

**A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**  
■  
**CITY OF PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK**

*Box 128*

**May 1999**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**IMPACT STATEMENT**

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# A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



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# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. BACKGROUND

The City of Plattsburgh is working to sustain its future by updating its Comprehensive Plan which was last revised in 1982. In September 1996, the City began this Comprehensive Plan update as a way to identify and address critical land use issues and to guide growth. In addition, the City is updating its Plan to:

- inform developers of the type and pattern of land use desired by city residents;
- encourage consistent decision-making regarding new and expanded development;
- provide a legal basis for the adoption or implementation of land use tools; and
- help the city to invest wisely in municipal services.

This study was funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to evaluate and respond to the impacts on the City resulting from closure of Plattsburgh Air Force Base.

### 2. APPROACH

The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan included five basic steps which are outlined below.

- *Issues and Goals* - Initially, the City determined what the Plan update would do for the community. In other words, what specific needs would be addressed? To answer this, the City and its consultants reviewed previous planning studies (including the current Comprehensive Plan) and worked with the community to identify potential issues and development goals.
- The results of this research helped to define the format and content of this Plan. Unlike the 1982 Plan, this Plan is "issues-oriented". The prior plan examined 18 subareas of the City and presented goals, objectives and recommendations for each.

The participants in this study examined both the subarea and city-wide issues. The Planning Board concluded that the majority of the subareas did not currently face major land used issues. In addition, a limited number of issues appeared to have city-

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wide implications, such as rezoning of the former airbase and revitalizing of the downtown. As a result, the Planning Board oriented this Plan towards addressing the specific land use issues presented in Chapter III.

These issues will typically concern large areas of the city, rather than specific sites or parcels. The issues selected for study were those which:

1. Most closely matched the purpose of the HUD grant to complete this study (i.e. housing and economic development);
2. affect the long term economic stability of and quality of life within the City;
3. affected the broadest range of the City's population; and
4. were not the subject of a current more detailed planning study (e.g. waterfront access is being addressed is the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program study that is currently underway).

These studies included the *City of Plattsburgh - Development Concept Plan (1982)*, *Comprehensive Reuse Plan for Plattsburgh Air Force Base (1995)*, *Historic Point District Future Planning Commission Report (1996)*, *Downtown Future Planning Commission - Phase 1 Report (1995)*, and the *Draft City of Plattsburgh - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (1995)*.

- *Inventory and Analysis* - During this step, data was collected to determine the extent, nature and significance of the major issues. A detailed GIS inventory (see Section 3) was prepared to assist in the analysis.

In addition, series of background and alternative studies was prepared by the City's consultant and reviewed by the Planning Board. These studies identified key findings from the inventory and presented alternative strategies for resolving the issues. The Planning Board invited public comment during each work session on the ideas being discussed. A list of the background studies is presented in Appendix 1 and copies are available from the City's Engineering and Planning Department.

In addition, meetings were held with key City staff to identify issues and opportunities and to discuss alternative solutions. The ideas and observations of the City's residents and staff were used to enhance the inventory and analyses. The background information helped identify possible solutions and recommendations. The most viable strategies were then incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

- *Comprehensive Plan Development* - A comprehensive plan consists of the goals, objectives and recommendations. It serves as a "road map" for reaching the City's



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development vision. This version of the Plan is a draft for public for review and comment. The public's input will help refine the Plan before it is adopted by the City Council.

- *Comprehensive Plan Adoption* - The final Plan must be adopted by the City Council. Once adopted, the Plan will guide development in the City of Plattsburgh and will influence other land use tools and decisions since they must concur with the Plan.
- *Implementation* - Recommendations in the adopted Plan may be general or specific. General statements are used when there is a need to further study or monitor certain issues. Specific strategies are used when there is a very clear and exact vision of what the City wants and the City is willing to act in the near term to implement those strategies. The agency or organization responsible for implementing each recommendation will also be identified in the adopted Plan.

The City Council, Planning Board and residents of the City have been working together to develop this plan. For example, citizens helped define and prioritize the list of key issues at a public workshop held early in the planning process. While the Plan update must be adopted by the City Council, the knowledge, ideas and direction of the City's resident, civic groups, business owners and developers have been sought during each step. This input will be the basis of the recommendations of the Plan.

### 3. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Comprehensive Plan inventory was completed using a computerized Geographic Information System (GIS). The GIS data base was analyzed throughout the planning process and was used to compose maps and graphics. Key findings of the inventory are presented in the individual background studies prepared as part of this planning process. The following data was acquired during the inventory process and included in the GIS data base:

- *Base Map* - Existing map data including, city boundary, streets, railroads, zoning districts, water boundaries, and old and new assessors neighborhood unit boundaries were provided in an AutoCAD format by the City Engineer's office. These data layers were converted to Arc/Info coverage's for use in the inventory analysis.

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- *Assessors Tax Parcel Data* - A copy of the City of Plattsburgh real property tax data was acquired from Clinton County. This data includes information regarding land use, street address, owners name, geographic coordinates, assessed value and numerous other items. The data base was converted to an Arc/Info point coverage using the included parcel location coordinates of each parcel centroid. Since digital parcel boundaries do not yet exist in Clinton County, parcel centroids were not linked to precise parcel boundaries.
- *Student Housing Data* - A data file containing information regarding the location and condition of student housing in the city was provided by the Building Inspector's office. This data was linked with the Assessor's tax parcel data.
- *Area Variance Data* - The City Building Inspector permitted students from SUNY Plattsburgh's Center for Earth and Environmental Science to review zoning files to identify properties within the target neighborhoods which have applied for area variances within the last three (3) years. This data was entered into a spreadsheet and subsequently linked with the Assessor's tax parcel data.

All digital data gathered during the inventory is in a standardized format compatible with the City Assessor's data base. This will enable the City staff to use the data for other planning and management purposes. The City should acquire appropriate GIS software to improve the ability of staff to query and display the inventory.

#### **4. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW**

The City of Plattsburgh City Council has assumed Lead Agency status for the purpose of reviewing the City's Comprehensive Plan Update and any accompanying zoning amendments under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) procedures. The Plan may result in one or more significant environmental impacts. As a result, a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) has been prepared to examine the impacts of the Plan, alternatives to the recommended actions and necessary mitigative actions.

In order to simplify the SEQR review, the Draft and Final Comprehensive Plan Update will serve as the Draft and Final GEIS. The Comprehensive Plan documents provide all of the applicable elements of a GEIS under New York State law. In addition, the public hearing process for Comprehensive Plan and the GEIS will occur simultaneously.



## II. SETTING

The City of Plattsburgh, known as the "Lake City" is a community steeped in rich history and tradition. Plattsburgh is the only incorporated city in Clinton County (Charter signed in 1902) and has a Common Council form of Government comprised of a Mayor and six Councilors. Its area is approximately 5 square miles, or 3,250 acres. The City's population is about 21,300 persons.

Located on the shore of Lake Champlain, the City of Plattsburgh is an important transportation and industrial center on the route between New York City and Montreal. As home to a State University College and to the region's only medical center, the city became the educational, cultural, and technology hub for the northern Adirondack region.

As shown on Figure 1, the City of Plattsburgh has developed with very traditional land use patterns. (Note: Figure 1 was prepared using the GIS inventory. Each dot represents an actual City parcel and the corresponding land use classification assigned by the City Assessor). The central commercial core of the city is surrounded by mixed-use commercial/residential neighborhoods which include both single and multi family homes. At the edge of these mixed use areas, multi-family residences transition into perimeter single family neighborhoods.

The City has a well-defined downtown which is a special and unique area. Historically, Downtown Plattsburgh has been the center of civic business, and entertainment activity in the City and surrounding region. It also offers outstanding historical and natural resources (i.e. Saranac River) and is near the Lake Champlain waterfront. While the downtown is no longer the region's center of retail activity, it remains an important resource.

The southeastern portion of the City is made up of the former airbase which was closed by the Department of Defense in 1995. The airbase includes outstanding historic resources, unique open spaces and an extensive stretch of underdeveloped waterfront property on Lake Champlain. The existing buildings and infrastructure offer a broad range of economic development opportunities.

Lake Champlain forms a distinct eastern boundary forcing residential development to expand largely to the west and north of the CBD. Both physical and visual access to the waterfront is an important issue within the community. Public access, via a proposed waterfront recreational trail, is a major issue for reuse of the former Air Base.

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SUNY Plattsburgh encompasses the significant portion of the central part of the city with its influence felt in surrounding neighborhoods in the form of student housing and services. The college contributes substantially to the City's economy, therefore it is important to balance needs of the students for quality housing with the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The primary areas of industrial development include the foundry located on White Street. Georgia Pacific paper mill located to the north of the downtown near the lakefront and the Canadian Pacific railyard and City sewer plant located immediate east of the downtown on the lake shoreline. In addition, industrial development exists in the Wall Street industrial area offering both vacant land and immediate access to a railspur and the Adirondack Northway (I-87).

The most prominent commercial strip is Cornelia Street/Route 3 near I-87 exit 37 extending from the City into the Town of Plattsburgh. Typical highway interchange and strip retail businesses have located along this corridor. Many of these businesses have relocated from the downtown to capitalize on increased traffic and visibility.



### III. GENERAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the general pattern of development for the City and the goals and objectives for each land use category. It is the City's overall goal to promote a land use pattern that:

- Strengthens existing neighborhoods.
- Promotes revitalization of the downtown and the former air base.
- Protect important natural and cultural resource, such as the Saranac River and Lake Champlain waterfront (including historic districts and buildings).
- Promotes recreation and tourism.
- Provides for economical services and facilities.
- Fosters investment and redevelopment that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

Figure 2 presents the Plan's recommendations for the location of general land use categories.

#### 1. LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Much of the western section of the City is designated for low-density residential uses. These areas include the most recently developed residential sections of the City.

Low-density, single-family residential and related public and semi-public uses are recommended as the only permitted land uses in these areas.

##### Goals and Objectives

- Keep low-density residential areas outside the City's development core area.
- Control the incursion of incompatible, non-residential uses in these areas to protect the residential character and neighborhood values.



## 2. GENERAL RESIDENTIAL

These general residential areas include the older central sections of the City as well as substantial areas to the north and south of these central sections. Also, specific areas within the western section of the City are also included.

A portion of the City's core area known as the 'Center City Neighborhood,' is somewhat unique because of its high population of college students. The State University has created a high demand through the years for the conversion of former single family residences, usually larger older homes, into student housing accommodations. Today this neighborhood contains a mix of family residences and student housing, together with some office uses. Some portions of the neighborhood remain predominantly family residential in character.

### Goals and Objectives

- Permitted uses to residential uses and related limited neighborhood service commercial uses or small professional uses.
- Conversions only for purposes compatible with existing neighborhood character and only when adequate provision is made for parking and open space.
- Multi-family residential development on the basis of appropriate development site size and neighborhood standards rather than as an accepted practice
- Maintain general residential uses within the city's development core and designated areas of the former airbase.
- Maintain the Center City as an area for general residential uses while; (a) preventing the further incursion of multi-family housing (including student housing) into much of the area; (b) giving landowners more options to use their properties than the current R1 zoning allows; (c) permitting multi-family housing in those blocks where it currently predominates; and (d) greatly reducing the number of non-conforming uses that currently exist.
- Within the Center City Neighborhood, restrict the further conversion of structures into student housing in portions of the area that are predominantly used for family residences.

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- Control the incursion of incompatible non-residential uses in these areas to protect residential character and neighborhood values.
- Protect the character of historic districts.
- Redesignate the central portion of Margaret Street (between Elm Street and Robinson Terrace) from General Business to General Residential. This area is predominantly residential and a substantial investment was made by the City to improve housing conditions in this area. The purpose of the proposed change is to prevent further commercial sprawl and to protect the residential character.

### 3. CENTRAL BUSINESS

The city has a well-defined Central Business District as is a special and unique use area. Land use in the downtown is predominantly commercial, retail and office use. There is also an intermixture of public uses, which includes churches, City and County offices and public parking facilities. This area is generally bounded by Oak Street on the west, Cornelia Street on the north, and the Saranac River on the east and south.

The Plan recommends that retail, office, service, parking and residential uses be allowed in this section of the City, in accordance with the Goals and Objectives below.

This plan proposes intense development in this central business district portion of the City as a necessary element in revitalizing the City's downtown area.

#### Goals and Objectives

- Retain downtown as the primary social and business center of the City.
- Actively support intensified development in the area to the greatest extent feasible.
- Allow compatible residential uses in the upper levels of structures to provide for more intensive development and use of the area. The range of upper floor housing types and costs should be broadened.
- Develop innovative parking controls to allow maximum use of limited available parking and support intensified development.
- Provide for development tools such as design guidelines and a handbook, which encourage improvements, while retaining the aesthetics of the area.

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### **4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

Four general business use areas are defined in the Plan. These four areas are largely built-out as commercial service centers and include the following areas:

- The Boynton Avenue and North Margaret Street retail commercial area.
- The Sharon Avenue and Peru Street retail commercial area, located opposite the Air Force Base.
- The South Catherine Street commercial area, located north of the Saranac River bridge crossing.
- The upper Cornelia Street commercial area, located at the west end of the City, on Cornelia Street, including highway oriented and shopping center facilities constructed in this area and beginning the Route 3 business area, which extends into the City of Plattsburgh.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- Limit general business to the identified areas to prevent the continuing sprawl of business uses. These four areas provide adequate locations for business and commercial uses to service all sections of the City. This will result in overall positive impact on the quality of commercial development in these areas and a concurrent improvement in the value of properties in these areas.
- Allow general business, retail office and service uses in these sections of the City.

### **5. INDUSTRY**

Two sets of guiding principles will drive economic success in the City of Plattsburgh. First, the City leadership must focus on all four elements of business development -- business attraction, retention, expansion and entrepreneurship. Second, the City and surrounding region must provide and commit five key resources towards these four elements -- people, capital (money), infrastructure, materials and land. However, since the current areas designated for industrial use are mostly built-out the availability of suitable land for today's industries is limited in Plattsburgh.



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Five areas have been identified as areas for industrial use. These areas include the following:

- Parcel A1, A2 and the runway and apron on the former airbase along Route 22, and the Saranac River (see Figure 7 for location map).
- The South End industrial area located between Wall Street and the Saranac River.
- The White Street industrial area, which includes the existing foundry.
- The Point industrial area, which accommodates the City's sewage treatment facility. (However, this area is recommended for recreation and related uses over the long term.)
- The North End industrial area, which is located north of Boynton Avenue and includes all of the property east of Oak Street to the City boundaries not included in the recreational development areas.

The plan recognizes the following, with respect to these areas:

- The South End industrial area provides the opportunity for industrial expansion due to the availability of railroad siding access, as well as infrastructure capacity in this area. However, a significant portion of the land designated for industrial use remains in low density residential use. This has caused concern to residents along Wall street and other nearby streets regarding truck traffic, noise and other potential impacts.
- The White Street area has been identified principally due to the fact that it is an existing industrial foundry use which has been previously recognized by the City as an incompatible use in its current location. The site is designated as industrial, in order to accommodate this major industrial employer. However, if a method of relocating this foundry is identified in the future, it is proposed as part of this plan that this area be converted to residential use. Careful examination of the site's environmental conditions may be required as part of the relocation.
- The former runway and apron of airbase industrial area is anticipated as being suitable for an airport and related use, including support facilities such as landing fields, control towers, hangers, administrative buildings and navigation equipment. This area is suitable for airport allied uses, including aircraft and aircraft parts

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manufacturing, air freight terminals, trucking terminals, aviation schools, aircraft repair shops, aviation research and testing laboratories, and aircraft sales, equipment and parts storage. The area is also suitable for other uses currently allowed in the Industrial Zoning District. Spectator and concert events may also be appropriate as a use requiring special permit under the Zoning Ordinance.

- Portions of Parcels A1 and A2, totaling 16 acres, are being purchased by a private developer directly from the Federal government. The Base Reuse Plan recommends this area for airport-related and industrial uses.
- Significant highway improvements and realignments are currently planned by PARC. The proposed actions would create a 4-lane direct connection between Interstate 87 and New York Road. In addition, an alternate rail line extension and connection to the Wall Street Industrial Park is currently planned along the edge of the present runway and apron area. This new alignment would also serve the industrial land on the former airbase.
- The North End industrial area incorporates a paper mill, as well as smaller industrial uses in this section of the City. Also, there is limited opportunity for expansion on available vacant land. However, the bulk of the vacant property in this area is likely limited as to its development potential, due to the fact that much of the area includes wetlands and flood plains
- The Point area industrial area along the Saranac is desirable for redevelopment as Recreation and Related Uses should the opportunity arise to relocate the Municipal Lighting Department and the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

### **Goals and Objectives**

- Allow a broad range of industrial uses be allowed in these areas, including light, general and heavy use, warehousing and manufacturing.
- Implement development controls which assure that industrial developers will construct aesthetically pleasing, high-quality facilities, *particularly buffer yards.*
- Actively pursue industrial users for appropriate sites in the City to provide much needed expanded tax base and employment.

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- Actively cooperate with users wishing to relocate to the appropriate industrial sites by coordinating efforts to use local, state and federal programs which may benefit the developers.
- Coordinate with the Plattsburgh Airbase Reuse Commission and the Town of Plattsburgh regarding other regional demand for industrial development and consistency of industrial land use on the former air base.

### **6. RECREATION AND RELATED USES**

The City of Plattsburgh's economy is significantly dependent upon the tourism industry in the community particularly along the waterfront. In recognition of this, the Plan recommends that areas be set aside in the City which may be most appropriately developed as major recreational facilities designed to support this tourism industry or uses that are compatible with tourism. The Plan also notes that a recreation trail extending the length of the waterfront is planned and partially funded.

Four primary areas are identified for recreation and related uses. The largest of these areas is at the north end of the City on Lake Champlain, and includes the municipal beach complex and properties on Lake Champlain and fronting on both sides of Margaret Street, in the City's North End Urban Renewal Project. The second area is also an area located on Lake Champlain in the Plattsburgh Bay section. This area includes properties extending from Jay and Bridge Streets to the lake and mouth of the Saranac River. The third designated area consists of two strips of land proposed for recreational development, located on the banks of the Saranac River. The fourth area is a significant portion of the former "Old Base" which fronts on Lake Champlain.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- Recreation allow related uses including general public recreation uses and private recreation facilities and improvements. Allow retail and commercial uses designed to service tourists and uses which are compatible with tourism and recreation, such as offices or light assemble, in certain locations.
- Identify additional areas (e.g. portions of the former airbase) which are suitable for recreation and related uses.

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- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to encourage appropriate recreation and related uses for additional waterfront areas, recognizing the needs of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Designate areas appropriate for major public and/or private tourism development.
- Tourism related uses should maximize the recreation potential and provide public access to the Saranac River and Lake Champlain.
- Retain the open space character of these areas through the use of zoning tools such as Planned Unit Development and minimum open space requirements.
- Provide incentives for private donations of public access (physical and visual) through the use of incentive zoning or other tools.
- Over the long term, redevelop the Point industrial area for recreation and related uses.

### **7. UNIVERSITY AND HOSPITAL**

University and Hospital uses are identified separately in this Plan since these uses are a major portion of the City's land use area. In preparing this Plan, it was determined important to realize the significant impact of these areas and their use in the City's character and development.

The City recognizes its control over these areas, by ordinance, is largely superseded by state legislative authority. This Plan proposes that development be in keeping with identified goals and objectives. Also, the incorporation of these areas into land use control ordinances must reflect these conditions.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- Future development in these areas should be in keeping with neighborhood characteristics and that development should be responsive to infrastructure capacity and community needs.
- Maintain a working relationship to develop strategies which mutually satisfy institutional and city-wide objectives.

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### **8. FORMER AIR BASE**

In 1993, the Department of Defense announced that the Plattsburgh Air Force Base (PAFB) would close in September of 1995. A plan for the reuse of the former air base was prepared by the Plattsburgh Intermunicipal Development Council (PIDC). The reuse plan called for the creation of an international trade park including an aviation center, business park and lakeside resort.

The implementation of the reuse plan has been undertaken by the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation (PARC). PARC'S mission is to work towards the development of new jobs and opportunities for the social and economic well being of the North Country, doing so in a financially and environmentally sound manner.

The City initiated its Comprehensive Plan update following preparation of the reuse plan. Currently, portions of the former base within the City are zoned R-2 and Industry. However, airbase properties owned by the Federal government are not subject to the City's Zoning Ordinance until such time as property is transferred to a private owner or other non-exempt public organization.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

This Plan anticipates that the majority of the former airbase within the City's limits will ultimately be subject to the City's Zoning Ordinance. It is the City's goal to promote land use patterns on the former air base that:

- effectively integrate with the surrounding neighborhoods;
- provide appropriate residential development;
- support job creation and economic development;
- preserve natural and cultural resources;
- preserve and enhance the historic character of the base;
- preserve key open spaces and public access to the waterfront; and
- promote recreational use of the waterfront and nearby upland areas.

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It is also the City's goal to develop a regional waterfront recreation trail through the Old Base. The trail would extend through Parcel H1 of the Old Base (see Figure 6) for which the City has applied for a Public Benefit Transfer to City ownership. The parcel should be reserved as permanent open space for the recreational trail and appropriate ancillary uses. Should the Public Benefit transfer to the City be denied, the City should seek to purchase this parcel in full fee or easement. In addition, amendments to the City's zoning ordinance (i.e. allowable use lists) minimum open space requirements and PUD requirements) should be adopted regardless of ownership to encourage preservation of open spaces.

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## IV. SPECIFIC LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the City's definition and prioritization of current issues, consideration of alternative solutions or strategies and selection of a preferred approach. The City incorporated substantial public input in the development of these recommendations.

The recommendations include changes to general policies, zoning language and the existing Zoning Map (Figure 3). The cumulative proposed amendments to the zoning map are displayed in Figure 4. The basis for each of the proposed amendments are described in the remainder of this chapter.

### 1. CENTER CITY

The area locally known as the "Center City" is adjacent to the State University, and is bounded by Beekman Street, Broad Street, Oak Street and Cornelia Avenue. It is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, and once was one of the choice areas within the city for a family residence, consisting of larger, older homes, on tree lined streets. Many of the dwellings represented fine examples of historical architecture. The establishment of the State University created a high demand through the years for the conversion of former single family residences into apartments, primarily to house students. Student housing, and some of the commercial development, has subsequently created substantial adverse impacts upon the quality of life for families residing in the neighborhood. In order to halt the conversions the Center City was rezoned from R2 to R1 in 1992. However, under R1 zoning about 67 percent of all properties are non-conforming, an unusually high percentage. Owners wishing to sell their properties argue that the R1 zoning is too restrictive.

Examination of existing land use patterns within the Center City revealed that the neighborhood has a number of uses that currently exists there; (1) a family residential area consisting primarily of one and two family residences, (2) a multi-family residential area consisting primarily of student apartments, and (3) a residential-office area characterized by a mix of one and two family dwellings, and office type uses. These areas correspond to the zoning district proposed in Recommendation 1, below.

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**Figure 3**  
**Existing Zoning Map**



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**Figure 4**  
**PROPOSED ZONING MAP**

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



### **Recommendation 1.1 Create a New Residential Zoning District**

The Plan recommends the addition of a new zoning district for use in areas recommended as “General Residential” on the Conceptual Land Use Map (Chapter 3). The following zoning district is recommended.

1. Residential - Historic (RH). The purposes of this district are to encourage uses that make economical use of larger existing structures without adversely impacting the family residential character of the neighborhood, and to discourage the further conversion of buildings into multiple family dwellings and commercial establishments that are disruptive of residential neighborhoods.

The recommended allowable uses within the districts are presented in Table 1 “Proposed Schedule of Permitted Uses”.

The most important differences between the current R1 district and the proposed RH district is:

- a. Conversion of an existing owner occupied dwelling to create a single accessory apartment would be permitted in RH by Special Permit, but is not allowed in R1.
- b. Professional offices, medical and dental clinics, and photographic or art studios would be permitted by Special Permit in RH, but are not allowed in R1.
- c. A structure that is used for multi-family housing, professional offices, or a combination, may be converted to residential or office condominium ownership if a special permit is obtained. Conditions on the special use permit would include: the number of residential dwelling units is not increased, the number of parking spaces available for on site parking is not reduced, any physical alteration of the structure complies with the historic district guidelines.

Accessory apartments created within RH districts would require the issuance of a Special Permit that would expire after 3 years, but that could be renewed. Among the other standards are that the building housing the accessory apartment must be owner occupied, and that a maximum of two bedrooms would be allowed in the apartment. Additionally, no accessory apartment shall be permitted unless there is provided one on site parking space in addition to parking spaces required for other uses in the building. (See Table 2 "Proposed Standards for Accessory Apartment" for a complete list of proposed conditions).

C O M P R E H E N S I V E P L A N



**TABLE 1**

**Proposed Schedule of Permitted Uses**

Zoning District	Permitted Principal Uses	Accessory Uses	Uses Requiring Special Permit
RH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Single Family Residence</li> <li>2. Home Occupation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Park or Recreation Facility</li> <li>2. Other uses customarily accessory to permitted principal uses.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nursing or Rest Home</li> <li>2. Conversion of an existing structure creating one accessory apartment.*</li> <li>3. Professional Office</li> <li>4. Residential or Office Condominium Units</li> <li>4. Photographic Studio or Art Gallery</li> <li>5. Bed &amp; Breakfast Establishment</li> <li>6. Medical or Dental Clinic</li> <li>7. Church or other house of worship.</li> <li>8. Elementary or High School.</li> <li>9. College or University</li> <li>10. Fire Station</li> </ol>

\* 3 Year Renewable Special Permit Required

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## TABLE 2 Proposed Standards for Accessory Apartments

*Permits.* A Special Permit shall be required. Special Permits shall be issued for a three year period, after which time they shall expire if they are not renewed.

*Renewals.* Renewal permits for an additional three year period shall be granted by the Code Enforcement Officer following: (1) submission of a renewal application form by the applicant, (2) an inspection of the premises by the Code Enforcement Office, and (3) submission of a signed statement by the applicant stating that the conditions as originally set forth in granting the Special Permit have not changed in any way. The Code Enforcement Officer shall determine that the premises still meet the standards of the New York State Fire Protection and Building Code, and that the original qualifying conditions still exist.

*Owner-occupancy required.* The owner(s) or contract vendee of the lot upon which the accessory apartment is located shall occupy and maintain as a legal full-time resident at least one of the dwelling units on the premises, except for temporary absences not to exceed eighteen (18) months in any five-year period. Longer absences will result in revocation of the temporary permit, except by approval of the Board of Appeals. Owner-occupants must maintain an interest of thirty-three and one-third (33 1/3) percent in the property. In the event of the transfer of the property, either by deed or land contract or lease, to other than the owner's spouse or other family member residing on the premises, the permit shall automatically expire, and a new owner or contract vendee must apply for a renewal permit.

*Occupancy.* The accessory apartment may be occupied by no more than one family, as defined herein.

*Location.* An accessory apartment must be established within the existing residential structure, and not within a garage or other accessory building.

*Size.* The floor area of an accessory apartment shall not exceed 33 and one-third (33 1/3) percent of the of the total habitable floor area of the building in which it is located. Each accessory apartment shall be limited to a maximum of two bedrooms.

*Area requirements.* A residential structure containing one accessory apartment shall meet the area and bulk requirements for a two-family dwelling.

*Parking:* No accessory apartments shall be permitted unless there is provided one on site parking space in addition to the parking spaces required for other uses in the building.

*Exterior appearance.* The entry to the building and its design shall be such that the appearance of the building shall remain as a single-family residence. New or additional front entrances or windows are discouraged but in any event must be in keeping with the architectural style of the rest of the structure. Exterior stairways may only be constructed in the rear, except where an alternate location would be less publicly visible.

*Deed restriction.* Within thirty (30) days of an accessory apartment permit, the owner(s) must record at the Clinton County Clerk's office a declaration of covenants on the subject property, with cross-referencing to the original deed, and provide proof of such recording and cross-referencing to the Code Enforcement Officer, who may then issue a building permit. The declaration shall state that the right to let an accessory apartment ceases upon transfer of the title. The Code Enforcement Officer shall note the existence of an accessory apartment on the record of the property.

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**Recommendation 1.2: Conversion of Non-Conforming Uses**

It was stated above that there is a high percentage of non-conforming uses currently in existence in the Center City area. The establishment of the RH District reduces the percentage but there is still a substantial number that would be located in the new district. To help with the conversion to more conforming uses the following is put forth.

Within an RH district, a non-conforming use may be converted to a more conforming use, in accordance with the following table. A non-conforming use appearing on the following list may be converted to a use appearing below the listed use.

↓	<u>Least Conforming</u>
	Repair Shops
	Restaurants
	Retail Businesses (including neighborhood convenience stores)
	Laundry & Dry Cleaning Businesses
	Day Care Centers
	Banks, Beauty Salons
	Funeral Homes
	Multi Family Dwellings
	Fewer Units in a Multi Family Dwelling
	Duplex Dwelling
	<u>More Conforming</u>

The basic principal for organizing from least to most conforming is the amount of noise, dust, odor, light and traffic a particular use is likely to generate. The listing is subjective and some may differ on which use is relatively more offensive in a predominantly residential neighborhood.

Professional offices, medial and dental clinics are not shown on this list because such uses will become special permitted uses upon adoption of the zoning change. Where a non-conforming use is proposed to be converted to a conforming special permitted use, a special permit must be obtained.

With regard to existing uses that would be classified as a special permitted use at the time of the zoning change, a special use permit will not need to be obtained from the Planning Board.

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### **Recommendation 1.3: Re-zone the Center City neighborhood into one new zoning district.**

It is recommended that the current R1 Low Density Residential District zoning within the Center City neighborhood be changed using the new district recommended in Recommendation 1.1 above.

This proposal would: (a) prevent the further incursion of multi-family housing (including student housing) into much of the area; (b) give landowners more options to use their properties than the current R1 zoning allows; and (d) greatly reduce the number of non-conforming uses that currently exist. The percentage of non-conforming properties would be reduced from 67 percent under the current R1 zoning to about 28 percent under the proposed zoning.

The recommended location of the districts are described below and shown on Figure 5.

This district is proposed for the portion of Center City where single family and two family owner occupied dwellings tend to predominate, and/or where lots are large enough to accommodate parking for professional offices and or condominiums.

## **2. RENTAL HOUSING**

The area requirements for these districts are proposed to be the same as the R-2 District.

### **Recommendation 2.1: Raise the parking requirements for non-blood related families**

Raise the parking requirements for dwelling units occupied by non-blood related families from one space per each two residents to one space per each resident. Current requirements are out of date. A survey of off-campus college students conducted in 1997.

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**Figure 5**  
**RECOMMENDED CENTER CITY ZONING**

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by SUNY Plattsburgh - Center for Earth and Environment, revealed that about 80 percent of all such students keep a car in Plattsburgh.

### **Recommendation 2.2: Require a Special Permit for 3-family and multi-family housing within the City Center neighborhood**

This would inject more public input into the review process, and would result in projects being more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. After some experience with the process within the Center City neighborhood, consideration should be given to requiring a Special Permit for all multi-family developments throughout the city.

### **Recommendation 2.3: Revise the definition of family in the Zoning Code**

The current definition of family in the Zoning Code will not withstand court challenge, and should be changed to make it legally sufficient. The proposed definitions (See Table 3) retain the numerical limit of four non-blood related individuals constituting a family. Under the proposed definitions, each group of four unrelated students renting an apartment would continue to constitute one family.

### **Recommendation 2.4: Establish a policy of more frequent inspections**

As an alternative to establishing a formal registration and annual licensing program, the City should consider adopting a policy of inspecting properties on an annual basis, those properties with a history of repeated code violations.

## **3. DOWNTOWN**

### **Recommendation 3.1: Increase the Range of Allowable Uses in Downtown**

A key downtown revitalization strategy is to attract more people more frequently and hold them for as long as possible. The City can do this by creating a variety of reasons to come and stay downtown. A diversity of "cornerstone uses" will encourage people to come to the central business district not only during the daytime, but in the evenings and on weekends as well. In addition, different uses create markets and provide support services for each other.



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**TABLE 3**  
**Proposed Definition of Family**

### *Family*

- a. Any number of individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption and up to three (3) unrelated roomers living together in a single housekeeping unit and using certain rooms and sanitary and cooking facilities in common; or
- b. One (1) to four (4) individuals unrelated by blood, marriage or adoption occupying a premises and living together in a single housekeeping unit and using certain rooms and sanitary and cooking facilities in common; or
- c. Any number of individuals unrelated by blood, marriage or adoption, living together as a functional family (see definition of functional family) in a single housekeeping unit and using certain rooms and sanitary and cooking facilities in common.

### *Functional Family*

A group of individuals living together within a single dwelling unit in a family-like living arrangement, that: (a) in size, appearance and structure resembles a family of related individuals; or (b) is headed by a person or persons responsible for providing care for a reasonable number of individuals such as a home care facility for senior citizens.

A group of five (5) or more unrelated individuals, exclusive of minor dependent children, living together in the same dwelling unit shall be presumed not to be living together as functional family that in size, appearance and structure resembles a family of related individuals. This presumption may be rebutted by sufficient evidence showing that their living arrangement possesses substantially each of the following four characteristics.

- (1) The occupants share the entire dwelling unit. A unit in which occupants act as separate roomers shall not be deemed to be occupied by a functional family.
- (2) There is joint ownership of the dwelling unit, or a lease whereby the occupants, except dependent occupants, are jointly and severally liable to pay the entire rent for the premises. In situations where the occupants have separate leases or rental agreements they shall be deemed not to be living together as a single housekeeping unit.
- (3) The presence of one or more occupants who is dependent upon another occupant for their financial support.
- (4) There is evidence of stability of the housekeeping unit, and that it is not transitory in character. The following criteria shall be considered in determining stability.
  - (a) Evidence that the occupants intend to reside together on a permanent rather than on a transient basis, such as a showing that the household has been living together for 12 months or more.
  - (b) The sharing of household expenses by the occupants, such as utility bills, insurance, real property taxes, cleaning supplies, maintenance costs, food, and household supplies.
  - (c) Joint or common ownership of household furnishings located in the common areas of the dwelling unit.
  - (d) The presence of dependent persons regularly residing in the household.
  - (e) The fact that different members of the household use the household address for purposes of voter registration, drivers license, motor vehicle registration, and filing of taxes.
  - (f) Any other factors that show that the group is of a permanent rather than a transient nature.

### Group Residence

A residence occupied by five (5) or more unrelated individuals, rather than by: (a) a family related by blood, marriage or adoption, or (b) a functional family as defined herein.

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Strong downtown economies typically have a strong housing presence. A residential population creates activity, provides a ready market for retail uses and establishes a constituency for quality public services and infrastructure. In addition, the range of types and prices of downtown housing is typically very broad in successful downtown's. The current Zoning Ordinance allows only efficiency and one bedroom residences above the second floor in the Central Business District.

Non-intrusive types of light industrial uses, such as micro-enterprises or incubator industries, are another type of cornerstone use for a downtown. Industrial uses are not currently permitted in the Central Business District under the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Therefore, an objective of the Comprehensive Plan is to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow light industrial uses and a greater range of residential uses in the Central Business District. These uses would be in addition to the office, retail, recreational, institutional, housing (i.e., upper floor, single bedroom apartments) and entertainment uses that are currently allowed.

A second, related objective is that residential, office and light industrial uses should be limited to upper floors. First floors should be reserved for retail, restaurants, cultural, walk-in financial services (e.g. banks).

*Light Industrial Uses* - Industrial uses which are generally not objectionable due to noise, heavy truck traffic or fumes are desirable. Uses which have the potential for a negative impact, such as those which create dust, dirt, noise and unsightly conditions, are not. The recommended strategy for doing such is to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow light industrial uses as defined in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**Definition of Light Industrial**

*Light Industrial Use:* The assembly, fabrication, processing, or other handling of products, the operation of which is conducted solely within a building or group of buildings, and which does not involve any of the following: (a) the outdoor storage of materials; (b) dissemination of noise, vibration, odor, dust, smoke, observable gas or fumes, or other observable atmospheric pollutant beyond the immediate site of the building where the use is conducted; (c) the creation of airborne, liquid or solid hazardous wastes; and (d) the use or manufacture of hazardous chemicals.

*Hazardous Chemical:* Solid, liquid or gaseous substances which pose a potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed or otherwise managed, including but not limited to hazardous substance designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 311 of the Clean Water Act (40CFR 116).

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*Residential Uses* - The maximum number of bedrooms per apartment in the Central Business District is one under the current Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the minimum floor area of an apartment is 1500 square feet. Combined, these provisions have made it financially difficult to create/renovate apartments without a subsidy. Since increasing the financial viability of creating new residences in Downtown is a goal, the Plan recommends the City amend both provisions.

The recommended strategy for doing such is to increase the number of allowable units to either two or three bedrooms and to decrease the minimum floor area to approximately 1000 square foot per resident.

A potential concern regarding increased residential density is the adequacy of the parking supply. However, residential parking tends to be overnight and does not compete with weekday daytime uses. On weekends, office-related demand is low, so residential parking can be accommodated in those spaces. Therefore, it is anticipated that there is no need to mitigate parking impacts.

A second potential concern is the impact of the increase housing supply on an already weak rental housing market throughout the City. However, due to the existing build-out and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the estimated number of structures or lots where new residences might be developed in the downtown is low (i.e., less than 10 buildings). In addition, the introduction of new jobs due to recent industrial development (e.g., Bombardier expansion) is expected to increase demand for rental housing throughout the City.

#### **4. RECREATION AND RELATED USES (RC) ZONING DISTRICTS**

##### **Recommendation 4.1: Create Three RC Zoning Districts**

The Plan recommends the creation of three Recreation and Related Uses (RC) Districts under the Zoning Ordinance. There currently exists a single RC District. The three proposed districts are described below. The recommended list of allowable uses is presented in Table 5 and the recommended area and bulk controls on Table 6.

1. RC-1 District - The list of allowable uses, accessory uses and special permit uses would remain nearly the same as the existing RC District. The only change is to no longer distinguish “eating and drinking establishments serving alcohol” since a

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**Table 5  
Proposed Schedule of Permitted Users - RC Districts**

Zoning District	Permitted Principal Uses	Accessory Uses	Uses Requiring Special Permit
RC-1*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi-family residences.</li> <li>2. Townhouse residences.</li> <li>3. Hotel and motels.</li> <li>4. Eating and/or drinking establishments not serving alcoholic beverages.</li> <li>5. Indoor and outdoor commercial recreation such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Bowling</li> <li>b. Tennis</li> <li>c. Paddleball</li> <li>d. Gymnasiums</li> <li>e. Skating</li> <li>f. Assembly facilities</li> <li>g. Marinas and boat rides</li> <li>h. Other similar uses</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Public recreation and related facilities.</li> <li>7. Retail businesses and commercial uses commonly associated with recreation related and tourist areas, such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Convenience type grocery stores and food specialty shops.</li> <li>b. Drug stores</li> <li>c. Apparel stores</li> <li>d. Book and stationary stores.</li> <li>e. Gift and craft shops</li> <li>f. Sporting goods and camping supply stores</li> <li>g. Other similar uses.</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Personal and business service establishments such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Banks</li> <li>b. Professional offices</li> <li>c. Medical and dental clinics</li> <li>d. Barber and beauty shops</li> <li>e. Laundry establishments</li> <li>f. Other similar uses</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parking and loading areas.</li> <li>2. Pedestrian walkways, beach and related facilities.</li> <li>3. Retail sales and services incidental to a permitted uses.</li> <li>4. Other uses customarily accessory to permitted principal uses as defined in this chapter</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amusement parks, facilities and concessions.</li> <li>2. Essential public utilities.</li> <li>3. Eating and drinking establishments serving alcoholic beverages.</li> <li>4. Drive-In Businesses.</li> <li>5. Recreation Vehicle Campgrounds</li> <li>6. Conference Centers.</li> </ol>

\* Same as existing RC Zoning District. The RC-1 District replaces the RC District.

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**Table 5 - Continued**  
**Proposed Schedule of Permitted Users - RC Districts**

Zoning District	Permitted Principal Uses	Accessory Uses	Uses Requiring Special Permit
RC-2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Single-family residences.</li> <li>2. Two-family residences.</li> <li>3. Three-family residences.</li> <li>4. Multi-family residences.</li> <li>5. Townhouse residences.</li> <li>6. Churches or other houses of worship.</li> <li>7. Elementary and high schools.</li> <li>8. Churches and other places of worship.</li> <li>9. Public parks and recreation facilities.</li> <li>10. Professional offices, medical and dental clinics.</li> <li>11. Hotels and Motels.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Home occupations as permitted according to this chapter.</li> <li>2. Other uses customarily accessory to permitted principal uses as defined in this chapter.</li> <li>3. Agricultural uses.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Universities or colleges.</li> <li>2. Neighborhood and convenience-type commercial facilities.</li> <li>3. Cemeteries.</li> <li>4. Hospitals and medical and dental clinics.</li> <li>4. Essential public utility facilities.</li> <li>6. Private clubs.</li> <li>7. Nursing and rest homes.</li> <li>8. Funeral homes.</li> <li>9. Nursery schools and day-care facilities.</li> <li>10. Eating and/or drinking establishments.</li> <li>11. Conference Centers.</li> </ol>
RC-3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Churches and other houses of worship.</li> <li>2. Elementary and high schools.</li> <li>3. Public parks and recreation facilities.</li> <li>4. Gymnasium.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Universities or colleges.</li> <li>2. Cemeteries.</li> <li>3. Essential public utility facilities.</li> <li>4. Private commercial recreation facilities (e.g. marinas)</li> </ol>

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**TABLE 6**  
**Zoning Text Amendments for RC Zones**

1. Rename the current RC, Recreation and Related Uses, zoning district to RC-1, Recreation and Related Uses -1 throughout the text.
2. Add to Section 270-5:

RC-2 Recreation and Related Uses - 2

RC-3 Recreation and Related Uses - 3

3. Add to Schedule II, Area and Bulk Controls:

	Minimum Lot Size Requirements				Minimum Yard Requirements			Maximum Building Height (feet/stories)	Coverage (percent)	Minimum Open Space (percent)
	Area (sq. ft.)	Area per Dwelling Unit	Width (feet)	Depth (feet)	Front (feet)	Side One/Both (feet)	Rear (feet)			
<b>Recreation and Related Use - 1</b>										
Permitted Residential Uses	10,000	4,250	100	100	12	12/42	12	35/2-1/2	30	50
Other Permitted Uses	10,000	Not Applicable	100	100	12	12/42	12	35/2-1/2	30	50
<b>Recreation and Related Uses - 2</b>										
Permitted Residential Uses	15,000	15,000	125	75	15	30/90	30	49/3-1/2	15	75
Other Permitted Uses	15,000	Not Applicable	125	75	30	30/90	30	49/3-1/2		
<b>Recreation and Related Uses - 3</b>										
Permitted Uses	20,000	Not Applicable	150	100	30	30/90	30	49/3-1/2	15	75

Note: All area and bulk requirements shall exclude lands between the low- and high water mark from consideration in calculation, including minimum area and per dwelling unit.

The minimum open space requirement shall apply only to proposals that would diminish existing open space, such as the construction of new buildings or additions, or the creation of parking or storage areas or other paved areas. It shall not apply to a change in use of existing buildings or facilities that would not result in diminished open space. Nor shall it apply to building expansions of less than twenty-five (25) percent in floor area, as compared to the size of the floor area that existed at the time this requirement was adopted.

Lot area calculation - Shall exclude all land between the waterside property boundary and the highwater elevation.

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license to serve is issued by New York State regardless of the local zoning. This district would primarily be used for waterfront areas and would allow the broadest range of uses of the three RC districts. Specifically, it is recommended that this district apply to North Margaret Street, the Point Railyards and the mouth of the Saranac River on the Point.

2. RC-2 District - The purpose of this district is to allow recreation and related uses, but with an emphasis on open space protection, historic preservation, protection of views to waterbodies (e.g., Lake Champlain). Historic resources, waterfront open space and views to Lake Champlain are considered to be major economic development tools for the City. The range of allowable uses are oriented towards a mix of residential, professional and hospitality uses and is therefore narrower than for the RC-1 District. The Plan specifically recommends the use of this district for much of the Old Base portion of the former Air Base.
3. RC-3 District - The purpose of the recommended district is to protect the open space character of waterfront area and key open spaces in the City. Permitted uses are limited to those which are compatible or dependent on large areas of open space or waterfront. This district is recommended for the areas of the Old Base and New Base which were recommended as permanent open space in the Base Reuse Plan, including the waterfront, U.S. Oval and other key sites. It is also recommended for a portion of the Rugar Woods along the Saranac River which is owned by the State University of New York.

The recommended locations for three RC Districts are shown on Figures 6. The purpose of the three districts is to integrate and balance neighborhood concerns (e.g., noise and traffic), city-wide concerns (e.g., visual and physical access to the waterfront, tax base enhancement, waterfront tourism, reuse of the Air Base) and property owner objectives (e.g., a reasonable financial return on their property).

### **5. POINT ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS**

As shown on Figure 6, the plan recommends zoning amendments for three areas along the Point waterfront. Each is discussed below.

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**Figure 6**  
**POINT WATERFRONT ZONING**





**Recommendation 5.1: Railyards and Marina**

The railyards and marina are currently zoned RC. The plan simply recommends amending this area to the new RC-1 district which would maintain the existing list of allowable uses and dimensional requirement.

**Recommendation 5.2: Amend Mouth of Saranac River on Point to RC-1 District.**

The Plan recommends rezoning of the property south of the mouth of the Saranac River from Industrial to RC-1. The area includes the Municipal Lighting Department and the City's wastewater treatment plant. The rezoning is consistent with the City's long term goal of redeveloping this area for tourism and resort development. It is also consistent with the existing and recommended zoning for the adjacent railyards.

**Recommendation 5.3: Eastern Side of Jay Street**

This area is within the R-2 Zoning District. The affected area includes five privately-owned parcels along Jay Street. Four of these parcels are used for offices, warehousing and light assembly. However, the warehousing and light assembly uses are non-conforming under the R-2 Zoning District. These uses lawfully existed prior to the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to designate this land as R-2 and can legally continue. This area is also part of the corridor proposed for the Clinton County Bike Trail. Rezoning the area east of Jay Street to the waterfront will link the mouth of the Saranac River to the Old Base in a continuous corridor of RC.

Within the proposed rezoning area, there is a small portion of the Old Base that had been leased by the City from the Federal government. The purpose of the lease was to create a public park. However, the City has let the lease lapse. The City also owns a street extension (i.e., 33 feet) which roughly aligns with MaComb Street and extends from Jay Street to the railway within the area proposed for rezoning.

The idea of creating a non-conforming use is to limit a property in such a way that the use is likely to disappear. However, a non-conforming use which cannot be altered, enlarged or changed under zoning. It will, over time, become increasingly incompatible with the character of the residential neighborhood since the owner is discouraged from investing in the appearance of the property. However, when market conditions are appropriate, some properties will convert to the desired ones.

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There are three options for consideration in this area:

1. Rezone from R-2 to RC-1; thereby allowing a broader range of business uses than at present, but not industrial. Existing non-conforming uses would remain non-conforming.
2. Rezone from R-2 to RC -2; and thereby permitting a broader range of business uses than at present, plus light industrial. Existing light industrial and warehousing uses would become conforming.
3. Maintain existing R-2 District. Existing non-conforming uses would remain non-conforming.

The Plan recommends that the City rezone the area from R-2 to RC-1. The purpose of this zoning is to allow a broader range of uses that are in keeping with the character of the waterfront area.

### **6. AIR BASE ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS**

Currently, the airbase is owned by the Federal government. At such, it is exempt from the City's Zoning Ordinance. Any portion of the airbase that is transferred to ownership by PARC or other private entity will be subject to the City of Plattsburgh Zoning Ordinance.

The Reuse Plan recommends that the Base be zoned as a "planned development district" or Planned Unit Development (PUD) which provides the City the authority to alter the use, setback, coverage, density, and other requirements to provide flexibility to encourage redevelopment.

This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the City not zone the airbase as a PUD, but make it eligible for such a designation based on special permit review by the Planning Board. This is the current approach used by the City. The Plan further recommends the City amend the underlying zoning districts as presented in Figure 7 and discussed below.

Other recommended changes to the City's PUD requirements are presented in Section 8 of this chapter.

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**Figure 7**  
**PROPOSED ZONING FOR FORMER AIR BASE**

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### **Recommendation 6.1: Change Key Open Spaces to RC-3.**

This strategy could involve the following areas:

- Waterfront /Railroad Right of Way (H1);
- U.S. Oval (Parcel H7);
- Existing and Expanded Post Cemetery (Parcels H14 and H18);
- Ballfields and Picnic Grounds (Parcels H12 and H13);
- Historic Point Buffer (Parcel H17); and
- Park Within New Base (Parcel B2).

The purpose of these amendments is to preserve the open space and/or recreational character of these areas. The waterfront and U.S. Oval are two areas that have been highlighted by the City as desirable for recreation and tourism development. Therefore, the minimum open space requirement of the RC-3 District is 75 percent.

The Comprehensive Plan should explicitly delineate these areas as desirable for permanent open space protection. In addition, the criteria for PUD approval or for any site plan approval should include consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and other relevant plans, such as the County's Waterfront Recreation Plan and the Base Reuse Plan. This would encourage areas designated as open space in the City's Comprehensive Plan to be preserved as open space.

### **Recommendation 6.2: Change Key Tourism/Recreation Areas to RC-2.**

The Reuse Plan recommends up to nearly 586,000 square feet of tourism and resort development on 92 acres (assuming an FAR of 0.2 for new development). This strategy would include the following parcels:

- Old Headquarters Building (Parcel H11) - located at the southern end of the U.S. Oval, this parcel is proposed for the military museum and visitors center;
- Historic Stone Barracks (Parcel H12) - located southeast of the entrance road;
- Vicinity of U.S. Oval (Parcels H9, H10, and H16);
- Officers' Club/Visiting Officers Quarters (Parcel H2) - located at the northern end of the U.S. Oval, this is the alternative location for the resort; and
- Nevada Circle (Parcel H15) - located at southern end of Old Base, this is the preferred location for the resort in the Base Reuse Plan.

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Amending the zoning of these parcels to RC-2 would allow many uses related to a tourism destination or resort. The proposed district would allow a hotel or conference center. No structure should be altered or constructed, except in compliance with the Historic Structure Design guidelines.

**Recommendation 6.3: Keep R-2 for Historic Homes on U.S. Oval (Parcels H-5 and H-8).**

These parcels are recommended for single family residences. These parcels include the 49 historic units of housing on 8.5 acres along the western boundary of U.S. Oval.

**Recommendation 6.4: Rezone Hospital (New Base) to B-2.**

The hospital (New Base) could be developed for office if medical reuse is not feasible. Medical use is permitted under the existing R-2, but the parcel (B1) would need to be rezoned to either the C or B-2 District for office use. In addition, the zoning ordinance should be amended to add Light Industrial Use, as defined in Table 4, in the B-2 District.

**Recommendation 6.5: Change Residential Portion of the New Base to R-1 (Parcels B3, B4, B5, B37 and B6).**

The residential structures are four-plexes with four units to a single structure and meet the City's definition of a "townhome residence." To make most efficient use of the land within this district, the residential density should be changed to R-1 Low Density and single family residences should replace the existing structures as development warrants.

**Recommendation 6.6: Amend Site Plan Review and PUD Requirements**

Revise Site Plan Review requirements in the zoning text to mandate site plan review for all new construction except for one and two family dwellings, and to require consistency with land use plans. Current city-wide site plan review requirements exempt non-residential uses that require 10 or fewer parking spaces. This exemption would be

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eliminated on the former PFAB, and require that all new construction go before the Planning Board for site plan review and approval in order to insure compatibility with adopted City master plans, Local Waterfront Revitalization plans, and base re-use plans. Additional revisions to these provisions are recommended in Table 7 of this Plan.

**Recommendation 6.7: Add airport related uses to the list of permitted uses within Industrial Zoning Districts.**

The plan recommends that the Industrial Zoning District be amended to allow airport related uses within that district. This approach is preferred rather than creating a new zoning district for the small portion of the City that is located in the vicinity of the former airbase's runway. The proposed amendment is presented in Table 8.

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**TABLE 7**  
**Text Amendments For Site Plan Review**

1. Change Section 270-32 (Submission of Site Plans), parts A. (1) and (2) to read as follows:
  - A. (1) Residential uses.
    - (a) In R1, B1, B2, C, 1, RC1, and RC2 zoning districts: Applications for construction of a single structure designed for residential use and which requires a parking area for ten (10) parking spaces or less.
    - (b) In RH, RM, RO, and RC3 zoning districts: Applications for construction of a single structure designed for residential use and which requires a parking area of 4 (four) parking spaces or less.
  - A. (2) Non-residential uses. In R1, R2, B1, B2, C, 1 and RC1 districts: Applications for a single structure designed for residential use, but containing less than ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor area.

(Note: The above provisions list exceptions to the site plan review requirement. The change to Part A. (2) would require site plan approval for all non-residential construction within RC-2 and RC-3 districts, located on the former PFAB.)
2. Add a Part H to Section 270-36:
  - H. Consistency with approved land use plans. When reviewing site plans for proposals located within the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base and/or within the OL-W (Waterfront Overlay District), the Planning Board shall require consistency to the maximum extent practicable with the City of Plattsburgh Comprehensive Plan, City of Plattsburgh Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and any approved or accepted base reuse plans. Open space areas shown on said plans shall be conserved as open space to the maximum extent practicable.
3. Add a Part N to Section 270-20
  - N. Former PFAB. When reviewing PUD proposals within the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base, the Planning Board shall require consistency to the maximum extent practicable with the City of Plattsburgh Comprehensive Plan, City of Plattsburgh Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and any approved or accepted base reuse plans. Open space areas shown on said plans shall be conserved as open space to the maximum extent practicable.

C O M P R E H E N S I V E   P L A N



**TABLE 8**  
**Zoning Text Amendments for Industrial Zoning Districts**

Add to Schedule 1, Schedule of Permitted Uses for Industrial Zoning Districts

Zoning Districts	Permitted Principal Uses	Accessory Uses	Uses Requiring Special Permit
Industrial	<p>8. Airports, including all support facilities such as landing fields, control towers, hangers, administrative buildings and navigation equipment.</p> <p>9. Airport allied uses, including aircraft and aircraft parts manufacture, air freight terminals, trucking terminals, aviation schools, aircraft repair shops, aviation research and testing laboratories, aircraft sales, equipment and parts storage.</p> <p>10. Nurseries, greenhouses.</p> <p>11. Parks and playgrounds.</p> <p>12. Public utility facilities.</p> <p>13. Storage uses, including warehousing, building materials, storage yard or plant, sales of construction equipment, lumber yard, stone monument works, wholesale business, storage buildings and warehouses, distribution plants, parcel delivery, ice and cold storage.</p> <p>14. Spectator events, to include air shows, balloon shows, and vehicle racing.</p> <p>15. Offices</p> <p>16. Museums, libraries.</p> <p>17. Private Clubs.</p>		4. Concert events



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### 7. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City of Plattsburgh should adopt a design review questionnaire and guidelines to help preserve the character of several neighborhoods. The recommended neighborhoods include the Historic Point, Point Waterfront, Downtown, Center City and Old Base.

The recommended review process and design tools (questionnaire and guidelines) will give developers and their architects as well as the City a clear idea of the what is desired by a neighborhood. This will encourage more equitable and consistent decisions by the Planning Board. In addition, they will improve the quality of site plan and subdivision applications as well as the quality of development. Design guidelines also make good business sense. For example, a pleasing retail environment attracts shoppers.

Design guidelines are typically concerned with:

- how buildings are placed on the site,
- how buildings visually connect to each other and
- how buildings relate to circulation.

The City Zoning Ordinance currently requires design review for historic sites. Any use that requires a zoning and building permit on a historic site is managed under Section 270-31 of the Zoning Ordinance. In reviewing applications for a historic site permit, the Planning Board considers the compatibility of the proposed action in light of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects with Guidelines for Applying the Standards*. There are ten additional standards listed in the ordinance that are considered by the Planning Board. These standards are qualitative and require a subjective interpretation on a case by case basis. This can result in uncertainty by both the Planning Board and the applicant about what is actually desired.

#### **Recommendation 7.1: Designate Overlay Districts**

The City would clearly define the zoning districts or other geographic areas as well as the specific uses that will be subject to design review. The steps for design review should also be clearly defined.



**Recommendation 7.2: Designate Planning Board as Review Authority**

The Planning Board should be designated as the party responsible for design review in the overlay districts. This approach avoids creating another government entity and avoids potential conflicts between the Planning Board's judgment and another government party. The Planning Board is already responsible for review of proposals for historic sites.

**Recommendation 7.3: Prepare Design Questionnaire**

It is recommended that the City would simply require applicants in certain districts to prepare a design review application form. The form would ask a series of questions about the architecture and site elements of the proposed project. The questions would pertain to the elements listed below. The form would be completed by the applicant and reviewed by the Planning Board.

The questions would seek to determine whether the proposed building is consistent in character to existing buildings in the following respects.

1. Height,
2. Bulk and general massing,
3. Major divisions or rhythms of the facade,
4. Proportion of openings (i.e., window to wall relationships)
5. Materials, colors and textures of buildings and signage,
6. Roof treatment,
7. General architectural character,
  - a) horizontal or vertical emphasis
  - b) scale
  - c) stylistic features and themes
8. Relation to the street, and
9. Style and Period (historic districts only).

In addition, the questions would help determine whether the new building's site characteristics are similar to existing buildings in respect to the following:

1. Relationship of structure to topography,
2. Relationship of structure to adjacent development,
3. Relationship of structure to solar access,

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4. Relationship of structure to special conditions (e.g., views to the Lake or Saranac River, historic and cultural features, etc.),
5. Relationship of parking areas and driveways to structure,
6. Relationship of accessory uses to adjacent development, and
7. Location and character of landscaping.

The benefit of this approach is a low cost for implementation and avoids additional regulations. The application form will help to clarify what the Planning Board is expecting for construction within the designated review districts. It will also allow flexibility in terms of architectural style in the downtown and center city where no single style is predominant.

### **Recommendation 7.4: Prepare Design Review Manuals**

The City should simultaneously prepare design manuals to assist both the applicant and Planning Board. In the interim, the Planning Board could supplement the form by referring to design manuals prepared for other communities. The City should establish a Design Review Committee to help prepare the manuals.

Once the Design Review Board has identified major issues and concerns, a series of Architectural and Site Design Manuals should be created for each overlay district. The manuals should clearly and explicitly define what is expected for each of the design elements listed in the Zoning Ordinance. By publishing the manuals, the City can help developers and their designers understand the City's expectations in advance.

The manuals should be prepared based on the following principles.

- use precise language - terms such as "the streetscape should enhance the pedestrian experience" should be avoided;
- use photographs and drawings to illustrate key points;
- define explicitly which points are requirements (i.e., musts) and which are more flexible (i.e., should); and
- keep the guidelines sufficiently flexible to allow the marketplace to function.

The manuals should identify existing buildings within each overlay district that are models or references for the types of features the City desires. This is less important for site or "streetscape" requirements since they are relatively simple to interpret and to enforce. However, architectural objectives are less defined and allow for a broader

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range of interpretation. The City should establish what is within an acceptable range by identifying existing buildings that set the desired stylistic standards for each hamlet.

Because some of Plattsburgh's residential neighborhoods closely border the commercial areas, the manuals could address residential buffering. When new development occurs or existing development is expanded, applicants should give special consideration to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. These residents should be protected from noise, fumes, lack of privacy and any other offensive aspects of the commercial uses. Possible buffering solutions include additional open space separation, buffer plantings, berms and wooden fences. The City should use the manuals to illustrate desirable buffering concepts.

### 8. PUD RECOMMENDATIONS

A PUD generally refers to the development of a large tract of land in a unified manner by a single owner. Accordingly, the usual list of allowable uses and the minimum lot size requirements do not have to apply since traditional zoning requirements are based on the premise that every lot is separately owned by a different individual. The benefit of the PUD is that it provides flexibility in terms of layout and uses. As such, it is a useful tool for large properties where there are specific proposals for only a portion of the property. It is an important tool for preserving key open spaces due to its flexibility.

The City's current Zoning Ordinance provides for PUD's. Separate zones for PUD's are not established and PUD's are permitted in any district as the introductory paragraphs to Section 270-20 states.

Implicit in the text is the assumption that any uses allowed in the zone where a PUD is located are allowed within the PUD. This should be made more explicit as shown in the revised zoning text (See Table 9).

The minimum land area currently required and recommended for a PUD is presented below (See Table 10). The City should increase the minimum requirements for the R-1, R-2, B-1, B-2, C and I districts to 5 acres so as to avoid spot zoning and to achieve the benefits of this technique. A minimum area of 5 acres should be required for PUD's on RC-1 and RC-2 and 10 acres for RC-3. The Plan recommends that PUD's not be allowed within the RC, RH and RM districts.

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**TABLE 9**  
**Zoning Text Amendments for PUD's**

**Changes to Schedule 1**

1. Within all zoning districts except RH, RM and RO, add Planned Unit Developments to the list of Uses Requiring Special Permit. (This is simply a clarification, not a change. PUD's are already permitted in any zone by Section 270-20.)
2. Delete "Residential" Planned Unit Developments from the Uses Requiring Special Permit in R2 zones. (All PUD's, not just residential, would be allowed. Again, this is a clarification.)

**Changes to Section 270-20**

1. In the introductory paragraph, change the phrase that currently reads "Planned unit development shall be permitted in any district after specific approval by the Planning Board" to read:

Planned unit development shall be permitted in any district, *except RH, RM and RO*, after specific approval by the Planning Board.

2. Add part M.
  - M. Allowable uses. Allowable uses within a PUD shall be the same as those allowed by Schedule 1 for the zoning district within which the PUD is located.
3. Add a part N.
  - N. Review guidelines for RC3 Districts. Within RC3 districts, the Planning Board in their review of the design and layout of a PUD, shall take into consideration the recommendations of any approved base reuse master plan for the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base, including the location of proposed open space and recreation areas.
  - O. Consistency with approved land use plans. When reviewing site plans for proposals located within the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base and/or within the OL-W (Waterfront Overlay District), the Planning Board shall require consistency to the maximum extent practicable with the City of Plattsburgh Comprehensive Plan, City of Plattsburgh Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and any approved or accepted base reuse plans. Open space areas shown on said plans shall be conserved as open space to the maximum extent practicable.

4. Change the Minimum Land Area chart contained in part A.(2) to read as follows.

The minimum land area in the R-1, R-2, B-1, B-2, C, I, RC1 and RC2 districts shall be 5 acres. The minimum land area in the RC-3 district shall be 10 acres. A PUD is not permitted in the R-H, R-M and R-O district.

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**TABLE 10**  
**Planned Unit Development**  
**Minimum Area Requirements**

<u>District</u>	<u>Current (sq. ft.)</u>	<u>Recommended (acres)</u>
R-1	90,000	5
R-2	30,000	5
B-1	30,000	5
B-2	60,000	5
C	30,000	5
I	90,000	5
RC-1	60,000	5
RC-2	NA	5
RC-3	NA	10

Note: 1 Acre = 43,560 square feet  
5 Acres = 217,800 square feet  
10 Acres = 435,600 square feet

Table 11 includes recommended revisions to the City's subdivision regulations pertaining to PUD's. The recommendations are aimed at eliminating the use of underwater lands in density calculations and for preserving key open spaces.

The recommended changes will most likely affect larger, undeveloped parcels and the former Airbase. These larger parcels include the Point rail yards, the former NYSEG site along the Saranac River and the Boynton Avenue corridor vacant land. In addition, the new area requirements will encourage owners of smaller parcels to combine lots. This will encourage coordinated development which is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

## 9. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Several suggestions for expanding the amount of industrially zoned lanes in the southern section of the City were considered.

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**TABLE 11**  
**Proposed Amendments To Chapter 236, Subdivision Of Land**

1. Amend Article IX Planned Unit Developments to read as follows:

**236-36 Authorization**

The City of Plattsburgh Planning Board is hereby authorized to review subdivision of land within a planned unit development created pursuant to Chapter 270-20 (Zoning) of the Code of the City of Plattsburgh as a cluster development as provided in Section 37 of the City Law.

**236-37 Purpose**

The purpose of this article is to permit flexibility in design and layout of individual lots within a planned unit development (PUD), provided that the overall layout meets the density, open space, and use requirements for the zoning district in which the PUD is located. Buildings may be situated on smaller lots than otherwise required by the Zoning Code in order to preserve an equivalent amount of open space on other portions of the PUD.

**236-18 Variation of Area and Bulk Controls**

The minimum lot size requirements, minimum yard requirements, and minimum open space requirements as specified in Schedule II of the City of Plattsburgh Zoning Code, and any amendments thereto, may be varied for individual lots within a PUD provided that the following provisions are met.

- A. The minimum percentage of open space contained in the entire PUD shall be minimum percentage required by Schedule II for the zoning district in which the PUD is located. In calculating the area of required open space, Section 270-16, part B of the Zoning Code shall apply. In addition, any land below the low water mark in Lake Champlain, as determined from the year prior to that in which the PUD is proposed, shall not be considered as open space for purposes of the calculations.
- B. The total number of principal structures and dwelling units permitted on the site shall not exceed the number that would otherwise be permitted by application of the minimum lot size requirement for individual principal structures on the site. To calculate the maximum number of principal structures permitted within a PUD the following procedure shall apply.
  - (1) From the entire land area of the PUD shall be subtracted the area of any water bodies or water courses.
  - (2) Said result shall be divided by the minimum lot size for principal structures with the zoning district within which the PUD is located.

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(3) Fractional results shall be truncated to the lower whole number.

C. Permitted uses within a PUD shall be those permissible within the zoning district within which the PUD is located.

### 236-39 Open Space

A. Open spaces shall be located in accordance with the following objectives.

(1) Consistency with approval land use plans, including the City of Plattsburgh Comprehensive Plan, the City of Plattsburgh Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, and the Re-Use Plan for the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base.

(2) Preservation of other open spaces which in the determination of the Planning Board should remain as open land in order to preserve views, protect environmentally sensitive lands such as steeper slopes or stream corridors, preserve land for open space recreational uses, or which are otherwise deemed to be significant open spaces or natural areas.

(3) Provision of appropriate buffer areas surrounding the PUD or within the PUD.

B. The Planning Board is hereby empowered to review and approve the location of open spaces designated on the PUD.

C. Open space land may be held in private ownership, dedicated to the City, or owned in common by a homeowner's association.

(1) The Planning Board may require that privately owned space be permanently preserved as open space by means of conservation easement, deed covenant, or other legally sufficient means of preserving open space.

(2) Open space land owned in common by a homeowner's association shall be permanently preserved as open space by means of conservation easement, deed covenants, or other legally sufficient means of preserving open space..

D. Adequate provision shall be made for the future maintenance of open space lands.



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This Plan recommends that industrial zoning district along Wall Street remain in place and not be expanded at this time. However, other lands in the southwestern portion of the City may be desirable for industrial use in the future. Prior to any zoning amendments in the southern section of the City for industrial purposes; the City should:

- Quantify the desirable amount of industrially-zoned property for the next twenty years.
- Coordinate with PARC and the Town of Plattsburgh.
- Attempt to make the City's zoning consistent with the Base Reuse and Town plans.

Any future amendments to the Industrial zoning district boundaries in the southern section of the City should be coordinated with PARC and the Town of Plattsburgh.

### 10. MARGARET/MILLER STREET

#### **Recommendation 10.1: Rezone Residential Portion to R-2 District**

This area is the Margaret Street/Miller Street strip commercial area. Uses are generally an older mix of commercial and multi-family residential uses. Although this area is zoned B1, an intact concentration of multi-family residential homes is found along Margaret Street between Elm Street and Robinson Terrace Streets, and most of Miller Street in this neighborhood. There are 27 student housing properties located in this area. This neighborhood was a CDBG target area in 1992, receiving \$327,000 in funding for housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements.

Commercial uses are generally considered to be stable and are concentrated along Margaret Street south of Elm Street, adjacent to the downtown, and North of Robinson Terrace in the vicinity of the Georgia Pacific Paper Mill. Although zoned B-1, the properties in between these commercial clusters are primarily used for residences. This zoning developed prior to construction of the Northway when Route 9 was the major travel corridor. The City should rezone this residential neighborhood to R-2 as shown in Figure 2.

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### 11. NEIGHBORHOOD AND CONVENIENCE-TYPE COMMERCIAL

#### **Recommendation 11.1: Define Neighborhood and Convenience-Type Commercial Facilities**

The Zoning Ordinance does not define “neighborhood and convenience-type commercial facilities” which is allowed in the R-2 District. The following definition is recommended:

Add to Section 270-4:

NEIGHBORHOOD AND CONVENIENCE TYPE COMMERCIAL FACILITIES - Small scale businesses, including both retail and personal service establishments, which meet frequently recurring needs of nearby residents and visitors to nearby public recreational facilities. Such facilities shall be limited to less than 1,600 square feet total floor area. These facilities include:

1. barber and beauty shops.
2. bicycle sales and repair shops.
3. candy, ice cream and confectionery shops.
4. greeting card shops, retail
5. pastry and coffee shops
6. dairy products, retail.
7. drugstores, retail.
8. florists, retail.
9. grocery, meat, fish, fruit and vegetable stores, retail.
10. laundry or dry-cleaning pickup stations.
11. marine equipment sales shops.
12. newspaper, magazine, book and stationery stores.
13. shoe repair shops.
14. video rental stores.

The definition is intended to clarify the term and to avoid lengthy and expensive referrals to the Planning Board and Zoning Board for interpretation. The Planning Board should consider the definition and determine if it is necessary and, if so, is this definition appropriate.

### 12. WEST SIDE ZONING

#### **Recommendation 12.1: Amend Zoning along Kennedy, Erin and Sandra Avenues**

A significant portion of the western portion of the City is zoned R-2 along Kennedy, Erin and Sandra Avenues and other neighborhood streets. The majority of the homes in these areas are single family residences on lots which exceed the minimum lot size for the R-1 district. The neighborhood is largely “built-out” or subdivided. There is one four acre

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(approximately) parcel remaining to be developed under the R-2 district. The north and south ends of this neighborhood have a broader mix of uses. To the south, there are three multi-family complexes along Ruger Street and Erin Court. There is a mix of commercial and multi-family uses along Healy Avenue to the north.

This will help limit the conversion of single family homes to two-family. The Plan recommends that the single family portion of the neighborhood be rezoned to R-1. residences and help to protect the single family character of the neighborhood. The existing and proposed zoning is shown on Figure 8.

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**Figure 8**  
**EXISTING AND PROPOSED ZONING**

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### 13. WATERFRONT DISTRICT

#### **Recommendation 13.1: Amend Zoning Map to recognize proposed Waterfront District**

A significant portion of the City is located adjacent to Lake Champlain. To encourage development or re-development of land lying between public streets and the shore of Lake Champlain in such a way as to preserve public views to the water while minimizing restrictions on property owners it is recommended that a Waterfront District zone be created. The land proposed to be included are described below.

#### **Waterfront District Overlay Zone**

Beginning at the intersection of the City Line and Route 374; then east along Route 374 to its intersection with New York State Route 9 (Margaret Street); then southwest along NYS Route 9 to its intersection with Cumberland Avenue; then east and south along Cumberland Avenue to the pedestrian bridge. Across the bridge to the railroad tracks, thence following the Saranac River side of the railroad tracks, encompassing all City owned property east of the tracks to include the CPRail Yards, crossing Dock Street from Trackside to the intersection of Jay and Bridge Streets. Then continuing on the east side of Jay Street to where it intersects with Hamilton Street. Thence following the Plattsburgh AFB boundary fence line south along the train tracks to the southern most boundary of the City, east along that boundary to Lake Champlain, thence northerly following the city's eastern line to the northern most boundaries of the Municipal Beach to the point of origin (omitting all R-1 zoned areas.)

Preserving public views are becoming increasingly important as the City redevelops and it seeks to preserve one of its highest quality aspects - waterfront on Lake Champlain.

#### **Recommendation 13.2: Include the following language to create the Waterfront District zone**

Amend the zoning ordinance to include the following language.

*Interpretation of Overlay Zone:* The Waterfront District Zone shall overlay the underlying zoning district. The zoning regulations of the underlying zoning district shall apply to all land within the Waterfront District, except as modified, or permitted to be modified, by the Waterfront District zoning regulations.

*Site Plan Requirement:* All new construction and additions to existing structures within the Waterfront District shall require Planning Board approval of a site plan.

In connection with such site plan approval, the Planning Board is granted the authority to vary the area requirements for lots within the Waterfront District in accordance with guidelines to be developed by the County Planning Office for county-wide and city use. The purpose of the guidelines is to encourage the establishment of Public Viewshed areas to provide an unobstructed view from a public street or other public lands to Lake Champlain. The following are suggested variations:

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Front and rear yard setback requirements may be reduced by up to 50%, provided, a "Public Viewshed" (defined below) area is created or enlarged in an amount equal to the reduced square footage area requirement for front and rear yards. The boundary of lots bordering Lake Champlain shall be the high water mark of Lake Champlain, regardless of the owners deed.

*Definition of a Public Viewshed:* Public Viewshed areas shall provide an unobstructed view from a public street or other public lands to Lake Champlain. Public Viewshed areas may be located anywhere on the lot and may be established by increasing the width of a side yard beyond the minimum side yard requirement of the underlying zone. No structures or parking shall be permitted in a Public Viewshed area.

The reduction described above is permissible but not required. As stated above, if a reduction is granted the owner must compensate for the reduction by providing a public viewshed area, which cannot be built upon or used for parking. Given that there are restrictions, it is important to note that there is little incentive for property owners to develop a viewshed. The City may continue to seek methods to catalyze the creation of public viewsheds. For example, the proposed language does not permit the height limitation of the underlying zone to be varied. Allowing the construction of a four story versus a three story building in connection with the establishment of a viewshed could be an added incentive necessary to create Public Viewsheds.



## V. NEIGHBORHOOD DISCUSSION

The 1982 City of Plattsburgh Development Concept Plan organized the City's issues, goals, and recommendations according to 18 different neighborhoods shown on the attached map. Following is a listing of the neighborhoods, a general description of their character, and changes or trends since the 1982 plan was completed. In addition to this listing each neighborhood is categorized by predominant land use type (i.e., residential, commercial, mixed use). To help guide the future development of these areas, general goals, objectives, and strategies for these like-neighborhoods are presented. The final section of this chapter discussed current statistics of each neighborhood.

### NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTIONS, CHANGES AND TRENDS

#### 1. CORE AREA - CBD

*SPECIAL NOTE: Some neighborhoods and topics were addressed in Chapter IV and thus are considered primary focus areas. Because these neighborhoods or topic areas were given detailed consideration, they will not be discussed here. Refer to Chapter IV for a detailed discussion of these neighborhoods.*

#### 2. CENTER CITY (STUDENT HOUSING) (Comp Plan primary focus area - Refer to Chapter IV for the discussion)

#### 3. CITY FLATS AREA

##### **Description**

This area is referred to locally as the City's flats area. The Saranac River, which bends around the area, forms boundaries on the south and east, while the South Catherine Street frontage and the Riverside Cemetery form the western boundary. Broad Street is the area's northern boundary.

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**Figure 9**  
**STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES**



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The southeastern portion of this area is one of the City's oldest development areas, and is characterized by modest single-family residential structures on very small lots. Other key land use in the area includes Police Headquarters and a school. The Catherine Street area is characterized by an inter-mixture of older, multi-family housing stock and commercial uses.

### **Changes and Trends**

Renaissance Village is located in the northwestern section of the area. This is an example of a successful high density development which offers a unique approach to student housing. The units are arranged in such a manner that there are four rooms off one common area. The building has a full-time resident manager which helps reduce the number of problems that are often associated with high density housing (i.e., noise, parking, garbage, etc.). The other predominant land use in the area is a mixture of single and 2-family residences

A foundry in the White Street area further compounds the intermixture of land uses. It is located in the center of the Flats neighborhood which is a notable incompatible land use that is nearly surrounded by residential homes. Although the foundry is inconsistent with surrounding uses it has been an integral part of the Flats neighborhood for a quite some time.

## **4. SOUTH END OF WARD 1**

### **Description**

This area is the older residential portion of the south end or Ward 1 area of the City. It is bounded by the Saranac River on the west, Peru Street on the east, Monty Street on the south, and the Saranac River on the north. This area is generally characterized by modest, single-family residential housing. Although predominately residential in character, this area, like other older sections of the City, has been affected by scattered intermixture of non-residential uses.

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### **Changes and Trends**

The area is constrained on the north and west by the Saranac River. In addition, the area is divided by South Catherine Street which, as previously noted, is heavily traveled. The South Catherine Street river crossing is a primary access route between the southern and northern sections of the City.

Eleven area variances have been granted in Johnson Avenue neighborhood in the last three years to property owners seeking relief from required yard setbacks to expand or reconstruct existing structures. This pattern suggests lots in this neighborhood are typically small in size and do not meet current area requirements. This condition is merely an observation of fact and was not mentioned as a significant concern.

However, the city now has the capability to monitor conditions such as this using the recently purchased geographic information system (GIS) which is currently located in the engineering department. A GIS is a computer program that allows the city to display physical features and monitor change. For example, a base map showing streets, water, railroad tracks, etc. has been prepared. Overlaid onto these features the GIS can display points depicting the center of each and every tax parcel. Using the GIS, a map can be prepared showing the land use of each parcel in a color coded fashion (i.e., residential = yellow, commercial = red, industrial = purple, etc.). Figure 1 in the Comprehensive Plan is example of such a map. Because the source of the tax parcel data is the City Assessor's office, the maps can be updated as often as the Assessor's database is updated thereby showing "real-time" change in land use patterns.

In addition to displaying a map, the GIS can be used to ask specific questions of land use patterns, among other things. For example, a certain neighborhood can be selected, such as Neighborhood IV, and the question asked, "How many two-family homes are located in Neighborhood IV?" The GIS will display the answer and a print-out can be prepared showing the exact parcels by section-block-lot number.

A GIS is a very powerful tool that has seemingly endless possibilities. Currently the Engineering Department is running ArcView GIS and it is suggested that the City continue to invest in the technology to help monitor land use patterns now and into the future.



## **5. RIVER BEND DEVELOPMENT SITE (NYSEG)**

### **Description**

Former NYSEG Site - This is the site of the former NYS Gas and Electric coal gasification facility. The site is known to be contaminated with coal tar deposits which are a limiting factor to site redevelopment. NYSEG is in the process of remediating the site. Following remediation there should be no restrictions to future development of the site.

### **Changes and Trends**

Properly planned, development of this site can have a major economic benefit for the City's downtown. However, there are a range of possibilities and options. When considering a potential use the city must regard street access and the state's remediation reuse policy. As contaminated sites are cleaned and remediated in the state, NYSDEC specifies the allowable uses as redevelopment occurs. The City may consider allowing temporary access to further the Landlocked Salmon recreational fishing activity. To further this use, improvements to the pedestrian bridge can be made to provide access to both sides of the river.

## **6. PERU STREET FROM BROAD TO BRIDGE**

### **Description**

This area links the downtown to the Point commercial area and is also considered on the primary entrances to the City's downtown from the south via NYS Rt. 9. The area is comprised of the frontage along Peru Street, opposite the Plattsburgh Air Force Base and is also bounded by Peru Street on the east, the railroad on the north, and the Saranac River on the west. This area, as is the case in most older areas of the City, also exhibits a significant intermixture of land use types. The predominate use, however, is commercial use with an intermixture of residential use.

The area developed at the same time the riverfront portions of the central business district were developing. Subsequently, however, the City's commercial expansion occurred on the western bank of the Saranac River.

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### **Changes and Trends**

Various retail uses have evolved over the year changing the character of this area. Pedestrian connections should continue to be pursued to link new residential development to the waterfront. To further ease access movement in the area, signage near the intersection with Broad Street Bridge should be improved and maintained.

LWRP suggested strengthening the Dock St./Bridge St. as a primary corridor between the downtown and the waterfront.

### **7. POINT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (Comp Plan primary focus area)**

### **8. CUMBERLAND AVENUE**

#### **Description**

This area is another of the areas in the City with potential direct access to the lakefront. The area is bounded by the mouth of the Saranac River on the south, the railroad tracks and the properties fronting on Saily Avenue on the west, Boynton Avenue on the north and Lake Champlain on the east.

#### **Changes and Trends**

This area is an older neighborhood with a mix of single and multi-family housing units. Residential units vary from lakefront estate homes along Cumberland Avenue to moderate income homes along Saily Avenue. Although the neighborhood has important visual access to the lake, public access to the waterfront is quite limited due to private ownership of lakefront property. Recreational development includes the Heritage Trail along Cumberland Avenue connecting the Municipal Beach area with downtown.

#### **Wilcox Dock**

The former NYS Barge Terminal is currently closed to public use. Since public access to the waterfront is quite limited in this neighborhood this State owned property offers important potential for public recreational access to the lake for fishing, dockage, mooring

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and other passive recreational activities. Although this site is regulated as a hazardous waste site by the NYSDEC, there is a remediation plan in place to mitigate the site within the next three years. Once complete, this site will be ready for reuse as a major waterfront access point.

Many opportunities exist especially with the Wilcox Dock area as an access point to the Lake, and preserving visual access with careful consideration of development is key. Public access must be carefully considered so that the surrounding neighborhoods are not disrupted with increased traffic, noise, and refuse. Changes in traffic patterns to serve this recreational site can be considered to remove traffic from the residential neighborhood.

### **9. MARGARET ST./MILLER ST.**

#### **Description**

This area is the North Margaret Street/Miller Street strip commercial area. Uses are generally an older mix of commercial and multi-family residential uses. This zoning developed prior to construction of the Northway when Route 9 was the major travel corridor.

#### **Changes and Trends**

Although the area along Margaret St. in this neighborhood is zoned B1, an intact concentration of multi-family residential homes is found along Margaret Street between Elm Street and Robinson Terrace Streets, and most of Miller Street in this neighborhood. There are 27 student housing properties located in this area. This neighborhood was a CDBG target area in 1992, receiving \$327,000 in funding for housing rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements.

Commercial uses are generally considered to be stable and are concentrated along Margaret Street south of Elm Street, adjacent to the downtown, and North of Robinson Terrace in the vicinity of the Georgia Pacific Paper Mill. Although zoned B-1, the properties in between these commercial clusters are primarily used for residences. This zoning developed prior to construction of the Northway when Route 9 was the major travel corridor. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the City rezone this residential neighborhood to R-2 as shown in Figure 2 in the Comprehensive Plan.



## **10. NORTH CATHERINE AND BAILY AVENUE AREA**

### **Description**

This area is the last of the older developed neighborhoods in the inner core of the City. Grace Avenue forms the area's westerly boundary. The boundary that extends easterly behind the frontage on Bailey Avenue to the properties on Palmer Court, and then northward along the property lines on Palmer Court and Oliver Court to Boynton Avenue. The boundary continues easterly along Boynton Avenue to the railroad tracks, and then extends southerly along the rear property line of properties between Oak and Margaret Street to Cornelia Street. The boundary then extends westerly along Cornelia Street to Grace Avenue.

Land use in this area is predominately residential. There is a mixture of modest frame structures, as well as some larger structures constructed around the turn of the century. The predominant housing character in this area is principally one and two-family homes.

### **Changes and Trends**

There has been a noticeable trend over the past few years for use of existing multi-family housing in the French Quarter as student apartments. Of the 272 multi-family dwellings in the district, 27 (10%) are at least partly occupied by students. A concentration of student housing is found along Montcalm Street.

Considering the small lot urban-residential character of the French Quarter (Lafayette, Montcalm and Champlain Streets), the large number of multi-family properties has resulted in the perception of overcrowding and inadequate on-site parking. Moreover, the lifestyle of students and resident families is incompatible. Given the small lot size, it is difficult to remediate the parking problem. However, the City's program to limit on-street parking during snow emergencies has been very helpful.

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### 11. NORTH END

#### **Description**

The north end of the City is comprised of a mix of land uses including the Georgia Pacific Paper Mill, the Municipal Beach and Crete Recreation Center, and numerous tourist-related commercial uses along Margaret Street and the Lake Champlain shoreline. Single and Multi-family residential uses are also found along the lake shoreline. Views to the lake shoreline are an asset to this area, although physical access to the waterfront is highly limited by existing shoreline development.

#### **Changes and Trends**

Over the years there has been quality development in this area, however, the lakefront is considered to be developed in a manner that there is limited visual access to the lake. The City's recently completed Local Waterfront Revitalization Program is addressing this issue by recommending a Waterfront Overlay District.

The Municipal Beach and Crete Center are felt to be underused and do not realize their full recreational potential. The Municipal Beach has historically been a significant tourist destination and this site has the potential to continue to be a destination for various uses such as an outdoor entertainment venue.

Residential development in this area consists of recently constructed, upscale condominiums and townhomes in nicely landscaped neighborhoods. Office development is similar. Proposed uses under the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program include strengthening the existing waterfront activities that predominate in this area including fishing, swimming, and boating.

Development in the vicinity of Georgia Pacific should continue be compatible with the mill. A recent example is the development of Teneco pulp mill. Georgia Pacific also owns a considerable amount of land east of Margaret Street which they are currently using as wood storage. As plans emerge for the development of this area, public view sheds and preservation of the natural features in this area should be considered.

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### 12. BOYNTON AVE.

#### **Description**

This corridor is located immediately adjacent to Northway Exit 38 and is comprised of a mix of land uses including multi-family high-rise housing on Beekman Court, Bailey Avenue Park and adjacent school, and office and other commercial uses along Boynton Avenue. Single-family residences are largely limited to the Beekman Street/Woodland Drive area. Significant developable vacant land is found to the north of Boynton Avenue. However, there are certain constraints such as access, topography, wetlands, stormwater discharge areas that limit development potential.

#### **Changes and Trends**

Given the limitations and constraints on the land development costs in this area could be potentially very high. Any future development in this area should be carefully considered so that it is compatible with existing development and does not disrupt the natural resources.

### 13. NW QUAD OF CITY

#### **Description**

This neighborhood is located in the northwest quadrant of the City and includes all of the area northwest of Grace Street and north of Cornelia Street, with the exception of the commercial shopping center located off of Cornelia Street at the western boundary of the City, and also exclusive of the medical center property. Land use in this area includes older, upper-income type housing constructed on large lots in the Beekman Street area, with single family subdivisions.



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### **Changes and Trends**

The area exhibits an intermixture of both older and newer housing construction types as well as the health care-geriatric complex. Although there is a varying mix of land uses, this neighborhood functions well as there are no serious incursions that disrupt the residences.

This area has been allowed to be developed with an intermixture of multi-family and single-family housing. In addition, much of the recent development is located in an area which is environmentally impacted by the Northway on the north and major commercial development on the south and west.

### **14. WEST END OF RT.3/CORNELIA ST.**

#### **Description**

This area includes the Route 3/Cornelia Street highway-oriented commercial strip extending from Broad Street westward into the Town of Plattsburgh. Route 3 is the primary transportation route into the City from the Northway.

The Route 3 commercial strip quite typical of roadside business development occurring throughout the country. There is generally a lack of coordinated site access/circulation and parking between adjacent commercial uses. Retail architecture and signage are used to compete for visibility. These factors combine to create a negative visual impression at this important western gateway to the City.

#### **Changes and Trends**

There is currently substantial undeveloped property located behind the Plattsburgh Plaza which does not have adequate access to Rt. 3 making it difficult to develop this property without major improvements. Although this property is zoned for commercial use there is concern over the impact of future development on the adjacent single family residential neighborhood.

There are two commercial properties (WIRY and Santa) which are located behind the commercial uses fronting the south side of Route 3. Although access to these properties is

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via a right-of-way to Route 3, these properties are located within an R1 zone and have frontage along Haley Drive - a stable single-family residential street. In recent years, this area was rezoned as an R1 zone which is appropriate given the type of land uses. The intent of this zoning is to protect the surrounding residential uses from incompatible expansion of these pre-existing non-conforming uses. However, there are supplementary measures that could be added to provide additional protection such as amending the zoning language to add buffer between commercial and residential districts. An example of a buffer could be a landscaped berm five feet high planted with thick evergreens at a 1:3 slope which would be approximately 30 feet wide.

### **15. WEST END OF SUNY CAMPUS (Comp Plan primary focus area)**

### **16. SOUTHERN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT**

#### **Description**

The City's southern industrial district is the only area of the City with significant property available and zoned for industrial development. The district is considered to be an attractive industrial location with available rail service and direct access to Northway Exit 36. Moreover the district is located immediately adjacent to the Champlain Valley International TradeParc (former Plattsburgh Air Force Base).

There is a relatively low supply of vacant, industrially-zoned property in the Wall Street area. In addition, industrial development in this area must be sensitive to nearby residential uses (including a trailer park) found along Wall and Main Mill Streets. These homes are non-conforming uses which existed prior to the change in zoning of this area to Industrial.

#### **Changes and Trends**

It is reasonable to consider industrial growth in this area. A major asset is the recent "Rail Link" project which offers full service rail and road access to this area. One of the major changes in this area is the growth of Bombardier. As a result of their growth they are in need of more land. To help alleviate some of this demand the City may be able to utilize some of the PAFB properties and other existing properties such as

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Imperial. In all cases, new industrial development should occur so that it does not interfere with the residential properties.

### **17. SOUTHERN RESIDENTIAL AREA**

#### **Description**

This neighborhood is located in the southern portion of the City and includes a combination of old and new development. The area is bounded by Wall Street on the west, Monty Street on the north, the Peru Street commercial area on the east and the Plattsburgh Air Force Base on the south. Much of the City's public housing is located in this area. The South Acres Park, which is a major recreation facility in the City, is also located here, as is one of the trailer parks located in the City.

#### **Changes and Trends**

This area can be considered stable and no major recommendations are suggested. To ensure stability, however, the City should monitor land use changes with the GIS system (see discussion under Changes and Trends for Neighborhood IV.)

### **18. SHARRON AVE.**

#### **Description**

This area is a strip of commercial area located opposite the Plattsburgh Air Force Base on Sharron Avenue and United States Avenue. The area has highway oriented commercial type uses and includes a shopping center, as well as other commercial structures, some of which have been converted from other uses.

#### **Changes and Trends**

The area includes a wide range of varied commercial uses. Due to the area's location, it is perhaps best suited to serve as a neighborhood commercial retail center. However, the uses in the area are quite varied and many of them lend themselves to servicing a broader population, in addition to the neighborhood.

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Although some of the uses are not neighborhood oriented, many of the uses do, in fact, provide a commercial service orientation which is an important asset to the adjacent residential community.



## **NEIGHBORHOODS BROKEN DOWN BY PREDOMINANT TYPE**

### **Residential Area (1- and 2-Family)**

Neighborhoods:

III. City Flats Area

IV. South End of Ward 1

X. French Quarter

XIII. NW Quad of City

XV. West side of SUNY Campus

Goals:

- Encourage a concentrated rehabilitation program to preserve the residential neighborhoods, through the use of available local and federal programs such as HUD's Community Development Block Grant program.
- Preserve residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial and industrial areas through the establishment of transitional land uses, vegetative buffers and/or architectural screens, controlling height, and the control of vehicular access.
- Provide for development controls that will assure development which is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. Examples include encouraging infill development that is compatible in scale with the surrounding area by establishing voluntary architectural guidelines for new or renovated housing.
- Provide for the continuation of the current residential character of these neighborhoods by limiting the expansion or development of intense commercial development that is out of scale and is architecturally incompatible.
- Support the validity of this neighborhood by not allowing the incursion of multi-family development into these neighborhoods.

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- Protect the character of the historic districts by establishing voluntary architectural guidelines for new or renovated housing and discouraging the demolition of known historic structures.

### **Multi-Family Residential**

Neighborhoods:

II. Center City Student Housing (Comp Plan Focus Area)

XII. Boynton Ave.

XVII. Southern Residential Area

Goals:

- Provide for development controls which assure adequate off-street parking facilities for both residential and non-residential uses and which address the need for additional parking spaces when units are occupied by students.
- Work in partnership with SUNY Plattsburgh to address student housing needs. Alternatives include additional on-campus housing and off-campus housing complexes utilizing new construction or adaptive reuse of existing structures.
- Provide for development controls that will assure development which is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. Examples include encouraging infill development that is compatible in scale with the surrounding area by establishing voluntary architectural guidelines for new or renovated housing.
- Institute development controls which will assure construction of facilities which consider the area's environmental constraints by using cluster development when smaller lot sizes would complement surrounding development. In addition to cluster development, provisions can be made for the preservation of open space to ensure a greenway system where space allows.

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- Preserve residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial and industrial areas through the establishment of transitional land uses, vegetative buffers and/or architectural screens, controlling height, and the control of vehicular access.
- Maintain the Center City as an area for general residential uses while; (a) preventing the further incursion of multi-family housing (including student housing) into much of the area; (b) giving landowners more options to use their properties than the current R1 zoning allows; (c) permitting multi-family housing in those blocks where it currently predominates; and (d) greatly reducing the number of non-conforming uses that currently exist.
- Within the Center City Neighborhood, restrict the further conversion of structures into student housing in portions of the area that are predominantly used for family residences.

### **Mixed Use**

#### Neighborhoods:

VIII. Cumberland Ave.

XI. North End

#### Goals:

- Attempt to secure access to the lakefront via the barge docking facilities should this site become available as a result of abandonment of the adjacent tank farms. Consider traffic improvements in this area to alleviate impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods.
- As the tank farms are abandoned for their present use, attempt to encourage reuse of this site as a residential extension of the current neighborhood at a level and intensity which makes the redevelopment of such facilities economically feasible.
- Assure that conversions to more intense multi-family housing and

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development of new multi-family housing structures in the area incorporate provisions for adequate parking and open space to eliminate potential for overcrowding.

- Evaluate the needs of the municipal beach complex and actively pursue grant programs with NYS Department of State and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to complete the development of this facility in a manner that enhances entertainment needs of city residents.
- Encourage the enhancement of the visual quality of the industrial areas so as to mitigate negative impacts on visual access to the lake.
- Incorporate recommendations from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) such as strengthening existing waterfront activities including fishing, swimming, and boating.

### **Commercial**

Neighborhoods:

- I. Core Area - CBD (Comp Plan Focus Area)
- VI. Peru St. from Broad to Bridge
- VII. Point Commercial District (Comp Plan Focus Area)
- IX. Margaret St./Miller St.
- XIV. West end of Rt. 3/Cornelia St.
- XVIII. Sharron Ave.

Goals:

- Actively support intensified development in these areas to the greatest extent feasible.
- Provide for development controls which encourage improvements, while retaining the aesthetics of the area such as allowing for increased square footage of building size for additional perimeter landscaping that buffers parking from adjacent sidewalks and/or placing parking behind the structure and moving the building to the sidewalks edge.



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- Allow compatible residential uses in structures to provide for more intensive development and use of these areas where appropriate. For example, residential apartments in the CBD will help expand the number of hours there is pedestrian traffic thereby helping to expand business development.
- Attempt to retain access to the lakefront through the acquisition of easements or other methods, as development occurs along or near the lakefront. Density bonuses can be provided to developers in exchange for a permanent easement along the shoreline.
- Attempt to improve traffic circulation to resolve the problems of congestion at the intersection of Broad and Cornelia Streets.
- Limit general business to the identified areas to prevent the continuing sprawl of business uses. These areas provide adequate locations for business and commercial uses to service all sections of the City. This will result in overall positive impact on the quality of commercial development in these areas and a concurrent improvement in the value of properties in these areas.
- Reduce the number of entrances onto main roads and encourage shared parking.

### **Industrial**

#### Neighborhoods:

#### V. River Bend Redevelopment (NYSEG)

#### XVI. Southern Industrial District

#### Goals:

- Carefully consider uses for the NYSEG site so that new uses contribute to the economic benefit of the City while possibly allowing access to the Saranac River and enhancing the salmon fishery.

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- Continue to pursue options for industrial development on the PAFB such as providing incentives through the EDZ program and establishing a Municipal Redevelopment Area by passing a council resolution.
- Allow a broad range of industrial uses be allowed in designated areas, including light, general and heavy use, warehousing and manufacturing.
- Implement development controls which assure that industrial developers will construct aesthetically pleasing, high-quality facilities, particularly buffer yards and/or architectural screening.
- Actively pursue industrial users for appropriate sites in the City to provide much needed expanded tax base and employment.
- Actively cooperate with users wishing to relocate to the appropriate industrial sites by coordinating efforts to use local, state and federal programs which may benefit the developers.
- Coordinate with the Plattsburgh Airbase Reuse Commission and the Town of Plattsburgh regarding other regional demand for industrial development and consistency of industrial land use on the former air base.

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### NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICS

Attached is a spreadsheet listing each neighborhood and statistics that describe the present day conditions. The source of the data is the City Assessor's office and includes the following statistics:

- Number and percent of non-conforming uses
- Type and number of structures (i.e., residential, commercial, etc.)
- Number of vacant structures by type
- Assessed value by type
- Total assessed value by neighborhood

The figures were derived using a geographic information system (GIS) where the parcel level data provided by the City Assessor was queried to determine the overall count. Because the City Engineering office has GIS capabilities these spreadsheets can continue to be updated using new data provided by the City Assessor's office.

Included are a series of maps which graphically depict the figures presented in the spreadsheet. It is often helpful to physically observe the distribution of the data so that patterns and/or trends can be easily identified. For example, looking at the first map, PERCENTAGE OF NON-CONFORMING USES, one can see that neighborhoods II - Center City and XI - North end have the highest number of non-conforming uses. As a result of this analysis, neighborhood II was one of the primary focus areas within the Comprehensive Plan. Other maps generated include:

- Number of Vacant Structures
- Total Assessed Value