive of Oneonta, and visitors to the City's historic

Damaschke Field. The City has started to experience the positive influence of seasonal tourism in the downtown.

The City's existing retail economy is stable, but it lacks the resources to compete with the services and advertising capabilities of the large-scale commercial businesses along NY State Route 23 in the Town of Oneonta.

Despite these economic challenges, Oneonta provides something that other communities can't; Oneonta maintains the charm of a historic, small town but is still able to provide residents and visitors access to all the amenities of much larger cities. In 2016, Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council recognized Oneonta's potential and awarded the City \$10M in funding during the first round of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The funding will allow Oneonta to build on its existing assets and undertake projects to transform the downtown, leverage significant private investment, increase jobs, provide diverse housing alternatives, and position the City to attract future employers and self-sustaining growth.

As part of the DRI planning process, the City prepared a Strategic Investment Plan that identified 26 projects, 14 of which were recommended for DRI funding. According to the Plan, these projects are designed to leverage significant private investment to promote sustainability and reduce the City's carbon footprint, provide new housing opportunities, create a Food and Craft Beverage Innovation District, and expand upon its economic potential as a regional center of culture and commerce. When preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Steering Committee incorporated implementation of the DRI projects into the vision, goals and recommendations.

2. What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that enables residents to set a vision for their community's future and then outlines the policies and projects required to achieve that vision. It helps guide decision-makers on infrastructure spending, policy decisions, land use regulations, and economic development strategies.

Comprehensive plans are one tool municipalities can use to set a course for the future, by addressing a variety of aspects of community life. Specifically, a comprehensive plan:

- Provides an occasion to formally consider the need for city-wide changes in development patterns on a community-based and community-driven basis;
- Systematically identifies and creates a public record of community assets, opportunities, and needs;
- Produces a vision for the future of the community that is shared across a variety of community perspectives, including neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, and environmental interests;
- Outlines specific actions to achieve that shared vision; and,

- Establishes a framework for community- and region-wide collaboration on plan implementation.

3. How the Comprehensive Plan was Developed

The City's most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007. Since then, the City and surrounding region have changed. The Comprehensive Plan Update process is an opportunity for the community to come together and make sure that the City's vision, goals and recommendations are reflective of changing conditions.



The 2007 Plan included a historic overview of the City, detailed community characteristics, including demographics and community resources, and recommendations for destination and image, economic health and revitalization, quality of life, downtown, and administration and government. The purpose of this current plan is to update the 2007 Comprehensive Plan by recommending specific actions or policies that the City should pursue incorporating a new vision, addressing the rail yards, and the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). The planning process also included independent studies of the City's housing and parking assets and needs.

The City of Oneonta established a formal Steering Committee comprised of volunteers and city staff to guide development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. One of the Committee's priorities was to engage the public and provide them with multiple opportunities to be involved in the planning process. The Steering Committee continually sought input and advice from all segments of the community. They hosted focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews, community open houses, and a project website. Information collected from the community was carefully reviewed and extensively discussed by the Committee. The resulting plan will not be a panacea for all of the challenges facing Oneonta in the future. However, the plan does represent a community-wide effort to identify and address critical issues and opportunities facing the City at this point in its history. At its core, this Plan is intended to be a useful guide to public and private actions taken on behalf of the City. The Plan attempts to honor the community's history while embracing the changing opportunities that shape the character of Oneonta.



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Existing

Conditions

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2. Community Profile
3. Planning Environment
4. Demographics & Housing
5. Existing Land Use & Zoning
6. Natural Resources
7. Parks & Public Space
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9. Infrastructure
10. Community Services

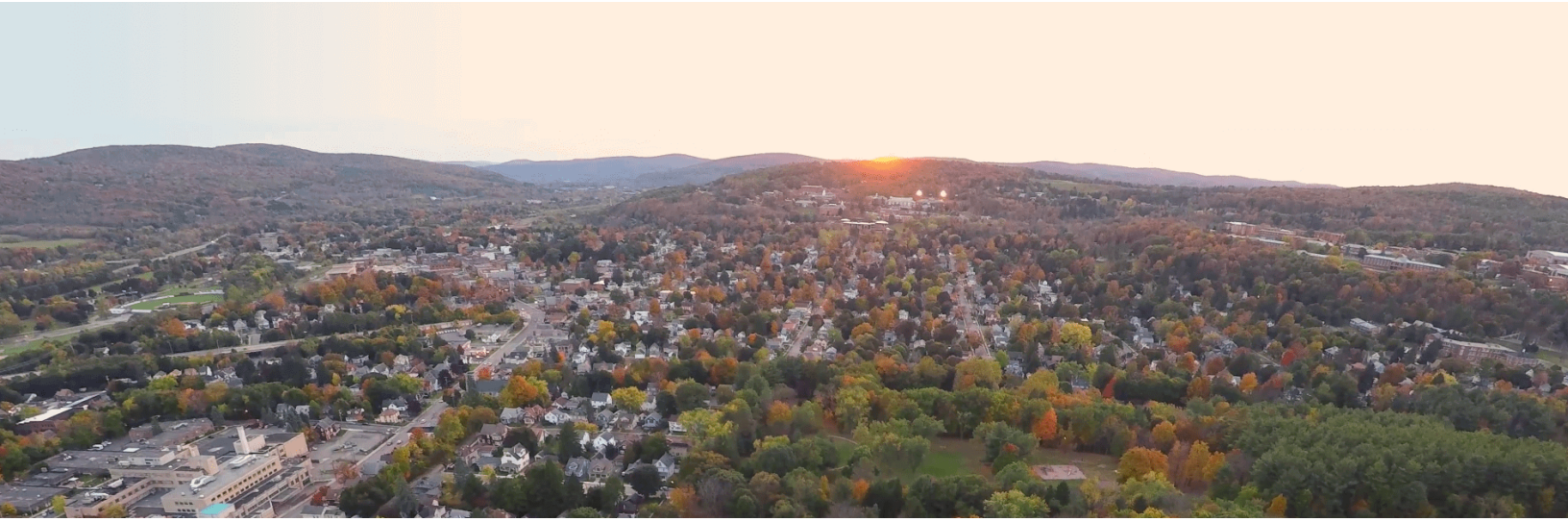


Photo Credit: City of Oneonta

1. Introduction

The following 'Existing Conditions' section is an update of the information contained in the City's 2007 Comprehensive Plan, including demographics, housing, land use and zoning, natural resources, parks and public space, historic resources, infrastructure, and transportation. Since 2007, the City of Oneonta has taken great strides towards realizing the vision of their Comprehensive Plan, including undertaking the following plans, projects, and initiatives:

- 2014 Main Street Streetscape Assessment
- 2013 Bike Friendly Report
- 2013 Comprehensive Plan: Housing Update
- 2014 Otsego County Community Needs Assessment
- A \$15 million housing stabilization project with Housing Visions
- 2016 Focus on the Future on Main Street
- 2016 Rail Yard Study and Economic Development Plan
- 2017 New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)
- Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (in process)
- A Housing Needs Assessment of Otsego County, NY (in process)

Oneonta's recent selection as one of ten first round Downtown Revitalization Initiative communities to receive \$10 million in state funding for priority projects is a tremendous opportunity to catalyze redevelopment and investment in the City's downtown. Over the course of a six-month intensive

planning process the City identified catalytic projects that would bring the City to life and leverage private investment in Oneonta.

The City has also introduced a new Manager-Council form of government in 2012 as an effort to modernize and streamline the functioning of the City. In 2011 the City overhauled their zoning regulations to incorporate best practices. The historic Delaware and Hudson rail yards that were once a vital piece of Oneonta's economy were demolished in 2008 after years of vacancy. Now, that area is an opportunity, not a liability that they had been at the time of the last comprehensive plan.

Other notable projects since the adoption of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan include:

- Renovation of the Bresee's building downtown with mixed use housing and commercial spaces
- Construction of the Foothills Performing Arts Center
- Streetscape improvements along Main Street valued at over \$500,000
- Construction of 60 units of quality, affordable housing at Oneonta Heights, and
- Construction of modern student housing adjacent to the SUNY campus.

These positive steps have helped Oneonta to move closer to the community it wants to be. However, many of the underlying demographic and physical issues facing the City in 2007 still persist. Approximately 30% of the population still lives in poverty and the City has an aging housing stock that will be expensive to update and modernize.

Despite these challenges, there have been notable positive demographic trends. The 2007 Plan projected a population decline for the City; however, this did not come to fruition as Oneonta actually gained residents. Between 2000 and 2016 the population grew by over 4% and population growth is now on par with most upstate New York cities. Household incomes in Oneonta have also risen at a higher rate than the County and State as a whole. During this time period, educational attainment levels also increased in the City.

2. Community Profile

The Community Profile provides an overview of the key characteristics of the City of Oneonta to provide a context and baseline understanding to inform the planning process. These key characteristics include the City's regional context and location, local government structure and services, historical background, and community assets.

Location

The City of Oneonta, known as the 'City of the Hills' because of its characteristic topography, is located along the banks of the majestic Susquehanna River in the southcentral part of Otsego County. Oneonta, which is strategically located between Albany and Binghamton, is readily accessible from the east and west by Interstate 88, a major highway that runs along the southern boundary of the City, and by NY State Route 23, which becomes Main Street within the City limits and continues on to West Oneonta. NY State Routes 7, 28 and 205 connect Oneonta to other municipalities in the region. The City is completely encompassed by the Town of Oneonta.

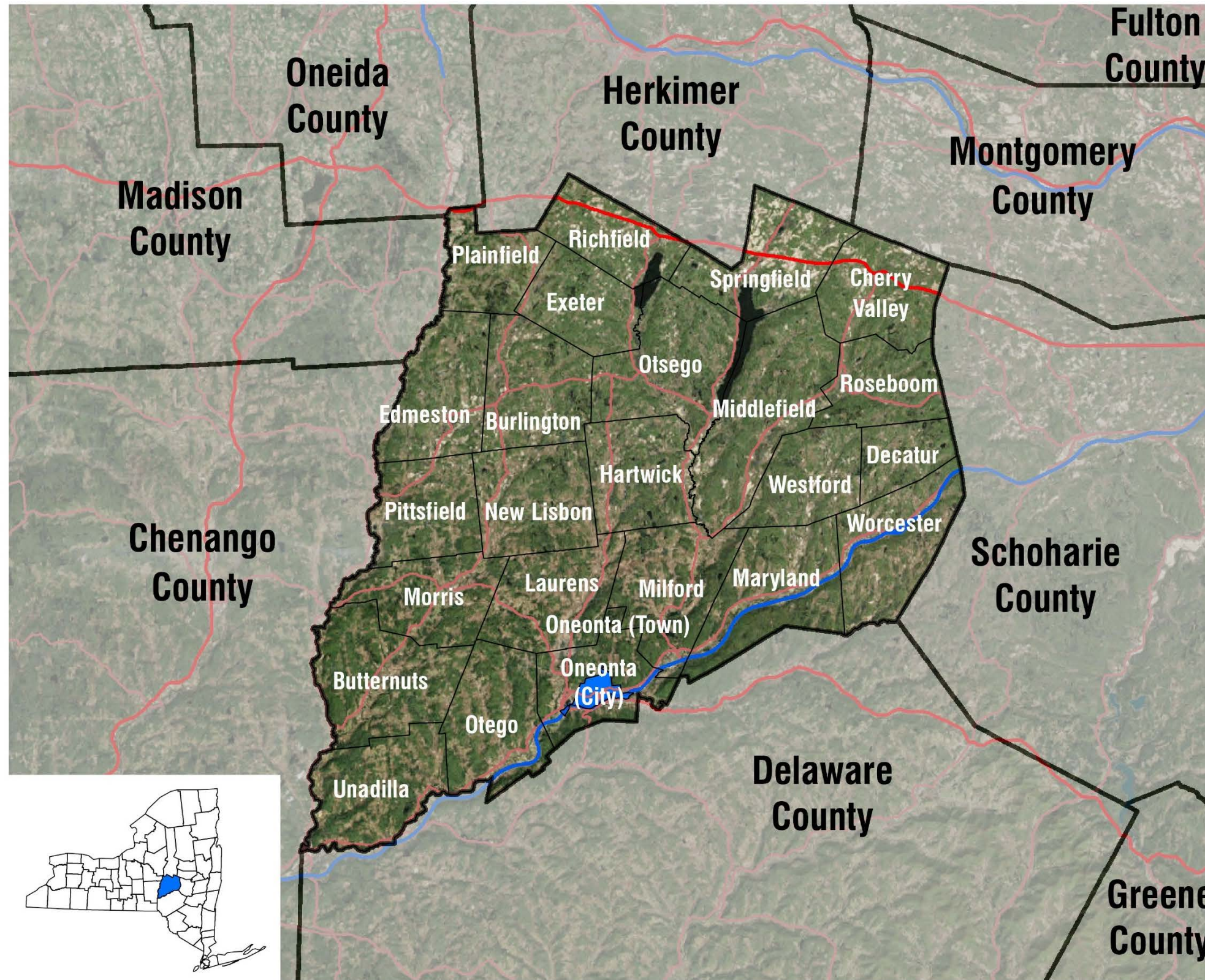
Oneonta serves as the primary urban center for communities within a 30-mile radius, providing most of the goods and services for residents of the City's rural environs. The City is located at least 60 miles from any other major city (Binghamton and Utica), which provides Oneonta with an excellent locational advantage by reducing competition with other cities for jobs, businesses, and investment.

The map presented in Figure 1 on the following page shows the city in the context of the broader region. Table 1 shows the distance from Oneonta to major population centers and reveals that while somewhat isolated in a relatively rural environment, the City is within a reasonable driving distance of major population centers and cities, including Albany, Scranton, and Syracuse, all of which are less than two hours away.

Place	Driving Distance (miles)	Drive Time
Binghamton, NY	60	1 h
Utica/Rome, NY	60	1 h 15 min
Albany, NY	80	1 h 20 min
Ithaca, NY	85	1 h 45 min
Saratoga Springs, NY	100	1 h 40 min
Scranton, PA	110	1 h 50 min
Syracuse, NY	110	1 h 50 min
New York City, NY	170	3 h 30 min

Source: Google Maps

Figure 1: Regional Location Map



Regional Location

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update



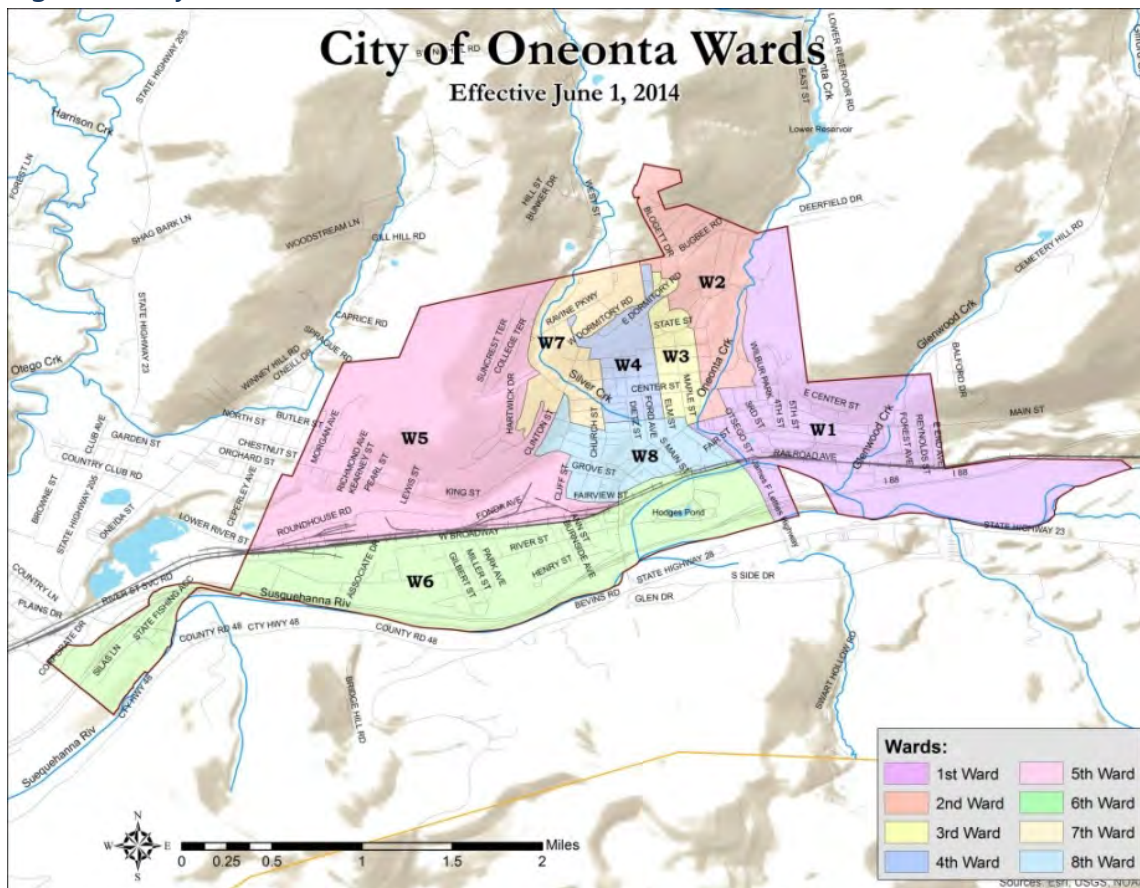
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Local Government

In 2012, The City of Oneonta transitioned to a Council-Manager form of government. The change means that the City Manager now serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and is responsible for the day to day government operations, coordinating between various departments and City Council members, and implementing policies set by the City Council. Historically, the City operated as a “Weak Mayor-Council” form of government, but in 2010 the Council authorized the creation of a Charter Review Commission to explore the feasibility of a City Manager. In 2010 Oneonta residents voted to update the charter to include a City Manager position starting in January of 2012.

The eight-member Common Council is the governing body of the City. Council Members serve four-year terms and the Council is presided over by the Mayor. The Common Council is responsible for the legislative affairs, setting policy for the City Manager, and managing and controlling the finances and property of the City. The transactions of the City are voted on and require a simple majority of the Council members, with the exception of taxes, assessments and ordinances. Each of the eight Council Members represents the specific ward in which they reside, which are shown in in Figure 2.

Figure 2: City of Oneonta Wards



The City has a number of boards, commissions, and departments that focus on specific aspects of carrying out the functions of local government. These are shown below:

Boards & Commissions

- Civil Service Commission
- Library Board of Trustees
- Planning Commission
- Board of Public Service
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Board of Assessment Review
- Zoning and Housing Board of Appeals
- Commission on Community Relations and Human Rights
- Environmental Board
- Examining Board of Electricians
- Americans with Disabilities Act Board
- Transportation Board
- Board of Ethics
- Examining Board of Plumbers

City Departments

- Central Garage
- City Assessor
- City Court
- City Manager
- Code Enforcement
- Community Development
- Engineering
- Finance
- Fire
- Parks and Recreation Personnel
- Police
- Public Service
- Public Transit
- Wastewater Treatment
- Water Treatment

Historical Background

The City of Oneonta and surrounding region was long inhabited by several Native American tribes, including the Mohawks, Oneidas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras; members of the Six Nations that lived throughout the northeastern United States. Nestled among the valleys and located at the convergence of several large creeks and rivers, the area was easily accessible and became a semi-permanent settlement to Native America travelers. Evidence of a main trail running along present day Main Street was discovered in the past along with other artifacts throughout the area.

The first non-Native American settlers in the present-day City of Oneonta were Dutch and Germans who were driven from their homes in other areas of Otsego County during the Revolutionary War. Once known as Milfordville, Oneonta grew into a farming community, as well as home to several grist and saw mills. Proximity to the Susquehanna River provided power to these mills as well as easy transportation to cities with larger markets. The community was officially given the name Oneonta in 1832 after the first post office was established 15 years prior. The name Oneonta translates to “stony place” or “a place of open rocks.”

Growing slowly at first, the community gained momentum starting in 1826 when talk of a railroad through the area began, although it wasn't until 1865 that the first train ran through Oneonta. The area grew as an important transportation hub, especially for the rail industry. The Industrial Age relied heavily on coal from Pennsylvania to fuel factories in the northeast, consequently the Albany &

Susquehanna Railroad, renamed the Delaware & Hudson around 1875, was used often. As a central location between Binghamton and Albany, Oneonta became a prime area for repair shops and freight car production. Due to Oneonta's proximity to steep terrain, the city was home to a large number of helper locomotives. Oneonta was also home to what was once the world's largest and longest roundhouse turntable, which was 75 feet in diameter and later enlarged to 105 feet. The roundhouse itself was over 400 feet in diameter and housed 52 cars.

During this time, the population of the community doubled from what it was in 1870. As the community grew, so did the surrounding businesses and, in turn, the quality of life improved.

Higher education, the second most important driver of population growth (behind the establishment of the railway) was established during this boom time as well. SUNY Oneonta, originally known as the Oneonta Normal School, was founded in 1889 and Hartwick College opened in 1928. Hartwick College was a derivative of the Hartwick Seminary, first established in 1797 by a Lutheran missionary.

Oneonta was officially incorporated as a city in 1909, which also was the peak of its rail industry and remained so for another decade. After World War II, diesel engines became popular and employment at the rail yards began to slowly decline. However, during this same period, enrollment grew at both of Oneonta's colleges due to the return of soldiers from war and the GI Bill. Urban Renewal and increased use of



the automobile reshaped the face of downtown Oneonta and also helped to accelerate the decline of the rail industry. In 1954, the demolition of the Oneonta roundhouse began. In

1974, the interstate highway I-88 connecting Albany and Binghamton opened on the outskirts of the City which has allowed swifter automobile access into, out of, and bypassing Oneonta's downtown. In the mid-1990's Delaware & Hudson ended operations at the rail yard.

Even without its historical industry, the City continues to flourish in the areas of higher education, health care and more recently regional tourism and recreation, which have helped to make the area a great place to live and work. In 2014, Otsego County's tourism sales were more than \$175.6 million.¹

¹ http://www.oneonta.ny.us/files/3614/6400/6278/201567_Final_Draft-rev12.pdf p. 41

An inventory of the city's historic buildings, sites, and assets is provided in the Historic Resources subsection of this Existing Conditions chapter.

Community Assets

The City of Oneonta has transformed over time, evolving from a Native American settlement, to a center of railroad activity, to an area rich in education, history, and culture. SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College continue to provide vast opportunities for higher learning as well as cultural and economic resources to the community. SUNY Oneonta has a total enrollment of approximately 6,000 students, and Hartwick College has a total enrollment of approximately 1,300 students - contributing significantly to the city's population.

The location of the City in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains and among various waterways offers boundless, year-round recreational activities. Neighborhood parks, such as Neahwa and Wilber Park, and natural resources, including the Susquehanna River and Wilber Lake (City of Oneonta Reservoir), are located within walking distance from people's homes and provide passive and active recreational activities to the community.

The City is also home to a number of heritage and cultural tourism attractions including the Foothills Performing Arts Center, Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO), the Oneonta Theatre, Farmers Market, Oneonta History Center, two designated historic districts, and a number of entertainment venues located downtown. These assets, coupled with regional attractions that draw tourists to the area including the Cooperstown National Baseball Hall of Fame, Leatherstocking Railway Historical Society, Yager Museum at Hartwick College, and the SUNY Science Museum support Oneonta's vision to become a regional tourist destination.

The City is strategically located between Binghamton and Albany. Other economic development assets include close proximity to Interstate 88 (I-88), the municipally-owned Albert S. Nader Regional Airport, a historic Main Street in the midst of revitalization, and over 150 acres of rail-supported commercial real estate at the Oneonta Rail Yards.

3. Planning Environment

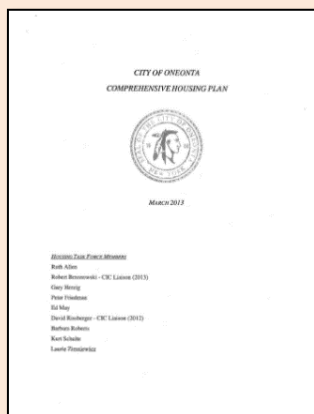
The City of Oneonta has completed a number of studies and plans since the completion of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. These documents were reviewed as part of the Plan Update to identify community goals, priorities, trends, and needs. The documents also shed light on which goals and strategies from the 2007 Plan may or may not be relevant in the present. The understanding of these recent initiatives assisted in the development of a new plan that will best serve the needs of the City and its residents. The list of key plans and studies are presented below in sequential order since the last Comprehensive Plan.

2007 Comprehensive Plan



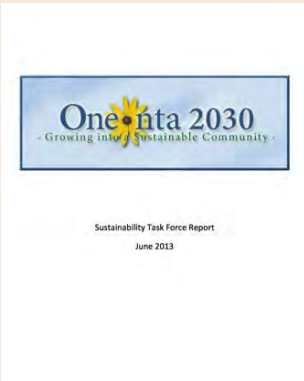
The 2007 Comprehensive Plan outlined the existing conditions of the community utilizing data from the 2000 US Census. It served as the basis for a 2011 overhaul of the zoning ordinance.

2013 Comprehensive Plan: Housing Update



Due to the importance of housing in the City, a task force was convened to address this important topic. This municipally-led initiative reached out to property owners and reviewed existing housing conditions. The study identified that old rental units were not easy to update.

2013 Oneonta 2030: Sustainability Task Force Report



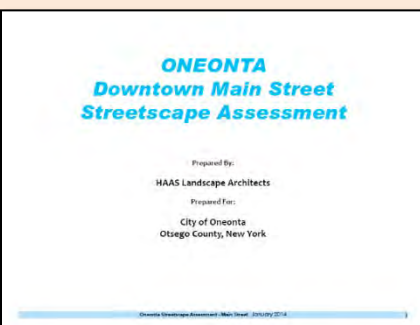
The report, adopted by the Common Council, “offers a blueprint for advancing community thinking on various strategies related to sustainability.” The report is organized around four key areas: Food, Community Environment and Stewardship, Energy and Transportation. Food recommendations include enhancing connections to the local food network and actively promoting them. Community Environment recommendations include involving student interns and other members of the community to protect and enhance waterways. Energy recommendations generally encourage the municipality to inventory and evaluate their energy use and to explore alternative energy sources. Transportation recommendations include encouraging the use of alternative transportation and enhancing the transportation network for modes other than private automobiles.

2014 Otsego County Community Needs Assessment



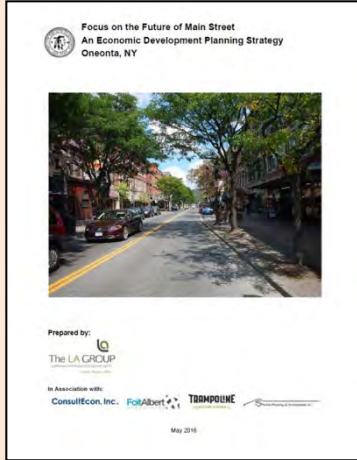
Opportunities for Otsego prepares a Community Needs Assessment every three years that analyzes key issues, population changes, demographics, and poverty relating to employment, education, housing, nutrition, income, transportation, and health. Some of the key issues identified in 2014 included an increase in the County poverty rate, high unemployment, declining school enrollment and graduation rates, a lack of affordable housing, and an aging housing stock.

2014 Main Street Streetscape Assessment



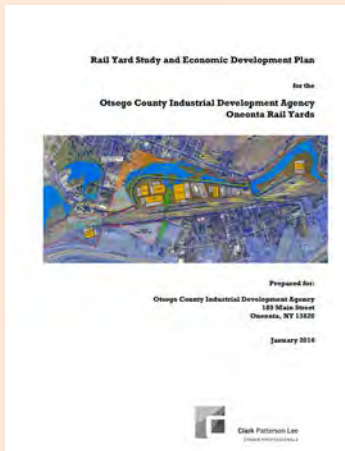
In recognition of the importance of the physical environment of Main Street, the City created a physical improvement plan. Considerations for aesthetics, traffic calming, pedestrian facilities, lighting and branding were incorporated into the plan. The plan served as a basis for additional grant funding that was secured to implement the recommendations of the plan.

2016 Focus on the Future of Main Street



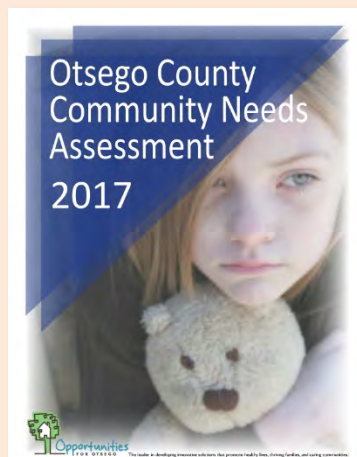
This economic development planning study for the downtown included public outreach, stakeholder interviews, retail analysis, a housing study, and a regional economic analysis.

2016 Rail Yard Study and Economic Development Plan



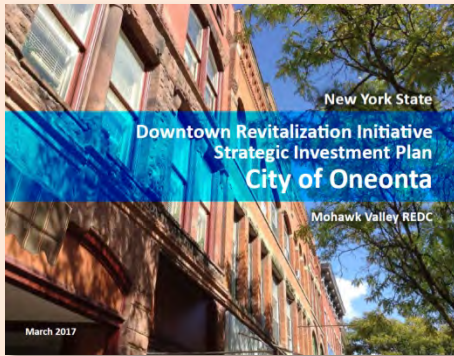
The Rail Yard Study was commissioned by the Otsego County Industrial Development Agency to examine creating a new industrial/commercial business park that will take advantage of the rail line. The document provides a feasibility analysis that includes an analysis of opportunities and constraints. It also includes conceptual development plans and cost estimates. This study is discussed further in the "Infrastructure" section of this existing conditions chapter.

2017 Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative/ Community Needs Assessment



In 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo launched the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) targeting communities with entrenched poverty. Oneonta was allocated \$500,000 to understand the root causes of poverty and to streamline the delivery of existing community services combating poverty. Oneonta selected Opportunities for Otsego to carry out the ESPRI. The first data-gathering stage was completed in late 2017 with the release of the 2017 Community Needs Assessment. The report tracks key indicators including; population, employment, education, housing, nutrition, income, transportation, health and wellness. The data in the report is a valuable snapshot of the issues facing the regional population.

2017 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)



The DRI is an effort to improve the vitality of urban centers across New York State. In 2016 Oneonta was picked as one of 10 cities to receive \$10m in funding for catalytic projects that would spur redevelopment and private investments in existing downtown areas. \$300,000 of that money was set aside for a community planning process to create a vision for the downtown, study existing conditions, develop goals and strategies and to identify projects and programs that the remaining \$9.7m should fund. As part of the planning process two additional studies were conducted:

- **Residential Market Analysis:** A housing study for the downtown area was conducted, but was met with resistance from some members of the community who did not feel that the study was accurate.
- **Retail Analysis:** This element of the DRI study found that Oneonta’s downtown attracts people from out of the area for spending. The downtown’s primary competitors are Cooperstown and the Southside Mall a mile to the south in the Town of Oneonta. Façade and sign improvements were recommended to make the retail environment more attractive.

2018 Housing Needs Assessment: Otsego County

The Housing Needs Assessment details the housing issues and future needs for Otsego County and the City of Oneonta.

2016 Otsego County Strategic Prioritization Plan

Otsego County developed a strategic plan designed to, “promote quality development, increase opportunities for economic growth and achieve fiscal savings by identifying areas of government that are best suited for consolidation and shared services.”

2014 Town of Oneonta Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Oneonta, which surrounds the City, adopted their Comprehensive Plan in 2014. The Plan recommends that, where possible, the Town and City work together whenever it is in the best interest of both municipalities. Areas for cooperation include: water and sewer services, development of the Rail Yards, establishing an Economic Development Group, joint grant applications, seeking alternative energy sources, public transportation, emergency services, and parks and recreation.

4. Demographics & Housing

Community planning is a complex process that requires considerable forethought. The demographics and housing portion of the Comprehensive Plan examines a wide range of conditions that affect the social, economic, and environmental character of the City of Oneonta.

Key Findings:

- **Population Growth.** Since the last Comprehensive Plan, the City of Oneonta has seen a reversal of a decades long decline in population that started in the 1970's. Between 2000 and 2015 the population grew by 4.2% to 13,862. While the past decade has seen a growing population, regional projections assume that the population will decline.
- **Ageing Population.** Oneonta's population has aged. Since the last Comprehensive Plan many Baby Boomers have moved from mid to late career and towards retirement. The cohort of college-aged students has remained high while the declining population of children has correlated with a drop in school enrollment.
- **Increasing Educational Attainment.** Oneonta's population is more educated than it was at the time of the last Comprehensive Plan and educational attainment rates for the population 18 to 24 and the 25+ population are above the Otsego County rates.
- **Rising Incomes, but Some Being Left Behind.** The data has shown significant increases in income levels in recent years, especially among families in the City. Despite these gains, poverty levels have remained fairly constant and there remain relatively higher concentrations of low-income households in the City.
- **Housing a Critical Issue.** The City has developed some new tools to combat blight including a vacant building registry and the establishment of a regional land bank, and new enabling legislation combating 'zombie properties' has been passed. Multiple housing studies have been completed and multimillion dollar rehabilitation initiatives have been launched. However, the condition of aged properties, the lower median income of working families and the local and regional employment outlook still leave Oneonta struggling to provide a safe, attractive and affordable supply of housing for existing and future residents.

Data Analysis Approach

Planning for the future requires a clear understanding of current conditions and recent trends. A look at these trends allows community leaders to make informed decisions about the future direction of the City. This section of the plan provides useful information on a wide variety of topics affecting the social, economic, and environmental character of the City of Oneonta.

Demographic composition is a collection of population characteristics that defines a community. Future policies, land use decisions, and development often depend on a community's growth or

decline, age distribution, educational attainment, transportation commuting trends, places of work and occupation, changes in income, and household characteristics.

In many of the categories, data from several points in time are provided to show the trends in the City. Observing changes over time shows which direction the City is headed in. Where possible, information is included from other sources, including Otsego County, which provides context and a glimpse of regional dynamics that may be affecting Oneonta. Reliable sources such as the Census Bureau, the New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the City of Oneonta, and the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) were used to compile the data needed for an accurate representation of Oneonta and the surrounding region.

Population

Oneonta’s population has grown since the last Comprehensive Plan, but the rate appears to be slowing based on recent data. According to Census data, the City of Oneonta’s population was 13,901 in 2010, up 4.6% from the 2000 (13,292) and nearly identical to the 1990 population (13,292). More recent estimates from the 2015 American Community Survey indicate a slight 0.2% drop in population from 2010 to 13,862. Otsego County’s population, meanwhile, was 62,203 in 2010, which was an increase of up 0.9% from its 2000 population of 61,676.

Based upon historical population information, the City’s population has steadily decreased from its peak population of 16,030 in 1970 while the County’s has been increasing at a moderately slow rate. The sharp population decline between 1970 and 1980 followed a national trend of migration from central cities to the suburbs. According to the “Population Trends in New York State’s Cities” report from the NYS Comptroller’s Office, this period of time had the greatest degree of decline, with a 12% loss in cities statewide.

	Population 2000	Population 2010	Population 2015	Total Change (2000–2015)	Pct. Change (2000-2015)
City of Oneonta	13,292	13,901	13,862	570	4.3
Otsego County	61,676	62,259	61,399	-277	-0.4
New York State	18,976,457	19,378,102	19,673,174	696,717	3.7

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates and Decennial US Census

Under existing conditions, the population of the City of Oneonta is projected to decline slightly by the year 2020. Otsego County’s population is also projected to decline slightly by the year 2040. The projected population losses for the City and County are not as severe as the population losses of the late 20th century. Note that population projections are not predictions and only serve to help understand what the population will do if current trends continue. The previous Comprehensive Plan

had predicted that the population of the city would decline slightly and the 4.6% population increase between 2000 and 2010 was not expected. Table 3 presents the population projections for the City, County, and State contained in the City’s “Focus on the Future of Main Street” report.

Year	City of Oneonta			Otsego County			New York State		
	Total	Change #	Change %	Total	Change #	Change %	Total	Change #	Change %
2010	13,901	-	-	62,259	-	-	19,378,102	-	-
2014	13,838	-63	-0.5	61,128	-1,131	-1.8	19,746,227	368,125	1.9
2020	NA	NA	NA	62,094	-165	-0.3	19,697,021	318,919	1.6
2030	NA	NA	NA	61,343	-751	-1.2	19,794,733	97,712	0.5
2040	NA	NA	NA	59,637	-1,706	-2.8	19,623,506	-171,227	-0.87

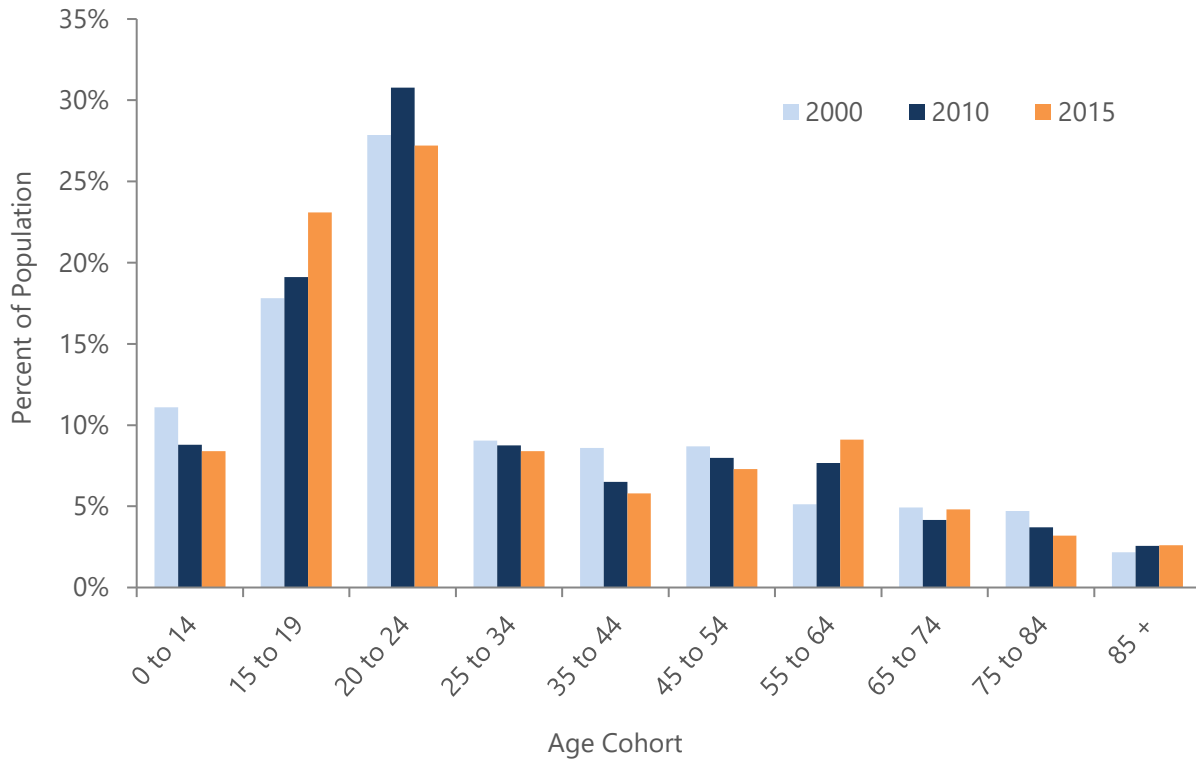
Source: Focus on the Future of Main Street: An Economic Development Planning Strategy. Oneonta, NY (2016). Data from US Census; Cornell Program on Applied Demographics. Note that 2020 to 2040 projections are not available at the city level.

Age of Population

Age cohorts are important to evaluate as they can help identify future community needs and issues, including the provision of appropriate housing, recreation, public services, and transportation options among others. As shown in Figure 4, the City has a significant number of residents in the age 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 cohorts, which is most likely due to the presence of SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College. As a result, the most recent estimates of Oneonta’s median age of 21.8 years old is far lower than the County median of 41.6 and the NYS median of 38.1. Therefore, it is important to examine the trends of each of the cohorts, rather than the overall median age.

Between 2000 and 2010, there has been a substantial population increase in the age 55 to 64 cohort. At the same time, there has been a substantial decline in the youth population (age 14 and under) within the City and in the 35 to 44 age cohort. This suggests a decline in families with children in the City. It also indicates a growing senior population that may result in a need for additional services and housing options – especially if this population group is to “age in place” rather than leave the community.

Figure 4: City of Oneonta Age Distribution



Source: 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Households and Families

Household and family size and characteristics are important to consider in planning efforts because different types of households and families have different needs in terms of public services, transportation, recreation, housing, etc. Almost one-third of residents in Oneonta reside in “Group Quarters,” defined as students and those living in facilities like nursing homes, prisons, and other places where people live in a group living arrangement. Of the approximately 9,500 people not living in group quarters, approximately 57% (5,403) are in family households that, by definition, include two or more people that are related (but may also include others). The nearly 4,070 people that are in “Nonfamily Households” either live alone or share their residence with unrelated people.

Table 4. Household Types: City of Oneonta		
Household Type	Number	Percent
Total	13,901	100%
In Households	9,471	68.1%
In Family Households	5,403	38.9%
Householder	1,851	13.3%
Spouse	1,252	9.0%
Child	1,891	13.6%
Other Relative	180	1.3%
Nonrelative	229	1.6%
In Nonfamily Households	4,068	29.3%
In Group Quarters	4,430	31.9%

Table 5 provides a breakdown of average family and household sizes in the City, County, and State, and shows how these sizes have been changing over the past fifteen years. As of 2015, the City's average household size is 2.26, which is smaller than both the County (2.36) and the State (2.63). The City's average family size (2.85), however, is the same as the County's, although the size in each is considerably smaller than the average family size in New York State as a whole (3.3).

Families represent a significantly smaller share of households in the City (44.7%) compared to Otsego County (63.3%) and New York State (63.7%). Both the average family size and household size declined slightly between 2000 and 2010, but then reversed course and increased between 2010 and 2015. This change mirrored the demographic trends in Otsego County and New York State.

Table 5. Households and Families			
	City of Oneonta	Otsego County	New York State
Average Family Size			
2000	2.87	2.94	3.22
2010	2.80	2.84	3.20
2015	2.85	2.85	3.30
Average Household Size			
2000	2.20	2.43	2.61
2010	2.17	2.31	2.57
2015	2.26	2.36	2.63
Families as a Percent of All Households			
2000	45.0%	64.9%	65.7%
2010	42.3%	61.2%	63.5%
2015	44.7%	63.3%	63.7%

The household and family data indicate that the population in group quarters (including students) may require special planning consideration. Additionally, the significantly smaller proportion of family households in the City, may indicate underlying issues that need to be addressed to attract and retain families, which is critical in maintaining a stable or growing future population.

Educational Attainment

Education levels are essential to understanding the community’s population and the implications for income and poverty, employment, and quality of life. Educational weaknesses are potential issues to address in the Comprehensive Plan through strategies that, as an example, may include workforce training programs to give residents needed job skills.

Table 6 provides a comparison of educational attainment for residents of the City compared to those in the County and New York State. Educational levels in the City are relatively strong with nearly 53% of residents (age 25+) having an Associate’s Degree or higher, which is well above the level for Otsego County (38.6%) and New York State (34.6%). Only 6.6% of the population has not completed High School (or equivalency) compared to over 10% of county residents and 21% of New York State residents.

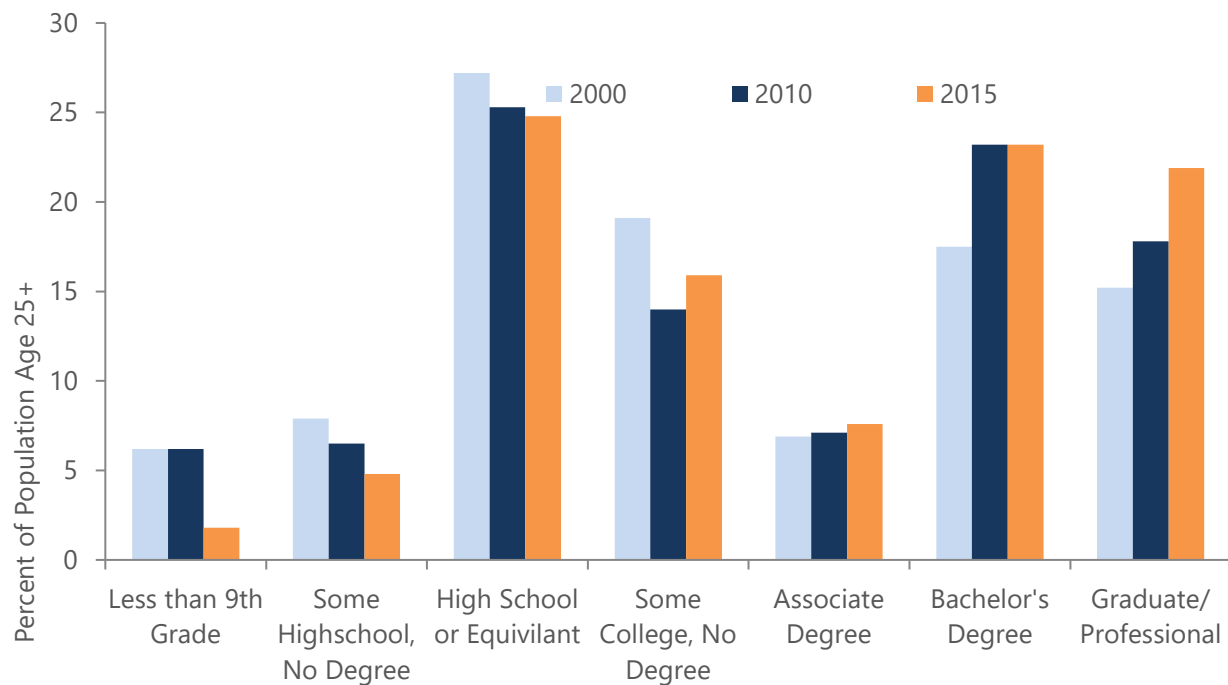
Table 6. Educational Attainment

Household Type	City of Oneonta	Otsego County	New York State
Population 25 years and over	5,734	40,102	12,542,536
Less than 9 th Grade	1.8%	2.9%	8.0%
9 th to 12 th grade	4.8%	7.2%	12.9%
High School Graduate	24.8%	34.5%	27.8%
Some college, no degree	15.9%	16.8%	16.8%
Associate’s Degree	7.6%	10.9%	7.2%
Bachelor’s Degree	23.2%	14.2%	15.6%
Graduate or Professional	21.9%	13.5%	11.8%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

The strong educational attainment levels in the City reflect a trend in recent years. Approximately 93% of Oneonta’s population is a high school graduate or higher and 45.1% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. This is an increase from the last 5-year estimates which indicated that 87.3% of the population was a high school graduate or higher and 41.0% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Figure 5 shows educational attainment levels have been changing in the City between 2000 and 2015.

Figure 5: City of Oneonta Educational Attainment Trends (2000 – 2015)



Employment

Employment data is significant to a community because of its impact on residents' ability to pay for housing, support local businesses, raise families, and their overall quality of life. Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment rates are available only for areas with a population of 25,000 or more. Therefore, unemployment in Otsego County is examined in this section.

Since the last Comprehensive Plan, Oneonta and the nation weathered the Great Recession (2007-2012). Total employment at the time of the last Comprehensive Plan (2007) was at 30,530 and has not completely recovered since (30,243 jobs in 2015). Oneonta's economy may be more resilient as its major employers (higher education and health care) are less impacted by national economic trends and more impacted by local and regional demographic trends and offer a degree of stability to the city.

Table 7 illustrates how Otsego County saw a decline in the total number of jobs between 2006 and 2009. It wasn't until 2012 that the County started to once again gain jobs. The County is now approaching pre-recession employment levels but has not recovered at the same rate that the nation has.

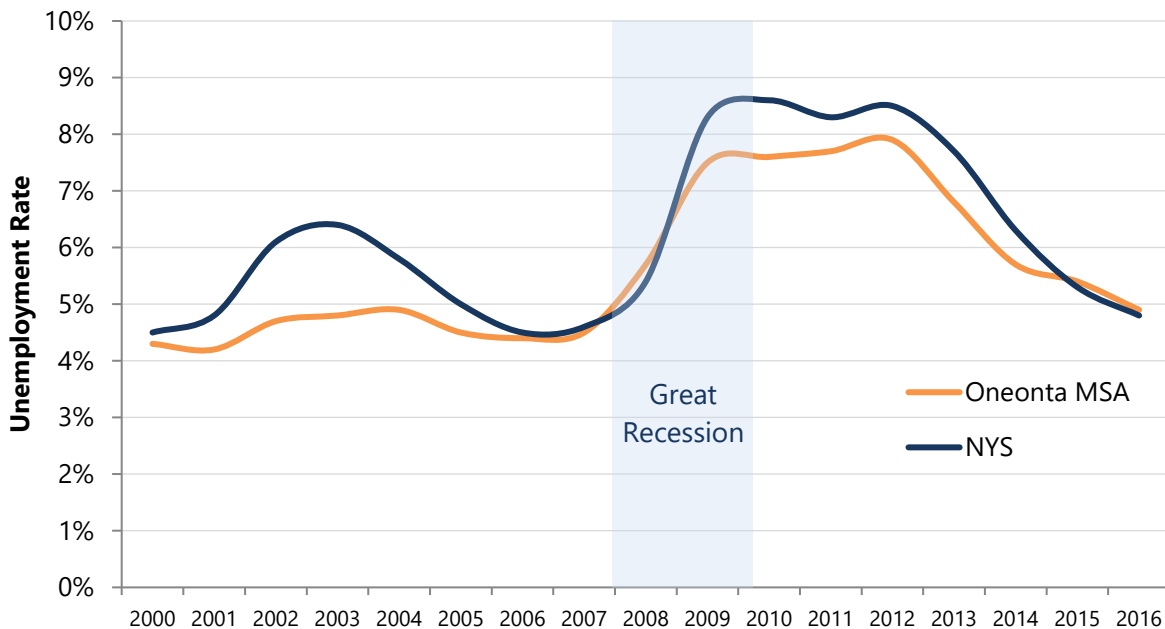
Table 7. Otsego Employment Trends (Not Seasonally Adjusted)		
Year	Total Jobs	% Change
2005	30,771	--
2006	31,135	1.2%
2007	30,530	-1.9%
2008	30,342	-0.6%
2009	29,121	-4.0%
2010	29,789	2.3%
2011	29,216	-1.9%
2012	29,451	0.8%
2013	29,854	1.4%
2014	30,012	0.5%
2015	30,243	0.8%

Source: Novogradac & Company and US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017

The unemployment rate provides another measure of the community's economic health. Although it does not provide a complete picture, it does give insight into employments trends in the County. As seen in Figure 6, the unemployment rate for the county since the last Comprehensive Plan update in

2007 was highest between 2009 and 2013 before shrinking in 2014 to the present. Unemployment levels in Otsego County never reached as high as the New York State unemployment rate during and after the recession, which may be due to the previously mentioned institutions in the City that are less susceptible to national economic downturns.

Figure 6: Unemployment Rate History: Oneonta MSA and New York State



Employment by Industry

In addition to population growth, the success and viability of a community is tied to the various types of employment opportunities and industry available in the area. With SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick College, Springbrook and A.O. Fox Hospital as the major employers in the City, it is no surprise that the majority (42.6 percent) of those employed in the area work in the ‘Educational services, and health care and social assistance’. ‘Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services’ as well as retail trade were the other top industries employing a majority of the residents. Other major employers include New York State Gas and Electric (NYSEG), Verizon, Corning Corporation, Mold-A-Matic Corp, and the ARC Otsego.

It is of note that occupation refers to a specific job or set of tasks. In the City of Oneonta, the most popular occupation is in the ‘Educational services, and health care and social assistance’ field. Since 2000, the share of residents working in the ‘Management, business, science, and arts occupations’ has increased while the proportion of employees working in the ‘production, transportation, and material moving occupations’ has declined. Industry is the term used to describe the kind of business conducted by a person’s employing organization, while occupations describe the type of work that person does on the job.

Table 8. Employment by Industry

Industry	NYS	Otsego County	City of Oneonta
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	27.5%	34.6%	42.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.5%	11.6%	21.3%
Retail trade	10.8%	13.2%	15.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.4%	5.5%	5.5%
Manufacturing	6.5%	8.8%	3.9%
Construction	5.6%	6.5%	2.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	8.0%	5.6%	2.5%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	3.9%	2.2%
Public administration	4.6%	2.8%	1.8%
Information	2.9%	1.1%	1.1%
Wholesale trade	2.5%	1.0%	0.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.1%	2.7%	0.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.6%	2.6%	0.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2015 5-year estimates

The most recent estimates for employment trends indicate that workers in the City of Oneonta are employed in the educational services, health care and social assistance fields and the 'arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services,' at considerably higher rates than the County and State. The presence of both Hartwick College and SUNY Oneonta may explain this.

Commuting Characteristics & Patterns

Oneonta is an employment center with more people commuting into the City to work each day (approximately 5,000) than there are residents that leave Oneonta to work elsewhere (approximately 3,000). Of the approximately 6,000 jobs in the City, nearly 84% (5,060) are filled by people that commute into the City. The remainder (1,000 or 16.5%) are filled by residents.

When the resident population of Oneonta is examined, there are nearly 4,100 employed adults. Approximately 76% of working residents leave the city to work while the other 24.5% both live and work in the City.

The data indicates that a relatively small proportion of the population both lives and works in the City. The high influx of workers from outside of the City may indicate that there may be reasons that people

are choosing to live outside of the City, such as differences in quality of life or housing. Figure 7 and Table 9 detailed the inflow/outflow characteristics of workers and residents for the City of Oneonta.

Figure 7. Inflow/Outflow of Jobs & Residents

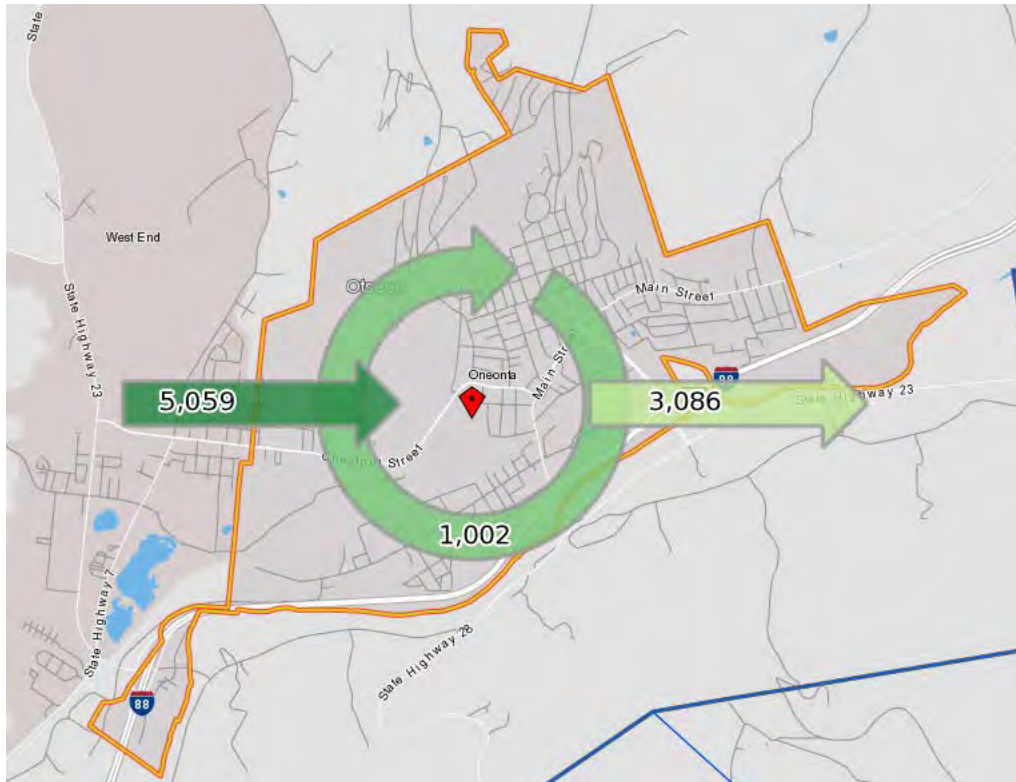


Table 9. Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Primary Jobs)

	Count	Share
People <i>Employed</i> in the City of Oneonta		
Employed in Oneonta	6,061	100%
Employed in Oneonta but Living Outside	5,059	83.5%
Employed and Living in Oneonta	1,002	16.5%
People <i>Living</i> in the City of Oneonta		
Living in Oneonta (Primary Job Holders)	4,088	100%
Living in Oneonta but not Working in Oneonta	3,086	75.5%
Living and Employed In Oneonta	1,002	24.5%

Since the last Comprehensive Plan and as of 2015, the most recent year for which data is available, there has been an increase in the proportion of workers who live in Oneonta but work elsewhere as well as a decrease in the proportion of workers who live and work in the City.

	2007	2015	Percent Change
Living in Oneonta (Primary Job Holders)	3,973	4,088	2.9%
Living in Oneonta but not Working in Oneonta	68.5%	75.5%	10.2%
Living and Employed In Oneonta	31.5%	24.5%	-22.2%

Source: On The Map, Inflow Outflow Job Counts: 2007 & 2015

Correspondingly, the mean travel time to work has increased between 2010 and 2015 for residents of Oneonta. Between 2010 and 2015 there was a 2.2-minute increase in commute times which is far higher than a 0.3-minute increase for Otsego County residents overall and a 1.0-minute increase for New York State residents.

	City of Oneonta	Otsego County	NYS
2010	13.2	21.4	31.3
2015	15.4	21.7	32.3

Source: 2010 and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates

Household Income

Income levels are measured in various ways. The most common measures are median family income and median household income. In order to obtain a more accurate picture of income levels for the City of Oneonta, median family income is the preferred measure because it factors out the impact of college student households. The Census Bureau defines a family as a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.

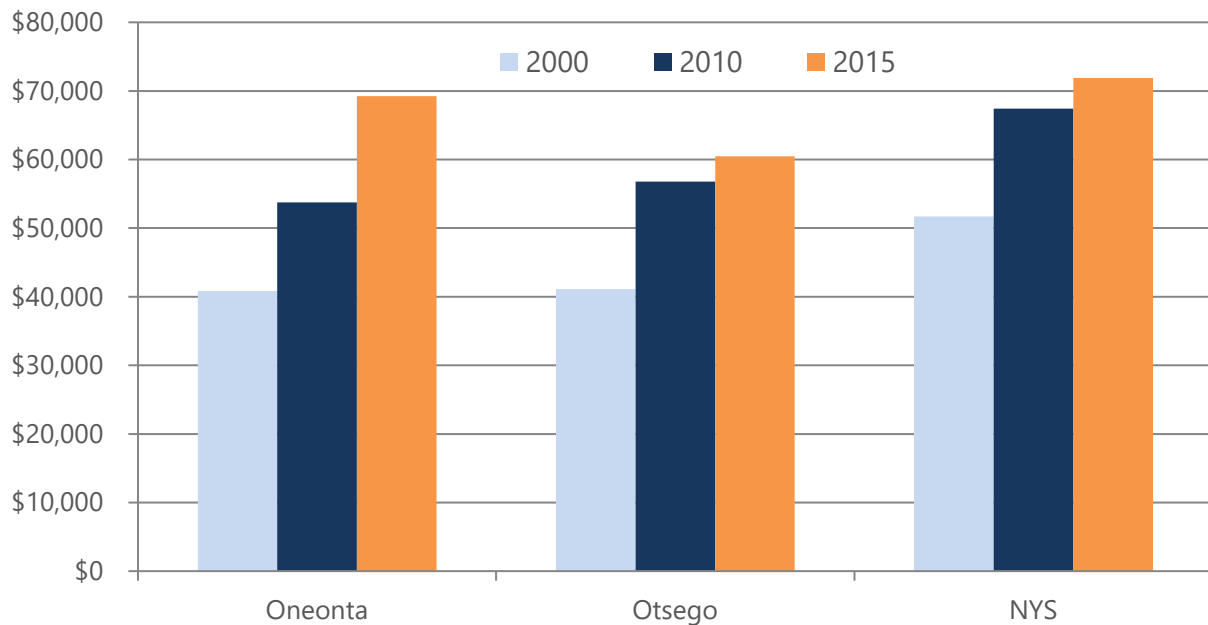
Census Bureau data indicates that incomes have been rising at a relatively faster pace in the City of Oneonta than other areas and communities in New York State. The median family income for the City of Oneonta was an estimated \$69,214 as of 2015. This compares to a reported median family income of \$40,833 in 2000, representing an increase of nearly 70% over the fifteen-year period. During that same time, median family income rose by only 47% in Otsego County and 39% in New York State.

According to Census data, the relatively quicker rise in family income levels has been especially pronounced in recent years. In the five-year period between 2010 and 2015, the median family income

in the City rose nearly 29% compared to 6.5% in the County, and 6.7%. As a result, the median family income in City (\$53,800) went from trailing that of the County in 2000 (\$56,800), to being substantially greater in 2015 (\$69,200 in the City vs. \$60,500). The City of Oneonta’s median family income is now close to being on par with that of New York State (\$69,200 in the City vs. \$71,900 in the State overall).

Figure 8 shows how the median family income has changed between 2000 and 2015 in the City, County, and State.

Figure 8. Median Family Income Trends



Non-family income:

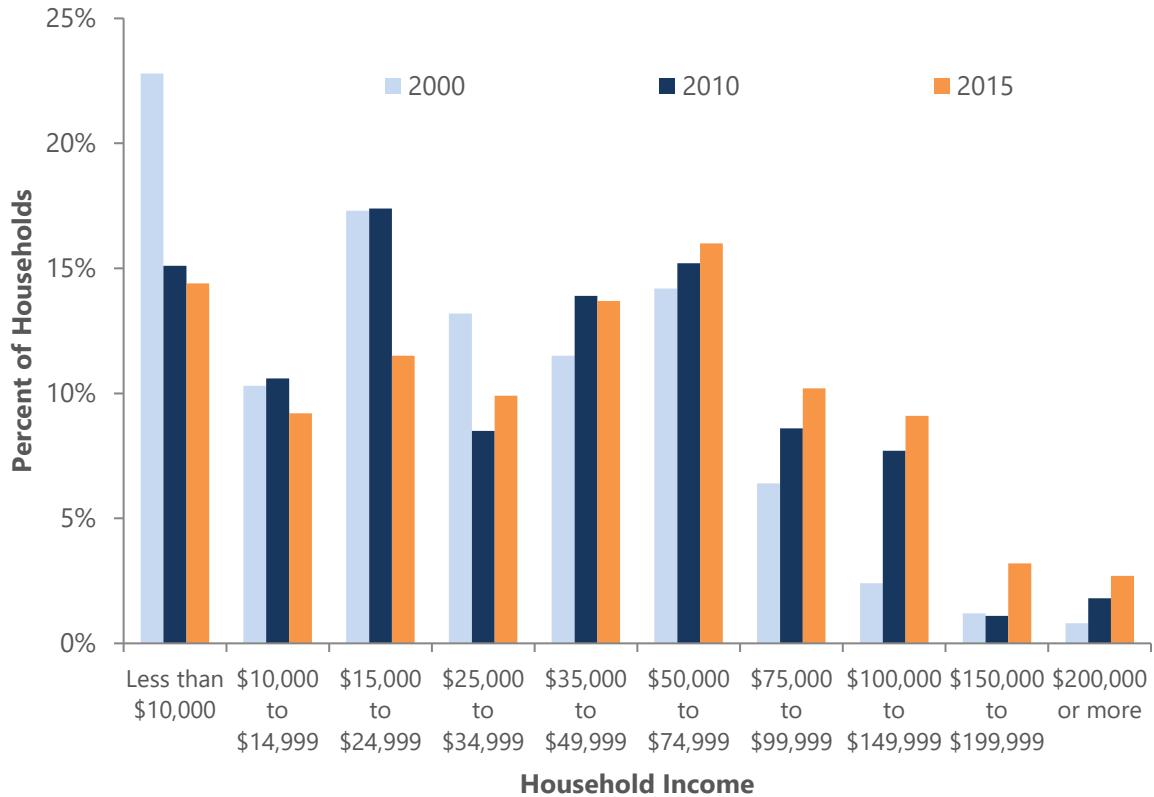
According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the median income for non-family households was \$24,375, far below the median family income. The presence of college students is likely a contributing factor to this low income.

Household Income Distribution

Figure 9 below shows the distribution of households in different income levels has changed between 2000 and 2015. There has been an increase in the proportion of households in the upper-income ranges (\$50,000+) within the City during this time with one of the greatest percent increases occurring in the \$150,000 to \$199,999 range.

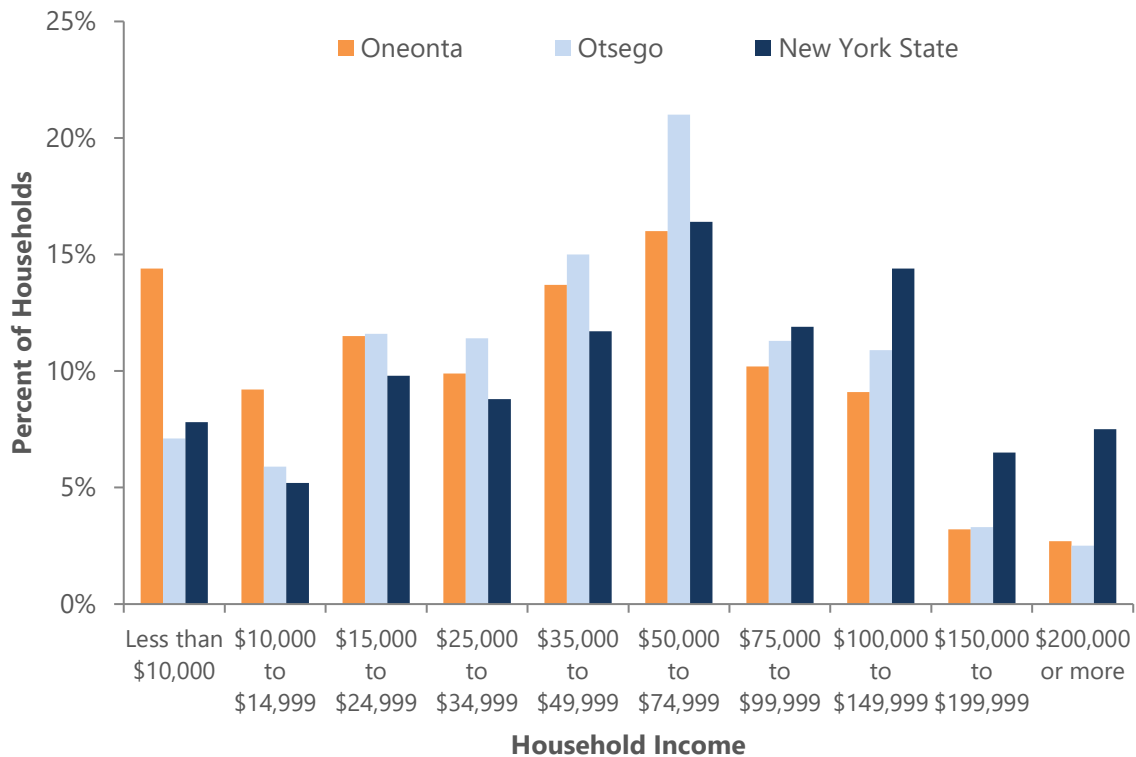
At the other end of the spectrum, there was a substantial decrease in the number of households with incomes less than \$10,000 from 2000 to 2010, but the percentage was fairly stable in recent years, around 15%. Another significant change occurred between 2010 and 2015 as the percentage of households in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 income range fell considerably.

Figure 9: Household Income Distribution Trends: City of Oneonta



When the distribution of household incomes is compared to Otsego County and New York State, Oneonta generally has a relatively greater concentration of households in the lower-income ranges, which can be at least partially explained by the student population found in the City. Figure 10 shows the household income distribution comparison of the City with the County and State.

Figure 10. Household Income Distribution Comparison (2015)



Poverty

In 1999, 13.5% of families and 30.3% of individuals were living below the poverty level in the City. In 2015, those rates declined slightly to 10.3% of families and 29.5% of individuals below the poverty level. Despite the minor improvements, this indicates that there is a pervasive and persistent level of poverty in Oneonta, even as income levels have risen overall in the City.

In recognition of this issue, Oneonta was selected to participate in the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI). The City designated the not-for profit Opportunities for Otsego with carrying out the initiative. As part of the ESPRI, Opportunities for Otsego collected data from a wide variety of sources and found that 43% of the housing in the City of Oneonta is substandard, 53% of Oneonta residents live more than one mile from a supermarket and 18% of households in the City do not own a vehicle.

Housing

Housing is a critical component of the quality of life of the City's residents and the location, quality, type, and affordability of housing in a community has far-reaching implications including transportation, health, economic development, and overall quality of life.

In the City of Oneonta there were 4,774 housing units at the time of the 2010 Census, up 210 units from the 2000 Census. Since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2007, there have been several new housing developments in the City. Hillside Commons, a 325-bed modern apartment complex was built in the far north edge of the city to serve as a private residence for college students. Oneonta Heights, featuring 7 buildings and 60 units of affordable housing, is being constructed through Housing Visions, a non-profit affordable housing developer.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, a housing study was commissioned to identify the housing issues and needs in the City of Oneonta. The key recommendations of the study are presented below:

- Preserve the City of Oneonta and Otsego County's existing single-family housing stock.
- Enhance housing and amenities in downtown Oneonta and the other villages and towns throughout Otsego County.
- Implement a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy for multifamily housing within the City of Oneonta and other areas of Otsego County.
- Create additional, good quality mixed-income housing within the City of Oneonta.
- Create additional, good quality senior housing within the City of Oneonta and Otsego County to support the need for affordable senior housing in the next five years.
- Create additional, good quality supportive housing within the City of Oneonta and Otsego County to support the need for supportive housing.
- Educate low to moderate income households on how they can purchase homes and encourage the use of first-time homebuyer incentive programs.
- Convert unused space in the downtown area of Oneonta into live/work units for young professionals and small businesses.

Since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan 'the sharing economy' has become a powerful economic force impacting housing and transportation patterns. Short term rental services like Airbnb and HomeAway are allowing a wider segment of the population to earn income by providing lodging in regular homes and apartments. Ride-sharing programs like Uber and Lyft allow people to use private automobiles like taxis. Their long-term impact on how people move through cities and own a vehicle is not yet apparent, but bears attention in the future.

5. Existing Land Use & Zoning

Existing Land Use

Residential land uses compose the majority of the property and land in the City of Oneonta. The majority of individual parcels in the City are categorized as ‘residential’, followed by ‘vacant’ and ‘commercial,’ respectively. By area, the City is also primarily residential, followed by ‘vacant’ land and land devoted to ‘community services.’ This is reflective of Oneonta’s history as a center of higher education and transportation rather than a center of industrial production like many other upstate New York cities.

The City of Oneonta has 3,541 parcels representing approximately 2,217 acres of land. Oneonta’s total assessed land value is \$639,590,743, up from \$633,421,880 in 2007 (including structures and improvements), while the land is valued at \$48,792,379 down from \$48,961,236 in 2007. A city-wide revaluation project was completed in 2015 and may account for some of this². However, the value of property would have ideally risen with inflation. The cumulative price change between 2007 and 2017 was 18% accounting for inflation. This data is based on digital information obtained from the Otsego County Real Property Tax Office.

Land Use Category	Parcels	Percent of Parcels	Acres	Percentage of Land
200s (Residential)	2,596	73.3%	619.3	27.9%
300s (Vacant Land)	439	12.4%	571.2	25.8%
400s (Commercial)	414	11.7%	210.4	9.5%
500s (Recreation & Entertainment)	17	0.5%	148.7	6.7%
600s (Community Services)	51	1.4%	472.2	21.3%
700s (Industrial)	7	0.2%	26.9	1.2%
800s (Public Services)	15	0.4%	166.5	7.5%
900s (Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Parks)	1	0.0%	2.1	0.1%
Unclassified	1	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Grand Total	3,541	100%	2,217.5	100%

Source: Otsego County

² http://www.oneonta.ny.us/files/6814/9149/4860/Final_Fin_Rpt_Oneonta_2015.pdf

Residential

Approximately 73.3 percent of Oneonta's parcels are assessed as residential. As illustrated in Figure 11, in general, residential development is located north of Main Street between the SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College campuses. Additional development is located along the River Street corridor in the southern section of the city. Parcel sizes are primarily a quarter of an acre or less, with few over an acre in size. Seventy-nine percent of the residential homes are single-family, while 21 percent occupy 2- and 3- family houses. Higher density apartments make up the additional homes. According to the US Census, the City of Oneonta has an aging housing stock with 59.4 percent of the homes constructed prior to 1939. A more suburban style type of development has been followed north of the city in design and scale. Homes in this area are located on larger lots with more curvilinear streets, rather than a more traditional, urban street grid. These neighborhoods also contain the most homogenous housing stock of single family homes. Elsewhere in the city there is a more diverse mix of housing stock.



Commercial

The City of Oneonta has 414 parcels classified as commercial properties. These commercial areas are found primarily along Main Street, which gives the City a more traditional urban feel. Warehouses and multi-use buildings are located outside of the Main Street corridor, most of which are between Chestnut Street and River Street near the former Oneonta Roundhouse area. Since commercial uses tend to demand less in public services than residential uses, maintaining an appropriate balance between residential and commercial land is critical to minimizing the tax burden placed on city residents. The primary land use in the commercial category is 'apartments' which account for 133 parcels (32% of all commercial parcels) and 60 acres (28% of all land area classified as commercial.)



Industrial

Seven parcels, encompassing 26.9 acres, are classified as industrial uses in the City of Oneonta. Five of the parcels are used for manufacturing purposes by companies such as the former KMS Plastics Company. The other two tracts of land are occupied by Otsego Ready Mix, Inc. as mines/quarries for cement and concrete manufacturing.



Vacant

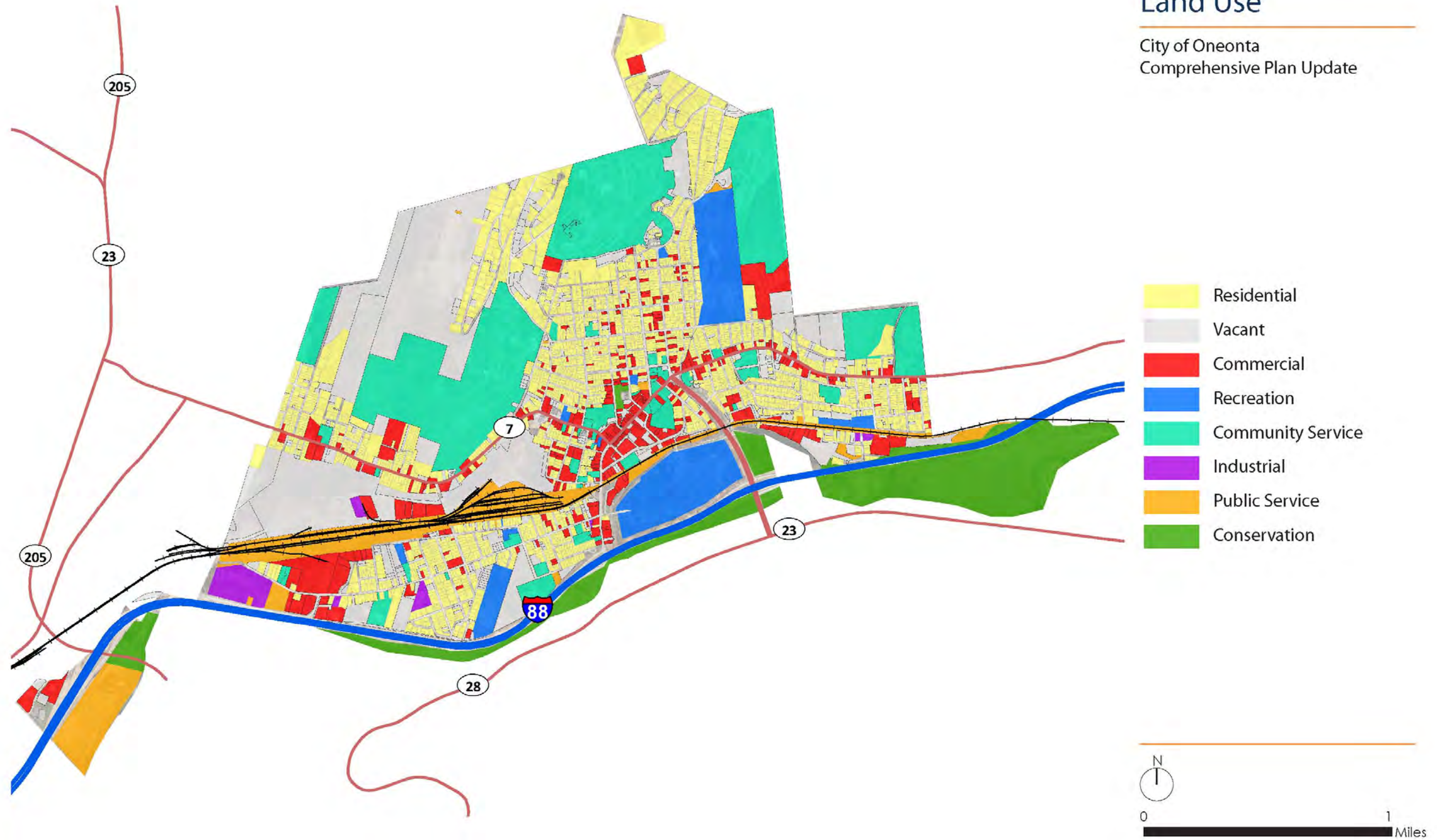
Vacant lands represent 12.4 percent, or 571 acres, of property in the City of Oneonta. The largest properties are located on the western side of the city north of Hartwick College and on the old Oneonta Roundhouse parcel. Ownership of the parcels varies from the County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to private holdings by the schools. The amount of space available represents vast (re)development opportunities for Oneonta to explore.

Land Use Patterns

Figure 11 on the following page presents a land use map for the City of Oneonta that illustrates the patterns of uses within the City. Commercial uses are clustered in the city's downtown area and along major road corridors such as Route 23 and Route 7 (Chestnut Street & Main Street). Distinct residential neighborhoods compose large contiguous areas, notably north of downtown, the southeastern section of the City, and to the southwest between Route 88 and the railyards. Some larger and commercial areas are found on the periphery of the City with a sizable cluster at the southwestern corner of the City, adjacent to I-88. Recreation and community service areas are interspersed throughout the City with several large "community service" uses somewhat encircling the downtown and residential core of the City. Overall, the land use patterns suggest that it may be useful to examine the specific neighborhoods in the planning process to ensure that appropriate services and recreation opportunities are available, especially those amenities that should be within walking distance of residents, such as parks and open space.

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Figure 11. City of Oneonta Land Use Map



Land Use

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

- Residential
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Community Service
- Industrial
- Public Service
- Conservation



Existing Zoning Regulations

The City of Oneonta uses zoning to regulate land use within its borders. The zoning found in chapter 300 of the City Code was last overhauled in 2011. The new zoning replaces the 1975 zoning that had been periodically revised over the course of almost 4 decades. The updated zoning is modeled on the principles of New Urbanism and the Smart Code. Mixed-uses, a high quality public realm, walkability and flexibility are all encouraged in the new code.

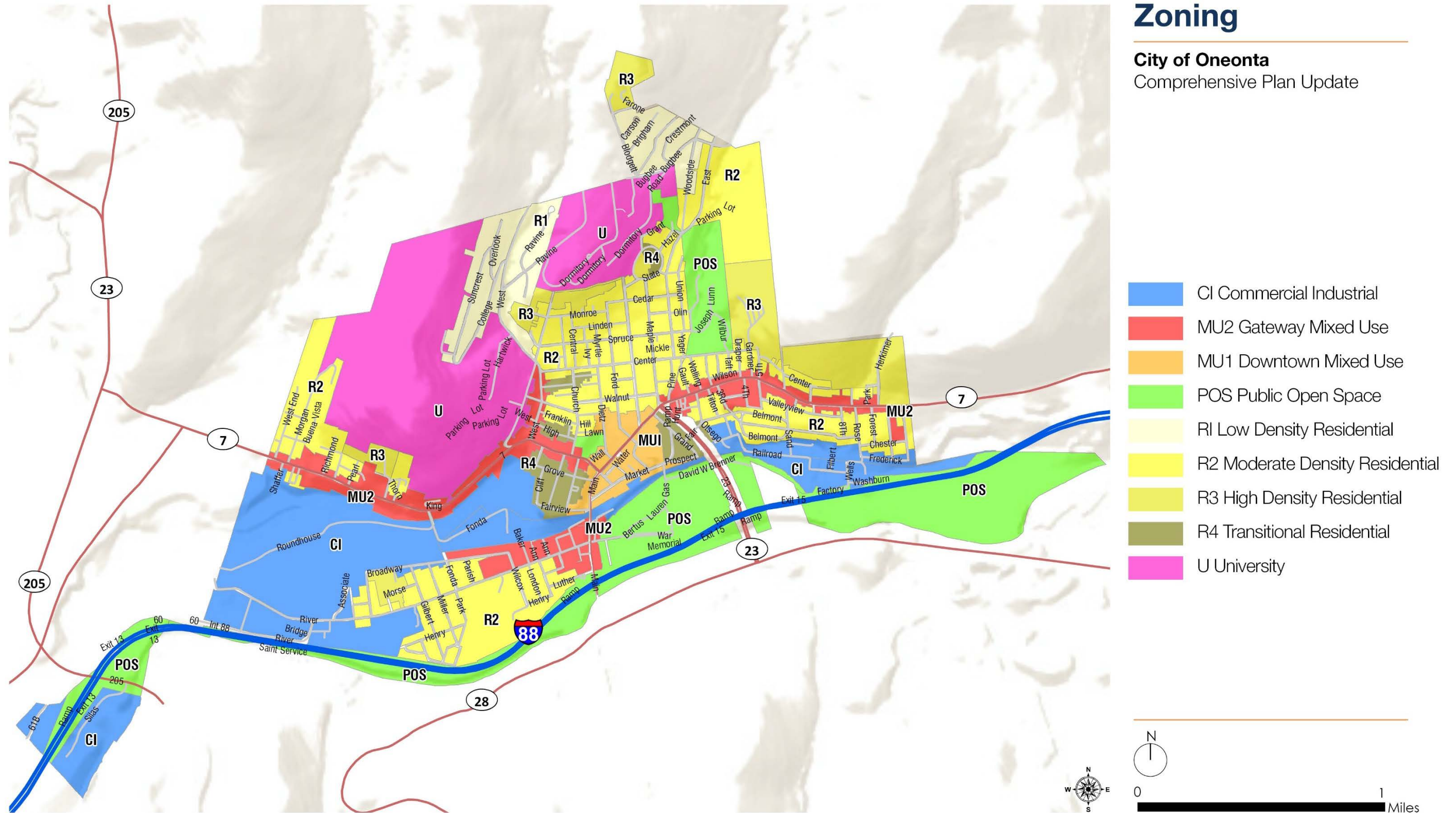
“A. Development of this chapter was driven by several goals identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan with balance among several objectives; (1) Encouraging residential, commercial, and industrial development consistent with small city character, (2) Providing for diverse housing needs, (3) Encouraging new business development, & (4) Ensuring that City structure and procedures facilitate achievement of planned goals.” The city is divided into nine mapped districts and one floating Planned Development district, as shown in Table 12 and the map provided in Figure 12.

District	Name	Acres	Percent of City
R-1	Low-Density Residential District	132.4	4.0%
R-2	Moderate-Density Residential District	533.9	44.6%
R-3	High-Density Residential District	166.7	3.7%
R-4	Transitional Residential District	47.6	7.0%
MU-1	Downtown Mixed-Use District	50.5	5.7%
MU-2	Gateway Mixed-Use District	162.4	22.5%
C/I	Commercial/Industrial District	495.6	8.7%
U	University District	470.7	1.0%
POS	Public Open Space District	502.3	2.7%
PUD	Planned Unit Development District	Unmapped floating district	

Source: Otsego County Real Property Services

The zoning section of the City Code includes a set of design standards that clarify the city’s vision for their built environment. The design standards help to ensure that developers, the planning board and the public have a shared understanding of what development in Oneonta will look and feel like. Figure 12 on the following page shows the current zoning districts within the City of Oneonta. The City’s zoning generally aligns with the current patterns of land use. As a result, the zoning will likely lead to future development patterns that are consistent with current uses and therefore maintain the general character of the City.

Figure 12. City of Oneonta Zoning Map



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Zoning along Oneonta's Borders

The City of Oneonta is completely encompassed by the Town of Oneonta and land use decisions on either side of the municipal border have the potential to impact the adjacent municipality. The Town of Oneonta's zoning recognizes the existing land use and zoning in the City of Oneonta. This is of particular importance along the western edge of the city where the Town's street pattern and land use patterns mimic that of the City's. The zoning of the two municipalities is generally harmonious along all border areas.

6. Natural Resources

Economy, population, and other demographic information can assist community leaders regarding how an area will grow, but the natural features dictate where that community can grow. Features such as steep slopes, wetlands, rivers, and unstable soils can make development unsuitable. Working with existing land features ensures a sustainable and environmentally friendly community.

Topography

Oneonta is nestled in the valley of the Appalachian Uplands Province, the major physiographic province in southern New York that stretches down to Alabama. The terrain consists of ridges varying from 1,000 to 2,000 feet above sea level divided by large streams or rivers. The terrain is much higher in the south and tends to become lower in elevation approaching the Mohawk Valley. A varying climate of wet and cool temperatures produces the abundant mix of forests.

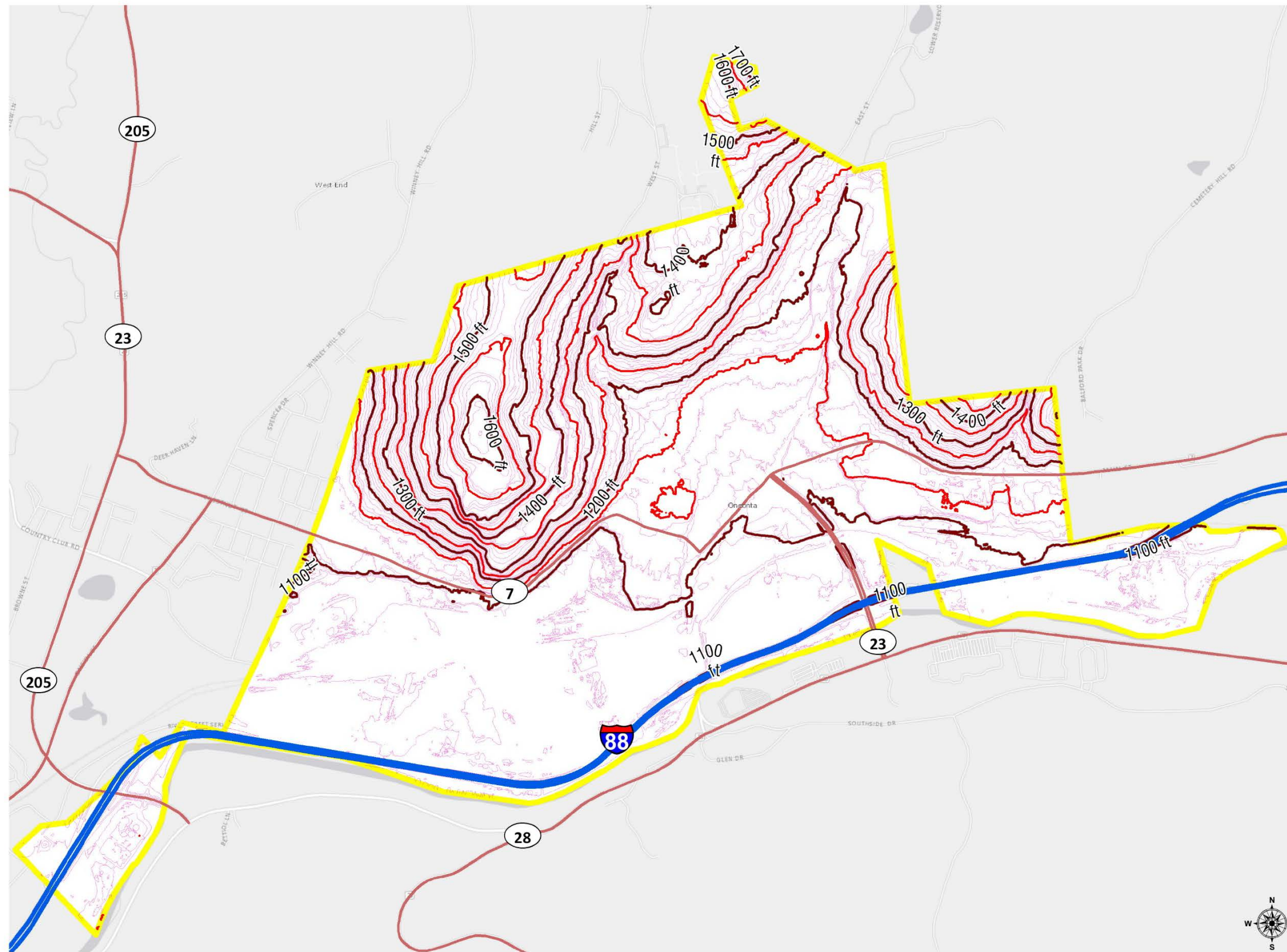
As shown on the topography map in Figure 13 on the following page, the area has a rolling terrain marked with few steep slopes. However, some areas, especially in the northern portion of the City, have slopes upwards of 45 percent. Steep slopes generally indicate areas where development should be avoided due to unstable soils. Most of the City is located on level land with the exception of the areas to the north, including the SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College campuses. A majority of the slopes in the City are in the 3-15 percent range.

The City's rolling terrain and hills may present special planning challenges. These include viewshed concerns, especially for any proposed development on hillsides or tops that will be in highly visible locations. Other concerns include stormwater runoff and management as well as erosion prevention.






The City's rolling hills had a large influence on its patterns of development

Figure 13. City of Oneonta Topography Map



Topography

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

-  100 ft contours
-  50 ft contours
-  10 ft contours



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Water Features

The City's water features are both environmental and recreational assets, but pose challenges and constraints to existing and future development, including flooding and regulatory constraints. Figure 14 on the following page provides a map of the City's waterbodies, floodplains, and wetlands that are important to factor into long-term planning decisions.

Rivers and Streams

A watershed is defined as the area of land that drains into a particular water body. The City of Oneonta drains south into the Upper Susquehanna River Basin, which ultimately drains into the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The Susquehanna River begins at Otsego Lake in Cooperstown and winds through southern New York, western Pennsylvania, and Maryland before joining the Chesapeake Bay near Baltimore, Maryland and terminating into the Atlantic Ocean. The Susquehanna River flows 444 miles carrying an estimated 22 billion gallons of water daily. The 16th largest river in the United States, the Susquehanna is a prime waterbody for fishing, boating, and other recreational activities. A variety of fish including muskie, walleye, smallmouth bass, panfish, catfish and carp inhabit the river.

Other major streams and creeks include Otego Creek to the west, Silver and Oneonta Creek, which flow through the City, and Glenwood Creek to the east.

Floodplains

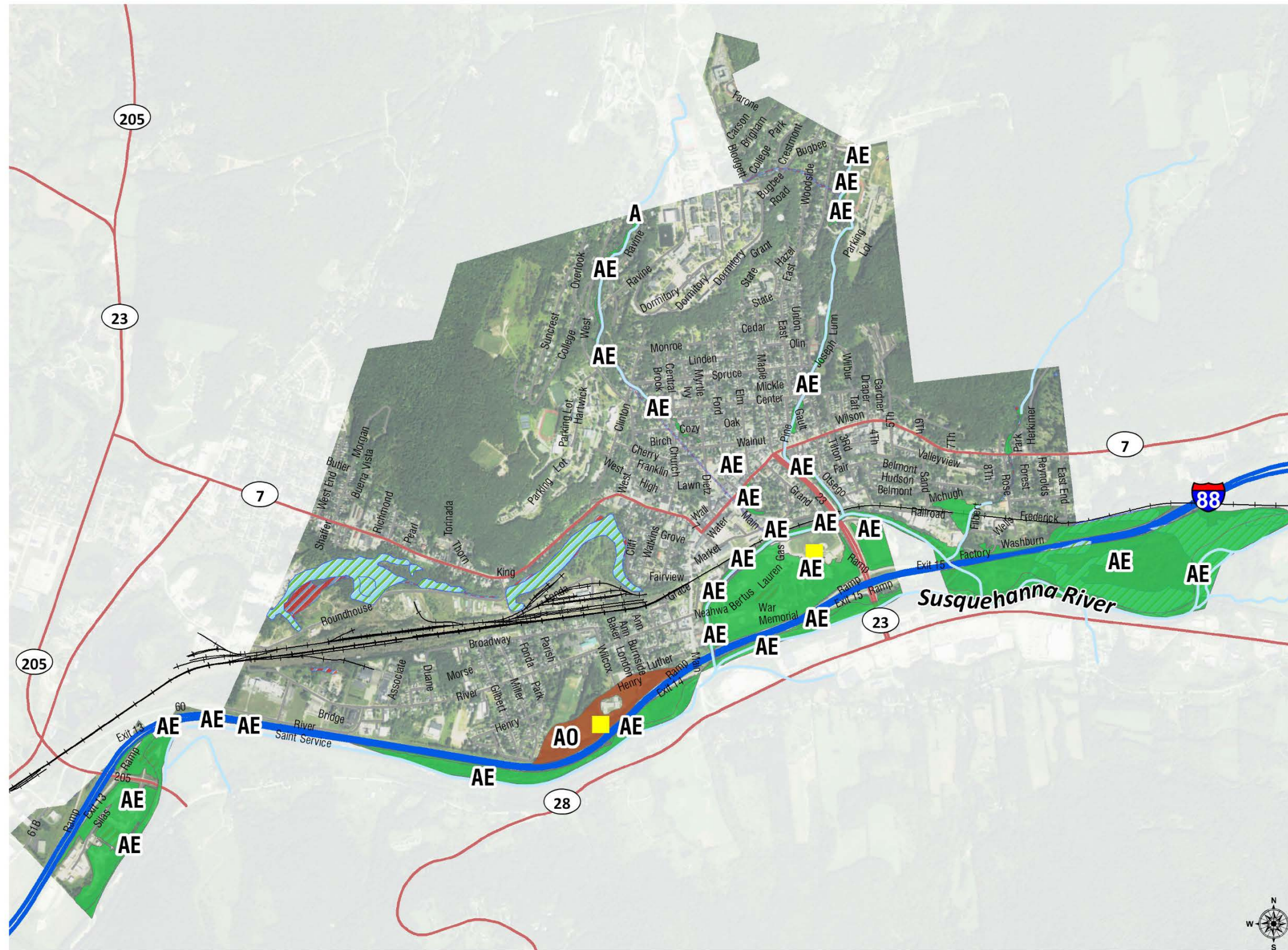
According to digital Flood Insurance Rate Mapping (FIRM), floodplains in the City are located primarily in the southern portion around the Susquehanna River. The City has taken measures to control flooding in the Sixth Ward neighborhood and around Neahwa Park through the construction of levees and removable flood walls.

Wetlands

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) regulates wetlands that are 12.4 acres or greater. There are several wetland areas located within the City limits, including ON-7 & ON-9, which are south of Chestnut Street on the former site of the Canadian Pacific railyard Oneonta Roundhouse and. ON-6 is found on the eastern tip of the City south of the I-88 corridor, and ON-10 is south of CR-8 and east of Oneida Street. ON-10 is the only wetland not located within the City limits. Currently, these wetlands are on land that is either vacant or used for public services. Federally regulated wetlands are not categorized by the NYS DEC and may exist within the City. In order to avoid costly fines and penalties, developers should contact the NYS DEC Regional Office 4 for permitting information.








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Figure 14. Water Features Map



Water Features

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

-  Rivers and Streams
-  Dams
-  NYSDEC Wetlands
-  Federal Wetlands
-  A: 1% annual chance of flooding¹
-  AE: 1% annual chance of flooding²
-  AO: 1% annual chance of shallow flooding

1. Base Flood Elevation (BFE) not determined
2. BFE established



0 1 Miles

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Soils

According to the General Soils Map created by the United States Department of Agriculture for Otsego County, Oneonta's soils are mainly categorized as Chenango (CnB & ChB) and Udorthents (Ue). These types of soils are found predominantly in the southern half of the City. Chenango soils are located throughout central and southern New York, northern New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and northeastern Ohio. Bedrock is typically greater than 60 inches deep in these soils. Udorthents consist of areas from which soil has been excavated. The original soil ranges from sand and gravel to fine sandy loam. Both of these soils are generally deep, sandy and well drained with slopes of 3-8 percent.

Other soil types in the City include Bath, Lackawanna, Lordstown, and Oquaga, which are also all moderately well drained soils. A wide variety of soils are found in the northern section of the City as seen in Figure 15.

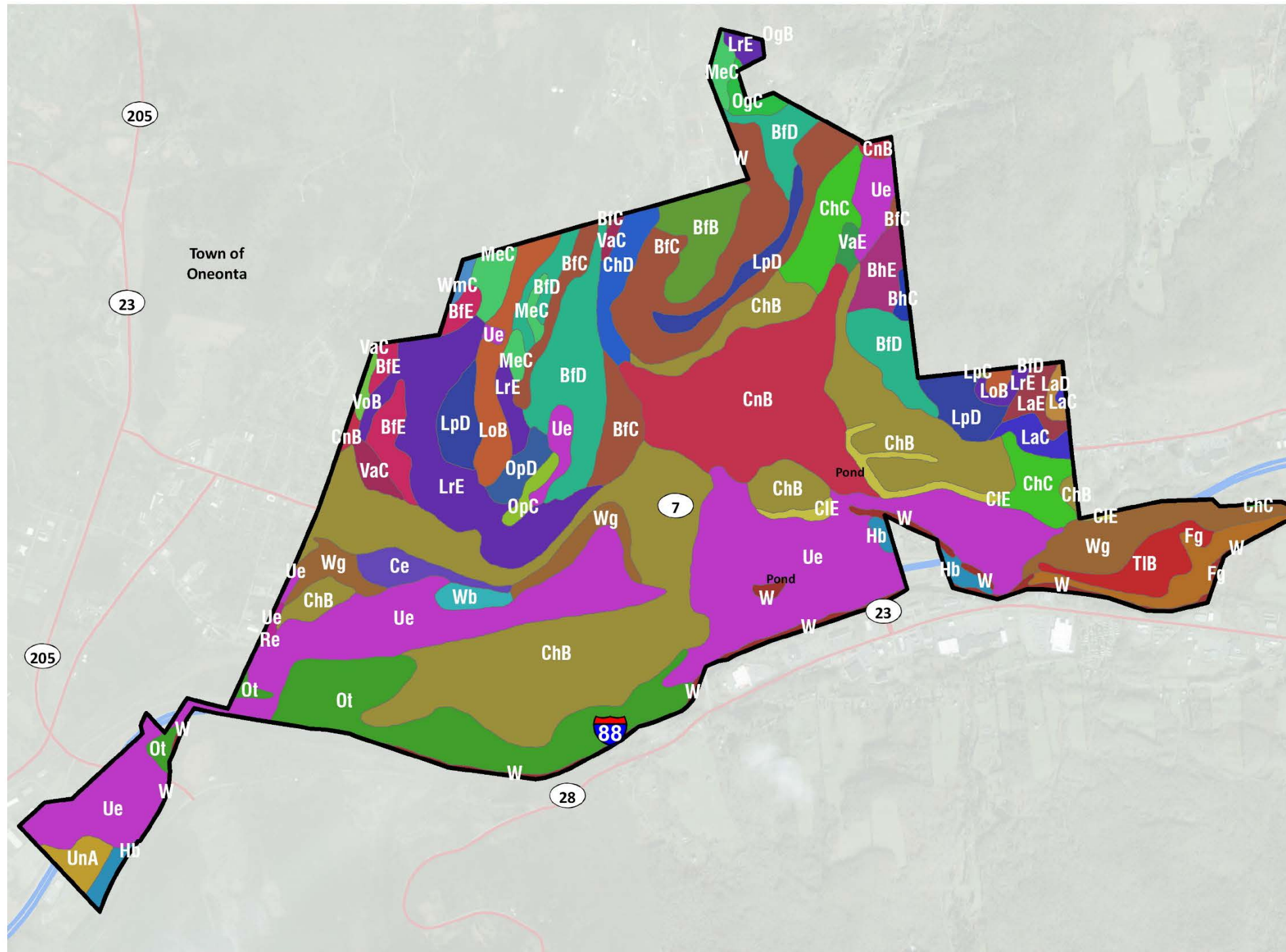
Energy

Since the last Comprehensive Plan there has been an increased interest in diversifying the sources of energy. For the latter portion of the 20th century petroleum and coal from domestic and international sources were the dominant source of energy. Instability in fuel prices and supply, as well as an increased interest in reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced has prompted all levels of government to explore more stable, domestic energy sources. The use of solar, wind, and hydroelectric energy, as well as the use of natural gas, has increased since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2007.

- **Solar Energy:** Solar capacity has increased dramatically in New York. In 2009, NYS as a whole had just 17.7 megawatts of installed solar power generation. By 2017 that number had risen to 882.02 megawatts. The City of Oneonta adopted the NYS Unified Solar Permitting Process to facilitate and expedite the installation of solar panels in the city. The Mohawk Valley Regional Sustainability Plan identifies the possibility of developing of a large institutional scale photovoltaic system in partnership with SUNY Oneonta.
- **Wind Energy:** Oneonta's location in a valley and dense settlement patterns makes the establishment of large scale wind turbines impractical. There may be potential for some limited, small scale wind energy production within the city limits.
- **Hydroelectric Energy:** Due to Oneonta's location along the Susquehanna River and the presence of other smaller streams, the Mohawk Valley Regional Sustainability Plan notes that there is potential for small scale hydroelectric power generation in the City.
- **Natural Gas:** Nationwide, natural gas has been identified as an affordable alternative to fossil fuels and accounts for almost one-fourth of all of the energy used nationwide. It should continue to be considered a part of the City's energy portfolio.

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Figure 15: Soil Map



Soils

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

Most Common Soil Types

-  ChB - Chenango gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes (20% of total)
-  Ue - Udorthents, smoothed (19% of total)
-  CnB - Chenango channery loam, fan 3 to 8 percent slopes (8% of total)
-  BfC - Bath channery silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes (7% of total)
-  Ot - Otego silt loam (6% of total)
-  BfD - Bath channery silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes (6% of total)
-  LrE - Lordstown, Chadakoin, and Manlius soils, 25 to 50 percent slopes, very rocky (6% of total)



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7. Parks & Public Space

Oneonta contains a series of public parks for both active recreation and passive enjoyment. The City of Oneonta's primary parks are Neahwa Park and Wilber Park. Wilber Park is a 55 acre park located in the northeastern section of the city, east of SUNY Oneonta. Neahwa Park (66 acres) to the south of downtown, is the city's most active park and features multiple sports fields and areas for passive and active recreation. Neahwa Park is home to Damaschke Field, Veterans Memorial Walk and Ted Christman Field. Wilber Park includes the Waddington Tennis Complex, Briggs Pool, and Applebaugh Garden.

Other parks include Maple Street Park, located at the corner of State and Maple Streets, Huntington Park located downtown, and Curtis and Miller Parks, located at the end of Lettis Highway. Muller Plaza is a prominent public square on Main Street that is used for various events, including the Farmers Market. The City's parks and recreation offerings are described in further detail below:



Damaschke Field. Photo Credit: Chris Chase via Vimeo



Hodges Pond. Photo Credit: SUNY Oneonta

Neahwa Park

Neahwa Park is the largest and most active park in the City. The Park also includes Veterans Memorial Walk, a picturesque pedestrian promenade that highlights numerous historical markers and memorials. The park includes the following facilities and amenities:

- Historic Damaschke Field, a baseball stadium that is home to the PGCBL's Oneonta Outlaws
- Skateboard Park
- Brenner Recreation Center & Laskaris Skatehouse
- Tennis and basketball courts
- Playgrounds
- Sand volleyball
- Numerous athletic fields
- Mill Race Trail
- Historic Little Red Caboose
- Hodges Pond
- Picnic pavilions



Photo Credit: Everything Oneonta

Catella Park

Catella Parks features several multi-use athletic fields used for baseball, softball, and soccer. The park provides fishing access to the Mill Race stream. The trailhead for the Catella Park/New Island Trail is at the northeast corner of Catella Park.



Briggs Pool. Photo Credit: 21st Century Pools & Spas

Wilber Park

Wilber Park features Waddington Tennis Complex that has eight tennis courts, and two that are suitable for pickleball. Briggs Pool is located in Wilber Park providing outdoor public swimming facilities in the summer. The park also includes Applebaugh Garden, a serene setting available for outdoor events. The following facilities and amenities can be found at Wilber Park:

- Tennis courts
- Briggs Pool
- Applebaugh Garden
- Basketball court
- Picnic pavilions & Playground
- Multi-use fields
- Wooded trails and open space



Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway. Photo Credit: This is Cooperstown

Susquehanna River Park

The Susquehanna River Park is located at the end of Silas Lane, near I-88 Exit 13. The Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway is located around the park and has two miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, snow shoeing and cross-country skiing. The Park also has soccer fields available for use.



Swart-Wilcox House. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

Swart Wilcox Historic Park

The Historic Park features the Swart-Wilcox House, but also contains soccer fields, a baseball field, and plots for the City’s Community Gardens program. A total of 24 plots are provided on a first come, first served basis for a small fee.



Oneonta Mountain Biking Trail. Photo Credit: Timothy W. Stevens (From Where We Stand Episode 2 via YouTube).

Trails System

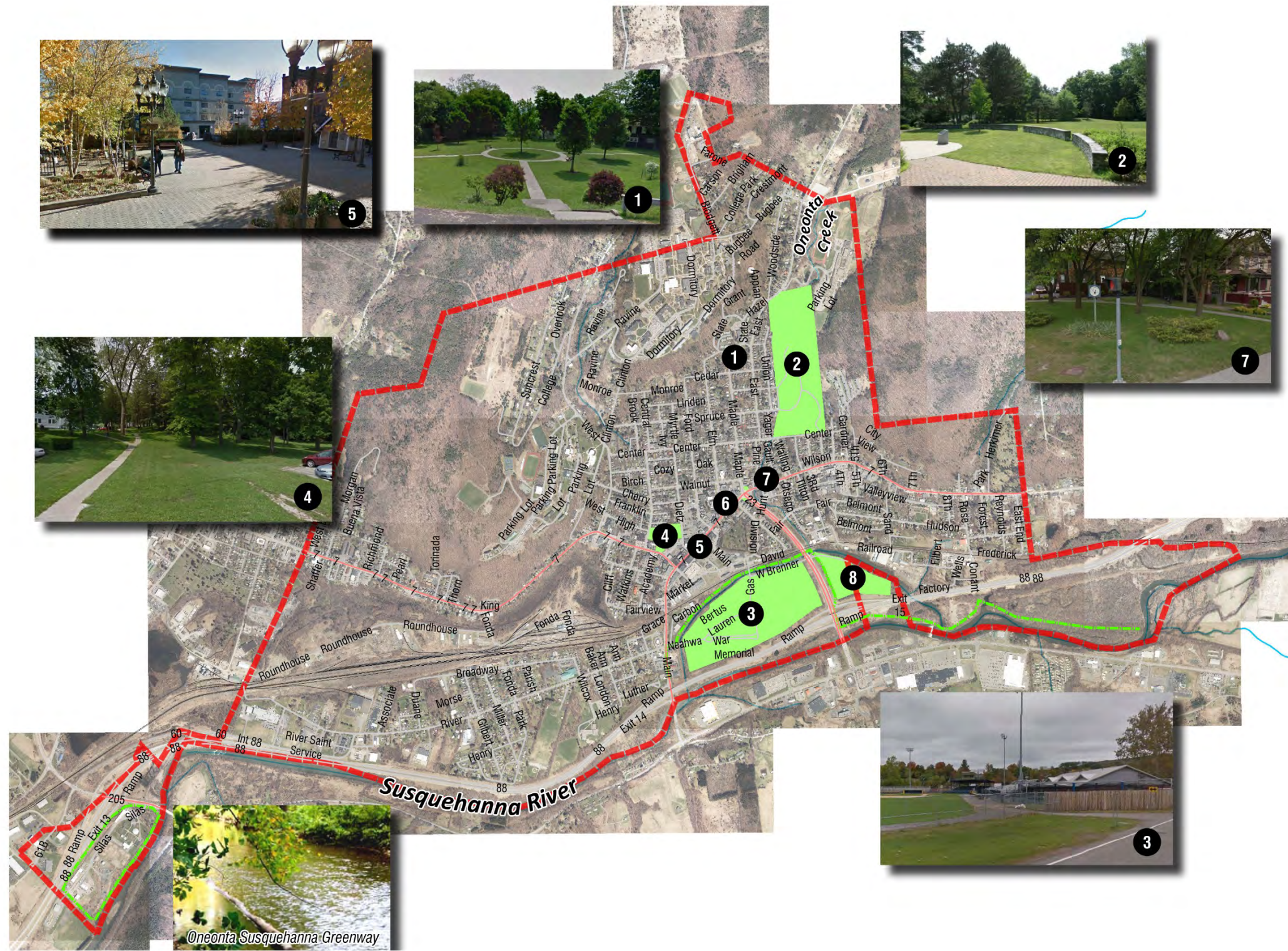
The Oneonta State Mountain Biking Club, consisting of college faculty and students, has developed a system of trails in recent years for hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing. These include the following:

- College Camp Trails
- Catella Park/New Island Greenway
- Homer Folks State Forest Trails
- Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway at Silas Lane
- Wilber Park/Glenwood Creek Trails

Since the last Comprehensive Plan in 2007, there has been an increased emphasis on parks and public space. In 2013 the City’s 1996 parks master plan was updated. In 2014, the “Oneonta Streetscape Assessment” was released. The report makes recommendations on upgrades to the streetscape and identifies funding sources for the various projects. Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative process, Oneonta is seeking ways to activate public spaces like Muller Plaza and the City’s gateway areas.

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Figure 16. Parks and Public Space Map



Parks & Public Space

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

- 1 Maple Street Park (0.9 acres)
- 2 Wilber Park (55.7 acres)
- 3 Neahwa Park (67.4 acres)
- 4 Huntington Park (5 acres)
- 5 Muller Plaza (0.2 acres)
- 6 Miller Park (0.1 acres)
- 7 Curtis Park (0.1 acres)
- 8 Catella Park (19 acres)

Oneonta-Susquehanna Greenway



0 1 Miles

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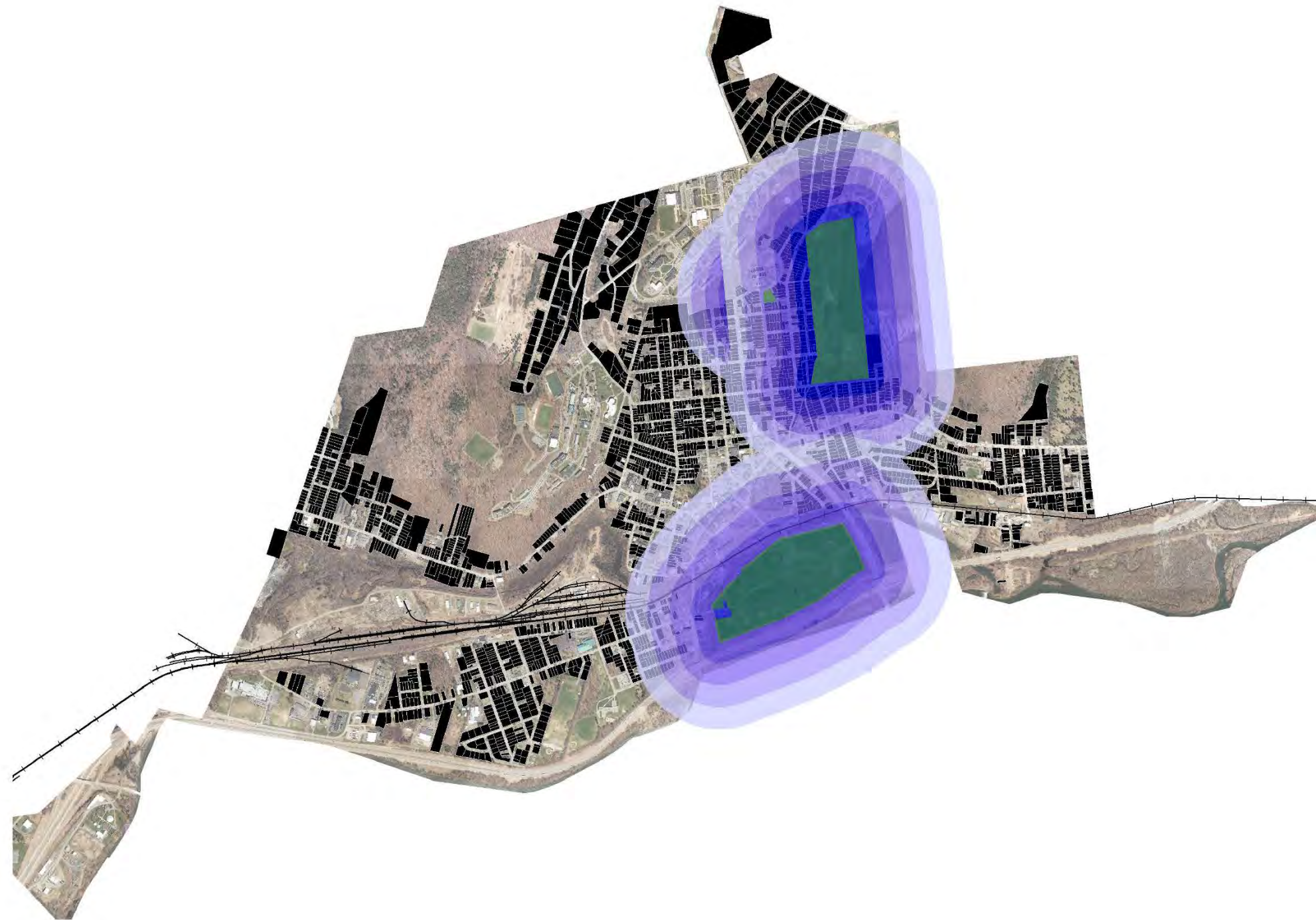
Park Access

Parks are an integral part of the quality of life and health of community residents and studies have shown the importance for residents of a community to be within walking distance of parks. Figure 17, provided on the following page, shows the residential areas of the City located within 1,500 feet of a public park, which correspond to an approximate 5-minute walk.

The analysis shows that there is large proportion of the population that lives beyond a 5-minute walk of a public. Therefore, there may be a need for the City to explore creating additional neighborhood parks in underserved areas.

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Figure 17. Residential Distance from Public Open Space



Distance from Parks

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

- Public Parks
- 1,500' Buffer
- Residential Buildings



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8. Historic Resources

Oneonta’s long history is reflected in a multiple of officially recognized buildings and historic districts. The City contains two historic districts shown in Figure 18, the Oneonta Downtown Historic District (31 acres) and the Walnut Street Historic District (15 acres). The Downtown Historic District follows Main Street generally between NY Route 23 and NY Route 7 and contains 64 buildings and one site. Most of the historic buildings in the district were built between 1870 to 1930. The Walnut Street District is directly north of the Downtown District and contained 46 contributing structures when it was established. Having housed important figures in the City’s history, the Walnut Street District is primarily residential compared to the more commercially-oriented Downtown District.

Aside from the historic districts, the City of Oneonta has a dozen historic properties found on the State and National Historic Registers of Historic Places, as shown in Table 13. These historic properties help maintain the City’s historical identity and character.

Table 13: Districts and Properties on the Registers of Historic Places: City of Oneonta

Name	Location	State/National Listing Date
Wilber Mansion	11 Ford Avenue	2000/2000
Oneonta Armory	4 Academy Street	1994/1995
Oneonta Theatre	47 Chestnut Street	2002/2002
Ford Block	188-202 Main Street	1984/1984
Old Post Office	258 Main Street	1980/1978
Fairchild Mansion	322 Main Street	1980/1974
Oneonta Municipal Building	238-242 Main Street	1982/1982
Bresee Hall	Hartwick Drive	1983/1984
Walnut Street Historic District	Multiple (47)	1980/1980
Chapin Memorial Church	12 Ford Avenue	2002/2002
Swart-Wilcox House	Wilcox Avenue	1990/1990
Oneonta Downtown Historic District	Multiple (57)	2003/2003

Source: NYS Historic Preservation Office and Cultural Resource Information Center



Fairchild Mansion



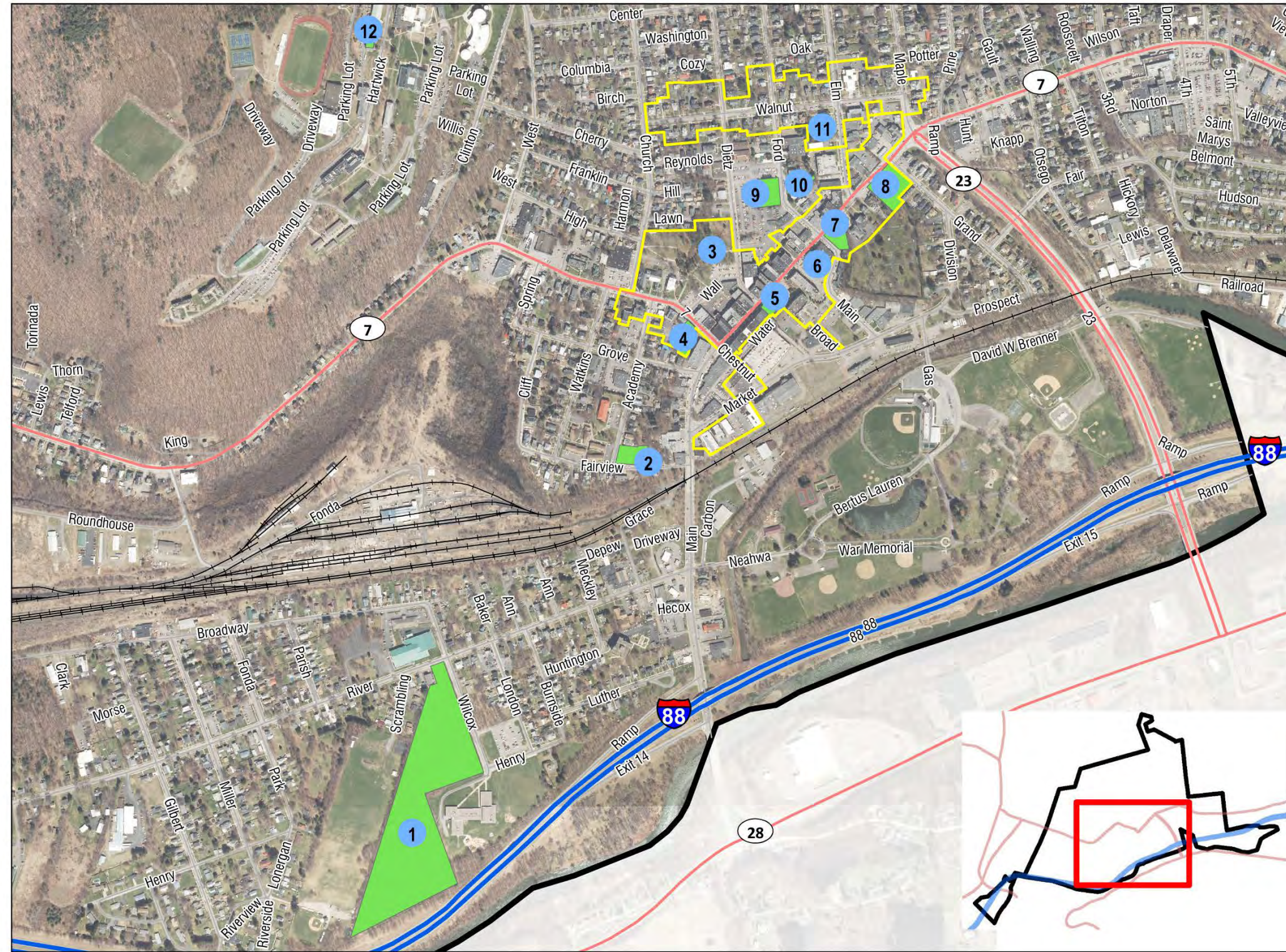
Oneonta Theatre



Bresee Hall (Hartwick College)

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Figure 18. City of Oneonta Historic Resources



Historic Resources

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

- 1 Swart-Wilcox House
- 2 Oneonta Armory
- 3 Oneonta Downtown Historic District
- 4 Oneonta Theatre
- 5 Ford Block
- 6 Municipal Building (Old City Hall)
- 7 Old Post Office
- 8 Fairchild Mansion
- 9 Wilber Mansion
- 10 Chapin Memorial Church
- 11 Walnut Street Historic District
- 12 Bresee Hall



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The City has at least ten (10) buildings that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but have not gone through the process to complete the listing. Successful listing of these buildings will help preserve them for future generations and open new funding opportunities for physical improvements or rehabilitation. Eligible buildings are listed below.

Table 14: Buildings Eligible for National Historic Register		
Name	Location	Date of Eligibility
NA	15 Watkins Avenue	Unknown
Old D&H Railroad Station	60 Market Street	Unknown
NA	3 Grand Street	2014
NA	11-13 Hunt Street	Unknown
Alpha Omicron Pi	17 Maple Street	2015
Springbrook: Oak & Elm	41 Elm Street	2015
NA	58 Center Street	Unknown
NA	50 Ford Avenue	Unknown
NA	48 Cedar Street	2016
NA	59 Valleyview Street	Unknown

Source: NYS Historic Preservation Office and Cultural Resource Information Center

9. Infrastructure

The 2016 Main Street Planning Study conducted extensive analysis of public and private infrastructure in the City of Oneonta.

Utilities

Water Supply

The City gets water from Wilber Lake and from the Catella Park Well. Recently the City has been working to upgrade the water mains in order to ensure reliable water pressure needed to support multistory sprinkler systems.

Wastewater

The municipal wastewater treatment plant started operation in 1974. The City has been working to separate sewer and stormwater and has included this staged initiative in their capital improvement planning.

Private Utilities

New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG) is responsible for natural gas and electricity distribution throughout the city. There are multiple internet providers available to Oneonta residents.

Transportation

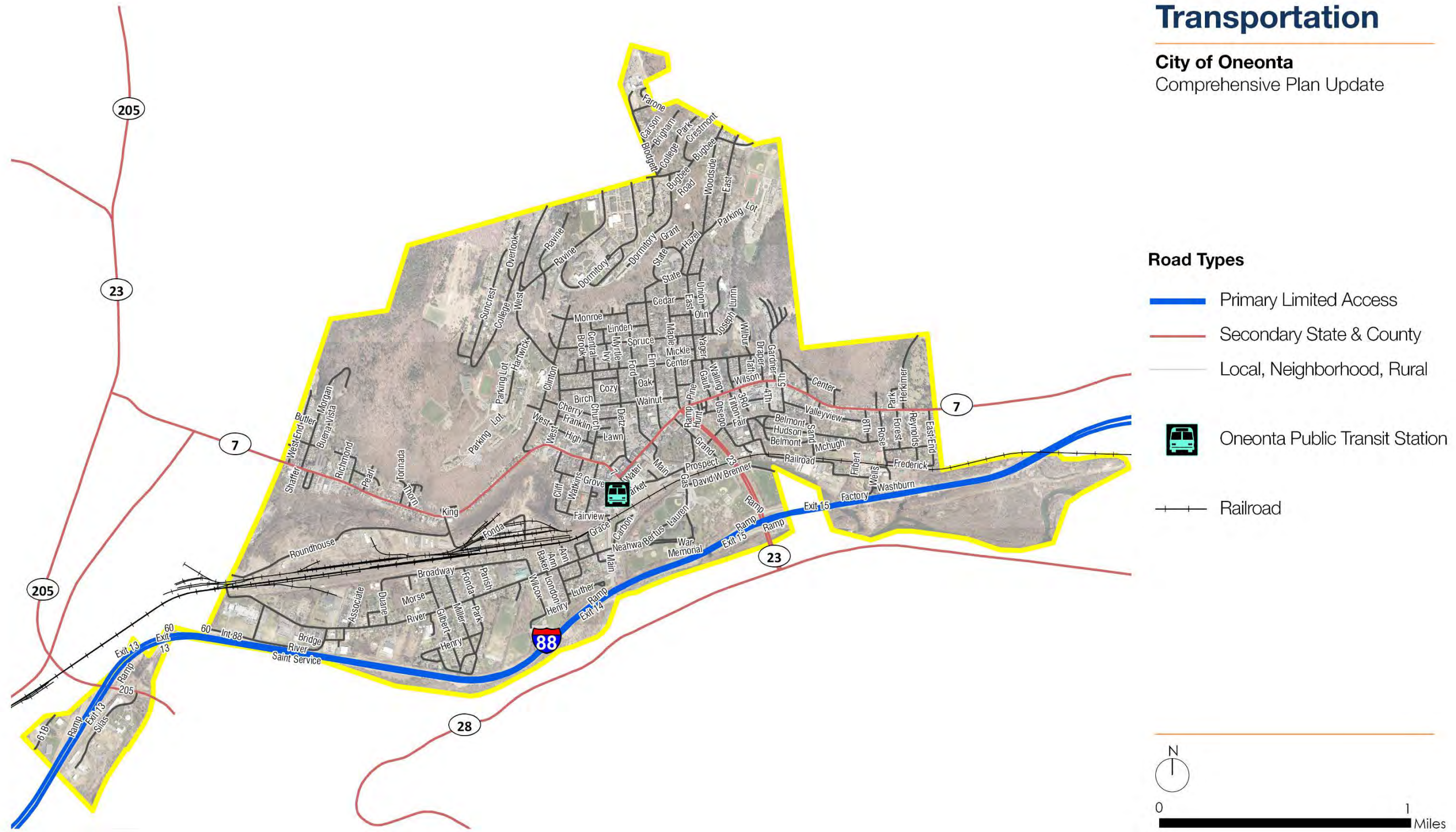
Automobile

Oneonta's streets are primarily laid out in a traditional grid pattern typically found in older cities. Portions of the grids have been disrupted by Urban Renewal initiatives. Oneonta's steep topography has also served to distort the grid, particularly between the center of the City and the two college campuses. Some housing developments from the mid-20th century were laid out along more circumlinear, suburban style roadways.

Pedestrian & Bike

In addition to the roadways and railways, the Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway is a partially completed off-road multi-use trail. Currently three of the four sections have been completed. Eventually the trail will span six miles and allow users to travel from the Silas Lane Loop in the West End of Oneonta, through Neahwa Park and around New Island in the city of Oneonta. The recently completed DRI plan recommends targeted improvements to the pedestrian network in the downtown area. Some bike lanes do exist in Oneonta. However, the hilly terrain of the City and the narrow historic streets make the establishment of an independent bike transportation network difficult.

Figure 19. Transportation Map



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Bus and Public Transportation

Oneonta Public Transit operates routes throughout Oneonta and between the City and Cooperstown. The main terminal is the John Insetta Transportation Center at 104 Main Street. It provides riders access to all areas of the City via multiple bus routes. An inter-network terminal is located at 47 Market Street, which provides an interconnection of City bus routes with the county-wide public transportation system. The City and County also coordinate transportation efforts via cost share of the Oneonta Public Transportation Route 28 corridor route

Rail

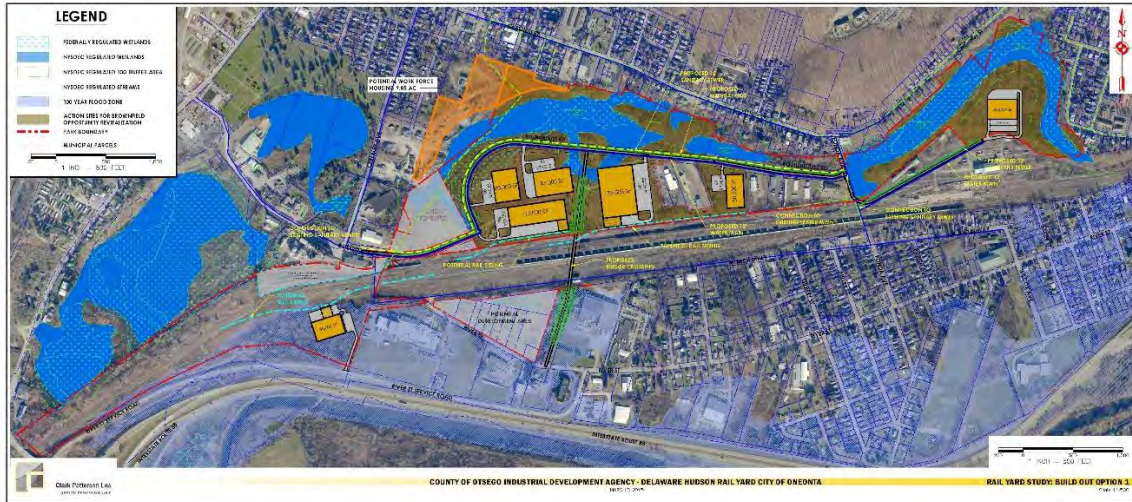
Oneonta has a long history as a rail hub and the existing Delaware & Hudson freight rail line that runs through the southern portion of the City is an asset for economic development. In 2016, the Otsego County Industrial Development Agency (Otsego Now) commissioned a feasibility study and redevelopment plan for the 200-acre Delaware & Hudson rail yard.

The final report includes conceptual site plans and initial cost estimates ranging from \$6.1 million to \$14.2 million. The site options are illustrated in Figure 20: Rail Yard Conceptual Development Options.

The report also presents several next steps for the City, including:

- Securing funding
- Conducting a market analysis and targeted industry study
- Analyzing workforce development needs
- Developing a site acquisition and ownership plan
- Preparing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)
- Design and permitting of bid ready infrastructure to enable “Shovel Ready” status
- Begin constructing infrastructure

Figure 20. Rail Yard Conceptual Development Options



Parking

A parking study was conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update to examine downtown’s current parking supply, condition, accessibility, and other characteristics, along with existing and future parking demands to identify future needs in the downtown area.

Of the 2,127 parking spaces falling within the downtown study area, approximately 1,719 are off-street with 783 of those spaces located in public parking lots. The Chestnut Street Garage contains 421 of those spaces. The majority of downtown parking is in good condition and with good accessibility and appropriate signage. Nearly all of the parking is located within 800 feet of Main Street, which is considered a reasonable walking distance.

The study examined usage of downtown parking spaces and found that there is an adequate number of parking spaces to meet current demand, with excess capacity to spare for new future parking demand. To examine future demand, the parking analysis projected parking demand based on proposed or planned development projects, including those that may eliminate existing spaces.

A summary of the future parking supply and demand is provided below (note that a 10% reserve capacity percentage is the typical benchmark):

Table 15: Future Parking Supply and Demand					
Condition	Total Public Parking Supply	Peak Public Parking Demand	Functional Peak Parking Demand	Reserve Public Parking Capacity	Reserve Capacity Percentage
Existing	1191	639	703	488	41%
Change Due to Identified Projects	-205	+62	+68	NA	NA
Total with Identified Projects	986	701	771	215	22%

Draft Oneonta Downtown Parking Study. GPI (2014)

The results indicate that there is a “significant unused supply of public parking in the City of Oneonta” and even with the implementation of the new projects and initiatives, the supply of parking will be sufficient to accommodate new demand.

Therefore, there is not a present or near-future need to expand the supply of parking in the downtown area; however, wayfinding strategies and continued improvements to existing lots and the garage may improve utilization. The results also indicate that new development projects may not need to add as much new parking as they would otherwise need to, due to excess supply that could be utilized. This has benefits for the future design and community fabric by reducing the need for new surface parking areas.

10. Community Services & Education

Emergency Services



City of Oneonta Public Safety Building.
Photo Credit: Oneonta Fire Department

The City's police department is located at the Public Safety Building at 81 Main Street and includes a patrol division of 15 officers plus an additional four sergeants that oversee the patrol division. The department has several special units including a Special Response Team (SRT), bike patrol, and D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). SUNY Oneonta operates its own separate University Police Department, which has a force of seventeen police officers.

The City's fire department has 27 full-time members supported by a paid part-time/call staff. The primary service area of the department is the area within an approximately 14-mile radius, including the Town of Oneonta. The department responds to over 3,000 calls each year, including ambulance responses.

Institutions



A.O. Fox Hospital. Photo Credit: Eastman Associates.

A.O. Fox Hospital

The hospital is a 53-bed acute care hospital featuring a 14-bed observation unit, an emergency department that handles over 15,000 patients annually and a 130-bed nursing home. The hospital also provides 950 jobs in the City. Basset Healthcare, which operates the hospital, also has a Specialty Services facility at 1 Associate Drive off River Street that provides outpatient services,

including a 12-bed dialysis unit. Another facility located at 125 Main Street provides internal medicine and pediatric services. An urgent care facility is available at WellNow Urgent Care on NY-23.

Public School System

The City of Oneonta School District serves the families of the City and those of the Town of Oneonta and portions of the Towns of Laurens, Milford, Maryland, and Davenport. The District features five schools:

- Oneonta High School (enrollment: 506)
- Oneonta Middle School (enrollment: 362)
- Greater Plains Elementary School (enrollment: 291)
- Riverside Elementary School (enrollment: 256)
- Valleyview Elementary School (enrollment: 280)

Between 2004 and 2015 the student body shrunk by 18.6% from 2,129 to 1,732 students. As of the 2016-17 School Year, the District had an enrollment of 1,695, representing a continued decline. According to the City’s 2017 Community Needs Assessment, the City has experienced a significant decline in its number of children – a nearly 32% drop between 2010 and 2017.

SUNY Oneonta

SUNY Oneonta is part of the State University of New York System. The campus has a total enrollment of approximately 6,050 and 433 full and part-time faculty. The college, composed of five schools, offers over 120 majors, minors, and cooperative programs. Currently, 17 graduate level programs are offered at the school. The college ranked #13 on the 2018 U.S. News and World Report list of the best public institutions in the region.



SUNY Oneonta Campus. Photo Credit: SUNY Oneonta.

Hartwick College

Hartwick is a private liberal arts college with a total undergraduate enrollment of approximately 1,400 and encompasses a campus of 475 acres. Full-time students live on campus, with the exception of members of the Greek system living in recognized fraternity and sorority houses, commuters, and

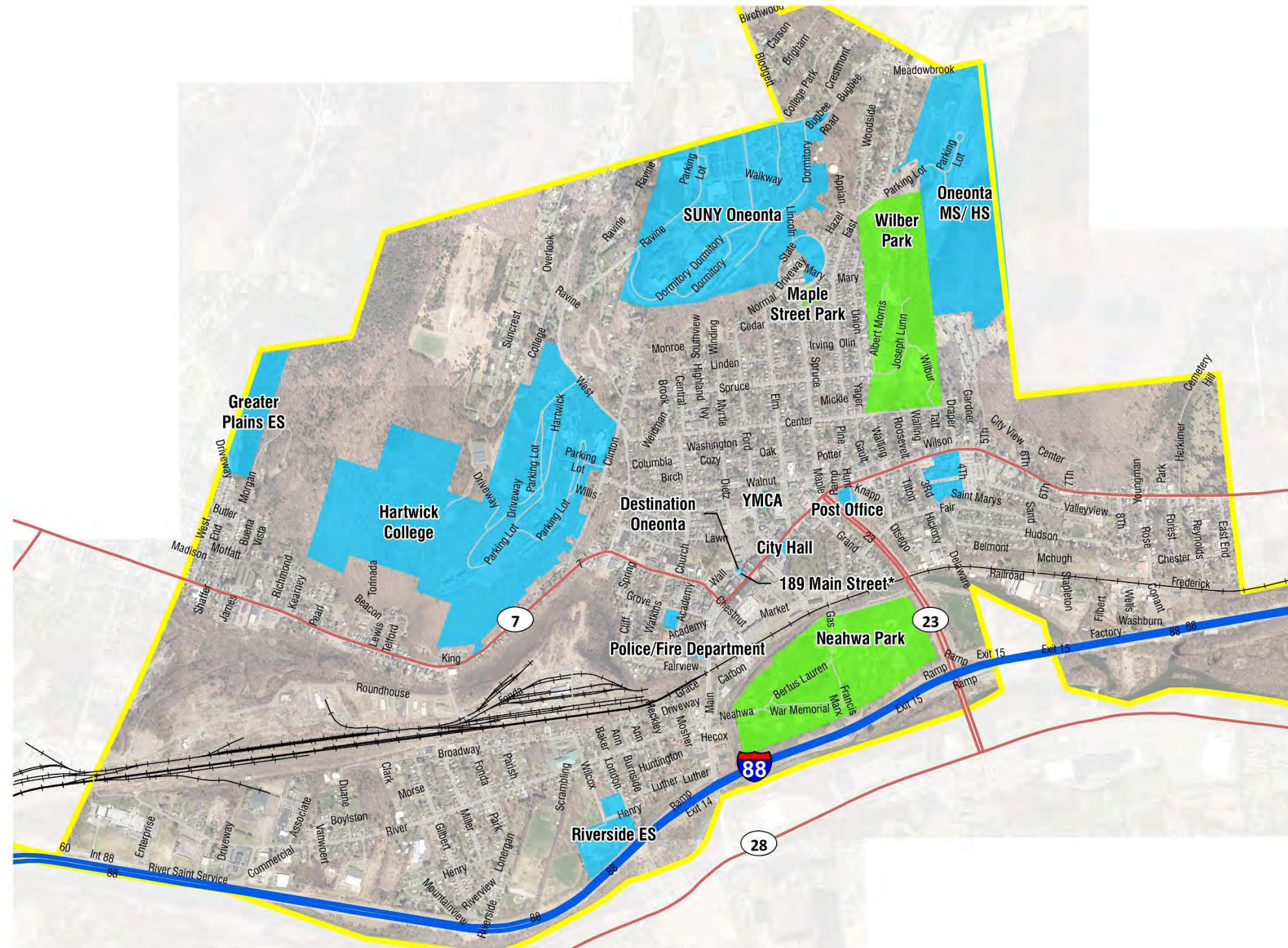
married students. The school offers over 30 bachelor degrees, four pre-professional programs, six cooperative programs, and will be offering its first master's program in 2019.



Hartwick College Campus. Photo Credit: CNY News

A map of the City's community services, institutions, and public spaces are provided in Figure 21 on the following page.

Figure 21. Community Services



Community Services

City of Oneonta
Comprehensive Plan Update

- * Services Located at 189 Main Street
- LEAF Council on Alcoholism and Addictions, Inc.
 - Otsego Now
 - CADE
 - SBDC
 - Chamber of Commerce



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VISION

In 3-5 words describe what you would

years...

LESS
APARTMENTS
MORE
FAMILIES

Melissa for
Part. Arts
Pay rent more
theatre!

USING
RENEWABLE
ENERGY

Sustainable
change makers
diverse
holistic
inspiring

Open
for
Business

Healthy College
City balance.
Retain EXISTING
businesses.

3

Public Engagement

Section Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Steering Committee
3. Focus Group Meetings
4. Community Open Houses
5. Project Website and Social Media

Place Pro
Improved
Roads
&
Infrastructure

MORE CHILDREN
IN OUR SCHOOLS
- MORE FAMILIES
IN OUR HOUSES
& APARTMENTS



1. Introduction

Consensus building involves bringing together the general public, private sector, not-for-profit organizations, and community leaders. Involving the community during the planning will ensure the Plan's long-term success and may unearth a wealth of ideas and resources that could prove critical to the future of Oneonta. The goal of public engagement during the planning process for development of the Comprehensive Plan Update was to foster communication, create a sense of ownership and build trust between residents, property owners, students, and the City of Oneonta.

Citizen participation provides an opportunity to compile the public's knowledge of the community and understand the public's hopes, concerns and desires for the future of the City. The following public engagement tools were used to gather input for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- Steering Committee
- Focus Group Meetings & Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Open Houses
- Project Website and Social Media

2. Steering Committee

To guide development of the Comprehensive Plan Update, a Steering Committee comprised of residents, representatives from local businesses, not-for-profits, and City staff was established. Multiple meetings were held to discuss community issues and concerns, identify stakeholders and enlist the general public, review key findings, prepare a vision statement and goals, and prioritize recommendations.

Committee members include:

- Gary Herzig, Mayor
- Bob Brzozowski, Greater Oneonta Historical Society
- Seth Clark, Peter Clark Student Rentals
- Julie Dostal, LEAF Council
- Mark Davies, Hartwick College
- Joan Fox, Realtor
- Meg Hungerford, City Finance Director
- Rachel Lutz Jessup, Destination Oneonta
- Judy Pangman, City Community Development Director
- Al Rubin, A&D Transport Services, Inc.
- Russ Southard, 6th Ward Council Member
- Alex Thomas, SUNY Oneonta

3. Focus Group Meetings

As part of the public outreach process, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee identified over 70 organizations and key stakeholders to be interviewed. The list was refined and representatives from the identified organizations were invited to attend one or more of the following focus group meetings, which were held in August and December of 2017:

- Landlords
- Housing Non-Profits & Government Agencies
- Realtors and Developers
- Business & Economic Development
- Local Government
- Tourism, History & the Arts

Landlords

A group of local landlords, identified by the Steering Committee, were invited to attend a focus group meeting to discuss recent housing trends in Oneonta, challenges they face as landlords, and steps the City could take to address existing housing needs.

Among the thoughts expressed at the focus group meeting are:

- Landlords have trouble finding housing for young professionals. “We get a call but don’t have the kind of housing stock they are looking for.”
- There is a big market for “workforce housing.”
- Construction of Hillside Commons student housing complex has resulted in a glut in the student housing market.
- There is currently a 17-20% vacancy rate for student rentals. Landlords have had to reduce rents and increase amenities to be competitive.
- “Student housing is the economic engine that runs Oneonta.”
- Concern was expressed that DRI-funded high-end downtown housing aimed at young professionals won’t work. “Students who are downtown will keep these folks awake at night.”
- There is a need for a program that incentivizes rehabilitation of homes located outside the downtown.
- The City is working with Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank to create developable lots.

Housing Not-for-Profits & Government Agencies

Representatives from local housing not-for-profits and government agencies were asked to provide an overview of the organization they represent, discuss how the current housing supply meets the needs of the community they serve, and the needs of homeless and at-risk populations.

Members of the focus group expressed a desire to see additional workforce, senior, and affordable housing in the City. Comments included:

- It is hard to find affordable units for clients. Landlords would rather rent to students at \$750/head than take Section 8.
- The need for workforce housing is growing. For every doctor hired, there are nurses, custodians, etc. that need housing. Not everyone can afford places like Klugo’s Parkview Place.
- The biggest housing needs include places for seniors to age in place, money to rehab abandoned and vacant homes, 2nd story housing on Main Street, and single family homes.
- A continuum of care is needed for at-risk populations. Organizations can provide temporary shelter, but nothing long-term

Realtors and Developers

The Steering Committee identified a group of local Realtors and developers to discuss the City's current housing market and challenges to development/redevelopment in the City of Oneonta.

Members of the focus group expressed the following:

- Recent housing trends include students moving to campus apartments and working professionals moving to Main Street.
- There is a need for single-level homes, apartments and condominiums for seniors.
- Single-family sales in Oneonta are down all around due to limited job market and a growing senior population. There is a larger population that want to rent instead of buy; large number of adjunct positions at colleges, not sure if they are going to stay in the area.
- There are a large number of college professors who want to live downtown.
- The College employs 1,000 people, but most live elsewhere in Utica or places that have adult (not college) housing units downtown. "Don't want to run into your students downtown."
- Buildings need to have elevators and parking for seniors who want to live downtown.
- A lot of people who have money are looking for \$200-250K McMansions; the City doesn't have the housing supply to meet this kind of demand.

Business & Economic Development

The Steering Committee invited a diverse group of local business owners and economic development professionals to meet and discuss the current economic climate in Oneonta. Provided below is a list of interview questions and a summary of the most common focus group responses.

1. How would you describe the current business climate in the City of Oneonta?

- Depressing, stagnant, low profit margins
- DRI may be creating unfair, subsidized competition
- Sales are better this year and we're seeing more local repeat customers
- We don't deal with too many students; we get more business from their parents
- Students account for only about 5% of mall shoppers. When they're there they tend to spend more money on eating and drinking.
- 50% of our customers are within a 40-mile radius

2. In your experience, what characteristics do businesses value the most about working in Oneonta?

- Quality of life, great place to raise a kid and families
- Beauty of the area. Small town feel/look.
- Security of the region – low crime/drugs
- Entertainment, sports and activities for families

- Sense of community
- Relatively lower cost to start a business
- Not as expensive as other college towns

3. What do you see as challenges or barriers to economic or employment growth in the City?

- Many businesses are closed on Sundays and Mondays; many baseball families come down at 6:00 pm and can't find places to go.
- No presence or recognition of colleges downtown - not even any banners
- Brick and mortar retail isn't expanding
- Finding employees – lack of basic skills
- City Code and start up process
- Zoning has been an issue for retrofitting existing buildings
- City isn't getting its records straight (i.e. letter of zoning compliance, past approvals, etc.). Simple administrative errors.
- Signage process
- Getting different stories from different City departments (regarding development process)

4. What significant opportunities for economic development do you see for the City of Oneonta?

- Expand on what we have to offer: SUNY & Hartwick, health care, and tourism
- Retail “hub” for the area
- Get students to buy into what we're doing
- Baseball camps
- We need to get people down here for things beyond just events and food
- Entertainment-type businesses are attracting students; we can consider exploring this.
- Gather a group of venture capitalists that could help local businesses
- We can't change state regulations, but we can change local regulations to incentivize
- Support local businesses that are already here
- The Rail Yards and Pony Place

5. What can the City do to continue to support business and economic development?

- Make downtown more attractive
- Keep drugs/loitering off Main Street. The City should pass a no loitering law, increase foot patrols downtown.
- Streamline the City Code
- The City is working on a website to offer guidance to new small businesses to point people in the right direction
- College outreach - There used to be a more formalized group doing this but it's not very active now

- Bring back program for students (Downtown 101)

Local Government

Representatives from local and regional governments were invited to attend a focus group to discuss the City's assets and challenges, as well as opportunities to partner on future endeavors. A summary of interview questions and responses is provided below.

1. What has been the most positive development or trend that has taken place in the City during the past five years? What about the region?

- Stability in colleges; Colleges have good reputations
- Increased development in Southside area
- Springbrook has grown (approximately 1,200 employees)
- Ongoing improvements in public safety
- Positive impact with alternative transportation
- Local food and beverage and buy local movement
- DRI - \$2.6M program rolls out next month to assist downtown businesses
- Events - Destination Oneonta, Holiday Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting, Pit Run, First Night, Hometown 4th of July, and OH-fest
- New zoning code passed approximately five years ago – fewer districts, fewer definitions
- Downtown as a place for celebrating community has been enhanced
- Positive housing projects including 63-65 Spruce Street, Oneonta Heights, and the Neumann Project (Hillside Commons)
- Town/City cooperation on pedestrian infrastructure improvements

2. What do you consider the biggest issues facing the City today?

- Housing is an ongoing challenge. Major employers cite that the area lacks appropriate housing for faculty, professionals, etc. Other issues include increasing degradation of housing stock, aging housing stock, need to promote first-time homebuyer program, single-family homes being converted to multi-family housing, attracting young professionals/seniors to downtown upper story housing.
- Very little land to develop within the City
- Lack of gateways
- Downtown - Homeless and transients, empty storefronts downtown, existing traffic patterns make it hard to make and receive deliveries
- Lack of grocery store in City
- High turnover of restaurants
- Hard to attract high tech jobs to area due to broadband issues in the County
- Water is underutilized – Can't see the River

3. What projects are on your Capital Improvement wish list?

- Gateway enhancements (Maple & Main, physical improvements off Exit 15)
- Charging stations for electric vehicles
- DRI projects – Market Street improvements, Westcott Lot, Parking Garage/Transportation Hub
- Oneonta Theatre
- Create ‘Lettis Boulevard’ with greenway, sidewalks, etc., and traffic circle at Lettis Boulevard/Route 7 intersection
- Pedestrian/bike connection from downtown to Neahwa Park and Susquehanna River & Susquehanna Greenway connections
- Neahwa Park and Damaschke Field grandstand improvements
- City Hall space improvements, Public Safety building improvements
- Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank properties cleanup – tiny homes on small lots?
- Year-round Farmers Market location and expansion of the market

4. As part of the public engagement process, we will be asking the community to tell us what they would like to see happen in the Downtown and the Railyards. What other sites in the City do you think could serve as a catalyst for area-wide revitalization?

- Market Street
- Fill in empty storefronts

5. Are there opportunities for the City to partner with neighboring local governments and/or the County to increase efficiency?

- Partner with the colleges to stabilize and develop housing
- Look at mechanism for tiny homes and granny cottages
- Review existing zoning and update, if necessary
- Improve town/gown relations
- Joint CFA application for Town and City Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
- Opportunity for more bike paths, pedestrian friendly environment; Need to make a safe and easy walk to Southside
- Turn Oneonta Creek into a trout stream
- Opportunity to create a Makerspace downtown
- Opportunity to become a Climate Smart Community

Tourism, History & the Arts

Representatives from cultural and heritage tourism organizations were invited to attend a focus group to discuss assets, challenges and opportunities in the City of Oneonta as they relate to arts, history and the tourism sector. A summary of interview questions and responses is provided below:

1. How would you characterize cultural and heritage tourism in the City? Is this economic sector growing? Why or why not?

- Healthy and growing
- Lots of events and arts venues

2. How would you describe Oneonta's cultural and heritage tourism sector to a visitor who is unfamiliar with the City? What key assets or characteristics would you be sure to point out?

- We have a lot of good arts venues in the City including Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO), Yager Museum of Art and Culture, Foreman Gallery, Slade, Anderson and Breese Theatres at Hartwick
- Events: CANO Chili Bowl and art shows , GOHS Hops for History,
- Martin-Mullen and Project Space Galleries at SUNY Oneonta
- Greater Oneonta Historical Society and its historic walking tours and exhibitions
- Destination Oneonta Welcome Center and its many events including: Balloonfest on Labor Day weekend, Gingerbread Jubilee, Festival of the Trees, Community Cookie Swap, and Tree Lighting in December; Downtown Trick or Treat, and Fabulous Fridays.
- Other events include: First Night, Fourth of July, Farmers' Market, and Glorious Garage Sale.

3. How would you profile the typical visitor(s) to the City of Oneonta? Who are they? Where do they go and what do they do?

- Baseball families, college visitors, people traveling to Cooperstown
- Tourists here for sports events
- Students and their parents looking for something to do
- Visitors to the region for farm tourism, summer camping or related activities

4. Looking ahead, what do you see as the key issues or challenges facing local tourism over the next five years?

- The biggest challenge is to find or develop a niche that can sustain the arts/cultural tourism or related activities for more than one season
- Need to find funding and places for public art
- No historic markers, not many statues or monuments in the city
- Signage – the City has parking, we just need signage so people know where it is
- We need something downtown other than a place to get a tattoo or a slice of pizza
- Need a grocery store downtown

5. What opportunities do you see to grow arts, culture and tourism in the City?

- Financial investment in the arts and culture infrastructure, more public art
- Create more of a hub – an arts and entertainment district
- More partnerships
- Preserve Oneonta Theatre as a performance spot
- Build on our historic and heritage – two historic districts, state and federally recognized properties, walking tours, signage, and historic markers
- Need an attractive downtown to increase number of visitors
- Increase communication/promotion with two colleges. Residents aren't aware of activities going on at the campuses.

Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to these focus group meetings, the project team conducted one-on-one stakeholder interviews with representatives from Otsego Now and the Otsego County Chamber to discuss current and planned economic development initiatives.

4. Community Open Houses

Throughout the planning process, the general public was provided with opportunities to get involved. The Steering Committee hosted two Open Houses and maintained a project website to provide those with busy schedules and/or limited mobility an opportunity to stay involved.



Open House #1

The first Open House was held on Thursday, January 18, 2018 at the Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO) Wilber Mansion located at 11 Ford Avenue. Approximately 100 community members dropped by the Open House between 3:00 pm to 7:30 pm to contribute their ideas for the Plan. Representatives of the Steering Committee and Elan Planning and Design were on hand for the event, helping guide participants through the various stations set up throughout the room.

The Open House event had participants visit the 22 different stations set up throughout the room. Stations were arranged in a fashion that moved participants through the room to learn some facts and figures about the City and, more importantly, to share their thoughts and ideas about the future of Oneonta. Stations were organized by topic areas including *Natural Resources and Recreation, Housing & Neighborhoods, Historic & Cultural Assets, Tourism, Business & Economic Development, Strategic Advantage, Sustainability, and Places & Spaces*. The *Places & Spaces* stations provided participants with the opportunity to identify those areas that they think are ripe of investment.

A summary table of the most common themes identified during the Open House is presented below.

When participants asked, **“Where is your favorite place in Oneonta?”** the most frequent responses included:

- Main Street shops and restaurants
- Municipal parks
- Huntington Library
- Farmers’ Market

When asked, **“What areas of the City need improvement and/or where are the things you don’t like in the City?”** the most frequent responses were:

- Save the Oneonta Theatre
- Housing – more non-student rentals and year-round options
- Empty retail spaces
- Parking improvements

The following is a list of common ideas of **products, services and/or experiences that residents feel would be successful** in Oneonta.

- Co-working space, Makerspace, arts studio, community kitchen, innovation incubator labs, shared workspace for entrepreneurs/freelancers
- Less thrift stores downtown, more beer, food, arts/entertainment
- “Green business”, tech, data management firms, medical support
- Downtown grocery store and drug store
- Develop the Railyards

Open House participants were asked to share their favorite story about **people, places and events that shaped Oneonta**. Popular responses included:

- Downtown restaurants and businesses, including Bresee’s Department Store
- Municipal parks and sponsored activities
- Community leaders

Participants were asked to think about when friends, family or clients come to visit Oneonta and to describe any **issues they have experienced in terms of tourism amenities** (lodging, restaurants, gas stations, restrooms, transportation access, etc.). Common themes included:

- Need to enhance/improve directional and wayfinding signage
- Not enough lodging during the summer months
- Stores and restaurants are closed during opportunity hours

When asked to describe their **vision for the City’s future**, participant most often stated:

- Vibrant downtown, safe, diverse, tourist stop
- Sustainable, green, environmentally conscious
- A destination for the arts, open for business, magnet for young people
- Family friendly

When participants were asked to detail the **advantages and challenges of living in the City** compared to similar communities, the most frequent responses included:

- Beautiful old homes, walkable community
- Need a grocery store
- Housing for seniors and young professionals

Participants were asked to talk about the **advantages and disadvantages of living and working in the City**. Common themes included:

Advantages:

- Vibrant downtown, walkable community
- “Small town feel”
- Recreation and culture

Disadvantages:

- Housing – rents too high, run-down homes, not enough
- Affordable housing for young professionals
- Lack of professional employment opportunities

The first “Idea Center Station” focused on natural resources and recreation. When asked to identify **opportunities to showcase the City’s natural resources**, the most popular responses included:

- Improve access to the River, riverside activities
- Improve walk/bike routes – to Southside from Lettis Highway
- Ice skating on the pond

Participants were asked to how the **Market Street corridor could best be used for reinvestment**.

Common responses included:

- Maintain/enhance connection to Main Street
- Streetscape improvements – benches, trees, fountain, tables
- Make Foothills a convention center

When asked to identify the City’s **greatest historic and cultural assets**, participants most frequently cited:

- Opportunity to build on existing assets – Oneonta Theatre, CANO, Foothills, community events, Farmers’ Market
- Main Street and Walnut Historic Districts
- Need to celebrate the railroad and railyards history
- Strong arts scene

Residents were asked to think about **what makes the City of Oneonta unique**. Common responses included:

- Historic housing, history, great architecture
- River, recreation, walkable, trail systems, parks, access to nature
- Two colleges, health care
- Access to rail, highway, airport and strategic location between Albany and Binghamton
- Strong arts community

Participants were asked to identify **ways to integrate sustainability into the City**. Some of the common ideas included:

- Adopt green building codes, water resource management plan
- Public gardens, composting, solar panels on municipal buildings
- Encourage “green industries” at the Rail Yards

Residents identified the following **ideas to use the Downtown to revitalize the City’s economy**.

- Renovate upper floors for residential use, market rate housing
- Places for education downtown, smart classroom, video conferencing
- Renovate Oneonta Theatre

When asked to identify **areas for reinvestment**, participants most frequently mentioned:

- The Oneonta Theatre

- Railyards and railroad corridor
- Former Ford Sales Building
- Armory

The **Creative & Open Thinking** board provided people with an opportunity to add anything that they wanted to the discussion. Frequent responses included:

- More culture, more arts
- Focus on entrepreneurs, instead of courting big business
- Green energy, food waste composting, green waste management, encourage geothermal energy
- We still need a grocery store!

Open House #2

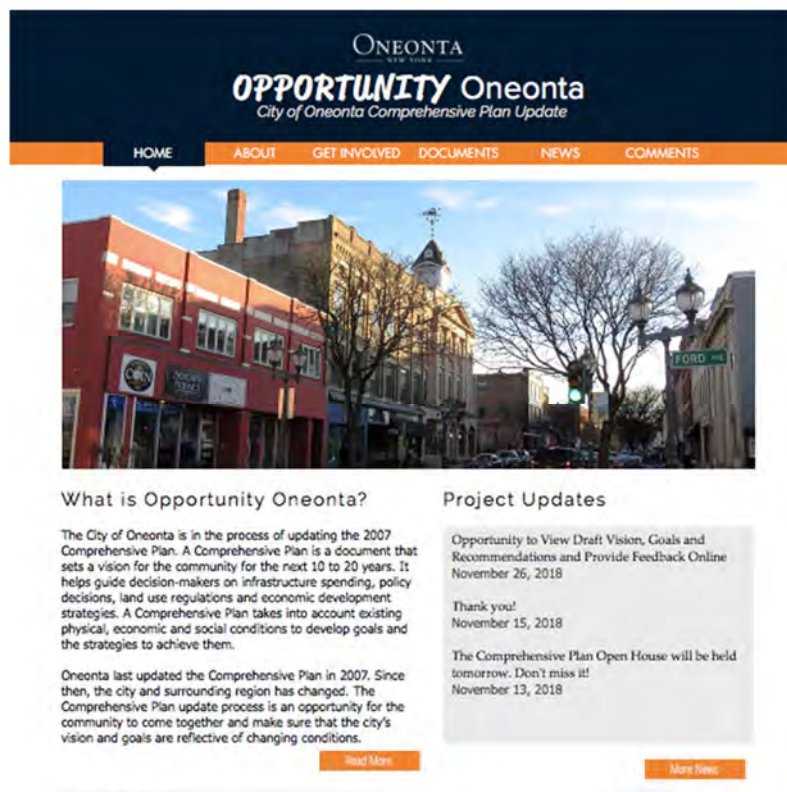
On November 18, 2018 a second Open House was held at the Village High School. Community members were asked to reflect and provide feedback on the draft Vision Statement, Goals, and Recommendations. Attendees were invited to use colored dots, markers, pens, and Post-it Notes to indicate approval or disapproval of the draft recommendations and provide the Committee with additional feedback and ideas. As a result of the information provided at the Open House, a number of the Plan’s goals and recommendations were modified.

5. Project Website & Social Media

The Steering Committee recognized that not everyone would be able to the public engagement events, including the community open houses. In response, a project website

(www.opportunityoneonta.com) was created to provide those with busy schedules or limited mobility an opportunity to stay informed and provide project feedback.

In addition to the official project website, an Opportunity Oneonta Facebook page was established as part of a social media campaign.





4

Vision Statement

Section Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Vision Statement

VISION STATEMENT

Oneonta aspires to be a vibrant, thriving community known for its historic urban fabric, surrounding natural beauty, strong educational institutions and commitment to environmental awareness and responsible growth. We see ourselves as a small city that serves as a regional destination with ample opportunities for jobs, housing, culture and recreation; attracting new ventures and supporting existing businesses through the creation strategic partnerships. Oneonta is a community devoted to economic and social justice where each person accepts responsibility for making decisions that lead to a healthy, equitable, and sustainable future.

More specifically, and consistent with our values as a community, we see Oneonta as:

- A thriving small city that serves as a destination to experience the unique history, culture, recreation, natural beauty, including the Susquehanna River, and intellectual pursuits of the northern Catskills;
- A business-friendly environment that encourages innovation and attracts sustainable enterprise while broadening the economic base and growing existing businesses;
- A safe, welcoming community where everyone has access to a variety of employment, housing, recreation, and cultural opportunities in a healthy environment;
- A vibrant place to live, work and play based on an eclectic mix of building types and uses in an attractive, pedestrian friendly downtown;
- A community governed by citizens who are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all;
- A friendly community offering a wide range of housing options for its growing and increasingly diverse population, while supporting established neighborhoods;
- A small city committed to environmental sustainability and its associated practices, such as energy efficiency, alternative transportation, and reuse of historic properties; and,
- An innovative, multi-purpose center that includes an industrial/commercial business park that attracts industry, creates new jobs, and adds to the local tax base.

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Goals & Recommendations

Section Contents:

1. Policy Area 1: Destination & Image
2. Policy Area 2: Economic Development
3. Policy Area 3: Quality of Life
4. Policy Area 4: Downtown
5. Policy Area 5: Administration & Government
6. Policy Area 6: Campus & Community Relations
7. Policy Area 7: Housing
8. Policy Area 8: Sustainability
9. Policy Area 9: The Rail Yards
10. Policy Area 10: Transportation
11. Policy Area 11: Regional

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool that can be used by communities to organize projects and policies. The recommendations outlined on the following pages detail specific actions or policies the City of Oneonta should pursue to accomplish the Plan's vision and goals. It is of note that the recommendations are the suggested method to accomplish the vision, but they may not be the only approach. The intent is to provide the City with a variety of options to address the issues and concerns that were identified during the comprehensive planning process.

Several of the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations were also identified in the City's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Strategic Investment Plan. The Steering Committee recognized that additional funding may be necessary to fully implement these recommendations and elected to include them in the Comprehensive Plan Update as well.

To achieve the City's vision for the future, the Steering Committee developed a series of goals and recommendations for the following policy areas:

1. Destination & Image
2. Economic Development
3. Quality of Life
4. Downtown
5. Administration & Government
6. Campus & Community Relations
7. Housing
8. Sustainability
9. The Rail Yards
10. Transportation
11. Regional

1. Policy Area 1: Destination & Image

It is the policy of Oneonta to: establish the City as a regional and national destination, expanding and promoting our various assets including higher education institutions, scenic beauty, the arts and cultural community, urban parks, and excellent quality of life.

Whether it's the historic charm of downtown's Main Street, the scenic beauty of the surrounding Catskill Mountains and Susquehanna River, anchor institutions such as Hartwick College and SUNY Oneonta, or the abundance of arts, entertainment and recreation venues and events, the City of Oneonta has the elements necessary to become a regional tourist destination. In an effort to help reverse the recent economic downturn, the City is leveraging the support received through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to develop a unified image, and establish itself as a destination for arts, culture, recreation, and the rapidly growing food and beverage industry.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Monitor, support and implement DRI programs and recommendations that improve Oneonta's image.	
<p>DI.1 Execute DRI Branding & Marketing and Downtown Wayfinding program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the visibility of Oneonta's downtown and small businesses, \$250,000 in DRI funds will be used to develop a marketing theme and network with which to regularly disseminate the marketing materials for the downtown. The project will result in increased retail sales, commercial business opportunities, and improved perception of the downtown \$320,000 in DRI funds will be used for a Downtown District Signage project that will improve the visibility of downtown Oneonta businesses and advertise the City to a broad region.
<p>DI.2 Explore creation of a Community Information Officer position to oversee City's long-term marketing efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a Community Information Officer position will provide the municipal capacity needed to showcase the City's natural and man-made assets and quality of life and properly market the City to potential businesses, workers and residents.
Goal 2: Establish the City of Oneonta as a destination for the arts, culture, and recreation.	
<p>DI.3 Support ongoing efforts to grow the arts in the City of Oneonta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing efforts could include programming and renovation of existing assets including, but not limited to, the Oneonta Theatre, Foothills Performing Arts Center, and the Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO), as well as exploring the feasibility of establishing artists' lofts (live/work space) downtown.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>DI.4 Explore development of a structure (Arts Task Force) to coordinate arts, entertainment, and recreation venues throughout the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in the public engagement process commented that it would be beneficial to have a single events calendar that promotes community, historic, cultural and recreation venues and events. • The careful development of events across the City can provide an effective mechanism for brand building, attracting visitors, and the inclusion of previously excluded areas into the tourism mainstream. Regional cultural or sporting events could be established to promote a unified brand and leverage exposure.
<p>DI.5 Secure funding to implement recommendations of arts and culture-related studies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Oneonta has the potential to be a vibrant and dynamic arts and cultural destination for the region. Growing the arts and cultural community will help make the City a unique destination, support a high quality of life for existing and future visitors, and attract visitors from outside of the City that will patronize local businesses. • To enhance the City's arts & cultural community and assets, the City should implement existing recommendations, which will help generate new public art, support local artists, market existing assets, and otherwise help grow the City as an arts and culture destination.
<p>DI.6 Leverage and promote existing recreation assets and natural resources, including the Susquehanna River, Wilber Park, Neahwa Park, and the Homer Folks State Forest, to attract tourists and enrich the visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage tourists, as well as outdoor recreation enthusiasts, are looking for authenticity of place. • When promoting the area, special attention should be paid to those natural and man-made attractions that distinguish the City of Oneonta from other communities.
<p>DI.7 Work with existing public and private entities to promote year-round recreation activities in the City, including hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, ice skating at Neahwa Park, and snowmobiling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish Oneonta as a year-round recreation destination, the City should partner with organizations like Destination Oneonta to promote existing summer and winter recreation activities and events.
<p>DI.8 Partner with existing organizations, such as Destination Oneonta, to develop a multi-day trip itinerary to market to regional summer tourists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Oneonta has an abundance of historic, cultural, recreation and natural assets. • Working with existing organizations, the City should develop and promote a multi-day itinerary that will drive visitation and increase customers' length of stay in the City.

Goal 3: Establish the City of Oneonta as a food and beverage tourism destination, and hub for local agricultural entrepreneurs.	
<p>DI.9 Establish the Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods to support the local food and beverage industry, as identified in the DRI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods is in keeping with the Mohawk Valley REDC’s initiative to support innovation and expansion in the agribusiness and agritourism markets. • Development of the Center will transform Market Street into a regional destination centered on food, beverage, hospitality, and community, and connect and complement Main Street and the recent revitalization efforts underway there.
<p>DI.10 Partner with existing assets to coordinate efforts to ensure Oneonta is part of a broader regional effort.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should work closely with existing assets, including the Hartwick College Center for Craft Food and Beverage, existing producers, the Oneonta Farmers’ Market, the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE), and CNY Fresh, to advance the Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods concept.

2. Policy Area 2: Economic Development

It is the policy of Oneonta to: support existing businesses and encourage the attraction of additional businesses that meet the needs of residents and visitors.

A healthy economy is critical to the long-term well-being of the City of Oneonta. The recommendations identified in this policy area are designed to:

- Encourage partnerships to establish a proactive economic development program focused on the redevelopment of targeted areas;
- Create a business climate that attracts and retains a diversity of businesses to sustain a strong tax base that offers the goods and services community members need and want;
- Build upon existing assets and growing economic sectors such as environmentally conscious or “green” technologies, recreational tourism, and arts and culture; and,
- Create job opportunities attractive to recent college graduates and business start-ups.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Establish a structure to implement local economic development initiatives.	
ED.1 Activate the Oneonta Local Development Corporation (LDC) as the economic development entity for the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local development corporations (LDCs) are private, not-for-profit entities designed to allow local governments to help businesses create and retain jobs, provide loans, and play a more flexible role in public-private partnerships.
ED.2 Work with local economic development entities to identify common priorities and strategies to achieve them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of local economic entities working to grow economic development in Otsego County and the City. • The City should meet with representatives from the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Otsego Now, Destination Oneonta, and others to identify common goals and strategies to advance economic development in the City.
Goal 2: Monitor and implement programs and recommendations that support the vitality, retention and expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses to the City of Oneonta.	
ED.3 Expand upon the DRI-funded Downtown Improvement Fund (DIF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DIF provides grant monies for projects that will transform downtown by increasing the supply of year-round occupied, market-rate, high-quality residential units in upper stories of existing buildings; improving building facades; and, encouraging exterior signage for buildings.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>ED.4 Continue to be a business-friendly community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities with procedures and policies that are perceived to be most accommodating to businesses have a significant advantage when it comes to business attraction and retention. • Working with the Oneonta Chamber of Commerce, the City should consider the following action steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue efforts to streamline the zoning and permitting processes to make it easier to open a business in Oneonta. ➤ Create a Business Welcome Kit. ➤ Create a permit and license application system that allows for online application together with online issuance of permits/licenses, as appropriate. ➤ Designate a liaison to guide applicants through the regulatory process.
<p>ED.5 Use the Comprehensive Plan, zoning law and existing studies to market the City to attract and recruit businesses that will serve residents as well as visitors and provide a mix of products and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing plans and ordinances can be used as marketing tools to tell a municipality's story, vision and goals to attract residents, business and developers to locate in a community. • The City should take steps to educate and integrate citizen boards to ensure cross-communication.
<p>Goal 3: Create opportunities for recent graduates and entrepreneurs seeking to establish in Oneonta and start businesses.</p>	
<p>ED.6 Conduct a business incubator and/or shared work space feasibility study to identify various niche/targeted businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oneonta's assets include the presence of two higher education institutions in the City. However, the City's populations of promising students often seek employment elsewhere after graduation, rather than staying in the community. • When successfully implemented, business incubation can have a positive effect on the success of new ventures. Some keys to success include accurately defining the market opportunity and delivering the services (programming and facilities) required by start-up and small businesses. • A feasibility study can determine the market demand for a business incubator and/or shared work space in Oneonta, recommend a format and general operating procedures, and assess potential financial performance.
<p>ED.7 Partner with Otsego Now and other organizations to provide support and opportunities to transition successful incubator and start-up businesses into permanent space in the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a business incubator in Oneonta could provide recent graduates, as well as local start-up businesses, with the necessary support and financial and technical services needed to create and grow young businesses.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 4: Encourage infill development throughout the City.	
<p>ED.8 Advance Westcott Lot mixed-use development project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed-use projects traditionally include a mix of commercial and residential uses that create a 24/7 vibrancy downtown, which in turn, supports existing businesses and attract new ones. The City plans to use \$1,470,000 in DRI funds to construct a new mixed-use retail and residential project at 226-236 Main Street.
<p>ED.9 Consider the acquisition of key properties by the Oneonta LDC or Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to promote development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an alternative to greenfield development, the City should assist and encourage redevelopment of existing vacant and underutilized sites. The City LDC and County IDA should work together to establish a shared inventory of properties suitable for infill developments. The LDC and IDA can provide incentives to encourage development, including PILOTs (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) and issuance of tax-exempt bonds.
<p>ED.10 Encourage a partnership between the Oneonta LDC and Otsego Now (Otsego County IDA) to support redevelopment opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated efforts between the LDC and IDA can help spur initiatives to improve the overall business climate in Oneonta. The City could convene an initial workshop between the LDC and IDA to identify shared priorities and identify infill development opportunities that align with the mission of both organizations.
<p>ED.11 Ensure zoning supports recommendations for development of key sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning is the legal mechanism that controls future land use in the City and therefore it is critical to align zoning regulations with the desired development outcomes for key sites. The City should review the existing zoning regulations of key development sites in the City with respect to allowable uses, but also regulations that affect the scale and design of development. Identifying desirable development concepts or conceptual site plans may be beneficial by allowing the City to “work backwards” from desired outcomes and ensuring that zoning regulations permit the development concepts.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION / POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 5: Ensure that adequate municipal services and infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities, energy, telecommunication, etc.) are in place to support economic growth in the City.	
<p>ED.12 Partner with local service providers to identify gaps in existing infrastructure systems, and seek solutions to advance economic growth without negatively impacting quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in modern infrastructure lay the foundation for economic development and growth, including business creation and retention, attracting (and retaining) a skilled workforce, and fostering sustainability. The City should establish a working committee that includes representatives from local service providers to examine the current condition of infrastructure available to Oneonta residents and businesses, conduct a needs assessment, and identify potential solutions and funding sources. The City should make an effort to stay at the forefront of new, cost efficient technologies as they emerge.
Goal 6: Revitalize abandoned, vacant and brownfield sites to support economic growth.	
<p>ED.13 Seek funding assistance from the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program, Federal EPA, and other organizations to identify and assess brownfields in Oneonta and develop strategies for redevelopment and remediation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and state programs provide technical and financial assistance to communities to develop revitalization plans and implementation strategies for areas affected by the presence of brownfield sites. Organizations like the Department of State (DOS) and EPA offer funding programs to help local communities with brownfields, including grant funds to assess and remediate sites, as well as to conduct planning activities to address community-wide or neighborhood area brownfield redevelopment.
<p>ED.14 Work with the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank (GMVLB) to repurpose vacant or abandoned properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City has multiple vacant or abandoned properties that may be good candidates for acquisition by GMVLB. The Land Bank’s mission is to address vacant, abandoned and blighted properties in the region when local governments do not have the resources to identify, stabilize, rehabilitate and resell such properties. The City should partner with GMVLB to identify priority sites for acquisition, which will then subsequently be redeveloped. This will remove visual blight from neighborhoods, get properties back on the tax rolls and in productive use, and/or create new open space in the City.

3. Policy Area 3: Quality of Life

It is the policy of Oneonta to: ensure that Oneonta is a premier city in New York State where people desire to live and raise a family, and have ample employment opportunities.

Quality of life consists of multiple indicators, including education, the arts, economic stability, public health and safety, social networks, environmental quality, public services, adequate infrastructure, healthy neighborhoods, and recreational opportunities.

Oneonta has an authentic sense of place founded upon the City’s historic charm, picturesque natural landscape, cultural and recreation amenities, and strong sense of community. The recommendations identified in this policy area are designed to build on these assets to nurture the City’s quality of life in order to attract and retain residents, businesses, and tourists.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Improve offerings and expand access to cultural and recreational areas within the City.	
<p>QL.1 Seek funding to develop and implement a Component Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in partnership with the Town of Oneonta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A LWRP is a comprehensive planning document that addresses issues affecting a community’s waterfront. • The LWRP should examine the potential impacts that an increased regulation from the Chesapeake Bay Program, NYS’s Phase III Watershed Implementation program will have on the surrounding Susquehanna waterfront. • Benefits of having an adopted LWRP include: a clear direction that can increase a community’s ability to attract appropriate development that will respect its unique cultural and natural characteristics; a long-term partnership among local government, community based organizations, and State agencies; and, financial assistance to implement recommended projects.
<p>QL.2 Create a Neahwa Park Market Street entrance to improve access for all users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neahwa Park is an important recreation amenity for both residents and visitors. • Improvements to the James Georgeson Avenue entrance off Market Street will create a welcoming gateway to the Park, enhance pedestrian safety and help establish Oneonta as a recreation destination.
<p>QL.3 Continue to implement and update the City’s 2013 Neahwa Park Master Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neahwa Park is an integral part of the City’s parks and recreation system that provides active and passive recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors. • Master Plan recommendations include enhancements to the picnic area, Hodges Pond, park entrances, Damaschke Field, splash park, dog park, infrastructure improvements and landscaping.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>QL.4 Secure funding to develop a city-wide Parks and Recreation Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To guide the growth and development of Oneonta’s municipal park system, it is recommended that funds be secured to develop a city-wide plan. The plan should include recommendations and an implementation strategy that will assist the City government when making decisions and securing funding for the acquisition, development, and management of municipal parks, open space, and recreation programming. Strategies should include a review of lands located near the reservoir for potential passive and active recreation activities that will not negatively impact water quality.
<p>QL.5 Redevelop Damaschke Grandstand area to expand family entertainment options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseball has been an integral part of Oneonta’s history. For over 100 years, residents and visitors have traveled to Damaschke Field to attend evening baseball games. To ensure continued spectator and player safety, the aging Damaschke Grandstand area should be renovated.
<p>Goal 2: Reduce substance misuse, dependence and overdose in Oneonta.</p>	
<p>QL.6 Support initiatives to develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan to curb the impacts of the addiction epidemic in Oneonta and increase the likelihood that persons with addiction will seek recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City has been greatly affected by the national opioid epidemic and is experiencing a significant substance misuse and overdose problem. The problem is detrimental to the social fabric of the community, creating hardships for many families in the City. It also impacts economic development as businesses may have difficulty finding qualified workers. A comprehensive and coordinated plan will ensure that the problem is addressed with involvement from appropriate stakeholders, including the City and health organizations.
<p>QL.7 Partner with organizations to further educate the public and to increase awareness of the substance misuse risks, impacts, and reduction measures that will improve the quality of life for Oneonta residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and awareness is a key tool in combatting substance abuse and the City should be proactive in working with partners, including Hartwick College and SUNY Oneonta, to conduct an education and awareness campaign, which should direct people to available resources for help.
<p>QL.8 Continue to coordinate and support specialized training for law enforcement and first responders to address substance use disorders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law enforcement and first responders are on the front lines of the substance abuse problem and are called in to help those in emergency situations. It is crucial that the City continue to support these professionals through specialized training, including how to recognize signs of overdose and substance abuse problems and how to respond accordingly. This includes making sure that first responders are trained in the use of Naloxone, the medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. The training should also include connecting at-risk individuals to resources for support and treatment.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>QL.9 Ensure that zoning code supports the location of support services for people with addictions and recovering from addictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support services for addiction include substance abuse treatment facilities, supportive housing, mental health facilities, and others. Communities often resist allowing these types of facilities but they are critical infrastructure in combatting substance abuse issues. • The City should ensure that its zoning regulations allow these types of facilities and if necessary conduct educational outreach so that residents understand the benefits of the facilities and that common fears about crime and property values are typically unjustified.
<p>Goal 3: Strengthen partnerships with community not-for-profits and other organizations to improve quality of life for Oneonta residents.</p>	
<p>QL.10 Continue to work with not-for-profits on the poverty reduction initiative and identify future areas for cooperation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census data indicates that approximately 30% of the people in the City of Oneonta live in poverty. • Oneonta is one of sixteen communities across New York State awarded grant funding in 2016 to develop a locally driven strategy to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunities for local families. This work should be continued to reduce overall poverty rates in the City.
<p>QL.11 Establish ongoing dialog with the Bassett Healthcare Network to ensure that Fox Hospital is working to meet the mutual goals of Bassett and providing services that a thriving city needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox Hospital, which is part of the Bassett Healthcare Network, is one of the largest employers in the City. As the face of healthcare continues to change at a rapid pace, Bassett will need to continue adapting to meet evolving needs to remain a leader in the field. • The City recognizes that the hospital is an important community resource and is critical to the economic vitality of Oneonta. The City should continue to work with representatives of the Bassett Healthcare Network to ensure that Bassett’s plans are harmonious with those of the City, and vice versa.
<p>Goal 4: Preserve and promote the City’s historic and cultural assets.</p>	
<p>QL.12 Participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CLG program encourages municipalities to enact laws that provide for local review of development proposals that impact historic buildings. • By obtaining CLG status, Oneonta will be eligible for grant monies that can be used for property research and education about historic preservation.
<p>QL.13 Enhance recognition of the City’s two existing historic districts: Oneonta Downtown Historic District and Walnut Street Historic District.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Downtown Historic District, which includes the downtown commercial core, features 64 historic buildings and one historic site. • The Walnut Street Historic District includes 44 structures and was established in 1980. It includes buildings located on Dietz Street, Elm Street, Ford Avenue, Maple Street, and Walnut Street. • The two districts are important assets of the City of Oneonta showcasing the City’s rich history and helping to make the City’s built environment unique and attractive. By improving their recognition the City will support a high quality of life, community pride, sense of place, and increased heritage tourism.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>QL.14 Support the Greater Oneonta Historical Society's efforts to establish a building history and plaque program for historic buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity exists to promote public appreciation and civic pride in Oneonta's history by establishing a historic property plaque program. • The program could include development of a house history and a bronze plaque, which commemorates the building. The property owner would pay a fee to cover the expense of the historic plaque and the house history.

4. Policy Area 4: Downtown

It is the policy of Oneonta to: make its defined Downtown a regionally renowned destination and a place that serves the residential, commercial, and civic needs of the community and its visitors.

The health and vibrancy of Downtown has a significant impact on the City's image, economy and quality of life for residents. In 2016, Oneonta was selected as the winner of the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) in the Mohawk Valley Region. These monies are being used to fund projects that will leverage private investment to make physical improvements to the Downtown that will enhance the City's image and accessibility, provide new housing opportunities, establish an Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods to support the local food and beverage industry, promote sustainability, and expand upon the City's economic potential as a regional center of arts, commerce, recreation, social, and civic activity.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that improve Downtown.	
D.1 Complete the DRI Downtown Improvement Fund (DIF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DIF supports: (1) the creation or renovation of high-quality, year-round residential units in upper stories of existing buildings; (2) façade improvements; and (3) exterior signage for buildings. Continuation of funding for the DIF program will support a vibrant Downtown.
D.2 Establish the Muller Plaza Passage, which is a public pedestrian passageway between Muller Plaza and Water Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project, which was awarded DRI funding, will transform an "L" shaped lot into a public pedestrian passageway that connects Water Street to Muller Plaza. The new passage will provide access to Muller Plaza from the City's public parking garage, shops located along Water Street, and ultimately to the new Transit Hub, the proposed Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods on Market Street, and the existing Foothills Performing Arts & Civic Center.
D.3 Establish the Water Street Boardwalk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRI funded project will establish a public pedestrian passageway between Water and Market Streets, providing access between the parking garage and new Transit Hub, existing shops on Water Street, Foothills Performing Arts & Civic Center,, and the future Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>D.4 Complete the Market Street and South Main Street Improvement project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRI goals for improvements to Market and South Main Streets are to increase pedestrian activity, provide an urban character consistent with Oneonta’s downtown, and incentivize development of underutilized properties.
<p>Goal 2: Build new opportunities in the Downtown and enhance organizational capacity.</p>	
<p>D.5 Redevelop Market Street to offer greater commercial, residential and other opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will physically transform Market Street into a pedestrian friendly, arts-themed corridor primed for private investment. When complete, the street will be an active, urban space with large public art installations, café spaces, innovative stormwater design, sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, and enhanced gateways. This public investment is necessary to advance an exciting new concept that builds on the strengths of the Mohawk Valley Region and the proposed Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods..
<p>D.6 Consider alternative ways to finance public infrastructure improvements in the Downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public improvements in the Downtown will help catalyze private investment, but these types of infrastructure improvements can be cost-prohibitive. The City should explore new, alternative, and innovative financing strategies for implementing infrastructure projects. One potential strategy that the City could explore is PILOT Increment Financing (PIF) in partnership with the County IDA. PIF allocates a portion of future property tax revenue from a designated redevelopment area into a dedicated fund that can be used to cover payments for public infrastructure investments made in the district. Another option that the City could explore is Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which is a flexible, economic development tool that allows local governments to invest in infrastructure and other improvements and pay for them by capturing the increase in property taxes generated by development.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>D.7 Consider alternative organizing entities for Downtown revitalization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City could benefit from having a dedicated Downtown revitalization organization representing a collaborative partnership among existing organizations and businesses. Several types of these organizations exist for the City to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Business Improvement District (BID)</u>: A BID is a defined area within which property owners contribute to a fund for projects of common interest through an additional tax levy and benefit such as marketing and events, beautification, and capital improvements. A BID is typically run by a not-for-profit organization with a Board of Directors elected by members in the district. ➤ <u>Merchants/Downtown Business Association</u>: This is a group of business owners that are focused on economic development issues. These associations do not necessarily have a defined district and do not have the same type of tax levy found in a BID. These associations typically provide a more local specific focus area compared to a Chamber of Commerce. ➤ <u>Main Street Program</u>: The National Main Street Center oversees the Main Street Program which has been adopted by communities across the country. The program includes building a Main Street organization with broad representation. A Main Street Program is focused on organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion.
<p>D.8 Explore feasibility of a new facility that would provide support to local artists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists contribute to a dynamic, unique, and vibrant community and the City should consider options for a facility to support local artists so that the City maintains a strong arts and cultural community. • An “Arts Incubator” would provide developmental assistance to artists, creative enterprises, and arts organizations in their early stages, including business development assistance and/or low-cost studio space. • Other options may include subsidized live/work space to help artists with living costs while they become established.

Goal 3: Preserve and enhance the historic character and scale of Downtown.	
D.9 Expand upon and incorporate the design guidelines prepared as part of the DRI-funded DIF into City Code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design standards help define the appearance of existing structures, additions, new construction and site work and how they relate to the rest of the community. • As part of the DRI, the City developed a set of design guidelines to assist Downtown businesses, developers and property owners as they make property improvements using the DIF program. • To create a uniform look to the City, these guidelines could be expanded to cover a larger geographic area.
D.10 Incorporate underground utilities where feasible in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of roadways and other public works projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underground utilities have numerous benefits, including safety, aesthetics, and energy. Overhead utilities can be brought down in storms and pose public safety issues. Overhead utilities also detract from the beauty and appearance of places – especially vibrant Downtown and Main Street areas. There are also practical reasons to bury utilities, including the reduced amount of transmission loss of power lines. • Due to the high cost of putting utilities underground, the City should incorporate utility burying into other planned rehabilitation and public works projects, whenever feasible. Downtown areas should be prioritized.
D.11 Consider ways to create safe pedestrian-only areas and inviting public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality public spaces in the Downtown will help support the area as a friendly place to experience as a pedestrian. This will help enhance activity and vitality Downtown, while supporting local businesses in the Downtown area that benefit from foot traffic. • Public spaces for people might include parks, plazas, paths, sidewalks, and other spaces such as those around public buildings. • The City should identify existing and potential public spaces and explore creative ways of enhancing them as part of the City’s public realm in the Downtown areas.
D.12 Create a rear building façade program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rear building façade program would encourage property owners and commercial tenants that have properties accessible from a dedicated street or alley to invest in building façade upgrades that create a more interesting and appealing streetscape, attracting customers, clients, visitors and businesses to the Downtown.

<p>D.13 Encourage outdoor seating: indoor/outdoor counter seating at restaurants, shared seating areas, and space for food trucks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor seating contributes to a dynamic and vibrant environment while contributing to a high quality of life by creating people-friendly public spaces. • Outdoor seating for restaurants and spaces for food trucks will help build the Downtown and City as an exciting dining destination, helping to draw in visitors and customers from outside of the City.
<p>D.14 Consider installation of amenities in new public areas that are created Downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As new public spaces are created Downtown, the City should explore the addition of amenities to enhance these spaces such as public restrooms, water fountains, water bottle fillers, and dog water facilities at the new transit hub. Other potential areas for new amenities include in the indoor walkway between Main Street and the parking garage.

5. Policy Area 5: Administration & Government

It is the policy of Oneonta to: ensure that City government serves the needs of the community by supplying services that promote quality of life and economic growth.

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require strong leadership, government accountability, and regional cooperation. The following recommendations are designed to incorporate best practices to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of local governance, improve communication, and ensure that the City can continue to provide high quality municipal services to residents and commerce.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Enhance the overall quality and efficiency of municipal services in the City of Oneonta.	
AG.1 Ensure that the City Manager’s goals support the Comprehensive Plan Update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Manager is responsible for developing an annual strategic operational plan that maps out the City’s short- and long-term priorities. When developing the strategic operational plan the City Manager should review the Comprehensive Plan Update to ensure that the priorities are consistent with the City’s vision and goals
AG.2 Explore ways to maximize response to the U.S. Census.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities are based on population totals and breakdowns identified by the census. Businesses and developers also use census data to decide where to build factories, offices, stores, and homes. The City should continue to participate in discussions with local leaders from the region to identify a strategy to maximize citizen participation in the upcoming decennial census.
Goal 2: Ensure that public facilities will adequately serve the needs of residents and businesses within the City of Oneonta and are adaptable to future growth.	
AG.3 Conduct a space needs assessment of municipal facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A space needs assessment is a systematic study of a building and its occupants for the purpose of determining if the design and size of the structure meet the needs of the occupants. As communities continue to make more services on-line accessible, municipal facility space needs are changing. Conducting an assessment of current needs would promote efficiency of local government facilities.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>AG.4 Plan for and construct or renovate municipal facilities to meet the needs of City operations in order to serve residents in a safe, secure, energy-efficient and cost-effective manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City should use the space needs assessment to identify for future municipal facility needs. A long-term plan should be prepared for the renovation of existing facilities or construction of new facilities as needed. This will help prioritize need and provide advanced planning for the financing of facility improvements or additions. Renovations and new construction should incorporate energy efficient systems as feasible to minimize ongoing operational costs to taxpayers.
<p>Goal 3: Engage the Town of Oneonta and surrounding communities in additional dialogue regarding issues and the potential for shared services.</p>	
<p>AG.5 Identify additional areas of opportunity for shared services with the Town of Oneonta and surrounding communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared services can help municipalities increase effectiveness and efficiency in their operation. As municipal responsibilities become increasingly complex and demanding, municipalities should explore shared services and other cooperative opportunities as a way to reduce or avoid costs, improve service delivery, and/or maintain services.
<p>Goal 4: Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land while enhancing the physical and economic environment of the City of Oneonta.</p>	
<p>AG.6 Review, and if necessary, update City Code using innovative approaches to ensure that zoning and building codes support the recommendations identified in this Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning and building codes should be reviewed for alignment with the City's comprehensive plan to make sure that regulations allow for the plan's recommendations to be implemented. Innovative emerging best practices in building codes and zoning such as form-based zoning and energy-efficiency requirements should be integrated wherever appropriate.
<p>AG.7 Create site development design guidelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design guidelines ensure that new development that occurs within the City is of an appropriate scale and style so that it contributes to functionality and attractiveness of the City. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) has generated design guidelines for the Downtown area. The City should build off this effort to create site development design guidelines for the remainder of the City to ensure its neighborhoods and other areas outside of the downtown are appropriately developed in a manner that is integrated with its surroundings.
<p>Goal 5: Increase communications and public engagement opportunities.</p>	
<p>AG.8 Review and enhance the City's website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today, municipal websites act as digital gateways, and can often create positive or negative impressions for visitors before they step foot in a community. Residents and business owners have come to rely on municipal websites to provide a variety of services and information, including agendas, meeting minutes, application forms, calendar items, links, and contact information, at a minimum.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>AG.9 Increase the public’s ability to interact with various City departments electronically to complete forms on-line and pay fees electronically.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City should seek grant funding to determine the feasibility and cost associated with developing an on-line permit system. The system should allow residents and businesses to complete forms online and allow for coordination of the permit process with the Code Enforcement Office to improve efficiency and records management.

6. Policy Area 6: Campus & Community Relations

It is the policy of Oneonta to: continue to develop strategic partnerships with local higher education institutions.

The City of Oneonta is home to two institutions of higher education, SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College, both located in the northern part of the City. SUNY Oneonta has an enrollment of approximately 5,900 undergraduate students and employs over 1,180 faculty and staff. Hartwick College enrolls approximately 1,400 students and includes 320 faculty and staff.

Both colleges are significant economic contributors to the local economy. They are two of the largest employers in the City and faculty and students support businesses located downtown and contribute to the local housing economy. In the evenings, students and employees from both colleges can be seen frequenting downtown restaurants, bars and entertainment venues. According to the "Focus on the Future of Main Street: an Economic Development Planning Strategy," it is estimated that students, faculty, staff, and visitors contribute \$50M annually to the local economy.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Continue to improve relationships between the City of Oneonta and local higher education institutions.	
<p>CC.1 Establish a planning group (Campus & Community Task Force) comprised of representatives from the City, the community, and the colleges to work together to proactively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a healthy and attractive environment for both residents and students, it is recommended that a Campus & Community Task Force be established. The membership of this committee should include an equal number of representatives from the City, including the Police Department, business owners, residents, Hartwick College, and SUNY Oneonta. The committee should meet regularly to proactively address issues that may arise.
<p>CC.2 Develop a "Welcome to Oneonta" program for in-coming and returning college students, faculty and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are increasingly becoming more accustomed to finding the information they need online. The City's website can serve as a powerful tool to get answers to questions about living in Oneonta. The City should develop an "Oneonta Welcome" tab on its existing website that directs students and other newcomers to general information about Oneonta as well as about City government, including contact information, parking rules, zoning regulations, and community events.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>CC.3 Encourage the colleges to hold student events which directly involve community members (concerts, art shows, presentations, lectures, etc.) at off-campus sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-campus events are a great way to forge positive connections and interactions between the colleges and the broader Oneonta community. • The City should help facilitate these types of events, which may include offering public areas and parks for events and helping to coordinate logistics.
<p>CC.4 Continue to work with the colleges to establish community service programs that foster a stronger relationship between students and the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service programs are effective tools in connecting students to their community by engaging them in projects and activities that enhance the City. • These types of programs also generate goodwill in the community and help forge connections that may help retain students in the community after graduation. • The City should continue to support and grow these program offerings and should identify future projects that students may be able to assist in, especially those that align with existing academic programs and student organizations.
<p>CC.5 Continue to work with the colleges to explore opportunities to establish a physical presence for college programming Downtown.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown offices or facilities for the colleges can help spur economic revitalization by bringing new workers, students, and others that visit these locations closer to businesses Downtown. • Downtown locations for satellite offices and facilities can also be attractive for workers, putting them within walking distance of amenities such as restaurants, shops, and parks.

7. Policy Area 7: Housing

It is the policy of Oneonta to: encourage a variety of housing options for people of all ages and income levels.

As part of the planning process, a housing needs assessment was conducted to identify the current and proposed housing supply and future housing needs in the City of Oneonta and surrounding Otsego County. The components of the housing needs assessment included: an economic analysis, demographic characteristics, housing supply characteristics, future housing needs, housing resources, and strategies and recommendations. This data, coupled with information gathered during focus group interviews and the Community Open House, was utilized by the Steering Committee to develop the following housing goals and recommendations.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that enhance downtown housing options.	
<p>H.1 Activate upper stories and others for housing opportunities within the DRI boundary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRI's Downtown Improvement Fund (DIF) will provide a total of \$2.335M in grants to business owners and owners of existing buildings within the DRI area for signage, façade improvements, creation of market rate housing on upper stories, and transformative projects. Encouraging renovation and re-use of structures for apartments, studio space, retail establishments, and other uses in underutilized buildings will create 24/7 vibrancy Downtown, which will support the local economy.
<p>H.2 Market the <i>Graduate to Home Ownership</i> program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, Governor Cuomo launched the <i>Graduate to Homeownership</i> program to help recent college graduates become first-time homeowners. The program, which is designed to retain and attract talented young people to Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) communities, offers low-interest rate mortgages, a down payment assistance loan with no additional fees, and a homebuyer education course. Program is available for qualified first-time homebuyers who have graduated with an associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree within the last 48 months.

Goal 2: Increase the variety and affordability of housing choices for all ages and incomes.	
H.3 Catalog results of recently completed housing studies and align various organizations' efforts to identify housing initiatives and prioritize funding opportunities for implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent studies have examined housing in the City. Common themes and findings should be identified to help prioritize needs and identify opportunities for partnerships where recommendations align with the focus areas and efforts of existing organizations. The shift from research and analysis into implementation and action is critical towards resolving the housing issues and needs identified in the various studies. This process will also help the City pursue grant funding for key initiatives that are supported by multiple plans and studies.
H.4 Preserve the City's single-family housing stock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 60% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1939. The housing analysis conducted as part of the planning process identified the need to ensure that these older properties are maintained to preserve the single-family housing stock.
H.5 Implement a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy for multi-family housing within the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to local stakeholders, there is a lack of good quality affordable housing within the City of Oneonta. An inclusionary zoning policy will encourage developers to set aside a percentage of housing units for low- to moderate-income residents. Further, this strategy would increase private-sector development, and put less reliance on state and federal programs that promote mixed-income developments.
H.6 Develop an inventory of "zombie properties" in the City and work with the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank (GMVLB) to facilitate the reuse and redevelopment of these properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zombie properties are homes that the homeowner has abandoned, typically in the face of a foreclosure action. With no occupant to perform basic maintenance, these homes can fall into a state of disrepair. Dilapidated vacant and abandoned properties can have a corrosive effect on local communities, lowering property values, attracting criminal activity, creating health and safety hazards, and imposing extra costs on local governments due to the additional police, fire and building safety resources they require.
H.7 Market existing City and Opportunities for Otsego (OFO) housing programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City and OFO have a number of programs to assist city residents with first-time home buying, home rehabilitation, and supportive housing.

<p>H.8 Create additional high-quality senior and supportive housing, as well as affordable rental units for people of low to extremely low income, while maintaining integrated neighborhoods within the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of the City of Oneonta is aging. This is driving the increased need for appropriate and affordable housing options for the senior population. • A new 40-unit high quality, senior housing complex was recently developed in the City, but the demand for additional senior housing options still exists. • The City should implement the necessary policies and programs to encourage the creation of new high-quality senior and supportive housing, including ensuring that existing policies allow for this type of development. Quality affordable rental housing units should also be encouraged in neighborhoods throughout the City to ensure that city neighborhoods are maintained as mixed-income neighborhoods and that pockets of low-income and high-income households are integrated.
<p>H.9 Educate the public about programs, grants and organizations that allow seniors to age in place, including home maintenance and rehabilitation and foreclosure prevention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level." • Increased promotion of existing programs will provide increased options for seniors who want to live safely in their existing homes.
<p>H.10 Review and update City Code to address housing trends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing trends include that Americans look to downsize and enjoy simpler living in a smaller space, tiny homes, small lot sizes, and increased density are becoming more popular. • Another growing trend is cohousing - the Scandinavian-pioneered concept in which private homeowners share green spaces, maintenance or gardening equipment, and sometimes a common house where they talk over weekly potlucks, pick up their mail and put up their guests. • The City should review, and if necessary, update the City code to address current housing trends and provide affordable housing options for residents. • When reviewing City Code as it relates to short-term rentals, the City should seek to find a balance point that will maximize economic benefits for residents while minimizing negative impacts to neighborhoods.

8. Policy Area 8: Sustainability

It is the policy of Oneonta to: encourage a sustainable environment, energy efficiency, green economic development, and mitigate of hazards.

Oneonta recognizes the critical role that the environment and sustainability play in the future of the City. As a Climate Smart Community, the City is demonstrating its commitment to balancing the three “Es” of sustainability: environment, economy, and equity.

The following recommendations are designed to increase the City’s use of renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and decrease auto use and associated parking problems by the promotion of walking, bicycling and public transit as preferred modes of transportation.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Improve the City’s efforts to encourage a sustainable environment.	
<p>S.1 Map City assets in an effort to increase sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of a single asset management software/app that will manage all City infrastructure assets. • Benefits include better public health and enhanced sustainability.
<p>S.2 Continue to pursue sustainability efforts such as Climate Smart Community Certification from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Clean Energy Communities program administered by NYSEERDA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City has passed the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) pledge as a municipal resolution. The next step in the process is to become certified. • Benefits include being eligible for up to \$250,000 in grant monies, with no local match required, to support implementation of clean energy projects.
<p>S.3 Continue to explore programs and funding opportunities with government, private, and not-for-profit organizations to enhance sustainability in the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should both lead efforts to pursue programs and funding opportunities and be an active partner with private and not-for-profit organizations throughout the City to support their efforts to implement sustainability projects in Oneonta. • It may be beneficial for the City to create a working inventory of programs and funding opportunities and keep a calendar of application deadlines, especially for grant resources. The inventory should be updated periodically to account for new programs and resources, including those at the state and federal level.
<p>S.4 Reduce dependence on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions within the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing strategies identified in this Plan that support alternative modes of transportation will reduce the City’s dependence on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions. • Benefits include increased public health and sustainability.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
<p>S.5 Support the recommendations of the <i>Oneonta 2030: Growing into a Sustainable Community</i> report and support the efforts of the Otsego County Energy Group in developing comprehensive long and short term energy plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2013 the City's Sustainability Task Force prepared a long-term plan to preserve the community's environmental health and vitality. • City staff is currently working with the Otsego County Energy Group to prepare long- and short-term energy plans • Benefits of supporting both of these efforts include improving Oneonta's overall environmental quality, reducing the carbon footprint, CO2 emissions and gasoline consumption, and building a healthy food infrastructure by 2030.
<p>S.6 Explore how sustainability, green infrastructure techniques, and environmental health policies can be codified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should first undertake a green infrastructure code audit to identify barriers to implementing green infrastructure in current city codes and ordinances. Existing resources exist to help communities conduct these types of audits, including a guide from the Wisconsin Sea Grant, "Tackling Barriers to Green Infrastructure." • Best practices in sustainability and green infrastructure codes should be incorporated into the City's regulations wherever feasible. Examples may include requirements for parking lot landscaping, reducing impervious surface, permitting bioretention of stormwater, and others.
<p>S.7 Partner with NYS DEC and other organizations to increase awareness of the need for water conservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtually all water conservation efforts depend on public awareness and understanding of the need for conservation.
<p>Goal 2: Encourage energy efficiency in municipal buildings, lighting, and infrastructure.</p>	
<p>S.8 Conduct a comprehensive municipal energy audit to identify long-range energy/greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal facilities and operations use considerable amounts of energy and most commonly rely on fossil fuels such as natural gas, oil, and coal. • A municipal energy audit includes an inventory of energy usage and identifies ways to reduce consumption and cost. • Primary benefits include energy conservation and a reduction in municipal budget increases.
<p>S.9 Work with the NY Power Authority (NYPA) and NY State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) Corporation to convert municipal lighting to LED technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are available to assist municipalities with conversion of existing streetlight systems to energy-efficient LED. • Benefits include electricity and maintenance cost savings, a lower tax burden on residents, and a decreased impact on the environment.

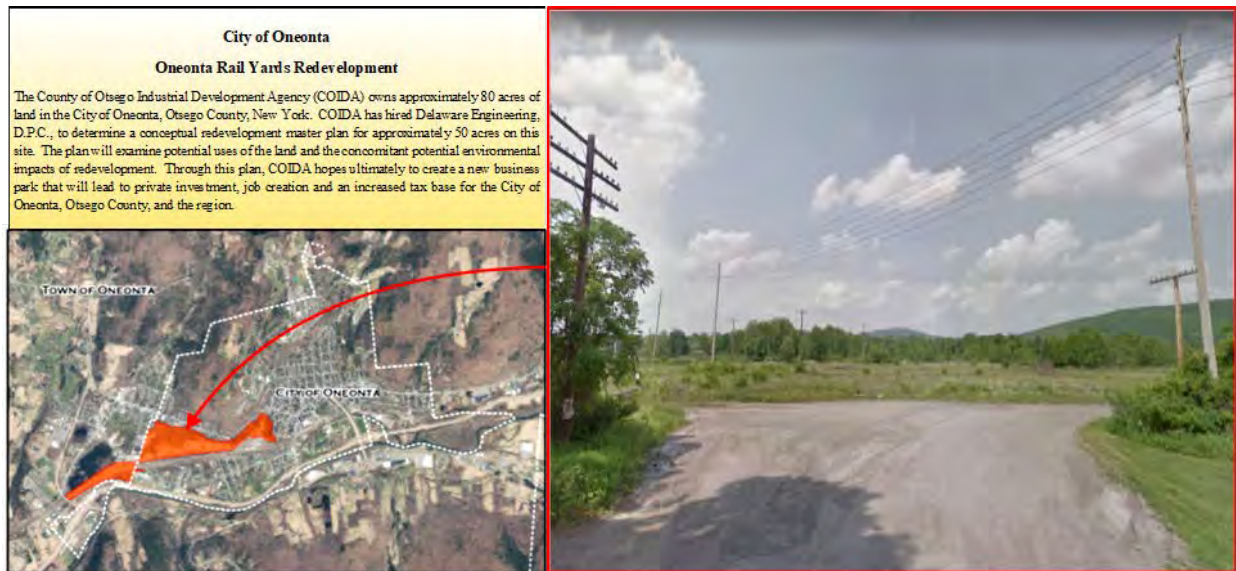
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 3: Reduce the City’s vulnerability to flooding and other hazard events in order to protect the life, health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors.	
<p>S.10 Participate in development of and support the goals and actions of the Otsego County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEMA states that developing hazard mitigation plans enable local governments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase education and awareness around threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities; ➤ Build partnerships for risk reduction involving government, organizations, businesses, and the public; ➤ Identify long-term, broadly-supported strategies for risk reduction; ➤ Align risk reduction with other state and local objectives; ➤ Identify implementation approaches that focus resources on the greatest risks and vulnerabilities; and ➤ Communicate priorities to potential sources of funding.

9. Policy Area 9: The Rail Yards

It is the policy of Oneonta to: explore redevelopment opportunities at the Rail Yards to bolster economic development and create jobs.

The Oneonta Rail Yards, located adjacent to the downtown, consists of 150 acres of rail-supported commercial real estate. Redevelopment of the Rail Yards could provide Oneonta with a new industrial/commercial business park that would attract new businesses, create new jobs, and add to the City's tax base.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Develop the Oneonta Rail Yards to bolster economic development in the City and create jobs.	
<p>RY.1 Partner with Otsego Now to explore potential redevelopment opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment benefits include creation of a new industrial/commercial business park that provides job opportunities and an enhanced tax base for the City. • The community expressed a desire that the City make a conscious effort to maximize renewables and consider "green industries" when developing the Rail Yards.



Source: Otsego Now

10. Policy Area 10: Transportation

It is the policy of Oneonta to: ensure that the City provides the necessary infrastructure to support a variety of transportation choices.

Oneonta’s transportation network is comprised of a variety of elements including Interstate highways, routes, roads, multi-use trails, sidewalks, parking, and public, rail, and air transportation. The City and its transportation providers strive to provide a variety of transportation systems, networks and amenities that are safe, reliable, support economic development growth, and limit impact on environmental and scenic resources.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that improve parking and transportation circulation in the City.	
T.1 Renovate the existing Market Street parking garage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 40-year-old Market Street parking garage has fallen into disrepair and its aging façade is viewed as a blight on the City’s downtown. Renovation of the parking structure will improve downtown’s image and provide parking necessary to support local businesses and events.
T.2 Add a new multi-modal transit facility, as identified in the DRI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of a new multi-modal transit facility will strengthen downtown Oneonta’s position as a regional destination.
Goal 2: Improve the aesthetics, safety, and functionality of the City’s gateways including Main Street intersections and I-88 connectors.	
T.3 Implement the Master Streetscape Improvement Plan focused on enhancing Main Street and converting the James Lettis Highway to a boulevard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the Open House participants identified the need to improve the city’s gateways along Main Street intersections and I-88 connectors to improve pedestrian safety and create a welcoming first impression of the community. Converting the James Lettis Highway to a boulevard is an effective traffic calming measure that will slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
T.4 Continue to partner with civic organizations, not-for-profits, volunteer organizations, and other municipalities to improve gateways and other areas of the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateways are areas where visitors experience a critical first impression of a community. To create a welcoming gateway to Main Street, it is recommended that the following enhancements be added: a well-defined gateway, signage, and landscaping.

Goal 3: Ensure that regional infrastructure is in place to support economic growth in the City.	
T.5 Partner with communities along the I-88 and Route 28 corridors, and other regional highways, to advocate for infrastructure improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The I-88 and Route 28 corridors and other regional highways in the Mohawk Valley Region are in need of infrastructure improvements. A coordinated effort should be made among Otsego County communities to advocate for public investment to upgrade area roads and bridges, which will lay the foundation for economic development and growth.
T.6 Strengthen Oneonta’s municipal airport, the Albert S. Nader Regional Airport, as a regional asset by increasing the base of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Albert S. Nader Regional Airport is owned and operated by the City. The Airport estimates that approximately 75% of its 2,000 annual air visitors were destined for Cooperstown. Because the airport serves the entire region, the City should partner with local communities to expand the base of financial support.
Goal 4: Provide alternative modes of transportation to enable access to commercial, cultural and recreational areas.	
T.7 Continue to incorporate adopted Complete Streets guidelines in all public and private projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018, Oneonta adopted a Complete Streets policy, which encourages the City to take into consideration the safety needs of all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, those with mobility impairments, the elderly, and transit riders when improvements are made to local roadways. The policy can also improve the economy as making streets more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly can result in more local shopping, and encourage residents to be more active thereby improving their health and reducing obesity rates.
T.8 Explore pedestrian and bicycle enhancements/amenities, including feasibility of a bike share program to connect downtown to neighborhoods, colleges, parks, and other destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote bicycling as an integral part of daily life, the City and its partners should provide short-term and/or long-term bicycle parking in commercial districts, along main streets, in employment centers and multifamily developments, at schools and special events, in recreational areas, and at intermodal passenger stations.
T.9 Support efforts of government entities and not-for-profits to update pedestrian/bike plans and the Susquehanna Greenway Strategic Action Plan and incorporate recommendations into the City-wide Parks and Recreation Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking and bicycling are important facets of a community’s mobility, economic development, public health, and environmental sustainability. Wherever possible, the City should support local efforts to promote walking, biking and other active modes of transportation to provide people with increased health benefits and improve overall sustainability of the community.

<p>T.10 Continue to pursue and install public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the City and encourage private and not-for-profit entities to establish EV charging stations for public use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City installed two public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. • Continuing to install EV charging stations throughout the City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supports alternative modes of transportation ➤ Improves the overall sustainability of the City by reducing dependence on fossil fuels ➤ Provides a valuable service to EV drivers ➤ Encourages green businesses to relocate and invest in the local economy ➤ Provides an additional way for the City to show measurable reductions in carbon emissions
<p>T.11 Explore vehicles that use alternative fuels to replace the City's current fleet of vehicles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of alternative fuel vehicles (flex fuel or electric) helps reduce automobile emissions, promote domestic energy production, improve air quality, and decrease the City's fuel costs.

11. Policy Area 11: Regional

It is the policy of Oneonta to: work with regional communities.

Regional collaboration is becoming increasingly important. It provides communities with the opportunity to coordinate and strengthen infrastructure and public services to enhance quality of life, facilitate job growth, and increase cost-effectiveness through economies of scale, while protecting the region's quality of life and unique sense of place. The City recognizes the importance of increasing partnerships with regional communities, Otsego and Delaware counties, and organizations in the larger surrounding regions, such as the Susquehanna River Basin.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Encourage a regional approach to economic development and planning.	
R.1 Coordinate with regional communities to ensure that residents outside the City have access to the City's commercial, cultural, and recreational offerings, and that City residents can access regional offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies indicate that young professionals and retirees are looking to locate in small, affordable cities that can provide shops, restaurants, cultural and recreational amenities that meet their lifestyle.
R.2 Collaborate with the Town of Oneonta and other communities in Otsego and Delaware counties to encourage the development of multi-use trails and the improvement of roadway shoulders to encourage biking and walking to and from the City and connect, where possible, parks and open space owned by the City, Town of Oneonta, Otsego County and the State of New York.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional trails can provide communities increased public health, economic, and transportation benefits including: increased opportunities for social connections, as well as a safe place to play, exercise and relax; increased property values for homes located near trail systems; increased revenue and traffic for local businesses located near trail systems; and, safe, alternative means of travel that is emission and cost-free.
R.3 Continue to develop relationships with other municipalities in the region to identify further areas for cooperation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City already shares some services, facilities, and equipment with the County, neighboring communities, and the school district. Opportunities exist to continue working with these organizations to identify further areas for cooperation to make operations more cost-efficient.
R.4 Enhance the City's identity as a Susquehanna River Basin community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are over 1,400 municipalities located within the tri-state Susquehanna River Basin, which is recognized nationally as a scenic and recreational asset. Enhancing the City's identity as a Susquehanna River Basin community provides opportunities to foster cultural heritage and recreation tourism.



6

Future Projects Map

Section Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Future Projects Map Description



1. Introduction

The proposed projects and policies recommended in the previous section of the Plan reflect the extensive research, analysis, and public engagement undertaken as part of the planning process. They are intended to reflect an ambitious but realistic vision to revitalize the City and generate economic growth. The projects and policies are diverse but interrelated and mutually supportive.

The Future Projects Map, provided on the following page, is a graphic representation of the Plan's coordinated effort to establish Oneonta as a regional destination, encourage economic development, improve quality of life, revitalize the downtown, and provide sustainable transportation alternatives.

The Map includes fourteen projects recommended in the Comprehensive Plan Update. It is important to note that these projects, which include a mix of existing, planned, and proposed uses, do not represent *all* of the projects and policies identified in the Plan. Only those projects with a physical location or address were included on the map.

Future Projects Map

City of Oneonta, NY | 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update

Projects Key*

Policy Area 1: Destination & Image

DI.9 Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods

Policy Area 2: Economic Development

ED.8 Westcott Lot Mixed-Use Development

Policy Area 3: Quality of Life

QL.2 Neahwa Park Market Street Entrance

QL.3 Update & Implement Park Master Plan

QL.5 Redevelop Damaschke Grandstand Area

QL.13 Enhance Recognition of Historic Districts

Policy Area 4: Downtown

D.2 Muller Plaza Passage

D.3 Water Street Boardwalk

D.4 Market St. and S. Main St. Improvement Project

D.5 Redevelop Market St.

Policy Area 9: The Rail Yards

RY.1 Explore Redevelopment Opportunities

Policy Area 10: Transportation

T.1 Renovate Parking Garage

T.2 New Multi-Modal Transit Facility

T.3 Master Streetscape Plan: James Lettis Boulevard Conversion & Gateway Improvements

*Note: Only projects (plan recommendations) with specific locations shown on map



Map Legend

- City of Oneonta
- Flood Zone
- Parks
- The Rail Yards
- Colleges & Universities
- Historic Districts & Places
- Rail Line

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2. Future Land Use Plan Description

Policy Area 1: Destination & Image

DI.9 Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods

In 2014, a feasibility study and economic development strategy was prepared to analyze the feasibility of creating and sustaining a successful ‘food hub’ in Oneonta and to explore how the concept could revitalize Market Street and connect to Oneonta’s downtown. The goal of the project was to address the intertwined problems of agricultural producer access to proximate urban markets, low median incomes and profitability for farmers, producer expansion through value-added production, and regional food producer collaboration. Furthermore, it was proposed that the project seek to decrease urban blight through remediation of a condemned building, to increase jobs in the City and to partner with local workforce training initiatives to prepare hard-to-place workers in ag-related occupations.

As a result of robust stakeholder input a number of ideas were identified, all of which cannot be located in one building. Using the ideas generated the City began to look at Market Street and redevelopment or infill opportunities that complement the idea of an Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods that when fully built out, would transform Market Street into a regional destination centered on food, beverage, hospitality, and community. Upon completion, the project will connect and complement Main Street and the recent revitalization efforts underway there.

Policy Area 2: Economic Development

ED.8 Westcott Lot Mixed-Use Development

Establishing a mixed-use development on the Westcott Lot, located at 226-236 Main Street, was identified as a high priority project in the DRI Strategic Investment Plan. The City will use \$1.47 million in DRI funding to leverage private investment to redevelop the site with retail and residential uses. The proposed project will also include a small public plaza on Main Street and a linear public pedestrian passageway that will connect Main Street to South Main Street.

A downtown mixed-use development project will address the growing demand for downtown apartments suitable for young professionals and early retirees.

Policy Area 3: Quality of Life

QL.2 Neahwa Park Market Street Entrance

During the public engagement process, residents identified Neahwa Park as one of the City’s greatest assets. To encourage recreation tourism in the City, the James Georgeson Avenue entrance off of Market Street should be enhanced to create a beautiful gateway to welcome residents and visitors alike. Enhancements could include installation of a clearly defined crosswalk on Market Street to enhance pedestrian safety, ornamental dark sky compliant street lights, a new park entry sign, improved pavement walking surfaces, curbing, street trees, and landscaping,

QL.3 Update & Implement Park Master Plan

In 2013 the City prepared a Master Plan for municipally-owned Neahwa Park. Plan components include enhancements to the picnic area, Hodges Pond, and park entrances; improvements to Damaschke Field; infrastructure improvements and landscaping; and new features including a splash park and a dog park.

Continued improvements to this municipally-owned park will further the City's efforts to become a regional destination for recreation.

QL.5 Redevelop Damaschke Grandstand Area

Watching an evening baseball game at Damaschke Field has been a tradition enjoyed by generations of Oneonta residents and visitors. The historic Damaschke Grandstand was built in 1935 as a project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Today, the structure is showing signs of age. The steel support beams are rotting and studies indicate that the structure will need to be replaced.

As Oneonta strives to become a regional recreation destination, it is important to redevelop the grandstand area so future generations can continue to safely enjoy watching baseball at Damaschke Field.

QL.13 Enhance Recognition of Historic Districts

Cultural heritage tourism is a fast growing and high-yielding sector of New York State's economy that generates jobs and tax revenues. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present."

Oneonta has an opportunity to grow the cultural heritage tourism sector of the local economy by enhancing recognition of the City's two designated historic districts: the Downtown Historic District and the Walnut Street Historic District. The Downtown Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The District, located in the City's downtown commercial core area, includes 64 historic buildings and several separately listed buildings including the Masonic Temple, Old Post Office, Municipal Building, Ford Block, and Oneonta Theatre.

The Walnut Street Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, includes 44 structures including buildings located on Dietz Street, Elm Street, Ford Avenue, Maple Street, and Walnut Street.

Policy Area 4: Downtown

D.2 Muller Plaza Passage

Development of the Muller Plaza Passage was identified as a priority project in Oneonta's DRI Strategic Investment Plan. The City was awarded \$250,000 in DRI funds to transform an "L" shaped lot into a public pedestrian passageway that will connect Water Street on its southwest end to Muller Plaza at the northeast end. The new passage will provide access to Muller Plaza from the City's public

parking garage, shops located along Water Street, and ultimately to the new Transit Hub, the proposed Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods on Market Street, and the existing Foothills Performing Arts & Civic Center.

D.3 Water Street Boardwalk

The Water Street Boardwalk was also listed as a priority project in Oneonta's DRI Strategic Investment Plan. According to the Plan, "the block bounded by Main Street, Chestnut Street, Market Street, and South Main Street is a superblock. A superblock is an urban block large enough to prohibit convenient pedestrian or vehicular connections across the City."

Development of the Water Street Boardwalk is designed to improve the quality of walkable connections downtown by establishing a public pedestrian passageway between Water Street and Market Street. This will provide access between the City's public parking garage and new Transit Hub, existing shops on Water Street, Foothills Performing Arts & Civic Center, and the future Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods. The project builds on the Muller Plaza Passage project, and when joined a complete pedestrian connection will be established from Main Street to Market Street.

D.4 Market Street and South Main Street Improvement Projects

The City identified improvements to Market and South Main Streets as a priority project in the DRI Strategic Investment Plan. The Plan includes a number of pedestrian safety improvements, streetscape enhancements, and infrastructure improvements that will elevate the character of the streets to match Oneonta's historic Main Street.

D.5 Redevelopment of Market Street

Market Street, located one block from historic Main Street, has a character that is inconsistent with the rest of Oneonta's downtown. DRI funds and other state monies will be used to physically transform Market Street into a pedestrian friendly, arts-themed corridor primed for private investment. When complete, it is envisioned that the street will be an active, urban space with large public art installations, café spaces, innovative stormwater design, sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, and enhanced gateways. A revitalized Market Street will have strong connections to the recently renovated Main Street and will tie together key components of the surrounding area including the Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods and the new Transit Hub.

Policy Area 9: The Rail Yards

RY.1 Explore Redevelopment Opportunities

During the public engagement process, the community identified the Rail Yards as a high priority redevelopment opportunity area. In addition to industrial and commercial uses, ideas generated by the public included:

- Explore rail yard development for sustainable economic development;
- Use part of the site for the food hub and linking development to local food production; and,
- Explore space for recycling materials.

An overall site analysis and redevelopment plan has begun for over 150 acres of rail-supported commercial real estate in the City of Oneonta. Otsego Now is working closely with the City and the general public to prepare a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) pertaining to redevelopment of rail-supported commercial real estate. Redevelopment of the Rail Yards could provide the City with a new industrial/commercial business park that will create new jobs for the region and add to the City's tax base.

Policy Area 10: Transportation

T.1 Renovate Parking Garage

The City was awarded \$2.5M in DRI funds and \$3.79M from the Federal Transit Administration to renovate the existing public parking garage and add a new transit facility. The Market Street parking structure provides three levels of public parking and a bus station for Trailways and Greyhounds intercity buses. The 40-year-old structure has fallen into disrepair and is viewed by many as a blight on the downtown. Downtown business and residents are dependent upon parking for visitation. Despite complaints that there isn't enough parking available downtown, the garage is often partially vacant due to the current condition of the structure. General upgrades to the parking garage are necessary to accommodate existing public parking needs, as well as serve future demand generated by the redevelopment of Market Street and development of the Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods.

T.2 New Multi-Modal Transit Facility

A written survey conducted as part of the DRI planning process identified a new Transit Hub facility as one of the highest priority projects. Oneonta Public Transit's current Transportation Center is located on Main Street, and necessitates extensive bus movements often in peak traffic times. According to the DRI Strategic Investment Plan, construction of a new Transit Hub will, "unify local and regional buses into one facility, provide a taxi area, bike parking, shared car parking, electric vehicle charging stations, elevator, roof top solar panels, and new central waiting room."

T.3 Master Streetscape Plan: James Lettis Boulevard Conversion and Gateway Improvements

During the Open House, many residents stated that it isn't safe for pedestrians to walk along the James Lettis Highway. To increase pedestrian safety, and create a welcoming "front door" to the downtown, the City should prepare a Master Streetscape Plan that includes conversion of the James Lettis Highway to a pedestrian-friendly boulevard and installation of gateway improvements.



7

Implementation Plan

Section Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Implementation Matrix



1. Introduction

The Implementation Matrix outlined on the following pages has been developed to support the Comprehensive Plan Update. The matrix organizes recommendations by policy area and goal. Each recommendation has been assigned a project champion, potential partners and, where applicable, potential funding sources. Finally, the Plan sets a level of priority for each recommendation — High, Medium or Low. The recommendations are also assigned an anticipated time for implementation:

Immediate: Year 1

Short term: Years 2-5

Medium-term: Years 6-10

Long-term: 10+ Years

Ongoing

This implementation plan should be amended and updated annually by the City as new actions are introduced and as recommendations are implemented. The City's capital improvement and budgeting processes should also incorporate the priority requirements on an annual basis.

It is of note that the Steering Committee did not assign a specific project champion to all recommendations. Prior to implementation, the City should determine if it has the capacity to successfully implement the project or policy. If so, the City should assign responsibility to an appropriate

municipal department or staff person at that time. If the City does not have the capacity, an external Project Champion should be selected.

It is recommended that the Common Council undertake a full review of the adopted Comprehensive Plan within a ten-year interval.

2. Implementation Matrix

Goals and Recommendations		Project Champion	Potential Partners	Potential Funding	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
Policy Area 1: Destination & Image								
Goal 1: Monitor, support and implement DRI programs and recommendations that improve Oneonta's image.								
DI.1	Execute DRI Branding & Marketing and Downtown Wayfinding program.	City - Community Development	NYS ESD, OCR, DOS	NYS ESD, OCR, DOS	H			
DI.2	Explore creation of a Community Information Officer position to oversee City's long-term marketing efforts.	City - Personnel	Destination Oneonta (DO)				M	
Goal 2: Establish the City of Oneonta as a destination for the arts, culture, and recreation.								
DI.3	Support ongoing efforts to grow the arts in the City of Oneonta by programming and renovation of existing assets including, but not limited to, the Oneonta Theatre, Foothills Performing Arts Center, and the Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO).	City - Community Development	Oneonta Theatre, Foothills, CANO		H			
DI.4	Explore development of a structure (Arts Task Force) to coordinate arts, entertainment, and recreation venues throughout the City.	City	Arts, culture and other related organizations			H		
DI.5	Secure funding to implement recommendations of arts and culture-related studies.	City - Community Development	Arts, culture and other related organizations	NYSCA, CDBG, NY Main St		H		√
DI.6	Leverage and promote existing recreation assets and natural resources, including the Susquehanna River, Wilber Park, Neahwa Park, and the Homer Folks State Forest, to attract tourists and enrich the visitor experience.	City - Parks & Recreation, Parks & Rec Commission	DO, OCCA	NYS EPF				√
DI.7	Work with existing public and private entities to promote year-round recreation activities in the City, including hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.	City - Parks & Recreation, Parks & Rec Commission	Susquehanna Greenway, Bike/rec orgs, colleges, DO					√
DI.8	Partner with existing organizations, such as Destination Oneonta, to develop a multi-day trip itinerary to market to regional summer tourists.	City - Community Development	DO, This is Cooperstown	DRI - Branding and Marketing		H		√
Goal 3: Establish the City of Oneonta as a food and beverage tourism destination, and hub for local agricultural entrepreneurs.								
DI.9	Establish the Innovation Center for Sustainable Foods to support the local food and beverage industry, as identified in the DRI.	City	Otsego Now, local colleges, CADE		H			

Goals and Recommendations		Project Champion	Potential Partners	Potential Funding	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
DI.10	Partner with existing assets such as the Hartwick College Center for Craft Food and Beverage, existing producers, the Oneonta Farmers' Market, the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE), and CNY Fresh to coordinate efforts to ensure Oneonta is part of a broader regional effort.	City	Hartwick, Farmers' Market, CADE, CNY Fresh, Otsego Now, Cornell Coop Ext.		H			
Policy Area 2: Economic Development								
Goal 1: Establish a structure to implement local economic development initiatives.								
ED.1	Activate the Oneonta Local Development Corporation (LDC) as the economic development entity for the City.	City				H		√
ED.2	Work with local economic development entities (Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Otsego Now, and Destination Oneonta) to identify common priorities and strategies to achieve them.	City - Community Development	Otsego Co. Chamber, Otsego Now, DO					√
Goal 2: Monitor and implement programs and recommendations that support the vitality, retention and expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses to the City of Oneonta.								
ED.3	Expand upon the DRI-funded Downtown Improvement Fund (DIF).	City - Community Development		CDBG, NY Main St.				√
ED.4	Continue to be a business-friendly community.	City	Planning Commission, Code Enforcement					√
ED.5	Use the Comprehensive Plan, zoning law and existing studies to market the City to attract and recruit businesses that will serve residents as well as visitors and provide a mix of products and services.	City - Community Development						√
Goal 3: Create opportunities for recent graduates and entrepreneurs seeking to establish in Oneonta and start businesses.								
ED.6	Conduct a business incubator and/or shared work space feasibility study to identify various niche/targeted businesses.	City	Otsego Now, local colleges	CDBG		H		
ED.7	Partner with Otsego Now and other organizations to provide support and opportunities to transition successful incubator and start-up businesses into permanent space in the City.	City	Otsego Now, Otsego Co Chamber of Commerce	CDBG, NYS ESD				√

Goal 4: Encourage infill development throughout the City.								
ED.8	Advance Westcott Lot mixed-use development project.	City	SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick, private developers		H			
ED.9	Consider the acquisition of key properties by the Oneonta LDC or Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to promote development.	LDC / Otsego Now	Private developers					√
ED.10	Encourage a partnership between the Oneonta LDC and Otsego Now to support redevelopment opportunities.	LDC / Otsego Now	Private developers					√
ED.11	Ensure zoning supports recommendations for development of key sites.	City	Code Enforcement					√
Goal 5: Ensure that adequate municipal services and infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities, energy, telecommunication, etc.) is in place to support economic growth in the City.								
ED.12	Partner with local service providers to identify gaps in existing infrastructure systems, and seek solutions to advance economic growth without negatively impacting quality of life.	City	Regional utilities			H		√
Goal 6: Revitalize abandoned, vacant and Brownfield sites to support economic growth.								
ED.13	Seek funding assistance from the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program, federal EPA, and other organizations to identify and assess brownfields in Oneonta and develop strategies for redevelopment and remediation.	City	Otsego Now					√
ED.14	Work with the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank to repurpose vacant or abandoned properties.	City	Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank					H
Policy Area 3: Quality of Life								
Goal 1: Improve offerings and expand access to cultural and recreational areas within the City.								
QL.1	Seek funding to develop and implement a Component Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in partnership with the Town of Oneonta.	City - Community Development	Town of Oneonta	NYS DOS		H		
QL.2	Create a Neahwa Park Market Street entrance to improve access for all users.	City				H		
QL.3	Continue to implement and update the City's 2013 Neahwa Park Master Plan.	City						√
QL.4	Secure funding to develop a city-wide Parks and Recreation Plan.	City						M
QL.5	Redevelop Damaschke Grandstand area to expand family entertainment options.	City		NYS DASNY		H		
Goal 2: Reduce substance misuse, dependence and overdose in Oneonta.								
QL.6	Support initiatives to develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan to curb the impacts of the addiction epidemic in Oneonta and increase the likelihood that persons with addiction will seek recovery.	City	LEAF, Otsego Co. Addiction Recovery Services, FOR-DO					H

QL.7	Partner with organizations to further educate the public and to increase awareness of the substance misuse risks, impacts, and reduction measures that will improve the quality of life for Oneonta residents.	City	Local healthcare agencies							H
QL.8	Continue to coordinate and support specialized training for law enforcement and first responders to address substance use disorders.	City	OPD, OFD							H
QL.9	Ensure that zoning code supports the location of support services for people with addictions and recovering from addictions.	City	Code Enforcement							H
Goal 3: Strengthen partnerships with community not-for-profits and other organizations to improve quality of life for Oneonta residents.										
QL.10	Continue to work with not-for-profits on the poverty reduction initiative and identify future areas for cooperation.	City	OFO	NYS OTDA						√
QL.11	Establish ongoing dialog with the Bassett Healthcare Network to ensure that Fox Hospital is working to meet the mutual goals of Basset and providing services that a thriving city needs.	City	Bassett Healthcare							√
Goal 4: Preserve and promote the City's historic and cultural assets.										
QL.12	Participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.	City	NYS SHPO, GOHS	NYS SHPO			M			√
QL.13	Enhance recognition of the City's two existing historic districts: Oneonta Downtown Historic District and Walnut Street Historic District.	City	GOHS							√
QL.14	Support the Greater Oneonta Historical Society's efforts to establish a building history and plaque program for historic buildings.	GOHS	City							√
Policy Area 4: Downtown										
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that improve Downtown.										
D.1	Complete the DRI Downtown Improvement Fund (DIF).	City	NYS OCR	NYS OCR			H			
D.2	Establish the Muller Plaza Passage, a public pedestrian passageway between Muller Plaza and Water Street.	City	NYS DOS	NYS DOS			H			
D.3	Establish the Water Street Boardwalk.	City	NYS DOS	NYS DOS			H			
D.4	Complete the Market Street and South Main Street Improvement project.	City	NYS ESD	NYS ESD			H			
Goal 2: Build new opportunities in the Downtown and enhance organizational capacity.										
D.5	Redevelop Market Street to offer greater commercial, residential and other opportunities.	City	Otsego Now, private developers	NYS ESD, DOS, OCR, Main St., CDBG, private developers			H			√
D.6	Consider alternative ways to finance public infrastructure improvements in the Downtown.	City					H			
D.7	Consider alternative organizing entities for downtown revitalization.	City	LDC				H			

D.8	Explore feasibility of a new facility that would provide support to local artists.	City	SUNY Oneonta, private developers, CANO, Art Space	DRI	H			
Goal 3: Preserve and enhance the historic character and scale of Downtown.								
D.9	Expand upon and incorporate the design guidelines prepared as part of the DRI-funded DIF into city code.	City	Code Enforcement, Planning Commission			H		√
D.10	Incorporate underground utilities where feasible in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of roadways and other public works projects.	City - Engineering and Public Works						√
D.11	Consider ways to create safe pedestrian-only areas and inviting public spaces.	City	Private businesses	NY Main St.				√
D.12	Create a rear building façade program.	City	Building and business owners	NY Main St.		M		
D.13	Encourage outdoor seating: indoor/outdoor counter seating at restaurants, shared seating areas, space for food trucks.	City	Private businesses, Code Enforcement, DO		M			√
D.14	Consider installation of amenities, including but not limited to public restrooms, water fountains, water bottle fillers, and dog water facilities at the new transit hub, in the indoor walkway between Main Street and the parking garage, and in new public areas that are created in the Downtown.	City		DRI	H			√
Policy Area 5: Administration & Government								
Goal 1: Enhance the overall quality and efficiency of municipal services in the City of Oneonta.								
AG.1	Ensure that the City Manager's goals support the Comprehensive Plan.	City Manager	Common Council					√
AG.2	Explore ways to maximize response to the U.S. Census.	City - Community Development	ESPRI Task Force	NYS DOS, Census Bureau	H			
Goal 2: Ensure that public facilities will adequately serve the needs of residents and businesses within the City of Oneonta and are adaptable to future growth.								
AG.3	Conduct a space needs assessment of municipal facilities.	City					M	
AG.4	Plan for and construct or renovate municipal facilities to meet the needs of City operations in order to serve residents in a safe, secure, energy-efficient and cost-effective manner.	City						H
Goal 3: Engage the Town of Oneonta and surrounding communities in additional dialogue regarding issues and the potential for shared services.								
AG.5	Identify additional areas of opportunity for shared services with the Town of Oneonta and Otsego County.	City	Town of Oneonta, Otsego County	NYS Division of Local Government Services				√

Goal 4: Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land while enhancing the physical and economic environment of the City of Oneonta.								
AG.6	Review, and if necessary, update City Code using innovative approaches to ensure that zoning and building codes support the recommendations identified in this Plan.	City	Code Enforcement					√
AG.7	Create site development design guidelines.	City	Code Enforcement, Planning Commission			M		
Goal 5: Increase communications and public engagement opportunities.								
AG.8	Review and enhance the City's website.	City	Communication Info Officer, DO	DRI - Branding & Marketing		H		
AG.9	Increase the public's ability to interact with various City departments electronically to complete forms on-line and pay fees electronically.	City						√
Policy Area 6: Campus & Community Relations								
Goal 1: Continue to improve relationship between the City of Oneonta and local higher education institutions.								
CC.1	Establish a planning group (Campus & Community Task Force) comprised of representatives from the City, the colleges, and the community to work together to proactively find ways to blend the City and campus communities.	City	SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick			H		√
CC.2	Develop a "Welcome to Oneonta" program for in-coming and returning college students, faculty and staff.	Campus & Community Task Force (CCTF)	SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick, DO			H		
CC.3	Encourage the colleges to hold student events which directly involve community members (concerts, art shows, presentations, lectures, etc.) at off-campus sites.	CCTF	DO, SUCO, Hartwick					√
CC.4	Continue to work with the colleges to establish community service programs that foster a stronger relationship between students and the City.	CCTF	DO, SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick, community service providers					√
CC.5	Continue to work with the colleges to explore opportunities to establish a physical presence for college programming Downtown.	CCTF	SUNY Oneonta, Hartwick, Otsego Now, City - Community Development					√
Policy Area 7: Housing								
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that enhance downtown housing options.								
H.1	Activate upper stories and other housing opportunities within the DRI boundary.	City	Property owners	DRI		H		

H.2	Market the <i>Graduate to Home Ownership</i> program.	City	Local banks, local colleges	SONYMA	H			√
Goal 2: Increase the variety and affordability of housing choices for all ages and incomes.								
H.3	Catalog results of recently completed housing studies and align various organizations' efforts to identify housing initiatives and prioritize funding opportunities for implementation.	City	Opportunities for Otsego (OFO), SUNY Oneonta, Otsego County			M		
H.4	Preserve the City's single-family housing stock.	City	OFO, City - Code Enforcement, Realtors	NYS Housing				√
H.5	Implement a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy for multi-family housing within the City.	City	Code Enforcement, Private developers			M		
H.6	Develop an inventory of "zombie properties" in the City and work with the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank (GMVLB) to facilitate the reuse and redevelopment of these properties.	City - Community Development	GMVLB		H			√
H.7	Market existing City and Opportunities for Otsego (OFO) housing programs.	City, OFO	City, OFO, local banks, Board of Realtors, local Realtors	CDBG, AHC, NY Main St, HOME				√
H.8	Create additional high quality senior and supportive housing, as well as affordable rental units for people of low to extremely low income, while maintaining integrated neighborhoods within the City.	City	Private developers, City - Code Enforcement, Non-profit housing organizations, Oneonta Housing Authority	CDBG, AHC, NY Main St, HOME		H		√
H.9	Educate the public about programs, grants and organizations that allow seniors to age in place, including home maintenance and rehabilitation and foreclosure prevention.	City	OFO, housing organizations, County Office for the Aging, Realtors	CDBG, HOME				√
H.10	Review and update city code to address housing trends.	City	City - Code Enforcement	CDBG				√
Policy Area 8: Sustainability								
Goal 1: Improve the City's efforts to encourage a sustainable environment.								
S.1	Map city assets in an effort to increase sustainability.	City - Engineering & Public Works	City - Community Development	NYS DEC, NYSERDA	H			

S.2	Continue to pursue sustainability efforts such as Climate Smart Community Certification from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Clean Energy Communities program administered by NYSEERDA.	City	City - Community Development, City - Engineering & Public Works, DEC, NYSEERDA	NYS DEC, NYSEERDA					√
S.3	Continue to explore programs and funding opportunities with government, private, and not-for-profit organizations to enhance sustainability in the City.	City	Private and non-profit organizations, Environmental Board						√
S.4	Reduce dependence on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions within the City.	City	Environmental Board						√
S.5	Support the recommendations of the Oneonta 2030: Growing into a Sustainable Community report and support the efforts of the Otsego County Energy Group in developing comprehensive long and short term energy plans.	City	Environmental Board						√
S.6	Explore how sustainability, green infrastructure techniques, and environmental health policies can be codified.	City	City - Code Enforcement, City - Engineering & Public Works, City - Code Enforcement, Environmental Board			M			
S.7	Partner with NYS DEC and other organizations to increase awareness of the need for water conservation.	City	NYS DEC, Environmental Board						√
Goal 2: Encourage energy efficiency in municipal buildings, lighting, and infrastructure.									
S.8	Conduct a comprehensive municipal energy audit to identify long-range energy / greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and strategies.	City	City - Engineering & Public Works, Finance, Env. Bd	NYSEERDA, NYPA, private utilities		H			√
S.9	Work with NY Power Authority (NYPA) and NY State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) Corporation to convert municipal lighting to LED.	City - Engineering & Public Works	NYPA / NYSEG	NYPA / NYSEG					√
Goal 3: Reduce the City's vulnerability to flooding and other hazard events in order to protect the life, health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors.									
S.10	Participate in development of and support the goals and actions of the Otsego County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.	City	City - Eng. & Public Works, OPD, OFD, Otsego County						√

Policy Area 9: Rail Yards								
Goal 1: Develop the Oneonta Rail Yards to bolster economic development in the City and create jobs.								
RY.1	Partner with Otsego Now to explore potential redevelopment opportunities.	City	Otsego Now, private developers		H			
Policy Area 10: Transportation								
Goal 1: Monitor and support Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) programs and recommendations that improve parking and transportation circulation in the City.								
T.1	Renovate the existing Market Street parking garage.	City		DRI - DOS	H			
T.2	Add a new multi-modal transit facility, as identified in the DRI.	City		DRI - FTA, NYS DOT	H			
Goal 2: Improve the aesthetics, safety, and functionality of the City's gateways including Main Street intersections and I-88 connectors.								
T.3	Implement the master streetscape improvement plan focused on enhancing Main Street and converting the James Lettis Highway to a boulevard.	City	City - Engineering and Public Works, Town of Oneonta, NYS DOT	FHA - FAST, NYS DOT	H			
T.4	Continue to partner with civic organizations, not-for-profits, volunteer organizations, and other municipalities to improve gateways and other areas of the City.	City	DO, Garden Club, volunteers	DRI, private funding sources				√
Goal 3: Ensure that regional infrastructure is in place to support economic growth in the City.								
T.5	Partner with communities along the I-88 and Route 28 corridors, and other regional highways, to advocate for infrastructure improvements.	City	Town of Oneonta, Village of Cooperstown, Otsego County				M	
T.6	Strengthen the Albert S. Nader Regional Airport as a regional asset by increasing the base of support.	City	Town of Oneonta, Village of Cooperstown, Otsego County				M	
Goal 4: Provide alternative modes of transportation to enable access to commercial, cultural and recreational areas.								
T.7	Continue to incorporate adopted Complete Streets guidelines in all public and private projects.	City	City - Engineering & Public Works					√

T.8	Explore pedestrian and bicycle enhancements/amenities, including feasibility of a bike share program to connect downtown to neighborhoods, colleges, parks, and other destinations.	City	Local bike groups, Susquehanna Greenway, Town of Oneonta, local colleges						√
T.9	Support efforts of government entities and not-for-profits to update pedestrian/bike plans and Susquehanna Greenway Strategic Action Plan and incorporate recommendations into city-wide Parks and Recreation Plan.	City	City - Parks & Recreation, Susquehanna Greenway						√
T.10	Continue to pursue and install public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the City and encourage private and not-for-profit entities to establish EV charging stations for public use.	City	Private and non-profit entities	NYS DEC					√
T.11	Explore vehicles that use alternative fuels to replace the City's current fleet of vehicles.	City	City - Engineering & Public Works, Finance, Oneonta Public Transit						√
Policy Area 11: Regional									
Goal 1: Encourage a regional approach to economic development and planning.									
R.1	Coordinate with regional communities to ensure that residents outside the City have access to the City's commercial, cultural, and recreational offerings, and that City residents can access regional offerings.	City	Neighboring communities, Otsego Now, DO, Chamber, Oneonta Public Transit						√
R.2	Collaborate with the Town of Oneonta and other communities in Otsego and Delaware counties to support the development of multi-use trails and the improvement of roadway shoulders to encourage biking and walking to and from the City and connect, where possible, parks and open space owned by the City, Town of Oneonta, Otsego County and the State of New York.	City	Town of Oneonta, Otsego and Delaware Co. communities	NYS DOT, NYS EPF, NYS OPRHP					√
R.3	Continue to develop relationships with other municipalities in the region to identify further areas for cooperation.	City	Neighboring municipalities						√
R.4	Enhance the City's identity as a Susquehanna River basin community.	City	Susquehanna Greenway						√