ITHACA SDAT

AIA Communities by Design

ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.

September 2010

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Introduction

In November 2009, Ithaca, New York submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the city and its citizens in addressing key issues facing its downtown regarding the need to connect more effectively to other commercial districts in the City. The issues included planning and land use, connectivity, transportation, economic development, housing, and governance. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in June 2010, recruited a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In September 2010, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, students and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others.

Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- Customized Design Assistance. The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.

- A Systems Approach to Sustainability. The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.

- Inclusive and Participatory Processes. Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholder viewpoints and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.

- Objective Technical Expertise. The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts (planners, architects, economists and others) from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.

- Cost Effectiveness. By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to $15,000 in financial assistance for each project. In 2009, each SDAT project was estimated to cost between $20,000-$30,000 total. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields. Finally, the SDAT process employs a compressed schedule and the application of innovative public participation techniques to leverage resources effectively and produce timely results.

SDAT Program Communities

Communities that have participated in the SDAT program include the following:

Alexandria Township, NJ	Syracuse, NY	Windsor, CA
Oklahoma City, OK	Northeast Michigan	Tampa, FL
Northampton, MA	Lawrence, KS	Detroit, MI
Pittsfield, MA	Hagerstown, MD	Fort Worth, TX
Forest City, NC	Tucson, AZ	Leon Valley, TX
Cache Valley, UT	Englishtown, NJ	Morristown, NJ
Reno-Tahoe-Carson Region, NV	Dubuque, IA	Parma, OH
New Orleans, LA	Culver City, CA	Kauai, Hawaii
Longview, WA	Central City, LA	Fellsmere, FL
Guemes Island, WA	Albany, NY	

The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 180 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the Ithaca SDAT project recommendations, with summary information concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the city.

Summary Conclusions

The following report captures the SDAT Team's key recommendations across several important issues facing Ithaca:

• Connectivity

• Transportation

• Downtown

• Housing and Development

• Governance

While each team member authored a specific section of the report, several core themes emerged that overlap across components of our inquiry. The following summary conclusions capture the cross-cutting issues that face the community, and the team's assessment and core recommendations regarding them.

Central Themes of the SDAT Process

Ithaca's application to the American Institute of Architects was built around the need to assess important linkages between the downtown and other key districts within the community. As the application states, "the proposed SDAT project is designed to kick-off a prolonged community process of building connections and linkages between Downtown and its adjacent commercial district neighbors." The application highlighted several goals for the process:

 (1) The process will raise public consciousness of the need to improve connectivity and linkages between districts.

(2) The process will initiate discussions and planning on improving connections as proposed in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

(3) The project will identify possible design solutions for linkages that can be further developed or refined for implementation.

(4) The project will identify possible transit and transportation solutions that are appropriate to the conditions and marketplace.

(5) The project will identify possible marketing and promotional collaborations that can be initiated by the districts.

As a result of the three-day charrette process, the SDAT Team identified a series of key observations and recommendations across these areas, which are captured in the following report. In addition, the Team found that the process resulted in a broader analysis which uncovered additional observations regarding the community, which are described below.

Maintaining the Ithaca Quality of Life

The SDAT Team was quite impressed with the quality of Ithaca's community. The city is blessed with some extraordinary assets that include the following:

• A spectacular physical landscape that includes a range of topography, scenic vistas, the beautiful Ithaca Gorges, over 100 waterfalls within 10 miles of the downtown, and the Cayuga Lake, which provides a range of recreational opportunities.

• The presence of world class institutions, including Cornell University and Ithaca College. In 2009, USA Today ranked Ithaca the #1 college town in America.

• A relatively compact physical infrastructure, which provides residents with several advantages, including the ability to engage in a lifestyle that requires no more than a short walk or bike ride to fulfill most needs.

• A range of incredible amenities, including the renowned Ithaca Farmer's Market, local organic produce markets, neighborhood bakeries, the famous Moosewood Restaurant, and the Ithaca Commons.

The City's special quality of life is underscored by the fact that during the last decade Ithaca has been featured in at least 30 best cities lists. There is no question that Ithaca's residents currently enjoy a quality of life that would rival any community in America. The Ithaca quality of life is a defining feature of the community. As a result, the SDAT Team believes that the framework for its inquiry is largely captured by the need to build on, preserve and maintain the extraordinary quality of life and sense of place Ithaca enjoys while adapting to meet new challenges regarding sprawl and development.

The Centrality of Downtown

The SDAT Team found that downtown Ithaca is the critically important heart of the community, both from a physical standpoint and in regards to the importance of place and identity. The Ithaca Commons is a defining feature of the community, and represents a central community gathering place that is a part of important civic traditions and the maintenance of the community's sense of place. As Jane Jenkins writes, "The Commons is the iconic brand of Ithaca; it is the physical embodiment of how your community sees itself." As a result of its central place in the community, the SDAT Team believes the Commons and Downtown more broadly should be a focal point for community effort and investment. Regarding the Commons, Jane Jenkins observes, "What I saw is a need to address deferred maintenance issues. The Commons needs better management, programming and ongoing maintenance. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is probably the organization best suited and positioned to assume this role. This can be done via contract from the City of Ithaca using a BID or some other institutionalized funding source. The Commons, both as a place and a physical environment, is an integral part of Ithaca's brand. It is critical that the citizens see the need to maintain the Commons as the physical image of the community."

Connectivity: Making Ithaca's Connections Work

Ithaca's application to the AIA was titled, "Making Sustainable Connections". As the application states, the title was "purposefully selected." Furthermore, it states that, "Connectivity is what this project is all about. Linking downtown with its neighbors makes sense for downtown as well as for each of the other districts. This is an effort to create win-win planning initiatives that enable all districts to succeed, rather than pit one area against another." The SDAT team concurs with this assessment, and believes Ithaca can succeed in making stronger connections between its commercial districts. As Morgan McIwain writes, "Each of Ithaca's existing commercial districts has developed independently. In order to make the linkages between these districts more tangible, the City should apply a whole systems approach that clearly demarcates the connecting corridors and focuses a series of investments on them that reinforce their connecting purpose." The range of investments include enhanced transit opportunities as well as visible development of the corridors' identities, and are outlined in greater detail in the section on Connectivity.

Connecting Transportation and Land Use Strategies

The SDAT Team believes that the City should seek to build more integrated strategies linking land use and transportation policy for better outcomes. In many cases, perceived transportation issues are inherently linked to poor land use decisions, and a lack of resources to address them sufficiently with a transportation solution. As Ed Starkie writes, "The team found existing land use and development strategies to be insufficient." Mike Davis concurred, describing the local housing approach as an "unsustainable condition." As Mike Davis writes, "One of the first principals of sustainable development is that people should be able to live where access to employment, social diversity, and cultural opportunity is optimally available. In other words, housing should be located where basic human needs can be most easily met. For urbanized areas, this means putting housing as close to the urban core as possible. When this relationship is not present, people working in service-sector jobs must typically live far away from their employment and – without the benefit of public transportation – must drive to work. This activity wastes time, diverts a great deal of personal income to transportation costs, puts an unmanageable burden on a road system, supports the existence of parking lots as a "productive" land use and raises the level of airborne particulate matter from automobile exhaust. But perhaps most insidiously, this inequity creates a class division between those who live in and enjoy the opportunities of a community and those who cannot. This situation is not sustainable."

The team did find enormous potential for the City to address current challenges with targeted infill development and land use strategies that focus on the core. As Casey Hildreth writes, "Between Court and Green Street from the Commons to Inlet Island, there are enough surface parking lots and aged buildings of little value to absorb most of the County's population target over the next ten to fifteen years. Here is where the transportation grid can more easily absorb additional traffic, where transit service is most concentrated, and where there is the best opportunity for affordability incentives such as transit supportive home loans and low parking ratios. On the island itself, for example, current zoning does not require any parking at all –a special opportunity to retool the standard development pro formas that require expensive and unnecessary parking stalls." The team found that coordinated land use and transportation strategies that support a more vibrant downtown would help the entire community and carry significantly positive benefits to Ithaca's long-term sustainability.

The Need for Regionalism

The SDAT Team also found that the City cannot go it alone on this endeavor. As Ed Starkie observes, "One of the most significant challenges facing the region currently is the lack of a coordinated development strategy between the City and the Town of Ithaca. The team strongly recommends that the jurisdictions begin work on a coordinated strategy that addresses key development challenges at a regional scale to mitigate an otherwise predominate sprawl pattern that will negatively impact the entire area." In his analysis of transportation issues, Casey Hildreth concurred, writing, "Between the City and Town of Ithaca, Tomkins County, Cornell University and Ithaca College there have been missed opportunities to tackle mutual problems in earnest and plan across boundaries. The result is that key decisions – despite the many references to cooperation and coordination in planning documents - are largely made in isolation and there is little shared accountability where it is needed most." The team felt that efforts to work more effectively at a regional scale should begin immediately. As Joel Mills asserts, "The lack of regionally coordinated planning represents a gap that should be addressed as soon as possible. Until an effective and collaborative approach to regional planning can be put in place, the high quality of life all residents of the Greater Ithaca Area share will be at risk."

The Governance Connection

Finally, the SDAT Team found that governance considerations are at the center of a long-term sustainability strategy for the community. As Joel Mills writes, "Ithaca's current governance structure is dated. It is no longer leading to the kinds of outcomes that the region's citizens want for their community. As a result, its exceptional quality of life could be threatened in the long-term." The SDAT Team found that Ithaca, like many communities, suffers from a governance structure that is leading to artificial conflicts and a fragmented political and civic framework that is inhibiting good decision making. The combination of growth and sprawling development patterns within a fragmented community means that no one has control of the future. Under the current governance structure, the community is likely to experience chaotic development patterns characterized by reactive policy that is too narrow and inadequate to address its impacts. Sprawl crosses jurisdictional boundaries, making it impossible for any one entity to effectively address it. Localized, narrow approaches to planning are not adequate measures to solve the sprawl problem at a regional scale. Therefore, the SDAT Team recommends an integrated, 'One Ithaca' strategy that combines changes in government structure with a broader approach to governance that includes enhanced civic leadership and collaboration across jurisdictions. This approach is detailed in the section on Governance.

Connectivity: Making Connections Work

"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

Ithaca's application to the SDAT program was titled, "Making Sustainable Connections." As the application makes clear, the need to improve connectivity between key districts in the city is a central challenge facing the downtown's future, as well as the future of each emerging commercial district. As the application stated, "Connectivity is what this project is all about. Linking downtown with its neighbors makes sense for downtown as well as for each of the other districts. This is an effort to create win-win planning initiatives that enable all districts to succeed, rather than pit one area against another." Building successful connections between Downtown and three principal emerging commercial areas (East Hill, South Hill, and West End/Waterfront) is a valid goal and one that the team believes is critically important for the future viability of them all.

Ithaca is well positioned to accomplish this goal. The relatively compact character of the city is an advantage in creating better connections between commercial districts. Collegetown is the commercial district that is adjacent to Cornell University. It is a mere six blocks from downtown, even though it features a topographical barrier with a 500 foot rise on East Hill. The West End's emerging commercial district sits along the Cayuga Lake inlet waterfront only a mile from downtown. Ithaca College is located on South Hill, about 1.5 miles from downtown. These distances are not extreme, and the Team feels that identifying and prioritizing key connecting corridors and investing in them can enhance connectivity significantly. However, any connectivity initiative the City undertakes will require two key components:

• Once identified, connecting corridors will require a range of strategic interventions, including a host of design elements, streetscape improvements, transportation enhancements, and other interventions.

• This initiative must be implemented in a collaborative manner, involving leadership from every commercial district in a coordinated effort. As the SDAT application stated, in the past, "Districts were generally viewed as islands unto themselves, not linked physically and not working collaboratively." This condition must change if the city is to have success in linking its major commercial areas effectively and reinvigorating the downtown.

Spine & Spoke Concepts

Ithaca's street system was originally designed to get people in and out of downtown, where most of the employment was located. Today, it has a 'spine' through downtown, still serving the center of the community, and a series of 'spokes' connecting it to other areas of the city. As the City has experienced the growth of competing commercial districts, the spoke system and its individual corridors have become more important as strategic connecting points between various official and unofficial districts.

The Diagram on the opposing page is a representation of Ithaca's Spine & Spoke model. The team recommends connecting its important districts with distinctive infrastructure that includes the following elements:

• Development of Special Corridor Districts. Each of Ithaca's existing commercial districts has developed independently. In order to make the linkages between these districts more tangible, the City should identify the connecting corridors and focus a series of investments on them that reinforce their connecting purpose.

• The Team believes the defined corridors of importance should include Downtown to Cornell, Downtown to Ithaca College, Downtown to Development Districts, and a community trail network that is woven through the system.

• Reinforce Connecting Corridors with Enhanced Transit. The team believes that these strategic connections should be buttressed with enhanced transit, such as more frequent trolley or shuttle services, with the potential for more robust transit investments in the future.

• The City should focus on key linkages along State/Eddy Street and South Aurora Street to help define the system.

Spine & Spoke Concepts

The SDAT Team recommends that the City apply a series of design interventions to fully articulate these key corridors as connection points between the commercial districts. Ithaca can utilize a full toolbox of design elements to achieve well articulated corridors, including the following elements:

• Special Streetscape Elements. Adding elements such as street trees, flower boxes, public art, street furniture, paving, lighting, and landscaping will contribute to the value of the area and enhance the user experience by changing the character and feel of each corridor.

• Paving, Lighting, and Seating. The use of well-designed, pedestrian-scale lighting can change the character of a corridor and help establish a more welcoming environment for a range of transportation options. Paved walkways signify a welcoming experience for pedestrians, and seating can provide an attractive amenity that helps increase multiple uses of the corridor beyond automobiles, creating less congested streets and a more livable experience for all users.

• Landscaping. Adding special landscape elements to existing corridors can help distinguish them from other streets, communicate their important connecting purposes, and contribute to the public space available in the community. In some cases, special landscaping can be utilized to control stormwater runoff as well, providing long-term savings to street maintenance.

• Signage. Using special signage along connecting corridors is a simple way to brand them, give them an identity, and communicate their placemaking role to the community.

Lighting and Street Furniture can Enhance the Corridorrs

Redevelop the Ithaca Commons as a Pedestrian and Transit Mall

The SDAT Team believes that the Ithaca Commons is the critical spine in the city's system, and should be enhanced as both a pedestrian mall and a transit mall in the future, extending transit from the Commons through key corridors. By enhancing this critical spine with additional connectivity and transit, the city can re-establish it's central importance to the street network and make it an attractive place for more intense investment and development.

The Importance of Gateways

Finally, the Team recommends that the City identify a design strategy for key corridor gateways and invest in them as points of articulation. These gateways should reflect the Ithaca quality of life and reinforce community identity through their design character. Maintaining an attractive image and announcing the importance and special role of these corridors will enhance their perceived and tangible connections between commercial districts.

Transportation and Land Use

Transportation to and within Ithaca, although it has an efficient grid network of downtown streets and numerous other assets, is largely defined by the geography. Whether trying to cross water bodies at a limited set of bridges, overcome steep grades, reach the nearest (but far away) destination, or deal with the practical and psychological impacts of excessive winter weather, there will always be physical barriers that make driving a car the easy choice for many people. It is thus understandable that, fearful of congestion turning away customers or reducing quality of life, some remain skeptical to increasing downtown and campus development without the provision of ample parking and expansion (or maintenance) of roadway capacity.

While the perseverance of 'car culture' can be frustrating, progressive advocates and decision-makers can neither wholly dismiss such thinking as parochial nor sidestep critical but sensitive issues by embracing smaller, marginal victories. For its part Ithaca seems to have walked the line well, starting with the creation of the "Commons" and successful opposition to new highways and continuing with sensible but significant transportation improvements (waterfront trail development, residential traffic-calming, the 6-Point Traffic Plan), downtown parking management, and support of an up-and-coming transit system. These efforts clearly have helped preserve the urban core while expanding non-driving options for college students and nearby residents. But like every U.S. city large and small, much more needs to happen if the term "sustainable" is to have any meaning: there are still very real challenges to making transit and non-motorized travel appeal to the skeptics, and at a larger scale there is a real need to encourage infill development and compact growth while preserving natural and agricultural lands.

The City of Ithaca, with nearly all its transportation plans outdated and currently working to update its Comprehensive Plan, seems poised to discover a next generation of priorities that can do just that. However, just as downtown's clear physical boundaries have defined its access and movement so too have they defined much of the land use planning and transportation mitigation. Between the City and Town of Ithaca, Tomkins County, Cornell University and Ithaca College there have been missed opportunities to tackle mutual problems in earnest and plan across boundaries. The result is that key decisions – despite the many references to cooperation and coordination in planning documents - are largely made in isolation and there is little shared accountability where it is needed most.
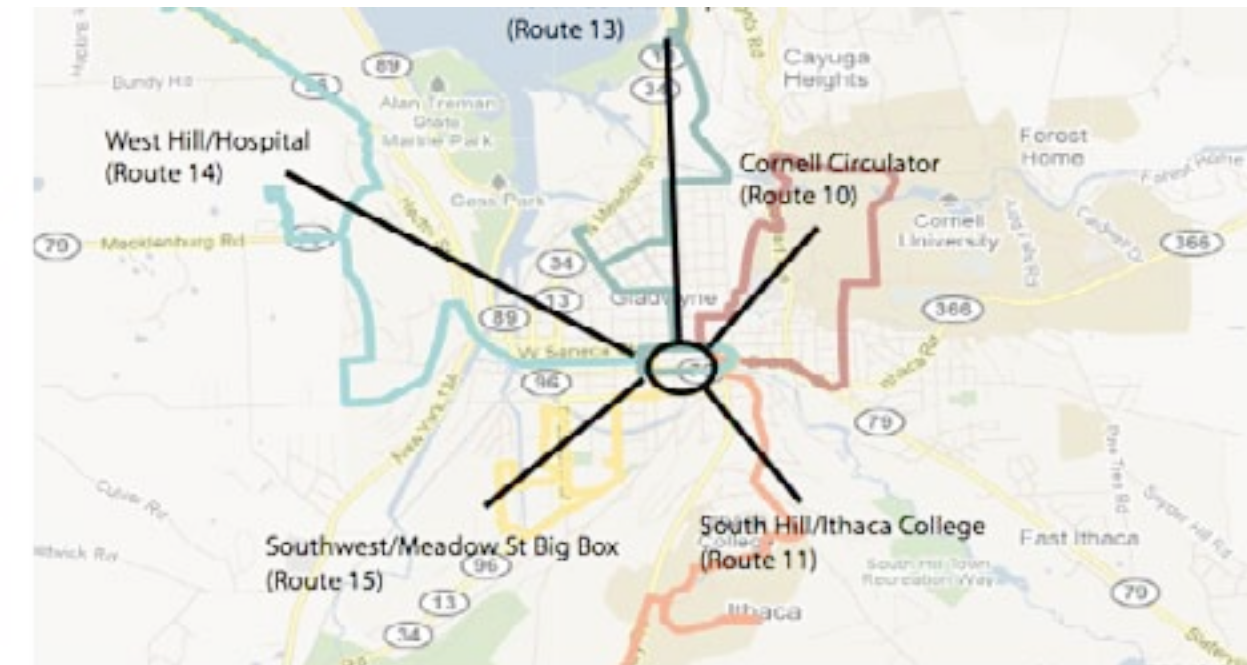
A 6-Point Livable Transportation Plan

With this in mind, the following is an outline for a revised "6-Point Livable Transportation Plan" which broadens the scope and ambition of the previous traffic plan and should serve as a potential blueprint for developing Ithaca's – if not Tompkins County's - next generation of priorities:

1. **Undertake joint City/Town land use and transportation comprehensive planning**

Transportation infrastructure and transit service will continue to chase land use under the status quo – no matter how thoughtful the individual municipal or campus plan. The prospect of 'nodal' green field development on both Cornell's east campus and West Hill's City/Town border, coupled with intense but isolated development in the Southwest District and continued housing sprawl at Ithaca College, is an incremental disaster in the making. Unacceptable impacts on existing rural lands, key arterial roadways, and the economic relevancy of downtown will occur for at least three reasons:

1.) There is no redundancy in the roadway network outside of downtown. Even the most finely-executed nodal development will continue funneling peak hour traffic (which includes buses) through the same existing pinch points since there are few viable ring road or bypass opportunities

2.) Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) will never have enough service hours to adequately serve all the new growth nodes being planned. Mixed-use development with a bus stop serving hourly and peak-only routes is not transit-oriented, and it takes an incredible number of new jobs and housing along the full alignment for new service investments to be worthwhile (see Point #4)

3.) Without a regional accounting of assets and trade-offs, dense development will struggle to actually happen. Unless growth is tangibly linked to preservation and mitigation is pooled and targeted to produce widely felt benefits, the Not-In-My-Backyarders (NIMBY's) will continue controlling the mitigation discussions at their localized margins and threaten ambitious projects

For there to be logical and somewhat sustainable approach to transportation investment, housing and job targets need to go where they are physically – not jurisdictionally – appropriate. As best we can tell this is in the existing city core and at the colleges, which leads to Point #2.
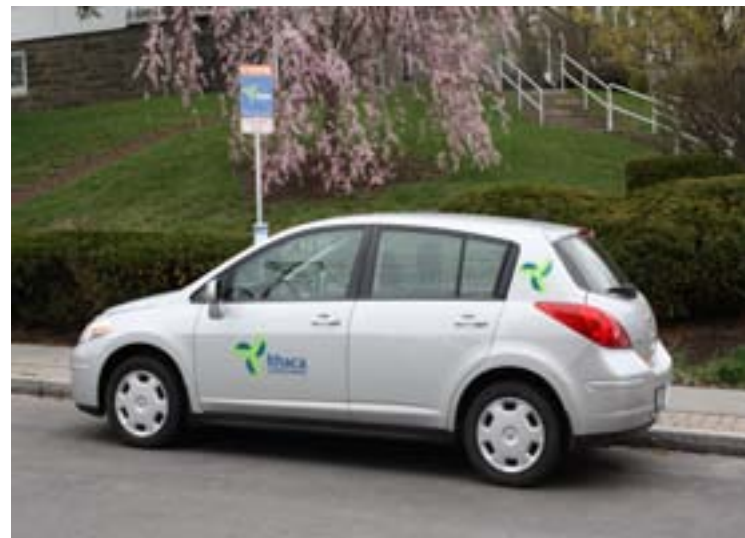
2. Re-prioritize Southwest District housing in favor of the downtown and West End

Throughout the site visit and community engagement process, it was repeatedly argued that downtown development – in particular affordable housing - is very challenging due to high land costs and the difficulty of getting taller, denser projects approved. Perhaps this is why the City, in an attempt to locate new, 'smarter' development has looked to the derelict and publicly-owned Southwest District for targeted growth. But while the Southwest District provides easier land acquisition, its peripheral location and proximity to big box stores make it a very long-term bet as a walkable and transit-oriented neighborhood. (There is also the issue of how to improve roadway circulation so as not to overwhelm S Meadow Street with automobiles - see Point #5.) In order to face-up to the task of promoting growth and affordable housing without the creation of isolated ghettos, the challenge of downtown development needs to be refocused and thought of as a major opportunity.

Between Court and Green Street from the Commons to Inlet Island, there are enough surface parking lots and aged buildings of little value to absorb most of the County's population target over the next ten to fifteen years. Here is where the transportation grid can more easily absorb additional traffic, where transit service is most concentrated, and where there is the best opportunity for affordability incentives such as transit supportive home loans and low parking ratios. On the island itself, for example, current zoning does not require any parking at all –a special opportunity to retool the standard development pro formas that require expensive and unnecessary parking stalls.

Taking advantage of the West End and downtown's capacity for growth, however, requires a focused effort. Skeptical residents and weary developers both need greater degrees of certainty and confidence: in the specific public benefits expected of private development, in the development review process itself, and in the ability of the "market" to rely on fewer car trips. The following are three recommendations which speak to these needs:

1.) Develop a downtown/West End urban design framework (UDF). To avoid the legal and technical rigidity of most environmental impact assessments (i.e. a process to establish a "nexus" between impacts and mitigation, which is often focused on vehicular Level-of-Service), a UDF is a values-driven planning effort to engage community members on the character and specific amenities (open space, community space, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, etc.) expected of new development. Although not a substitute for technical analysis, the recommendations from a UDF give a developer up-front guidance on community preferences and often can be folded into transportation mitigation.

2.) Formalize and professionalize the development review process. The current system, which leaves open the possibility of endless revisions by City Council and savvy slow-growth advocates, is a major barrier to new housing development. (S)electing a knowledgeable group of citizens with a range of professional design and community backgrounds to review and shepherd development will help de-politicize and bring fairness to the design review process

3.) Target housing partnerships and marketing strategies at graduate students, active seniors. There is clear indication both of these demographics have vast growth potential in Ithaca, walk more and drive less, and prefer off-campus housing. Cornell graduate students and faculty are also expected to provide the bulk of transit ridership increases over the next ten years (as established by the 4.0-4.5% transit mode shift goal in the T-GEIS). If these cohorts can be specifically linked to housing development, the chances for financing smaller urban units with lower parking ratios are much greater.

3. Take control of your most important roads from NYSDOT

The fact that so many state routes converge in downtown Ithaca brings both opportunities and challenges. Lacking proximity to an interstate highway, Ithaca nonetheless provides a well-connected arterial road system to serve the needs of regional freight mobility and local business access. Unfortunately, it also leaves the City at the mercy of state engineers who are often neither accountable to local officials nor adept at urban, multi-modal contexts. The result is an all-to-familiar condition where state-controlled roads wind up as barriers to livable, walkable neighborhoods.

As part of a national trend towards reversing this condition, summer 2010 saw both the New York Senate and State Assembly pass Complete Streets bills which will ultimately give greater deference to local planning preferences and multi-modal priorities. Although these bills wound up unresolved in committee and ultimately unsigned by the Governor, there is every indication that a statewide Complete Streets bill is eminent. In anticipation of these changes, Ithaca needs to unburden itself of past frustrations and re-imagine the city with greater control of its streets. This effort can otherwise be called *"Improve a Couplet, Remove a Couplet"*:

Improve a Couplet (Seneca and Green Streets)

With between 8,000-10,000 cars per day on each street (and T-GEIS forecasts of at most a few thousand more by 2018), there is no compelling reason from a traffic capacity standpoint why these two streets need to remain one-way. Streets up to and over 20,000 ADT can provide adequate capacity with just one lane in each direction and a center two-way left-turn lane. On the other hand, the benefits of converting this couplet are ambiguous and expensive (due to new traffic signals), especially when one considers alternative improvements and the potential benefits of the existing configuration.

Unlike some arterial couplets, Green and Seneca Streets (part of State Route 79) have great potential to be pedestrian-friendly with just a few design tweaks. Gaps in traffic coupled with existing curb extensions into parking lanes already allow short crossing times and extensive jaywalking (an illegal but nonetheless positive activity with respect to sustainable streets). By increasing the number of curb extensions and widening sidewalks with new development, over time these arterials will become consistently narrowed to help reduce traffic speeds and provide space for urban design amenities (trees, lighting, seating, etc.).

The fact that these streets carry the largest number of buses is also main consideration, with opportunities for priority treatments that would otherwise be challenging if they were two-way. One-way streets can more easily be optimized for transit through signal treatments, by dedicating travel lanes as "bus-and-bike only," or by widening the sidewalk to provide "in-lane" transit stops. The latter is especially effective at improving, in addition to speed and reliability, traveller comfort by removing the need for buses to swerve in and out of the parking lane. For more discussion on transit, see Point #4.

Lastly, the Green/Seneca couplet can be leveraged to reinforce the presence of the Commons, providing a hierarchy to the street grid and assisting the formation of one's downtown mental map. Currently these streets do not do this well but could be improved if, for example, sidewalks adjacent to the Commons built upon and extended the look and feel of the interior. Combined with transit access and other pedestrian crossing improvements, the Seneca/Green couplet can complement and expand – rather than isolate –the City's retail center and most popular destination.

Remove a Couplet (Fulton and Meadow Streets)

In contrast to Seneca and Green Streets, the north-south couplet of Fulton and Meadow Streets is a much more problematic collection of state routes (13, 34 and partial segments of 96) with a combined average volume of approximately 30,000 cars per day and an adjacent active railroad line. Together they form a dense mental and physical barrier between downtown and Cayuga Inlet while also serving to inhibit redevelopment of several attractive waterfront parcels. North of Hancock Street and south of W Clinton Street, these routes recombine on Meadow Street to form a five-lane arterial roadway. Shoe-horning a similar cross-section through the West End will not be easy, but it is by all means possible and has tremendous upside for the City and region (see Points #1 and #5).

The key to converting the Fulton/Meadow couplet is to make the project much more than traffic or transportation. While there will be obvious benefits to bicycles and pedestrians, what will build support for the project is a comprehensive plan that includes coordinated property redevelopment, new open space and environmental benefits, upgrades to a 'smart' grid, targeted preservation, and the full support of Cornell University and the downtown businesses. If such an integrated strategy can be developed, convincing NYSDOT that there is safe and adequate movement capacity along Routes 13 and 34 should not be as formidable as it once may have been.

There are many technical requirements that can work to obscure the feasibility of such a large undertaking, but three conditions stand out that make this author excited about its prospects. The first is the area of Meadow Street that would be converted. Although the project would likely require a small property take on one or both sides of the street and the relocation or undergrounding of overhead utilities, there are very few existing buildings which come out to the street edge. Where buildings do abut the sidewalk are areas of high redevelopment potential. Second, the two northern blocks of Fulton Street between Esty and Meadow Streets could be completely removed from the grid, thus opening up redevelopment opportunities close to the water where none currently exist. Lastly, the presence of the street grid and several east-west one-way streets provide opportunities to restrict turning movements in favor of through traffic. This last condition could be critical for obtaining a slimmer, less costly roadway profile and/or allowing more boulevard-quality landscape features –elements a 21st century, sustainability-focused NYSDOT could embrace.


4. Develop an East-West, High-Frequency Transit Corridor from Fulton to Mitchell

Like every transit system in America, TCAT must struggle with two competing, fundamentally distinct missions: that of providing frequent service on a limited set of existing routes to make transit more attractive and convenient (defining a core network), versus geographically balanced service that is accessible to vulnerable populations and helps maintain political support (i.e. coverage). TCAT has thus far been successful at balancing these goals and increasing ridership, and is by every indication a well-run organization in which Ithaca can take pride. Nonetheless, the struggle to grow a core network within an outward-expanding region has troubling implications for sustaining ridership growth and leveraging urban infill development.

According to their Transportation Impact Mitigation Strategies document, Cornell has a goal of increasing employee transit ridership from approximately 14 percent to over 18 percent in ten years. As part of this goal a comprehensive assessment of TCAT's system was conducted in 2009. While these changes seem to have improved service on several key routes and eliminated inefficient low-performers, the underlying architecture of the transit system was kept firmly in place. As Cornell and Ithaca College seek to expand their transit patronage, and if downtown is going to grow and provide significant new affordable housing, the transit system as a whole needs to further concentrate its service and increase frequency on several core routes.

In order to locate potential demand for more frequent service, it is informative to look at some details from Cornell's campus master plan. According to the T-GEIS environmental review, the highest traffic volume increases expected over the course of the plan build-out are along the City's east-west corridors. These include E State Street east of the Commons (+3,650 daily car trips), Route 96 (+2,000), Green Street (+1,900), Dryden St (+1,800), and Seneca St (+1,300). Improving service frequencies along this demand path could help lower these traffic estimates by making transit attractive to a wider range of potential users.
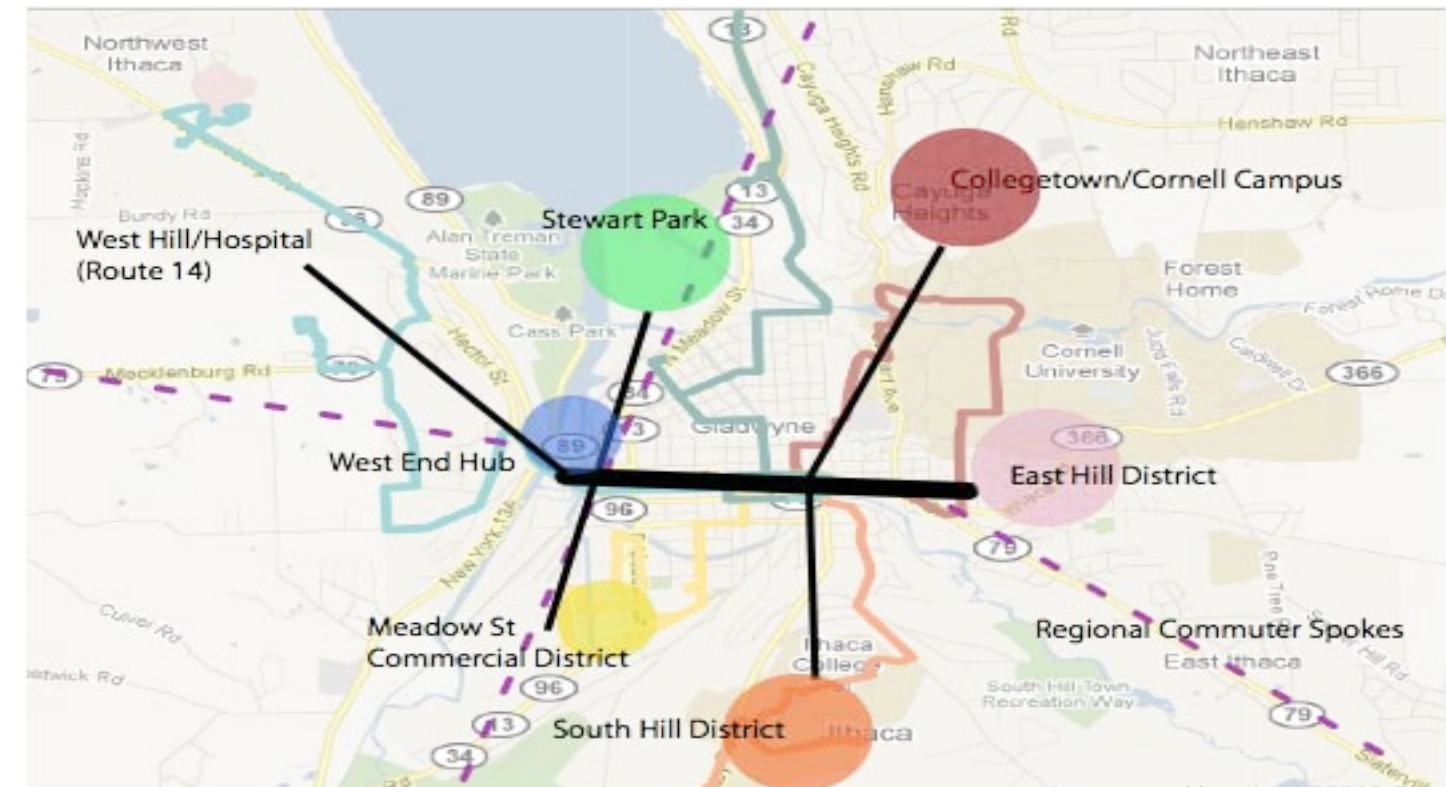
5. Re-scope and complete the most important task from the old 6-Point Plan: "The Octopus"

The remaining task from the 6-Point Traffic Plan is perhaps its least-defined yet important recommendation, which deals with how to improve mobility (both in terms of congestion relief and asphalt relief) at the famed "Octopus" at the base of the lake where a new roadway is proposed to connect Taughconnock Blvd across the inlet to the southwest shopping district.

The Octopus is a confusing, gnarled set of intersections, bridges, train tracks and signage that disconnects west side residents from the city and everyone from the water. The Team recommends applying roundabouts to the alignment to ease traffic flow and connectivity, as illustrated below.

Downtown & The Commons

The Ithaca Brand

My mother always taught me that nothing is more important than your reputation. In the case of communities, your reputation is what we now refer to as "brand." We often find that a community brand is strongest *outside* the community. Such is the case with Ithaca. You have an excellent, known brand outside of your community, but inside, you see only the problems. Ithaca needs to understand and embrace its excellent outside reputation as a community with "gorgeous" geography and smarter than average people.

Community Branding

• Branding is the process of setting your community apart and creating the perception that there's no place quite like your town.

• Creating this can perception is more art than science. It requires community organizations to be collaborative, cooperative and consistent in their messaging.

• The brand is for the entire community although downtown should be the physical representation of the brand.

• Branding revolves around product more than marketing.

• Marketing is hype. Do not market what your community cannot deliver.

• Successful brands do not appeal to everyone.

• It might be hard to believe, but not everyone wants to live in a community full of smart people in an environment of steep hills and snow and ice. That does not mean Ithaca is not a successful brand; it just means some folks prefer flat, sunny suburbs.

Branding is...

• What someone else thinks of you, not what you say you are.

• I can tell people that Oklahoma has green, rolling hills in the eastern part of the state, but that doesn't change the perception of most people that my state is nothing more than a flat dusty prairie. Knowing what people think about you can help you deliver on your brand promise, or craft messages that will be more reflective of the community reality.

• Obvious and pervasive throughout the community.

• The community has to believe. Sometimes the locals are the toughest audience; but your brand will be stronger the more community support there is for it.

• A feeling. In this case a feeling that makes you want to go there.

• If I mention New York City, you summon more than just a visual image of density, skyscrapers, taxi-cabs and people. The very mention of New York City evokes an emotional response from people. Of course, that response is not the same for everyone, but your goal should for people to say "Let's go there!" when someone mentions Ithaca.

• Not a logo and/or a slogan. They simply reinforce the brand.

• This is where many communities trip up. We are conditioned that the Nike swish is the Nike brand; but it is the quality of the product that makes the brand mark valuable. Do not confuse your community logo with your brand. Your logo is only valuable if you can deliver on your brand promise.

Branding Recommendations

• Embrace your geography.

• The hiss represents connectivity challenges; but do not look at it as an excuse. Approach it as an asset and you might find creative solutions rather than excuses.

• Understand the challenges of an education brand.

• Although it's difficult to believe, there are often negative images associated with university communities. Stuck up. Eggheads. Ivory towers. Out of touch with reality. Education is very much a part of Ithaca's brand and like your geography, it needs to be embraced and promoted in a positive light.

• Debunk local negative perceptions and understand that your brand is better outside of Ithaca than it is internally.

• Local communities can sometimes be their own worst enemies. Ithaca is no exception and the most critical comments I heard were from local residents. Sometimes it is worthwhile to consider a local "we are fabulous" campaign. For example, I am always frustrated that the most positive image advertising for Oklahoma City happens outside of Oklahoma City to attract visitors as opposed to educating residents and making then proud to live here.

• Know what your brand is NOT.

• Knowing what you are NOT is just as important as identifying who you are. When you try to market to everyone you market to no one, so it is important to identify market segments that would not be interested in your message.

Manage and Maintain: The Ithaca Commons

The Commons is the iconic brand of Ithaca; it is the physical embodiment of how your community sees itself. What I saw is a need to address deferred maintenance issues. The Commons needs better management, programming and ongoing maintenance. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is probably the organization best suited and positioned to assume this role. This can be done via contract from the City of Ithaca using a BID or some other institutionalized funding source. The Commons, both as a place and a physical environment, is an integral part of Ithaca's brand. It is critical that the citizens see the need to maintain the Commons as the physical image of the community.

The Commons Recommendations

• Keep the Commons – but definitely upgrade!

• The Commons is an important part of the Ithaca identity, but it could use a makeover. The community needs to revisit how the public uses the area and add some more modern elements including color. The overall impression is that the area is gray.

• Consider infrastructure and the needs of residents and businesses.

• When considering a makeover for the commons, it is important to consider the needs of the businesses and residents. Sometimes these are mutually exclusive, but with proper planning a new design can meet the needs of both groups

• Establish clear management responsibilities.

• The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is the organization best positioned to manage and maintain the commons. A funding mechanism and accountability structure must be identified, but this DIA has the expertise and the "on the ground" presence to ensure the Commons are maintained properly and programed appropriately.

• Develop an ongoing maintenance plan and capital replacement plan.

• This exercise can be done in conjunction with establishing a new management structure. The City, Town, County, DIA and other public utilities must cooperative to develop an ongoing schedule for infrastructure maintenance and capital replacement when needed.

Aging Infrastructure on the Commons

the Commons   *Collegetown*

Left (and Right) of Center: Multiple Retail Centers

Commercial Ithaca is actually a collection of districts or business nodes. Depending on your point of view, that can be interpreted as Ithaca having no center or multiple centers. Of course, as a downtown professional, I believe there can be only one "center", and in Ithaca – that is the Commons. However, the reality is: the Commons is not the exclusive business center in Ithaca and each "node" will have its own niche market. Strengthening the retail mix is probably the most effective way of drawing a broader audience to downtown. While Ithaca enjoys healthy tourist traffic, the retail mix should serve the needs of local residents first and visitors second. The team would like to emphasize three important points:

1. **You will not be able to change your retail mix unless you get your property owners involved.** They have to be vested in the process from the very beginning. Start a roundtable; invite them to coffee.

2. **While the Ithaca brand is certainly tied to education, not all Ithaca residents are students.** Design your retail mix to meet the needs of *those* residents; Cornell students will stay in the university commercial district.

3. **Retail is cyclical.** It is natural for some businesses to close. In fact, this can sometimes be a good thing as it opens a new market and opportunity for another entrepreneur. Do not be discouraged if you lose retail businesses during the time you are trying to restructure.

Retail Recommendations

• Use the existing retail study to coordinate with all commercial nodes in the community.

• Consider an additional study including all the retail districts.

• Establish and brand downtown as the center.

• This does not have to be at the expense of the other commercial areas. Identifying one center can only contribute to making the special purposes of these areas smaller.

• Revisit the concept of a retail business incubator.

• I know it has been discussed previously, but Ithaca is an environment ripe for fostering entrepreneurship. There were several building opportunities downtown and both educational institutions could contribute as a partnership. This is not an overnight project, but definitely one I recommend you pursue as it seems to be a perfect fit for Ithaca.

• Manage and communicate with property owners and business owners.

• This is probably the most obvious task, but the greatest challenge for all downtown organizations. Again, the needs of property owners, business owners, consumers, downtown residents and downtown employees may not always seem symbiotic. But the only way those groups will find common ground is with constant communication and coordination. I have found that it is effective to convene affinity meetings and larger group socials. Once the groups are comfortable talking to each other, more casual forms of communication (e-mail, social media) can be employed.

The Oklahoma City Skyline

Sample Funding Models

The Oklahoma City MAPS model

• 1 cent sales tax for capital economic development expenditures. (http://www.okcchamber.com/page.asp?atomid=290)

Business Improvement District model

• Create a BID (or equivalent) specifically for the maintenance and management of the Commons.

(http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/econdev/bids.asp)

Building a City/Town Strategy for Success

Overview

One of the most significant challenges facing the region currently is the lack of a coordinated development strategy between the City and the Town of Ithaca. The team strongly recommends that the jurisdictions begin work on a coordinated strategy that addresses key development challenges at a regional scale to mitigate an otherwise predominate sprawl pattern that will negatively impact the entire area. The team found that there is currently limited regional demand for housing, and therefore demand for new retail/services is also quite limited. As a result, a few new projects could conceivably fill the entire existing demand.

Current Policy

The team found existing land use and development strategies to be insufficient. In particular, the group identified the following challenges that should be addressed:

• Current plans favor housing outside of core areas, which will lessen the region's ability to address growing issues surrounding infrastructure, amenities and services that each jurisdiction has an interest in;

• Current policy places few limitations on development location. As a result, no jurisdiction is encouraging development where it should be placed to strengthen the community, and the general pattern has been development that is spreading further from the core and stressing scarce resources.

• The "as of right" development policy represents a traditional sprawl model that will threaten the livability and beauty of the region's future.

• The region lacks a clear definition of 'complete', walkable places. "Complete Places" represent those places that are planned, designed, built, and used holistically – with the user in mind. Complete Places encompass locational concentrations and livable design to accommodate the full lifecycle of human activity. As a result, they are highly efficient and vibrant, and often become destinations for visitors and tourists as well.

• The current land use policies contain no requirement for transit readiness, resulting in developments that are car-dependent, lack connectivity, and are not capable of creating mutually beneficial relationships with one another. By amending current policy to require transit readiness, the City and region can take advantage of more efficient development patterns that require less infrastructure and long-term costs, and which can be leveraged to create significant public places that are amenity-rich.

City-Town Strategy: Key Principles

The team recommends adoption of a coordinated strategy for future development that includes the following key principles:

• Retain the character of the Town as it is now. Both the City of Ithaca, as well as the Town of Ithaca, place great importance on their existing character. The team believes the character of the Town should be conserved and development efforts should be focused on the core to enhance and strengthen the City's existing character as well.

• Develop complete places only. The team believes that the region should codify a policy that reflects its intent to build complete places which are not car dependent in the future, which fit within the existing development fabric, and which carry efficiencies that lessen future infrastructure burdens.

• Develop at discrete nodes. The team recommends an integrated regional development strategy that places priority on developing strategic nodes, rather than sprawl, in order to gain efficiencies and enhance livability.

• Develop transit ready neighborhoods. Future neighborhood development should be designed in a transit-ready manner, incorporating the possibility to accommodate street cars, existing bus lines, and a range of options for residents that provide choices beyond automobile dependency.

• Use a scale that supports the central core. Future development should be supported at an appropriate scale that supports the vibrancy of the central core – the Ithaca Commons and its surroundings – and minimizes the spread of development patterns further and further from the core, where jobs, services and amenities are concentrated.

• Develop in city first. The team believes that a 'City First' development policy is critical to the region's future sustainability and the maintenance of its quality of life. Competing development policies that compete among the variety of jurisdictions and institutions in the region will harm everyone. The area's quality of life cannot be maintained without prioritizing future development that supports and enhances the central core.

Town Development

While the Team's project focus was on the Ithaca Commons and its connections to surrounding areas, it would like to make additional observations concerning the Town of Ithaca's future development since the Town's land use decision making is intricately tied to the future quality of life in the city and region. The team recommends that the Town should focus future development efforts on the creation of Complete Places that accomplish the following goals:

• Places that are walkable.

• Places that have density sufficient to support services locally, rather than forcing residents into car-centric development on the fringes of the region.

• Places that include employment centers and space within new developments.

• Places that are self-sufficient and include amenities such as parks and open space.

• Places that include diverse housing options for all ages and incomes.

• Places that are transit ready.

Complete Places

Based on existing development patterns, the team believes the best locations for future development that supports Complete Places include the area South of Ithaca College, the area of the East Hill near Cornell University, and other locations only as demand requires.

A Model for Complete Places

The following example demonstrates an existing program for a complete place that has been planned elsewhere and is illustrative of the kind of development that would support the region's goals regarding quality of life.

Sample Program

Size:

- ± 150 Acres
- 36 acres of infrastructure
- 14 acres parks and open space
- 17 acres of natural storm treatment
- 1,500 units of housing
- 180,000 square feet of retail
- 30,000 square feet office/flex

Housing Types:

20% Units Mixed Use Housing 1 & 2 BR

20% Units Multi-Family/Senior Living 1 & 2 BR

6%   Town Homes 1,400 sf

10% Single Family Standard 1,500 sf (workforce)

10% Single Family Standard 2,000 sf (workforce)

8.5% Single Family High Cottage 800 sf (workforce/senior)

8.5% Single Family High Small 1,500 sf

8.5% Single Family High Medium 2,000 sf

8.5% Single Family High Large 2,400

The team believes that this kind of development model should be applied to the region's future land use policies and developments.

Images courtesy of Dover Kohl and Partners

Supporting Downtown

Concerning the Ithaca Commons and Downtown, the Team found several challenges that have impacted its current vitality. They include the emergence of Big Box developments, the failure to capture the Cornell student market, and the relative lack of downtown residential population. The emergence of Big Box developments on the periphery has reduced demand for downtown amenities and represents an ongoing competitor which has contributed to congestion by providing a largely car dependent alternative to downtown retail. The Cornell student market continues to represent a potentially significant market for downtown Ithaca, but better connections to the university need to be established to exploit this potential. The emergence and growth of college town, and largely insular campus area, represent additional challenges for the downtown. In addition, the lack of an ongoing downtown residential population has left the Commons at a disadvantage because it has meant that downtown development is dependent on adequate parking structures to support services, and it has lowered the Commons' vitality after dark, when a residential population would contribute to an active restaurant scene. As a result of these conditions, the team found that downtown lease rates reflect the declining position of downtown relative to new developments on the periphery. Lease rates have fallen from $27 to $15 per foot by one analysis.

A City-Town Strategy

The team recommends a coordinated City-Town Strategy to support the downtown's vibrancy, with the following components:

• **Reinforce Retail with Additional Units.** The team recommends a focus on adding to the existing supply in downtown to reinforce the retail market.

• **Rework the Commons.** This report contains a number of recommendations regarding the enhancement of the Ithaca Commons, which should be prioritized to strengthen the retail experience and importance of the public realm.

• **Add graduate student housing to lower housing pressure on other neighborhoods.** The team believes this would have multiple benefits for the community, by strengthening connections between the downtown and universities, providing a ready supply of downtown consumers, and relieving some of the existing neighborhood issues with student housing.

• **Adding density makes transit more effective.** By increasing downtown density, the existing transit services become more efficient and can increase ridership, lessening pressure on the street system and contributing to an expanding pedestrian culture.

Conclusion

The team believes that Ithaca can achieve residents' aspirations to strengthen the existing character of the City and enhance its quality of life by increasing existing density and buttressing the downtown housing supply. Added density will contribute to the existing fabric of the downtown by producing a more pedestrian-friendly environment, stronger retail market, and more efficient transit system. It will also refocus the City's identity back on its downtown core, where it should be, and away from sprawling development that has damaged the downtown's health in the past. The team believes that 4-story buildings are more than sufficient outside of the downtown core. This level of density is achievable in the downtown, and it is the team's position that between 1,400 to 2,800 units of housing are possible in the Downtown Core and West End. This level of additional housing would add between $10.5 to $21 million in consumer spending to the downtown market, restoring the vitality of the Ithaca Commons retail experience.

Housing in the Spine

"In a quality city, a person should be able to live their entire life without a car, and not feel deprived."
--Paul Bedford Chief Planner and Executive Director, City of Toronto

A Critical Challenge to Ithaca's Sustainability

Sustainability is a societal goal. When economic opportunity (the creation of wealth and its reinvestment in a community), environmental stewardship (active engagement with and protection of natural resources) and social equity (equal access to the benefits of a society for all members of a society) all coexist, a community can perpetuate itself.

One of the first principals of sustainable development is that people should be able to live where access to employment, social diversity, and cultural opportunity is optimally available. In other words, housing should be located where basic human needs can be most easily met. For urbanized areas, this means putting housing as close to the urban core as possible.

When this relationship is not present, people working in service-sector jobs must typically live far away from their employment and – without the benefit of public transportation – must drive to work. This activity wastes time, diverts a great deal of personal income to transportation costs, puts an unmanageable burden on a road system, supports the existence of parking lots as a "productive" land use and raises the level of airborne particulate matter from automobile exhaust. But perhaps most insidiously, this inequity creates a class division between those who live in and enjoy the opportunities of a community and those who cannot. This situation is not sustainable.

As it was clearly presented to the Ithaca SDAT, the local housing scenario largely resembled this unsustainable condition. The 2004 Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan identified the Tompkins County area median income of $37,272 per year as essentially matching that of adjacent counties, while median housing sales prices were 50 to 75 percent higher than in surrounding counties with a rental vacancy rate of only 2.6 percent in the City of Ithaca. This report plainly documented an affordability crisis. In addition, the SDAT's learned that new housing developments being considered were well outside the urban core, sited on farmland site that were significantly underserved by existing utility and transportation infrastructure.

As a primary result of this inequity, the Tompkins County State of the Workforce 2003 Report, characterized the local labor force as being unable to meet current demands in terms of both numbers and collective skills. The words "inadequate" and "unstable" were used to describe this critical sector. The lack of available and affordable housing in Ithaca's downtown core was clearly a factor in this key obstacle to economic viability. Housing affordability was understood a critical challenge to the City's sustainability.

Although the City of Ithaca has a well-established and figural urban core, it was not seen as a universally desirable or accessible place for people to live. As a district, it was also widely described as being "disconnected" from other viable mixed-use and commercial neighborhoods like nearby Collegetown.

But when combined with the relatively underdeveloped (and extensively master-planned) West End and Inlet Island, the potential for Downtown Ithaca to support a significant amount of new development seemed unrealized. With some estimates of Ithaca's near-term housing demand at 2,000 units, the SDAT proposed to investigate these questions:

1. Could enough sites be identified in the West End and Inlet Island to accommodate 2,000 new units of affordable rental housing in mixed-use development?

2. What was the potential for underdeveloped parcels in the West State Street "corridor" to be included in this new housing vision?

3. What impact would an increased density of new housing development have on the streetscape and the quality of Ithaca's public realm?

4. How could this housing on scattered-site urban parcels be developed in the most "affordable" way, and

5. How would all this be designed so that connectivity between Ithaca Common and the West End/Inlet Island would be established?

Analysis of Existing Conditions

Although in theory this development agenda was universally supported by the SDAT and our clients, stakeholder interviews and analysis of existing conditions revealed a number of challenges.

State Street, the "main street" of downtown Ithaca, was not perceived as a consistently viable commercial corridor west of Cayuga Street through to the West End, nor was it considered an extension of the urban core. The observed vacancy rate of existing retail buildings increased drastically west of Cayuga Street. In the vicinity of State and South Meadows Street, only five blocks west of Ithaca Common, parking lots and automobile-oriented businesses dominated the land use pattern and commercial buildings just north and south of State Street were abandoned.

Conversely, the SDAT consistently heard that Downtown Ithaca had no room for further development – a claim likely shaped by the fact that most full-time Ithaca residents live quite a distance (in both physical and cognitive terms) from the West End. Despite the presence of destination uses on Inlet Island such as marinas, several lakeside-oriented restaurants and a highly regarded farmer's market – all just under a mile from Ithaca Common and an indisputably walk-able distance from most Downtown businesses – the citizens and workers of Ithaca did not recognize this district as part of their community.

Meadow Street, a north-south street crossing State Street, was the northbound half of two regional arterial highways and as such created something of a pedestrian barrier to the West End. Development along Meadow Street was much less dense than in the urban core, automobile-oriented and shaped by the dominating presence of national fast-food brands and gas stations giving this important north-south route a generic, suburban character. Fulton Street, the next north-south cross-street to State, was the southbound half of the same arterial with a character identical to Meadow Street.

For the great volume of regional vehicular traffic that drove through Ithaca without leaving this route, the City's unique character was completely missed. Clearly, part of the inherent challenge to creating a connection between Ithaca Common and the West End was imagining how this series of intersections could be redesigned so that street-level pedestrian activity could be supported.

Calculations

The SDAT's first task was a cursory inventory of potential development parcels. Based on a 90-minute walk out State Street west of Cayuga extending one block north and south, it was apparent that very few cleared, undeveloped contiguous parcels in fact existed. However, sensing that it was important for the SDAT to offer a vision of what the West State Street Corridor could become, we disregarded ownership and extended our definition of "developable" to include any sites that were either unbuilt or currently occupied by vacant, abandoned, or significantly underutilized single-story structures.

With these criteria, approximately a dozen sites were identified. Aided by aerial photography and graduate student volunteers at Cornell University, these parcels were estimated to contain a combined land area of approximately 200,000 SF.

Upon further analysis, we estimated that another 200,000 SF of land area was available on secondary sites and within the West End two blocks from Fulton Street north and south of State including Inlet Island.

This district and some of the sites studied are illustrated in Sketch #1.

Housing Program and Density

The SDAT then developed a program for mixed-use and residential building that could exist on 400,000 GSF. Given the high market preference for rental units in Ithaca and the relatively small household size, smaller one and two bedroom units were given preference in programming calculations. This yielded a working average units size of 650 GSF per unit. A high net-to-gross of 85% was also estimated as architectural design for these sites would favor walk-up or townhouses dwelling units or compact elevator-served floor plans in order to minimize the amount of floor space dedicated to corridors and common areas.

Given the close proximity of all the subject sites to public transportation and the nexus of regional employment, the walkability of the State Street Corridor and the likely lifestyle of the population to be served, a parking ratio of .5 spaces per unit was advised. It was further recommended that as much of the new residential parking as possible is contained on-site by limiting ground floor coverage to 50% of site area. Underground residential parking – although something that would drive higher ground floor coverage and increase the value of the residential units – was not included in programming calculations as this amenity typically compromises housing affordability.

Floor area estimates for upper residential floors were assumed to be roughly 80% of lot size per floor as residential floor design is more appropriately a function of unit sizes and lot configuration than coverage. In all cases, development envelopes were envisioned to be primarily four and secondarily three stories in height above grade.

The results:

• 400,000 SF of site area at 50% coverage for ground floor commercial and residential entry lobby space yielded 200,000 SF of non-residential floor area.

• 2.75 floors (on average) above grade at approximately 80% of lot size over 400,000 SF yielded 880,000 SF of gross residential floor area. Discounting this floor area at 85% net-to-gross produced 748,000 of net residential floor area. At 650 SF (on average) per unit, this yielded 1,150 dwelling units, more than half of the speculated short-term demand of 2,000 units.

• Adding the 200,000 GSF of ground floor commercial space to 888,000 GSF of residential floor area totaled 1,088,000 GSF, producing a cumulative FAR (Floor Area Ratio) of 2.72, a density very comparable to that of Ithaca's downtown core.

• In terms of dwelling units acre, another measure of residential density, 1,150 units on 9.18 acres (400,000 SF divided by 43,560 SF per acre) yields approximately 125 dwelling units per acre: A density level commonly found in an urban core.

• At .5 parking spaces per unit, 1,150 units produce 575 parking spaces. At approximately 350 SF per surface parking space, 575 cars need 201,250 SF of lot area: Just slightly more than the 50% lot area uncovered by projected ground floor building uses.

The conclusion, at least statistically, was that the sites identified by the SDAT along the State Street Corridor into the West End and Inlet Island could support a significant number of dwelling units at a height and density that would be consistent with the character of Ithaca's urban core. The next test was to illustrate this development density and consider its impact on the public realm.

Public Realm

The sketches produced for four of these development sites illustrate the importance of enhancing the quality of the public realm on State Street so that the new residential sites were legible as an extension of the downtown core. A standard and consistent street and sidewalk paving pattern and materials palette, light poles, changeable promotional banners, banner hardware and street furniture should be part of a Master Plan for the State Street Corridor.
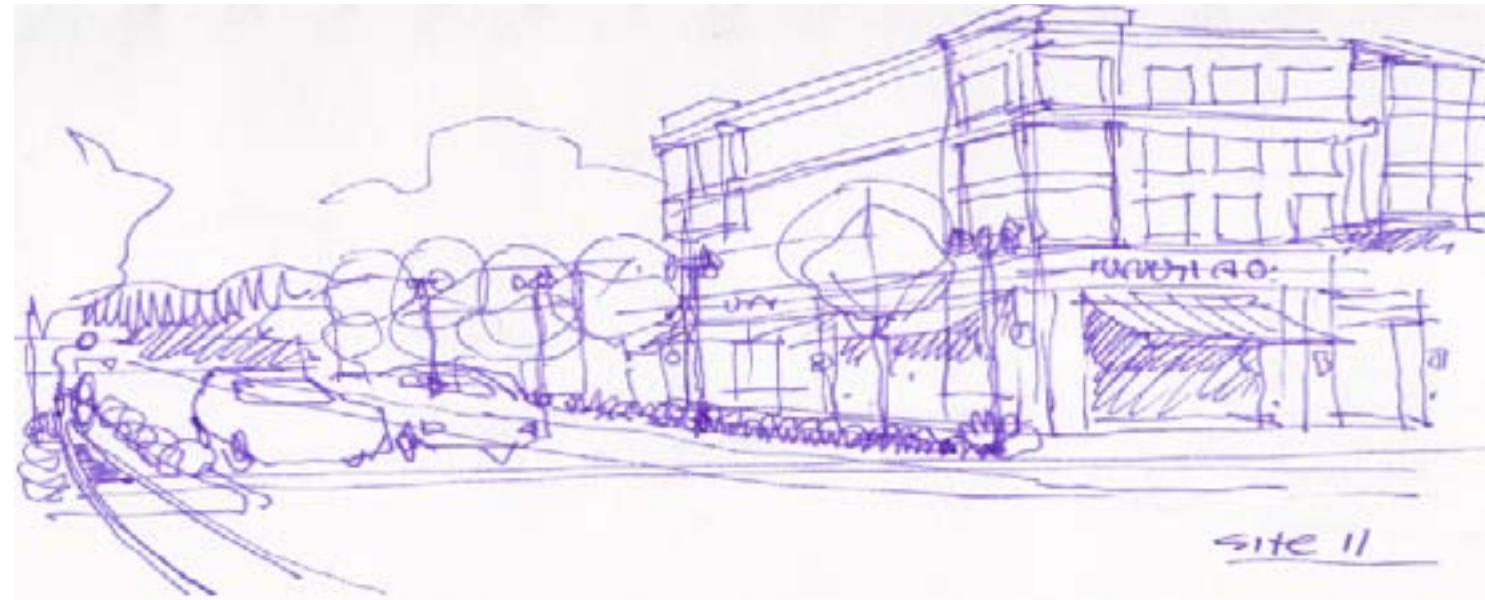
Sketch #2 illustrates a new building on a small parcel at the northeast corner of State and Albany Streets, a site now occupied by the single-story and vacant "Carpet Bazaar" building. The massing on State Street exactly matches the four-story height and Mansard-roof articulation of its adjacent neighbor, while stepping down to three stories on Albany Street. Note the presence of storefront entries and awnings across the entire frontage on State Street with the residential entry located on Albany Street. The architectural style or language suggested is meant to refer to the proportions and materials of Ithaca's historic structures while remaining true to its contemporary nature.

Sketch #3 depicts the proposed transformation of the intersection of State and North Meadow Streets. In order to convincingly extend the urban core to the West End, North Meadow Street is re-imagined as a five lane north/south urban boulevard with a treed median. This new boulevard – extending north/south or at least five blocks – should be designed so that east/west pedestrian traffic and north/south vehicular traffic would coexist in what was perceived as a high-quality medium-density mixed-use urban environment. Note the presence of new four-story building on both corner lots. North Fulton Street could then be allowed to become a two-lane local access street with 90 degree or angled parking serving the anticipated new ground floor commercial uses in the West End and effectively eliminating the barrier to Inlet Island.

Sketch #4 Illustrates this potential transformation of North Fulton Street. The site selected is the east of N. Fulton Street between Buffalo and Seneca, currently occupied by single story and abandoned or underutilized buildings. With the reduction in this street's width and slight expansion of the sidewalk, the restaurant uses suggested on the ground floor could include outdoor dining, be west-facing, and reinforce the presence of the casual dining establishments already present in this vicinity.

Sketch #5 depicts a typical multifamily development on a waterfront site on Inlet Island. The recommendation for parcels such as these is to forgo the ground floor commercial use in favor of creating a quieter and lower-scaled housing precinct that may be appropriate for married graduate students and/or developed on a turnkey basis for Cornell University or Ithaca College. Access to the waterfront should always remain public and some of the streetscape palette from State Street could be used to enhance this public realm as well.

Development Guidelines

Whether parcels of this nature are independently developed by private landowners or secured and offered for long-term ground lease by the municipal authority, The City of Ithaca should adopt explicit development guidelines for these sites and a master plan of streetscape and sidewalk amenities.

Development priority should be given to site that exceed or can be assembled to exceed 10,000 GSF. Consideration should be given for "scattered site" developments, or the assemblage of non-contiguous but nearby sites for a single master development. Parcels that work best to support mixed-use multifamily development have frontage on at least two streets: In this case frontage on State Street plus a secondary north/south street including a corner. This would allow vehicular access points to be prohibited from State Street.

Ground floor uses on State Street should be continuous commercial storefronts unbroken by curb cuts and driveways. Municipal storefront and signage design guidelines should be created and enforced for all parcels. These guidelines should maximize the percentages of glazing, mandate low sills and design "control zones" that extend 3 feet behind storefronts, prohibit roll-down security grates and temporary in-window signage, and be explicit about signage materials, lighting, awning materials. Internally-illuminated vacu-form plastic signs and awnings are typically inappropriate.

Zoning Relief: All parcels being considered in this study appear to be zoned either Business B-2c (State Street), West End Zone WEDZ-2 or 1a, or Waterfront WF-1c or 1d. Although the lot coverage and height limitations in these zones do seem workable for the level of development imagined by the SDAT, it appears as if none of these zones allow Residential uses. The off-street parking requirements for ground floor commercial uses in the B-2c zone should be relieved in favor of resident parking.
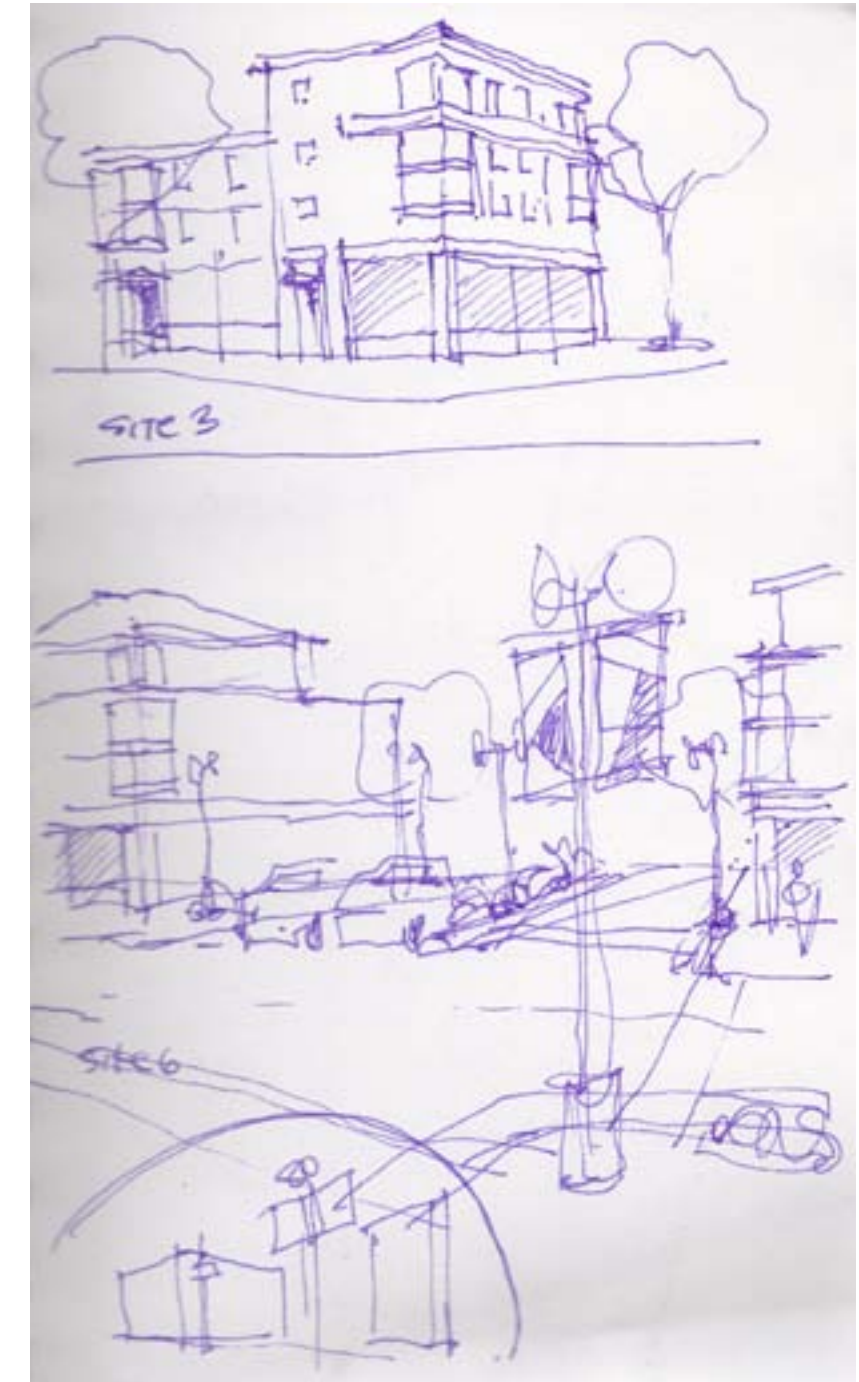
Affordability

"American communities require that new housing meet quality requirements that are very high by world or even Western European and Japanese standards. These requirements are designed by middle-class architects, planners, and citizens in conformity with what they believe is decent housing. But their concept of decency far surpasses what is necessary for human health and safety. Consequently, all new American dwellings are too costly for low-income people to occupy without direct subsidies. But subsidies are provided for only a few of the many households with incomes low enough to be eligible for them. So poor people live in unsubsidized older dwellings." – Anthony Downs - Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution

The two principal categories of housing affordability for this study are the costs associated with the construction and occupancy of the units themselves and the cost associated with beneficial urban dwelling.

The primary means to making multi-unit housing affordable in the Northeast is to build with wood frame construction. In addition to being a familiar regional trade, wood framing also uses materials that are plentiful and locally sourced reducing the buildings' embodied energy. Limiting the building height to four stories will generally allow this construction type (Type III) by code, although automated sprinkler systems would likely be required based on floor area or for construction over a higher hazard-index ground floor such as a commercial use.

In addition, designing efficient floor plans and minimizing or eliminating common area can significantly reduce overall unit costs. An elevator must be provided to access second floor units over retail use, but by Federal Fair Housing standards upper floors that can be accesses from stairs to grade do not necessarily need to be elevator served. Party-wall or apartment-style dwelling units are inherently more energy efficient as each unit has less exterior building envelope.

A robust on-line resource developed by HUD in cooperation with the American Institute of Architects and several non-profit housing investment corporations, the Affordable Housing Design Advisor http://www.designadvisor.org is a very useful resource for anyone working in affordable design.

Overall housing affordability must also take into account the relatively reduced cost of living in a transit-served walkable community. Someone living on State Street in Ithaca could expect to drive less, earn a living wage and enjoy the benefits of a thriving social and cultural environment, much of which occurs in and around the Commons itself.

Hope, economic viability and a shared sense of civic pride raises the standard of living for all.

Federal Fair Housing Standards

- The Fair Housing Amendments Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1988, amended the Federal Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) and established design and construction requirements for any multifamily housing built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991. This law provides that failure to incorporate certain features of accessible design will be considered unlawful discrimination against people with disabilities.

- The Fair Housing Act Design Manual, published by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1996 and updated in 1998, provides clear and helpful guidance to compliance with the Fair Housing Act. It should be referenced in Requests For Proposals for multifamily development sites. Of particular interest to development in Downtown Ithaca is Part Two, Chapter One, Section: "Buildings With Common Entries", page 1.31, titled "Buildings with Grounds Floors Over Shops or Garages". This section states that where a first level of a building that containing dwelling units is above retail stores, garages or other common space, this floor is considered the "first floor" and all units on that floor only are "covered units": meaning subject to Fair Housing Act guidelines.
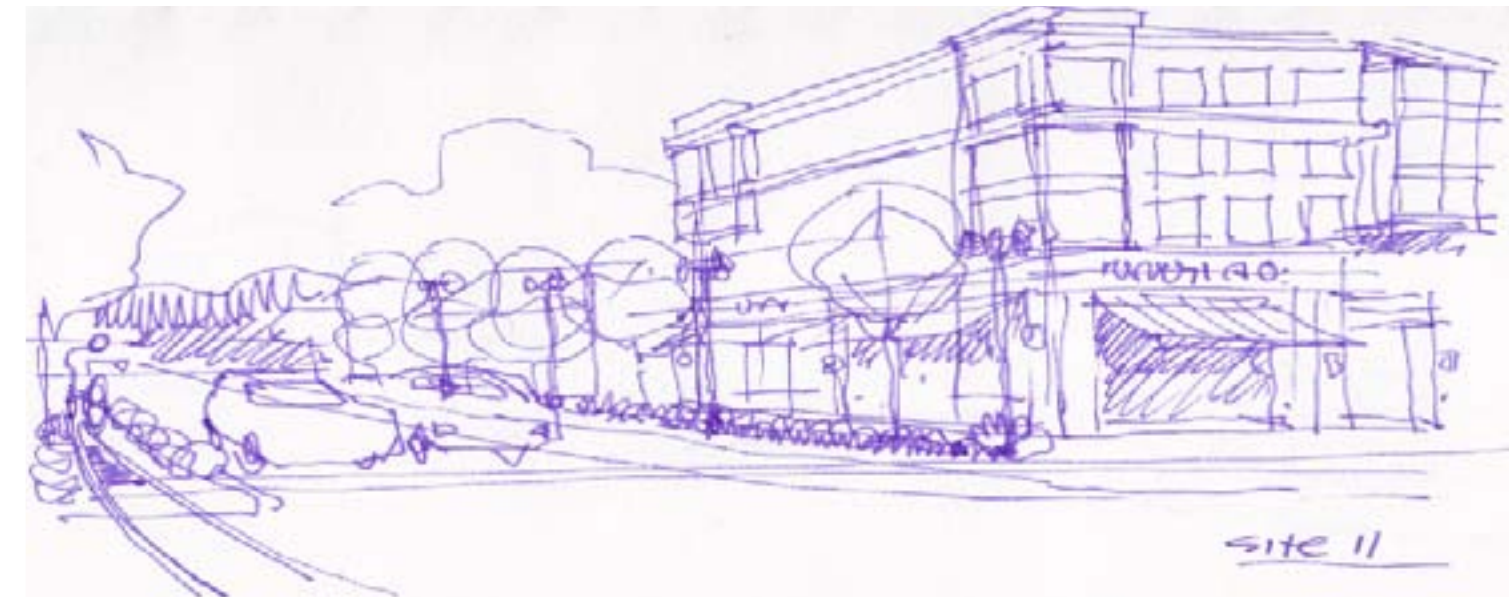
"We must not build housing, we must build communities." - Mike Burton Exec Officer Metro Portland, OR

Governance

Why Governance Matters: Ithaca is Gorges!

After only 3 days in the community, the SDAT Team recognized that the Ithaca community is a special place. Ithaca is a place of uncommon beauty. The features of the landscape in the Greater Ithaca Area are spectacular. For instance, there probably aren't many communities in America that can claim over 100 waterfalls within 10 miles of their downtown. Ithaca's gorges provide dramatic spaces for outdoor recreation. Its topography allows for incredible vistas across the valley, and Cayuga Lake provides a beautiful resource for a range of recreational activities. Ithaca is home to great institutions of higher learning, which provide vibrancy and cultural contributions to the community. In 2009, USA Today ranked Ithaca the #1 college town in America. The city of Ithaca is still a relatively compact community, which provides residents with several advantages, including the ability to engage in a lifestyle that requires no more than a short walk or bike ride to access any range of incredible amenities, including the renowned Ithaca Farmer's Market, local organic produce markets, neighborhood bakeries, the famous Moosewood Restaurant, and the Ithaca Commons. In fact, during the last decade Ithaca has been featured in at least 30 best cities lists. There is no question that Ithaca's residents currently enjoy a quality of life that would rival any community in America. The Ithaca quality of life is a defining feature of the local identity and a source of civic pride. Maintaining that community character and quality of life are recognized as important, and it is for this reason that governance is a central concern for the SDAT Team. Quality of life is also a central point of regional consensus. Everyone in the Greater Ithaca Area can agree that quality of life is something they hold dear, and for that reason there is a huge opportunity to organize around this common issue and build a platform for collaboration across sector, across artificial jurisdictional lines, and across institutional boundaries. Promotional materials for the community proudly claim that Ithaca is "disdainful of convention." Residents and community leaders describe Ithaca as "smart and always unexpected." However, in the area of governance, the team found that Greater Ithaca is more similar to other struggling communities across america than it is different. Ithaca's current governance structure is dated. It is no longer leading to the kinds of outcomes that the region's citizens want for their community. As a result, its exceptional quality of life could be threatened in the long-term.

The Great Myth: "10 Square Miles Surrounded by Reality"

One of the favorite local slogans to express civic pride is the reference to Ithaca as "10 square miles surrounded by reality." The SDAT Team found the phrase ironic given the real dynamics that are playing out beyond the city's borders. The idea that the city represents an oasis separate from its neighbors is old-fashioned and potentially harmful. In fact, there is an urgent need to acknowledge the growing interdependence among Ithaca and its neighboring jurisdictions. What happens in the town affects the city - there is a growing mutual need to establish more robust forums for multi-jurisdictional collaboration and partnerships among the major civic institutions of the region.

Fragmentation

The SDAT Team found that Ithaca, like many communities, suffers from a governance structure that is leading to artificial conflicts and a fragmented political and civic framework that is inhibiting good decision making. The combination of growth and sprawling development patterns within a fragmented community means that no one has control of the future. Under the current governance structure, the community is likely to experience chaotic development patterns characterized by reactive policy that is too narrow and inadequate to address its impacts. Sprawl crosses jurisdictional boundaries, making it impossible for any one entity to effectively address it. Localized, narrow approaches to planning are not adequate measures to solve the sprawl problem at a regional scale.

The existing fragmentation is disempowering to every jurisdiction in the Greater Ithaca region. As a result, no individual jurisdiction or institution can succeed alone. Modest growth in the region is leading to considerable sprawl patterns which are threatening the unique natural beauty and quality of life that citizens hold dear - the core identity of Ithaca is threatened by the impact of continued sprawl. As a result, the team feels that the entire region is vulnerable to severe negative impacts of continued development moving forward. The old governance structure is dated and inadequate for contemporary land use challenges. As one stakeholder described it, "the current situation makes no sense whatsoever." Sprawl and its impact on Ithaca's quality of life is a defining issue for the community, and will require collaborative and innovative strategies in order to maintain the quality of life that makes the community exceptional.

The SDAT Team found that fragmentation exists across the Greater Ithaca Region:

• Local Government. The Town of Ithaca, City of Ithaca, and the Village of Cayuga Heights are limited by their boundaries.

• Civic Institutions. Ithaca is home to some incredible civic resources, including Cornell University and Ithaca College. However, the level of collaboration between academic institutions and local government has been low regarding land use decisions.

• Multiple "Destinations". During the public input sessions, the SDAT Team heard each entity describe themselves as a destination, rather than a part of a larger community fabric.

• Fragmented Land Use Policies. The team found that there are a host of masterplanning efforts underway or complete for small pieces of the community. However, there is no guiding vision for the whole community, and each masterplan addresses an area unto itself, without the connection or integration into larger community strategies. As a result, the Town of Ithaca has a development strategy that is currently in conflict with the City of Ithaca's plans for future growth. Cornell University is developing plans for a sprawling expansion to the east of the community, and Ithaca College has developed a suburban campus and housing south of the city. None of the existing plans are addressing community growth at scale, and none of them are able to address the impacts of sprawl in a smart manner without a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional vision that includes civic institutions and the public in a common approach.

There are several constraints which make this fragmented approach to land use decision-making ineffective. First, there are limited public resources available in any individual jurisdiction to address the challenges of sprawl. Each jurisdiction is struggling to put enough resources into future smart growth, and at present they are working at odds, producing an extremely inefficient and potentially damaging outcome for every community in the region. Second, the jurisdictional boundaries that are being applied to decision-making limit effective approaches. Sprawling development does not recognize these boundaries, and as a result no jurisdiction will be able to control its future until the entire region works together on a common approach. The scale of the issues is beyond any one entity's existing capacity and resources. Currently, no one in the region is addressing the issues at scale - everyone is attempting to adapt to their changing context in an artificial bubble.

21st Century Governance Models

It is important to emphasize what it means to be a successful community in the 21st century. Governance is not limited to *government* in successful communities. The communities that are achieving bold visions today are combining all of the available resources in a community in a collaborative approach. Government, business and civic institutions, the non-profit sector, and residents work together toward common goals through cross-sector partnerships, public processes, and a collaborative framework that stresses civic leadership over political leadership.

In order for the Greater Ithaca Region to take control of its future, the SDAT Team recommends a community wide initiative called One Ithaca. This approach to governance includes the following components:

• **Government Consolidation.** While not a new idea, government consolidation is an idea whose time has come. By recognizing the need to consolidate, Ithaca can begin to move forward incrementally and phase the formal consolidation to allow for a graduated transition. The SDAT Team recommends a phased consolidation plan for the Town and City of Ithaca, and believes that a similar process with Cayuga Heights would also be beneficial to the region.

• **Government Restructuring.** Consolidation gives the Greater Ithaca community an opportunity to update its governing model. The SDAT Team recommends progression toward a Council-Manager form of government under the consolidated Ithaca.

• **Vision and Public Process**. The most successful communities in America today are able to organize powerful visioning processes that engage a broad range of community residents in collaborative work and direction setting. A strong visioning process provides the platform for partnerships and collaboration, as well as future strategic investments. These processes address the whole community, rather than piecemeal sectors and band aid approaches. The SDAT Team recommends that a visioning process serve as the first step toward collaborative planning in the Greater Ithaca community.

• **Cross-Sector Collaboration.** While a visioning process creates a framework for partnerships, formalizing cross-sector collaborations requires deliberate work toward identifying and aligning interests among the many civic institutions and organizations in the community. Ithaca has a wealth of potential institutional partners that can be critical components to the partnerships that will be necessary in the future.

• **Defining and Measuring Success.** Successful communities are investing in robust systems to define and measure community success through indicators initiatives. Many of these initiatives are community-driven and engage the public in direction setting, indicator prioritization, and data collection.

• **Civic Leadership.** Local government has shouldered too much of the public burden in tackling community issues in the past. The SDAT Team recommends an approach that will emphasize civic leadership over political leadership in engaging the whole community in collaborative public work. Furthermore, the team believes a renewed focus on building civic capacity and partnerships will yield significant return on investment in a few years.

• **Creation of a Community-wide Civic Organization.** Successful communities often have an organization that serves as a civic intermediary. These organizations are widely trusted across the community and play a critical facilitative role outside of the normal political dialogue by convening a broad spectrum of interests for healthy dialogue about the future. They also help develop civic leadership skills in facilitation and help establish productive civic cultures where partnership is the norm. Leadership of a Greater Ithaca visioning process will require a neutral convener that can serve as a credible, non-political organization for the entire community. The team felt that this recommendation is probably the most important component of the entire governance portfolio because it will enable Ithaca to engage the public effectively and form the basis for innovative public partnerships that cross traditional sectors of the community.

Each of these components is an important part of the picture, but applied in combination the team feels that Ithaca is well-positioned to become a leading community in America given its potential capacity, institutions and resources.

Symbolic reasons. The Town of Ithaca is required by charter to locate its Town Hall in the geographic center of the community to allow for the greatest access for its citizens. As a result, the Ithaca Town Hall is actually located outside jurisdictional boundaries, in the City of Ithaca. This leads to a bizarre political reality in which citizens of the Town of Ithaca actually have to leave their home jurisdiction to gain access to their local government offices. The issue of naming is also relevant. By having both a Town and City of Ithaca, consolidation makes sense to avoid the confusion associated with naming, and it can be accomplished without major transitions given the fact that there are few identity issues associated with being located in "Ithaca."

Culture. Residents of Greater Ithaca do not delineate the artificial boundaries associated with the Town and City. They identify themselves as living in "Ithaca" only. As the wikipedia entry for Ithaca states, "The two entities form a single community for most practical purposes."

Strategic Reasons. While most of the previous dialogue concerning consolidation centered around the tax consequences for existing jurisdictions and the typical urban-suburban tension over control, the main incentive for formal consolidation is in regard to the need to address regional sprawl and maintain the high quality of life that everyone currently shares. Land use control and joint planning are absolute strategic imperatives for the region. Local government consolidation empowers Greater Ithaca to gain control of its land use policies and plan for smarter future growth. Under a consolidated local government, property and sales tax revenues would be more balanced as well, creating incentives for smart growth planning. Most importantly, a public declaration and agreement on future consolidation will facilitate enhanced collaboration between the existing government entities now, allowing them to recognize a shared vision and move beyond ad hoc partnerships and narrow service agreements toward sustained partnership for the future.

Government Consolidation: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

The dialogue about local government consolidation has been a periodic issue for many decades in Ithaca. In 2009, the *Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group on Shared Services and Consolidation* summarized the history of the issue in Ithaca:

Among the various efforts involving the City and the Town of Ithaca, the most salient were two which produced substantial documents of their work—the Greater Ithaca Fact-Finding Committee, formed in 1947, whose report was released in March 1953, and the Greater Ithaca Regional Planning Board, created in 1957, whose plan of the Ithaca urban area was published in 1959. During the 1950s and 1960s, still other joint committees composed of elected officials and community leaders explored ways to make a reality of the prediction that was captured in a July 15, 1963 Ithaca Journal headline—"Unified Area Government 'Inevitable' Here."

It has been almost 50 years since that prediction. In that time period, government consolidation has increased at the local level. For instance, there have been over 110 City-County consolidation referenda since 1970 across the country. Today, consolidation makes more sense than ever, and there are reasons both symbolic and pragmatic for it.

Geography. The City of Ithaca is surrounded by the Town of Ithaca, forming a land-locked 'island' jurisdiction. Cayuga Heights is an adjacent jurisdiction that geographically makes sense in the newly consolidated community as well, but the two Ithacas present an ideal case.

Leverage Previous Local Studies

The SDAT Team believes Ithaca should build upon the great work that has already been done on consolidation. The 2005 Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group on Shared Services and Consolidation provides an excellent resource on which to base future consolidation efforts. This is important work that can be leveraged to think more strategically about the regional land use framework and how it could fit within a consolidated local government structure.

Phased Implementation

In the long-term, there is no question that a local government consolidation will create win-win scenarios for the community regarding its control of land use decision making. Consolidating local government presents a potentially "game-changing" transformative strategy for the region to achieve a future vision that enhances livability and addresses sprawl with a unified strategic framework and a toolbox of coordinated policies. However, this is a long-term process and will require a phased implementation and a strategy for transition. According to the Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group on Shared Services and Consolidation, formal consolidation between a city and a town requires state legislative action, which will take time. Having the proper collaborative process in place to make joint decisions will also require considerable time and planning. However, the SDAT Team recommends that the planning proceed immediately with representative bodies and joint work, and potentially a joint declaration by political leaders expressing intent toward a future consolidation. There are several interim steps the jurisdictions may consider as they move toward unification.

Shared Services

Local governments have been pursuing an increase in shared services for decades. For example, a survey by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) in the mid 1980s reported that 55 percent of the localities were involved in an intergovernmental service contract or joint-service agreement. Joint-service agreements between municipalities typically included the following services: police/fire communications, libraries, sewerage disposal, fire prevention/suppression, jails/detention homes, solid-waste disposal, emergency medical/ambulance, animal control, recreational facilities, and water supply. In New York, the Office of the State Comptroller produced a report in 2005 which detailed statewide adoption of such agreements. The report, Intermunicipal Cooperation and Consolidation: Exploring Opportunities for Savings and Improved Service Delivery, found that local governments identified $575 million annually in revenues for services provided to other local governments through a minimum of 3,332 cooperative agreements between local governments. The Greater Ithaca area has certainly been a party to such partnerships as well. The Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group on Shared Services and Consolidation found that "there are already examples of successful contractual agreements as well as informal practices to collaborate in the provision of services and equipment." Furthermore, it concluded that "there are undoubtedly opportunities to increase the current level of sharing and to formalize responsibility for some inter-municipal operations."

The Importance of Joint Planning

The pursuit of shared services is an accessible first-step toward larger, more robust collaboration, and one the SDAT Team recommends Ithaca continue to investigate. However, the team believes it is of far greater importance to begin the immediate study of joint planning for the Greater Ithaca area. Ironically, the need for land use planning provides the single greatest reason for formal consolidation, but was also viewed most negatively by the participating jurisdictions during the Joint City/Town Study Group process. As the report stated, "Fundamental issues such as the nature and extent of future development and the establishment of future land use goals and objectives were also viewed quite differently by both the planning and legislative functions of each government."

While both the town and city have comprehensive plans, the Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group found that "specific attempts to coordinate development concepts, community character and the overall impact of future land use changes beyond municipal boundaries did not play a major role in shaping the adopted Town and City plans." The lack of regionally coordinated planning represents a gap that should be addressed as soon as possible. Until an effective and collaborative approach to regional planning can be put in place, the high quality of life all residents of the Greater Ithaca Area share will be at risk. State enabling legislation exists to empower multi-municipal planning, as well as the creation of special districts for land use purposes. Special districts provide an interesting case as a potential interim intervention, but also pose unique challenges. Special districts have proliferated in the United States to address a range of issues. They have mainly been formed as an answer to the difficult politics associated with full government consolidation. From 1962 to 1992, special districts grew by 68 percent. Metropolitan special districts that include an entire metro area grew by 152 percent over the same period. Today, the average metropolitan area contains about 100 local governments, including 40 special districts, 24 municipalities, 19 independent school districts, 16 townships, and 2 counties. However, special districts are often criticized as undemocratic and unaccountable structures given that they serve as appointed bodies and do not have a tradition of public engagement. More importantly, special districts have a tendency to focus too narrowly on areawide issues, and have been criticized for exacerbating regional fragmentation rather than abating it. The SDAT Team believes that a special planning district for the Greater Ithaca area would be less advantageous than effective multi-jurisdictional collaboration on land use, and far less effective than formal consolidation. On this issue, the SDAT Team was in full agreement with the members of the Joint City/Town Study Group, which concluded, "In an era when the need for nations to work together to solve global problems is increasingly being recognized and taken into account, we believe that municipal governments should commit themselves to make a special effort to jointly fashion an area-wide plan for the future." In the case of Greater Ithaca, it was the team's opinion that this point carries additional emphasis given the potential consequences of non-action.

Models: Pennsylvania

There are numerous examples of joint planning that Ithaca can draw upon as it pursues a regional vision for its future. For illustrative purposes, Pennsylvania provides a similar case where multi-municipal planning has occurred among municipalities and regions of similar character and size. Like New York, Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code enables regional land use planning. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage smart growth by concentrating infrastructure investments within identified growth areas that meet regional needs rather than one municipality in isolation. Open space protection and farmland preservation are also important components. As the approach is described, "A multimunicipal comprehensive plan is not an ordinance or regulation. It is an adopted planning document that establishes planning policies for a group of contiguous municipalities and includes recommendations to implement those policies to guide growth and identify areas for protection and/or preservation." In Pennsylvania, the Shenango Valley municipalities of the City of Sharon, City of Hermitage, City of Farrell, Wheatland Borough, West Middlesex Borough & Shenango Township, and the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, have been developing a multi-municipal comprehensive plan for the region. The process includes two multi-municipal comprehensive plans among different municipalities that will be coordinated into one approach for an entire region.

Models: Wisconsin

Wisconsin holds another example that is relevant to Ithaca. In 2006, the Village and Town of Jackson, Wisconsin won a Community Partnership Award from the ICMA for their work together. Like the Ithaca region, the village of Jackson, 25 miles northwest of Milwaukee, had experienced growth. The village of Jackson and the town of Jackson, which surrounds the village on three sides, had a long history of conflict. In 1994, the village instituted a zoning and use freeze 1.5 miles from their boundary to delay the town's expansion of a mobile home park into an unincorporated area that the village had set aside for expansion. This freeze was established by state statute to permit the formation of cooperative plans to address such issues. The village's action further deteriorated relations between the two jurisdictions. However, the two jurisdictions worked together through a Joint Planning Group to establish the Revenue-Sharing Agreement and Cooperative Boundary Plan, which spelled out a host of criteria for future development, including revenue and service sharing. The municipalities built upon this collaboration with joint funding for a park and recreation department, and work toward joint building inspection, engineering, and public works departments. It also paved the way for collaboration toward a joint smart growth plan. As the ICMA Award stated, "These cooperative efforts—all outgrowths of the Revenue-Sharing Agreement and Cooperative Boundary Plan—demonstrate the ability and willingness of the village of Jackson to work with other municipalities to economically, efficiently, and cooperatively provide a broader range of services, which could not be provided unilaterally, while maintaining its uniqueness and individuality."

Leveraging Resources for Implementation

There are state resources Ithaca can pursue as it proceeds with greater collaboration and formal consolidation. For instance, the Report of the Joint City/Town Study Group found that "state support of up to $200,000 per municipality might, on a competitive basis, be available to implement the consolidation." There are two specific smart growth policy actions that have implications for Ithaca as well. At the federal level, the Sustainable Communities Partnership among the Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency has resulted in strategic federal investments in regional planning. HUD just distributed the first round of its Sustainable Community Planning grants, which totaled $100 million. In addition, the state legislature recently passed the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Priority Act (A8011B/S5560B). While the implications of this law are still uncertain, it directs state agencies to make their infrastructure spending decisions in accordance with smart growth principles. Therefore, Ithaca could be well positioned to receive state investment by pursuing a multi-municipal plan in the interim, and formal consolidation in the long-term. The expanded population of the consolidated municipality will also have benefits for both state and federal funding scenarios in the future.

Government Restructuring

Moving toward local government consolidation provides the opportunity to reassess government structure and consider new models that are best suited to modern challenges. The SDAT Team recommends that the community consider creating a Council-Manager form of government as the consolidated government structure.

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) describes the Council-Manager form of government as follows:

Council-manager government combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager or administrator. All power and authority to set policy rests with an elected governing body, which includes a mayor or chairperson and members of the council, commission, or board. The governing body in turn hires a nonpartisan manager who has very broad authority to run the organization.

Currently, the city functions under a Mayor-Council government, and the Town government includes consists of an executive, the Town Supervisor, elected to a four-year term, and a Town Council of five members also elected for terms of four years. By moving to a Council-Manager form of government, the city can realize several key benefits regarding long-term stability for implementation of the community vision and professional executive leadership that is not subject to politics. The Council-Manager form of government suits Ithaca particularly well for the following reasons:

• The Council-Manager form of government is a product of the progressive era reform movement, and suits Ithaca's civic culture and progressive mentality well. This form of government was proposed as a response to the dominance of political machine politics and the accompanying corruption in local government. Progressive era reformers such as Louis Brandeis and Teddy Roosevelt were the leading proponents of the Council-Manager form of government, and its roots are tied to New York.

• The Council-Manager form of government is a proven model to establish non-political, professional executive leadership in local government. With a professional executive function at the staff level, Ithaca will gain leadership stability that is resilient to a variety of political changes and can help with long-term leadership toward a shared community vision. In addition, by establishing executive leadership outside of the local political dialogue in a consolidated local government structure, Ithaca can minimize conflict and the politicization of urban-rural issues where some level of tension is natural.

• The Council-Manager form of government is the leading local government structure in the United States today. According to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), by 2000 the Council-Manager form of government was being used in 63 percent of cities with populations of 25,000 or more, and 57 percent of cities with populations of 10,000 or more. An average of 63 local governments per year adopted the Council-Manager form of government between 1984 and 2000. It has also been adopted in municipalities in Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

Technical Resources and Support

There are several resources the Greater Ithaca region can leverage to assist its transition to a consolidated local government and implement a Council-Manager structure. The International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) mission is to create excellence in local governance by advocating and developing the professional management of local government worldwide. In addition to supporting its nearly 9,000 members, ICMA provides publications, data, information, and technical assistance to thousands of city, town, and county experts and other individuals throughout the world. The National Civic League has assisted communities across the country with Charter Reform initiatives that apply the Council-Manager form of government. Founded in 1895, the League serves as a clearinghouse for information on methods of improving state and local government. The League's Model City Charter, now in its eighth edition, has endorsed council-manager government since 1915, and serves as a technical resource for Charter Reform initiatives. These organizations can provide resource information and technical assistance to a charter review commission, and help educate the community about the Council-Manager form of government.

Ithaca Can Be a Leading Community

Despite its governance challenges, the SDAT Team found that Ithaca has a rich civic culture. The shared sense of community among the city's residents, and the widely held sense of exceptionalism as members of the Ithaca community, are great resources to leverage for collaborative public work. Ithaca has a comparatively active citizenry with strongly held beliefs and a tradition of public involvement. As a result, Ithaca is uniquely positioned to create bold new ways of conducting its public business. The presence of multiple strong institutional resources, such as Cornell University and Ithaca College, is an exceptional asset for a jurisdiction the size of Ithaca. These institutions can play a critical role in providing technical expertise outside to buttress local government, and their sizable student populations can make important contributions to volunteerism and the active work of the community. Ithaca is also home to a wealth of local media, including several print newspapers, a public radio station, and a range of online media. This information infrastructure is a key tool to engage, inform, and collaborate with the public at large.

Creation of a Community-Wide Civic Organization

Successful communities have effective civic intermediaries - organizations that can serve as credible public conveners and facilitators. Chattanooga's urban renaissance in the 1980s and 1990s was driven by Chattanooga Venture, and its work today is being pushed forward by Chattanooga Stand. Ithaca needs an effective civic organization with broad representation that can bring the whole community together for good public dialogue and implement long-term visioning processes. The resources are present in the city to create such an organization, and the SDAT Team felt it would be a critical step forward for the Greater Ithaca Area to create the capacity for public work outside the governmental realm.

The Chattanooga Story

Chattanooga holds an important place in our nation's narrative about sustainability and environmental transformation. In the 1970s, Chattanooga was labeled the "dirtiest city in America," and faced profound challenges regarding the health of its watershed and the future of its downtown. In 1984, Chattanooga's leaders came together to create Chattanooga Venture, an unconventional partnership that spawned the Vision 2000 process – engaging citizens in a bold campaign around 40 goals for the future of the city. Civic leaders were so successful in institutionalizing a collaborative approach to public work that one writer labeled it the "Chattanooga Process," explaining that it had become the "normal approach to dealing with issues in Chattanooga." By 2000, many of the original goals had been realized. Chattanooga is now known as "The Scenic City," boasting some world-class downtown attractions, an iconic pedestrian bridge, and a vibrant community life. In 2008, the city was named by Outside Magazine as one of the best places to live in the US.

Today, the city is reinventing that process with the emergence of the next generation of civic leadership as represented by the Chattanooga Stand initiative. Chattanooga Stand was created in 2008 by a diverse group of citizens to facilitate a shared vision for the future of the region. Using a survey-based engagement model developed in Calgary and utilized in Portland, Chattanooga Stand's stated goal was to implement the "largest survey-based visioning campaign in the world." By September 2009, the Stand initiative had engaged over 26,000 citizens in the process, with plans to leverage the results of its work to facilitate citizen-led collaboration across a host of issues at the neighborhood, city, and regional level. Stand representatives describe their effort as simply "the latest incarnation of our city's spirit for self-reflection and community betterment."

Stand representatives released the results of the survey, identifying 5 major trends that came out of the first phase of the process. The results include a summary report from Stand's project partner, the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies, as well as a web-based database that includes over 1.2 million data points – certainly a rich starting point to fuel a new generation of public partnerships across the region. It represents an exciting starting point for a new conversation and the kind of partnerships that lead to tomorrow's transformations.

The Dubuque Story

As a 2007 All-America City, Dubuque has been setting the standard for what it means to be a successful community for several years now. Dubuque has been widely recognized for its achievements, including being listed as "The Most Livable Small City" (2008), one of the "100 Best Communities for Young People" (2008), and among "America's Top 100 Places to Live." Each success has built additional momentum for further public engagement and partnership.

The city is now seen as a leading partner for organizations that are attempting to develop innovative solutions to the challenges of climate change. In 2009, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Dubuque as one of 3 partner cities for its new Green Lab initiative to develop best practices in sustainability and preservation. This year, the Obama administration included the city on its tour of America to highlight urban success stories. IBM recently announced that Dubuque will serve as its first "Smart City" partnership in the United States, with the hope that it can develop a model for other communities regarding energy efficiency. According to Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager for the City of Dubuque, cross-sector partnerships, broad public participation in the city's vision and implementation, and innovative thinking about the city's assets are driving an unprecedented level of achievement. "One of the reasons IBM selected Dubuque was the fact that we have a longstanding approach to the use of partnerships. We realized long ago that the city can't do it alone," says Carstens. The city even has a formal entity, Dubuque 2.0, that was formed as a process to help forge public-private partnerships to build the community's future.

Define, Measure, and Celebrate Success

The SDAT Team found that the appropriate elements exist for Ithaca to become a leading community. Once implementation of a visioning process has been completed, and innovative new partnerships are being formed to address community issues, the team recommends that the community seek ways to define and measure what success means for the community. As the slogan goes, "what gets measured gets done." There are numerous existing models for community indicator processes and tools:

• As a civic leader, the Jacksonville Community Council (JCCI) has been involved in indicator work for 25 years through its annual Quality of Life Progress Report for Jacksonville and the Northeast Florida region. JCCI engages the community in setting the public agenda, and monitors indicators against that agenda. JCCI has also been involved in technical assistance with other communities on sustainable indicators projects during the last 20 years.

• As a government accountability process, Baltimore's CitiStat program has measured government performance and tied measurements to departmental accountability for a decade. The program also interacted with Baltimore's Neighborhood Indicator Alliance, a community-based indicator process, to create a full cycle community process.

• Several national organizations have been involved in assisting communities on indicator processes for years. At the Urban Institute, the National Neighborhood Indicator Partnership has worked with local community data centers and indicator processes for years. It describes itself as a "collaborative effort by the Urban Institute and local partners to further the development and use of neighborhood-level information systems in local policymaking and community building." Organizations such as Sustainable Measures and the National Civic League have also provided technical assistance and resources to communities working in this area.

The SDAT team believes that Ithaca should work to affirm its renewed status as a unique community that defies convention by working together in novel ways to accomplish public work. For over 50 years, the All-America City Awards have been held to recognize the leading communities across the nation. Often described as the "Olympics of Community," the awards are designated to communities that demonstrate collective partnering capacity and innovative approaches to community problem-solving. Receiving the All-America City Award would reinforce community identity and civic pride, build continued momentum for future collaborative work, and lead to additional economic investment in Ithaca. The team believes that Ithaca could be well positioned to apply for this designation in the years to come, and following its implementation process a leadership group should be formed to consider applying for the award.

Conclusion

Governance, at its heart, is about getting things done. Successful communities today are skilled at convening the entire community to envision a shared future, building innovative cross-sector partnerships to implement key goals, and developing civic leadership to drive public engagement outside of the normal boundaries of government. The SDAT Team believes that all the key ingredients for this kind of success are present in Ithaca. It is up to civic leaders to convene the community and build the partnerships of the future to achieve a vision that reflects the best values of the entire region.

Conclusion

"The Whole is Greater than the sum of its parts"

Ithaca's civic identity is captured in several slogans and self-descriptions. Ithaca is "disdainful of convention." Ithaca is "smart and always unexpected." Ithaca is "10 Square Miles Surrounded by Reality." Ithaca is _different_ – it is a special place. In many respects, the SDAT Team agrees with this assessment. Ithaca is home to incredible assets and unique experiences – premier education institutions, natural beauty, wonderful local destinations such as the Ithaca Market and Ithaca Commons, and a quality of life that is truly enviable. However, the Team found that Ithaca is becoming more like other communities in America facing issues with sprawl. Its sense of a public commons, and common identity, is slowly being eroded by competing districts, institutions, neighborhoods, and competing jurisdictions. Ithaca is in an advantageous position, because it has assets that many other jurisdictions lack. In order to renew the spirit of community that has distinguished Ithaca in previous generations, the whole community must come together to work collaboratively on its shared interests.

The team found that the foundation on which Ithaca can build its future success is already present. Ithaca has world-class civic institutions, an educated and engaged citizenry, good local governments, and a set of shared issues from which it can build robust partnerships. The time for an expanded vision of Ithaca has come – the whole community can be engaged in redefining what and who Ithaca is in the 21st Century, and its vision can drive partnerships that lead to tangible positive change that benefits everyone. The SDAT Team looks forward to following the community's progress as it revitalizes the Commons, reconnects its important districts, and collaborates across jurisdictions to take control of its future. As the SDAT application stated, "The term sustainable is more than just window dressing. In Ithaca we take sustainability seriously and in downtown sustainability is a fundamental aspect of our future." Working together, we believe Ithaca is poised for great accomplishments, and can remain "smart and always unexpected" for generations to come.

The SDAT Team

Erica Gees, AIA, SDAT Team Leader

Initially trained as an Industrial Designer, Erica Gees obtained her architecture degree in Switzerland at the EPF in Lausanne. For the last 18years, she has been in private practice in Western Massachusetts. Her projects include master planning, library design, renovation and expansion of educational facilities, community and residential design. Prior to her return to the United States she practiced architecture in Switzerland. Her public project work there included, lakefront development studies, pedestrian streetscape design and mixed use community centers. She has taught architecture and industrial design in Guatemala and has traveled extensively researching industrial design, architecture and planning in Europe and Latin America. As part of AIA's Design Assistance Programs – SDAT + R/UDAT — she has been a team leader for communities in Louisiana, Washington, Florida and Massachusetts. She currently serves on the National Board of Directors for AIA and is active locally in Western Massachusetts developing public awareness and educational outreach for regional sustainability and smart growth.

Jane Jenkins

Jane Jenkins is the new President and CEO of Downtown Oklahoma City, Incorporated. Previously, Jane was Executive Director of the Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District in Boulder, CO. With over 23 years experience in downtown revitalization and management, Jane is an internationally recognized speaker and expert on urban issues. She currently serves as Chairman for the International Downtown Association Board of Directors.   As a former high school educator, Jane was named Teacher of the Year at Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Ms. Jenkins was born in Virginia and grew up in Charleston, SC. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts Education from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Texas in Denton. She taught secondary school in Chandler and Tulsa before beginning her downtown management career in Wagoner, OK as the Main Street Manager. After serving in the same capacity in Pawhuska, Jane moved to Denton, Texas where she managed the downtown development program there for eight years before joining the staff of the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the Regional Director of the Southwest Office in Fort Worth, TX. She accepted the position as the first director of the Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District in 2000. Jane has led and participated in design assistance teams in Petersburg, VA, Springfield, IL, Fort Worth, TX, Windsor, CA, and Los Angeles, CA.
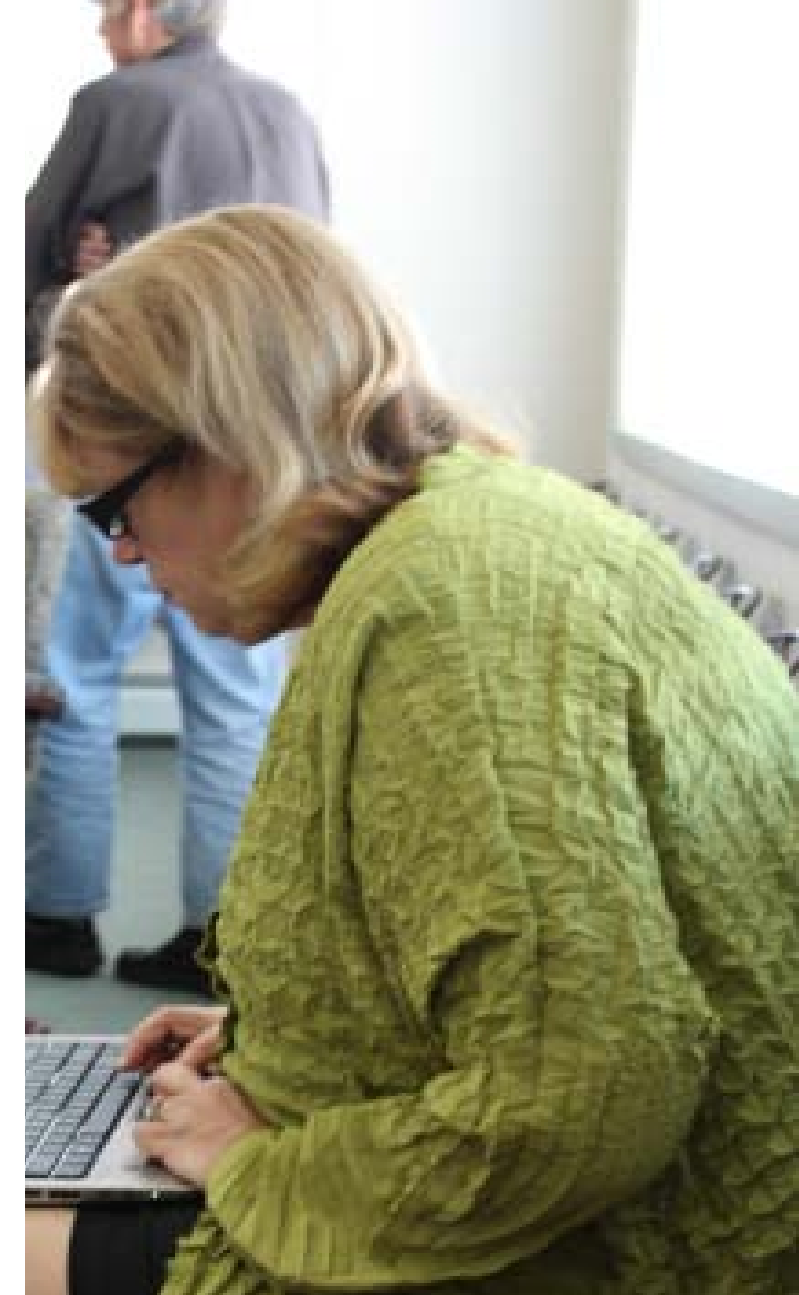
Casey Hildreth

Casey Hildreth is a planner and urban design specialist with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)'s Livable Streets and Systems Development team. Focused on translating sustainable goals and policies into street design practices, he is currently managing long range multi-modal hub and sub-area planning efforts as well as helping to develop SDOT's "Complete Streets" review and design program. Besides experience with both SDOT and the Seattle Department of Planning and Development, he has worked as a transportation consultant with Nelson/Nygaard Associates, as an advocate for the non-profit Transportation for a Livable City in San Francisco, and is a former public interest fellow from Philadelphia.

Casey holds a Bachelor's Degree in political economy from Princeton University, and a Master's of Urban Planning degree from the University of Washington. Recent workshops include the Seattle Open Space 2100 Charrette and the Sustainable Streets Seminar Series sponsored by UC Davis.

Morgan McIlwain, ASLA, RLA, SCUP

Mr. McIlwain is a registered Landscape Architect with over 30 years experience in programming, planning, and design. His past project experience has ranged from large scale regional and community planning to detailed site design and includes parking and roadway design, building and site development, community open space, parks, landscape development and master planning. Over the years, Mr. McIlwain has developed a strong experience base in campus planning and design with a particular focus on college and university work.

Mike Davis, FAIA

Mike's accomplishments are primarily demonstrated in three categories of his work: Public Policy Leadership, Knowledge-Sharing, and Sustainable Design Practice. As the Commissioner of Public Policy of the Boston Society of Architects and co-chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee, he is active in advocacy for public policy initiatives that support sustainable design. As a member of Mayor Menino's Green Building Task Force, the Boston Civic Design Commission, and Governor's Patrick's Net Zero Energy Building Task Force, Mr. Davis is experienced in public policy implementation in support of sustainability. He serves as faculty and an Overseer of the Boston Architectural College, serves on the Board of Directors of the Green Roundtable, and has recently presented to Build Boston, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, the Environmental Design Research Association, the Massachusetts Climate Action Network, and served as a steering committee member and panelist at MassImpact: A joint BSA/MIT symposium in 2008 on our urban region's response to climate change. Under his design leadership, all of Bergmeyer's new and adaptive-reuse multi-family residential and university housing projects have been designed to LEED Silver minimum by using innovative site design solutions and greater building energy efficiency. Mike's projects have earned a grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to study renewable energy strategies and received a 2009 Boston Preservation Alliance award for historic preservation as well as a 2009 John M. Clancy Award for Socially Responsible Housing. Mike, a resident of Boston, MA, is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University's architecture program and earned his Master of Architecture from Yale University.

Bergmeyer is an award-winning Architecture and Interior Design firm specializing in commercial, housing, and institutional building design, workplace interiors, and retail and food service design for national and international clients. Bergmeyer has ranked as one of Boston's top 25 Architecture and Interior Design firms by the Boston Business Journal, as well as one of

America's top 100 design firms in a survey by Interior Design magazine. Bergmeyer was founded in 1973 and currently employs a staff of 40.

Ed Starkie

Mr. Starkie has 23 years experience in real estate that includes moving complex projects from conception and feasibility analysis to financing and development. A particular career focus has been the economic structure of vital urban places, of downtowns and neighborhoods that are pedestrian and transit oriented environments. His work has received four awards from the American Planning Association in the areas of main streets and downtown revitalization, and he contributed to the current EPA guidelines for promoting Smart Growth. His recent work has also gained an award from the California Preservation Foundation and a Charter Award from the Congress for New Urbanism.Mr. Starkie is a financial advisor for private and public development who brings a unique, pragmatic approach that results in projects that are feasible, profitable, and contribute to community livability. Mr. Starkie holds a Master of Science in Real Estate Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a panel member of Urban Land Institute Advisory Services. Mr. Starkie also has also served on the faculty of the University of Oregon Urban Architecture Program and the Portland State University Urban Planning and Architecture programs.

Erin Simmons

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. To date, Erin has served as staff lead on over 20 design assistance teams. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as senior historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Joel Mills

Joel Mills serves as Director of the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects. He provides process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, he works with AIA components, members and partner organizations to provide technical assistance to communities across the country on sustainability and urban design. His expertise is in civic health and governance, and includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields including juvenile justice reform, local government, education, family strengthening, civic media and emergency management. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. He maintains active memberships in the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD). His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The Washington Post, and other major media sources.

Acknowledgements

The Team would like to thank the community of Ithaca for its hospitality and participation in the SDAT process. In particular, the Team would like to thank the following individuals:

• Mayor Carolyn Peterson. Mayor Peterson spent generous time with the team, and her frank insights on a number of key issues were invaluable to our work.

• The Ithaca City Staff, in particular the following individuals:

    o JoAnn Cornish, Director, Department of Planning and Economic Development.

    o Phyllis DeSarno, Deputy Director for Economic Development. Ms. DeSarno was an integral part of the team's local efforts, providing information and accompanying the team on a tour, as well as in several meetings.

• The local design community, in particular the following individuals:

    o Steve Hugo, Holt Architects

    o Andrew Gill, AIA Southern Tier District Representative

• The local educational community, in particular the following individuals who hosted the team for meetings at various times during the process:

    o John Gutenberger, Director of Community Relations, Cornell University.

    o Anthony Hopson, Vice-President for Community Affairs, Ithaca College.

• Fred Bonn, Director, Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

• Fernando D'Aragon, Director, Tompkins County Transportation Council.

• The Downtown Ithaca Alliance. Without the leadership of the Downtown Alliance, the SDAT process would not have happened. The team would like to extend special gratitude to the following individuals:

    o Mack Travis. Mr. Travis' insights on local development were invaluable to the team's deliberations.

    o Joseph Gaylord, President of the Board of the DIA.

    o Ursula Browning, DIA Board Member.

    o The Staff of the DIA, for their assistance to the team throughout the SDAT process.

• Gary Ferguson, Executive Director, Downtown Ithaca Alliance. More than any other individual, Mr. Ferguson envisioned this project, led the application process to the AIA, and put together the three-day charrette process with the team. His contributions to the process were incomparable, and the team would like to express its gratitude for his efforts to make the process a success.

AIA Communities by Design
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