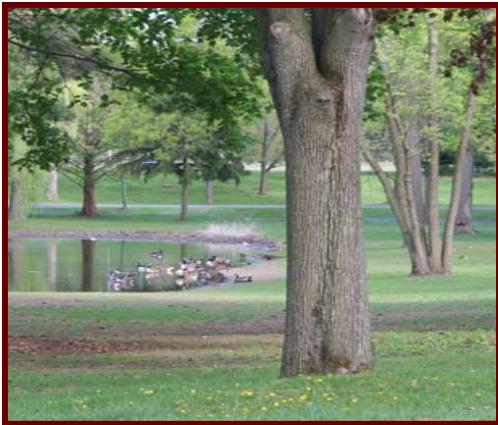
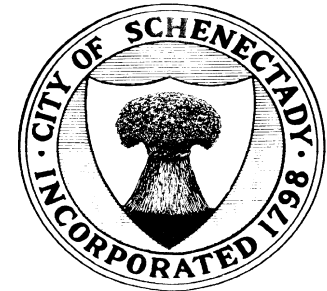


Community Profile



City of Schenectady Comprehensive Plan 2020



Reinventing the City of Invention

Brian U. Stratton
Mayor

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Overview: Regional Context and Development History

This community profile is being prepared as part of the City of Schenectady's 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The profile provides a snapshot of Schenectady today. It describes a range of conditions, obstacles and trends impacting the City and the rich array of opportunities available to Schenectady in the future.

Schenectady's proud history creates the framework for future growth and development. "The City that lights and hauls the world" was synonymous with economic expansion for decades. Fueled by the growth of the middle class, the city's neighborhoods, including the GE Realty Plot, Hamilton Hill and others enjoyed high rates of homeownership and vibrant commercial corridors. The community was, and still is, enhanced by the presence of Union College, the Stockade District and other historic and heritage resources unparalleled in the region.

Essentially a two-company town for most of its history, Schenectady is distinctly different from its neighbors in the Capital Region. All are industrial cities, but while industry was booming at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers well before the Civil War, Schenectady did not achieve such a standing until the 1880s. The remarkable expansion of the General Electric Company between 1890 and 1920 conferred a unique, twentieth century quality on the physical character of the City, virtually bereft of the dense, attached rows that characterize streetscapes in Albany and Troy.

GE brought change to Schenectady at a magnitude few cities ever experience. Known as "the City that lights and hauls the world", in 1914, more people worked at GE than had lived in the entire city before the company was created. GE's main plant developed into a mile-square city-within-a-city, and extraordinary demand spurred rapid housing development in adjacent neighborhoods. Although downtown State Street was the "preferred address" for many local businesses, from the elite classicism of Proctor's Arcade to the streamlined economy of Woolworth's, more personalized services, such as groceries, bakeries, butcher shops, taverns, and tailor's shops, could be found on the commercial strips in Schenectady's proliferating neighborhoods.

For decades, GE and ALCO were Schenectady's two major employers. Through the world wars, the City's factories were used in the production of heavy military equipment and trains for transport. Following World War II, however, the economic character of the City underwent rapid change. As railroading declined in the U.S., so did the prospects of ALCO, which ceased operations in 1970. General Electric's gradual decline in Schenectady in the later decades of the 20th century confronted the community with tougher challenges than most cities ever have to face. The transition from a company town, to a city with a diversified economy, strong and productive tax base and vibrant downtown has been an ongoing process for Schenectady, as it has been for other cities in the region including Albany, Troy and Amsterdam.

Schenectady was a model community for the historic preservation movement and is still recognized for its achievements there. It must now be a model community as a place where dynamic growth can be balanced with the retention of its community character

- in general and at a specific neighborhood level. In evaluating community character and historic preservation issues the plan must identify residential redevelopment opportunities, while also taking protective measures to support preservation.

In Schenectady, however, the process has built considerable momentum in recent years, fueled in part by the Metroplex Development Authority and other community partners. Construction of the MVP and DOT office buildings, the Proctor's Block including the expansion of Proctors Theater, Little Italy and North Jay Street improvements, streetscaping, the BID's, waterfront planning, and brownfield assessment are part of a growing list of accomplishments which this comprehensive plan will unite and advance.

Mayor George Lunn, elected to serve Schenectady in 1911, had the foresight to commission a landscape architect and early advocate of city planning to develop a blueprint for its growth and development. After his administration ended, however, the plan faltered. The challenge facing the city's leaders and residents today is to produce a plan shaped and driven by broad and passionate neighborhood support - a plan so vital and vibrant that all stakeholders will work tirelessly to ensure its accomplishment.

Demographic Characteristics

Introduction

The City of Schenectady, like other large upstate New York urban municipalities, is struggling with a declining population, increasing number of low and very low income residents, and a shrinking labor force qualified for 21st century jobs. The loss of population in the City puts neighborhoods at risk for increasing rates of abandonment, vacancy and absentee ownership of investment property. Tax burden is distributed among fewer tax payers, threatening the delivery of basic city services.

Population

Located in eastern Schenectady County, the City of Schenectady encompasses an area of approximately 10.9 square miles. Schenectady's population peaked in 1930 at 95,692. However, the number of residents in

Population Change 1990-2000	-5.7%
Minority Population	25.5%
Median Age	34.8 years
Average Household Size	2.23 persons per household
High School Diploma	77.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	19.0%
Median Household Income	\$29,378
Low/Mod Income Households	66.9%
Very Low Income Households	45.8%
Housing Unit Change 1990-2000	0.1%
Owner Occupied Units	44.7%
Renter Occupied Units	55.3%
For-Sale Vacancy Rate	4.6%
Rental Vacancy Rate	9.3%
Units built before 1940	56.5%
Percent of Units in Single-Family Detached Structures	34.8%
Percent of Units in Two-Family Structures	33.7%
Percent of Units in Three and Four-Family Structures	12.6%
Percent of Units in "Other" Structures ¹	19.0%
Median Gross Rent	\$548
Rent Burdened Households	42.2%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing	\$71,200
Owner Cost Burdened Households	25.0%

¹ Other Structures include single-family attached, 5 to 9 unit, 10 to 19 unit, 20 to 49 unit, and 50 or more unit.

Schenectady has in general been steadily declining, having lost 32.6% of its population since 1950. Population loss is projected to continue through 2020.

Table 2: Population and Median Income Change, Schenectady County Municipalities

Municipality	1990 Census		2000 Census		Change 1990 - 2000	
	Population	Median Household Income 1989 (Adjusted to 1999)	Population	Median Household Income 1999	Population	Median Household Income
Duanesburg	5,474	54,691	5,808	58,463	6.1%	6.9%
Glenville	28,771	51,521	28,061	52,373	-2.5%	1.7%
Niskayuna	19,048	68,935	20,259	70,800	6.4%	2.7%
Princetown	2,031	50,521	2,132	57,250	5.0%	13.3%
Rotterdam	28,395	46,190	28,387	46,267	0.0%	0.2%
Schenectady	65,566	32,827	61,821	29,378	-5.7%	-10.5%

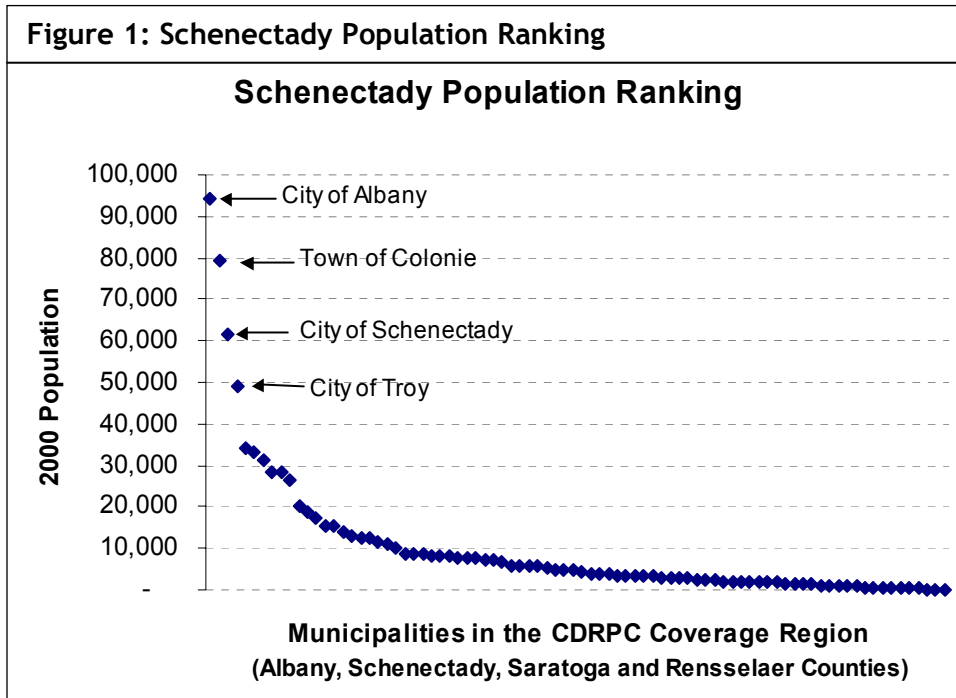
Source: 1990 and 2000 Census, CPI Adjuster from Columbia Journalism School

In 2000, the City of Schenectady had a population of 61,821, a decrease of 5.7% since 1990. Schenectady County also lost population during the same period, dropping by 1.8% to 146,555. The City of Schenectady currently accounts for 42.2% of the County's overall population base. As with many of New York's upstate cities, Schenectady has lost population and wealth to the surrounding towns. In just the ten years between the 1990 and 2000 census the City of Schenectady lost 5.7% of its population, and had its median income drop by 10.5% while most surrounding towns posted gains.

Population projections prepared by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) based on the 2000 Census show a slowly declining population in Schenectady from 61,821 in 2000 to 58,788 in 2040. In comparison, CDRPC projects that the Capital District's (defined as Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties) population will steadily increase from 794,293 residents in 2000 to 884,831 residents in 2040.

Despite the dire statistics that describe its current conditions, Schenectady still plays an important role in the regional hierarchy of communities in the Capital Region. Schenectady is the third largest of the 84 municipalities in the region with 7% of the region's population living in the City of Schenectady. Only the City of Albany (11%) and the Town of Colonie (9.3%) have a larger share of the regional population, and there is a marked drop off in population sizes after the top four municipalities. (www.cdrpc.org/PopEstimates.html)

Figure 1: Schenectady Population Ranking



Population estimates for the year 2005 were also obtained from Claritas, Inc., a private company that has been providing demographic data for marketing and other purposes for more than twenty years.² According to Claritas, the City of Schenectady’s 2005 population is estimated at 60,742 with the 2010 population declining to 59,771.

A description of the methodologies used by CDRPC and Claritas is presented in the Appendix of this document.

The trends of continued population decline and increasing concentration of lower income residents have significant consequences for the City. Schenectady was built for, and supported, a high population of 95,692 in 1930. The City’s built-environment of structures, industrial properties, roadways, and parks has not been scaled back at the same rate as population has declined. The oversupply of buildings is creating blighting conditions in some neighborhoods as well as high rental and for sale

housing vacancy rates. Although Schenectady continues to house a large percentage of the County’s residents, population loss affects future labor force availability and may be a disincentive for new business location and commercial growth.

Households

Reflecting the general trend toward smaller families and the increasing prevalence of single parent (or even single person) households, the average household size in the City of Schenectady has been decreasing slightly, from 2.26 in 1990 to 2.23 persons

² Claritas develops population estimates based on the most recent estimates produced by the Census Bureau at the national, state, and county levels. Population growth is then projected using forecasts provided by WEFA, an econometric forecasting firm. At smaller geographic levels, a variety of other sources, such as estimates from local agencies, household and consumer marketing databases, and other proprietary sources may also be used. While the estimates are useful for projections, it should be noted that the margin for error for small areas like small cities and census tracts is larger than for a state or region.

per households in 2000. The Census Bureau reported that there were 26,265 households in the City of Schenectady in 2000, a decrease of 5.3% since 1990. In comparison, households increased slightly less than 1.0% in Schenectady County overall.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i># Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
City of Schenectady	27,748	26,265	-1,483	-5.3%
Schenectady County	59,181	59,684	503	0.8%

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census

Of the 26,265 households in the City of Schenectady, 11,033 are headed by a female householder. Of the 11,033 female headed households, a total of 4,384 female households (in two or more person family households) have no married partner present and 2,916 have children under the age of eighteen. According to the 2000 Census, the median family income of a female householder with no married partner present was \$19,199, compared to the income of \$28,153 for a male householder with no married partner present. Incomes for both single female and male householders drop significantly when children under eighteen years of age are included in the household. The median family income of a female householder caring for their own children was \$14,818, compared to \$24,597 for a male householder in the same situation.

There has also been a rise in the number of grandparents acting as the primary caregiver for their grandchildren. In 2000, 376 grandparents, many on fixed incomes are spending their retirement years as the legal guardian for their grandchildren. The consequences of these trends are important. Single parent households with lower incomes tend to work multiple part-time jobs, often without medical or other benefits. They have less available time to be involved in the community or in their parenting responsibilities, including involvement with their children’s schooling.

Race

The 2000 Census presented data about race in a new way, making direct comparisons with previous census data difficult. Each respondent was asked to report the race they considered themselves to be. For the first time the Census broke down the Hispanic category, enabling respondents to indicate if they are Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 15,752 minorities in the City of Schenectady comprising 25.5% of the population. All ethnic groups experienced population increases (see Table 4 on page 9). The largest minority group was the Black or African American population, which comprised 54.9% of all minorities and 14.0% of the citywide population in 2000. Approximately 2.9% of Schenectady residents reported that they were of two or more races. The number of white people in Schenectady decreased 19.6%.

Since the 2000 Census was completed, the City of Schenectady has witnessed an influx of Guyanese immigrants from downstate New York (especially Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx). Local press estimated that as many as 6,000 immigrants had come to the City. In 2000 the census reported that 508 Schenectady city residents were born in Guyana, the second-largest immigrant population behind those born in Italy, with a count of 692. The significant increase in the Guyanese population represents exciting opportunities for cultural diversity. It also challenges the community and its organizations to accommodate the cultural differences that diversity brings.

	<i>1990 Number</i>	<i>1990 Percent</i>	<i>2000 Number</i>	<i>2000 Percent</i>	<i>% Change 1990-2000</i>
White	57,278	87.4%	46,069	74.5%	-19.6%
Black	5,502	8.4%	8,651	14.0%	57.2%
American Indian	176	0.3%	204	0.3%	15.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	666	1.0%	1,242	2.0%	86.5%
Other Race	183	0.3%	210	0.3%	14.8%
Two or More Races	n/a	n/a	1,813	2.9%	n/a
Hispanic Origin	1,761	2.7%	3,632	5.9%	106.2%
<i>City of Schenectady</i>	<i>65,566</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>61,821</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>-5.7%</i>

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census

Age

The median age of City residents increased 2.2 years to 34.8 years in 2000, a rate slightly faster than the State as a whole. All age groups, other than school aged children (5-19) and adults between the ages of 45-64 decreased between 1990 and 2000 (see Table 5 on page 10). The largest percentage losses were pre-school children under the age of 5 (-16%) and seniors 65 years and older (-15.8%). Adults (20-44) account for 38.0% of the City’s overall population, had a decrease of 13.6% from 1990.

The City of Schenectady is aging at a rate slightly faster than the state as a whole. If this trend continues the needs of seniors will begin to become more apparent and demand attention. The majority of population is between 20 and 64 with a considerable number between 40 and 64 which are considered a persons “peak earning years”. Additionally, the City experienced an increase in the number of school aged children, which could impact the school system resulting in larger class sizes, and the need for additional teachers and classroom space.

Age Group	1990	2000	Change, 1990 - 2000
0-4 Years	5,186 (7.9%)	4,358 (7.0%)	-828 (-16.0%)
5-19 Years	11,489 (17.5%)	12,752 (20.6%)	1,263 (11.0%)
20-44 Years	27,203 (41.5%)	23,506 (38.0%)	-3,697 (-13.6%)
45-64 Years	10,507 (16.0%)	11,792 (19.1%)	1,285 (12.2%)
65 Years and Older	11,181 (17.1%)	9,413 (15.2%)	-1,768 (-15.8%)
55 Years and Older	16,521 (25.2%)	13,986 (22.6%)	-2,525 (-15.3%)
Total	65,566 (100.0%)	61,821 (100.0%)	-3,745 (-5.7%)
Median Age	32.6 years	34.8 years	2.2(6.7%)

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census

Educational Attainment

Fully 77.8% of Schenectady residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, while 19% have a bachelors degree or higher. The City lags the County and its regional urban counterparts in educational attainment (see Table 6 on page 11). Almost 85% of county residents have a high school diploma and 26.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, 81.2% of Albany residents have a high school diploma and 32.5% have a bachelors degree or higher. In Troy, 77.7% of residents have a high school degree and 19.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The City of Schenectady lags the New York State average for educational attainment at the high school level by a few percentage points, but is significantly behind the region (the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)³ and Schenectady County. The significant issue is the shortage of residents with advanced degrees (19.0% in the City versus 26.3% in the County, 27.4% in the State, and 28.2% in the MSA.) The relatively low educational attainment is a concern for economic development and business recruitment and will push the City to use other job training methods to ensure that the local labor force remains competitive.

Information on public and private schools in the City of Schenectady can be found in the Government, Public Safety and Community Institutions section of this document.

³ The Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area is comprised of Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Schoharie and Montgomery counties.

	<i>No High School Diploma</i>		<i>High School Diploma or higher</i>		<i>Bachelor's Degree or higher</i>	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
	City of Schenectady	25.2%	22.2%	74.8%	77.8%	17.3%
Schenectady County	19.3%	15.2%	80.7%	84.8%	23.0%	26.3%
New York State	25.2%	20.9%	74.8%	79.1%	23.1%	27.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

Disability Status

According to the 2000 Census, there are a total of 14,163 residents in the City of Schenectady with a disability. Of the 9,613 adults between the ages of 16 and 64 who have a disability, 53.4% are employed. Approximately 10.0% of youth between the ages of 5 and 15 have a disability, while 41.8% of elderly residents age 65 and older have a disability. School Districts report the number of students with disabilities served in their annual School Report Cards to the New York State Department of Education (NYSED). According to NYSED, there were 1,489 K-12 students in special education within the Schenectady School District as of December 1, 2002 (the most recent statistic available) including students for whom the district receives tuition from another district.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City of Schenectady's 2000 population decreased by 5.7% to 61,821 since 1990.
- Population projections prepared by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) and Claritas Inc. show a continuous, yet slowly declining population in Schenectady.
- The trends of continued population decline and increasing concentration of lower income residents have significant consequences for the City; Schenectady was built to support a high population of 95,692 in 1930. The City's built-environment of structures, industrial properties, roadways, and parks has not been scaled back at the same rate as population has declined. The oversupply of buildings is creating blighting conditions in some neighborhoods as well as high rental and for sale housing vacancy rates.
- A growing percentage of Schenectady households with children under 18 are headed by single parent households and/or grandparents. Single parent households, especially female headed households have lower incomes and less available time to be involved in the community or in their child's school. Similarly, grandparents, some of who are on fixed incomes, are increasingly spending their retirement years raising children.

- Minorities comprised 25.5% of the City's overall population in 2000. The City of Schenectady has witnessed an influx of Guyanese immigrants since 2000. The significant immigrant population represents exciting opportunities for cultural diversity. It also challenges the community and its organizations to accommodate the cultural differences that diversity brings.
- The City of Schenectady is aging at a rate slightly faster than the state as a whole. If this trend continues the needs of seniors will begin to demand greater attention. The majority of population is between 20 and 64 with a considerable number between 40 and 64 which are considered a persons "peak earning years". Additionally, the City experienced an increase in the number of school aged children, which could have an impact on the school system resulting in larger class sizes, and the need to hire additional teachers and create new classrooms.
- Approximately 77.8% of residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma and 19.0% of City residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. The City is significantly behind the region and the County in educational attainment. The shortage of residents with advanced degrees (19.0% in the City versus 26.3% in the County, 27.4% in the State, and 28.2% in the MSA) has consequences for economic development, business recruitment and retention, pushing the City to use other job training methods to ensure that the local labor force remains competitive.

Economic Profile

Regional Context

The Capital Region began as an important transportation and trade center with the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers providing natural transportation corridors for the movement of goods away from the eastern seaboard. Water power fueled the area's early manufacturing industries; later, rail transportation served as a major stimulus for regional economic growth. More recently, the development of an extensive interstate highway system replaced the role of the canals and the railroads in the movement and transfer of goods and continues to be one of the major forces shaping development in the Capital Region.

The economic structure of the region is characterized by its diversity of employment, with services, government, wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing accounting for the vast majority of jobs. Over the last several decades, however, there has been a gradual shifting in the region's economic structure which mirrors the national trend of becoming more service-based and less manufacturing-oriented. In 1960, almost a third of Capital Region employees worked for manufacturing firms; today, less than one in ten workers are employed in the manufacturing industry. Regional employment in manufacturing fell significantly during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, reflecting contractions and closings of large establishments, foreign competition, and changing technology.

The Capital Region has traditionally experienced unemployment rates significantly lower than the state and national averages, due primarily to growth in state and local government employment and other publicly funded industries such as education and health care. However, not all areas -- or workers -- have shared in this relative prosperity. The diminishing supply of blue-collar jobs and the movement of jobs and population away from the cities and into the suburbs have meant fewer employment opportunities for the area's less educated workers.

The NYS Department of Labor notes two trends that will continue to present a major challenge to area employers and service providers: (1) there is an increasing skill gap between the basic skills required by today's employers and the ability level of much of the entry level workforce; and (2) with an older, less skilled, and more immobile labor force, central cities have higher unemployment rates than surrounding suburbs.

The centers of employment and commercial activity within the city of Schenectady are generally located along State Street and Downtown, especially along the Broadway/Erie Boulevard corridor. Several smaller commercial corridors or nodes exist including Crane Street, Upper Union Street, Van Vranken Avenue, Upper Broadway and the Crosstown Plaza area providing retail and services to surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The City's industrial backbone, including the General Electric complex, is located along the Mohawk River off Broadway, Erie Boulevard and Maxon Road. The Downtown is the City center for municipal

activity including City, County and State government offices, the entertainment and arts district (including Proctor’s Theatre) and the historic Stockade Neighborhood and higher education with Union College and Schenectady County Community College.

Table 7: Largest Employers in Schenectady County (2006)		
<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>EMPLOYEES</u>	<u>LOCAL ACTIVITY</u>
General Electric Power Systems	3,400	Manufacturing
Golub Corporation	2,364	Retail, Grocery, Corp. Hdqtr
Lockhead Martin, KAPL	2,200	Defense Industry
General Electric - Global R & D	1,900	Research and Development
Ellis Hospital	1,669	Health Care
County of Schenectady	1,500	Local Government
NY Air National Guard	1,145	Military
Schenectady City School District	1,112	Education
St. Clare’s Hospital	900	Health Care
Mohawk Valley Physicians Health Plan	867	Health Insurance
Mohonasen School District	804	Education
Union College	718	Education
Sunnyview Hospital	603	Health Care
Schenectady County ARC	525	American Retarded Children Workshops
Niskayuna School District	510	Education
Scotia-Glenville School District	500	Education
Trustco Bank	477	Banking
Bellevue Hospital	445	Health Care
Schenectady International	400	Chemical, Corporate R&D, Mfg.
Shalmont School District	400	Education
Bechtel Plant Machinery Inc.	320	Machine Apparatus Operation
Daily Gazette	307	Newspaper
Visiting Nurses	250	Health Care
<i>Source: City of Schenectady Department of Development (2006)</i>		

With the exception of General Electric, the largest employers located in the City of Schenectady are government agencies and health care and education sector employers including Ellis Hospital, St. Clare’s Hospital, Schenectady County, Schenectady City School District, MVP Health Plan and Union College.

Recent Studies/Plans

Downtown Master Plan (1999). This retail based downtown plan took a comprehensive look at the City's core and outlined a short term strategy to leverage investment and encourage increased vitality. The purpose of the plan was to assist public and private sector leadership in addressing the shifting downtown economy and its role in the community while establishing a realistic program for coordinated short term action within the context of a feasible long-term framework plan. The plan focused on identifying actions that would bring more people into downtown during the day time and evening hours. It proposed initiatives in a relatively small geographic area to maximize impacts. The plan called on the City and its partners to arrive at a true partnership of effort that will be necessary to overcome past divisions and sustain revitalization efforts.

The plan established goals for downtown revitalization:

- Reinforce the vision of Schenectady as an affordable urban community with an eclectic mix of uses
- New development projects need to be built around and incorporate the civic and architectural history of the City
- The Arts (e.g. Proctors Theater) are central to the civic vitality of Schenectady. The master plan needs to support the growth and uses related to the arts
- New and improved urban housing will be essential in improving the sense of community in the downtown
- Promote visitation, which includes the attraction of residents from within the capital district
- Activate first floors of buildings along key streets to reinforce the pedestrian nature of downtown
- Minimize the impact of automobiles and buses
- Create a fabric that includes pedestrian corridors, open spaces, buildings and streets to knit the city together
- Be progressive and promote diversity. Be tolerant of eclectic developments that do not compromise the quality of life in downtown
- Position Schenectady as a brand for young adult consumers - "a retro mystique"

The plan outlined a detailed list of implementation tasks that would address ten development themes including:

- Arts and entertainment
- Office development
- Small business retention and attraction
- Retail development
- Residential development
- Civic events and festivals
- Cultural education
- Parking and transportation infrastructure development
- Downtown management
- Public improvements

Other recommended initiatives included first-time business move in grant program, real estate broker incentive program, matching grant program, marketing directly to college and office workers, new downtown management entity (the BID), a downtown arts magnet school, and development of new meeting and gathering spaces.

Canal Square Corridor Redevelopment Plan. This plan outlined a short-term implementation strategy for the 400 Block of State Street known as the Canal Square Redevelopment Area. It outlined a site specific strategy to introduce major office, retail, entertainment and other small components to bring increased activity to the vibrant core of Schenectady. The target area included the triangular shaped area bounded by State, Broadway and Clinton Streets. Key themes stressed mixed uses, ground floor retail, and a clean orderly appearance. Participants were concerned that the plan support the expansion plans of Proctors Theater and preserve existing building facades. It concluded that niche and locally owned enterprises should be recruited to fill retail and entertainment spaces. Specific elements of the plan include:

- Broaden the arts and entertainment district to generate pedestrian activity and nightlife
- Proctors theater expansion
- Multi-screen movie theater
- Space shuttle Challenger Learning Center
- Expand and revitalize retail at the street level
- Other large and small office building development
- Live-work space and residential uses on the upper floors of existing State Street Buildings
- Farmers market
- Streetscape improvements and open space along Broadway and Clinton Streets
- State street rehabilitation to stabilize and restore existing historic structures
- Distribution of new development components throughout the site
- Introduction of small scale users such as residential and start-up offices for re-use of upper levels of existing buildings
- Streetscape continuity to create a new pedestrian environment for downtown

The plan was based upon a comprehensive retail analysis and was assessed to have considerable economic impact including:

- \$151 Million mixed use redevelopment plan
- Six-phase plan over 7-10 years
- 867,000 square feet of new and renovated space for office , retail, arts and entertainment
- 2,380 new job creation potential
- \$19,000,000 in increased assessed value of real property

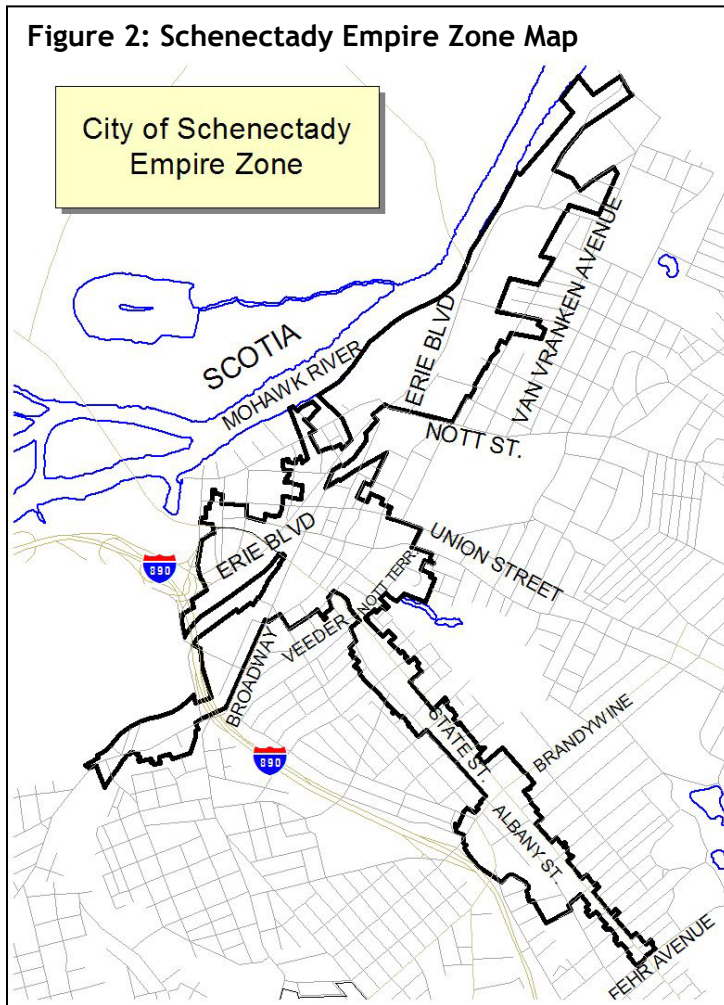
New York Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Study. The Route 5 Study was commissioned by the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) in 2001. The study examines the Route 5 Corridor from the City of Albany, through the Town and Village of Colonie, Town of Niskayuna and terminates in downtown Schenectady (State Street). Route 5 was an important corridor throughout the 19th Century. Prior to construction of the Interstate System, Route 5 was the primary east-west overland transportation corridor connecting all of the major commercial centers in New York State and points west, particularly when trucking replaced barges and railroads as the primary movers of freight. Although it has met challenges in the last 50 years, State Street is still the most important commercial corridor in the City of Schenectady. This study examined the existing land uses and transportation network as they relate to socio-economic factors in each community and proposes a future land use and transportation plan that would enhance the value of Route 5 for each community. The "Preferred Future" describes many ways in which the corridor could become more pedestrian friendly, mass transit oriented, and more accessible for economic growth. For the Schenectady segments, the most pressing need is to attract additional commercial to vacant storefronts and vacant lots and improve the visual appearance of buildings through streetscape and façade improvements.

Comprehensive Economic Plan: City of Schenectady, NY. This study was prepared in 1984 and is the most recent comprehensive, city-wide economic study. The study established five goals for economic development: create new jobs; enhance tax revenues; diversify the City's economy; attract private investment; and upgrade the City's physical image. Toward meeting these goals the study identified five economic growth opportunities: tourism opportunities in the Downtown area; industrial development opportunities on the northern Riverfront in the area of Maxon Road; a small office/research park development opportunity on 17 acres in the area of Duane Avenue, east of Brandywine; corporate office/research park on a 100 acre site across Route 7 from the Crosstown Plaza; and additional single-family housing development (up to 175 units) in the Woodlawn neighborhood if flooding/storm drainage improvements are accomplished.

Downtown Schenectady Master Plan (1970). This urban renewal strategy (\$8.0 million) with a significant private sector leadership role (\$16.0 million) begun in 1968 and completed in 1970, proposed to level the retail playing field by creating an inner city mall which would compete with the growing regional malls and strip development in Colonie and the Mohawk Mall, then in the planning phase. The extensive development initiative included:

- Construction of airwalks between department stores
- Widening Clinton, Broadway and Franklin Streets, construction of two major parking garages in phase one (1000) and another in phase 2
- Landscaping State and Jay streets
- Assembly of land including demo of 45 buildings
- Expansion of Wallace's Department store\construction of new Carl Company store
- Construction of hotel on air-rights over garage
- Potential construction of new office tower and third department store

The plan concluded that the downtown looked “drab, old, unattractive and not very active” citing traffic congestion and difficulty finding parking as key issues and a “lack of mutual support among downtown functions.” The plan called for the demolition of 45 buildings between Clinton and Broadway stretching across State Street from Liberty to Hamilton. It described the Carl Company as a “landmark in Schenectady” and Proctors as “an obsolete and decaying structure” that should be demolished. The plan called for the creation of a pedestrian mall on Jay Street and for subsidized housing for seniors and small families. Future phases outlined development of a convention center (with auditorium and other facilities to replace the demolished Proctors Theater).



Economic Development Programs and Organizations

City of Schenectady Department of Development (DOD). The Department of Development is responsible for long-range planning for the City of Schenectady, as well as the day to day administration of various City, State and Federally-funded programs geared toward the physical and economic renewal of the City. Major areas of responsibility are City planning and zoning, community development, the Schenectady Heritage Area, neighborhood planning, economic development, property management, grants procurement and monitoring, and neighborhood commercial revitalization. The Department of Development is also responsible for the administration of the Federal Consolidated Plan, which includes funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME).

Schenectady Glenville Empire Zone (EZ). The City DOD administers the Empire Zone program. This New York State sponsored program offers incentives to businesses relocating from out of state or expanding in Schenectady in the form of exemptions from state sales taxes, wage tax credits, investment tax credits, real property tax credits, tax reduction credits, utility rate reductions and capital credits. The boundaries of the zone encompass portions of the City of Schenectady (see map) and Towns of Glenville, Rotterdam and Niskayuna.

Metroplex Development Authority. The Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority is a unique economic development mechanism created by State legislation in 1998. Primary funding comes from 0.5% of

county sales tax revenue dedicated to economic development, of which 70% goes to Metroplex. Metroplex’s original service district of 24 square miles stretches along Routes 5 and 7, which intersect in the city’s Woodlawn neighborhood and also includes all of the Central Business District. Several communities in the county have opted to join the Authority so that its territory has now expanded to about 84 square miles.

The mission of Metroplex is to enhance the long-term economic vitality and quality of life in Schenectady County by cooperative, purposeful actions and investments within its corridor with particular emphasis on downtown.

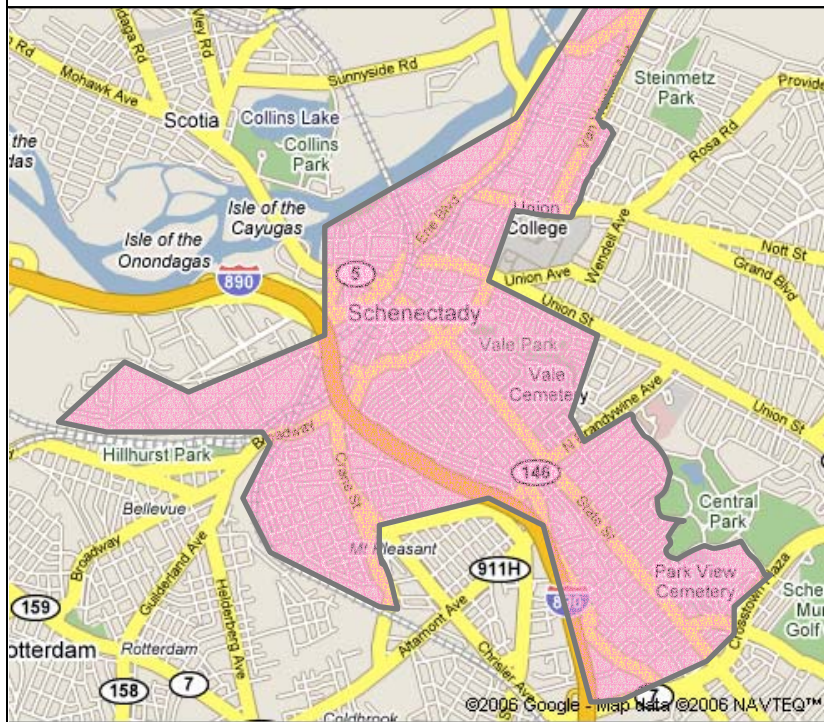
Three criteria guide the selection of projects for Metroplex involvement: expanding the county’s property tax base, expanding its

sales tax base, and creating and retaining jobs. Metroplex’s enabling statute gives the authority many tools to accomplish its mission. It can design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage, and maintain facilities within its service district.

Schenectady Renewal Community - Launched in 1993, the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Initiative is an interagency effort focused on the creation of self-sustaining, long-term development in distressed urban and rural areas throughout the Nation. Currently, Schenectady is one of 28 urban communities and 12 rural communities that have Renewal Community (RC) designations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The designation provides federal tax credits, tax deductions, accelerated depreciation, and exemptions from capital gains on real property. The Schenectady RC was initially composed of three census tracts, (2 in Hamilton Hill and 1 Downtown) bounded by Broadway on the north, Route 7 on the south, State Street on the east and the I-890 ramp on the west. With the release of 2000 census information, the RC was expanded to add another nine census tracts in Central State (1 tract), Downtown (4), Mont Pleasant (2), Northside (1) and Vale (1). Figure 3 displays the current Renewal Community with all 11 census tracts. Through its Course of Action, the Schenectady RC

is focusing on certain key strategies, the highlights of a few of which are as follows:

Figure 3: Schenectady Renewal Community Map



is focusing on certain key strategies, the highlights of a few of which are as follows:

- Reduction of tax rates and fees within the RC boundary.
- Improving Local Services through the establishment of a new holistic health center located near the RC designated area; expansion of Head Start classes through Schenectady Community Action Program, Inc.; the provision of pre-employment training to local youth through the Boys and Girls Club, as well as the provision of general job services through JOBS Etc.
- Crime reduction strategies include a Community Policing Program where police officers patrol the eight distinct neighborhoods that exist in the City. This provides more foot patrols, more safety presentations, and both organize and support residents participating in the Neighborhood Watch program.
- Neighborhood Initiative Program (previously called the Zero Tolerance program) was developed to provide concentrated housing code inspections to designated areas through out the City of Schenectady. This has proven to be the most effective means of neighborhood revitalization both for showing results and the best use of manpower. This program addresses code enforcement and quality of life issues, which are the bases for revitalizing our neighborhoods. With the future use of mapping software, we will be able to track our progress and share property information with other agencies.

Schenectady Local Development Corporation. The SLDC, an all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization staffed by the city's Department of Development, has loaned nearly \$5 million to 250 projects within the city since the early 1980s. Technical assistance in the form of ombudsman services with other governmental agencies, licensing and regulatory requirements, business planning services, market and customer identification, management and financial analysis are all aspects of the technical assistance accessible through the SLDC program. In an effort to consolidate economic development agencies, many of these functions are being transferred over to the Small Business Development Center (see SCCBC).

Schenectady County Community Business Center (SCCBC). The SCCBC, made possible with \$1.2 million in funds appropriated by the Schenectady County Legislature, is a one-stop resource center located in the City of Schenectady for new and growing businesses in Schenectady County. The mission of the SCCBC is to encourage and support the development, growth and success of new and existing small businesses in Schenectady County by providing training, counseling, business and technical assistance services, leased space, shared services and financial support.

The business center operates an incubator located at 920 Albany Street in Schenectady and is designed to provide start-up companies with the space, office equipment and support services necessary to grow into successful companies. Prospective tenants must meet certain qualifications to be an incubator tenant, including completion of a business plan. The building contains approximately 20,000 square feet of leasable space that is appropriate for office and light industrial. The building is located in an Empire Zone that can provide significant tax savings to qualified businesses.

SCCBC offers a small business seminar once a month on a topic of interest to anyone trying to operate a small business and an in-depth 15 session training program that guides entrepreneurs through the step-by-step process of starting and managing a business and helps business owners run their own companies more efficiently and profitably. SCCBC provides technical assistance through a mentor program. The SCCBC now houses an office of the New York Small Business Development Center which provides technical assistance as well as assesses the city's and county's business loan funds.

Schenectady County Chamber of Commerce - The Schenectady Chamber is the largest independent business support organization in the County. Its membership is over 900 firms. The Chamber's mission is to drive a strong business climate throughout Schenectady County while providing valuable member services. Membership is corporate, allowing all employees of a member company access to all membership benefits. Benefits include a directory, business advertising/profiling on the Chamber website, discounts on business related products and services, group health insurance program, member to member discounts on products and services and more.

Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation (DSIC) - The DSIC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of downtown Schenectady, and represents more than 600 property owners in the defined boundaries that make up the city's first-ever Business Improvement District (BID). The organization is primarily funded through a special assessment on properties within downtown Schenectady, from contributions through the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority, and by fundraisers organized by DSIC that are held throughout the year. The DSIC officially formed during the summer of 2001.

The corporation manages and carries out many programs: environmental enhancement and maintenance (sidewalk, landscaping, partnership with the City Mission to provide maintenance workers, public safety initiative); a facade improvement program utilizing \$250,000 in Metroplex funds that during the summer of 2002 awarded matching grants to about 40 downtown property owners; business promotion and marketing; a Web site launched in June 2002 that provides a listing of all available properties within the BID, links to economic development agencies and organizations, copies of DSIC publications and information about the facade grant program; special events; fundraising and development.

Upper Union Street BID- The Upper Union District Management Association was created by act of the Schenectady City Council on April 23, 2001 and was formally incorporated on March 3, 2002. The Association, commonly called the Upper Union Street BID, grew out of a long standing business owners organization, the Upper Union Street Merchant's Association. In the late 1990s, facing increased pressure from suburban competition, the Merchants Association determined that a more aggressive strategy was required, and identified a Steering Committee which became the founding organization for the BID. The mission of the Upper Union Street Business Improvement District is to recapture the legacy of Upper Union Street through a comprehensive program of marketing services and physical improvements. The Upper Union Street Assessment Area includes roughly 80 small businesses providing a variety of employment opportunities.

The BID developed a “Master Plan”, commissioned and completed in 2000 with support from Assemblyman Paul Tonko, the City of Schenectady, and Metroplex. Initial support was also provided by Troy Savings Bank, Hudson River Bank and Trustco. The Master Plan identified two key strategies for enhancing the business environment on Upper Union: streetscape improvements and façade improvements. The first phase of the streetscape improvements was completed in Fall 2003 with funds provided by Metroplex, a NYS Assembly Member Item and the Schenectady City Council. The BID is currently seeking additional funding to continue the streetscape improvements.

Local Economy

Wealth and Income

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income for the City of Schenectady was \$29,378 and per capita income was \$17,076. Schenectady County had a higher median household income of \$41,739 (42% higher than the City) and per capita income of \$21,992 (28.8% higher than the City) in 2000. Further, 12,260 or 20.8% of City residents are living below poverty level, according to the 2000 Census. This figure is significantly higher than Schenectady County (10.9%) and New York State as a whole (14.6%).

In comparison, the City of Albany’s median household income was \$30,041 and per capita income was \$18,281. The median household income for the City of Troy was \$29,844 and the per capita income was \$16,796. For the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA, the median income was significantly higher at \$43,250 and per capita income was \$22,303. Poverty rates for individuals living in Albany, Troy, and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA were 21.7%, 19.1%, and 9.4% respectively.

Income data collected from the census reflects the income levels of the previous complete year in which the census is taken in order to obtain an accurate survey of annual income. To gain a better understanding of changes in income between the censuses taken in 1990 and 2000, 1990 (based on 1989 income) Census income data was converted to 1999 dollars using the consumer price indices of 1989 and 1999 as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to calculate an inflation rate, which was 34.4% over the 10 year period. As Table 8 (page 23) indicates, when year 1989 incomes in the City of Schenectady were adjusted for inflation, median household income decreased 10.1% from 1989 to 1999 and median family income decreased 10.8%. Per capita income increased by 1.1%. In comparison, Schenectady County’s median household income decreased by 1.6% and median family income increased by 3.0%. Per capita income increased by 6.1%.

The City of Schenectady contains a significant proportion of low and moderate income households. Census figures indicate that approximately 66.9% of households in the City in 2000 were considered low and moderate income households (i.e., households with income less than 80 percent of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA median) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Further, 45.8% of households in the City are very low income, earning 50% or less of the Albany-

Schenectady-Troy MSA median family income. In comparison, 50.9% of Schenectady County residents are low and moderate income households and 31.7% are very low income. Of the Schenectady County residents who are low and moderate income households, about 57.8% are from the City of Schenectady and 63.6% of County residents who are very low income are from the City of Schenectady.

The Cities of Albany and Troy had similar levels of low and moderate income and very low income households. Approximately 64.4% of Albany residents are defined as low and moderate income and 45.3% are considered very low income. In comparison, the City of Troy's low and moderate income households comprise 65.3% of all households and 45.7% are very low income. As a whole, the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA has a significantly lower percentage of low and moderate income and very low income households at 49.5% and 30.0% respectively. Of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA residents who are low and moderate income households, about 10.1% are from the City of Schenectady and 11.5% of MSA residents who are very low income are from the City of Schenectady.

Table 8: Household Income and Poverty Rate Comparison

	City of Schenectady (1989)	Adjusted* City of Schenectady (1989)	City of Schenectady (1999)	Schenectady County (1989)	Adjusted* Schenectady County (1989)	Schenectady County (1999)
Median Household Income	\$24,316	\$32,670	\$29,378	\$31,569	\$42,414	\$41,739
Median Family Income	\$30,410	\$40,857	\$36,458	\$38,793	\$52,120	\$53,670
Per Capita Income	\$12,569	\$16,887	\$17,076	\$15,378	\$20,661	\$21,992
Individuals Below Poverty Level	14.9%	n/a	20.8%	8.3%	n/a	10.9%
Families Below Poverty Level	11.4%	n/a	16.8%	5.7%	n/a	7.8%

The City of Schenectady's income profile is not uncommon in upstate New York. There has been minimal improvement in median income in the City and incomes have not kept pace with inflation. The area is experiencing increasing concentration of resident with moderate or low incomes as well as residents living below the poverty line.

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

For purposes of comparison, 1989 dollars have been adjusted for inflation to 1999 dollars.

Employment Rate

According to the NYS Department of Labor, the City of Schenectady had a labor force of 29,700 in 2004 which is a marginal increase over the past five years. The employment data reported is based on the NYS Department of Labor data which is the most recent available. As the number employed has fluctuated between no increase and a slight decrease over the past five years, Schenectady's average unemployment rate has increased from 3.9% in 2000 to 4.9% in 2002 to 5.5% in 2004. The City's 2004 unemployment rate of 5.5% was higher than the County-wide rate of 4.4% and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA rate of 4.2%. The City's rate was, however, slightly lower than the 2004 statewide average of 5.8%.

Employment by Occupation and Industry

According to the 2000 US Census, 27,077 civilian City residents were employed. The most common occupations were *management, professional and related occupations* (29.7%), *sales and office occupations* (28.9%) and *service occupations* (28.8%). While a direct comparison to 1990 cannot be made as some of the occupation categories have been modified, a general comparison indicates that *technical, sales and administrative support occupations* predominated (35.8%). *Managerial and professional specialty occupations* and *service occupation* followed with 24.3% and 17.9% respectively.

Occupation	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	8,042	29.7%
Service occupations	5,915	21.8%
Sales and office occupations	7,837	28.9%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	36	0.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	1,873	6.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3,374	12.5%
Total	27,077	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau (2000)

Industry	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Mining	95	0.4%
Construction	1,302	4.8%
Manufacturing	1,944	7.2%
Wholesale Trade	737	2.7%
Retail Trade	3,618	13.4%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	1,144	4.2%
Information	640	2.4%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Rental	1,562	5.8%
Professional services	1,973	7.3%
Educational services	2,607	9.6%
Health care and Social Services	5,098	18.8%
Arts, entertainment, recreation	321	1.2%
Accommodation & food services	2,146	7.9%
Other services (except public admin)	1,463	5.4%
Public Administration	2,427	9.0%
Total	27,077	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census

According to the 2000 US Census (see table 10), the industries employing the most City residents were health care and social services industries (18.8%) followed by retail trade (13.4%), educational services (9.6%) and public administration (9.0%). A direct comparison between 1990 and 2000 to identify shifts in employment cannot be made with regard to service-related industries because industry categories have been altered between the 1990 and 2000 Census. Nonetheless, it is clear that the majority of employment remains in the same mix of industries. According to the 1990 Census, 18.6% of residents were employed in retail trade followed by health services (12.2%), public administration (10.3%) and educational services (8.8%). Employment in manufacturing declined 4.3% between 1990 and 2000. The regional trend mirrors that of the City of Schenectady in that more residents in the Albany-Schenectady-

Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) are employed in the health care and social services sector than any other industry, followed by public administration, retail services and education services according to the 2000 Census.

Journey to Work

More Schenectady residents (61%) work outside the City than within. The most common mode of transportation is by car, truck or van (82.6%) while 6.5% use public transportation and 6.8% walk. Of the 25,729 residents that travel outside the home for work, 51.3% travel less than twenty minutes. Almost 34% travel 20-34 minutes. The most common travel time is 10 to 14 minutes (18.6% of all workers).

Table 11: Commuting Patterns (1997)

		Work Location							Total
		Albany County	Fulton County	Rens. County	Saratoga County	Schen. County	Schoharie County	Other	Total
Home	Albany County	117,668	95	8,561	3,326	6,653	217	4,331	140,851
	Fulton County	1,243	15,550	109	721	1,294	103	4,606	23,626
	Rensselaer County	32,232	46	32,614	2,588	1,694	13	2,341	71,528
	Saratoga County	26,515	652	4,113	50,510	10,223	57	8,877	100,947
	Schenectady County	22,450	177	1,807	2,790	37,293	284	1,278	66,079
	Schoharie County	2,201	66	103	122	1,103	8,182	1,787	13,564
		14,916	2,342	4,884	7,043	3,125	1,519		
	217,225	18,928	52,191	67,100	61,385	10,375			
Percentage of Home County									
		Albany County	Fulton County	Rens. County	Saratoga County	Schen. County	Schoharie County	Other	Total
Home	Albany County	84%	0%	6%	2%	5%	0%	3%	100%
	Fulton County	5%	66%	0%	3%	5%	0%	19%	100%
	Rensselaer County	45%	0%	46%	4%	2%	0%	3%	100%
	Saratoga County	26%	1%	4%	50%	10%	0%	9%	100%
	Schenectady County	34%	0%	3%	4%	56%	0%	2%	100%
	Schoharie County	16%	0%	1%	1%	8%	60%	13%	100%
Percentage of Work County									
		Albany County	Fulton County	Rens. County	Saratoga County	Schen. County	Schoharie County		
Home	Albany County	54%	1%	16%	5%	11%	2%		
	Fulton County	1%	82%	0%	1%	2%	1%		
	Rensselaer County	15%	0%	62%	4%	3%	0%		
	Saratoga County	12%	3%	8%	75%	17%	1%		
	Schenectady County	10%	1%	3%	4%	61%	3%		
	Schoharie County	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	79%		
	Other	7%	12%	9%	10%	5%	15%		
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			

Additional journey to work data was available from the Census Bureau on the County level. Schenectady County is also a center for employment in the region, although not as important as Albany County. Schenectady County imports 39% of its workers from other areas, compared to Albany's 46%. Conversely only 56% of Schenectady residents work in Schenectady County, while 84% of Albany residents work in their home county.

While commuting patterns are available only at the county level, the 1997 Economic census shows us that the City of Schenectady is likely to account for a

significant number of those commuting employees, with 51% of all reported establishments and 55% of manufacturing establishments in the county. Note that the Economic Census does not provide information on all NAICS codes at the level of

granularity displayed here. For example, 52 (Finance and Insurance) and 92 (Public Administration) are not available, but would likely show at least a similar concentration in the City due to the location of the County government facilities in the City.

Industry Mix

Table 12: Industry Mix, City of Schenectady (2002)

NAICS Industry Code	Industry Description	Number of Estabs.	Number Employed	Sales/ recpts Shipments (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
	Manufacturing	56	2,500-4,999	N/A	N/A
42	Wholesale Trade	52	593	162,356	17,583
44-45	Retail Trade	209	2,264	381,214	44,141
51	Information	27	614	N/A	25,254
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	45	192	22,065	3,805
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	127	1,000-2,499	N/A	N/A
56	Admin. & support/waste manage.& remediation	59	724	36,344	18,297
61	Educational Services	9	20-99	N/A	N/A
62	Health care & social assistance	260	7,094	497,549	235,131
71	Arts, entertainment & recreation	22	660	101,709	17,384
72	Accommodation & food service	155	1,527	61,063	16,885
81	Other services (except public administration)	121	1,382	103,916	27,833

Source: US Bureau of the Census, Economic Census (2002)

surprising as General Electric is still the largest employer in the City. Manufacturing sector data related to payroll and sales/receipts/shipments was not available for analysis. The retail trade industry had the second largest number of businesses but only employed 2,264 people with average annual salary of \$19, 497 or \$374.94 per week.

The industry sector with the largest number of businesses and employees in the City of Schenectady is the “health care and social service” industry according to the 2002 *Economic Census*. The Economic Census is prepared by the US Bureau of Census every five years. It does not include public administration industries including public institutions and government industries. In 2002 there were 260 health care and social service businesses employing 7,094 people. The average annual salary of an employee in this sector in 2002 was \$33,145 or \$637.40 per week. Unfortunately, data regarding payroll and sales/receipts is suppressed for some industries and therefore it is unknown how these salaries and revenues compare with all other industries.

The Manufacturing sector has only a fifth of the individual businesses as the health care sector but employs between 2,500-4,999 (the actual number has been suppressed)⁴. This is not

⁴ The law requires the Census Bureau to maintain confidentiality therefore no data are published that could reveal the identity or activity of any individual or business.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive trend analysis of this data as not all data is available for industries within the City. In some cases, the Census data regarding a particular industry has been suppressed or a range of information has been provided in order to protect information on specific businesses. This is common in smaller communities. Furthermore, no trend analysis can be performed between 2002 and 1992 because in 1997 the Census Bureau stopped using the SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) code system to identify industries in favor of the (NAICS) North American Industrial Classification System which is more relevant when comparing industries beyond the United States border. Therefore, only 1997 and 2002 data may be accurately compared based on industry classification codes.

Furthermore, as the Economic Census becomes more sophisticated and some sectors continually evolve, industries are added to every Census making it impossible to make direct comparisons between some industries. For example, in 2002 the “information” industry was large enough to be its own category, while in the past information-related businesses had been folded into several other industry categories. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to perform trend analysis for 1997 to 2002 for several industries. Furthermore, as Schenectady is a smaller community, it lost or gained enough businesses in certain industries in either 1997 or 2002 to have data suppressed or estimated in one year and provided with no suppression in the other.

Retail Trade

The most recent sales data available for the City of Schenectady is from the US Bureau of Census in the *2002 Economic Census*. The following analysis reviews Schenectady’s retail trade industry between 1992 and 2002 and provides a detailed analysis of the performance of the mix of stores. It also provides a regional comparison of Schenectady to Schenectady County and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA.

For purposes of this analysis, “retail-related” refers to all types of retail included in the *Economic Census of Retail Trade* as well as eating and drinking establishments which the US Census Bureau no longer includes in the Census of Retail Trade, and instead includes in the Census of Accommodations and Foodservices. In 2002, retail-related sales in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA amounted to approximately \$10.2 billion. Of this, approximately \$434.2 million originated in the City of Schenectady, comprising 4.2% of MSA sales and 30.5 % of Schenectady County sales.

Table 13: Retail Trade, City of Schenectady (2002)

Type of Business	Stores	Sales (1,000s)	Employed
Motor Vehicle and Parts	16	\$53,049	151
Furniture and Home Furnishings	13	\$20,918	117
Electronics and Appliances	15	\$10,722	126
Building Materials, Garden Equipment, Supplies	15	\$69,772	290
Food and Beverage Stores	26	\$52,757	524
Health and Personal Care Stores	23	\$66,551	346
Gasoline Stations	30	\$49,944	208
Clothing and Accessories	19	\$13,616	131
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music	8	N/A*	b
Department Stores	9	N/A*	c
Miscellaneous Stores	25	N/A*	c
Nonstore Retailers	145	\$53,005	1,371
Eating/Drinking Places	10	\$19,011	92
Total	354	\$434,219	3,635

Source: Economic Census of Retail Trade, Accommodations and Foodservices (2002)
 N/A: Data is withheld by Census to avoid disclosing data of individual companies;
 b: 20 to 99 employees; c: 100 to 249 employees;

Retail Mix

There were 354 retail establishments in the City of Schenectady in 2002. The most common type of retail-related business employing the most people were the 145 eating and drinking establishments comprising 42.4% of all retail in the City. There were also 26 “food and beverage” stores and 23 health and personal care stores, and 19 clothing and accessories stores. Table 13 provides a more detailed breakdown of the types of retail found in the City.

Building materials, garden equipment and supply stores⁵ generated the most annual sales (\$69.8 million) in 2002 followed by health and personal care stores (\$66.6 million). However, the average sales per store was far greater in the hardware/garden supply stores at \$4.65 million compared to \$2.89 million in annual sales for health and personal care stores. Eating and drinking

establishments, food and beverage stores, gasoline stations and motor vehicle parts and dealerships also generate significant annual sales.

Trends (1992-2002)

Retail trends for the City of Schenectady over the last three Economic Census in 1992, 1997 and 2002 show a decline in all metrics including number of retail establishments, total sales, sales per store and number employed. With the exception of the total number of establishments, the decline was particularly dramatic in the five year period from 1992 to 1997. The number of retail establishments actually grew slightly from 1992 to 1997 by two establishments but, from 1997 to 2002, the number dropped dramatically by 54 establishments. Despite the decline in establishments, total sales, per capita sales and number of employees all gained or maintained the same numbers between 1997 and 2002.

⁵ There is one Home Depot Store located in the City of Schenectady which skews the figures.

Table 14: Retail Trade Trends (1992-2002)

	Change 1992-2002			% Change 1992-2002		
	City	Co. w/o city	MSA	City	Co. w/o city	MSA
Population*	-3,745	1,015	14,159	-5.7%	1.2%	1.6%
No. of establishments	-52	-107	-191	-12.8%	-21.4%	-3.8%
Adjusted annual sales	-\$61,943	\$161,473	\$2,141,864	-12.5%	19.5%	26.4%
Paid employees	-215	285	10,361	-5.6%	4.6%	17.0%
Per capita sales	-\$543.56	\$1,786.88	\$2,294.19	-7.2%	18.0%	24.4%

Source: 1992, 2002 Economic Census of Retail Trade and Census of Accommodations and Food Services
 *1990 Census population figures are used for 1992; 2000 Census figures are used for 2002 population.
 **Annual sales for 1992 are adjusted to 2002 dollars.

The City lost establishments at a lesser rate than the balance of Schenectady County which lost 21.4% of its establishments between 1992 and 2002, but much higher than the MSA as a whole which lost just 3.8% of its businesses. In all other indicators, the balance of Schenectady County and the MSA saw significant gains in total sales, sales per store and number of employees,

compared to the City’s losses.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

- Need job creation to replace ALCO and GE. Need an internal and external marketing plan to create living wage jobs for all, including those with limited education. Need employment opportunities that keep our children in the area after college graduation.
- Commercial districts have great shops but don’t have a good look, i.e. Upper Broadway, Van Vranken Avenue. An incentive program may help. We need to fill in shops between the “dots” (areas that have been redeveloped).
- Focus development downtown especially small and medium locally owned businesses (including a grocery) and residential living.
- Stricter regulations on facades in Vale Village and more outdoor dining.
- We need locations for businesses. Multiple acre plots are not available. Should focus on redevelopment of brownfields especially on the General Electric properties.
- GE is no longer the economic factor it had been. In addition to technology, we need to attract light industry that provides lower skilled jobs.
- Consider development of a convention center or conference center on or near the waterfront.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- With the exception of General Electric, the largest employers located in the City of Schenectady are government agencies and health care and education sector employers.

- There are six economic development organizations and numerous programs serving the City of Schenectady.
- After adjusting for inflation, median incomes in the City have decreased during the past decade. The median household income declined 10.1%, while the median family income decreased 10.8%.
- More than two-thirds of City residents are low and moderate income. Incomes have not kept pace with inflation. More residents are living below the poverty line than ever before.
- Approximately 18.8% of City residents were employed in the health care and social services industries in 2000 followed by retail trade (13.4%), educational services (9.6%) and public administration (9.0%).
- Retail trends for the City of Schenectady over the last three Economic Census in 1992, 1997 and 2002 show a decline in all metrics including number of retail establishments, total sales, sales per store and number employed.

Real Estate and Tax Base Analysis

Schenectady's Real Estate Tax Base

The City of Schenectady has a Mayor/Council form of Government. The Mayor serves as the chief executive officer of the City. The Mayor's Office prepares the budget, hires personnel and makes appointments to most boards and committees. The Mayor is elected to a four-year term.

The City Council consists of seven at-large members. Like the Mayor, Council members are elected to four-year terms. The Council appoints the City Clerk and some of the boards and committees, determines policy, approves the budget, levies taxes, authorizes contracts and agreements, set salaries and approves contracts of goods and services.

City Departments include assessment, building inspector/code enforcement, city archives/history center, city clerk/vital records, city court, police court, development, engineering, finance, fire, bureau of receipts, human resources, general services/neighborhood revitalization, law department, mayor's office, parks, police, and water.

From the perspective of municipal administration, a community's tax base drives its ability to invest in amenities and provide quality professional services that residents expect. From the citizen's perspective, tax burden influences where people buy homes, whether they reinvest in property and where they develop businesses. The City's ability to raise revenue to provide infrastructure and services is affected by its tax base. The existing and future real estate of the City provides opportunities and constraints for maintaining and attracting homeowners, businesses and jobs.

In many communities the key to economic stability or growth is to optimize the tax base by making every acre of land as productive as it can be without compromising community vitality or natural resources. Today, there are many tools available to cities to enhance, diversify and optimize their tax base. This analysis provides the basis for identifying those actions.

The City of Schenectady includes 10.8 square miles (approximately 6,912 acres) of land area according to US Census data. For 2004 the City of Schenectady maintained assessment data on 20,505 parcels. Based on the GIS shape file provided by the County of Schenectady, these parcels contain approximately 5,644 acres, indicating that 1,268± acres is dedicated to roads and right of ways, or about 18% of the City's land.⁶

⁶ For this analysis, the Assessor's database provided information about property class, assessed value and taxable value, while a mapping file provided by the County provided information about acreage and neighborhood for each parcel. The two databases did not align perfectly. The Assessor's database included information about 20,505 unique parcels of which 20,040 (97.7%) were in the mapping file. The mapping file included 20,312 unique parcels totaling 5,644 acres. Of this, 20,040 (98.7%) of the parcels

Approximately 42% of the city’s remaining land area is dedicated to residential uses including single and multi family homes, with an additional 4% used for commercial apartment buildings. Community service properties account for 14% of the acreage, with recreation properties occupying 12%, and commercial properties 11%. Not unlike other older upstate New York cities, only 6% of the City’s land area is classified as vacant meaning that almost any opportunity to expand the tax base will result from redevelopment

The New York State Office of Real Property Services Assessor’s Manual defines individual property class codes organized by land use categories such as residential, commercial, industrial etc. as outlined in the land use table above. General land use categories are defined as follows:

Residential (200 series) - includes single family; two family; three-family and mobile homes. The series does not include multi-family, mobile home parks or other residential/mixed use, which are classified in the commercial category

Vacant land (300 series) - includes property not in use, in temporary use or lacking permanent improvement. If land is “improved” (i.e. has a building on it) then it falls under the specific use class (residential, commercial, community service, etc.). If there is no improvement on the property, then it falls under the vacant land category. For example, if a single family home is unoccupied, it’s still classified as residential even though no one is living, but if it is demolished and the land has no structure on it, it would be re-classified as vacant land.

Commercial (400 series) - Property used for sale of goods and services and residential uses noted above.

Recreation & Entertainment (500 series) - Property used by groups for recreation, amusement or entertainment including Entertainment Venues (Theaters, TV & Radio Studios); Sports Venues & Facilities (Arenas, Bowling, Ice Rinks, Golf Courses, Pools, etc); Amusement Facilities etc.; Clubs (Elks, Moose, etc.); Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields, Picnic Grounds.⁷

Table 15: Land Use by Property Class

Code	Land Use Property Class	Acres	%
210	One-Family Residence	1,654	30%
220	Two-Family Residence	609	11%
230	Three-Family Residence	61	1%
200	Residential -Other	10	0%
300	Vacant	329	6%
400	Commercial Properties	580	11%
411	Apartments	219	4%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	652	12%
600	Community Service	751	14%
700	Industrial Properties	436	8%
800	Public Service	198	4%
	Total	5,500	100%
	Total Residential	2,334	42%
	Total Commercial	3,166	58%
	Unmatched	144	
	Total	5,644	

representing 5,500 acres (97.4%) were present in the Assessor’s database. Seventeen parcels in the mapping file crossed neighborhood boundaries. For these parcels, the assessed and taxable values were distributed between the neighborhoods proportional to the acreage in each neighborhood.

⁷ Note: Most Schenectady city parks are classified under Recreation & Entertainment, although the State Real Property manual recommends that they be classified under the 900 series “Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks”.

Community services (600 series) - Property used for the well being of the community including Education (Libraries, Schools); Religious; Health (Hospitals); Military Installations; Correctional Facilities; and Cultural Resources (Museums).

Industrial (700 series) - Property used for the production of durable and non-durable goods

Public services (800 series) - Property used to provide services to the general public including Water (Flood Control, Water Supply, Water Treatment); Communication (TV, Radio, Cell Towers); Terminals (Bus terminals, truck terminals, taxi garages etc.); Non Road Transportation (Railroad, Canals, Bridges); Waste Disposal (Incinerators, Compacting, landfills); and Utilities (Electric & Gas)

Conservation (900 series) - Property that is wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks

Code	Land Use Property Class	Assessed	%	Taxable	%	% Taxable	% Non Taxable	Acres
210	One-Family Residence	691,311,290	32%	668,326,747	45%	97%	3%	1,654
220	Two-Family Residence	279,945,370	13%	270,076,786	18%	96%	4%	609
230	Three-Family Residence	29,390,100	1%	28,642,320	2%	97%	3%	61
200	Residential -Other	4,546,755	0%	4,388,255	0%	97%	3%	10
300	Vacant	13,259,693	1%	10,182,393	1%	77%	23%	329
400	Commercial Properties	331,196,439	15%	258,527,413	18%	78%	22%	580
411	Apartments	111,133,800	5%	86,609,696	6%	78%	22%	219
500	Recreation & Entertainment	50,015,900	2%	3,644,875	0%	7%	93%	652
600	Community Service	436,425,290	20%	20,384,587	1%	5%	95%	751
700	Industrial Properties	62,698,750	3%	51,874,892	4%	83%	17%	436
800	Public Service	146,884,336	7%	71,372,736	5%	49%	51%	198
	Total	2,156,807,723	100%	1,474,030,700	100%	68%	32%	5,500
	Total Residential	1,005,193,515	47%	971,434,108	66%	97%	3%	2,334
	Total Commercial	1,151,614,208	53%	502,596,592	34%	44%	56%	3,166

The City of Schenectady had a total assessment base of \$2,156,807,723 as indicated in the assessor's database. However, only \$1,474,030,700 of this assessed value is taxable value indicating that approximately 32% of the City's land value is tax exempt, a rate much lower than most cities in the state. Troy (54.4%) and Albany (73%) have a much higher

percentage of tax-exempt property than Schenectady. Among some of the other upstate New York cities, Buffalo’s tax-exempt percentage is over 40% and Syracuse is nearly 59%.

Citywide, 1,133 parcels consisting of over 1,689 acres are completely tax exempt. The assessed value of these parcels is \$587.8 million or 27% of the total assessed value of the City. Properties are usually tax exempt based on the owner and the use to which the property is put. For instance, lands owned by the City of Schenectady or other governments, health care, education, and religious institutions are all generally tax exempt. Some non-profit owned properties which are partially leased to uses separate from the organization’s primary mission can be partially taxable.

Properties exempt from property taxes are usually not-for-profit entities which serve a public benefit, such as a community organization operating a community residence for homeless families. Properties owned by Industrial Development Authorities (or other tax-exempt organizations created by a municipality) which produce public benefit by stimulating job creation are often exempt from property taxes. Many IDA properties structure a payment in lieu of tax agreement (PILOT) which call for a gradual increase in property tax obligations with the goal of achieving full taxable status over a defined period of time.

A significant imbalance exists in terms of the percentage of land used for residential (42%) in comparison to the amount of taxable value that this land contributes (66%) in Schenectady. This imbalance is not unusual among cities where declining manufacturing base has caused the tax burden to fall on residential property owners. It underscores the urgency of pursuing economic development opportunities to shift responsibility back to commercial, business and industrial users.

A similar imbalance exists for industrial properties in the City, which generate only 4% of the City’s taxable value while occupying 8% of the land area. This trend is typical of former manufacturing centers like Troy and Utica where early manufacturing sites have been consolidated or abandoned altogether like certain General Electric facilities in Schenectady.

Table 17: Tax Exemptions by Property Class

Code	Property Class	Count	Assessed Value	Acres
210	One-Family Residence	68	5,140,100	13
220	Two-Family Residence	65	3,416,700	6
230	Three-Family Residence	9	494,800	1
200	Residential -Other	4	197,500	0
300	Vacant	386	3,623,500	100
400	Commercial Properties	178	67,882,400	77
411	Apartments	23	23,886,000	59
500	Recreation & Entertainment	66	46,339,100	590
600	Community Service	305	352,062,140	714
700	Industrial Properties	6	9,296,300	26
800	Public Service	23	75,511,600	104
	Total	1,133	587,850,140	1,689

Code	Property Class	Count	Matched Acres		Taxable		Taxable per parcel	Acres per parcel	Taxable per Acre	Taxable per Acre index
210	One-Family Residence	10,077	1,654	30%	668,326,747	45%	66,322	0.16	403,946	1.51
220	Two-Family Residence	5,262	609	11%	270,076,786	18%	51,326	0.12	443,177	1.65
230	Three-Family Residence	501	61	1%	28,642,320	2%	57,170	0.12	473,366	1.77
200	Residential -Other	61	10	0%	4,388,255	0%	71,939	0.16	454,428	1.70
300	Vacant	1,721	329	6%	10,182,393	1%	5,917	0.19	30,908	0.12
400	Commercial Properties	1,769	580	11%	258,527,413	18%	146,143	0.33	445,506	1.66
411	Apartments	616	219	4%	86,609,696	6%	140,600	0.35	396,149	1.48
500	Recreation & Entertainment	73	652	12%	3,644,875	0%	49,930	8.94	5,586	0.02
600	Community Service	322	751	14%	20,384,587	1%	63,306	2.33	27,150	0.10
700	Industrial Properties	40	436	8%	51,874,892	4%	1,296,872	10.90	118,953	0.44
800	Public Service	63	198	4%	71,372,736	5%	1,132,901	3.14	360,881	1.35
	Total	20,505	5,500	100%	1,474,030,700	100%	3,082,426	0.27	268,026	1.00
	Total Residential	15,901	2,344	42%	971,434,108	66%	6,047,203	0.15	416,197	1.55
	Total Commercial	4,604	3,166	58%	502,596,592	34%	12,037,236	0.69	158,773	0.59

The City's acreage is divided into ten neighborhoods of which Woodlawn is by far the largest, occupying 22.5% of the land area, and the Stockade the smallest, occupying only 1.5% of the land area.

Table 19: Taxable Value by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Count	Acres		Taxable		Taxable per parcel	Acres per parcel	Taxable per Acre	Taxable per Acre index
Bellevue	2,349	826	15.0%	168,063,454	12.6%	71,547	0.35	203,358	0.86
Central State	1,774	350	6.4%	101,438,529	7.6%	57,181	0.20	289,457	1.20
Downtown	861	340	6.2%	89,242,603	6.7%	103,650	0.39	262,752	1.06
Eastern Avenue	782	206	3.7%	44,483,745	3.3%	56,885	0.26	216,156	0.92
Mont Pleasant	3,056	521	9.5%	154,190,200	11.6%	50,455	0.17	296,017	1.24
Northside	2,610	811	14.7%	179,105,917	13.5%	68,623	0.31	220,850	0.92
Stockade	425	82	1.5%	45,518,400	3.4%	107,102	0.19	556,156	2.31
Union Street	2,784	746	13.6%	240,136,236	18.0%	86,256	0.27	321,695	1.36
Vale and Hill	2,166	276	5.0%	69,069,007	5.2%	31,888	0.13	250,188	1.04
Woodlawn	3,248	1,239	22.5%	238,336,688	17.9%	73,380	0.38	192,289	0.80
<u>No neighborhood</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>1.8%</u>	<u>1,866,316</u>	<u>0.1%</u>				
Total	20,040	5,500	100%	1,331,451,095	100%	66,440	0.27	242,100	1.00
<u>Unmatched</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>144</u>		<u>142,579,605</u>		<u>306,623</u>		<u>987,620</u>	
Total	20,505	5,644		1,474,030,700		71,886		261,170	

The Stockade, due to its relatively high property values, small lot sizes and low amount of tax exempt valuation generates 3.4% of the City's property

tax revenues while occupying only 1.5% of the land - 2.3 times the tax revenue it could be expected to generate based on land area. By contrast Woodlawn and Bellevue each generate less than 90% of the revenue that would be expected based on their land area alone. While per parcel taxable values are relatively high in these neighborhoods (\$71,547 and \$73,380 respectively compared to the citywide average of \$66,440), the relatively large lot sizes (0.35 and 0.38 acres per parcel compared to the citywide average of 0.28 acres per parcel) result in a lower taxable value per acre than other neighborhoods.

Comparable Cities Analysis

City Budget and Fiscal Trends

To provide an overall framework for assessing local economic conditions, ten comparable cities of similar size and demographics in New York State were selected for comparison with Schenectady. Comparable cities were selected based on 2000 population figures. Table 20 (see page 37) delineates the general characteristics for Schenectady and the ten comparable communities

selected for analysis. According to the 2000 Census, Schenectady ranked 8th among the 61 cities in New York State with a population of 61,821.

Four of the comparable cities by population are located in Westchester County. These cities are presumed to have an economic advantage because of their proximity to the New York City metropolitan market. The analysis which follows presents data including and excluding the downstate communities.

With a land area of 10.8 square miles, Schenectady’s population density is 8.9 persons per acre. This is slightly lower than the average for the ten comparable cities (10.3 persons per acre). Excluding the four Westchester County cities, the average persons per acre was 7.1.

Table 20: Population of Comparable Cities

NYS Comparable Cities		2000 Census Population		Land Area	Population Density	
City	County	Number	Rank	Sq. mi.	Persons per sq. mi.	Persons per acre
Yonkers	Westchester	196,086	3	18.1	10,833	16.9
Syracuse	Onondaga	147,306	4	25.1	5,869	9.2
Albany	Albany	95,658	5	21.4	4,470	7.0
New Rochelle	Westchester	72,182	6	10.4	6,941	10.8
Mount Vernon	Westchester	68,381	7	4.4	15,541	24.3
Schenectady	Schenectady	61,821	8	10.8	5,724	8.9
Utica	Oneida	60,651	9	16.3	3,721	5.8
Niagara Falls	Niagara	55,593	10	14.1	3,943	6.2
White Plains	Westchester	53,077	11	9.8	5,416	8.5
Troy	Rensselaer	49,170	12	10.4	4,728	7.4
Binghamton	Broome	47,380	13	10.4	4,556	7.1
Average of Comparable Cities		84,548		14.0	6,602	10.3

Source: Financial Data for Local Governments-Local Fiscal Years Ended in 2003 and River Street Planning & Development, LLC.

Full valuation takes into account the effect of different equalization rates among the cities and provides a fair and equitable way to compare their tax bases. Municipalities in New York State are responsible for assessing or assigning a value to every parcel within their jurisdiction for the purpose of determining and collecting property taxes. Initially these values are based on the full market value of the property (“full valuation”) as determined by an independent re-evaluation of all property within the jurisdiction. Due to the significant cost involved, many communities do not re-evaluate property on a regular basis, causing the discrepancy between the assessed value of property and its actual market value tends to increase over time. The State’s equalization rates are an attempt to adjust for this imbalance between assessed value and full value.

In terms of tax base analysis, a number of contrasts were noted between Schenectady and the other comparison cities. Based on information provided in the Financial Data for Local Governments - Local Fiscal Years Ended in 2003 (the latest report available), the following analysis compares the fiscal outlook for Schenectady compared to ten comparable cities.

With respect to taxable valuation of real property, the total **assessed value** of Schenectady’s tax base was 20% higher than the average assessed valuation of the ten comparison cities. In terms of **full valuation**, Schenectady’s tax base was significantly lower than the average of the comparison cities by 54%. This is essentially due to the fact that Schenectady’s equalization rate is 100% (1.00). In other words, the assessed value of property in Schenectady equals its market value (full valuation).

On a *per acre basis*, assessed valuation in Schenectady is lower than most of the other comparison cities. Full assessed value per acre in Schenectady was \$194,199 in 2003 as compared to the average for the ten comparison cities of \$326,141 per acre. Schenectady’s full assessed value (\$194, 199) per acre is higher than the six cities outside of Westchester County which averaged \$180,439 per acre.

NYS Comparable Cities							
City	County	<u>Taxable Valuation of Real Property</u>			Full value per acre	Tax Levy	Tax Rate
		Assessed	Full	EQ			
Yonkers	Westchester	532,448,440	12,677,343,809	0.04	\$1,094,384	205,030,000	\$16.17
Syracuse	Onondaga	3,434,340,834	3,434,340,834	1.00	\$213,791	76,584,601	\$22.30
Albany	Albany	3,124,299,923	3,282,517,254	0.95	\$239,670	39,000,000	\$11.88
New Rochelle	Westchester	304,075,721	7,564,072,661	0.04	\$1,136,429	32,579,585	\$4.31
Mount Vernon	Westchester	168,284,706	3,690,454,078	0.05	\$1,310,531	34,217,512	\$9.27
Schenectady	Schenectady	1,342,304,816	1,342,304,816	1.00	\$194,199	24,676,731	\$18.38
Utica	Oneida	1,080,016,608	1,132,448,997	0.95	\$108,555	15,132,293	\$13.36
Niagara Falls	Niagara	1,246,372,588	1,246,372,588	1.00	\$138,118	24,822,954	\$19.92
White Plains	Westchester	318,804,180	6,768,666,242	0.05	\$1,079,188	30,924,005	\$4.57
Troy	Rensselaer	250,778,977	1,056,801,420	0.24	\$158,774	16,009,419	\$15.15
Binghamton	Broome	1,233,185,536	1,130,015,152	1.09	\$169,774	19,384,260	\$17.15
Average of Comparable Cities		\$1,169,260,751	\$4,198,303,304	0.28	\$467,226	\$49,368,463	\$13.41

Cities rely on a number of sources to generate revenues to support municipal operations. These include real estate taxes, non property taxes, State, Federal or other governmental aid, interest earnings and fees for services such as water and sewer. The two revenue sources directly related to land use characteristics and development are the real property tax and the sales tax.

Real property taxes are dependent on such factors as the value of assessed property, the percent of tax-exempt parcels and the tax rate. Sales tax revenues primarily depend upon the quantity and quality of retail development impacting the community. Table 19 (see page 36) analyzes the performance of real property and sales taxes in Schenectady and the ten comparison cities.

In FY 2003, real property taxes in Schenectady accounted for 29.5% of total revenues. The comparison cities averaged 25.9% and ranged from 9.6% to 40.1%. Sales taxes provided 13.3% of Schenectady's total revenues compared to the other cities that averaged 17.4%. Schenectady and Binghamton had the second lowest percentage of sales taxes behind Niagara Falls. Other revenues, which include Federal and State aid, interest on earnings, income and fees for services, etc., generated 57.2% of total revenues. For the comparison cities, this figure was 56.7% of total revenues.

Discounting the impact of the Westchester County cities, the comparison results were similar, with less reliance on property tax revenues (23.1%) and sales tax revenues (15.7%) and more dependence on other revenue sources (61.2%).

Table 22: Taxes of Comparable Cities

NYS Comparable Cities								
City	County	Real Property Taxes		Sales Taxes		Other Revenues		Total
Yonkers	Westchester	\$72,164,450	23.8%	\$52,335,815	17.3%	\$178,895,190	59.0%	\$303,395,455
Syracuse	Onondaga	\$21,503,846	9.6%	\$48,847,492	21.7%	\$154,700,491	68.7%	\$225,051,829
Albany	Albany	\$39,117,190	28.8%	\$26,068,741	19.2%	\$70,688,061	52.0%	\$135,873,992
New Rochelle	Westchester	\$32,775,120	31.9%	\$20,979,283	20.4%	\$48,956,913	47.7%	\$102,711,316
Mount Vernon	Westchester	\$33,660,305	40.1%	\$11,918,032	14.2%	\$38,287,209	45.7%	\$83,865,546
Schenectady	Schenectady	\$24,402,893	29.5%	\$11,000,896	13.3%	\$47,249,182	57.2%	\$82,652,971
Utica	Oneida	\$14,978,246	25.4%	\$10,756,221	18.2%	\$33,220,177	56.3%	\$58,954,644
Niagara Falls	Niagara	\$23,579,155	13.8%	\$7,204,442	4.2%	\$140,025,951	82.0%	\$170,809,548
White Plains	Westchester	\$30,450,655	24.3%	\$34,413,440	27.5%	\$60,372,978	48.2%	\$125,237,073
Troy	Rensselaer	\$16,696,658	27.0%	\$10,852,970	17.5%	\$34,359,371	55.5%	\$61,908,999
Binghamton	Broome	\$20,331,560	34.3%	\$7,899,207	13.3%	\$30,975,542	52.3%	\$59,206,309
Average of Comparable Cities		\$30,525,719	25.9%	\$23,127,564	17.4%	\$79,048,188	56.7%	\$132,701,471

and more dependence on other revenue sources (61.2%).

In terms of overall revenue generated, Schenectady had total revenues of \$82,652,971 from real estate taxes, sales tax and other sources. The comparison cities generated on average 60.6% more revenue from all sources than the city of Schenectady. In fact only three of the comparable cities generated less total revenues than Schenectady. In terms of per capita

revenues, Schenectady generated total revenues of \$1,336.97 per capita versus \$1,569.97 for the comparison cities (85.2%). When the Westchester County cities are eliminated, the remaining comparison cities averaged \$118,634,220 in total revenue from all sources or about 43.5% more revenue generated than Schenectady. In general, the comparison cities relied more on sales tax and other revenue sources and less on property tax revenues than Schenectady.

Budget Expenditures Comparison

The Financial Data for Local Governments - Local Fiscal Years Ended in 2003 also provides detailed information regarding budget expenditures in two different formats: by object and by function. "Object" describes specific revenue spending such as salaries

and payroll, health insurance, purchase of equipment, telephone bill, repair bill, debt service payment, etc. "Function" describes the expenditures by the category of services provided, for example general government, public safety, public works, utilities, economic development, etc. Total expenditures by object equals total expenditures by function plus debt service payments.

Table 23: Budget Expenditures of Comparable Cities

Comparable Cities	Current Operations										Totals
	Personal Services		Employee Benefits		Contractual Expenditures		Equipment/ Capital outlay		Debt Service		
Yonkers	\$154,785,624	47.9%	\$49,845,118	15.4%	\$58,231,314	18.0%	\$40,663,100	12.6%	\$19,888,210	6.1%	\$323,413,366
Syracuse	\$86,187,241	37.6%	\$33,925,731	14.8%	\$75,682,686	33.0%	\$16,065,546	7.0%	\$17,623,435	7.7%	\$229,484,639
Albany	\$57,594,489	39.7%	\$32,546,709	22.4%	\$22,931,341	15.8%	\$19,809,276	13.7%	\$12,207,496	8.4%	\$145,089,311
New Rochelle	\$40,352,301	36.2%	\$14,459,306	13.0%	\$26,455,653	23.8%	\$18,220,472	16.4%	\$11,897,317	10.7%	\$111,385,049
Mount Vernon	\$40,607,716	49.3%	\$12,445,580	15.1%	\$24,384,226	29.6%	\$3,725,971	4.5%	\$1,250,408	1.5%	\$82,413,901
Schenectady	\$41,535,920	40.5%	\$12,969,197	12.6%	\$21,101,641	20.6%	\$16,079,946	15.7%	\$10,858,576	10.6%	\$102,545,280
Utica	\$25,393,135	37.9%	\$9,109,381	13.6%	\$15,489,421	23.1%	\$12,607,493	18.8%	\$4,372,818	6.5%	\$66,972,248
Niagara Falls	\$33,953,069	19.3%	\$19,916,890	11.3%	\$31,786,780	18.0%	\$7,510,187	4.3%	\$82,986,084	47.1%	\$176,153,010
White Plains	\$62,023,253	40.3%	\$17,835,632	11.6%	\$31,548,383	20.5%	\$32,846,896	21.3%	\$9,838,513	6.4%	\$154,092,677
Troy	\$25,540,084	36.6%	\$11,382,536	16.3%	\$14,487,453	20.7%	\$12,320,693	17.6%	\$6,104,629	8.7%	\$69,835,395
Binghamton	\$25,348,730	35.3%	\$10,059,702	14.0%	\$12,891,536	18.0%	\$17,082,517	23.8%	\$6,431,087	9.0%	\$71,813,572
Average of Comparable Cities	\$55,178,564	38.6%	\$21,152,659	14.8%	\$31,388,879	21.9%	\$18,085,215	12.6%	\$17,260,000	12.1%	\$143,065,317

The distribution of expenditures by object for Schenectady and the ten comparison cities is shown in table 23. For the comparison cities, current operations (made up of Personal Services, Employee Benefits and Contractual Expenditures) accounted for 75.3% of annual expenditures in FY 2003. Equipment and Capital Outlay made up another 16.8% of expenditures and the remaining 16.0% of budget expense was for principal and interest payments on debt service.

For the comparison cities excluding the Westchester County cities, current operations accounted for 71.7% of annual expenditures in FY 2003. Equipment and Capital Outlay made up another 15.7% of expenditures and the remaining 23.8% of budget expense

was for principal and interest payments on debt service. For the City of Schenectady, current operations accounted for 73.7% of annual expenditures in FY 2003. Equipment and Capital Outlay made up another 21.3% of expenditures and the remaining 14.4% of budget expense was for principal and interest payments on debt service.

Per capita expenditures for current operations in Schenectady were \$1,222.99 compared to the average of \$1,274.06 per capita for the ten comparison cities and \$1,194.11 for the comparison cities excluding Westchester County communities. Total expenditures per capita in Schenectady (FY 2003) were \$1,658.75. The average for the ten comparison cities was \$1,692.11 and \$1,666.12 for the comparison cities excluding Westchester County communities. Schenectady is essentially expending the same amount per capita as the comparison cities.

City	Population	Current Operations	per capita	Equipment & Capital outlay	per capita	Debt Service	per capita	Total per capita
Yonkers	196,086	\$262,862,056	\$1,340.54	\$40,663,100	\$207.37	\$19,888,210	\$101.43	\$1,649.34
Syracuse	147,306	\$195,795,658	\$1,329.18	\$16,065,546	\$109.06	\$17,623,435	\$119.64	\$1,557.88
Albany	95,658	\$113,072,539	\$1,182.05	\$19,809,276	\$207.08	\$12,207,496	\$127.62	\$1,516.75
New Rochelle	72,182	\$81,267,260	\$1,125.87	\$18,220,472	\$252.42	\$11,897,317	\$164.82	\$1,543.11
Mount Vernon	68,381	\$77,437,522	\$1,132.44	\$3,725,971	\$54.49	\$1,250,408	\$18.29	\$1,205.22
Schenectady	61,821	\$75,606,758	\$1,222.99	\$16,079,946	\$260.10	\$10,858,576	\$175.65	\$1,658.75
Utica	60,651	\$49,991,937	\$824.26	\$12,607,493	\$207.87	\$4,372,818	\$72.10	\$1,104.22
Niagara Falls	55,593	\$85,656,739	\$1,540.78	\$7,510,187	\$135.09	\$82,986,084	\$1,492.74	\$3,168.62
White Plains	53,077	\$111,407,268	\$2,098.97	\$32,846,896	\$618.85	\$9,838,513	\$185.36	\$2,903.19
Troy	49,170	\$51,410,073	\$1,045.56	\$12,320,693	\$250.57	\$6,104,629	\$124.15	\$1,420.28
Binghamton	47,380	\$48,299,968	\$1,019.42	\$17,082,517	\$360.54	\$6,431,087	\$135.73	\$1,515.69
Average of Comparable Cities	84,548	\$107,720,102	\$1,274.06	\$18,085,215	\$213.90	\$17,260,000	\$204.14	\$1,692.11

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- A relatively high percentage of Schenectady’s land area is dedicated to roads and rights of way due in part to the construction of an extensive network of highways and access roads to the General Electric facilities.

- Approximately 32% of Schenectady's assessed value is tax exempt, a rate much lower than other upstate cities of similar size and demographics.
- Schenectady's residential properties generate 66% of the City's taxable value while accounting for only 42% of its land area.
- There is a wide disparity between Schenectady's neighborhoods in terms of their impact on the tax base, with the Stockade generating 2.3 times the tax revenue expected based on land area alone, and Woodlawn generating 80% of the tax revenue expected based on land area.
- Schenectady's per capita spending is comparable to similar New York State cities.
- Schenectady's per capita revenue is only 85% of that of similar New York State cities.
- Sales taxes provided a smaller percentage of total revenues for Schenectady compared to similar New York State cities.
- Schenectady's assessed value is lower than that of most similar New York State cities both on a citywide and per acre basis.

Housing

General Housing Characteristics

The City of Schenectady has 30,272 housing units according to the 2000 Census. Of the total units counted in the Census, 26,265 were occupied. Owners occupy 44.7% of the occupied housing and renters occupy 55.3%. The vacancy rate of for-sale housing in the City in 2000 was 4.6% and the vacancy rate for rental housing was 9.3%.

In 2000, single-family, detached structures comprised 34.8% of the entire housing stock in the City. Two-unit buildings made up 33.7% of the market and three- and four-family buildings make up 12.6% of the market. Apartment buildings of five or more units

	1990		2000		% change 1990-2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Housing Units	30,232	100.0%	30,272	100.0%	0.1%
Total Occupied Units	27,748	91.8%	26,265	86.8%	-5.3%
Total Owner Occupied Units (% of occupied)	12,944	46.6%	11,747	44.7%	-9.2%
Total Renter Occupied Units (% of occupied)	14,804	53.4%	14,518	55.3%	-1.9%
Vacant Units	2,484	8.2%	4,007	13.2%	61.3%
Vacant For-Sale	230	1.7%	563	4.6%	144.8%
Vacant For-Rent	1,219	7.6%	1,487	9.3%	22.0%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

family, two family, 3-4 units, etc.). Of the 26,265 occupied units in 2000, a total of 11,747 were owner-occupied resulting in an owner occupancy rate of 44.7% citywide. The owner-occupancy rate for the United States as a whole is approximately 66.2% while the rate for New York State is 53.0%. However, it is estimated that 63.7% of all structures in the City are owner-occupied (see description below).

Owner-occupancy opportunities are primarily influenced by housing type. Single family homes offer the best potential for owner occupancy. Approximately 82.7% of single family housing in Schenectady is owner-occupied. In contrast, 29.6% of the two-family units are occupied by an owner and only 10.9% of the 3-4 unit buildings are owner-occupied.

account for 4,805 units, 15.8% of the market. Further, single family attached structures comprise 3.0% of the housing stock. The 2000 Census reports that 848 housing units or 2.8% of the housing stock in Schenectady was built during the 1990s. In contrast 56.5% of the units were built before 1940.

The Census provides tenure statistics for occupied housing units in the City of Schenectady by various housing types (single

Since single family homes comprise only 37.8% of all occupied housing in the city, there is an obvious limitation on the maximum potential homeownership rate in Schenectady based on unit occupancy. If we consider owner occupancy by residential structure, a somewhat different picture emerges. While the census does not provide specific building counts for the various housing types, an approximate estimation of maximum residential structures can be made with the results shown in column 2 below. Some of the calculations are fairly straight forward: for Single family, the number of structures equal number of units; and for Two-family homes, number of structures equal number of units divided by 2.

For the remaining multi-unit housing types, the maximum number of residential structures is derived by dividing total units by the lower number in the unit range - for example: for 3-4 family buildings, the maximum number of structures is equal to the number of units divided by 3; for 10-19 unit apartments, the maximum number of structures is equal to total units divided by 10; and so forth.

Based on this analysis, the maximum number of residential structures in Schenectady is 18,379. Since there are 11,729 owner occupants, the maximum percentage of residential buildings in which an owner resides is estimated at 63.8%.

The final part of the analysis examines the potential maximum owner occupancy rates in the city based on the current configuration of housing types. The following calculations were used: For Single Family, 100% owner-occupancy was assumed; for Two-family homes, 50% owner-occupancy and

2000 Housing Units	Total Units	Est. Max. Structures	% owner by units	% owner by structure ⁸	Maximum % owner by units	Maximum % owner by structure
Single-family	11,464	11,464	82.7%	82.7%	11,464	11,464
Two-family	10,221	5,111	29.6%	48.1%	5,111	5,111
3-4 Units	3,806	1,269	10.9%	26.7%	1,269	1,269
5-9 Units	1,872	374	0.8%	3.5%	13	13
10-19 Units	1,011	101	0.9%	7.9%	8	8
20-49 Units	725	36	4.8%	80.0%	29	29
50 + Units	1,197	24	1.2%	58.5%	14	14
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0
Totals	30,296	18,379	44.6%	63.8%	17,907	17,907
					59.1%	97.4%

⁸ The percentage of owner by structure is calculated by the number of owner occupied units and dividing it by the estimate maximum structures. In the case of 20-49 unit, the 2000 census reports that 29 of the units are owner occupied. Dividing the 29 units by 36 estimated structures results in 80% owner by structure.

for 3-4 units apartments, one owner-occupant per building. For the remaining housing types, we have assumed that the current number of owner-occupants would stay at current levels. The resulting analysis calculates a maximum potential owner-occupancy rate of 59.1% based on units (17,907 units divided by 30,296 total units) and 97.4% based on structures (17,907 structures divided by 18,379 total structures).

As noted, single family homes comprise 37.8% of the Schenectady housing market. In comparison, single family homes make-up 49.3% of total housing in New York State. Excluding New York City, this statistic is 72.5%. The prevalence of two-family homes in Schenectady provides another striking comparison. Two family homes comprise 33.7% of the Schenectady housing market. In comparison, two-family homes make-up only 10.9% of the total housing in New York State. Due to the higher percentage of two family and multi-family housing in Schenectady, the city's owner-occupancy rate will always be below the state and national averages by comparison.

Rental Housing

Rental housing accounts for 55.3% of occupied housing in the City of Schenectady in 2000. The average household size of renter occupied units is 2.12. One-, two- and three-bedroom each account for roughly 30% of rental units. Nearly 60% of rental units are in two, three and four family structures.

The median gross rent in Schenectady was \$428 in 1990. Adjusting the 1990 median rent for inflation to 2000 dollars projects a median rent of \$564. The actual median gross rent reported by the census in 2000 was \$548. Rental costs have actually decreased 2.8% in comparison to 1990 figures when adjusted for inflation. Lower rental costs can benefit low and moderate income renters. But lower rents also make it difficult for investor-owners and owner-occupants of multi-unit buildings to break even, leaving fewer resources for reinvestment.

Urban communities struggle to maintain a healthy housing choice for all potential residents. Schenectady is no exception. A healthy housing market should provide good quality units that address resident demand in terms of number of bedrooms, location, price and other considerations. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. In 1990 the city's rental vacancy rate rose from 7.6% in 1990 to 9.3% in 2000 - nearly double the standard vacancy rate of 5%.

Many lower income residents in the City are cost burdened, meaning that their gross housing costs exceed 30% of their income. According to 2000 Census information, 6,155 households or 42.2% of all renter households reported rental housing costs in excess of 30% of income. Not surprisingly, the extent of cost burden was more significant for lower income households. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 74.2%, of the cost burdened households.

Owner-Occupied Housing

There are 11,747 owner-occupied units in the City, comprising 44.7% of occupied housing in the City in 2000. The majority of these units are in single-family, three-bedroom detached structures. The average household size of owner-occupied units is 2.37 persons. According to 2000 Census figures, the vacancy rate of for-sale housing is 4.6%, significantly higher than the standard of 1% in a healthy market.

The Census asks respondents to list the value of their home. The median value of owner-occupied homes in Schenectady in 1990 was \$81,000. Adjusting the 1990 median value for inflation to 2000 dollars projects a 2000 median value of \$106,719 for owner-occupied units. The actual median value reported by the Census in 2000 for owner-occupied units is only \$71,200. Owner housing in the city is losing market value at a dramatic rate. The consequences of this trend are very significant since Schenectady's residential properties generate 66% of the City's taxable value. The trend also effects market, rental income rates, desirability of homeownership and access to capital for property improvements.

The 2000 Census reports that 2,154 or 25.0% of homeowners are cost burdened. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 918 or 42.6%, of the households determined to be cost burdened.

Housing Market Issues

Local Housing Market

Local realtors understand current conditions effecting housing choice, quality and market, and interviews with them are helpful to understand trends between census years. According to local realtors, the Schenectady housing market remains strong and housing values have increased in the past five years. The market has stabilized in the past year or two and demand for housing has risen steadily. Schenectady's housing is seen as very affordable to potential homebuyers who can renovate property for a primary residence, to resell or rent. Although taxes are higher in the City than the surrounding suburbs, residents feel that they can afford "more houses for the money" in the City. Housing demand is particularly strong for the Upper Union Street area and the part of the City that borders the Town of Niskayuna.

There is a large supply of rental property in the City, due in part to the composition of its housing stock in multi-unit buildings. The City has implemented a new program for issuing rental certificates at every change of occupancy (when a tenant moves out and a new tenant moves in) in an effort to ensure properties are code compliant. The process requires that landlords attend an appointment and pay a \$25.00 fee to obtain a new rental certificate. The City inspects the property before the new tenant moves in. Realtors believe that this process is onerous and a disincentive for acquisition of rental property, but neighborhood associations support it as one method for ensuring that rental units are well maintained and landlords are held accountable.

There has been limited new housing development in the City, with most new construction occurring in the surrounding Towns in Schenectady County. Between 1990 and 2000, the Census reports an increase of 40 units in the City of Schenectady. According to the City's Building Inspector, permits have been issued for 103 new housing units between 2000 and 2005.

Multiple Listing Service Trends

The Capital Region Multiple Listing Service is an association of realtors that compiles data on housing sales and market trends within the six county regional area which comprises the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA area. Data for this analysis was obtained for the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County, and for the immediate Capital District Region (Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties) for the years 2000-2003. The data for the City of Schenectady was broken out by three groups of zip codes.

For the Capital District Region as a whole, market trends in home sales have been on the rise. The average selling prices and volume of homes sold have steadily increased, while the average days to sale have progressively decreased. Regionwide, the mean current selling price of a home in 2003 was \$169,997, a considerable rise from the 2000 selling price of \$130,086. The average sales price of homes was \$147,989 for the four-year period. A total of 8,159 homes were sold in 2003, an increase of 12.4% since 2000.

In contrast, the sales price for homes in the City of Schenectady has averaged about \$65,173 between 2000 and 2003 or only 44.0% of the value of for-sale homes sold within the Capital District Region. Based on the average number of homes sold, the for-sale market in Schenectady accounted for approximately 6.2% of the Capital District Region's total, although the City of Schenectady accounts for 8.7% of housing units in the four-county area.

Other housing trends are more favorable, for example:

- The average days to sale was reduced by nearly 50% between 2000 and 2003.
- The average sale price of homes sold steadily increase between 2000 and 2003 (45.0% overall).
- The number of homes sold also increased steadily from 2000 to 2003. In 2003, a total of 558 homes were sold.

Table 27: For-Sale Housing Trends - City of Schenectady

Area	Data	2000	2001	2002	2003
City of Schenectady (Zip 12305, 12308, 12309)	Unit Sales	168	206	242	226
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$74,599	\$74,041	\$77,661	\$95,773
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$79,711	\$76,940	\$79,442	\$95,773
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$70,250	\$73,034	\$77,325	\$89,900
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$75,064	\$75,894	\$79,098	\$89,900
	Average Days to Sale	117	96	82	68
City of Schenectady (Zip 12304 & 12307)	Unit Sales	118	137	170	186
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$43,091	\$55,664	\$63,916	\$76,457
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$46,044	\$57,844	\$65,382	\$76,457
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$41,685	\$57,000	\$55,000	\$72,000
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$44,541	\$59,232	\$56,261	\$72,000
	Average Days to Sale	150	110	74	80
City of Schenectady (Zip 12303 & 12306)	Unit Sales	89	103	155	146
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$47,571	\$48,019	\$57,899	\$67,379
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$50,831	\$49,899	\$59,227	\$67,379
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$48,350	\$48,000	\$58,900	\$67,700
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$51,663	\$49,880	\$60,251	\$67,700
	Average Days to Sale	129	114	91	85
City of Schenectady	Unit Sales	375	446	567	558
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$55,087	\$59,241	\$66,492	\$79,870
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$58,862	\$61,561	\$68,017	\$79,870
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$53,428	\$59,345	\$63,742	\$76,533
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$57,089	\$61,669	\$65,203	\$76,533
	Average Days to Sale	132	107	82	78

Within the City of Schenectady, homes located in the 12305, 12308, and 12309 zip codes (Stockade, Downtown, Eastern Avenue, North End and Union Street neighborhoods) had the highest average home sales, most homes sold, and lowest number of days to sale in comparison to the other zip code areas (12304 & 12307 and 12303 & 12306) in the City. In 2000, the mean selling price of a home in these neighborhoods/zip codes was \$74,599, while in 2003, the price was \$95,773. The average sales price of homes over the four year period was \$80,519. A total of 226 homes sold in these neighborhoods in 2003, an increase of 34.5% from 2000. The average days to sale decreased from 117 to 68 days between 2000 and 2003.

In comparison, the mean current selling price of a home sold in the year 2000 in zip codes 12304 and 12307 (Woodlawn, Central State Street, and the Vale and Hamilton Hill neighborhoods) was \$43,091, while in 2003, the price was \$76,457. The average sales price

of homes was \$59,782 for the four-year period. A total of 186 homes sold in 2003, an increase of 57.6% since 2000. The average days to sale decreased from 150 to 80 days.

Table 28: For-Sale Housing Trends - Schenectady County and Capital District Region

Area	Data	2000	2001	2002	2003
Schenectady County	Unit Sales	1,372	1,537	1,687	1,712
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$106,177	\$105,927	\$112,976	\$127,914
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$113,453	\$110,075	\$115,567	\$127,914
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$86,798	\$90,218	\$91,637	\$110,356
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$92,746	\$93,751	\$93,738	\$110,356
	Average Days to Sale	96.3	87.5	70.2	59
Capital District Region	Unit Sales	7,256	7,737	8,023	8,159
	Mean Current \$ Selling Price	\$130,086	\$140,012	\$151,859	\$169,997
	Mean Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$139,001	\$145,494	\$155,342	\$169,997
	Median Current \$ Selling Price	\$117,921	\$123,580	\$130,892	\$146,808
	Median Constant \$ Selling Price†	\$126,001	\$128,419	\$133,894	\$146,808
	Average Days to Sale	92.8	78.1	64.9	51.3

Homes located in the 12303 and 12306 zip codes (Bellevue and Mont Pleasant) had the lowest sale prices, least homes sold and the most days to sale in comparison to the other zip code areas (12304 & 12307 and 12305, 12308, and 12309) in the City. In 2000, the mean current selling price of a home in these neighborhoods was \$45,571, while in 2003, the price was \$67,379. The average sales price of homes was \$55,217 for the four-year period. A total of 146 homes sold in 2003, an increase of 64.0% since 2000. The average days to sale decreased from 134 to 85 days between 2000 and 2003.

The average sales price for a home sold in Schenectady County in 2000 was \$106,177 and in 2003 it was \$127,914. The City's homes sold account for only 57.5% of the value of sold homes within Schenectady County. Of the 487 homes sold on average, the City accounts for 30.8% of the homes sold in Schenectady County.

Rental Housing Market

As part of the housing analysis, a survey of recent rental listings in the Daily Gazette newspapers was conducted from the May 30, 2005 listings. There were a combined total of 90 units for rent listed in May 2005. According to the rental listings, about 32.2% of the listings in the City were for one-bedroom units, while 28.9% of the listings were for two-bedroom units and 27.8% were for three-bedroom units. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom unit was \$517, with an average of \$629 for a two-bedroom unit, \$656 for a three-bedroom unit, and \$788 for apartments with four bedrooms. Approximately 17.8% of the units available for rent in the City of Schenectady include utilities. The overall average monthly rent for an apartment in Schenectady is \$594, which is slightly higher than the 2000 median gross rent of \$548.

For-Sale Housing Market

A listing of homes for sale was obtained through the Times Union's Homeport Web Site (May 30, 2005). Combined, there were 177 single-family homes, 238 two-family homes and 52 multi-family homes listed in the City of Schenectady. The majority of single-family homes were three-bedroom units (93 total). The average asking price of a three-bedroom is \$90,573 (prices ranged from \$24,900 to \$228,900). There were 44 four-bedroom units ranging in price from \$37,500 to \$475,000 (average asking price \$117,384). Two-bedroom units (24 total) ranged in price from \$39,000 to \$139,900, with an average asking price of \$73,953.

The Times Union also identified for sale homes by location within the City of Schenectady, however, some of the neighborhood names used by Times Union are not the same as those used to identify Schenectady neighborhoods as generally defined by the City and its residents. Most of the single-family homes listed were located in the Central State Street area (49) followed by Bellevue (34), Union Street-Grand Boulevard area (28), North Schenectady (19), Mt. Pleasant (17), Downtown Schenectady (15), and Upper State Street (12). The average asking prices varied greatly by neighborhood areas. Mt. Pleasant and the Central State Street area had the lowest average asking prices at \$67,459 and \$76,920 respectively. The average asking price for a home in the Bellevue neighborhood is \$83,793, while in the Upper State Street area it is \$85,333 and in Downtown Schenectady it is \$95,393. North Schenectady and the Union Street-Grand Boulevard area had the highest average asking price at \$134,879 and \$154,521 respectively.

Two-family homes ranged in price from \$16,999 to \$259,000 (average asking price \$86,139). The majority of two-family homes available for sale were located in Downtown Schenectady (34 total - average asking price \$86,400), Central State Street (29 total - average asking price \$78,657), and Mt. Pleasant (25 total - average asking price \$73,568). Bellevue and the Union Street-Grand Boulevard area had the highest average asking price at \$96,825 and \$117,029 respectively.

Multi-family homes ranged in price from \$60,000 to \$314,900 (average asking price \$130,496). Most of the multi-family homes available for sale were located in Downtown Schenectady (16 total - average asking price \$146,538). The Bellevue neighborhood had the highest average asking price at \$167,000.

Affordable Housing

A small portion of the rental housing within the City of Schenectady is provided through subsidized funding sources such as the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There are approximately 3,008 subsidized housing units in Schenectady, accounting for 9.9% of the overall total of housing units citywide. General characteristics of these units are presented in the table 29 (see page 51).

The Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority manages seven public housing facilities and administers the Section 8 program in the City. There are a total of 1,006 public housing units available for lease (12 additional units are used by the Housing Authority for

Table 29: Subsidized Housing Inventory

Facility	Total						Subtotal		Subtotal
	Units	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4+BR	Elderly/Disabled		Non-Elderly
Mount Pleasant YMCA	50	0	50	0	0	0	50	0	0
Cluster Housing (Indep. Living)	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	0
State Street YMCA	180	180	0	0	0	0			
Schenectady YWCA (SRO)	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Schenectady ARC	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	6	0
Scattered Sites (New Construction)	10	0	0	0	4	6	0	0	10
Scattered Sites (Acq. with Rehab)	40	0	0	0	17	23	0	0	40
State Hulett NSA	105	9	67	27	2	0	88	0	17
Schenectady Forty Apts.	40	0	19	14	7	0	0	0	40
Summit Towers	183	0	183	0	0	0	0	0	183
Schonowee Village - PH	207	18	151	36	2	0	207	0	0
Macgathan Townhouses - PH	50	0	0	0	27	23	0	0	50
Maryvale Townhouses - PH	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Steinmetz Homes - PH	244	0	47	144	50	3	0	0	244
Yates Village - PH	300	0	22	204	64	10	0	0	300
Ten Eyck Apts. - PH	102	41	60	0	0	0	102	0	0
Lincoln Heights - PH	105	29	58	18	0	0	0	0	105
Moderate Rehab Program	70	0	3	24	32	11	0	0	70
Schenectady Housing Authority-Section 8 Program	1,289	47	280	365	512	85	116	0	1,173
Totals	3,008	332	958	832	717	169	562	18	2,248

Source: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

maintains a full waiting list of over 1,000 households for section 8 program assistance and applications are not currently being accepted due to the large waiting list.

administrative purposes). Public housing units account for 35.6% of the affordable housing units citywide, while all Housing Authority units (public housing and section 8 units) account for 81.2% of the affordable housing units citywide. There are currently about 478 households on the waiting list for public housing.

The Housing Authority currently manages approximately 1,289 Section 8 Units. Through this program, tenants pay 30% of their gross income for rent and the subsidy makes up the difference. Only very low income (50% of the medium income) individuals and families are eligible for the program. The Housing Authority currently

Schenectady Housing Programs

Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority

In addition to providing subsidized housing through public housing units and Section 8 Housing Vouchers, the Housing Authority also offers several homeownership programs. A summary of these programs are described below.

Homeward Bound Program

The Housing Authority provides eligible residents with homeownership preparation assistance by coordinating supportive services in order to remove barriers to homeownership. Participants must be current residents of the Housing Authority and a first time homebuyer as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. Additionally, participants must have a household income of at least \$16,000 (which may be waived for disabled participants) and have demonstrated a 35% increase in earned income since applying for Public Housing. Participants are also required to complete a three-part Homeownership Educational Series.

Section 8 Homeownership Program

Under this program, first time homebuyers may be able to use their Section 8 subsidy to help meet monthly homeownership expenses for up to 15 years. Applicants must have been assisted by the Section 8 rental voucher program for a period of one year prior to receiving homeownership assistance. Applicants must also have full-time employment (30 hours/week) for a least one year prior to application and must meet an annual income of \$16,000 (not including public assistance). These requirements are waived for elderly or disabled applicants. Homes to be purchased must be single-family and must meet Housing Quality Standards. All safety and code issues must be addressed prior to occupancy. Applicants must hire and pay for a Certified Structural Inspector to inspect the home, must complete SMHA approved homeownership workshop series and individual housing counseling for budget and credit issues. Families must also comply with annual recertification.

Schenectady Homeownership Program (SHOP)

This program allows first time low-income homebuyers to purchase single family homes in the City of Schenectady. Program regulations require families to have a gross income of under 80% of the area median income. Homes will be rehabilitated to eliminate code and safety issues and will meet Housing Quality Standards. Applicant must also complete housing counseling and be ready to apply for mortgage financing.

Schenectady Home Improvement Program (SHIP)

The SHIP Program provides income eligible Schenectady homeowners with either a 100% grant or 75% grant up to \$25,000 to make needed repairs to their home. Code violation issues and housing quality standards are addressed through this program as well. Typically the program works with approximately 25 applicants at a time on a first come first served basis.

Schenectady Home Affordable Purchase Enhancement Program (SHAPE)

SHAPE provides up to \$18,400 in funding assistance for down payment, closing costs and minor housing rehabilitation for homebuyers who are currently involved in the Section 8 program. This program targets families whose income is less than 60% of the area median income. Applicants must comply with all the rules of the Section 8 Homeownership Program.

Vale Homeownership Program

The Housing Authority assists home purchase in the Vale neighborhood by rehabilitating a number of two-family houses and/or constructs new homes as appropriate, based on neighborhood preservation and cost efficiency. Homes are purchased in the open market or from the City of Schenectady, rehabilitated and then sold to eligible applicants, at a reduced cost. Applicants may be public housing residents, Section 8 voucher holders or any one interested in purchasing a home in Schenectady. The Vale program is funded by EDI.

Better Neighborhoods, Inc.

Better Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI) is a local homeownership center and HUD-approved housing counseling agency offering free consultation to new and existing homeowners. Additionally, BNI is a New York State Neighborhood Preservation Company (NPC) dedicated to rebuilding Schenectady neighborhoods through housing revitalization and affordable homeownership. BNI's core service area includes the Hamilton Hill (CT 209 and CT 210.02), Vale (CT 208), Central State (CT 217), Mt. Pleasant (211.03 and 214), College Park (CT 201.01), Downtown (CT 203), and Eastern Avenue (CT 208) neighborhoods of Schenectady. Programs and services offered by BNI include the following:

- Free housing counseling in homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention, rental assistance, reverse mortgage consultation and technical assistance is available to all residents of Schenectady County or to individuals relocating to Schenectady County either through personal consultation or through the Homeownership Workshop Series.
- Assistance and education to first-time homebuyers in obtaining grants to purchase a home within the City of Schenectady. (Most BNI consumers are interested in a simple one-family home with three bedrooms.)
- Renovation assistance of homes located in the Hamilton Hill and Vale Neighborhoods.

- Owns and manages apartments or have developed apartments which are now owned by individual homeowners. A listing of available apartments for rent is posted on BNI's website.

The agency addresses a range of homebuyer issues including the availability of affordable housing, threat of increasing property taxes, and credit issues. The factor that has the greatest impact on their ability to improve neighborhoods is lack of money. Threatened cuts to the Community Development Block Grant and lack of resources at the City level for direct housing subsidy and infrastructure investment (sidewalks, streets, beautification and lighting) threaten the BNI efforts. Additionally, BNI felt that more infrastructure projects, such as street lighting, were needed in the City.

Community Land Trust of Schenectady, Inc.

Community Land Trust of Schenectady, Inc. (CLTS) creates and preserves affordable housing by renovating older houses and selling them at affordable prices to persons of low or moderate income. The home is kept permanently affordable and owner-occupied through a land trust agreement. This agreement allows CLTS to retain ownership of the land that the house sits on, but allows the home buyer to purchase the house. The land is leased to the homebuyer and they have full rights to use the land. The land trust model allows CLTS to keep the price of homes affordable so that lower income families may be able to purchase a home of their own.

Programs and services offered by CLTS include the following:

- Homebuyer Driven Program - CLTS homebuyers own their homes while CLTS retains ownership of the land and leases the land to the homeowner. Homebuyers also agree that when or if they sell their home they will do so at a price that is affordable to the next household of modest means.
- Homebuyer Rehab/Lease to Purchase Program - Homebuyers lease a CLTS home with the intent that they will purchase it within 12 months. CLTS retains ownership of the home and land; however a portion of the residents' monthly payment will be set aside to be credited towards down payment and/or closing costs. Residents then have 12 months to deal with any and all obstacles preventing them from being mortgage eligible and completing their purchase agreement on the home.
- Housing Counseling Program - This program is available to all members regardless of their intent to purchase or live in a CLTS home.
- Rentals Program - This program provides decent affordable rental housing for low income people in the City of Schenectady.

The agency directly addresses the problems low income residents face finding affordable housing. The organization is considering developing homeownership programs targeting elderly and disabled people. Additionally, CLTS is sponsoring home repair workshops teaching families how to make basic repairs in their homes. This program is geared at improving basic quality of life issues such as clean streets and quiet neighborhoods.

Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, Inc.

Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, Inc. is a locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. Additionally, Habitat does provide counseling to the families they are building the homes for. The houses then are sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged. Their clients generally have incomes within the \$25,000 - \$35,000 income range. Habitat for Humanity maintains a waiting list.

Habitat families are only required to pay a 20-year, interest free loan on \$60,000 for an approximately \$100,000 home. Yet these families struggle to keep up mortgage and real estate taxes. In all cases, taxes are far larger than the mortgage payments. Another issue facing Habitat is complying with current zoning and building codes. In some cases in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood and along Emmett Street, Habitat has had to assemble two lots next to each other to build one home. Ideally the organization would like to find 10 acres of land to build a small development of 15 homes.

Habitat is interested in working with the City to identify properties and long term development plans together. They are now doing more rehabilitation of homes. The agency also has recently spearheaded the Schenectady Building Collaborative with Better Neighborhoods Inc. and Community Land Trust to build homes on the same street at the same time.

Schenectady Housing Development Fund Corporation

The Schenectady Housing Development Fund Corporation Second Mortgage Program provides assistance to first time purchasers in the City of Schenectady. The program provides loans of up to 10% of the purchase price for one- to three-family homes located in the City of Schenectady for downpayment or closing costs. The house must be in standard condition, and be able to gain a certificate of occupancy and lead based paint clearance.

Schenectady Housing Needs

City of Schenectady Consolidated Plan

The City of Schenectady submitted its 2005 Consolidated Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development on May 15, 2005. Housing needs that were identified include:

- first-time homebuyers with downpayment assistance
- elderly households
- single-headed households

- ethnic and minority households
- housing and supportive services targeting HIV/AIDS population.

The Con Plan reports that the high incidence of substandard housing units in the City (reported at 8,791 total units in the Consolidated Plan) and increasing cost of available housing stock are major issues impacting the City's low income residents. Code violations also limit the supply of safe and decent affordable housing for rent or purchase. The Consolidated Plan also reported the public housing needs identified in the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority 2005 PHA Plan. Public housing needs include:

- Providing homeownership opportunities for low/moderate income persons
- Providing assistance to tenants to keep rents within 30% of income
- Providing security deposits, mortgage payments, rental payments to at-risk populations to prevent homelessness
- Providing transitional housing for homeless families
- Providing necessary housing assistance, both for owners and renters for special population groups such as the elderly, physically and/or mentally disadvantaged, substance abusers, etc.
- Organizing tenant associations
- Educating community members about expectation for renters/homeowners (loans, leases, banking, etc.)

Homeless needs were also reported in the 2005 Consolidated Plan.

- Creation of a low demand shelter to provide immediate shelter to the chronically homeless
- Creation of additional low-demand permanent supportive housing resources
- Further collaboration with psychiatric facilities, correctional facilities, hospitals, and foster care agencies to prevent inappropriate discharge to emergency shelters or streets
- Expansion of street outreach to chronically homeless persons
- Securing funding for supportive services programs
- Increase affordable housing opportunities to alleviate the bottleneck affect that congests waiting lists for permanent supportive housing

Schenectady Housing Task Force

Affordable housing challenges facing City residents were also mentioned at the meetings of the Schenectady Housing Task Force Meeting.

- There appear to be a number of new landlords in Schenectady who require training, along with their tenants.
- There is a shortage of rental units in the City that will pass code enforcement.

- DSS payments to landlords have become problematic. Some landlords do not to rent to DSS recipients, while some agencies report problems relocating residents. An increasing incidence of utility shut offs are occurring as residents choose between paying rent and paying for utilities.

Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority

Over the next few years the Housing Authority will explore housing for the elderly. The Housing Authority believes there is more of a need for it in the City as well as housing for the disabled. The agency believes that the current supply of housing that is accessible to the disabled is inadequate, and that the City should establish a list of handicap accessible housing available in the City. The agency has encouraged the City to develop an emergency homeless shelter (low demand safe haven) to handle the frequent requests for emergency housing for people who have experienced fire emergencies and domestic violence situations, etc.

The lack of affordable housing results in lengthy waiting lists for its public housing and Section 8 program. In the face of a shrinking supply of federally assisted housing more people are staying in motels until housing can be identified.

The lack of condominiums and similar townhome housing is a challenge. People are now living, working and retiring for longer periods and the demand for low-responsibility housing is increasing. Unfortunately few of these units are available in the city and residents are moving to the surrounding suburbs to find that type of living.

Schenectady's population peaked in 1930 at 95,692. As the population has declined there has not been a commensurate demolition of substandard housing, resulting in oversupply of certain housing types in certain neighborhoods. Former worker housing, built inexpensively and located on narrow lots do not offer the amenities contemporary homebuyers seek.

Many housing providers encourage the City to selectively demolish homes and assemble property into redevelopment areas where new housing could be constructed. Successful examples of this new development include the housing built on Hamilton Street by Jerry Burrell Park (rebuilt in the 90's) and the 300 block of Page Street where the City worked with BNI to transition buildings to homeowners, rehabilitated some units, rebuilt new units and demolished those homes "beyond hope". It is terribly expensive to gut a home and rehabilitate it.

The Housing Authority also suggested that the City should play a more active role in redevelopment, perhaps creating a program to subsidize home repairs.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

- Codes - enforcement should be zero tolerance. If this means more officers - then hire them. Codes need to be enforced fairly and aggressively. This is seen as the primary mechanism to protect neighborhoods - the first line of defense.
- Address nuisances like garbage, speeding, animals, loud noise, littering, and loitering. The small things make the big changes possible.
- Reduce absentee ownership by treating landlords harshly when they violate codes, creating incentives for local people to buy investment property or a two-family home. Work through neighborhood associations to reach out to landlords.
- Address City property abandonment law and abandonment issues created by tax lien sales.
- Much of the City's housing was inexpensively built for GE workers as multi-family in same unit. Other than recent Guyanese immigrants, these buildings are not viewed as desirable by most people.
- There is a need to demolish some existing housing stock and replace it with a more contemporary housing choice.
- Need more user friendly housing for singles and seniors in a mixed use and walkable area.
- The decline of homeownership and the rise of absentee owned two-family houses are leading to blight. The City needs to attract quality renters and hold absentee landlords to high standards.
- Should pursue a general marketing campaign that someone can own a home in Schenectady without earning a lot of money. We need careful planning to build housing that is affordable to current as well as future residents.
- Town houses (using sensitive residential design with strict development standards) on the golf course maintenance facility land on Oregon Avenue bounded by Route 7, Golf Course Road and Oregon Avenue are a good idea which projects a new image of housing choice in the City.
- Downtown living is very attractive to technology workers, young people starting out (after high school or college and before getting married) and "empty-nesters", etc.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- There has been a rise in renter occupants from 44.7% in 1990 to 55.3% in 2000.
- Vacancy rates have risen considerably over the last decade, in both for-sale housing (4.6%) and rental units (9.3%)
- Over one-half of all housing units in the City were built prior to 1940.
- There are approximately 2,828 subsidized housing units in the City. The Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority manages 1,015 public housing units and 1,289 Section 8 units and maintains long waiting lists for housing.
- Three of the City housing providers (Habitat for Humanity, Better Neighborhoods Inc. and the Community Land Trust) are concentrating on building homes in coordinated target areas in Hamilton Hill to maximize impact.
- The key issues identified by housing providers include the lack of affordable housing, impact of high property taxes, homebuyer credit issues, and code enforcement.

Infrastructure and Transportation

Infrastructure and Utility Systems

Water

The City of Schenectady's public water system serves the entire community and portions of the surrounding towns of Rotterdam and Niskayuna. The water system has adequate supply capacity and a well-maintained distribution system.

The City's water is pumped from the Great Flats Aquifer by a series of twelve wells located at the City's water treatment plant on Rice Road in the Town of Rotterdam. The treatment plant is permitted for up to 35 mgd (million gallons per day), and pumps about 12-13 mgd on average. During the 2005 very warm and dry summer, the peak use was between 20-22 mgd, far less than the systems capacity. Water quality is generally quite good even prior to treatment, and the City's drinking water is in compliance with all applicable State and Federal regulations.

Improvements to the City's treatment plant and wells in the 1990's have left the City with few problems regarding its public water system. There are some older distribution lines in areas of the City, but these are not viewed as a significant issue at this time. When water line breaks do occur, the City replaces older 4" and 6" pipes with 8" lines to meet current engineering standards. The City would replace more of the older lines if resources were available, but this is not considered a high priority need. The only other issue that has been identified through interviews with City staff is occasional low water pressure in the vicinity of Bradley Boulevard and St. Clare's Hospital.

In terms of the future, the City's water system should be viewed as a valuable asset. As the source of water for approximately 150,000 residents in Schenectady County, the City should continue to support the efforts of the Schenectady Intermunicipal Watershed Rules and Regulations Board to protect water quality in the Great Flats Aquifer. As with any infrastructure in an older community, the City must also continue to maintain and upgrade its water system as needed; however there are no significant issues or foreseeable limitations to the City's overall success, or to the quality of life in any of the City's neighborhoods, resulting from the water system.

Sewer

The City's sanitary sewer system covers virtually the entire city with the exception of a few residential homes that utilize individual septic systems at the outer edges of the Woodlawn neighborhood. The City's sewer treatment plant was completed in 1973. It is located along the Mohawk River, near the City's border with the Town of Niskayuna. The treatment plant has a design

capacity of 18.5 mgd and treats approximately 14mgd on average. Though capacity at the treatment plant is not an immediate concern, the age of the equipment is something that will need to be addressed in coming years, particularly to support expanded commercial and industrial activity.

Age is a more immediate problem for the City's sewer collection system. Older pipes in the collection system require frequent repair. Similar to older systems in other communities around the country, stormwater infiltration and inflow (I&I) remains a significant issue for the City.

As described effectively by Lake Superior Streams⁹: "Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) is the process by which clear water enters the sanitary sewer system. *Infiltration* is clear water entering the sanitary sewer system from sources such as ground water. As it rains the ground becomes saturated and the water must drain some place. When finding the path of least resistance it sometimes filters into the sewer through cracks and or open joints in the sanitary sewer line. *Inflow* is clear water entering the sanitary sewer at points of direct connection to the system. Footing drains and roof drains are a good spot for clear water to enter directly into the sanitary sewer. Footing or foundation drains are installed at the base of the basement walls and under the basement floor. The drains are installed to drain water away from the footings of the house and basement walls keeping them dry."

In Schenectady, the I&I problem has several causes. There are approximately 175 miles of sanitary sewer pipe and only about 100 miles of storm sewer pipe in the City. In some areas, storm drains may still be connected directly to the sanitary system. There are also several neighborhoods where a comprehensive storm sewer system was never developed. Large portions of Woodlawn and Bellevue, and some parts of the Northside neighborhood - residential neighborhoods that were mostly built during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s - do not have storm sewers. Some of these neighborhoods, including especially the Cleveland Avenue area in Bellevue experience regular and significant flooding. The age of the collection system is certainly a contributing factor. Older pipes may have cracks and holes that allow stormwater to enter the sanitary sewer system. It is also likely that sedimentation has restricted efficient flow in the interceptors, contributing to an occasional backup at the bottom of the hill during a major storm event.

The result of this infiltration and inflow problem is that the City's sewer system is occasionally overwhelmed during a very large storm, causing some effluent to bypass the treatment plant and flow directly into the Mohawk River. At the bottom of the hill, where the interceptors bring the collected wastewater to the treatment plant, there have been occasions when sewage has

⁹ Lakesuperiorstreams. 2005. LakeSuperiorStreams: Community Partnerships For Understanding Water Quality and Stormwater Impacts at the Head of the Great Lakes (<http://lakesuperiorstreams.org>). University of Minnesota-Duluth, Duluth, MN 55812.

backed up through the manholes in the vicinity of Nott Street and Front Street (between Downtown and the Northside neighborhood).

Another result of the storm sewer system deficiencies is street flooding which sometimes occurs in isolated low-lying areas of the City such as: the intersection of Guilderland Avenue and Cleaveland Avenue (Bellevue neighborhood), on Jay Street (Downtown), on Oneida Street near Ellis Hospital (Northside neighborhood), and along Grand Boulevard (between the Northside and Union Street neighborhoods). Furthermore, in areas where storm sewers are not present, some individual homes suffer with wet basements; but because such problems are not widespread it is difficult to allocate scarce resources to pay for solutions.

The City of Schenectady is currently developing a strategy for remedying its sewer system problems. In an era of limited resources, it is understood that progress on these longstanding issues will be incremental. Fortunately, the problems described above are isolated and do not create immediate or widespread health, safety, or quality of life concerns for most of the City's residents. They also do not create any significant limitation to the City's efforts to revitalize its neighborhoods and grow its economic base.

Gas and Electric Utilities

Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company, provides natural gas service throughout the City of Schenectady. As with most of the older urban areas in the region, including the cities of Albany and Troy, Schenectady has a low pressure (1/4 lb.) gas distribution system. This low pressure system is satisfactory for the type of light use associated with residences and small businesses, and should not be viewed as a shortcoming in attracting major commercial or industrial users. Certain higher intensity uses such as industrial or institutional buildings, however, require high pressure (2lb.) gas service to meet their power needs. To provide the needed high pressure to these specific sites, Niagara Mohawk works with customers to determine the most appropriate and cost efficient option. In newer communities, high pressure systems are typically provided from the start, and Niagara Mohawk is upgrading low pressure mains to high pressure mains in Schenectady, as it does in other older cities, as possible each year. Over time, more of the City will be upgraded to a high pressure gas distribution system.

Niagara Mohawk also provides electric power distribution throughout Schenectady. There are no known problem areas in the city, and no immediate system upgrades are planned. The State Street area in downtown Schenectady is served by an underground electric network which has five 13.2 kV network feeders. Such a network, with redundant sources, provides more reliable and constant power in the served area; a selling point for technology based businesses with sensitive electronic equipment and energy needs. For certain industrial or other special users who require higher delivery voltages, Niagara Mohawk will work with individual customers to study the most suitable and cost efficient options for providing such power. The company also works with local economic development officials to identify opportunity sites for development/redevelopment, and to ensure that special power needs can be met.

Telecommunications

The City of Schenectady’s telecommunication network includes the availability of fiber optic cable, and a new initiative to create a wireless network in the downtown area. The wireless area network will cover a large area of downtown from approximately the Broadway/1890 interchange to Union College, and from Schenectady County Community College to Nott Terrace. The availability of wireless internet service in this area should be an additional benefit for the City’s economic development initiatives.

Transportation

Streets and Highways

The City of Schenectady is well served by a network of Interstate highways, state highways, and local streets. Based on a windshield survey and a review of existing studies and reports, the City’s road system appears to be adequate to support continued residential, commercial, and industrial development and redevelopment without significant changes or expansions to the network. Instead the primary need is ongoing maintenance, and in some cases design modifications to enhance safety and quality of life.

Table 30: Major Roads in the City of Schenectady	
Street / Highway	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
Interstate 890	41,092 - 48,440
Erie Boulevard	22,320
State Street	7,480 - 14,319
Michigan Avenue	15,384
Washington Avenue	22,649
Chrisler Avenue	12,649
Union Street	10,750
Route 7	24,338 - 37,531
Data from the NYS Department of Transportation - Traffic counts (AADT) are from 1998 to 2003. Where a range is shown, this indicates different AADT counts for different segments of the road.	

The City owns and maintains approximately 180 miles of roads. It spends about \$2 million annually to improve local streets (repaving, etc). Nearly half of that amount is utilized for curb and sidewalk repairs and expansions as part of a policy to enhance neighborhoods at the same time as roadwork is undertaken. Though the City does repair some portion of its streets on an annual basis, limited financial resources have created a backlog of paving projects

and it falls short of the nine miles annually that would ensure that each street is repaired within a twenty year time frame. Still, the City’s streets are generally in good condition.

As noted above, highway capacity and traffic are not really problems for Schenectady. However, there are locations within the City that would benefit from a “road diet”¹⁰ and/or other traffic calming initiatives. For example, sections of State Street (Route 5) have recently been reconstructed to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety and comfort. Though the downtown segment and a segment from Furman Street to Fehr Avenue are now complete, the section of State Street between these segments remains overly wide with poor access management and an intimidating pedestrian environment. Likewise, Erie Boulevard is extremely wide, but a project to redesign and reconstruct this important street from General Electric to Union only has recently been funded through the regional Transportation Improvement Program (see page 69). Design of the Erie Boulevard improvements will begin in 2006 and construction will start in 2008.

Some individual neighborhoods within the City have also identified transportation needs specific to their areas. For example, the *Upper Union Street Master Plan* (2000), identifies the need for improved pedestrian crosswalks at key intersections, and also contains several parking and signage recommendations. The *Hamilton Hill and Vale Plan* (1997) suggests that improved sidewalks and crosswalks are needed. It also recommends more bus shelters, especially at the neighborhood’s schools and community centers, and cites speeding cars as an important issue. Finally, the *Vale Village Revitalization Feasibility Study* (1999) discusses, among other things, modifications to traffic patterns as a means of reducing crime and improving neighborhood stability. An important streetscape (sidewalks, curbs, etc.) and infrastructure reconstruction project is currently underway in Vale Village. These studies once again indicate that the City’s transportation concerns tend to be about pedestrian safety and comfort, transportation alternatives, and neighborhood quality of life rather than traffic and congestion.

Bus transit

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) operates fifteen bus routes in the City of Schenectady. Current schedules and route maps are available on their website - www.cdta.org. Performance data on these routes appears in Table 31 (see page 64) for the period 4/1/04 to 3/31/05 (12 months - FY05).

There are 347 bus stops in the City of Schenectady. Twenty five (25) of these stops, primarily on the Route 5 (State Street) corridor, have shelters. There is one park and ride lot in the City of Schenectady at St. Luke’s and some others located in neighboring communities. The Park and Ride inventory for the region is posted at www.commuter-register.org.

From CDTA’s perspective, the primary issues regarding transit service in the City of Schenectady are: Poor performance on all routes except the Route 5 service in terms of ridership and revenue, continuing need for supportive pedestrian infrastructure city-wide, and the location of facilities that primarily serve the elderly and disabled in areas where fixed route accessible bus service

¹⁰ “Road Diet” is a term used by Dan Burden and Peter Lagerwey to describe efforts by engineers nationwide to help roads lose lanes and width, making them leaner, safer, and more efficient. See *Road Diets: Fixing the Big Roads*, Walkable Communities, Inc., March 1999.

is not available. Frequently, special use facilities are constructed in places where land is inexpensive, with no forethought regarding the availability of transit service or the ability of residents to independently access basic services.

Table 31: CDTA Performance Data

Route	Passengers (includes Transfers)	Number of Trips Provided	Vehicle-Hours of Service Provided	Riders per Trip (avg.)	Riders per Vehicle Hour (avg.)	% Cost to Operate Covered by Fares
50 - Route 50	11,093	1,028	912:21	10.8	13.0	5.9%
51- Broadway	73,773	4,049	3,869:55	18.2	17.2	10.0%
52 - Scotia/ Crane Street	85,189	4,090	4,025:04	20.8	20.3	11.0%
53 - Altamont Avenue/ Hamburg Street	52,246	3,751	3,701:58	13.9	14.5	9.2%
54 - Scotia Wal-Mart	59,354	4,347	4,168:47	13.7	12.9	7.6%
55 - Schenectady/Albany	1,842,178	38,100	52,399:07	48.4	35.6	22.4%
55X - Schenectady/Albany Express	45,218	3,341	5,816:46	13.5	13.4	9.7%
56X - Schenectady/State Campus	9,121	514	1,070:50	17.7	15.8	10.7%
59 - Nott Street	55,408	6,425	3,328:09	8.6	16.8	10.9%
61- Van Vranken	89,948	4,049	3,792:03	22.2	21.8	12.8%
62 - State/ McClellan	98,385	4,347	3,863:46	22.6	25.9	16.8%
63-Route 20	57,101	3,084	4,707:23	18.5	13.0	8.7%
66 - South Loop Night	4,260	771	878:05	5.5	4.8	3.4%
70 - Troy - Schenectady	171,365	10,318	12,441:07	16.6	12.8	8.2%
77 - North Loop Night	6,184	1,028	1,125:31	6.0	5.0	4.7%
78 - West Loop Night	17,555	1,799	1,803:17	9.8	8.9	6.4%
System-wide	11,355,086	756,732	610,520h56m	13.1	17.6	21.7%
Core Routes	8,235,608	408,253	344,652h28m	18.7	20.5	-27%

CDTA is currently undertaking a comprehensive look at their route structure and performance in an effort called the Transit Development Plan (TDP). Because many of Schenectady’s neighborhood routes are poor performers in the system, changes in their configuration and/or schedules is possible. CDTA is now in the “System Performance” phase of an anticipated 2-year TDP process. They have completed the “Environmental Scan” phase, and their Board has adopted a set of policy objectives to guide the rest of the process. With a limited budget for transit service region-wide, CDTA’s Board is now weighing competing priorities like increasing ridership and improving route performance and providing geographic coverage. The transit service implications of the presence or absence of municipal land use

policies and zoning that supports pedestrian travel and transit service were factored into the goal-setting phase. System redesign occurred over the fall and winter of 2005. CDTA anticipates holding Schenectady-specific outreach and workshops in the fall of 2006.

The most significant public transit project under development in the region is the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along the Route 5 Corridor from the City of Albany to the City of Schenectady. According to the project website, www.ny5.org:

The NY 5 corridor between Albany and Schenectady is CDTA's busiest corridor. Routes in the corridor carry 25% of CDTA's total ridership. Along the corridor, there are travel destinations that range from major workplaces (such as the New York State Capitol, the Alfred E. Smith State Office Building, the Empire State Plaza, One Commerce Plaza, the MVP Health Plan offices and the New York State Department of Transportation's Region 1 Offices) to major shopping destinations (Colonie Center, Northway Mall and Mohawk Commons) and general retail and service businesses, to residential housing.

As identified in the earlier NY 5 Land Use and Transportation Concepts Study, Bus Rapid Transit is particularly well-suited for the corridor because it can bring rail-like service to the major destinations in the corridor at a much lower cost, with much less disruption, in less time than light rail transit. A BRT system can also take full advantage of new traffic signal technology being installed on NY 5, which can help support preferential treatment of the BRT service. In addition, since NY 5 is readily accessible from both the Northway (in Colonie) and I-890 (in Schenectady), there is the potential for driving to "satellite parking areas" at which BRT can be accessed for travel to the downtowns.

Conceptual design, including a phasing plan, for BRT service is complete and is posted on-line at www.ny5.org. Phase 1 capital improvements (which include the rudiments of stations, a subset of the corridor park and ride lot spaces, traffic signal priority, some vehicle purchases, and queue jumpers at Wolf Road and New Karner Road) are fully funded in the Capital District Transportation Committee's (CDTC) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and have a 2-5 year horizon. Phase 2 improvements are 5-10 years out, and Phase 3 would be more than 10 years out and contingent upon successful completion of the earlier phases.

In terms of the City of Schenectady's planning efforts, CDTA notes that desired station locations for the BRT service have been defined. The City's comprehensive plan and any subsequent zoning changes could support the BRT effort by allowing for higher development densities at the identified station nodes, emphasizing pedestrian accessibility, and allowing for parking requirement modifications (reduced parking) if transit use is actively supported by proposed developments. CDTA is also looking to develop shared-use park-and-ride spaces along the Route 5 corridor, and would like to see better access management to improve circulation and connectivity in the corridor.

Intercity bus

The Schenectady Travel Center is located on State Street west of Erie Boulevard at the edge of the Stockade neighborhood and near Schenectady County Community College. Bus lines that currently provide regular intercity bus transportation service to and from Schenectady are Adirondack Trailways, Greyhound Bus Lines, and Vermont Transit Lines.

Passenger rail

The Schenectady train station is located one-half block north of State Street on Erie Boulevard between Liberty Street and Union Street. AMTRAK provides regular passenger rail service to and from Schenectady on several of its routes, including:

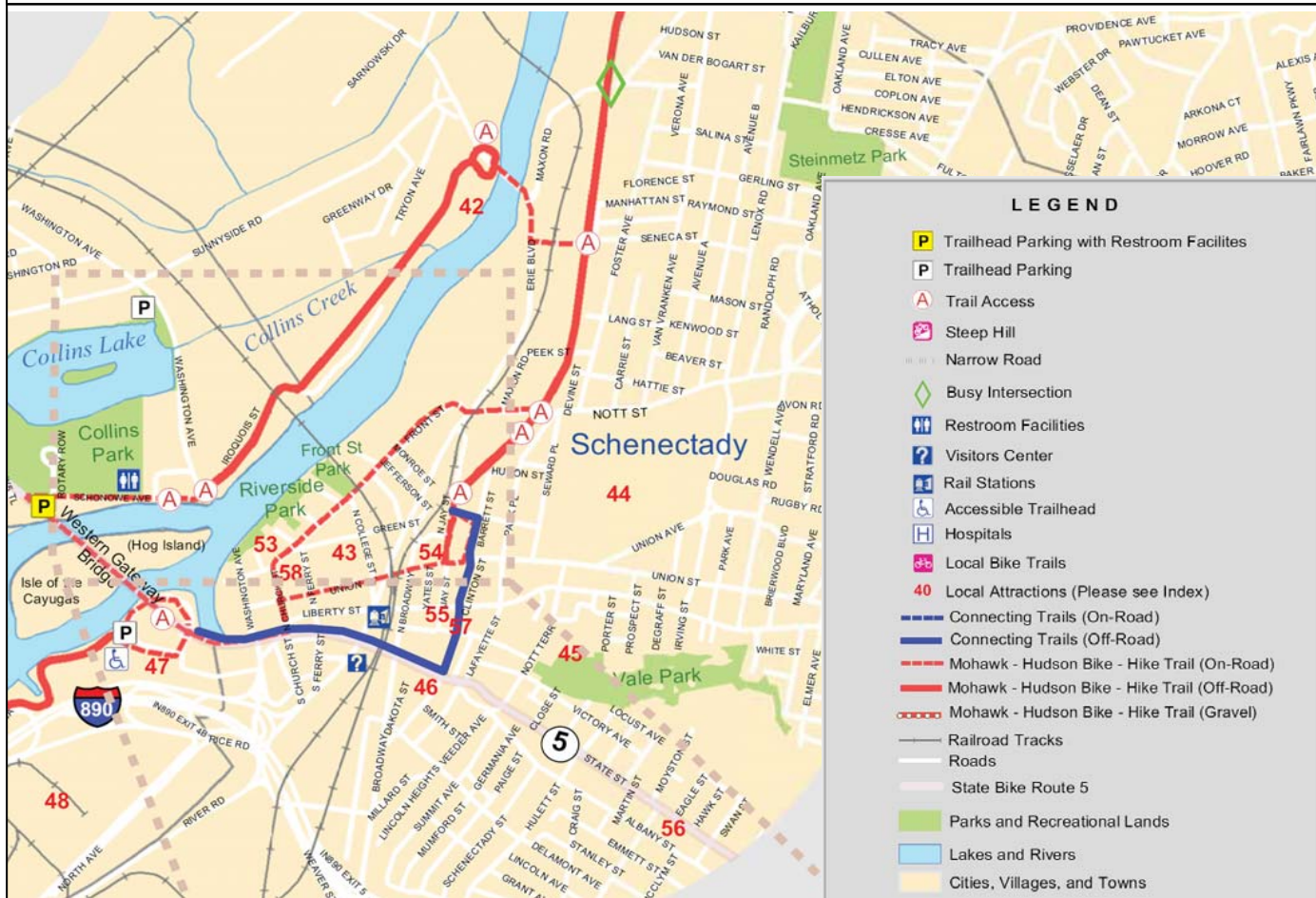
- Adirondack: Montreal - Albany - New York
- Empire Service: New York - Albany - Syracuse - Rochester - Buffalo - Niagara Falls
- Ethan Allen Express: Rutland - Albany - New York
- Lake Shore Limited: New York/Boston - Albany - Chicago
- Maple Leaf: Toronto - New York

One of the issues facing passenger rail service in the City is the bottleneck between Schenectady and the City of Albany. A single track runs between these two communities, and as a result, backups and delays are common. While service between Albany and New York City is frequent and of consistent quality, service west of Albany through Schenectady is much less dependable. Plans to remedy this situation by developing a second track in the corridor have been on hold for several years due to disagreements between the interested parties and a lack of funding. Additionally, there is no longer round trip service to New York City in one day, which has become a big issue.

As noted above, the City of Schenectady and the region's transportation agencies are making plans to improve the quality and public profile of public transportation services in the City through the development of an intermodal transportation center at the site of the existing AMTRAK station. With the cooperation of Metroplex and the City, CDTA has taken the lead agency role in the planned improvements. An initial project will do basic ADA accessibility and structural repair-type work. A project scheduled for 2008 in the CDTC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will provide for more significant improvements that are currently being scoped.

Finally, it should be noted that the long-term prospects for passenger rail service in New York State are very much in question. On the national level, the financial viability of AMTRAK remains uncertain as Congress and the President continue to discuss funding cutbacks for the national passenger rail company. However, at the state level there continues to be interest and discussion about improving rail service across upstate New York. It is likely that some form of passenger rail service will continue to operate in New York State even if the national service is reduced or eliminated.

Figure 4: Map of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in the City of Schenectady.



Bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure

For an urban community such as Schenectady, a continuous network of well-maintained sidewalks and well-defined crosswalks should be viewed as an essential component of transportation safety and quality of life. The importance of safe and comfortable pedestrian environments is borne out by the fact 21.5% of Schenectady’s 26,307 households do not have a car, and another 45.7% have only one vehicle available (Census 2000). Aside from the basic infrastructure of sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians, a pleasing and interesting built

environment enhances the desirability of walking. All of these elements are, therefore, important to the livability of Schenectady’s neighborhoods and to the economic revitalization of the City as a whole.

Likewise, bicycling is a mode of transportation that can be accommodated on the City’s existing street infrastructure. Well-maintained, paved shoulders can generally provide adequate space for the avid recreational cyclist or for those who commute to work or who shop by bicycle. However, shoulders on busy streets are not always adequate for recreational users and for children.

This problem becomes more pronounced when on-street parking (which is good for the pedestrian environment) forces the cyclist further out into the travel lanes. In some situations, a dedicated bike lane can help to define a proper location for cyclists on such streets. Off-road alternatives are also highly desirable for bicyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters, and others when it is possible to provide them.

The City of Schenectady has a fairly complete network of sidewalks, with an on-going need for repair and maintenance. As described earlier, the City does look at repair and replacement of curbs and sidewalks as needed when it repaves local streets. Special projects, such as the current work in Vale Village, are also undertaken as resources are available. Funding from the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority, Schenectady County, and through state and federal programs has helped the City to implement streetscape improvements in Vale Village. Such partnerships have also allowed the City to move forward with streetscape improvements on Upper Union Street and for the Little Italy Project on North Jay Street.

Well-defined crosswalks are more infrequent except in certain areas of the City, such as sections of State Street that have been reconstructed over the last few years. Despite the state's recent legislation giving clear priority to pedestrians in crosswalks, in most communities automobile drivers are either not aware of the law or not concerned with its sporadic enforcement. There is a continued need to improve pedestrian safety and comfort in many areas of the City.

Aside from its basic pedestrian infrastructure, there are a few locations in the City where trails are available for public use. Opportunities for walking and bicycling include trails within the City's parks. Central Park in particular contains many miles of trails.

State Street (NYS Route 5) is designated as a New York State Bike Route 5. New York State Bike Route 5 was established in 1994 as part of a comprehensive network of signed, on-road, long distance bicycle routes. The route is posted along regular state and local highways used by automobiles, trucks, and other motorized vehicles and is intended primarily for experienced cyclists.

The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, a component of the state's Canalway Trail System, runs through the City of Schenectady. It is a paved multi-use path from the Town of Niskayuna to North Jay Street near downtown. There the trail utilizes City streets until it starts again as a multi-use path at the Western Gateway Bridge adjacent to Schenectady Community College. In 2001, the City and the Capital District Transportation Committee completed the *City of Schenectady Urban Bike Route Master Plan*. This study looked at short-term and long-term opportunities to improve the link between the North Jay Street and the Western Gateway Bridge trailheads. In the long-term, the plan recommended that the City consider a riverfront alignment that would create a new off-road trail from Maxon Road through the Nott Street Industrial Park to Riverside Park in the Stockade Neighborhood and finally to Washington Avenue. The plan acknowledged that there are numerous obstacles to implementing this long range vision. The Urban Bike Route Master Plan also recommended four loop systems to connect to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. Three of these loops would travel through the City on local streets and properties: the Downtown/Stockade Loop, the Park Loop, and the Outer Park Loop. The fourth loop would travel through Scotia and Glenville. Finally, the study recommended

that several streets in the City be designated as “regional routes” and that certain local connector streets be designated as “bike routes”, and it developed a set of design guidelines for various types of bicycle facilities.

Future Transportation Projects

Several transportation projects in the City are on the region’s Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2005-2010. The TIP, developed by the Capital District Transportation Committee, allocates limited federal highway and transit dollars expected for the region during the period. TIP projects are selected and prioritized from among the entire region’s proposed and desired transportation projects through an exhaustive evaluation and discussion process. Projects on the most recent Draft TIP that involve Schenectady include:

- Planning and design phases for replacing the Route 7 bridge over I-890 just over the border in the Town of Rotterdam.
- Culvert repair on sections of I-890.
- Design and reconstruction of Erie Boulevard from Liberty Street (NY5) to I-890. This includes redesign of the road with signal, drainage, curbs, sidewalks, parking, median and intersection treatments and streetscaping.
- Rehabilitation of approximately 1.5 miles of the existing multiuse trail from Jay Street to the Town of Niskayuna border. This project will be administered by the New York State Canal Corporation.
- Reconstruction of Route 7 from I-890 to NY5, and resurfacing of Route 7 from NY5 to Saint David’s Lane in the Town of Niskayuna.
- Design and facilities work for the Intermodal Transportation Center at the site of the current Amtrak station.
- Replacement of the Oak Street Bridge over the CSX railroad tracks. This bridge links the Bellevue and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods.
- Provision of a second railroad track between Schenectady and Rensselaer to improve freight and passenger rail efficiency in this corridor. This project has been under discussion for several years but remains on hold as negotiations continue between the involved parties.
- Investments through the Capital District Transportation Authority toward implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service on Route 5 between Schenectady and Albany.
- Relocate the Barge Canal northwards towards the center of the River, and away from the City shoreline to allow for creation of more docks. This will require replacing or modifying the CSX railroad bridge over the Mohawk River.

The projects that have been funded through the current Transportation Improvement Program will help the City of Schenectady to address necessary maintenance on some critical roadway infrastructure. Some of the selected project will also allow the community to move forward with important revitalization, alternative transportation, and quality of life initiatives. However, limited funding remains the primary obstacle to accomplishing most of the necessary and desired transportation improvements in the City and its varied neighborhoods.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

Infrastructure/City Services

- Sewers, roads and sidewalks need improving. Emphasis should be put on fixing flooding - especially on Guilderland Avenue.
- Infrastructure upgrade in Stockade is essential to preserve heritage tourism potential and property values.
- Aquifer is a resource that can be marketed to draw commercial development. It needs to be protected from over development especially in Rotterdam where sewers are inadequate
- Key roads are not pedestrian friendly. Pedestrians cannot navigate the Cross Town
- Improved Signage is required on 890 and the NYS Thruway and the "attraction" signs need to be filled up rather than blank
- The City needs to be stricter and fairer in code enforcement, implement more precise zoning and attempt to prevent demolition of buildings by neglect
- Keep parkland as parkland, plant more trees, especially on State Street
- Taxes are too high and cutting into other spending
- Salvage yard on the cross town is an eye sore
- The City needs to learn from its big mistakes - train station, Nott Terrace High School.
- The train station is untapped resource. We need high speed rail to NYC. The bus station could use a face lift.
- Need to improve both State and Erie as green gateways. The 890/ SCCC is a terrible gateway and a horrible gateway to the Stockade
- More frequent trash receptacles are needed on main streets and in the parks
- More lighting is needed on side streets
- Should develop an intranet for City to reduce costs and increase integration

Transportation

- There should be more emphasis placed on creating pedestrian, wheelchair and bike friendly amenities which draw young people
- There should be better driving and walking etiquette
- The City's main arteries need to be reworked to allow pedestrians to get from neighborhood to neighborhood
- Should continue to pursue regional light rail (BRT)

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City's water system has adequate supply capacity and a well-maintained distribution system.
- The age of the equipment at the City's sewage treatment plant is something that will need to be addressed in coming years, particularly to support expanded commercial and industrial activity.
- Age is also a more immediate problem for the City's sewer collection system. Older pipes in the collection system require frequent repair. Similar to older systems in other communities around the country, stormwater infiltration and inflow remains a significant issue for the City.
- The City of Schenectady is currently developing a strategy for remedying its sewer system problems.
- Niagara Mohawk, a National Grid Company, provides natural gas service and electric power distribution throughout the City of Schenectady.
- The City of Schenectady is well served by a network of Interstate highways, state highways, and local streets.
- CDTA is currently undertaking a comprehensive look at their route structure and performance in an effort called the Transit Development Plan (TDP) and anticipates holding Schenectady-specific outreach and workshops in the spring of 2006.
- Several transportation projects in the City are on the region's Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2005-2010 including the redesign and reconstruction of Erie Boulevard which is scheduled to begin in 2006 with construction completed by 2008.

Natural Resources

The Natural Environment

Soil Types

There are eight major soil types in the City of Schenectady. Field surveys for the Montgomery and Schenectady County soils map were completed in 1972 by the USDA and Cornell University; the exact boundaries between the major classifications shown in the soils map are not precise and should be used as a reference only. Limitations on development related to soils pertain to poor drainage and a high water table along the northern Mohawk Riverfront and in the North Side Neighborhood. Additional soil limitations may have previously existed along the rest of the riverfront, however, removal/stripping of soil and infill for development purposes in the Downtown and on the southern riverfront have altered those soils. The major soil types include: Colonie Association, Urban Land, Cut and Fill, Burdett-Scriba, Hamlin-Wayland-Teel, Elnora-Junius and Scio-Raynham and are individually described below.

Colonie Association soils are the most common in Schenectady. It is dominantly underlain by sandy material. Areas of deep, well-drained to excessively drained, sandy Colonie soils are used for residences and large parking lots as well as parks and other such areas where the soils have had little disturbance. These areas are generally nearly level or gently sloping. Colonie Association soils are located in most of the Woodlawn, Bellevue, Central State Street, Eastern Avenue, and Union Street neighborhoods. Urban land - Colonie soils describe areas of the city where soils are affected by structures and pavement and are located in the Mont Pleasant and the Vale and Hamilton Hill Neighborhoods.

According to the Soil Survey, the Downtown and the industrial southern riverfront consists of "cut and fill land." This is an area in where the original soil is stripped and removed or is covered with three feet or more of soil material. In this survey it appears where flooding is a problem. For instance, along the Mohawk Riverfront at the City line with Rotterdam, Hamlin--Wayland-Teel soils exist that were likely once along additional portions of the City riverfront that were stripped and removed to make way for industry in the City.

The Burdett-Scriba and Scio-Raynham soil series are located in the North Side neighborhood. The Burdett soils are nearly level and gently sloping stony soils that are somewhat poorly drained and are within eight inches of the water table in the spring. Seasonal wetness in residential basements and other buildings is common. The Scio-Raynham soils are deep, nearly level, poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained soils where the water table is at or near the surface. There is severe seasonal wetness associated with these soils.

The Elnora soil series is located in the Woodlawn neighborhood at the Schenectady County line. The soil is deep, nearly level, moderately well-drained, and was formed in wind- or water-deposited sand.

Slopes

As the 1971 City Comprehensive Plan described, the City of Schenectady has relatively flat and gently sloping terrain with the exception of four ravines radiating back from the Mohawk River. These ravines remain undeveloped or are used as transportation corridors. They are located in the northwestern corner of the City, the Conrail railroad bed, Vale Cemetery and the I-890 corridor. Steep slopes also exist along Broadway, Veeder Avenue and Nott Terrace.

Floodways

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Administration, was developed in part to administer the National Flood Insurance Program. In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) "in response to the rising cost of taxpayer funded disaster relief for flood victims and the increasing amount of damage caused by floods." The NFIP "makes federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage."

The City of Schenectady is currently participating in the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood maps were last updated in 1983. Portions of the Mohawk Riverfront are within the 100-Year Floodway, particularly in the area of Downtown and the northern Riverfront. The ravine used as a rail bed separating the Bellevue and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods is also within the 100-Year Floodway. The Lisha Kill is a flood-prone stream running through the Woodlawn Neighborhood and the Woodlawn Preserve at the City's southeastern corner. The Lisha Kill and adjacent land in the Woodlawn Preserve are designated a Class I freshwater wetland. That area of Woodlawn is also in a 500-Year Floodway. Seasonal flooding in the Woodlawn neighborhood has always been and continues to be a problem (see storm water management discussion in the Infrastructure section.) The only other area noted on the NFIP map is in the area of the stream that runs through Union College Campus and the GE Plot.

Mohawk River

The Mohawk River is a vital link in the transportation and recreation waterways of the northeast and forms the City's northwest boundary. Historically, as the only natural passage across the Appalachian Mountain Range, the Mohawk River allowed development of the interior sections of New York State before roads were highly developed. Before European settlement, the Mohawk Valley was home to the Iroquois nations, which included the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga, and later the Tuscarora tribes. The stable culture developed by these tribes significantly shaped the early development of the United States.

The Mohawk Valley was also one of the most important frontiers in the New World. As noted in the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor's Management Plan, a succession of European peoples made their way across the valley, establishing a pattern of farms and towns that remains. The national characteristics of the Dutch of New Netherlands were particularly influential in shaping the emerging new American identity. Much blood was shed in the constantly shifting frontier wars that characterized the 17th and 18th centuries. As the colonial provinces turned into the battleground for independence from England, the Mohawk Valley was the setting for pivotal Revolutionary War events. These wars produced tensions that led to the dispersal of the Iroquois Nation and significantly shaped the new nation.

In addition, since the early twentieth century, when the state's original canal system was significantly enlarged, the Mohawk River channel replaced many sections of the original Erie Canal. The navigable section of the Mohawk River covers approximately 70 miles from Little Falls, NY to the confluence with the Hudson River at Waterford, NY.

The Mohawk River is currently more recreation-oriented than transportation- or cargo-oriented. It serves as a connector between the Hudson River and the Oswego Canal/Lake Ontario, Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. At its eastern terminus in Waterford, the Mohawk River joins the Hudson River forming a waterway that allows inland navigation from New York City to the Great Lakes.

In 1997, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission produced a Management Plan¹¹ designed to "improve the region's quality of life ... [through]... intertwining community revitalization, heritage tourism efforts, and historical interpretation ... [to]...lead to tangible results: helping small businesses, reusing old buildings, fixing up and cleaning up, creating parks and other amenities, making the great stories about the region's past a significant attraction for visitors."

The Plan is intended to be a long-term series of small simultaneous steps that do not involve large projects and major new capital investment programs. The Plan provides a 10 year action plan designed "...to preserve, promote, and celebrate our natural, cultural and historic strengths in order to enhance the quality of life and stimulate economic vitality throughout the corridor."

Woodlawn Preserve

The Woodlawn Preserve, located in the Woodlawn Neighborhood at the Schenectady - Colonie municipal line, is an undeveloped, rare natural community and wetlands with a unique ecosystem that is home to several rare species. The Woodlawn Preserve is part of the same ecosystem as the neighboring Albany Pine Bush Preserve. The low areas of the property are Class I freshwater wetlands and the high areas (or upland) are historically known as a pitch-pine scrub oak natural community. According to the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, "includes several remnant features of the Pine Bush, including sand plain and dune formations, pitch pine-scrub oak barrens, and historic Karner blue butterfly habitat, which while currently unoccupied, may be

¹¹ Mary Means & Associates, *Management Plan for the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor* (June, 1997)

restored as a future reintroduction site. The area also supports several important wetland areas forming a unique complex of pine barrens and wetland habitats.” It is currently listed on the State’s Priority Projects List.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

- There needs to be formal permanent protection for the Woodlawn Preserve. The City should expand use of preserve by the schools.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- Portions of the Mohawk Riverfront and the ravine used as a rail bed separating the Bellevue and Mont Pleasant Neighborhoods are within the 100-Year Floodway.
- The Lisha Kill and adjacent land in the Woodlawn Preserve are designated a Class I freshwater wetland. That area of Woodlawn is also in a 500-Year Floodway. Flooding in the Woodlawn neighborhood has always been and continues to be a problem.
- The Mohawk River is a vital link in the transportation and recreation waterways of the northeast and forms the City’s northwest boundary. It is currently more recreation-oriented than transportation- or cargo-oriented.
- The Woodlawn Preserve is an undeveloped, rare natural community and wetlands with a unique ecosystem that is home to several rare species.

Community Character & Historic Preservation

Facilitated by strategies such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program, communities large and small are integrating and relying on historic preservation as part of their community and economic development programs. In doing so, these communities have taken steps to identify, protect, enhance and promote their historic and cultural resources. These strategies help maintain and enhance property values, enhance community pride, establish a unique sense of place, stabilize neighborhoods, facilitate tourism and attract additional investment.

National and State Register Listings

The National Historic Preservation Act and New York State Historic Preservation Act establish criteria by which buildings, sites, and structures are determined historic. In order to be designated historic and listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods are evaluated through a formal survey and nomination process. Listed resources are afforded a basic level of protection from federal and state actions, but local regulation is needed to prevent demolition and other actions.

National and State Register-listed historic resources in the City of Schenectady include three historic districts (the Stockade Historic District and the Union Street Historic District, and the General Electric Realty Plot) and 14 individually-listed buildings. In addition to the buildings and historic districts listed on the National and State Register, the City of Schenectady has 5 locally designated historic districts (the Stockade Historic District and the Union Street Historic District, the General Electric Realty Plot, Morris Avenue, and Union Triangle).

Buildings listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places

The 14 buildings listed individually in the National and State Registers include:

- H.S. Barney Building - 217-229 State Street. This is a large two- to five-story masonry commercial building that was composed of six connected sections and altered for a large department store (1873-1923).
- Brandywine Avenue School - 108 Brandywine Avenue. This is a three and one-half story; brick institutional building built in 1904.
- Central Fire Station - Erie Boulevard. This large three-story Georgian Revival brick firehouse was built from 1924-29.
- Foster Building (Foster Hotel) - 508 State Street. This is a six-story Beaux-Arts terracotta-clad building that was designed by Penn Varney. It was built in 1907 as a commercial building and hotel.
- Franklin School - Avenue B and Mason Street. This large two-story Georgian Revival brick school was built in 1907.

- General Electric Research Laboratory - General Electric Main Plant. This world-renowned research laboratory was established in 1900 by Willis R. Whitney for General Electric. It includes two buildings at main plant and one in the neighboring Town of Niskayuna.
- Hotel Van Curler - 78 Washington Avenue. This is a six-story Georgian Revival brick former hotel that was designed by H.L. Stevens & Co. and built in 1925. It was converted for use as Schenectady County Community College.
- Irving Langmuir House - 1176 Stratford Road. Located within the GE Realty Plot, this colonial revival brick residence was built in 1906. It was the home of Irving Langmuir, a distinguished chemist, inventor, and winner of the 1934 Nobel Prize in chemistry.
- Nott Memorial Hall - Union College Campus. This Victorian Gothic 16-sided stone building was originally conceived by Joseph Jacques Ramee as a centerpiece of the 1813 plan for the campus. It was designed by Edward Tuckerman Potter.
- F.P. Proctor Theatre and Arcade - 432 State Street. This two-story through-block shopping and office arcade was designed by Thomas W. Lamb and built in 1926.
- Schenectady Armory - 125 Washington Avenue. This massive, Art Deco/Tudor Revival style edifice was built in 1936. It consists of an administration building and an attached drill shed. It was designed by State Architect William Haugaard.
- Schenectady City Hall- Jay Street. This Georgian Revival brick City Hall was designed by McKim, Mead & White and built in 1930-31.
- United States Post Office - Schenectady - Jay and Liberty Streets. This Neo-classical stone post office was designed by James Knox Taylor and built in 1911-13. It was substantially enlarged in 1934-35.
- Vale Cemetery and Vale Park - 907 State Street/Nott Terrace. Established in 1857, Vale Cemetery and the present Vale Park occupy a parcel of approximately 100 acres.

Historic Districts listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places

In addition to the 14 buildings individually listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places above, there are three historic districts, the Stockade Historic District, the Union Street Historic District and the General Electric Realty Plot. The Stockade Historic District was listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places in 1973 and was expanded in 1984. The GE Realty Plot was listed in the National and State Registers in 1980. The Union Street Historic District was listed in the National and State Registers in 1982.

Located between the Mohawk River, Railroad Tracks and Union Street, the **Stockade District** consists of many homes that were built between 1735 and 1800. This 15-block residential district includes approximately 380 buildings including several 18th Century Dutch Colonial frame and brick residences and numerous Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate brick and frame rowhouses and townhouses.

The **Union Street Historic District** features 19th and early 20th Century architecture and is located on both sides of Union Street (306-1364 and 307-1355) with contiguous properties at 20 ½ Union Avenue and 2 and 4 Nott Terrace. This 18-block district

includes approximately 190 buildings that are mostly detached residences. Notable buildings include the Second Empire John C. Ellis Mansion (1878), Queen Anne Willis T. Hanson Estate (1888), massive St. John the Evangelist Church (1898-99), and numerous large Queen Anne and Colonial Revival residences.

The **General Electric Realty Plot** is bounded by Rugby Road, Union Avenue, Nott Street, Lenox and Lowell Roads. This nine-block planned suburban residential neighborhood includes about 100 large early 20th century Queen Anne, Shingle Style, Arts and Crafts, Georgian and Colonial Revival residences on landscaped lots.

Local Historic Districts

In addition to the buildings and historic districts listed on the National and State Register, the City of Schenectady has 5 locally designated historic districts. To become a local historic district - a recommendation is needed from the Historic District Commission to the City Council, then the Planning Commission provides a recommendation to the City Council, then a public hearing is held and the City Council votes. If it is approved, it then becomes a zoning overlay. The local districts include: Morris Avenue, Union Triangle, Union Street, Stockade, and the GE Plot. There is currently discussion of developing a Jay Street Historic District.

Other Properties of Significance

The National and State Registers of Historic Places concentrate primarily on resources that are historically and architecturally significant at the National and State levels. Listing in the National and State Registers provides only limited protective measures and incentives for the improvement of historic buildings, coming into effect only when Federal or State funding is used to finance a project (construction, demolition, acquisition) or when Federal or State agencies are otherwise involved in the project. Only a local historic preservation ordinance can protect historic buildings from demolition or alteration.

Several areas with the potential to become historic districts have been identified by members of the Schenectady Heritage Foundation and the City's Historic District Commission. These areas may benefit from designation as a local historic district or neighborhood conservation districts, to stabilize neighborhoods, enhance property values, and attract additional investment and rehabilitation. Opportunity areas include:

- Jay Street Historic District - This district was recently proposed as a local historic district to the City of Schenectady. It encompasses the first three blocks of Jay Street including City Hall and the Post Office.
- Union Street Corridor Historic District - This proposed designation will expand the District east of the existing District.
- Bradley Boulevard Historic District
- Wright Avenue Historic District
- Central Park Historic District
- State Street Historic District - State Street from W. Gateway Bridge to Erie Boulevard.

Existing Historic Preservation Programs and Incentives

Existing organizations whose missions and/or activities concentrate on historic preservation or design include the following:

- Schenectady Heritage Foundation - Since 1972, the Foundation's mission has focused on the preservation of historic architecture in Schenectady County. Over the years, this not-for-profit, volunteer organization has supported a variety of projects through education, advocacy and grants. It has concentrated on building conservation, area and neighborhood rehabilitation, and stabilization of the three unique historic districts in the City of Schenectady.
- City of Schenectady Historic Commission - The Commission reviews plans for actions which result in the physical change, etc. of historic sites or structures within a Historic District; investigates, reports and recommends to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, City Council, City Departments, etc. on actions affecting buildings, etc. within a Historic District; and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council regarding the establishment, amendment or alteration of a Historic District.
- City Hall Centennial Commission - This Commission is charged with identifying restoration projects and guiding fund-raising campaigns to preserve City Hall.
- Certified Local Government - The City of Schenectady is a Certified Local Government. This Federal initiative provides valuable technical assistance and small matching grants to hundreds of diverse communities whose local governments are endeavoring to keep for future generations what is significant from their community's past.
- Schenectady County Historical Society - The Historical Society is a private not-for-profit organization. Their mission is the "storage and preservation of books and documents pertaining to the history of Schenectady County, the dissemination of information about this history, and the conduct of educational programs at the three centers that they own or manage - the Efner Center on the third floor of Schenectady City Hall; a Museum and Library at 32 Washington Avenue in the City of Schenectady, and the Mabee Farm in Rotterdam Junction.
- Friends of Vale - The Friends of Vale is an organization that works to preserve the character of the Vale Park and Cemetery.

There are two façade improvement programs currently operating in the City of Schenectady. The Upper Union Street Business Improvement District (BID) offers a Façade Improvement program to commercial properties located in the Upper Union Street BID area. Improvements must be consistent with the Upper Union Street BID Design Guidelines and typically range in size from \$3,000 to \$60,000 of construction cost. Program benefits include a fifty percent grant for construction costs as well as architectural services provided by the program at no cost to the applicant

The Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation operates a Façade Program for commercial properties within the boundaries of the Downtown Special Assessment District. Property owners participating in the program must comply with the Façade Program Guidelines and the Façade Program Design Guidelines developed by the Façade Committee and approved by the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation. The program requires the active participation of property owners throughout

the process. Grants for façade awards range from \$1,000 dollars to a maximum of \$30,000. However larger commercial buildings with linear street frontage in excess of 60 feet, may qualify for additional grant funds of up to \$60,000, subject to Façade committee approval.

Comprehensive Planning, Zoning, and Local Ordinances Related to Historic Preservation

Focused long-term planning and land use controls such as zoning ordinances; historic preservation, landmark or architectural review ordinances; and various types of overlay districts, are among the strongest tools available to local governments wishing to preserve community character or have a direct impact on the future development of the community.

The primary tool for protecting historic resources in the City of Schenectady is the City's Zoning Ordinance, Article VIII "Historic Districts" of Chapter 264 of the Schenectady Code. The purpose of this section is to:

- Safeguard the heritage of the City of Schenectady by preserving resources in the city that represent or reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history.
- Protect and enhance the attractiveness of such historic resources to home buyers, visitors, shoppers and residents and thereby provide economic benefits to the city and its citizens.
- Conserve and improve the value of property within Historic Districts.
- Foster, encourage and advise the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of structures, areas and neighborhoods.
- Promote the use of Historic Districts for the education, enjoyment and welfare of the citizens of the city.
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and history of the past as represented in the Historic Districts.
- Designate sites and structures throughout the City of Schenectady as having historical value which should be preserved.

The Historic Commission was created in 1988 to carry out the intent of the Historic Districts program in Article VIII. The Commission is a seven member body appointed by the Mayor. The Commission reviews plans for actions which result in the physical change that are visible from the public right-of-way to historic sites or structures within a Historic District; investigates, reports and recommends to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, City Council, City Departments, etc. on actions affecting buildings, etc, within a Historic District; and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council regarding the establishment, amendment or alteration of a Historic District.

Two of the existing State and Nationally Listed Historic Districts exist as independent use districts in the Zoning Ordinance and on the Zoning Map (Article IV, §264-8, §264-11, §264-20)). The Stockade, General Electric Realty Plot and Morris Ave Historic Districts are represented as Zoning Districts B-2, and A-2 within the Zoning Ordinance and on the Zoning Map while a floating Overlay Historic District was created for individual buildings and areas where a A-2 or B-2 classification would not be appropriate. The Union Street Historic District is not represented as a use district within the zoning ordinance like the Stockade or GE Plot. Instead, the district is part of a larger area, with residential and commercial zoning.

The Ordinance states that the B-2 Stockade Historic Residential District “is intended to promote, maintain and enhance the historic Stockade neighborhood where specialized standards and requirements are necessary to protect the area's distinctive residential quality and the architectural or historical significance of structures therein.” Permitted uses as of right within the district include single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, public parks and playgrounds, schools, churches, nursery schools, day care centers, family care homes.

The A-2 Historic Residential District is intended to promote, maintain and enhance the historic and architecturally significant buildings within the General Electric Realty Plot and Morris Ave neighborhood. Specific standards and requirements are necessary to preserve the single-family residential qualities and attractiveness of this neighborhood. Only single family dwellings are permitted as of right in the A-2 District.

The OH Overlay Historic District is intended to promote, maintain and enhance areas, buildings and neighborhoods of historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic value and to promote the purpose and intent of Article VIII governing historic districts. The OH District provides a means of applying historic district review and protection to individual landmark buildings or to areas of diverse land use that may not reasonably be classified as either an A-2 or B-2 Historic District. As an Overlay District, the OH District is mapped in conjunction with an underlying district.

The B-2 and A-2 districts and the OH District are subject to the requirements of Article VIII “Historic Districts” of the Zoning Ordinance. The Historic District Commission reviews, approves or disapproves all plans and building permit applications for construction, exterior alteration, repair, relocation, renovation or demolition of buildings and structures within the A-2 or B-2 District or OH District. For purposes of review and approval, the Commission is expected to base its decision on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings published by the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Preservation Assistance Division.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

- In the visioning workshops and individual neighborhood meetings, residents identified their historic resources and the stories of innovation that many of them represent as key assets for the City to build upon in distinguishing itself, creating a unique identity and attracting the growing number of heritage and cultural tourists.
- There was concern expressed in the Stockade District that the city practices demolition by neglect - not moving fast or aggressively enough to save structures being abandoned or underutilized by their owners.
- Residents felt that the ordinance was not enforced aggressively and that conversions happened in the neighborhoods that are not permitted but no one from the City goes after them.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City of Schenectady is home to three historic districts and 14 historic buildings that are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.
- Various groups have identified other potential historic districts around the City as well.
- Organizations serving Schenectady whose missions and/or activities concentrate on historic preservation or design includes the Schenectady Heritage Foundation, City of Schenectady Historic Commission, City Hall Centennial Commission, Schenectady County Historical Society, and the Friends of Vale.
- There are two façade improvement programs currently operating in the City of Schenectady (Upper Union Street Business Improvement District and Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation).
- The primary tool for protecting historic resources in the City of Schenectady is the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Article VIII “Historic Districts” of Chapter 264 of the Schenectady Code.

Recreation

Parks and Recreation - Parks Summary

The City of Schenectady Parks Department manages park and recreational areas within the City, as well as numerous open spaces (such as memorial sites and vacant land) that can be used for passive recreation. Active parks comprise 500.76 acres and passive parks account for 198.41 acres. The Woodlawn Preserve, located in the Woodlawn neighborhood is the largest passive park at 135.0 acres. The second largest passive park is Vale Park and Cemetery, located in between the Eastern Avenue and Vale neighborhoods. Five parks are memorial sites, one park is a passive area, and one park is vacant land. Table 32 shows the inventory of passive parks.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
Passive Parks			
Liberty Park	State Street/Washington Avenue -Downtown	0.20	Memorial
Pulaski Park	State Street/Nott Terrace -Hamilton Hill	0.60	Memorial
Steinmetz Memorial	Wendell Avenue - GE Plot	2.24	Memorial
Stelmack Park	Cutler Street/Davis Terrace - Mont Pleasant	0.89	Passive area
Vale Cemetery	Nott Terrace -Eastern Avenue	58.2	Cemetery
Veteran's Park	State Street -Downtown	1.06	Memorial
Westinghouse Park	Broadway/Guilderland - Bellevue	0.22	Memorial
Woodlawn Preserve	Woodlawn	135.00	Open Space

Source: City of Schenectady Parks Department

the services of a golf professional. The Clubhouse was built in the 1930's and requires modernization. The irrigation system at the course is also starting to fail. The need for a master plan for the facility has been identified. Table 33 (see page 84) shows the inventory of active parks.

There are 21 active parks in the City. The largest active park is Central Park, which straddles the Central State Street, Woodlawn, and Union Street neighborhoods. Central Park encompasses 172 acres and has a wide range of recreational facilities including a swimming pool, picnic pavilion, music stage, ball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, open space, jogging paths, ponds, and a rose garden. The second largest active park is the Schenectady Municipal Golf Course. It is located southeast of Central Park on Oregon Avenue and encompasses 166 acres. Approximately 35,000 rounds of golf are played each year. The City contracts for daily maintenance of the golf course, operation of the concession stand and

Table 33: City-Owned Recreational Facilities - Active Parks			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
Active Parks			
Carrie Street Playground	Carrie Street - North Schenectady	0.42	Basketball, play equipment
Central Park	Wright Avenue - Central State/Union St	172.00	Basketball, tennis, baseball, swimming, tot lot, play equipment, picnic area, passive area, rides
Fairview Park	Fairview/Campbell -Bellevue	2.76	Tennis
Grout Park	Hamburg Street -Mont Pleasant	10.00	Basketball, tennis, baseball, tot lot, play equipment, rugby field
Hillhurst Park	Campbell Avenue -Bellevue	21.20	Basketball, tennis, swimming, tot lot, play equipment
Jerry Burrell Park	Hamilton Street - Hamilton Hill	2.75	Basketball, tennis, play equipment
Kailberg Park	North Schenectady	6.00	Open field with a backstop (playing fields)
Landon Terrace Park	Landon Terrace - Eastern Avenue Neigh.	0.35	Playground equipment, basketball court
Little Front Street Park	Front Street - Stockade	2.60	Swimming pool
Michigan Avenue	Michigan Avenue/Norwood -Mont Pleasant	3.88	Tennis
Mont Pleasant Athletic Field	Norwood Avenue -Mont Pleasant	14.10	Ball diamond, open space
Municipal Golf Course	Oregon Avenue -	166.00	18 hole golf course
Orchard Park	Orchard Street - Mont Pleasant	1.00	Basketball, play equipment
Quackenbush Park	Forest Road - Mont Pleasant	2.00	Basketball, swimming, tot lot, play equipment
Riverside Park	Mohawk River/Washington to Ingersol - Stockade	6.00	Basketball, tennis, tot lot, play equipment
South Avenue Park	Downtown	0.35	Basketball, tot lot, play equipment
Steinmetz Park	Lenox Road -North Schenectady	44.00	Basketball, tennis, swimming, play equipment, picnic area
10 th & Webster	10 th Avenue/Webster Street - Mont Pleasant	1.00	Basketball, tot lot, play equipment
Vale Park	Nott Terrace -Eastern Avenue	41.80	Picnic pavilion, play unit, play equipment, gazebo
Wallingford Park	Congress Street/5 th Avenue-Mont Pleasant	0.85	Basketball, swimming, tot lot, play equipment
Woodlawn Park	Ricci Street/Kings Road - Woodlawn	1.70	Basketball, swimming, tot lot, play equipment, picnic area

Source: City of Schenectady Parks Department

The City currently owns five pools, but only three were open in 2005 due to financial issues including the cost of staff to ensure the facility's safety. The pools in the City are old and becoming too expensive to fix. In an effort to provide amenities which are not as costly to maintain or supervise, the city has examined creating spray parks and development of toddler pools.

Current Maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects

The city is struggling to maintain park land and amenities without adequate revenue streams and funding for staffing, capital investments, upgrading equipment, and making infrastructure improvements. Ongoing maintenance including mowing and trimming green spaces, and inspecting park equipment and removing unsafe equipment consumes all of the resources and there is little left to develop new recreation amenities. At the current time the City's parks department provides two formal programs: swimming and the 15 Love Tennis program. The Department also issues permits and schedules facilities to the various athletic leagues and other recreation providers.

In light of shrinking resources, the most recent parks capital improvement projects have been spearheaded by interested volunteers. These groups have been very successful in raising funds for special interest parks projects such as the Music Stage and Picnic Pavilion in Central Park, pavilion and two playground areas by the Vale Park Task Force led by Schenectady International, and the ReTree Schenectady Committee which has planted 2,500 trees during the past 10 years. There has also been some strong interest in revitalizing the Recreation Advisory Committee.

Basic Park Standards and Guidelines

During the early years of park and recreation systems planning, a basic spatial standard (10 acres of park land per 1,000 persons) was utilized to define recreation needs within communities. Within this overall standard, space allocated for park and recreational purposes was delineated by classification (neighborhood playground, community park, protected open space, etc.), service areas, age groups served, and other relevant factors.

While the original standard of 10 acres of parkland per thousand population has limitations, it does provide a general overall guide for recreation/open space systems planning. Table 34 (see page 86) shows fairly typical acreage standards for various park classifications within the R/OS system from small mini-parks to major park facilities. Natural resource areas and other protected open space make up the balance of acreage (3.0 acres per thousand) within the system and is more dependent on environmental factors. Based on the standards shown, we have calculated the required acreage for the various park classifications in the City of Schenectady (population - 61,821). These figures are then compared to the acreage of existing public facility sites located in the City.

Type of Park Facility	Size Criteria	Service Radius	Acre/1000	Acreage Standard Required	Acreage Standard Existing	Surplus/Deficiency
Mini Park	0.1-1.0 acre	.25 mile	1.00	61.82	12.88	-48.94
Neighborhood Park	3-10 acres	.50 - 1.0 mile	1.25	77.28	48.09	-29.19
Community Park	30-50 acres	.50 - 3.0 miles	2.25	139.10	107.0	-32.1
Major Park	50-75 acres	Community wide	2.50	154.55	473.0	+318.45
Total Acres				432.75	640.97	+208.22

Overall, existing recreation/open space in the region exceeds the 10 acres per 1,000 standard although much of this acreage is provided by Central Park, Schenectady Municipal Golf Course and the Woodlawn Preserve. The City also seems to be underserved by existing mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks. Each of the park classifications contributes a unique resource within the overall Recreation/Open Space system and to meeting overall community needs. Serious deficiencies in one or more of these resources could indicate that the community is not adequately responding to the recreation needs of the resident population. Community and Major Parks generally provide a diverse range of active and passive recreation facilities and programs serving a broad population base.

Park & Recreation Plans

Tree Master Plan for the City of Schenectady

This study, completed in March 2003, identifies goals and proposed actions for managing Schenectady's urban forest and outlines an implementation strategy. ReTree Schenectady commissioned the study through a NYSDEC Urban and Community Forestry Grant. ReTree Schenectady is a volunteer organization that was founded in 1991 and is currently responsible for most of the tree planting on city streets. This organization typically plants between 150 and 200 trees a year and provides maintenance to previously planted trees as needed. The Study identified the following recommendations:

- Review the tree ordinance - the City's tree ordinance dates back from 1988 and is no longer operational
- Remove or trim older trees in poor condition - it is estimated that one-sixth of the street trees in Schenectady are in poor condition or dead
- Work toward full stocking - the current stocking rate is 65% meaning that only two-thirds of the planting sites are currently filled
- Consider planting easements for set-back sites
- Computerize the parks office
- Increase the forestry crew's productivity

- Increase the Park Department's technical expertise
- Aim to become a Tree City, USA

The long term goal for the city is to hire an Urban Forester or to subcontract this position.

City of Schenectady Urban Bike Route Master Plan

The Mohawk Hudson Bike Trail is a 35-mile long, multi-use trail that travels along the shores of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers through four towns and four cities located in Schenectady and Albany Counties. It extends from the Erastus Corning Riverfront Preserve in downtown Albany west to Scafford Lane in the Town of Rotterdam. The trail was constructed in the late 70's and early 80's and is built directly upon the old Erie Canal Towpath and former railroad grades and is part of the State-wide Canalway Trail System. The trail is generally flat with 8-10 foot wide paved asphalt surface.

Funded by the Capital District Transportation Committee, the Urban Bike Route Master Plan identified preferred routes for connecting the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in the City of Schenectady, identified destinations within and near downtown and defined preferred routes linking these features, and established urban bike path design standards and guidelines to be piloted in Schenectady. There is currently a 1.25-mile gap in the trail in the City that needs to be connected.

The Study also makes the following recommendations:

- A management plan should be prepared to address issues associated with the trail's management, the identification of the responsible parties, and the roles of each of the partners. A consistent set of trail amenities including benches and bike racks and their preferred location along the selected routes should be identified. Marketing and promotional materials, including trail maps identifying the alternative routes should also be prepared.
- The City should establish an improvement program for low cost items such as bike racks, sign repairs and glass removal by providing mail-in post cards and phone response systems. The City should apply to CDTC for SPOT improvement funds for larger projects.
- The City should create a Bikeway Advisory Committee to provide input, support and oversight in the implementation of the Urban Bike Master Plan and the development of the Management Plan. A number of low cost short term improvements should be given immediate attention by this committee:
 - Inventory existing signage along designated routes and replace them as needed with the appropriate signage as described in the Design Guidelines.
 - Add appropriate striping along designated routes, including mid-block crossings, as described in the Design Guidelines
 - Establish a contra-flow lane on Washington Avenue in conjunction with the trail improvements underway in the vicinity of Schenectady County Community College.

- Consideration should be given to requiring any public or major private improvement project to provide for pedestrian/bicycle amenities such as sidewalks, curb cuts, sewer grates, and bike racks or bike lockers, etc.

Friends of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail

The mission of the Friends of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail is to develop, through public education and stewardship, the historical, recreational, and economic opportunities of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. The organization's first priority is to provide an off-road route through the City of Schenectady for the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. The long-term goal is to develop a riverfront, off-road trail connecting the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail through the City of Schenectady.

Two grants are in hand to help with these projects. In 2000, \$600,000 in TEA-21 funds was awarded to provide for a connection between Schenectady County Community College to Washington Avenue (in the Stockade neighborhood). The project includes intersection improvements, a 12 foot wide multi use path, a new parking lot, and landscaping and streetscape features. In 2003, \$600,000 in Canalway Trail funds was awarded for signage and minor road alignment changes. The TEA-21 funds were put on hold after the events of September 11, 2001 and the Canal Corporation has pushed off plans for the Schenectady area until 2007.

Community Feedback

Issues identified by residents include the following:

- The City should capitalize on waterfront for recreation and tourism, even though it is a little behind the curve and should have focused on waterfront redevelopment years ago. The City's Riverfront is very small and there must be careful review of planned development.
- Specific recreational assets are acknowledged. Quackenbush pool is an example of effective neighborhood/city cooperation. Youth skateboarding is happening in unsafe places, we need a place.
- We need more activities downtown and on river. We have fewer events in Central Park than Albany does, that should be corrected. Park events are not well advertised. We find out about them after the fact.
- There are no clear gateways and signage to help people find the City's assets is poor. Central Park is not easy to find.
- Should market the availability of bike paths with signage and brochures to integrate with community and businesses. There is an opportunity to connect bike trail from east via Stockade, parks, GE Plot and river. The Yellowstone Trail Route 5 Scenic Byway is another important opportunity.
- Vale and Steinnetz Parks need more access.
- There are conflicting opinions about the City's Parks. Many feel that the city should protect parkland and not yield to temptation to sell it for income (such as land around the Golf Course) and that there should be a park within walking distance of every home. On the other hand, Schenectady has lots of parks, without the financial resources to maintain them.

- Protect existing green space that we have and create more open, green and gathering places.
- Maintenance of green space and buildings should be improved. We should not be cutting money spent on parks. Gateways and entrances to the city need to be improved.
- Great Central Park and great golf course will attract companies. We need “eye appealing places” for companies.
- Young people need more recreational opportunities.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City provides approximately 700 acres of park and recreation and open space land in the City.
- Overall, existing recreation/open space in the region exceeds the 10 acres per 1,000 standard although much of this acreage is provided by Central Park, Schenectady Municipal Golf Course and the Woodlawn Preserve. However, the City seems to be underserved by existing mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks.
- Targeted improvements include development of playing fields, installation of spray decks, and renovation to the Golf Course.

Government, Public Safety and Community Institutions

Government Structure

The City of Schenectady has a Mayor/Council form of Government. The Mayor serves as the chief executive officer of the City. The Mayor's Office prepares the budget, hires personnel and makes appointments to most boards and committees. The Mayor is elected to a four-year term.

The City Council consists of seven at-large members. Like the Mayor, Council members are elected to four-year terms. The Council appoints the City Clerk and some of the boards and committees, determines policy, approves the budget, levies taxes, authorizes contracts and agreements, set salaries and approves contracts of goods and services.

City Departments include assessment, building inspector/code enforcement, city archives/history center, city clerk/vital records, city court, police court, development, engineering, finance, fire, bureau of receipts, human resources, general services/neighborhood revitalization, law department, mayor's office, parks, police, and water.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The Schenectady Police Department currently employs approximately 160 sworn officers. Seventy-five civilian staff members hold various administrative and clerical positions. The command staff of the Schenectady Police Department consists of a Chief of Police and three Assistant Chiefs. The Department is divided into three bureaus, the Field Services Bureau, Administrative Services Bureau and Investigative Services Bureau. Each bureau is commanded by an Assistant Chief. The Department also has many specialty divisions whose members receive specialized training including Special Operations, Vice Squad, Forensics, K-9, Youth Aid, Counter-terrorism, Sniper Sharp-shooter, Hostage Negotiator, D.A.R.E., Motorcycle Patrol, Bike Patrol, and School Resource Officer.

In 2004, the Police Department reports that a total of 10,402 crimes had been committed in Schenectady, a slight decrease from 2003 (see Table 35 on page 91). The Schenectady Police Department saw a total of 3,412 Part I Offenses in 2004. Part 1 Crimes consist of the following; Murder, Rape, Robbery, Assault, Burglary, Larceny, and Auto Theft. Part 1 crimes increased 9.9% between 2003 and 2004. There were 6,990 Part 2 crimes in 2004, a decrease of 4.9% since 2003. Part 2 Crimes generally consist of all other crimes and includes criminal mischief, arson, sale and use of controlled substances, assault and disorderly conduct among others.

Table 35: Schenectady Crime Statistics

Year	Part 1 Crimes	Part 2 Crimes	Total Crimes	% Change in Total Crimes
1999	3,595	6,934	10,529	-
2000	3,179	6,709	9,888	-6.1%
2001	3,563	7,075	10,638	7.6%
2002	3,197	7,098	10,295	-3.2%
2003	3,071	7,352	10,423	1.5%
2004	3,412	6,990	10,402	-0.2%

Source: City of Schenectady Police Department

Table 35 shows the index crimes reported between 2000 and 2003 for the City of Schenectady. According to the NYS DCJS, the Uniform Crime/Incident-Based Reporting system uses general offense categories that were developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to standardize reporting across

states. The seven Index crimes were chosen primarily on the basis of their seriousness and frequency of occurrence, and are used to gauge trends in the overall volume and rate of crime.

Between 2000 and 2004, there was a 7.6% increase in overall crime and a 10.8% increase in violent crime. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. The only index crimes that declined between 2000 and 2004 were rape and robbery.

Table 36: Index Crimes Reported: 2000-2004, City of Schenectady Police Department

Year	Index Crime	Violent Crime	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Property Crime	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft
2000	3177	462	3	44	201	214	2715	768	1741	206
2001	3556	522	5	54	208	255	3034	871	1902	261
2002	3197	493	8	45	174	266	2704	738	1652	314
2003	3080	483	11	43	171	258	2597	736	1616	245
2004	3420	512	7	38	172	295	2908	717	1941	250
% Change, 2000-2004	7.6%	10.8%	133.3%	-13.6%	-14.4%	37.9%	7.1%	-6.6%	11.5%	21.4%

Source: NYS DCJS, Uniform Crime/Incident-Based Reporting System as of April 8, 2005.

The Police Headquarters, located at 531 Liberty Street, is open 7 days a week-24 hours a day. There are eight patrol zones in the City. Most of the calls for service are from the Hamilton Hill, Central State Street and Mt. Pleasant neighborhoods. The Woodlawn neighborhood has the least amount of calls for services. Traffic Services, located at 837 Albany Street is open 5 days a week from 9 to 5. The Police Department has a small substation in Downtown located at 184 Jay Street. A wireless 911 system has been approved in the City through a grant from New York State. This system will allow cell phone callers to dial directly into the City's 911 system when traveling in the City of Schenectady, rather than to the State Police as it currently does.

Fire

The Schenectady Fire Department provides fire, emergency medical services (EMS) and advanced lifesaving support services (ALS), mutual aid response to the Town of Rotterdam and Village of Scotia, advanced lifesaving support services for Duanesburg Ambulance, automatic aid to the Town of Niskayuna, confined space rescues, and emergency services on a contracted basis to General Electric. The Department also responds to all Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat) and Weapons of Mass Destruction calls in Schenectady County. There are currently 115 firefighters that respond to between 12,000 and 15,000 calls annually.

There are four fire stations open in the City:

- The main station (#1) is located on Veeder Street and serves Downtown, Hamilton Hill and Vale.
- Station #2 is located at 1515 State Street just above Fehr Avenue. This station serves Central State Street neighborhood, the Woodlawn neighborhood and parts of the Mont Pleasant and Union Street neighborhoods.
- Station #3 is located on Third Avenue in the Mont Pleasant neighborhood and its service area includes Mont Pleasant and Bellevue neighborhoods.
- Station #4 is located on 1549 Avenue A and serves Eastern Avenue and Union Street into Upper Union Street and the North Side neighborhoods.

The Schenectady Fire Department apparatus are called upon to respond city-wide and to additional areas outside of the specific "first response" areas on a regular basis because of the volume of emergency calls. This situation occurs because of decreases in manpower, the closing of neighborhood fire stations, the number of fires (not on a decline in Schenectady), emergency medical calls, hazardous materials, and preparing for the challenges of a post 9-11 world.

Priorities for the department include:

- provide an extra two-man rescue rig at station # 2.
- develop a new station to replace Station #4, currently 100 + years old
- increase Department strength to handle known increases in projected services
- modify city code to require that all owner occupied homes have a working smoking detector (rental properties already must meet this requirement) and perhaps carbon monoxide detectors

Educational Services

Public Schools

The City of Schenectady is served by the Schenectady City School District which includes eleven elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school. During the 2003-2004 school year, the District enrolled 8,973 students and employed 641 teachers.

Approximately 47.6% of the student body was eligible for the free lunch program. In New York State, 37.0% of students are eligible for the free lunch program. For the 2002-2003 school year (the most recent year statistics are available), the District spent \$14,301 per pupil, compared to the statewide average of \$17,818.

The drop out rate during the 2003-2004 school year was 5.8%. This is significantly lower than the 2001-2002 drop out rate of 18.6%. In comparison, the New York State drop out rate for the 2003-04 academic year was 4.3%. Approximately 50% of all students at Schenectady High School received a Regents Diploma. Further, of the 328 graduates, 279 students were planning to attend a two-year or four-year college.

The High School offers a Pre-International and International Baccalaureate Program offering rigorous pre-university courses of studies. The program is targeted to highly motivated secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 19 years of age. Its two-year curriculum allows its graduates to fulfill the requirements of various national educational systems. The program is available in English, French, or Spanish. Students enter the Program in the eleventh grade. Schenectady High School has also established a two-year pre-IB program for students in ninth and tenth grades.

The International Charter School of Schenectady, New York (ICSS)¹² opened in the Fall of 2002. It is a college-preparatory, tuition-free, public charter school that currently serves students in Grades K - 6. The School is in the process of adding a grade level every year to become a full K-12 school. ICSS will be adding the eighth grade for the 2006-2007 school year. The School's management partner is Sabis Education Systems. The curriculum for the school is based on Sabis curriculum which "emphasizes a highly structured, internationally oriented curriculum in the core subjects of english, math, science and world languages, designed to prepare all students for college study.

¹² Information obtained from the International Charter School of Schenectady website - <http://www.icss-sabis.net:88/icss/main.jsp>.

School	School Enrollment	English Language Learners (ELL) Percent	Free Lunch Percent	Need Statistic	Need
Elementary Schools					
Elmer Avenue School	344	0.0%	56.4%	133.9	Middle range
Hamilton Elementary School	359	0.0%	69.6%	165.4	Higher range
Howe International Magnet School	306	1.0%	43.1%	103.4	Middle range
International Charter School of Schenectady	271	0.0%	58.3%	138.5	Middle range
Jesse T. Zoller School	475	6.7%	57.7%	143.7	Middle range
Lincoln School	317	0.0%	75.4%	179.1	Higher range
Martin Luther King School	374	1.6%	61.2%	147.0	Middle range
Paige Elementary School	338	13.6%	27.8%	79.7	Lower range
Pleasant Valley School	372	7.5%	68.8%	171.0	Higher range
Van Corlaer School	413	8.5%	48.2%	122.9	Middle range
Woodlawn School	318	0.0%	48.7%	115.8	Middle range
Yates School	312	0.6%	55.4%	132.3	Middle range
Middle Schools					
Central Park Middle School	720	0.0%	43.9%	104.2	Middle range
Mont Pleasant Middle School	819	3.9%	54.6%	133.5	Higher range
Oneida Middle School	679	0.0%	39.6%	94.1	Middle range
High School					
Schenectady High School	2,302	2.1%	32.3%	78.9	Middle range

Many residents have been asking how the Schenectady City School District compares with other urban schools. The New York State Department of Education has developed a system to evaluate “similar schools” across the state by placing schools in one of six categories based on the best indicator of educational need (school district student poverty) with the financial resources of the school district, district enrollment and district land area. According to the “District Need to Resource Capacity Category” in the School Report Card, the Schenectady City School District is an urban or suburban school district with high student needs in relation to district resource capacity. School districts in this category include Albany City, Rome City, Utica City, Newburgh City, Lansingburgh Central, Troy City, and Kingston City among others.

The Education Department “provides a comparison of each school (not the district as a whole) under the categories of elementary, middle and secondary school. For “similar schools” comparison, the Department places the schools of each category into relatively low (lowest quartile), relatively high (highest quartile), and typical (mid-range) groups based on this pupil need measure.” Using standard statistical procedures, the Department determined the relative impact of the proportion of pupils with free-lunch eligibility and the proportion of pupils with limited English proficiency on school performance in public schools statewide. By combining these two factors in the appropriate ratio, a measure of pupil need was created and used to rank-order schools within the categories defined by grade-range served and school district capabilities. Table 36 shows data for the Schenectady schools for the 2002-2003 school year (the most recent data that is available).

The Schenectady City School has one elementary school classified as “low need”, seven elementary schools considered “middle range”, and three elementary schools identified as “high need.” The International Charter School of Schenectady was categorized as middle range in terms of need. There are three middle schools located in the Schenectady City School District. Two schools (Central Park Middle and Oneida Middle School) are identified as middle range in terms of student needs. Mont Pleasant Middle School is categorized as high need. Schenectady High School is classified as a secondary level school serving having middle range need.

According to the Schenectady City School District, “To prepare students for the future, Schenectady has made an unprecedented investment in technology. This investment will incorporate technology as an integral part of the teaching and learning environment, with teachers and students learning and sharing through technology on a daily basis. The District is in the midst of a five-year \$22 million dollar technology bond initiative, and is also implementing a \$4 million dollar E-rate award. As a result of these initiatives, every classroom and library in the district is wired for Internet and video access. Each of the sixteen schools in the district has new computer labs and computer equipped media centers. Within the next two years, there will be computer clusters and projection devices available in every classroom in the District.”

Youth Visioning Workshop

As part of the public participation process, a Visioning Workshop was held with Schenectady Youth on August 16, 2005 at the Schenectady County Public Library. Approximately 30 youth attended this meeting. Topics discussed included education, park and recreation, jobs, housing and neighborhoods, and transportation.

In terms of education, a number of positives were noted by the youth including Schenectady High School offered a great experience, the summer science program at Union, the community really supports sports teams, most students feel safe in school, and the schools generally provide good preparation for college. Needs identified include: better marketing and communication about programs that are available, more parent involvement starting in elementary school, more after school programs, more staff to fix and maintain the computers, more counselors.

Youth suggested that the school district should offer drivers education and career/college days for students to explore different fields of interest.

Private Schools

The City of Schenectady is also served by private and parochial schools run by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany including:

- St. Helen’s School (Pre-K through 5)
- St. John the Evangelist School (Pre-K through 5)
- Notre-Dame Bishop Gibbons High School (6 through 12).

Brown School, a nondenominational, independent school in Schenectady, New York, serves students throughout the Capital District in nursery through eighth grade. Brown School is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents and meets all the requirements of the State Education Department. Brown School is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools.

Institutions of Higher Education

Union College

Union College is an independent, liberal arts college founded in 1795 as the first college chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York. Union offers nearly 1,000 courses in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, and engineering. About 30% of the College's students major in the social sciences, 30% in the sciences, 20% in the arts and humanities, 15% in engineering, and 5% design their own majors. Union has an undergraduate student body of approximately 2,252.

Union College is currently involved in four major initiatives, Converging Technologies, The Plan for Union, The House System, and The Union-Schenectady Initiative. The following is a brief description of each initiative:

- Converging Technologies - This initiative “focuses creative thought from engineering and the liberal arts on new ideas that are changing the landscape of global society.”
- The Plan for Union - This five-year comprehensive strategic plan addresses all facets of the College. The total cost to implement the plan is estimated at \$220 million. A central objective of The Plan for Union is to enhance social and residential life at the College. Other elements of the Plan for Union will enable the College to:
 - Attract a diverse group of faculty members
 - Attract and retain America's brightest and most committed students
 - Strengthen and expand programs in undergraduate research, international study, civic service, and the arts
 - Enhance the College's longstanding commitment to technology and engineering within a liberal arts environment
 - Enhance a variety of other programs and facilities, including the student advising and registration system. In athletics, the College will make a significant investment in intramural, intercollegiate and fitness facilities
- The House System -This initiative involves assigning each Union student to membership in one of the 19 houses prior to arriving at Union as a freshman.
- The Union-Schenectady Initiative - A broad-based plan to revitalize the neighborhood to the immediate west of the historic campus (Union Street and Nott Street and from Seward Place to Erie Boulevard). This involves a number of bold incentives to spur home ownership in the area including up to \$1 million per year in scholarships to Union College for eligible homeowners and attractive mortgage programs. The College is also offering incentives for Union College faculty and staff to purchase homes in the area. This initiative also involves comprehensive renovation and rehabilitation in the target area,

restoring the historic community to its past prosperity, including the implementation of much-needed infrastructure improvements such as historic lighting, banners, and sidewalks. The Kenney Community Center is a place for neighborhood residents to gather to share ideas and information, the community center is staffed by Union employees, students, residents, and volunteers.

Schenectady County Community College

Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) was established in 1967 and is part of the State University of New York System. SCCC offers 41 transfer degree, career degree and certificate programs in Business and Law, Developmental Studies, Hotel, Culinary Arts & Tourism, Humanities and Social Sciences, Math, Science, and Technology, and Music. Total enrollment is approximately 4,000 students with an average class size of approximately 22 students.

SCCC is involved in a special community initiative, now known as the Business & Education Partnership. Along with its community partners (the Chamber of Schenectady County, seven public school districts, one parochial school, various human service agencies, and several businesses), two priority initiatives (Career Expo and Certificate of Employability Program) have been established. The Career Expo Initiative helps prepare high school students for jobs after graduation and/or for entry into higher education that is directed at their specific career goals.

High school sophomore students first complete an interest survey and then are led by specially trained teachers to investigate their potential individual career interests and to chart pathways toward their career goals over a two-month period. Students are then invited to a day long event at SCCC where they attend career area panel sessions, where they hear from community businesspeople about their typical workday, the good and bad aspects of their professions, anticipated salary levels, and what educational and employment tracks led the panelists to their current occupations. After attending this event, students participate in follow-up activities with their teachers, focusing upon the paths they need to follow to achieve their individual career goals.

The second initiative is the Certificate of Employability Program (COE). The Basic COE targets youth and adults who are preparing for their first part-time jobs and the Advanced COE targets those who are preparing for full-time work. The curriculum for the Basic COE program focuses upon teaching students about the soft skills (people skills) that employers seek in new employees, and then observing students who must demonstrate those skills in order to be certified. The Advanced COE is a 6-lesson review of the requisite soft skills, but in seminar fashion, where students discuss implementation of the soft skills on the job and incidents in which failure to apply the soft skills resulted in undesirable consequences.

The College's Office for Workforce Development is heavily involved in labor force preparation activities as well as delivering training and services to Department of Social Services TANF eligible clients through the Schenectady One Stop Center. The One Stop Center operates a variety of federal, state, and locally funded activities that are designed to assist both employers and job seekers. Another resource, the Bridge Program, is an occupational-based program that provides comprehensive services to address

the needs of low income families in Schenectady County. Participants attend workshops, classes and meetings designed to address individual needs and receive one-on-one assistance to obtain supportive services including intensive case management and supportive mediation with their employers.

Other Community Institutions

Library

The Schenectady County Public Library is the central library for the Mohawk Valley Library System. In addition to providing services to residents in Schenectady County, the Library also serves residents in Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties. Its mission statement is "to satisfy the community's educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs by providing free and open access to a comprehensive range of materials, services and programs."

The Central Library is located in downtown Schenectady and there are nine branch libraries, four of which are located within the City of Schenectady. The Schenectady County Public Library is currently involved in a capital campaign for expansion of their Central Library. The proposed addition will provide a new 5,750 square foot Children's Center, a 170-seat Performance Space, and other enhancements including a Quiet/Study Room, Tutoring Space, and Galley/Vestibule Area among others. The Schenectady County Legislature bonded \$2.0 million of the estimated total project cost of \$4.9 million. The Library has also received donations from the Friends of the Schenectady County Public Library and The Wright Family Foundation. The Library is committed to raising the balance of the funds needed through grants and public support.

Health Care Services

Three major hospitals serve the City of Schenectady including St. Clare's Hospital, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital and Ellis Hospital.

Established by the Albany Catholic Diocese in 1949, St. Clare's Hospital is a 200 bed acute care community hospital. The campus includes the hospital and three medical office buildings. Patient care services offered include:

- asthma management
- cardiac rehab
- clinical laboratory
- maternity
- open MRI
- physical therapy

- sleep disorders
- surgical services
- voice care
- wound care
- Community education programs in baby basics, blood pressure clinic, breastfeeding classes, diabetes education, family gatherings, maternity services orientation, prenatal classes, and step up to health

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital is a rehabilitation-only facility (104 beds) that serves patients of all ages. Sunnyview assists patients requiring physical rehabilitation from the initial stages of acute rehabilitation care through education about disabilities to re-entry into the community. Injuries, illnesses and problems treated at Sunnyview include:

- brain injury/trauma
- pulmonary rehabilitation
- cardiac rehabilitation
- stroke rehabilitation and prevention for people of all ages
- spinal cord injury
- speech and hearing difficulties,
- peripheral vascular diseases (amputation)
- orthopedics
- sports injuries
- hand therapy
- bone health/osteoporosis
- rheumatology (arthritis, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus),
- driver training
- returning to work
- setting up ergonomically correct workplaces
- wellness center

Ellis Hospital is a community hospital with 368 beds plus an 82-bed nursing home. Ellis Hospital provides a full range of services including:

- cancer treatment
- cardiac rehabilitation
- cardiovascular diagnostic services
- day surgery
- diabetes services

- diagnostic imaging
 - MRI
 - CT
 - ultrasound
 - angiography
 - digital mammography
- gastroenterology laboratory
- geriatric services
- Golub Center for emergency services
- mental health care
- neuroscience critical care
- nuclear medicine
- orthopedic surgery
- physical therapy/sports medicine
- primary care
- respiratory therapy
- stroke center
- vascular surgery
- women's health services
- Wright heart center

Community Feedback

Participants at the community meetings provided a variety of responses relating to education, organizations/events, public safety/image, and community involvement. A summary of responses by category are as follows.

Education

- SCCC Campus and Institution
- Schenectady School District including the IB program in the high school and the tradition of strong (fabulous) public school system
- Union College and its beautiful campus
- Impact of educated people on the community
- Influence of science and inventors on the whole world
- STEP at Union for low income high performers

- Schools need to be improved if the City is going to attract new families. Some of the problem is perception of the schools - not reality
- City has little control of the School district
- IB program is a great asset
- Perception that the development of magnet schools caused down turn in school district reputation and quality

Organizations/Events

- Rich history of non-profit: Schenectady family health services and taking care of people
- Fabulous library and activities
- Schenectady Museum and lots of cultural activities
- Channel 16 - Public Access TV
- Sledding and skiing in Central Park
- Kids can walk places - stores, school, parental freedom from driving
- Number of private organizations that improve property
- Civic play house
- Great music - classical, jazz, folk, Sunday music in Central Park
- Family oriented festivals throughout city
- Tennis tournament
- Two fabulous hospitals/ Health care services/ Ellis School of Nursing and wheelchair accessible pool at Sunnyview Hospital
- Schenectady Museum - we need to make sure it stays here as it considers a broadened focus
- Farmers Market
- Little League and Pop Warner - passion for youth sports
- Christmas parade

Public Safety/Image

- We need to highlight how safe we really are and counteract the perception that public safety is an issue city-wide. We need to show off our city, toot our own horn, not discuss and promote problems.
- Clifton Park residents look down on us but they don't have as good water or garbage service
- We need more police on the force. Street crime, drugs, and prostitution is ongoing and beyond what force can deal with. The City should aggressively access grants funds to make it happen.
- Also want community police officers to work a shift that extended past midnight. Concern that the bars close later and that is when the real trouble happens.

Community Involvement

- Need open, transparent process public processes. Must recognize "company Town history" with inordinate influence by large organizations.

- Money and energy needs to go into people not things and places.
- Freedom of speech must be maintained at City Council Meetings, but speakers need to be accountable for statements.
- The broadcasted lack of civility of City Council meetings is not helping to improve the City's image.

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City of Schenectady has a mayor/council form of government where officers serve four-year terms
- The Schenectady City School District served nearly 9,000 residents during the 2003-2004 school year. Approximately 47.6% of the students were eligible for the free lunch program. The drop out rate during the 2003-2004 school year was 5.8%.
- The City is served by one charter school and by three elementary schools and one high school run by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.
- Two colleges serve the City: Union College and Schenectady County Community College.
- According to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, between 2000 and 2004, there was a 7.6% increase in overall crime and a 10.8% increase in violent crime in the City of Schenectady.