

## SECTION 3

### Neighborhood Descriptions

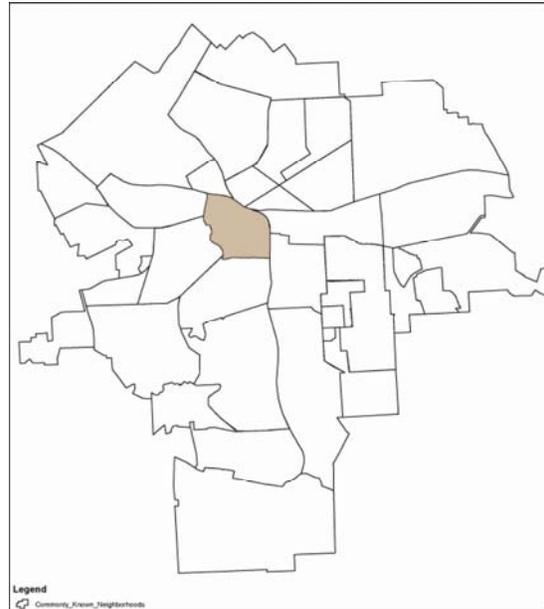
#### Downtown District Profile

##### Boundaries

Downtown is bounded by Route 690 on the north; Route 81 on the east; Adams Street on the south; and West Street and an elevated rail line on the west.

##### Primary Characteristics

Downtown Syracuse is truly the heart of Central New York, with all the major governmental buildings (Federal Building, State Office Building, County Civic Center, Public Safety Building, Onondaga County jail, and City Hall) as well as the City’s office towers. It also includes many historic buildings, like the Art Deco Niagara Mohawk building (now home to National Grid), the Landmark Theatre, and the former Carnegie Library. For decades, the Downtown area suffered from the flight of shops and businesses to suburban and Lakefront shopping malls. In recent years, however, business development has begun to return to Downtown (see Economic Development below).



Downtown’s squares and fountains are the sites of popular summer festivals, including the Jazz Fest, an annual arts and crafts fair, Downtown farmers’ market, and weekly lunch-time summer music festivals. The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the Syracuse Opera, the Everson Museum of Art, and the Media Unit (a teen drama program) all make their homes Downtown.

Many civic organizations, in addition to TNT, are working to improve the City’s Downtown. The Downtown Committee, UpDowntowners, 40 Below, and FOCUS Greater Syracuse are all citizen driven efforts that have brought attention and resources to Downtown. Both low-income and upper-middle income resident organizations are active and working to improve the quality of life for people who live here.

Downtown Demographics							
Population	Households	Average Household Size	Families	Average Family Size	Median Household Income	Unemployment	
						Male	Female
2,440	1,271	1.9	213	2.4	\$10,497	9.1%	8.3%

##### Housing Description

The architecture within the Central Business District is an eclectic mix of styles and building types that reflect the history of the community from its earliest canal-era days to the present. There are four National Register Historic Districts within Downtown: Hanover Square, Armory

Square, Montgomery Street/Columbus Circle, and the South Salina Street Commercial Historic Districts. Two of these National Register districts – Hanover Square and Columbus Circle – have been designated Local Preservation Districts. Local designation provides strict preservation oversight of any material changes to the exterior (and some designated interiors) of the properties within the locally-designated districts and individual local protected sites. Historically or architecturally significant properties outside of the local districts have some preservation protections provided through local project site review.

Residential development in the Downtown district has increased dramatically in recent years. Private developers have renovated existing buildings in Armory Square, Hanover Square, and the surrounding areas, resulting in a huge increase in the number of residences in the Downtown district. These market-rate residences range from affordable flats to luxury apartments, as well as condos available for purchase. Most of these buildings are marketed toward students, artists, and young professionals, who are more likely to choose to live Downtown. At the same time, some buildings containing subsidized housing, such as Harrison House and Townsend Towers, are now largely vacant and awaiting redevelopment. These population shifts are expected to affect both the population and median income of the district between the 2000 and 2010 Census.



Future residential development is planned for the Salina Street corridor and the Columbus Circle/Cathedral Square area. These projects are expected to draw more residents to the Downtown district and, in turn, attract more services and retail business to serve this new customer base.

Downtown Housing Data								
Housing Stock		Tenure			Occupancy Status			
Median Age	Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner/Renter Ratio		Occupied	Vacant	Vacancy Rate
1969	1,463	49	1,217	3.3%	83.2%	1,266	197	13.5%

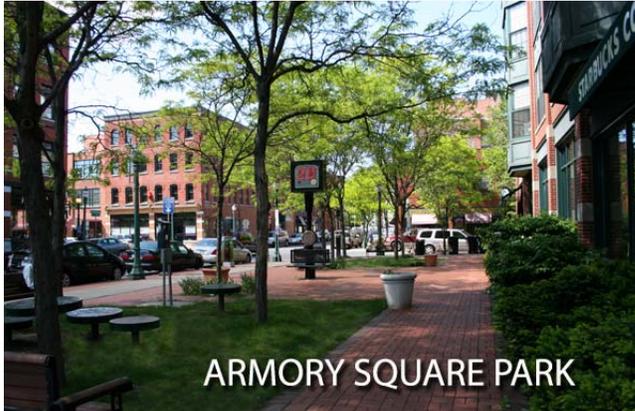
**Economic Development**

The Downtown Central Business District (CBD) is the hub of economic activity for the City of Syracuse and the Central New York region. After a long economic decline, accentuated by an exodus of businesses to the suburbs and consolidation and mergers of commercial banking, accounting and insurance institutions, the CBD is on an economic rebound. Success in attracting additional convention business to the Downtown Convention Center has resulted in an additional economic benefit to the area.

In 2005, Syracuse University temporarily moved its School of Architecture to the Warehouse building on the corner of West Fayette and West Streets, in the Armory Square area. The building, which now houses various University programs, brings students to the Downtown district and serves as an anchor for the University’s Connective Corridor project. The Warehouse, the Redhouse Arts Center, and the Delavan Art Gallery, located nearby, form a

small arts district (which continues with the Lipe Art Park and the Gear Factory farther down West Fayette Street) and act as a bridge to the Near Westside neighborhood.

O'Brien & Gere, an engineering and project delivery firm is in the final development stage to relocate its corporate headquarters from Dewitt to downtown Syracuse. The project, which is scheduled for completion in 2010 will bring 300 O'Brien & Gere employees to the downtown



area and anchor a major revitalization strategy for the City of Syracuse. The development project will result in a six-story, 125,000 square foot Class A multi-tenant office building and parking garage located at the corner of West Washington and South Franklin Streets in Armory Square.

The Jefferson Clinton Commons, built in 2008 was the first sizable, privately owned building to be constructed downtown since the AT&T Building went

up on South Clinton Street in 1992. The first two floors of the building will contain commercial space, and the top two floors will have a total of 18 residential condominiums. The condominiums will range in size from 1,100 square feet to 1,910 square feet with prices starting in the low to mid-\$200,000s. Currently 13 of the 18 condominiums have sold.

In 2010 the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA), the City of Syracuse, Adapt CNY, and VIP Development Associates announced the historic redevelopment of the corner of South Salina Street and West Fayette Street, anchored by the historic Witherill Building. The proposed project comprises four adjacent downtown Syracuse buildings; the Chamberlin Building, Witherill Building, Wilson Building and Bond Building. Located at perhaps the most important intersection in downtown Syracuse, the Pike Block project sits in what is called the "Heart of Downtown." The project entails the purchase of the four properties, selective demolition, their renovation and integration followed by the leasing of 87 one and two bedroom apartments and retail space.

In December of 2009, the former Dey Brother department store was purchased. The developers plan to bring a big residential element by building 45 apartments on the upper floors of the building. The downtown landmark, which is actually a collection of five buildings, has several tenants, including the Bank of New York, a credit union, the U.S. Small Business Administration, Home HeadQuarters and, until recently, HUD.

Clearly this emerging development is the first step in a trend that will restore Downtown Syracuse and the center of business enterprise for the Central New York Region.

### **Schools**

Central Tech, the Syracuse City School District's specialized technical school, is located just south of Downtown. The State University of New York at Oswego has established a downtown site (The Metro Center) for some of its courses. Efforts to establish a school for the arts in Downtown have not been successful, and there has been little progress on the redevelopment of the historic, but vacant, Central High. The lack of schools in the Downtown district may prevent young families (or those who hope to start families) from moving to the area.

## Greenspace & Recreation

Downtown is based more on the European model of plazas rather than parks. These include Hanover Square, Clinton Square (with an outdoor skating rink in the winter), Columbus Circle, Fayette Firefighter's Park, and the Everson Museum outdoor sculpture garden. Downtown serves as the home of the city's family of museums which include: The Museum of Science and Technology, Onondaga Historical Association Museum and Research Center, and the Erie Canal Museum.



## Housing Development Strategies

- Private Development – Private companies have taken the lead in redeveloping the Downtown district. The City should work with these developers to focus their efforts and resources, and eliminate or reduce any barriers to development.
- Vacant Land Re-use – Downtown contains many examples of quality adaptive re-use of vacant properties.
- Rental Properties – Maintain the quality of rental properties by working with landlords and tenants.
- Deter Crime – The perception that Downtown is a dangerous area keeps some people from visiting and/or living there. Solutions include a more visible police presence and a greater sense of “eyes on the street” by minimizing vacant storefronts and blank walls.

## Promotional Strategies

- City Living – Downtown living is a unique experience that is not available anywhere else in Central New York.
- Target Specific Populations – Market Downtown apartments and condos to young professionals and empty nesters.
- Middle and Upper Income Market – Upscale young professionals and financially secure seniors are most likely to desire a Downtown home.
- Website Use – Create links to completed projects to encourage potential sales. Non-residents considering Syracuse will likely start with the City's site.

## Success Indicators:

- Completion of development on the 300 block of Salina Street
- Private investment on Warren Street from Onondaga Avenue to Washington Street
- Renovation of the “Dey Building,” followed by condominium marketing and sales