

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – DOWNTOWN TEMPLATE
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BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Southern Tier

Municipality Name: City of Binghamton

Downtown Name: Binghamton

County: Broome

Downtown Description - Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award):

Downtown Binghamton encompasses the historic urban core of the City of Binghamton, NY. First settled in 1803, the frontier hamlet’s growth was greatly accelerated with a State-funded initiative, the 1837 completion of the Chenango Canal, which connected the growing village to the Erie Canal near Utica, NY. Binghamton became a manufacturing center, was incorporated in 1834 and by mid-century had become a major east-west rail hub and produced cigars, shoes, sleighs, buggy whips, washing machines, pianos, organs and patent medicines. By the 20th century, Greater Binghamton industry was manufacturing footwear, computers, flight simulators, cameras, photographic film, blueprint and drafting papers, reprographics machines and circuit board manufacturing equipment. Population peaked at about 85,000 people in the 1950s. In the ensuing decades, the area suffered industry and population losses due to problems affecting its core industries: technological change, globalization, off shoring of jobs and misguided state incentives that ushered jobs out of the region. Today, by the latest Census estimates, Binghamton has a population of approximately 46,000 and is a HUD Entitlement Community. The downtown is comprised of Census Tracts 11 – 14; taken separately or together, the areas have 50% or more households at or below 80% Area Median Income; this data is from HUD’s Geospatial data and reflects the 2010 Census. The Binghamton City School District has such a high percentage of low-income students that in 2014 it qualified for federal free lunch assistance for all 10 schools in the district. As noted in an article in the 5/27/16 *Press & Sun-Bulletin* newspaper, according to a recent study by Cornell University and the Community Foundation of South-Central New York, 1 in 5 Southern Tier children live in poverty. Broome County’s overall poverty rate of 17 percent is higher than state average of 15 percent, and in the City of Binghamton, 47 percent of children live in poverty — a percentage greater than in the New York City boroughs. Compounding problems, Binghamton was damaged by flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2005 and 2011 and has been recovering since. A turnaround began in the early 2000s with the rebranding of the region as “Greater Binghamton” and the State University located in Vestal, NY as “Binghamton University”. Coincident with this was the emergence of a downtown Binghamton arts district as artists began to rediscover and repurpose its

historic architecture. In 2007, the Binghamton University Downtown Center opened and since then a number of State initiatives have deepened the engagement of State University programs with the community, increased investment in education to stimulate research with ties to local electronics industry, and fostered entrepreneurship. These macro-investments spurred private residential investments to convert a number of large vacant downtown office buildings into student loft apartments. Along with this came a surge in specialty restaurants and the development of two microbreweries. In 2006, Binghamton University was designated one of four Centers of Excellence in the SUNY system for its small-scale systems packaging research. This designation fostered sustained research funding and the construction of the Innovative Technologies Center and Smart Energy Facility. The desire to spread economic development benefits into the community targeted a distressed gateway section of the downtown. This led to the current construction of the Southern Tier High Technology Incubator on Hawley Street a block from Governmental Plaza that broke ground in 2014. Binghamton will reap tremendous benefits from the incubator, but further stimulus investment from the DRI will complement prior State investments and strengthen the surrounding downtown of which the incubator is a centerpiece.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

The Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers bound the downtown of the City of Binghamton on the south and west. The northern boundary is the former Erie Lackawanna (Norfolk Southern) rail yard and the eastern edge is the NY-363/NY-7 arterial highway that connects Interstates 81, 86 and 88.

- 2) Size.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing, or increasing, population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown.

The approximate 0.5 square mile area of downtown Binghamton is defined by natural waterways, rail lines and highway features and has remained the commercial and political center of Broome County through the decades. Smaller urban areas on the southern side of the Susquehanna River and western side of the Chenango River connect and interact with the downtown's public and commercial entities. The downtown area is comprised of offices of municipal, State and Federal government; City, County, State and Federal courts; banks, credit unions and stock brokerage firms; architectural, engineering and law firms; non-profit organizations; two full service hotels, the Hilton DoubleTree and Holiday Inn. In addition, the downtown features amenities such as the 6,925 seat Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena, home of the Binghamton Senators Hockey Team, and the 6,012 seat NYSEG Stadium, home of the Binghamton Mets Baseball Team. In addition, the downtown offers the 1,500-seat Forum performing arts theatre that is home to Broadway in Binghamton, the Tri-Cities Opera, and the Binghamton Philharmonic. The Forum hosts a wide variety of other events including concerts, comedians, conventions, talent competitions, and recitals. The

downtown is host to the Binghamton University Downtown Center, which is the home of the University's College of Community and Public Affairs.

3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential. Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

- Binghamton University Downtown Center (2007): \$29 million
- Court Street Gateway Project (2005): \$2.7 million for street construction, new curbs, sidewalks, period lighting and a center-city roundabout
- Front Street Gateway Project (2015-17): \$5 million for full street reconstruction, new curbs, sidewalks, period lighting, water/sewer upgrades
- South Washington Street Pedestrian Bridge (2016): \$1.8 million for paint and structural repairs to this historic bridge; work will include lighting and landscaping to enhance this waterfront treasure
- Exchange Street Bridge Restoration (2015): \$3 million in structural repairs, painting and new concrete deck
- State Street Improvement Project (2016): \$480,000 for pavement, traffic signals and enhanced landscaping
- Front Street Gateway Project/First Ward Action Council: \$8 million secured to reconstruct 12 homes for low-moderate income housing
- NY 434 Greenway Project (2016-17): \$6.6 million secured in funding from NYSDOT and the Upstate Revitalization Initiative for a \$16 million project to create a bike and pedestrian trail connecting the Vestal, NY campus of Binghamton University with the downtown – indicative of the city's growing bond with Binghamton University.
- Southern Tier High Technology Incubator (2015-16): \$19 million, 35,000 SF structure that will provide infrastructure needed for companies focusing on energy, electronics and health. It will include specialized laboratories and other features associated with industry-based R&D, including testing, evaluation and prototyping. The incubator will have business resources, and tenants will be connected to research and educational programming at Binghamton University and SUNY Broome.

4) Job Growth. Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

As described in the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, the Southern Tier of New York of which Binghamton is a major city strives to implement a plan to create the ideal conditions for economic growth by leveraging over \$2.5 billion in private investment, creating over 10,200 jobs to realize an economic impact of \$3.4 billion in the next five years. Greater Binghamton is working to create a climate that will attract talent and foster new business development by revitalizing the urban centers of Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott. These efforts will maintain the area's innovation legacy and position it as a major gateway, with strengths in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, culture and high technology development. A goal is to capitalize on public-private collaborations and the growing presence of Binghamton University. The wider community has a long tradition of innovation with one of the highest concentrations of patent holders in the US, to scholastic strengths such as one of the strongest regions for Odyssey of the Mind competition in the nation.

Binghamton University has a profound effect on the region's economics. In addition, the region is focusing on agriculture technology and is moving to position itself as a specialty food supplier to major East Coast cities. In 2014, the University spent \$1 billion in the region with 11,500 direct/indirect jobs and accounting for 12% GDP for Broome and Tioga counties. Across the nation, historic downtowns are becoming increasingly attractive to young people with upper story loft developments and an eclectic mix of arts, recreation and eateries. Thanks to Binghamton University's continued expansion of enrollment, in the last ten years a number of private sector developers have transformed long vacant commercial structures into loft residential options for students with projects such as 20 Hawley Street (\$10 million), Twin River Commons (\$12 million), University Lofts (\$15 million), Chenango Place (\$14 million) and The Printing House (\$12 million). Now, Binghamton is encouraging developers to create more residential and live-work options for low-moderate income people, young professionals, and older empty nesters with mixed-use developments such as:

- 7 Hawley Street: \$20 million development of a combination parking/retail and residential facility
- One North Depot: \$12 million restoration/renovation of the historic National Register Rail Terminal District property, 1876 S. Mills Ely & Co. building into 70 units of low-moderate income housing and creation of live-work space
- City Center Lofts: \$1.8 million restoration/renovation of 73 Court Street and 1 Commercial Alley into market rate loft housing. City Center Lofts project is also a recipient of a \$284,400 and EFC GIGP grant to install a green roof
- 123 Court Street: \$350,000 renovation into student housing
- Newman Development Group's 50 Front Street project: \$20 million construction of a – Tito to send staff report
- 72 Court Street: \$5 million mixed use housing development

Binghamton has a growing number of unique specialty restaurants that have opened in the last 10 years that have a growing following with young professionals including Lost Dog Café, Little Venice Restaurant, Binghamton Hots, Thai Time, Strange Brew, Burger Mondays, The Colonial, Uncorked Wine & Chocolate Lofts and The Garage and two microbreweries, Galaxy Brewing and Water Street Brewing. eatBING, Inc., the marketing association of downtown Binghamton restaurants was awarded a \$58,800 grant in the URI to execute a set of strategic marketing campaigns that will showcase the diverse attractions Binghamton and the greater Southern Tier has to offer as part of the Binghamton Culinary Tourism Alliance. The website, promotional video and book will highlight local tourism businesses such as restaurants and microbreweries.

In addition, the city is promoting its attractiveness with projects such as the Route 434 Greenway – Bike Trail, a project for which the City and NYS Department of Transportation Region 9 are seeking \$16 million funding which will connect the Vestal campus of the University with the downtown via a 2.5-mile cycling and pedestrian walkway. The City is studying various Waterfront Revitalization projects to promote access to the Chenango and Susquehanna rivers for fishing, kayaking and canoeing.

The attractiveness of a community is measured by many things; from its perceived safety and security, to the breadth and quality of educational offerings in its public schools, cleanliness of streets and responsiveness of public services. Concerning education, the Binghamton City School District has an enrollment of 5,651 K-12 students and is one of a select number of schools in New

York State to offer the International Baccalaureate Program (IB), numerous Advanced Placement (AP) classes, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering curriculum and a full arts curriculum with the Rod Serling School of Fine Arts. The City School District just opened the new 129,000 SF Mac Arthur Elementary School, a \$79.5 million project that was 75% funded by FEMA to replace the prior structure that was damaged in the 2011 flood.

5) Attractiveness of the Downtown. Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

Downtown Binghamton has three State and National Register Historic Districts encompassing 146 contributing structures. A number of the larger commercial mixed use buildings have been restored and adaptively reused for luxury student housing. Unlike many cities, Binghamton has a department store in a prominent intersection, Boscov's, which is part of an independent 48-store chain headquartered in Reading, PA. Many structures have been restored and adaptively reused in Binghamton's downtown, but the Boscov's façade stands as a lonely reminder of 1980s Urban Renewal. Beneath its plain 70s brick veneer is a 19th century gem.

1. Boscov's Department Store Original Façade Restoration (\$2 million): the City would like to secure funding of \$2 million to remove the 1970s brick veneer, add back the corner turret and cupola and restore the Boscov's façade to its 19th century grandeur. This project would complement considerable private investment in the downtown over the past 20 years that has systematically restored much of the Court Street State and National Register Historic District and would radiate benefits to the wider region.

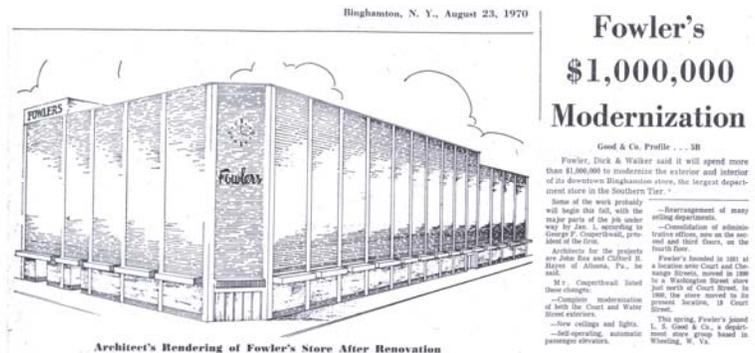


19th century postcard of The Boston Store, 17-23 Court St., designed by Sanford O. Lacey to resemble London's Harrod's Department Store

In 1899, "Binghamton's Largest Store", The Boston Store, opened at the corner of Court and

"The Central Binghamton Plan must make it possible to get around easily by providing an adequate system of automobile circulation. This will require relocation of some businesses and modifications of the present street system."

1971, Binghamton Urban Renewal Agency Annual Report



Water Streets with over 200,000 square feet. Founded in 1881 by George Fowler, Alexander Dick and Gilbert Walker, the store had been located at 89 Court Street and moved to 115-7 Washington Street in 1890 before moving to the most prominent street corner location in the City. Designed by Binghamton architect, Sanford O. Lacey to resemble London's famous Harrod's department store, the eclectic structure combined Queen Anne and Romanesque elements in a classical style. A conical-roofed corbelled turret dominated the façade. The upper floor windows were arched and a rough stone belt course ran between the first and second floors. Lacey used a classical coffered ceiling above the entrance and portal windows at the top of the turret. The store which came to be known as "Fowler's" replaced the Hirschmann Bros. who sold dry and millinery goods on this block from about 1869 to 1891. In 1901, Fowler, Dick and Walker were known as merchants of dry goods and manufacturers of shirtwaists and ladies underwear.

In 1971, the Fowler's building façade was heavily remodeled as the City underwent Urban Renewal. Binghamton paralleled national trends of urban flight with expansion of automobile ownership, an increasingly mobile population, growth of suburban shopping centers and shortsighted urban renewal efforts that decimated the business core to make it automobile friendly.

In 1981, Fowler, Dick & Walker's Department Store closed in downtown Binghamton following the opening of a store in the new suburban Oakdale Mall located in Johnson City, NY. At the time, Fowler's closing marked a low point in a 20-year period in which the City had experienced a steady business exodus.



Subsequent to Fowler's closing, a concerted effort was made by the City's Office of Economic Development to attract Boscov's Department Store. Boscov's was a central Pennsylvania full-line department store chain, then with nine stores in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

The City of Binghamton acting through the Binghamton Local Development Corporation and subsequently through a partnership called "Bing Realty", a Pennsylvania General Partnership of the Binghamton Local Development Corporation and B&L Realty, entered into a development agreement with Boscov's. The City/Bing Realty acting as the landlord/developer secured \$6,000,000.00 in financing from the Broome County Industrial Development Agency in Industrial Development Bond funding. In addition, the City obtained an Urban Development Action Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for \$2,190,000.00 and a capital contribution from the Binghamton Local Development Corporation for \$410,000.00. The City/Bing Realty proceeded to acquire and renovate the interior of the former Fowler's building and adjacent Johnson's china shop. The City constructed a 150-car space addition to the municipal Water Street parking deck that was adjacent to the department store building. The completed retail structure totaled 260,000 square feet.

Boscov's Department Store remains an important structure in downtown Binghamton:

- **Boscov's is a major downtown destination** and encourages people to use governmental and professional services located in the downtown.
- **Boscov's offers a full-line department store in close proximity to**



many low-moderate income city residents, more so than suburban shopping locations.

- **Boscov's projects an image of a revitalized downtown** and encourages retention and growth of service businesses. This aids the momentum already underway to transform downtown Binghamton's urban commercial district.
- **Boscov's helps market a vibrant downtown and a gateway region's vitality** – business visitors look to the urban core for positive cues about economic vitality of the region; as a southern gateway to New York State, Binghamton has an important role.
- **Boscov's celebrates the** atmosphere and excitement created by the city
- **Boscov's store open at night helps neighboring retail and service businesses** and projects image of a "safe" downtown
- **Boscov's provides services for downtown workers** - the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study estimates over 18,000 people traffic the downtown on any weekday.



2. Historic Downtown Binghamton Theater Restorations/renovations:

- a. Stone Opera House (\$3 million):** the City would like to secure funding to restore and repurpose this cavernous 19th century Richardsonian Romanesque theater located in the Court Street National Register District into a trendy space that could host a rock climbing gym, low-moderate income residential space other performing and visual arts space and recreational amenities in the downtown. This would complement the considerable investments in adjacent and nearby student residential developments that have taken place over the past 10 years. (See below).
- b. Strand Theater (\$2 million):** the City would like to secure funding to restore a portion of this early 20th century vaudeville/black & white motion picture theater to its original live theater use, renovate the lobby café and repurpose excess balcony seating and projection booth into mixed low-moderate income residential options for young professionals.



~STONE OPERA HOUSE~

Available Former Theater, 31 Chenango Street: Historic Downtown Binghamton



31 Chenango Street: ca. 1892, 23,900 SF, 3-story former theater located in the State and National Register Court Street Historic District; built in 1891 for banker, Charles F. Stone; designed by Sanford O. Lacey under supervision of famous area architect, Isaac Perry in the Richardsonian Romanesque style with rough-cut stone. One of area's first Vaudeville theaters, the Stone stage featured performances by Sarah Bernhardt, Ethel Barrymore and Lilly Langtree. In 1903, fire destroyed the interior. It was rebuilt in a year and hosted plays, symphony orchestras, and opera. By one account, Theodore Roosevelt made a whistle-stop campaign address from the second floor balcony (since removed). In 1931, it was converted to the "Riviera" Movie Theater, a single screen movie theater part of the Comerford movie chain. Later the theater was combined with the "Strand" movie theater next door.

Current condition: the theater was heavily modified in the 1930s into a single big -screen movie hall. Eclipsed in the following decades by radio and television and suburban multiplexes, the theater ceased operation in the 1970s. The building was remodeled to support three bays of first floor retail spaces and the theater was sealed off. The rear section experienced further deterioration. Seats have been removed and the building interior has been largely gutted.



Development potential/re-branding as a rock-climbing gym: the building has a historic facade deserving of careful restoration; the inside resembles a clean slate. The cavernous property needs bold rethinking, perhaps rebranding as a rock-climbing gym with a mix of amenities sought by the increasing number of students, young professionals and empty-nesters that are finding residential options nearby.

What could it become?

A trendy spot for many things:

- Indoor Climbing Gym
- Microbrewery
- Distillery
- Loft apartments
- Walk-in health clinic
- Small theater/performing arts
- Office space
- Artist studios/galleries
- Archery range
- Restaurant/cafe
- Retail boutique

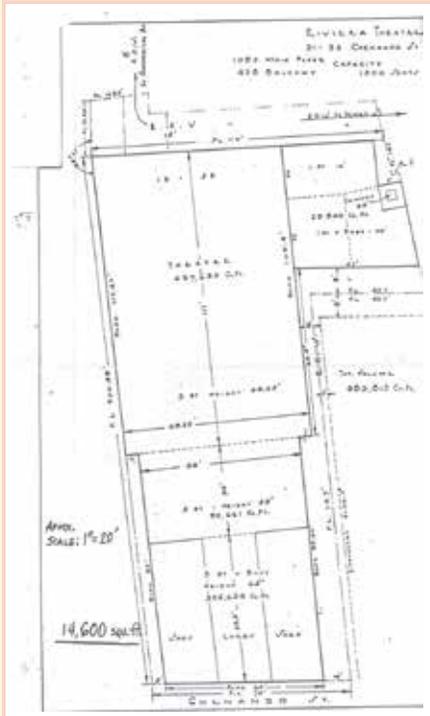




~STONE OPERA HOUSE~

Available Former Theater, 31 Chenango Street: Historic Downtown Binghamton

Historic Layout



Chenango Street, 1920s, Strand and Riviera Theaters (Stone) are on left

Centrally Located, Downtown



Many Benefits:

- authentic historic structure that could be rebranded as a trendy place
- centrally located in growing downtown
- motivated seller and/or potential development partner
- low-interest Binghamton Local Development Corporation financing available, other potential incentives
- adjacent 605-car State Street and 725-car Water Street parking ramps
- 20% State/20% Federal Historic Tax Credits for building restoration
- structure with tremendous history that can be rebranded as a trendy place
- traffic: approximately 18,000 people visit/pass through downtown daily to meet, dine, attend classes, shop, do banking, recreate or visit government/professional offices

For more information, please contact:

**EcoDev@CityofBinghamton.com
www.CityofBinghamton.com
(607) 772-7161**

- 3. Updated Code Enforcement Software (\$400,000):** With leadership provided by the NYS Department of State Codes Division, a project has been advanced to develop a comprehensive, information management system that will be deployed as a consolidated service for a consortium of municipal organizations, including the Cities of Schenectady, Amsterdam, and Gloversville. In the future, the Cities of Troy and Albany may participate in this group.

The goal of this project is to address, manage, and reduce urban blight by developing systematic, standardized methods of compiling, managing, and distributing property data, with emphasis on “problem properties” that are owned by “problem landlords/agents,” across an entire region of the State. In this manner, the participating organizations will leverage their relationships to improve performance and introduce greater efficiency into their respective code enforcement programs.

The project is specifically envisioned and designed, by the NYS Department of State Codes Division, to be shared with other municipalities, in support of similar, regional consolidation throughout New York State. Under these circumstances, urban agents such as the City of Binghamton Office of Code Enforcement, in partnership with other local municipalities such as the Town of Union, Village of Endicott, and/or the Village of Johnson City, could very well benefit from a similar initiative focused on our own region, i.e. Southern Tier.

The value of this initiative can be demonstrated in two ways: Firstly, project value is based on the research and development of the Schenectady project, as above, and will become retrospective, thus more apparent, as that project matures. Secondly, advantages of consolidating municipal code enforcement services, with specific reference to information management and record keeping services, is described and supported by a relatively recent study, completed on behalf of Broome County, that provided that exact recommendation as the principal opportunity currently available to participating organizations within the County.

The initial cost of this initiative is indeterminate at this time. However, it would be reasonable to assume – based on participation by multiple municipal organizations – that purchase, development, and deployment costs may be in the range of \$3-400,000.00, given the relative complexity of the initial task. Nevertheless, there may be further reason to believe that the overall cost of initial development could be reduced or defrayed by project development associated with the Schenectady project. In that case, municipalities would anticipate a less significant, initial investment and a corresponding operating cost that is consistent with financial resources currently available to similar municipalities, under current circumstances.

- 4. Bike Lanes/Bike Share Program (\$70,000):** the City is seeking funding for an intelligent/IOT bike rack which has been developed by mechanical/electrical engineering students at the Watson School of Engineering at Binghamton University. This intelligent bike rack would provide rental access to card-holding subscribers and would feature kiosks at seven locations that service the downtown: Martin Luther King Promenade, Binghamton University Downtown Center, Southern Tier High Technology Incubator, NYSEG Stadium, Governmental Plaza and State Street Arts District. These facilities would help promote healthy transportation alternatives to automobile use and reduce congestion. In addition, the facility would support the \$16 million the Route 434 Greenway – Bike Trail, a project for which the City and NYS Department of Transportation Region 9 are seeking \$16 million funding which will connect the Vestal campus of the University with the downtown vis a 2.5-mile cycling and pedestrian walkway.

5. **Stuyvesant/Court Food Business Accelerator (\$2 million):** the City is seeking funding to support the Southern Tier Agriculture and Revitalization Transformation initiative developed in cooperation with Cornell University and industry partners such as Wegman's Markets. These monies would rehabilitate downtown building to install small stores for start-up producers, food research and alpha runs for start-up producers.
6. **LUMA Projectors for Projection Art Festival (\$60,000):** as noted in the Southern Tier Final URI Plan, LUMA Projection–Computer Mapping Inc. is a successful entrepreneurial start-up founded by Binghamton University alumni who have developed a state-of-the-art computer mapping and entertainment business. The LUMA Projection Arts Festival debuted in September 2015 with seven striking computer animations on five major downtown Binghamton buildings and an audience of over 20,000. The City is seeking funding to purchase two 26,000 lumen projectors that would help advance this creative endeavor, promote the Southern Tier's innovative culture and a new tourism event.
7. **Waterfront Boating Access Points (\$300,000):** the City is seeking funding to provide boating access points to the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers in and near the downtown that would foster tourism, fishing, amateur boating competition and recreational alternatives. The City would seek to install floating docks at Sandy Beach Park, Rock Bottom Park North, Rock Bottom Park South, Veteran's Park, Laurel Avenue, Binghamton Plaza/Binghamton River Trail, Cutler Ice/Front Street, Roberson/Binghamton Visitor's Center and 50 Front Street.
8. **Temporary/Floating Dam on Chenango River (\$150,000):** the City seeks funding to study and implement a floating dam on the Chenango River that would raise mid-summer low water levels on the Chenango River to make the river more navigable for canoeing and kayaking. This would foster tourism, fishing, amateur boating competition and recreational alternatives.
9. **Portable Ice Rink for Downtown Plaza Area (\$200,000):** the City seeks funding to install a winter-time temporary ice rink in the Washington Street Plaza area that would attract visitors and offer a recreational alternative.
10. **Business Improvement District Seed Funding (\$250,000):** the City would like to establish a volunteer Business Improvement District to service the downtown. The BID would foster merchant cooperation, coordination of downtown shopping and holiday promotions. The funds would seed a Downtown Manager position/benefits for a two-year period after which the Director would have established events/promotions and income sources for the BID to sustain its continued operation.
11. **Downtown Awnings (\$1 million):** the City would like to start a 50/50 program to encourage downtown merchants to install sidewalk awnings which would shelter shoppers from the weather elements and foster retail and hospitality business in the historic district.
12. **Downtown Zoning Delineation & Branding Strategy (\$250,000):**
 - a. **Zoning & Cultural District Consolidation:** Many other communities in New York State have, or are in the process of, consolidating downtown zoning districts and historic districts to streamline development and create business-friendly downtowns.
 - **Expand the C-2 Downtown Business District** to consolidate areas that have similar goals for development (as identified in Blueprint Binghamton). This would add areas north and east of the current district, to foster downtown-like growth. A major benefit to inclusion in the C-2 is the easing of parking, height, and lot coverage restrictions. This could spur development in struggling areas such as the K-Mart Plaza, and help speed up development in areas that are already growing, such as Eldredge Street and Court Street east of Chenango Street.

Southern Tier Agriculture & Revitalization Transformation

Food Business Generation Station

Culinary Institute Graduates

Learn here,
stay here,
grow here.

Entrepreneurs

Prove ideas,
markets and
processes

Relocating

Grow with
nurturing
environment



Possible site
200 Court St.

1st Floor – Sprouting

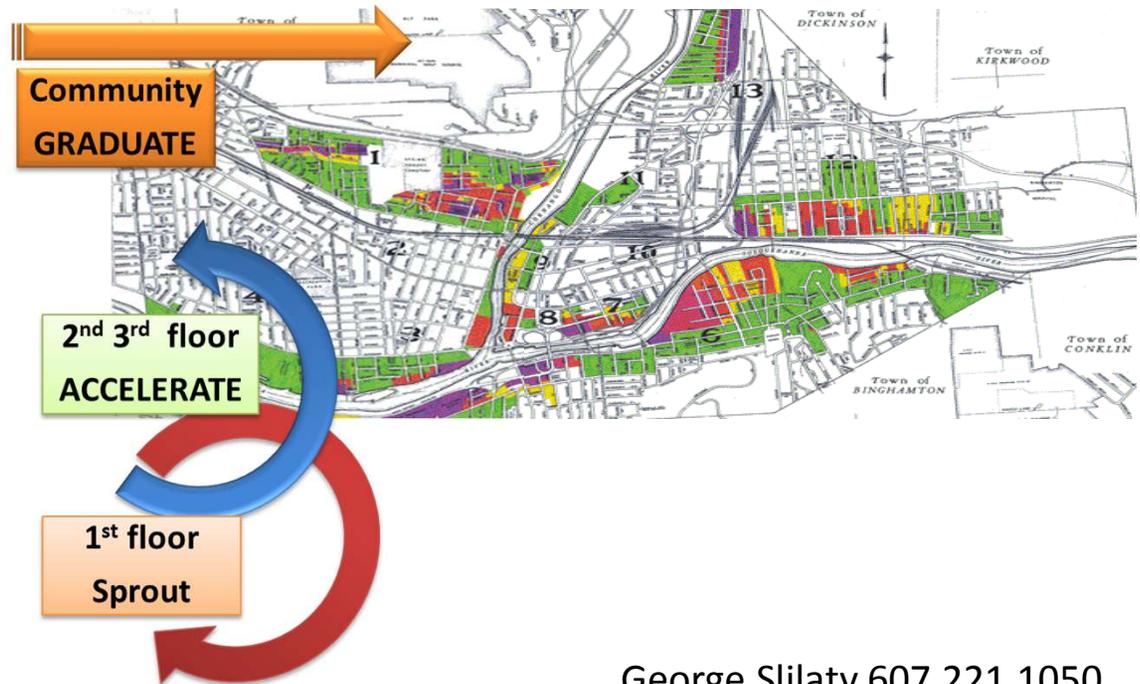
Store fronts with

- Common support facilities
- Business mentor/educate
- Storage/processing space
- Seed loans/expense subsidy

2&3rd Floor – Sapling

Alpha production

- Common Services
- Common support facilities
- Storage/processing space
- Subsidized



- Create one single “Downtown Historic District” identifying and consolidating the downtown as a historic place of collective importance. There are currently three separate historic districts Downtown, creating inefficiencies for PHCD staff and confusion/complexity for applicants and property owners. Consolidating the district would also give Tax Credit opportunities (up to 40%) to previously denied or ineligible/not included properties of areas adjacent to districts.

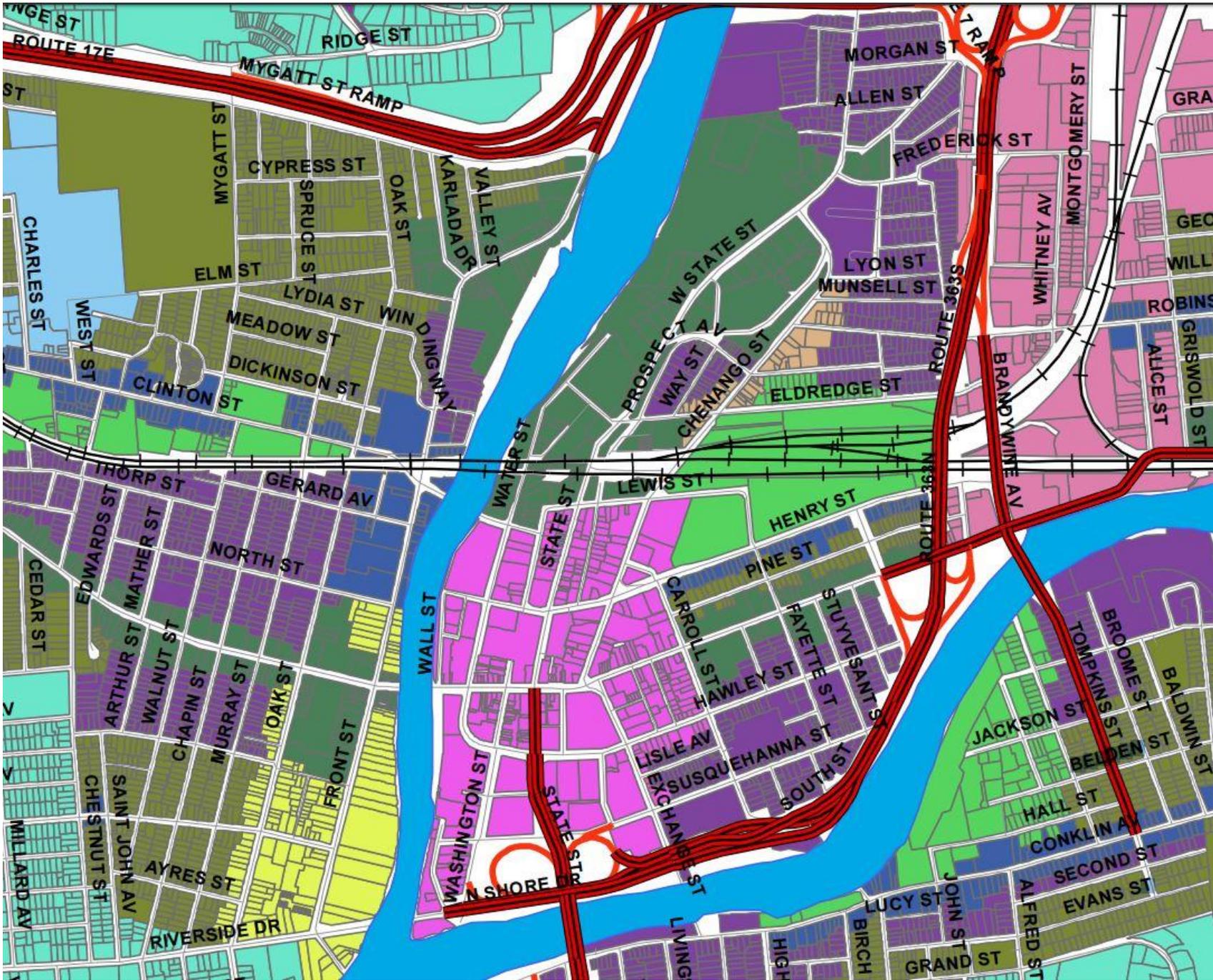
b. Downtown historic & marketing signage: Funding would be allocated to a brand identity and signage program for the new Downtown Historic District, signifying place and branding the downtown as a differentiated area of cultural and social significance.

c. Façade Improvement Grants: The remaining funding would be allocated to a fund to issue matching grants to property owners in the newly consolidated Downtown Historic District for historically appropriate façade improvements. An example would be the uncovering and restoration of encapsulated historic facades like those underneath the existing facades of Boscov’s and 59 Court Street. This would create support and buy-in among property owners.

d. Matching Resources: NY SHPO provides matching funding for Certified Local Government Communities (CLG) in good standing with the state. The City of Binghamton is a CLG community in good standing and would be able to receive grant funding resources that average between \$5,000 and \$15,000, but could be as much as \$29,000. These funds can be used for:

- i. Projects that address goals of identifying, nominating and protecting cultural resources
- ii. Project categories identified as training for staff, education programs, surveys and designations as part of a comprehensive plan, correction of deficiencies in CLG performance
- iii. Demonstration projects on critical issues such as compliance with state building and fire codes

Current C-2 Zoning Conditions:



Legend

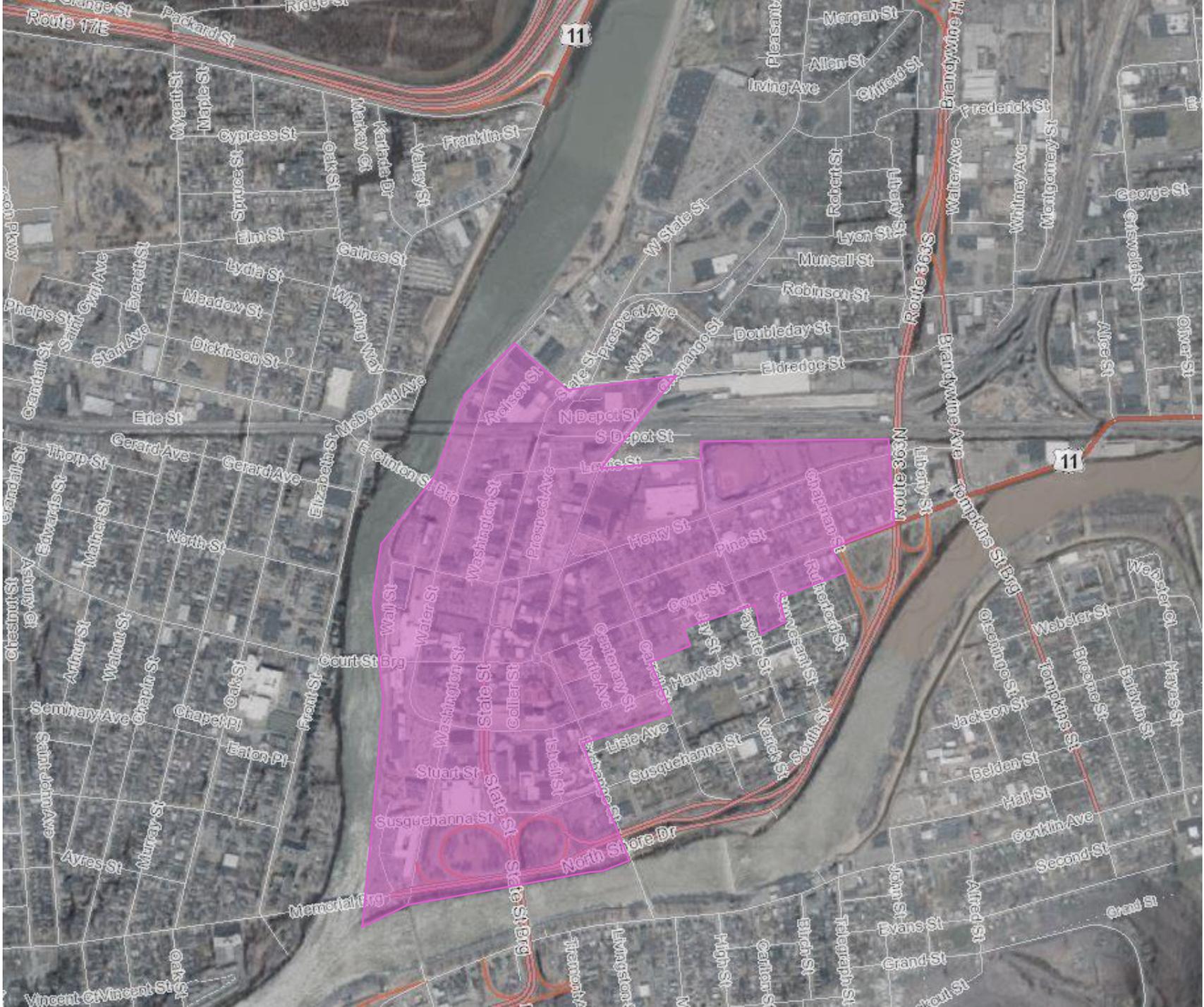
- County Road
- Federal Route
- Interstate
- State Route
- RAMP
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Roads

ZONING

- C-1 Service Commercial
- C-2 Downtown Business
- C-3 Medical
- C-4 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-5 Neighborhood Office
- C-6 Limited Neighborhood Commercial
- I-1 Urban Business Park
- I-2 Light & Medium Industrial
- I-3 Heavy Industrial
- R-1 Residential Single Unit Dwelling
- R-2 Residential One & Two Unit Dwelling
- R-3 Residential Multi-Unit Dwelling

C-2 Downtown Zoning District Extension

(version #1)



Legend

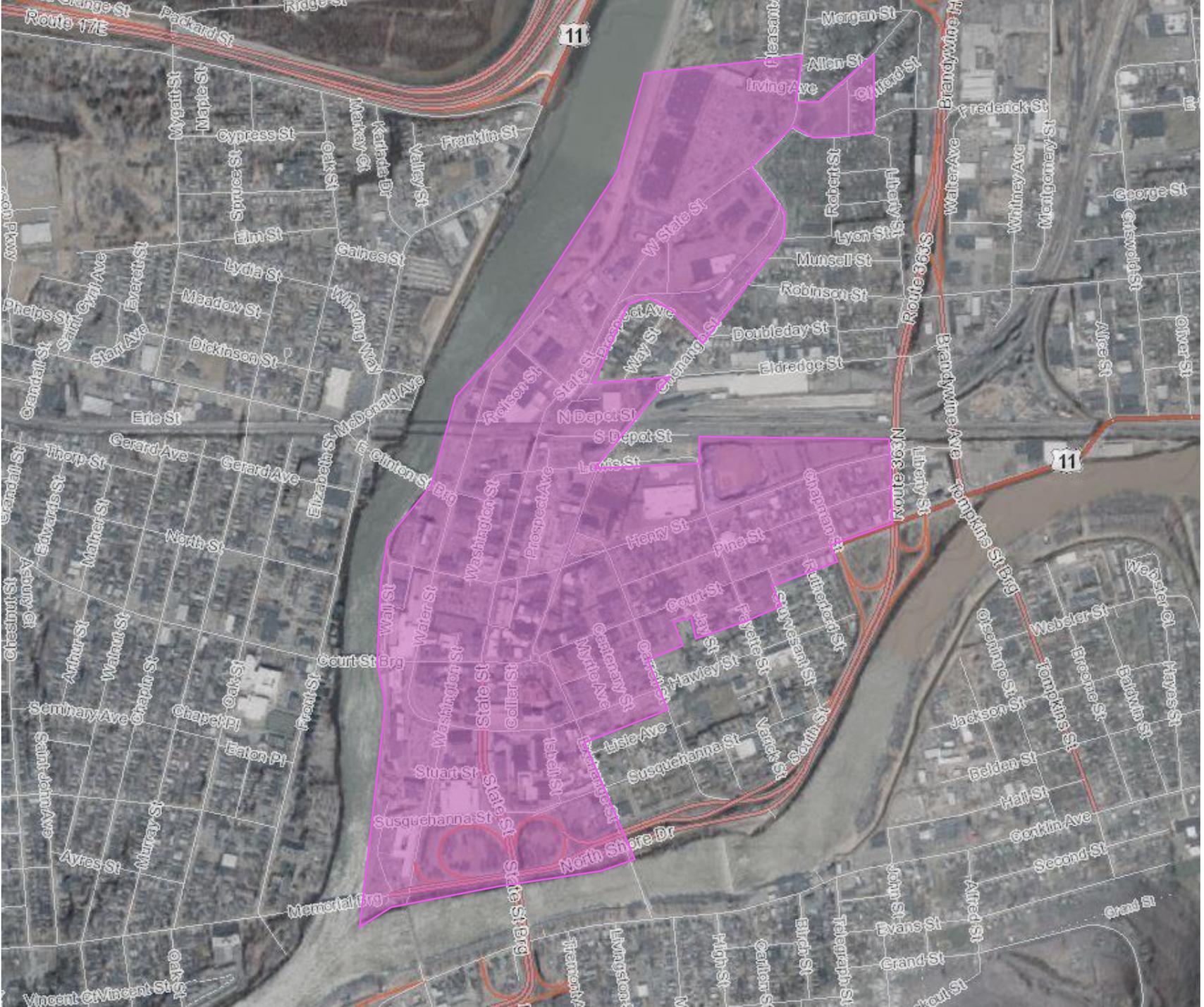
- County Road
- Federal Route
- Interstate
- State Route
- RAMP
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Roads

ZONING

- C-1 Service Commercial
- C-2 Downtown Business
- C-3 Medical
- C-4 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-5 Neighborhood Office
- C-6 Limited Neighborhood Commercial
- I-1 Urban Business Park
- I-2 Light & Medium Industrial
- I-3 Heavy Industrial
- R-1 Residential Single Unit Dwelling
- R-2 Residential One & Two Unit Dwelling
- R-3 Residential Multi-Unit Dwelling

C-2 Downtown Zoning District Extension

(version #2)



Legend

- County Road
- Federal Route
- Interstate
- State Route
- RAMP
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Roads

ZONING

- C-1 Service Commercial
- C-2 Downtown Business
- C-3 Medical
- C-4 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-5 Neighborhood Office
- C-6 Limited Neighborhood Commercial
- I-1 Urban Business Park
- I-2 Light & Medium Industrial
- I-3 Heavy Industrial
- R-1 Residential Single Unit Dwelling
- R-2 Residential One & Two Unit Dwelling
- R-3 Residential Multi-Unit Dwelling



Current Historic District Map:

Showing separate, disconnected historic district parcel areas in [blue](#)



Proposed Consolidated Downtown Historic District Map

With eligible historic parcel
areas highlighted in red

Downtown Zoning Delineation & Branding Strategy

1. **Zoning & Cultural District Consolidation:** Many other communities in New York State have, or are in the process of, consolidating downtown zoning districts and historic districts to streamline development and create business friendly downtowns.
 - i. Expand the C-2 Downtown Business District to consolidate areas that have similar goals for development (as identified in Blueprint Binghamton). This would add areas north and east of the current district, to foster downtown-like growth. A major benefit to inclusion in the C-2 is the easing of parking, height, and lot coverage restrictions. This could spur development in struggling areas such as the K-Mart Plaza, and help speed up development in areas that are already growing, such as Eldredge St and Court St east of Chenango St.
 - ii. Create one single “Downtown Historic District” identifying and consolidating the downtown as a historic place of collective importance. There are currently three separate historic districts Downtown, creating inefficiencies for PHCD staff and confusion/complexity for applicants and property owners. Consolidating the district would also give Tax Credit opportunities (up to 40%) to previously denied or ineligible/not included properties of areas adjacent to districts.
2. **Downtown historic & marketing signage:** Funding would be allocated to a brand identity and signage for the new Downtown Historic District, signifying place and branding the downtown as a differentiated area of cultural and social significance.
3. **Façade Improvement Grants:** The remaining funding would be allocated to a fund to issue matching grants to property owners in the newly consolidated Downtown Historic District for historically appropriate façade improvements. An example would be the uncovering and restoration of encapsulated historic facades like those underneath the existing facades of Boscov’s and 59 Court Street. This would create support and buy-in among property owners.

Matching Resources: NY SHPO provides matching funding for Certified Local Government Communities (CLG) in good standing with the state. The City of Binghamton is a CLG community in good standing and would be able to receive grant funding resources that average between \$5,000 and \$15,000, but could be as much as \$29,000. These funds can be used for:

- i. Projects that address goals of identifying, nominating and protecting cultural resources
- ii. Project categories identified as training for staff, education programs, surveys and designations as part of a comprehensive plan, correction of deficiencies in CLG performance
- iii. Demonstration projects on critical issues such as compliance with state building and fire codes

13. Downtown Zero Waste Management Plan Feasibility Study (\$75,000)

While identifying a needed strategy to effectively manage the waste generated in Downtown Binghamton, a Zero Waste Management strategy will help Binghamton to meet stated goals in our Comprehensive Plan and secure our continued Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS).

Issues regarding solid waste management in the Downtown business district of the City of Binghamton include:

- Inadequate number of collections per week – weekend gap
- Unauthorized use of dumpsters
- Need for Consolidated collection sites centrally located in high use areas; or
- Individual collection sites per business designed for security and visibility, aesthetics, and ease of use

These issues can be addressed in part by reducing the amount of material generated by the downtown businesses and restaurants by incorporating a Zero Waste management strategy. Zero waste is a simple concept designed around the following definition - Zero Waste is a philosophy that encourages the redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. No trash is sent to landfills and incinerators. Waste produced by businesses are separated into compostable, disposable and recyclable materials. Typically the sale of recyclable goods (paper and cardboard primarily) offset the cost of collection. If these materials are collected at no cost with no expected revenue, the offset costs are captured as a dollar savings. If these materials are collected and sold with a percentage revenue gain, there is no cost to the program and revenue is generated for the purchase of needed bins and equipment.

The primary component parts of a Zero Waste Management Plan include the following:

- Composting
- Waste oil capture and repurposing
- Recycling and revenue generation

Method of collection – Pay as you throw (PAYT); Free recycling; compost collection barrels; external fryer oil collection system; dedicated collection truck (6 cy compacting rear load garbage truck)

Schedule for collection – weekend runs; number and location of stops; number of material runs)

The feasibility study will identify the most practical and affordable method to reduce waste generation in our Downtown Business district; quantify the volume of waste produced; quantify an estimated reduction target and identify a value of off-set or avoided costs.

Comparison: Reuse/Recycling vs Quoted Disposal Cost				
	Materials	Labor	Transportation	Total
Recycling Project (IRN)	\$8,421	(\$20,407)	(\$11,876)	(\$23,862)
Disposal as Mixed Debris	(\$10,193)	(\$18,350)	(\$9,668)	(\$38,211)
Savings or (Added Cost)	\$18,613	(\$2,057)	(\$2,208)	\$14,348
Percent Savings				38%

6) **Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life in the downtown. Examples include the use of land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

Aggressive Infrastructure Repair/Replacement: the City of Binghamton is embarked on an aggressive plan to mill and pave 15 miles or approximately 10% of its streets every year, which is the average life of a mill-and-pave project. Initiatives with various State programs are outlined in Section 3.

- **LED lighting:** Binghamton is converting 7,000 streetlights to LED technology; a \$4 million project with \$700,000 in rebates from NYSERDA and NYSEG that in 15 years will save the city \$1 million in lighting maintenance costs and \$5.2 million in electric bills.
- **Downtown Microgrid:** the City secured \$100,000 to study the feasibility of a localized energy system whose power is generated and consumed in a small area. If funded for a second phase this could lay the foundation for a cheap and efficient municipal electric district in the downtown.
- **Electric vehicle charging stations:** Mayor David secured legislation to change Binghamton’s zoning code to foster EV charging stations and updated definitions to include commercial establishments that sell electricity for EVs.
- **Law & order community:** Binghamton added 20 new police recruits in fall of 2015; increased policing in downtown – expansion of Community Response Team; Arrests up 24% year-to-year, 622 drug-related arrests, 130 warrant arrests:
 - Binghamton Police Department’s participation in New York State’s Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative identified “hot spots,” focused operations against violent gangs and the deployment of outreach programs.
 - Binghamton’s gun buyback partnership with the Attorney General — has led to a 30% reduction in firearm-related violent crime in just one year. Binghamton Police K-9 units have conducted daily, randomized drug sweeps at the Greater Binghamton Transportation Center.
 - Relying more heavily on confidential informants and street-level operations by undercover Binghamton Police officers, the FBI, U.S. Marshals, New York State Police, Broome County Sheriff’s Office.

- Increased foot patrols in downtown to combat panhandling
 - Addition of 90 body worn cameras for each officer in the street
 - **Heroin Addiction:** the City has implemented a two-year intensive case management program in cooperation with a CHDO, Fairview Recovery Services
 - **SUNY Broome/Culinary Arts Program:** SUNY Broome Community College was successful in securing funding from the Upstate Revitalization Initiative and the Regional Economic Development Council; this will fund a \$12.5 million restoration and adaptive reuse of the city's old (1903) Carnegie Library. The program will train chefs and food service workers to find employment in the region's growing restaurant and hospitality industry.
 - **Downtown garbage/recycling collection:** the City is exploring options to place common collection garbage and recyclable collection points for commercial users in back-alley areas
 - **Street sweeping:** since 2015, the City has DPW personnel assigned to cleaning street sidewalks and picking litter
 - **Broome County Land Bank:** the County land bank was established in 2013 to foster economic and community development by acquiring, holding, managing, developing and marketing distressed, vacant, abandoned and under-utilized properties. The City is a partner in the land bank's mission to combat blight and foster adaptive reuse of under-utilized properties.
- 7) Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

Over the past few decades and through several Mayoral administrations, the City of Binghamton has worked to repurpose its downtown through planning initiatives; retention and development of existing businesses and strategic recruitment of new businesses; redevelopment of its waterfront; historic preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of key buildings as well as through multiple capital improvement projects. The result is a downtown poised for growth with the new Southern Tier High Technology Incubator as a catalyst. Partners in the redevelopment of the downtown will include:

- **Binghamton Local Development Corporation** – develops loan programs, initiatives and outreach efforts to support the City's economic development strategy, in conjunction with the Binghamton Economic Development Office. The BLDC manages low-interest loan programs to support business development within the City of Binghamton.
- **Downtown Binghamton Business Association** – an association of large downtown businesses and employers whose membership includes Security Mutual Life Insurance, Newman Development Group, Clark Patterson Lee and Chemung Canal Trust
- **Gorgeous Washington Street Association** – an association of downtown businesses and artists such as Garland Gallery, Davidson Fox, the Binghamton Philharmonic, DoubleTree by Hilton and Coughlin & Gerhart, LLP
- **eatBing, Inc.** – an association of downtown restaurants such as Lost Dog Café, Little Venice, Remlik's, Water Street Brewing, Galaxy Brewing, The Shop and Whole in the Wall that organizes a biannual Restaurant Week

Robert C. Murphy, the City of Binghamton's Director of Economic Development and Executive Director of the BLDC, will work to convene a DRI Planning Committee to guide approved projects.

- 8) Other.** Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

[Click here to enter text.](#)