

**SUMMARY OF CITY OF TROY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:
COMMUNITY PROFILE/EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT
MARCH 25, 2003**

THE PREPARER OF THE REPORT IS NOT INDICATED

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SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The report under examination is the 2003 City of Troy Draft Comprehensive Plan: Community Profile/Existing Conditions Report. This 150-page report is an excellent and thorough inventory of the physical, quantitative and fiscal conditions of the City of Troy as the whole and its neighborhoods: 1) Lansingburgh, 2) North Central, 3) Downtown, 4) South Troy, 5) Sycaway/East Side, 6) Albia/Heights individually.

The preparer of this report was not indicated; River Street Planning has been credited with analyzing some of the findings. Reading through the report, one can tell that there was more than one author; the writing styles section-by-section is discernibly dissimilar. There is also a redundancy of information among the sections, data and project descriptions and projections inconsistencies between and within sections. I attribute this to its *draft* designation which means it was probably not edited.

The report is divided into 10 sections or issue areas beginning with an introductory 'Overview from a Regional Context and Developmental History'. The "overview" does not provide an executive summary or summation of the reports' contents. It describes the City's geographic location, political structure, its two regional entities - the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) and the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) - and the City's history of development.

The 10 issue areas are 1) Demographic Characteristics, 2) Economic Profile, 3) Housing, 4) Real Estate Tax Base Analysis, 5) Natural Resources and Environment, 6) Historic Resources, 7) Recreational Resources, 8) Neighborhoods, 9) Infrastructure and 10) Community Services.

The organization of each issue area is similar in format, beginning with an "Issues, Opportunities and Challenges" paragraph that condenses the overall content of each sub-section.

The next grouping of paragraphs provide a general description of the City of Troy as it relates to the section topic, sometimes comparing the City's statistics to the Capital District Region, the Tri-County market area of Albany-Rensselaer-Schenectady counties, the Census Bureau's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), similar cities within New York State and/or nationally.

The subsequent paragraphs focus more narrowly on specific subject matters, data information or programs within and in relation to the issue area.

A majority of the data came from the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, although limited in its scope – it is noted throughout the report, especially in the Housing section, that the 2000 census figures would not be available until mid-2002; this report is dated 2003 and was not updated – and the *2000 Economic and Real Estate Market Study for the City of Troy* prepared by RKG Associates from research carried out in 1999 and 2000 for the Historic Troy 2020 Campaign.

2) ECONOMIC PROFILE: p.17

Table 11: p.18 – Rensselaer County: 10 Largest Employers (2001)

Table 12: p.19 – Unemployment Rates (1990-2001)

Table 13: p.20 – Employment by Industry (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Economic trends include the declining role of manufacturing, increasing unemployment and under-employment of under-skilled residents, job loss, retail sales constriction, loss of establishments and a growth of state workers;
- The diminishing supply of blue-collar jobs and the movement of jobs and population away from the city and into the suburbs have meant fewer employment opportunities for the area's less educated workers;
- NYS Dept. of Labor notes two trends that will continue to present a major challenge to area employers and service providers: (1) an increasing skill gap between the basic skills required by employers and the ability level of the entry level workforce and (2) with an older, less skilled and more immobile labor force, central cities have higher unemployment rates than surrounding suburbs;
- Workforce development will be a critical issue if Troy is to capture a fair share of the new technology development growing regionally; the expansion of RPI's role as a leader in biomedicine and new media also represents new development opportunities;
- The largest employers in the City of Troy are in (1) Health: Seton Health and Northeast Health (Samaritan Hospital and The Eddy), (2) Education: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), The Sage Colleges, Hudson Valley Community College (HCVV) and (3) Government services: New York State, Rensselaer County and the Troy City School District;
- Lansingburgh supports a wide range of neighborhood businesses, the Hoosick Street/Route 7 corridor and near HVCC focuses on commercial development and South Troy remains the industrial center of the City.

B) LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- In preparing the 2000 HUD Consolidated Plan, the City of Troy utilized the findings from the 2000 *Economic and Real Estate Market Study for the City of Troy* researched by RKG Associates and prepared for the Historic Troy 2020 initiative – with additional interpretation and analysis by River Street Planning & Development. That report concluded that:
 - labor force supply and demand is out of balance with many city residents lacking the cognitive, numerical and communication skills required for available jobs, and
 - underscored the impact high rates of poverty has on the city, its neighborhoods and families, limiting the size of the local market, draining municipal resources, increasing private sector costs and eroding investor confidence in Troy's business climate.

C) LABOR FORCE DEMOGRAPHICS:

- In 1991, 28,700 persons were employed in the City, in 1998, that figure dropped to 27,603, suggesting that regional growth is not being captured in Troy v. the County and the Tri-County market areas of Rensselaer, Albany and Schenectady Counties which has experience increases in employment.
- Between 1991 and 1998, four industry sectors realized a net increase in employment: (1) transportation, communications and utilities (TCPU), (2) finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE), (3) retail and (4) government.
- Troy has more than 52% of its employment base in services – compared to 46% in Rensselaer County and 40% in the Tri-County area;
- The only sectors to add *establishments* in Troy were FIRE and service sector businesses, while construction and retail experience a continued decline;
- The absolute count of all business types dropped about 3%;
- The percent growth in Troy’s average weekly wage at 33.3% lags behind the County at 43.6% and the Tri-County area at 43.5%; the absolute wage of \$600 appears competitive.

D) RETAIL SALES:

- The City of Troy has lost employment in the very business sectors which are experiencing the strongest growth in Rensselaer County and the Tri-County market area: business services, educational services and health services:
 - Between 1987 and 1997, retail sales went from \$289.4 million to \$372.6 million, an increase of 28.7%, well below the rate of increase in the County and Tri-County area;
 - There was an 18.9% decline in the number of retail establishments v. the county at a 4.7% decrease and the Tri-County area at .3% decrease;
 - Food and drink establishments, gas stations, and drug stores have increased while food stores, furniture, specialty shops and apparel stores have decreased;
 - Despite this decrease, retail sales of existing stores have increased productivity by nearly 60% - this suggests that existing stores are getting stronger;
 - In 1999, the estimated demand for a variety of retail goods and services was over \$233 million – of that amount, an estimate \$80 million or more may be “leaking” from Troy;
 - RKG analysis indicated that apparel, furniture and specialty retail store merchandise is where most of the leakage is;
 - Recapturing this leakage presents opportunity for expanded neighborhood and downtown retail and services.

E) CLUSTER ANALYSIS:

- According to RKG, there are 4 distinct business clusters which could be targeted for future development:
 - (1) *High-End Services Cluster*: health services, business services, educational services, legal services, membership organizations;
 - Nearly 43% of the employees and 27% of the establishments in Troy are in High End Services cluster;
 - To capitalize on Troy’s existing strengths in high end services, the plan recommends targeting the health service sector and associated business services, government and educational services.

- (2) *Information Technology/Knowledge-based Cluster*: engineering and management services, insurance carriers, depository institutions, communications, real estate, insurance brokers, securities brokers, non-depository institutions;
 - Approximately 8% of Troy's employment base and 13% of its establishments are in the IT/Knowledge cluster;
 - Growth in this cluster could be realized by targeting a range of financial services, data processing, record keeping and related information technologies that are characteristic of "back-office" operations.

- (3) *Distribution/Transportation Cluster*: wholesale trade, trucking and warehousing, air transportation, transportation services;
 - About 3% of the total employment is in the Distribution/Transportation cluster; as compared to 5% in Rensselaer county and 7% in the Tri-County area;
 - While this has been a growing employment cluster in Troy, the need for vast tracts of land by distribution facilities and the corresponding traffic impacts should limit future expansion.

- (4) *Indigenous Business Cluster*: machinery and equipment fabricated metal products, stone and concrete glass products;
 - Troy is slightly underrepresented in the Indigenous Business cluster
 - This cluster has exhibited positive employment or established growth trends in Troy over the past several years, or are well entrenched in the City's economic profile; the average weekly wage in Troy for this cluster exceeds that of the County and Tri-County areas.

F) PROJECTED JOB GROWTH:

- Projected occupational increases for the Tri-County area equate to over 23,000 positions between 1996 and 2006;
- Troy should be able to realize its employment/occupation growth potential through emerging partnerships with local educational institutions and health care employers;
- Based on growth and historic capture rates, Troy could add 2,000 workers by 2006 not only in the targeted clusters, but in government, retailing, personal services and entertainment/tourism.

G) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES:

- *South Troy Industrial Park*: Major impediments included environmental concerns and land assembly problems imposed primarily by Republic Steel's bankruptcy period and minimal cooperation by Conrail; today there are just 19 acres currently available for development as several industrial business and the Rensselaer County Jail occupy the remainder of Industrial Park lands.
- *Oakwood Business Park*: City abandoned project. Obstacles included an Article 78 proceeding over the way the SEQRA EIS was prepared.

- *Empire Zone Program*: encompasses portions of South Troy, North Central, Downtown and Lansingburgh and includes the South Troy Industrial Park. During 1998, 291 jobs were created and 14 new businesses were established.

G1) OTHER CITY OF TROY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES:

- *Real Property Tax Abatement* from an increase in assessment based in improvements to real property for up to ten years;
- *Troy Industrial Development Agency* provides financial assistance including sales tax, mortgage recording tax and real property tax exemptions;
- *City of Troy Business Loan Fund* is a revolving loan program assisting for-profit business entities located in the City;
- *50/50 Matching Grant – Commercial Building Exterior Rehabilitation Program*: The City will reimburse up to 50% of entire façade improvement up to \$10,000 for commercial buildings, \$25,000 for River Street Warehouse Rehabilitation and \$30,000 for Broadway Corridor or Waterfront buildings;
- *Federal Enterprise Community (EC) Designation*: EC designation through HUD provided the City of Troy (along with the Capital Region cities of Albany, Troy and Schenectady) with \$1 million to implement initiatives outlined in their Strategic Plans and provided priority consideration and access to other funding programs. EC designation in the City of Troy encompasses portions of North Central and all of Downtown;
- *The Rensselaer Gateway Development Corporation Inc.* is affiliated with the Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce. This agency identifies and secures business financing, helps individuals write business plans, locates sites for business expansion and relocation, assists with government regulatory issues and creates connections with other business assistance resources at no cost to the business;
- *South Troy Working Waterfront Revitalization Plan* provides an economic development strategy for the redevelopment of current underutilized industrial land, preliminary brownfields assessment and a transportation and land use plan for residential, commercial and recreational development in South Troy;
- *HUD Brownfield Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) Loan Fund*: In 2000, an \$8 million grant and loan resource in support of economic Development in South Troy – a joint program between the City of Troy and Rensselaer County – the BEDI provides essential, flexible, project financing and a revolving source of program income without which the initial land transactions proposed for the South Troy Working Waterfront Revitalization Plan would have been difficult to facilitate;
- *Rensselaer County Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (REAP)*: In 1994, the County was awarded a \$400,000 HUD Small Cities CDBG grant to develop and implement a micro enterprise program; in 1996, a multi-year CDBG was renewed to continue efforts in Troy and expand the program countywide;

- *Rensselaer County Business Incubator Funds*: In 1995, the County was awarded a \$1.2 million HUD Small Cities CDBG grant to create a business incubator to support the development of small businesses in Troy; funding facilitated the acquisition and renovation of the historic Market Block Building and provided start-up funding for operations; in 1996, a multi-year CDBG was renewed to continue renovations and operations.
- Two private groups have come forward to assist the City's economic development efforts and address the evolving fiscal crisis faced by the City of Troy in the early 1990's; the Troy Strategy Group and Troy Redevelopment Foundation:
 - *The Troy Strategy Group* was formed by a group of prominent Troy business professional to provide CEO leadership and assistance to the City in solving its fiscal problems. In July 1995, the Troy Strategy Group contracted with the *Center for Government Research*, a financial and management consultant, to develop the Troy Strategic Action Plan; the report identified an approach to bridging the gap between expected revenues and expenses and recommended a long-term strategy for economic renewal. The Historic Troy 2020 Campaign, funded entirely by the Troy Strategy Group, is an effort to develop a unified, strategic plan for the revitalization of greater Troy. The study, will examine trends and development in Troy and beyond the City's immediate boundaries.
 - Troy Redevelopment Foundation: comprised of major not-for-profit institution including RPI, The Sage Colleges, Seton Health Systems, Samaritan Hospital, Emma Willard School and The Eddy. In 1994, the Foundation agreed to provide the City of Troy with a \$400,000 annual grant for each of the next five years, half of which will go directly to the City's general fund. The remaining half will be awarded for educational and economic development projects. Projects funded: Congress Street improvements, South Troy Industrial Park Road, computer wiring for the Market Block and Rice Buildings and the purchase of a street sweeper.

3) HOUSING: p.28

Table 14: p. 29 - General Housing Characteristics

Table 15: p. 30 - General Housing Characteristics by Neighborhood

Table 16: p. 31 - Age of Housing Structures

Table 17: p. 33 - Subsidized Housing Inventory

A) OVERVIEW:

- Skyrocketing vacancy rates
- Decreasing homeownership rates
- Aging housing stock
- Significant concentration of subsidized housing
- Increasing rate of absentee ownership
- City's Consolidate Plan has identified 3 housing goals:
 - Maximize rate of home ownership
 - Improve quality, affordability and viability of rental housing
 - Improve residential neighborhoods as other housing goals.

B) GENERAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS: Analysis of Total Housing Units:

- 1990 Census figures counts 22,871 total housing units:
 - 39.6% owner-occupied
 - 60.4% renter-occupied
 - 9.2% total vacant units:
 - 2.9% vacant – *for sale*
 - 7.2% vacant – *for rent*

- 2000 Census figures counts 23,093 total housing units, an increase of 1%
 - 40.1% owner-occupied, a decrease of 2.6%
 - 59.9% renter-occupied, a decrease of 4.6%
 - 13.4% vacant unit totals:
 - 4.2% vacant – *for sale*, an increase of 30.9%
 - 9.2% vacant – *for rent*, an increase of 20.4%

- Types of Housing Structures by Percentages:
 - 31.5% are two-family housing structures;
 - 22.6% account for residential buildings with five or more units;
 - 21.8% are single-family detached residences;
 - 18.9% are units are located in three and four-family structures.

C) AGE OF HOUSING GENERALLY:

- Only 1990 Census figures available:
 - 64.9% built on or before 1939;
 - 9.0% between 1960 and 1969;
 - 7.3% between 1950 and 1959;
 - 6.8% between 1970 and 1979;
 - 6.4% between 1980 and March 1990;
 - 5.5% between 1940 and 1949.

D) CHARACTERISTICS OF RENTAL HOUSING:

- According to the 2000 Census:
 - rental housing constitutes 59.9% of the occupied housing in the City of Troy;
 - the average size of renter household is 2.13 persons per unit;
 - The medium gross rent was \$396 in 1990 – lower than the cities of Albany and Schenectady;
 - The cost of rental housing escalated at a higher rate than household income: the medium gross rent increased 24.7% (inflation adjusted) over the past decade, while the medium income increased 12.7% (after adjustment).

- Assisted (Subsidized) Housing:
 - There are approximately 2,826 subsidized housing units of which the City's elderly population occupies 37.8%;
 - The Troy Housing Authority (THA) provides a total of 1,524 public housing units in 11 subsidized housing projects;
 - THA is also the primary administrator of the Section 8 program; there are approximately 450 Section 8 units located in the City;
 - As of May 16, 2002, THS has a waiting list of 399 households for public housing units and
 - 670 households for Section 8 housing;

- THA is in the process of redeveloping Kennedy Towers, a senior housing facility. It plans to reduce to number of units to 133 from 265 units, creating 95 one-bedroom units and 38 two-bedroom units;
- The Lansingburgh Apartments is also in the process of redevelopment for senior housing; The number of units will be reduced from 96 apartments to 84 units with 7 studios, 63 one-bedrooms and 14 two bedrooms;
- The Troy Rehabilitation Improvement Program, Inc. (TRIP) provides 120 subsidized housing units to low-income residents in the North Central neighborhood. TRIP currently has a waiting list of 35 households in need of rental housing assistance.

E) CHARACTERISTICS OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:

- Owner-occupied housing comprises 40.1% of the housing stock;
- The average size of the owner households is 2.45 persons per unit;
- The medium value of an owner-occupied home is \$84,400, an increase of 44.7% (inflation adjusted) since 1980;

F) COST BURDEN:

- Cost Burden is defined as the extent to which gross housing costs exceeds 30% of gross income, based on data published by the Census Bureau. According to 1990 census information:
 - 5,423 total households (30.9%) reported housing costs in excess of 30% of their income;
 - 2,680 total households (1 out of 2) have annual incomes of < \$10,000;
 - 15.4% of all owner-occupied households were considered cost burdened;
 - 38.1% of renter-occupied households are cost burdened;
 - 25.7% of renter households reported annual incomes of < \$10,000.

G) SUBSTANDARD HOUSING:

- A 1995 field survey was conducted by TRIP for the City of Troy to determine the general conditions of existing housing and building stock in order to establish a pattern of overall housing conditions throughout the City of Troy. They found:
 - 50% of Troy's existing housing stock to be in substandard condition;
 - the poorer quality housing and higher concentrations of substandard conditions were in neighborhoods where person of low-and moderate income occupy the majority of households;
 - Many buildings have been part of façade improvements and rehabilitation programs; these programs should be augmented by other housing programs;
 - Much of the deterioration can be attributed to deferred maintenance by property owners, increasing incidence of arson and absentee landlords.

H) HOUSING MARKET ISSUES:

- The City is losing residents faster than it is losing housing units; building permit data indicates a net gain of 458 units since 1990 yielding an excess supply of residential units – a predicted over-supply of 3000 units by 2004;
- A maximum overall percentage of housing that can be owner-occupied is approximately 48.2% because of multi-unit building stock – a maximum homeownership rate, of as much as 95.4%, could be owner-occupied;
- Troy has substantially more subsidized housing than comparable cities and a lower rate of cost burden;

- Disinvestment is occurring because the market does not support the endeavor – ie: the margins are too tight, property is not producing an adequate income stream, the market is soft and owners cannot reinvest;
- The tenant base is younger and poorer than in past decades;
- There is a direct relationship between declining incomes and declining housing quality;
- Vacant and abandoned building are a growing concern;
- Lack of a comprehensive housing improvement plan has resulted in a less than effective use of limited resources in addressing housing needs and an unproductive and potentially harmful competition among local housing providers for the City's HUD funds;
- In-rem process needs to be used as a vehicle for improving neighborhood cohesiveness and amenities: consider demolitions, owner-occupancy requirements, deeding to abutting owners;
- Over 40% of Troy's land is not taxable;
- Residential uses (34% of the land) currently provides 75% of the tax levy; Downtown uses 2% of the land and contributes 11% of the tax levy;
- The net of service costs of a taxable acre of residential land is \$365 v. \$1,532 for commercial/industrial acre of land;
- The CDBG eligible neighborhoods experience the fastest decline, high levels of blight, incompatible land uses, poor access to amenities, highest densities and lowest homeownership rates;
- City has not done a Property Assessment Revaluation since 1972.

I) HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

- *Troy Rehabilitation Improvement Program (TRIP)* is a multi-faceted, not-for-profit, community-based organization dedicated to neighborhood revitalization. It provides a diverse array of housing and neighborhood services, including homeownership programs and Home Buyer Education Workshops training sessions;
- *Own a Home in Historic Troy* is a homeownership incentive program for anyone interested in buying and living in a home in downtown Troy and is sponsored by the Sage Colleges, Troy Architectural Program and TRIP. Forgivable loans of up to \$5,000 are available toward down payment, closing costs or renovations. Target Area includes residential and mixed residential/commercial properties located between Adams Street, Fifth Avenue, Federal Street and River/Front Street;
- *RPI's Homebuyer Incentive Program* offers \$5000 to qualified homebuyers who purchase a home in the neighborhoods directly north and south of the campus. RPI will also provide the closing at not cost to the buyer; no income limitations are required, however, buyers must commit to living in the home as their primary residence for five years and attend a seminar in homeownership to learn about issues surround maintenance, building codes, insurance, utilities and budgeting;
- *The City of Troy Homebuyer Incentive Program (HIP)* provides financial assistance to income eligible household in the form of deferred loan payment. Buyers must use the property as their primary residence and attend Home Buyers Club Education Services (sponsored by TRIP);
- *The Troy Architectural Program (TAP)* provides homeownership rehabilitation grants for homes purchased in Downtown and South Troy. Grants will assist income eligible household to perform necessary renovation on homes they will buy and occupy as their primary residence.

J) HOUSING REHABILITATION:

- TRIP also offers two housing rehabilitation programs:

- *The Revolving Loan Fund* is CDBG-funded and provides low interest loans for up to 30,000 for income-eligible homeowners for home improvements;
- *The Rehabilitation and Resale Program* rehabilitation properties and are then available for sale to low and moderate-income families at subsidized prices;
- *RPI's Neighborhood Renewal Initiative Program*: the college has purchased foreclosed buildings in the Hillside neighborhood of which some have been renovated and then sold; others have been demolished because they were beyond repair;
- The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) rehabilitation programs:
 - *CEO Weatherization Program* improves homes of income eligible households by providing energy conservation and health and safety measures;
 - *CEO Home Repair Program* is specifically designed to prioritize repairs for the elderly, disables and other homeowners in the City of Troy area; these services provide an alternative for some homeowners that may have lost their homes because they could not afford repairs or upgrades for basic safety and comfort;
 - *CEO Housing Rehabilitation and Energy Service Program* provides weatherization, energy conservation and rehabilitation services to income qualified residents in Troy's enterprise community neighborhoods (Downtown and North Central);
- *The Owner-Occupied Homeowner Exterior Paint Program* is a CDBG-funded program which provides grants for supplies and materials. Homeowners must be income-eligible or reside with the Enterprise Community Census Tracts 404 or 407;
- *The Sidewalk Replacement Loan Program* is available to property owners in the City of Troy who are current with all taxes and water bills. Loans may be used to install new or repair existing sidewalks and curbing around their properties.

K) CONTINUUM OF CARE:

- Troy's Homeless Services Collaborative is responsible for coordinating the development of the Continuum of Care strategy consisting of homeless prevention, outreach and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, permanent housing and supportive services;
- The Homeless Services Collaborative works closely with the City to identify emerging issues and needs and to prioritize the distribution of CDBG, Emergency Shelter Grant and other funds available on a competitive basis from HUD under the Shelter Plus Care Program and McKinney Act;
- Priorities include permanent supportive housing for persons with mental illness and/or substance abuse, outreach to chronically homeless persons; transitional housing and emergency housing for victims of domestic violence without or with mental illness and or substance abuse, employment placement and training and housing-related care management;
- Homelessness has been positively impacted by the Continuum of Care approach and the Homeless Services Collaborative but ongoing support is needed to accomplish identified goals:

- Create a comprehensive, coordinated system which moves homeless persons from the street toward permanent housing;
- Create sufficient permanent and supportive housing resources;
- Provide and coordinate supportive services needed to assist homeless persons in acquiring and maintaining housing;
- Provide emergency and transitional housing option for persons who are not yet ready to live independently.

4) REAL ESTATE TAX BASE: p.43

Table 18: p.42 - Real Estate Tax Base, City of Troy

Table 19: p.44 - NYS Cities: Demographic Comparison

Table 20: p.44 - NYS Cities: Tax Base Comparison (1999)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Composition of the tax base:
 - Troy is comprised of 6,660 acres of land including right-of-ways;
 - 3,188 acres is taxable; nearly 43% is tax exempt
 - 35% total acreage is residential land, the predominant use
 - 25% total acreage is Institutional land, largely tax-exempt
 - 22% is vacant land
 - 9% is park and recreational land
 - 5% is commercial land
 - 4% is industrial land
- Full value assessments:
 - Full value assessments of real property have increased by 60 percent (inflation adjusted) since 1980; this is a slower rate of increase than in nearby cities and the rest of Rensselaer County;
 - Assessment levels declined in the later part of the 1990's; between 1994 and 1998, total tax assessments declined by 5.7%;
 - Sharpest declines were seen in South Troy (-6.6%), Sycaway/East Side (-7.2%), and Downtown (-12.5%);
 - Assessments on taxable properties have declined 6%, while non-taxable properties have increased by 1.6%. This trend may be related to the growth in non-taxable parcels (12%) v. taxable parcels (.7%) during that time.
- Tax burden:
 - The tax burden in Troy is one of the highest in the region; its tax rate, at \$14.72 per \$1,000 of assessment, is 23% higher than Albany's and 18% higher than Schenectady's;
 - 75% of tax revenue is generated from residential parcels, 19% from commercial parcels, 4% from industrial land and 1% from institutional parcels;
 - The share of revenue from industrial parcels is unusually low; this may be due to current uses of industrial land: warehousing; old and inexpensive construction; vacant/underutilized.
- Comparison of base with similar NYS Cities:
 - Troy has a similar population and density with most of the states small cities;

- The taxable valuation of the city is 37% lower than the average of the seven other cities: Mt. Vernon, Schenectady, Utica, Niagara Falls, Binghamton, White Plains and Rome; the full value per land acre is 42% lower; Troy's tax rate is slightly above the average of the other seven cities.
- Real Estate Market Analysis: several factors work against maintaining the city's residential tax base:
 - Number of households is expected to decrease by 7.6% from 1990 to 2004;
 - In 1999, the residential vacancy rate was 16%, well above the stable market rate of 3.5%; the vacancy rate is expected to exceed 18% by 2004, producing an excess inventory of 3,000 units;
 - To stem tide and improve marketability, the city must improve quality of life features, such as recreation and green spaces, streetscape and alley improvements and code enforcement;
 - Neighborhoods with higher densities and little green/recreational space have greater vacancy rates and lower assessed values per unit (i.e. South Troy/North Central).
- Industrial/Commercial Properties:
 - Troy has only 35 acres of industrial land on the market; the city has 1.29 million sq. ft. of industrial space - about 8% of total in the Tri-Market area, 44% is vacant;
 - There is 1.47 million sq. ft. of commercial/office space, 33% is vacant;
 - These two figures are well above average in the Tri-Market area.
- Several characteristics of current inventory have been identified as a deterrent to occupancy:
 - Buildings are obsolete and too costly to repair;
 - Available buildings are too small to attract prospective businesses;
 - Much vacant land is undevelopable due to topography;
 - Potential brownfields and environmental concerns require costly rehabilitation;
 - A growing lack of utilization resulting in stagnant and unproductive condition of land;
 - Lack of incentives to improve, modernize or rehabilitate properties;
 - Private site assembly of blighted property is complex and costly;
 - Visual blight from failure to maintain or improve property as required by City Code;
 - Existing lots are inappropriately sized and lack access to vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic or utilities to allow for development;
 - Inadequate open space and recreation facilities.

5) NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT p.47

A) OVERVIEW:

- Site contamination is an issue for much of the waterfront, but remediation of brownfield sites, particularly in South Troy affords opportunities for new commercial, light industrial and recreational development;
- The City's water bodies - the Hudson River, Poesten Kill, Wynants Kill, Paensic Kill, Piscawen Kill, Wright Lake, Bradley Lake and Vanderheyden Reservoir – all provide recreational and interpretive/educational opportunities;

- Improving connections between natural resources and city neighborhoods would enhance quality of life, help improve and/or stabilize property values and make neighborhoods more attractive to potential homebuyers and other investors;
- Volatile organic compounds have been discovered in the groundwater directly adjacent to the mouth of the Wynants Kill in monitoring wells; a remediation process has been initiated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation.

B) HUDSON RIVER:

For several years, the GE Corporation used PCBs to insulate many of its products. Between 1972 and 1977, GE obtained Point Discharge Elimination System permits to discharge its industrial wastes, including PCBs, into the Hudson River. Neither GE nor the federal government was aware of the potentially harmful effects of PCBs on the environment and human health. In 1983, EPA placed the Hudson River on the National Priorities List as a Superfund site. The following year, the EPA examined the level of contamination, the remedial alternatives and comparative impacts of dredging. It concluded that dredging was not an appropriate alternative. In 1989, EPA announced plans to reassess its 1984 decision. A final decision requiring extensive dredging in key location was issued in 2001.

C) FLOODPLAIN:

The majority of the 100-year floodplain lies along the Hudson River from the Waterford Bridge to the Troy-Menands Bridge. A flood in 1994 resulted in substantial damage to the City. The elevation of the 100-year floodplain and the City's history of flooding (in 1913 and 1936) suggest that the threat of damage to and loss of property in South Troy and Lansingburgh could be substantial.

D) HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Real and perceived site contamination from past industrial processes has been a major impediment to redevelopment of vacant and underutilized industrial sites. As part of the South Troy Working Waterfront Revitalization Plan, an environmental planning and research study was conducted by Sterling Environmental Engineering, PC, to evaluate and characterize the environmental conditions of South Troy. The evaluation assisted the City in identifying a preferred land use pattern and redevelopment for the waterfront area and priorities and constraints to development.

E) OTHER KEY REDEVELOPMENT SITES:

Data exists for a number of other contaminated sites in the City:

- Niagara Mohawk Manufactured Gas Plant located on the Hudson River waterfront in the North Central neighborhood
- Niagara Mohawk Manufactured Gas Plant – Area 2 and Area 4
- Niagara Mohawk Manufactured Gas Plant – Area 3
- Republic Steel
- Portec, Inc.
- Sperry Warehouse
- Jack's Auto Parts

F) BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT:

The City of Troy has secured significant resources for brownfield remediation:

- *South Troy EPA Pilot Project:* In February 2001, the City received a \$250,000 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot grant for the South Troy Waterfront to complete site assessments and remediation planning, investigate legal and ownership strategies to facilitate site clean-up and redevelopment, create planning-based marketing tools, conduct extensive public involvement effort, resolve open questions about environmental quality and identify clean-up schedules and costs.
- *HUD Brownfields Economic Development Initiative:* The City and County received an \$8 million in loans and grants from HUD's Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI). This award provides \$2 million in grant funds and \$6 million in loans to facilitate land transactions, provide working capital, construction financing and public infrastructure and amenities to support economic development in South Troy.
- *North Central Environmental Sciences Training Center (NEST):* This community collaborative was created with \$50,000 in start-up capital from the City of Troy Enterprise Community Delegation and an additional \$200,000 grant from the Brownfields Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilot program to provide job training services to Troy residents, enabling them to play an active role in cleaning up their own community. This joint venture includes the North Central Neighborhood Association, TRIP, Inc. and RPI.

6) HISTORIC RESOURCES: p.53

Table: p.68 - Troy's Top 10 Threatened Historic Resources

A) OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this section is to document the City's existing historic preservation efforts, to assist the City in identifying the economic values and risks associated with historic resources and to provide information that will enable the city to evaluate whether historic preservation strategies are, or can be, more effective and productive economic revitalization tools.

This section is also intended to assist the City and the various agencies active in historic preservation, downtown promotion and neighborhood revitalization efforts in determining whether there is more they can do to capitalize on the economic development and heritage tourism potential of Troy's historic resources.

- The city possesses a significant number of historic resources and some key sites that are threatened by development or disinvestment;
- Current historic resources include 3 national historic landmarks, 7 national register-listed historic districts encompassing approximately 900 buildings, 29 buildings and sites listed individually on the National Register, 11 districts determined eligible for listing and over 40 buildings and sites that have been determined eligible for national register-listing either individually or as part of thematic resource groups;
- If the City's housing stock is to become more competitive with other segments of the local and regional housing market, the poor condition of the City's older and historic

housing stock and the deteriorated appearance of the neighborhoods will have to be addressed;

- Currently available rehabilitation tax credits and proposed historic homeowner tax credits should encourage revitalization;
- The City of Troy has secured a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to conduct neighborhood meetings in order to educate residents about Troy's historic resources and provide a public process through which the protection and enhancement of those resources can be discussed and implementation techniques identified;
- In 2001, the Mayor's Historic Preservation Task Force identified the following threats to Troy's historic preservation and community character:
 - RPI expansion along 8th Street and at the eastern edges of the campus;
 - Continuing Sage college expansion;
 - Redevelopment of the South Troy waterfront in accordance with the South Troy Working Waterfront Revitalization plan;
 - Redevelopment in other areas throughout the city;
 - Ongoing situations such as absentee landlords, lack of building maintenance, arson, code violations;
 - Insufficient incentive for property owners to make improvements;
 - Badly deteriorated and/or obsolete conditions of many older and historic buildings;
 - Declining church membership that make it increasingly difficult for existing congregations to maintain their facilities, most of which are either already designated as historic structures or are eligible for designation.
- The Task Force also identified specifically threatened historic buildings:
 - Lansingburgh: Freihofer Bakery & Riverside Club
 - Downtown: Quackenbush Building
 Tavern Building
 Proctor's Theater
 - South Troy: 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8 Washington Place
 Frame buildings: south side of Ferry Street, east of Fourth Street
 Portec Building
 171 Fourth Street
 Burden Iron Work Horseshoe Warehouse
 - Sycaway: Memorial Methodist Church Hall

B) HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS:

- National Historic Landmarks:
 - Kate Mullany House
 - W. & L.E. Gurley Building
 - Troy Savings Bank & Music Hall

The Rensselaer County Historical Society is formally seeking designation of the Hart-Cluett Mansion as a National History Landmark.

- Historic Districts Listed in the National & State Registers:
 - Fifth Avenue-Fulton Historic District

Grand Street Historic District
 Northern River Street Historic District
 River Street Historic District
 Second Street Historic District
 Central Troy Historic District
 Washington Park Historic District

- Individually-Listed Buildings in the National and State Registers:

- LANSINGBURGH:
 - Glenwood/Titus Eddy Mansion (Eddy's Lane)
 - Lansingburgh Academy (Fourth and 114th Street)
 - Herman Melville House (114th and First Avenue)
 - Oakwood Cemetery (101st Street)
 - Powers Home (819 Third Avenue)
 - Trinity Church Lansingburgh (Fourth and 115th Street)
- NORTH CENTRAL TROY:
 - Kate Mullany House (8th St., just north of Hoosick Street)
 - Esek Bussey Firehouse (302 Tenth Street)
- DOWNTOWN:
 - Cannon Building (1 Broadway)
 - Hart-Cluett Mansion (59 Second Street)
 - Ilium Building (Fulton & Fourth Street)
 - McCarthy Building (255 River Street)
 - National State Bank Building (297 River Street)
 - Proctor's Theater (82 Fourth Street)
 - St. Paul's Episcopal Church Complex (58 Third Street)
 - Troy Public Library (100 Second Street)
 - Troy Saving Bank Music Hall (32 Second Street)
 - US Post Office (400 Broadway)
 - W. & L.E. Gurley Building (514 Fulton Street)
 - Winslow Chemical Laboratory (105 Eighth Street)
- SOUTH TROY:
 - Burden Iron Works Site (East of Burden Avenue)
 - Burden Iron Works Office Building (Foot of Polk Street)
 - J.C. Osgood Steam Fire Engine Company No. 3 Firehouse (Third Street & Canal Avenue)
 - Public School No. 10 (Third Street and Adams Street)
 - Pumpkin House (180 Fourth Street)
 - Troy Gas Light Company Gas Holder House (Jefferson Street)
- SYCAWAY/EAST SIDE:
 - Old Troy Hospital - West Hall (Eighth Street)
- ALBIA/HEIGHTS:
 - Emma Willard School (Pawling & Elmgrove Avenue)
 - Henry Koon House (Pawling Avenue)

7) RECREATIONAL RESOURCES: p.70

Table 21: p.73 - Recreational Organizations

Table 22: p.74 - Youth Recreational Leagues

Table 23: p.75 - School Facilities

A) OVERVIEW:

- The City of Troy manages three major parks and 19 neighborhood parks: 10 softball fields, a baseball field, 2 football/soccer fields, 2 swimming pools, 25 tennis courts, 20 basketball courts, 4 spray pools, 5 handball walls, a running track, 160 pieces of playground equipment, 2 ice rinks and an 18-hole golf course;
- In 2001, there were 27 golf leagues, 74 golf outings and tournaments, a golf clinic, 2 tennis clinics, 5 softball leagues, 2 soccer leagues, a basketball league, 6 ice skating leagues, 2 figure skating clubs, 18 tennis matches and tournaments, 4 baseball leagues, 2 pop-warner football leagues, a flag football league, 5 ice hockey camps, 10 ice hockey clubs, 2 learn to swim programs, 2 water carnivals, 98 public swimming sessions and a major road race (Turkey Trot);
- The three major parks are: Prospect Park (80 acres), Knickerbacker Park (47 acres) and Frear Park (245 acres) – a master plan has recently been completed;
- Other significant recreational amenities:
 - Poestenkill Gorge with 30 acres includes hiking and nature trails, picnic areas, parking areas and overlooks to the falls;
 - Burden Pond Environmental Park with hiking and nature trails, parking areas, and picnic areas;
- The 21st Century Fund was established with the sale of the South Troy Recreation Center and provides money for buying or improving park land in the City of Troy. To date, the City has purchased property for the development of a waterfront trail and to make improvements to the Frear Park Golf Course;
- A new \$2.5 million South Troy Recreation Center was completed in 1994; in 1997 the City accepted a proposal from the Troy Boys & Girls Club to acquire, program and operate the facility.

B) ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

- The City is interested in promoting public access to the waterfront; it is a part of any new development or redevelopment plan situated along the entire river;
- There are not enough recreation facilities and “informal” fields (baseball, softball, etc.) for younger children;
- The City’s Public Works Department is in need of a new facility; If relocated, the existing facility could be transformed into an indoor/outdoor recreational facility;
- Knickerbacker Park is in need of improvement, particularly of gateways into the park;

- The Uncle Same bikeway is in need of maintenance, repair and upgrades;
- There is a lack of playgrounds and recreational amenities in the Stowe Avenue and Emerald Greens area in the Albia/Heights; the old landfill represents an opportunity for recreational development;
- North Central waterfront area has brownfields issues and is underserved in recreational opportunities;
- Craigin Avenue Park is the site of many drug dealings;
- Hillside Playground on 10th Street has constant trash inundation; acquisition of vacant land at the corner of Oakwood and 10th Street could be used as a replacement playground.
- Ingalls Avenue Park is a pass-through from bikeway to park and is inundated with by-passer's trash and litter;
- Adams Island presents additional recreational opportunities if navigational channel is relocated west and format access across is existing channel is provided.

C) INITIATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The City of Troy is submitting a Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act Fund application to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the South Troy Waterfront Park and Greenspace System. The project includes the acquisition of two parcels of Land in South Troy and the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of currently underutilized and deteriorated Rensselaer Ironworks building and the creation of a park along the Hudson River from Adams Street to Madison Street;
- The City of Troy is submitting an Environmental Protection Fund application to the NYS DOS for the South Troy Working Waterfront Implementation Strategy. The project involves the construction of key waterfront amenities and improvements including the creation of a pedestrian walkway on Canal Avenue, construction of a public boat launch south of Adams Street, and construction of two of six planned pedestrian corridors which intersect the TEA-21 funded pedestrian trail/bikeway along the Hudson River shoreline;
- The City is currently updating its Recovery Action Plan to identify overall recreation system needs, objectives, problems and opportunities related to physical facilities, service programs, system maintenance and opportunities for coordination with other urban programs. When the Plan is approved by the National Park Service, the city will be eligible to apply for Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPAAR) Program grants;
- Continue the implementation of the Frear Park Master Plan;
- Continue to reinvest in the parks through the Mayor's Capital Improve Program;
- Continue the development of youth programs in conjunction with Troy's Youth Services Coordinator;
- Continue to strengthen ties and develop projects with community partners;
- Continue park and pool improvements;
- Purchase vehicles and equipment;
- Increase computer usage within the Bureau of Parks & Recreation.

8) NEIGHBORHOODS: p.78

➤ LANSINGBURGH: p.78

Table: p.86 - Lansingburgh RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Lansingburgh is the second largest neighborhood in the City accounting for:
 - 27% of the City's total land
 - 24.9% of the taxable land
 - 27% real estate tax base – largest % among all the neighborhoods

 - 35.3% of the land is for residential use – > 80% of the real estate tax base
 - 31% of the land is for institutional use
 - 18.4% of the land is vacant
 - 8.2% is used for parks and recreation (123.6 acres; 24% of parkland citywide)
 - 4.8% of the land is for commercial use – 13.8% of the real estate tax base
 - 2.3% of the land is for industrial use – 4% of the real estate tax base

- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$177,083/acre for commercial
 - \$109,941/acre for residential
 - \$79,483/acre for industrial

- Lansingburgh is predominantly residential with highway commercial uses scattered along Second Avenue and neighborhood commercial uses concentrated in the area between 114th and 118th streets. It maintains its own school system, post office, historical society and business association;

- 1990 Census data counts 5,940 residential structures; the area accounts for more than ¼ of the City's housing stock and 74.6% of housing constructed between 1800 and 1939;

- Residential housing located in the riverfront neighborhoods are a mix of small frame structures on very small lots, mobile homes, and single, two- and multi-family houses created from former single- and two-family residences that have been modified to include more units; changes over time in zoning regulations and building codes have resulted in larger lot sizes and more single family structures located in the northern and eastern edges;

- *3 public housing facilities*: Corliss Park, Kane (Senior) Apartments and Martin Luther King Apartments; *2 senior housing facilities*: Diamond Ridge and Diamond Rock;

- *Operating Industrial Businesses*: Standard Manufacturing, Grethen-Cahrenger Memorials, Ready Fundraising and Oakwood Avenue Industrial Park;

- *Major Employers*: Lansingburgh Central School District, Seton Health, Standard Manufacturing, St. Mary's Hospital, Ross Valve, US. Post Office and City of Troy water treatment plant;

- *Sites Available for Development:* Former Garden Way facilities, Ready Fundraising (for sale), 40-acre site at the north end of Oakwood Cemetery, Former Junior Museum, Former 6.5 acre Leonard Hospital site, Former Ken Goewey Car sale lots, Powers School Building;
- *The 112th Street Corridor Study:* In an effort to promote development of a more formal “urban village” in Lansingburgh, the City will shortly undertake a planning study of the east-west 112th Street corridor and its major north-south cross routes of Second and Fifth Avenues. The study will focus on:
 - A connection to I-787 and its commercial area viability (building on the City of Cohoes Route 470 study)
 - Hudson River access (as a unique neighborhood asset)
 - 2nd Avenue commercial area
 - 112th Street corridor
 - 5th Avenue commercial area
 - Gurley Avenue/New Residential Development
- *Infrastructure and Traffic:* In addition to the 112th Street Corridor study, the city is replacing traffic signals along the Second Avenue corridor to accommodate “smart” technology. This grant-funded project includes the installation of ADA-compliant curb cuts at all intersections. Another project will result in the replacement of sewer lines along 102nd Street between 2nd and 8th Avenue and include repaving, new curbs and new sidewalks;
- *Building Stock and Conditions* have deteriorated substantially over the last decade and vary considerably from block to block. This negative trend has resulted from:
 - an aging population relocating to their housing and/or less able to care for their homes;
 - increase absentee landlords and property owners
 - lack of investment by owners
 - increasing drug activity, “crack houses” and suspicious arson
 - age of construction dated between 1800 and 1939
 - many buildings have architectural and historical significant. Unfortunately, they have been altered through insensitive modifications: additions, new windows and doors, new rooflines, installation of synthetic siding materials. While these changes represent positive investments, most were done in the 1960’s and 70’s, they are currently faded, dented, warped, scratched or dirty
 - these conditions reduce property values and make it difficult for Troy’s housing and neighborhoods to compete with regional housing.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for Lansingburgh is one of preserving and enhancing its residential nature and strengthening its existing commercial development;
- Target programs to increase owner occupancy to 60%, nearer the 65% national average;
- Reuse the former Leonard Hospital and the vacant school property for either a senior/assisted living facility or for market-rate housing – Section 8 or subsidized housing should be discouraged for these properties;

- Other than infill, additional new retail development should be discouraged, particularly along the waterfront; more appropriate development should focus on upgrading existing areas and on in-fill in existing retail/service districts;
- Target redevelopment/rehabilitation efforts utilizing matching grant programs for façade upgrades; incentive programs will need expansion in order to overcome reluctant property owners to invest and overcome the perception that property taxes will increase or that it will be difficult to see a return on their investment;
- Buffers need to be developed between incompatible land uses and the North Central-Lansingburgh transition properties to halt the blighting influences;
- Future manufacturing and light industrial uses should be discouraged; possible relocation of existing users to the South Troy Waterfront industrial area should be considered;
- Disband the Oakwood Business Park proposal – incompatible land use – and consider an upscale, active retirement community;
- Consider zoning changes, in addition to selected demolition, in order to reduce densities; eliminate manufacturing as an allowable use;
- Initiate an “Adopt-a-Park” pilot program to share in park maintenance and upkeep; shared assistance could range from labor and litter patrols to annual tax deductible contributions, possibly coordinated with a matching grant program;
- Riverfront access obscured; discontinue any new retail development and either remove or relocate trailer parks/camps as a means for enhancing residential values.

➤ NORTH CENTRAL: p.88

Table: p.91 - North Central RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- North Central is one of the smallest neighborhoods in the City accounting for:
 - 4.9% of the City’s total land
 - 6.4% of the taxable land
 - 6.9% real estate tax base
 - 37.7% of the land is for residential use – > 66% of the real estate tax base
 - 24% of the land is vacant
 - 15% of the land is for institutional use
 - 11% of the land is for industrial use – 10.9% of the real estate tax base
 - 9.7% of the land is for commercial use – 15.9% of the real estate tax base
 - 2.2% of the land is used for parks and recreation (6 acres)
- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$116,772/acre for residential
 - \$105,743/acre for commercial
 - \$82, 082/acre for industrial

- North Central is the city's most distressed neighborhood as evidenced by high levels of code violation, building abandonment and crime rate;
- In the 1970's the neighborhood was dramatically changed by the construction of the Collar City/Route 7 Bridge: construction of the bridge required significant demolition of existing commercial and residential building stock, created a physical barrier between the neighborhood and downtown Troy, devalued residential buildings and some commercial buildings adjacent to the bridge, new traffic congestion created poor living conditions - these residual effects have never been remedied;
- North Central is split into two different development patterns:
 - *Western portion* is a dense, urban neighborhood with a mix of commercial and residential uses and significant social and economic challenges; most of the building construction took place prior to 1939; it has the highest incidences of code violations, building abandonment and crime; the aesthetic appeal is further weakened by the number of absentee landlords, a lack of street trees, green space and poor sidewalks; the neighborhood continues to lose population, owner-occupied housing and stable businesses;
 - *North Central Hillside*, above 10th Street, is less dense with more single family homes on larger lots. The streetscape is green with fewer code violations; fewer land use conflicts with large portions of the non-residential areas provide community or institutional uses; the area is considerably more stable.
- *2 public housing developments*: Arnold E. Fallon Apartments and Martin Luther Apartments;
- *Nursing Home*: Eden Nursing Home;
- *Hospital*: St. Mary's Hospital;
- *Daycare*: Sunnyside Day Care Center;
- *1 Major park*: Frear Park;
- *3 neighborhood playgrounds*: all a site for dumping trash and excessive litter creating a less-than ideal environment for children activities:
 - Craigin Avenue Park
 - Ingalls Avenue Playground
 - Hoosick Street Playground
- Location of Troy's Inner-City Neighborhood Center;
- Location of the City School District's Alternative Learning Center for high school students.

B) ISSUES/CHALLENGES (NOT MENTIONED IN OVERVIEW):

- Residents are generally poor and cannot easily invest in the neighborhood; lack of homeownership;
- City of Troy does not have the resources to assemble sites and prepare them for redevelopment;
- Shortage of neighborhood amenities that are easily and safely accessible to pedestrians;
- Land use conflicts driving down property values, particularly in the southern and western portion of the neighborhood;
- Redevelopment or adaptive reuse opportunities exist along the Hudson River, on 5th and 6th Avenues between North and Jay Streets and along River Street as there are a significant number of underutilized or vacant lots and manufacturing/industrial buildings;
- There are many strong community organizations that provide youth programs, support services for families and individuals and general community activities;

- Ample opportunities to create pocket parks and off-street parking lots from the demolition of blighted buildings.

C) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for North Central is the need to reposition it for the 21st Century in order to improve the quality of life for its residents and to enhance its contributory value to the City as a whole;
- Several redevelopment options:
 - Business Park: capitalizes on North Central's proximity to the Downtown and compliment existing users such as Hedley Park Place and Flanigan Square;
 - Retail: capitalizes on the traffic count and planned capital improvements along the Hoosick Street corridor;
 - Office and Retail: A combination of the above two, with a broadly diversified development base on a smaller scale.
- Implementation:
 - Reduce residential density and target future housing development/redevelopment for low and moderate income residents;
 - Eliminate undesired and/or noxious uses; open up riverfront for "clean" development and recreation and green space;
 - Acquire junkyard and relocate away from riverfront; relocate Arnold E. Fallon Apartments to the riverfront; relocate the US Army Corps Locks and Dam and replace with riverfront office space;
 - Accentuate Hoosick Street and Oakwood Avenue as a "gateway" to North Central.

➤ DOWNTOWN: p.94

Table: p.101 - Downtown RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

List: p. 95 - Specific public and private investment projects

List: p.100 - Underutilized buildings and developable sites

A) OVERVIEW:

- Downtown is the City's smallest neighborhood accounting for:
 - 2.8% of the City's total land
 - 2.2% of the taxable land
 - 10.9% real estate tax base
 - 27.2% of the land is for commercial use – 68% of the real estate tax base
 - 24.4% of the land is vacant
 - % of the land is for residential use – 25.8% of the real estate tax base
 - 16.2% of the land is for institutional use
 - 6.5% of the land is for industrial use – 4.4% of the real estate tax base
 - 5.7% of the land is used for parks and recreation (9 acres)
- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$451,134/acre for commercial
 - \$364,765/acre for residential
 - \$287,230/acre for industrial

- Significant investments have been made over the last 10 years including major building restoration and renovations; despite this, a number of underutilized buildings and developable sites remain;
- Downtown's historic architecture, arts, cultural and educational institutions are important contributions to the local economy;
- *Major employers:* federal, state and local government agencies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Russell Sage College and Troy Saving Bank;
- *Educational Institutions:* Hudson Valley Community College, Russell Sage College, RPI including the Lighting Research Center and Rice Building incubator space, Educational Opportunities Center (in partnership with SUNY and Hudson Valley Community College), Questar III's Troy Access Center and Virtual Learning and Training Center;
- *Public housing:* Kennedy Towers, O'Neil Apartments, Troy Towers and Taylor Apartments;
- *Troy Redevelopment Foundation:* direct financial contributions are made by Russell Sage College, RPI, Northeast Health and Emma Willard School;
- *Major issues:*
 - Lack of a strong retail base; new stores are of questionable quality
 - Lack of a steady consumer base
 - Uncooperative landlords; unmanaged buildings
 - Absentee landlords; tax delinquencies, foreclosures, code violations
 - Perception that Downtown is unsafe; underage drinking and drug activity
 - Scattered placement and too few of well-managed businesses

B) ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

- *Organization:* No one group is taking responsibility for the overall management of the commercial district;
- *Building Stock and Conditions:* While city incentives have resulted in the improvement of numerous buildings, many remain vacant or underutilized; many suffer from deferred maintenance and functional obsolescence – upgrading electric and mechanical systems, installation of technology infrastructure, installation of new finishes such as flooring, carpeting and paint – improvement costs make it difficult for an owner to see reasonable return on investment;
- *Retail Retention and Recruitment:* Upgrading and attracting new businesses, especially of a retail nature is by far the most difficult challenge; depletion of large department stores and “mom and pop” independent shops;
- *Public Safety:* The Troy Police Department has been working to reduce the crime rate and improve perceptions of public safety, however, the perception that downtown is unsafe continues; some drug activity occurs along downtown streets and alleyways; improvements are needed to reduce underage drinking and rowdy behavior at bars on 3rd & 4th streets;
- *Parking:* The *Downtown Parking Development Plan* completed in 1998 measured the number of on- and off- street parking spaces as well as usage patterns; current count 4,400 public and private spaces; the city is in need of at least 550 new spaces to meet current needs; the plan made recommendations for improving and managing current parking options and analyzed potential for new lot development at five sites.

C) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for Downtown is to support and facilitate its role as the commercial, cultural and civic Center of the City of Troy, while enhancing its potential property values by selective rehabilitation;
- An increase in property values would encourage new development by stimulating a vibrant and mixed use of downtown properties to include office, retail/restaurant/tourism, culture, institution, government and targeted residential and increased linkage to the waterfront;
- Expand geographic definition of Downtown to include portions of North Central neighborhood from Hoosick Street and several blocks north and east (census tracts 404 & 405). This expansion should include an improved link with RPI into portions of Sycaway/East Side (census tract 406);
- Facilitate selective inventory reductions in residential and commercial stock and add green space;
- Add more parking strategically throughout Downtown; leverage the “public investment” of parking with “private investment” in specific projects. Consider removal/relocation of the waterfront parking facility along Lower River Street, realize that there is value to waterfront properties, view, vistas and gateways;
- Beautify the “backside” of Downtown which is presented to traffic/consumers/tourists as they travel I-787 across the Hudson River, tie this into the expansion of the arts district and artesian community, increase directional and pedestrian orientation signage;
- Develop a pilot project for artisan loft/gallery space, a tie-in to a ground floor leasing strategy; upgrade residential rental market through a targeted campaign for artisan and graduate student tenants; target empty-nesters to a new riverfront condominium project – consider relocating Taylor Apartments to achieve this;
- Consider hiring a downtown development manager to fill the void of an active liaison for development, recruitment, grant procurement, networking;
- Complete the Broadway corridor to Broadway Landing; complete the redevelopment of the vacant Ahern site and assemblage of adjacent parcel, tie in with proposed Congress Street corridor initiative.

➤ SOUTH TROY: p.105

Table: p.109 - South Troy RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- South Troy accounts for 68% of all the industrial land within the City and:
 - 13.6% of the City’s total land
 - 17% of the taxable land
 - 14% real estate tax base

- 38.2% of the land is vacant
- 29.9% of the land is for residential use – 69% of the real estate tax base
- 14.4% of the land is for industrial use – 12.5% of the real estate tax base
- 6.1% of the land is for commercial use – 13.9% of the real estate tax base
- .22% of the land is used for parks and recreation
- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$118,557/acre for residential
 - \$113,999/acre for commercial
 - \$40,652/acre for industrial - given the large amount industrial land, this per acre taxable value is lower than in most neighborhoods in the City.
- South Troy is densely populated with a considerable mix of industrial and residential uses. The neighborhood encompasses two distinct districts: the waterfront district dominated with industrial/employment uses and an inland neighborhood residential district;
- The neighborhood district is comprised of two and three-story row houses constructed on small lots interspersed with neighborhood businesses and institutional uses;
- Development has been severely constrained by a rugged topography reflected in the irregular street patterns; most of the area along the Hudson River between Adams Street and the Menands Bridge produces large amounts of truck traffic;
- The waterfront district encompasses 208 acres of land; just under 1/3 is vacant or underutilized, 23% are used for active industrial purposes, 13% are used for businesses, 10% are natural resources and just over 7% are used for institutional purposes;
- The vacant South Troy Industrial Park is a 26-acre parcel owned by the Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency. This parcel has approximately .3 miles of frontage on the Hudson River and provides a large area for development;
- The Rensselaer County Jail is located in South Troy and has been identified as a major impediment to future redevelopment options.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for South Troy, excluding the waterfront area addressed in the South Troy Working Waterfront Revitalization Plan, is one of basically upgrading and strengthening through enhancing property values, stimulating home ownership, developing a neighborhood retail center, providing recreation, green space and traffic calming;
- Target programs to increase the rate of owner occupancy to 50%, which would represent a near 50% increase over present homeownership rates;
- Continue to improve or enhance opportunities for homeownership; improve the residential characteristics; eliminate blight and create more open space, possibly through acquisition of in-rem properties;

- Develop a pilot program whereby the City would contribute adjacent parcels (in-rem properties) to new homeowners for their ownership to use as backyards;
- Eliminate residential uses where they conflict with active industrial uses and vice versa;
- Purchase the former Troy News properties and convert these sites to recreation/open space;
- Rezone portion of South Troy to less intensive/dense residential uses; manipulate the 4th Street Corridor to become the commercial corridor and gateway into Downtown from South Troy through zoning changes and by discouraging further residential development or redevelopment;
- Transportation corridors need to be identified and commercial/truck traffic eliminated from residential street;
- Over time, relocate Public School #12 as a means of broadening the potential acreage for development of the Waterfront industrial area and as a means for enhancing “village” development around a newly located school in the neighborhood.

➤ SYCAWAY/EAST SIDE: p.113

Table: p.117 - Sycaway/Eastside RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Sycaway/East Side neighborhood is the second largest source of real property tax revenue for the City, accounting for:
 - 23% of the City’s total land
 - 19% of the taxable land
 - 21% real estate tax base
 - 35.6% of the land is for residential use – 85% of the real estate tax base
 - 24.4% of the land is used for parks and recreation (312 acres – 61% of the land)
 - 24% of the land is for institutional use – (306 acres)
 - % of the land is for commercial use – 10.9 % of the real estate tax base
 - 1.1% of the land is for industrial use – Sycaway
 - 3.2% of the land is for industrial use – East Side
- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$143,163/acre for commercial
 - \$101,192/acre for residential
- Sycaway/East Side neighborhood is predominantly residential composed of three distinct areas: one to the north of Hoosick Street/Route 7, one to the east and one to the west of the combined campuses of RPI, Samaritan Hospital and the Troy City School District;
- What was once a thriving working class neighborhood is now dominated by college students and threatened by disinvestment despite the efforts of long time and well-organized

neighborhood residents; RPI has an annual enrollment of 5,103 undergraduates and 1,878 graduate students;

- *Housing* includes a mixture of one- and two-family homes, 3 *apartment complexes*: Park Ridge, Cedar Park and Troy Garden, student housing at RPI, and a *retirement and a skilled-care community*: Beachwood and Heritage House; this area of the City is nearly built out, new housing would require site acquisition and demolition;
- *Institutions*: RPI, Samaritan Hospital, Troy High School, Doyle Middle School and St. Mary Cemetery;
- 3 *City parks*: Prospect Park, Frear Park and Beman Park – primarily a green space – with a combined acreage of 311 acres; three smaller parks and playgrounds: Riley’s Playground, 9th Street Park and Hillside Playground;
- *Major Employers*: RPI, Seton Health, Samaritan Hospital. Most of the employment available tends to be entry-level work; there is not as great a need for skilled and specialized labor;
 - As entry level workers advance in their careers, they leave for suburban communities, thereby contributing to an “employee leakage.”

B) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for Sycaway/East Side is to continue to improve its residential nature and to enhance opportunities for home ownership. Also, future commercial development potential needs to be addressed in order to prevent further deterioration and disinvestments as witnessed by a decline in assessed value and average assessed values/parcel despite relatively high income and low densities;
- Target population to increase the rate of owner occupancy in this neighborhood to 60%, slightly below the national average of 65%;
- Facilitate in the removal of blight and reduced density particularly as it may create other development potential;
- Over the long term, put zoning and incentive in place for the conversion of all of Hoosick Street frontage to commercial and retail uses; discourage the conversion of residential to office, retail and commercial uses;
- Continue to work and network with RPI in facilitating their building and expansion needs. This could include developing additional “incubator” space, specifically as in-fill towards Hoosick Street; encourage utilization and adaptive reuse of the existing inventory of properties; one property for consideration is the former Christian Academy;
- Develop zoning and other incentives to encourage in-fill of off-campus, student residences between RPI and the Downtown; such incentive should include programs to facilitate graduate student home ownership;

- Work with Troy Plaza to improve visibility and appearance; possible tie-in with Hoosick Street redevelopment in return for owner improvements and signage, landscaping and property presentation.

➤ ALBIA/HEIGHTS: p.120

Table: p.123 - Albia /Heights RE Tax Base Analysis (1998)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Albia/Heights is the largest neighborhood in the City of Troy accounting for:
 - 28% of the City's total land
 - 30.0% of the taxable land
 - 20% real estate tax base
 - 38.9% of the land is for residential use – 652 acres, 91% of the real estate tax base
 - 28% of the land is for institutional use – (306 acres)
 - 26% of the land is vacant – 2% of the real estate tax base
 - 11% of the land is used for parks and recreation – (57 acres)
 - 2% of the land is for commercial – 5.8% of the real estate tax base
 - 1.4% of the land is for industrial use
- Taxable Acreage:
 - \$90,649/acre for commercial
 - \$77,733/acre for residential
- According to the 2000 Census, the Albia neighborhood had 8,459 residents, 17.2% of the overall population of Troy; among all the neighborhoods, Albia has the highest medium incomes, highest percentage of homeowners and the lowest vacancy rates;
- The neighborhood is mostly residential with commercial developments concentrated along the major roadways: Pawling Avenue, Vandenburg Avenue and Campbell Avenue;
- *Key Institutions*: Emma Willard School and Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC);
- Vandenburg Avenue (Route 4) is the western boundary of the Albia neighborhood; HVCC is located there and serves nearly 10,000 students/semester and employs 500 full- and part-time faculty members; additionally, a section of the avenue, between South Drive to Campbell Avenue, is being reconfigured for lane widening, bicycle lanes and to replace and enlarge water mains;
- The Hudson Valley Plaza is located across the street from HVCC. The Golub Corporation is constructing a new 56,000 sq. ft. Price Chopper supermarket in this plaza; the redevelopment plan also includes the construction of a Wendy's restaurant and (at the time of this publication) another unnamed retailer;
- *Public Housing*: Griswold Heights and Riverview Gardens;
- *Private Housing Developments*: Hillsvie Heights, Emerald Green, Riverview Estate and Vanderheyden Estates;

- *Parks and Recreational Resources:*
 - Burden Pond Environmental Park - there are hiking and nature trails and areas for picnicking;
 - Poestenkill Gorge Park - encompasses about 30 acres and has hiking and nature trails, picnic areas, and overlooks to the falls;
 - Smaller Municipal Parks: Sheridan Avenue playground; Kinlock Park playground and the Carroll Hill playground;
 - HVCC offers recreational skating for the public in the Robert Conway Rink, located in the McDonough Sports Complex.
 - The Joseph L. Bruno Stadium, located on the grounds of HVCC, will be the home of the New York Penn League's Tri-City Valley Cats (Class-A baseball team affiliated with the Houston Astros) and HVCC's nationally-ranked baseball team.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

2000 ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY FOR THE CITY OF TROY - RKG ASSOCIATES:

- The redevelopment theme for Albia/Heights is one of enhancing residential values and amenities through recreational developments, green space and neighborhood enhancement;
- Target programs to increase the rate of owner occupancy to 65% similar to the national average of 65%;
- Additional multi-family housing should be discouraged and minimum lot standards revised as this neighborhood represents the City's "land inventory" for future residential development;
- Expand existing subsidies, grants and other public funding for the continued rehabilitation and renovation of the existing housing stock. Tie the awarding of such funds to projects which enhance homeownership and stimulate unit reduction;
- Adapt the capped City Landfill for neighborhood recreational use;
- Create a series of nature and walking trails through the Wynants Kill watershed area and the Burden Pond areas with ultimate links to the South Troy waterfront and the Burden Iron Works Museum.

9) INFRASTRUCTURE: p.126

Table 22: p.127 - City of Troy Street Classification

Table 23: p.128 - CDTA Routes and Ridership in Troy

Table 24: p.132 - Primary Vehicular Facilities in Troy & Vicinity

A) OVERVIEW:

- The City has a mature public water and sewer infrastructure with well-functioning treatment plants and adequate capacity; the distribution systems are aged and require frequent upgrading; limited high technology infrastructure exists;
- The city needs to consider strategic opportunities to allocate the extra water capacity to maximize revenues, while minimizing negative development impacts;

- RPI presents significant technology infrastructure opportunities;
- The sewer system is old and largely combined with storm water systems, meaning it will need significant repairs and upgrades;
- The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) provides transit services in the City of Troy in the form of buses and smaller shuttles. They are in the process of comprehensively examining and considering the restructuring of their routes based on demographic changes, new service standards and funding opportunities. Current challenges facing transit providers include an aging population, a growing student population and the region's "Access to Jobs" initiatives;
- CDTA is developing several projects in the City of Troy. The largest is a major transfer center in the central business district. Preliminary discussions have focused on a city owned parcel adjacent to the Uncle Sam Parking Garage as the location for this transfer center;
- Several planning and infrastructure projects underway:
 - The Broadway/Waterfront Pedestrian Access project;
 - Traffic signal improvement for 12 intersections along the Second Avenue corridor between Middleburgh Avenue and 125th Street;
 - The South Troy Industrial Park;
 - Reconstruction of Vandenburg Avenue from Williams Road to Morrison Avenue;
 - Reconstruction of NY2 from 11th Street to Pawling Avenue.

The Rensselaer county Chamber of Commerce is advocating for a "boulevard" treatment of the Route 7 Corridor from River Street to the WalMart Plaza in the Town of Brunswick.

10) COMMUNITY SERVICES: p.138

Bar Graph:	p.140 - Appropriation & Tax Revenue Trends (1995-2002)
Table:	p.141 - NYS Cities: Demographic Comparisons (1990)
Table:	p.141 - NYS Cities: Tax Base Comparison (1999)
Pie Chart:	p.142 - NYS Cities: Distribution of City Expenditures (FY99)
Pie Chart:	p.142 - City of Troy: Distribution of City Expenditures (FY99)
Bar Graph:	p.143 - City of Troy: Expenditures by Function (FY99)
Pie Chart:	p.144 - NYS Cities: Distribution of City Revenues (FY99)
Table:	p.145 - City of Troy: Tax Assessment Trends (1997-2002)
Line Graph:	p.146 - Troy City School District/Student Enrollment (Oct. 2000)
Line Graph:	p.147 - Lansingburgh Central School District/Student Enrollment (Oct. 2000)

A) OVERVIEW:

- Troy underperforms with respect to its tax base, property values, tax rates and level of indebtedness when compared to other cities in the State; Troy's total taxable value in 2002 was about 11.5 million less than it was in 1997; the cost to provide basic city services is considerable and deferred maintenance on capital and equipment needs is dominating the city's current expenditures;

- *City Budget:*
 - The overall city budget has increased by 19.37% between 1997-2000
 - General funds increase 20.57% (1997-2000)
 - City property tax rate increased 4.5% in 2002
 - Property taxes make up about 28% of overall revenue (1999)
 - Sales taxes make up about 18% - an annual increase rate of 7.2% (1997-2000)
 - State-aid makes up 10.4% of revenue – an increase of 23% (1997-2000)
 - Water sales increased 2.6% annually (1997-2000)
 - Sewer rents increased 4.9% annually
 - Full value of land/acre is nearly 16% lower than statewide average, but 13% higher than the average of 6 comparably-sized state cities
 - Tax-exempt uses make up nearly 55% of all assessed valuation – a higher rate than comparable cities in New York State.

- *Educational Services:* two school districts:
 - The City of Troy City School District is made up of 5 elementary schools, a middle school, a high school and an alternative learning center (grades 9-12)
 - Total enrollment: 4,931 with 429 teachers
 - (1999-00): the district spent \$12,299 per pupil between v. statewide average \$11,040;
 - (2000-01): 41.5% of students were eligible for the free lunch program;
 - The district has seen a rise in the dropout rate between 1998 and 2001; an increase of 1.1% percentage points since 1998-1999 to 2.5% in 2000-01.

 - The Lansingburgh Central School District is made up of 2 elementary school, a middle school and a high school;
 - Total enrollment:: 2,412 students with 173 teachers;
 - (1999-00): the district spent \$10,157 per pupil between v. statewide average \$11,040;
 - (2000-01): 33.3% of students were eligible for the free lunch program;
 - The district has seen a decrease and then a rise in the dropout rate; an increase of 0.7% percentage points since 1999-2000 to 4% in 2000-01.

 - The Ark Community Charter School (K-5) serves 96 children; each class has 16 students; Funding for the school come from public education funding but is not run by the school district, by a self-selected board of trustees;

- *Private and Parochial High Schools:* Emma Willard – a private girls school (9-12), Catholic Central High School – Operated by Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany (7-2);
- *Pre-K – 6th Grades:* Our Lady of Victory School, Sacred Heart School, St. Augustine's School, St. Patrick's School, Capital Christian Church School and Susan Odell Taylor School for Children;

- Three Post-Secondary Schools: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, The Sage Colleges and Hudson Valley Community College;

- The Troy Public Library is part of the Upper Hudson Library System; it is also a Federal Depository Library; services include the Job and Small Business Information Center;

- In 1999, the City of Troy had a sworn police force of 113 full time officers and a fleet of 54 vehicles; crime has declined in recent years: In 1997 the rate per 1,000 populations was 51.9%; it decreased to 47.6% per 1000 by 1999;
- The City of Troy has a second law enforcement agency at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; officers are sworn peace officers;
- The Rensselaer County Sheriff also has jurisdiction in Troy but their activity is limited because of the city's own police force.

- The City of Troy is served by a full-time professional fire department with six firehouses; equipment includes a heavy rescue truck ladder, an ambulance and fire engines.