

COMPREHENSIVE
MASTER PLAN UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA, NEW YORK



THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES



Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers and Planners, P.C.

DECEMBER 1998

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CITY OF ELMIRA COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Since Elmira's last Comprehensive Master Plan in the late 1960's, its economic base, demographic profile and appearance have dramatically changed. Due to these changes and the lack of a current plan there are problems building consensus as to how to solve the tough issues the City faces on a daily basis. This Comprehensive Master Plan not only provides the guidance to address these problems, but also creates a framework and a direction for future decisions. The result will be to look at opportunities that will strengthen these positive attributes which will, in turn, place Elmira as one of the Southern Tier's leading communities.

This Plan is meant to guide the City through the next decade and strengthen its existence as a regional center for infrastructure (transportation), institutions (colleges and hospitals), manufacturers, recreation and quality neighborhoods. The basic purpose of the Comprehensive Master Plan is to provide the City Council and Planning Commission with specific projects and policies on which to act. If followed, the City of Elmira will become a mixed-use community with a robust economy, healthy neighborhoods, variety of recreational assets and a sound transportation network. The Comprehensive Master Plan is concerned with the long-range development of the City and, as a result, will help The City of Elmira secure a place in the regional, national and global marketplace.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Elmira has developed very traditional land use patterns. When studying the City, it is natural to divide it into four quadrants centered around the Central Business District (CBD). The quadrants can generally be described as northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. The natural boundaries between these areas are formed by a north-south rail-line and the Chemung River that flows east-west. The center of the city, or CBD, can be described as the area surrounding the point at which Main Street and the Clemens Center Parkway cross over the river.

Central Business District (CBD)

The CBD generally extends from Main Street west to Columbia Street, and from Main Street east to Madison Street on the north side of the River. South of the river, the business district extends along Main Street in a linear fashion towards Pennsylvania Avenue. Within the CBD the primary land uses are commercial and community service buildings, such as the post office and City Hall, with a slight mix of recreational use. Traditionally, the CBD was the retail center of Elmira. Recent expansions within the district have moved away from this trend as retail businesses are being replaced with

businesses that generate people (offices). Secondary to this activity is the existence of coffee shops and small lunch-time restaurants to support downtown workers.

Commercial Districts

There is a relatively large number of commercial establishments situated along the northern end of College Avenue near the border with Elmira Heights. There is a mix of uses in this area including some retail shops, restaurants/bars, and professional offices. This area directly leads into the “Miracle Mile” which is a four-lane road in Elmira Heights that is a primary area of commercial activity in the area.

Other commercial areas include portions of the city east of Eldridge Park, east of Sullivan Street near the industrial park, land along the Clemens Center Parkway, South Main Street, West Church Street between College and Hoffman Street, and Maple Avenue near Brand Park. These are the primary "pockets" of commercial activity.

Industrial Zones

The majority of Elmira's industrial land is located in the northeast quadrant of the City immediately adjacent to Sullivan Street. Within this area there are manufacturing facilities, warehouses and storage, and distribution facilities. Another primary area of activity is situated along the Clemens Center Parkway primarily south of the river. This area has historically been one of Elmira's manufacturing areas as this is where American LaFrance was located. There are additional scatterings of industrial uses within the downtown area. Many of these parcels are surrounded by commercial uses. Generally, nearly all of Elmira's industrial land is east of the north-south railroad.

Residential Zones

As with many American cities, residential land use in Elmira generally surrounds the CBD. The majority residential land use in Elmira is situated in the northwest, southwest, and southeast quadrants of the City. Many of these homes are single and multi-family homes aligned along a gridlike street pattern. Although the northeast quadrant of Elmira has some residential uses, commercial and industrial are more common.

Because of the mix of land use in the northeast quadrant, conflicts may be more common as the neighborhoods become increasingly isolated. Currently, there are many pockets of dilapidated structures within these neighborhoods, which may be a result of incompatible land use throughout the quadrant. Measures should be adopted that can protect these neighborhoods from further deterioration.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

A summary of major findings and proposals are presented to provide a preview of the more detailed conclusions and recommendations of the Comprehensive Master Plan. In evaluating different aspects (downtown, commercial districts, neighborhoods) of the City, consensus was reached on the direction each should take in order to contribute to the redevelopment of the City.

Downtown Central Business District (CBD)

The Elmira CBD is in transition. Over the years retailers have moved to Big Flats causing a change in the use of the downtown. Today, successful downtowns are compact and walkable, the social centers of the City and have layers of activity that bring different users in at different times of the day. The primary advantage of Elmira's CBD is its location in relation to the City as well as the County. Elmira's CBD is the geographic center of Chemung County, and three of the City's major north-south arterials move through it. Long-term planning should focus on how to capture this market and redevelop downtown as the functional center of the community. Toward this end, the purpose of downtown Elmira is to serve as a destination mixed-use district including recreation, government, retail, business, and entertainment activities. Each of these activities can service adjacent neighborhoods, city residents and a regional market and should focus on activities that do not compete with retail uses in Big Flats.

Commercial Development

Elmira has a number of commercial "areas" located throughout the city. These areas can be in the form of a commercial "hub", commercial arterial, converted residential districts, or neighborhood scale districts. In recent months, many of these areas have been developed (i.e., Tops and Wegmans) and are beginning to significantly contribute to the local economy. As Elmira continues to grow, it is important to continue to build a critical mass of retail activity. The City should focus on in-fill activity on vacant lots and create a pedestrian realm that connects back into the neighborhoods. Additionally, although the method of enhancing and preserving these areas may differ, all should continue to be made attractive and functional by conforming to a set of adopted Site and Architectural Design Guidelines to help increase the economic activity.

Industrial Development

Elmira has a considerable amount of industrial property located east of the railroad tracks and north of Second Street. Although there are a number of abandoned buildings, the City has taken action and demolished buildings that could not be used for redevelopment. The most recent example is the Trinity site where the City took initiative and demolished and prepared the site for development. This process has created a number of development pads which can be crucial to the redevelopment of the City and its economic base. The City should clarify existing industrial districts and maintain a sufficient land bank of industrial property in order to remain competitive in today's economy, clarify sites to be redeveloped, and re-use abandoned sites and buildings.

Neighborhoods

Many of the City's neighborhoods have experienced significant change since the completion of the first Comprehensive Master Plan in 1960. A key issue in retaining in-City residents is

maintaining attractive neighborhoods to which people feel they belong. However, in some neighborhoods, problems have arisen causing the erosion of neighborhood integrity. For example, in some areas, properties are poorly-maintained and homes that were originally constructed as single-family units have been converted to multiple-family dwellings. Conversions in an area that was not originally planned for such density contribute to overcrowding, service problems, and under-maintained rental units. However, not all of the City's neighborhoods are experiencing these pressures. In fact, some neighborhoods, such as the Near Westside, have a healthy rental market while others have remained well-maintained single-family homes. The Comprehensive Master Plan identifies neighborhoods that should be protected from further conversions and neighborhoods that should have the density reduced from one, two, three and four units to one to two units only and, in some cases, strictly single-family units.

Recreation

Elmira has a number of parks and recreation areas located throughout its neighborhoods with a number of active recreational facilities including picnic areas, play equipment, tennis courts, baseball/softball fields, and horseshoe pits. Further, there are numerous recreational assets surrounding the City in which residents utilize. However, residents voiced concern through a community survey and during focus group meetings, about a need to increase recreational facilities and programs. It is recommended that the City increase the amount of programmed activity in each park to meet these demands. It is further recommended that the Chemung River corridor be developed as a recreational trail system servicing the adjacent neighborhoods.

Environmental

Although a developed city, Elmira has a number of environmentally sensitive resources. These resources contribute to the quality of life in the City and should be maintained for the purposes of upholding environmental quality.

Transportation

The movement of people and goods is critical to the on-going competitiveness of a community. The focus of the transportation network in the City should be to allow the efficient and safe movement of truck transportation as well as creating an efficient system to allow easier access throughout the city and to downtown businesses. It is recommended that the truck route study be adopted and the Clemens Center Parkway be complete to NYS Routes 14 and 328 by the year 2000. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation are also an important aspect to a healthy city. In addition to improving vehicular circulation, the streets and sidewalks must be made safe and enjoyable for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Cultural Resources

The interests of a community in its cultural character say a lot about the way a community views itself and the impression it wants to extend to others. Attention to the historic and visual aspects of the City will help to restore a positive self image. It is recommended that the City's Historic Review Commission be given a larger role in an effort to preserve the City's unique resources.

Further, as the City reestablishes itself as a regional center, it should continue to support the expansion of the Clemens Center Performing Arts Center.

CATALYTIC PROJECT SUMMARY

During the formulation of the Comprehensive Master Plan, the Committees were asked to contemplate key projects they felt were important to the redevelopment of the City. The projects were chosen based on their ability to be catalytic leading to revitalization and redevelopment of key districts. Additionally, the projects were selected because they are:

- visible;
- along major arterials;
- in the center of the City; and
- responding to a specific need.

Given this rationale, the following projects were identified:

1. North Main Street / College District
2. City Center District
3. South Main Street Neighborhood Commercial Center
4. Church Street Retirement & Housing Center
5. Washington Avenue Neighborhood Commercial
6. Madison Avenue/Second Street Redevelopment Plan
7. Chemung River Trail

The Implementation chapter of the Comprehensive Master Plan discusses each of these projects in greater detail. In addition, a reduced graphic of each plan is included.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Planning activities play an important role in stabilizing a community, directing growth in a beneficial and controlled manner, and defining redevelopment opportunities. The Comprehensive Master Plan is a tool by which a community can identify its needs and establish a vision for its future. Development and implementation of a community plan is an effective and efficient means by which to achieve a meaningful and desired change in a steady and incremental manner.

The City of Elmira Comprehensive Master Plan Update was initiated in September 1995 under the direction of the City Council and staff. Central to the process were two committees: the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Community Working Committee (CWC). The TAC was made up of local business people, agency heads and city staff and the CWC was made up of key community leaders. Both committees convened periodically during the planning process and guided the development of the plan to respond to a wide range of interests.

The Master planning process began with an inventory and analysis of existing conditions followed by a survey sent to 879 randomly selected City residents. Once the committees gained an understanding of the existing conditions and knowledge of city residents' feelings towards issues outlined in the survey, a number of focus group meetings were held to gain additional insight into key issues. Next, specific policies and actions were developed to address problems and issues that were defined as part of the inventory, survey and focus group process. After the policies and actions were developed, strategies and tools to meet the objectives of the vision were refined. These components were graphically summarized on a future land use map. The map acts as a blueprint to help chart the City's growth and redevelopment in a direction which meets the established vision.

B. INTRODUCTORY SURVEY RESULTS

In March, 1996 a survey was sent to 879 randomly selected households which were obtained from the voter registration roll. A total of 390 responses were received from the sample pool. This level of response allows the City to be 95% confident that the resulting statistics will have a sampling error of $\pm 5\%$. Therefore, the City can be between 90% and 100% confident that the survey responses will accurately depict the community's feelings as a whole. Because the survey was statistically controlled, the results were interpreted as the consensus of the general public. The City Council, City staff, TAC, CWC and consultants utilized the survey results to shape the Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

The survey had 7 sections that addressed various issues. These included citywide issues, city priorities, neighborhood issues, traffic and transportation, parks and recreation, downtown issues and a respondent profile. Each issue is discussed on a topic basis in Chapter II - RECOMMENDATIONS. The first topic, city-wide issues, is presented here to direct the general goals and policies within the Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

The first survey question asked residents to identify the top priorities facing the community for the next ten (10) years. The three most important issues cited by the respondents were:

1. Jobs and Economic Development - 77.8%;
2. Crime and Public Safety - 58.6%; and
3. Improve Existing Housing and Neighborhoods - 46.7%.

Because of the importance of this question, many of the recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Master Plan are based on this survey question.

C. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE COMMUNITY

The City of Elmira is faced with many challenges. This Comprehensive Master Plan provides the City with the tools necessary to guide growth and development, define redevelopment opportunities and address the issues facing the community.

1. Economic and Community Development

The City of Elmira, the County Seat for Chemung County, is situated near the Pennsylvania-New York border in the central portion of the Southern Tier of New York State. It is the gateway to the Finger Lakes region and the regional focal point of industry and business. As a result of its advantageous location, the City of Elmira has established its role as a population center and has forged its own identity. The future of the City must now be addressed by setting a course of action to guide the community into the twenty-first century. With a relatively stable regional population base, the challenge is to identify the next phase of growth opportunities and the appropriate mechanisms which will help the City of Elmira become economically and culturally stronger.

2. Growth and Social History

Following its founding, Elmira benefited from its central location which seemed to create limitless development opportunities. In the early- to mid-1800s, Elmira was linked to numerous

markets via the railroad and the Chemung Canal. The City continued to grow due to technological advances, and by the turn of the century, had over 500 manufacturers. Following a population peak in the 1960s, the City's population declined. Today, the population is relatively stable and, since the latter half of the 1980s, the City has witnessed an increase in jobs for small- to mid-sized manufacturing companies.

3. Changing Urban Character

Today the City of Elmira is a city changing from the inside out. As is the case with many American cities, downtown retailers have moved to the perimeter of the City or elsewhere in the County, larger manufacturing businesses have relocated or closed, and residential neighborhoods are changing in character. This combination of factors presents the City with a unique challenge. The Comprehensive Master Plan should identify a strategy to once again focus the wealth of the community inward and restore vitality and stability to the central core as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

4. Regional Location

Elmira's location at the base of the Finger Lakes region is a combined asset and liability. The City's Southern Tier location are a few hours away from major urban centers such as Rochester, Syracuse, and New York City, making business and residential recruitment difficult. On the other hand, the close proximity to the Finger Lakes allows the City to capitalize on its amenities.

As times change, Elmira must utilize its current strengths and look to contemporary business opportunities to lead it into the next century. With a relatively low cost of living, a better than state-average manufacturing employment base, and quality neighborhoods, Elmira has a firm base on which to build its future.

5. Opportunities and Constraints

The Comprehensive Master Plan process identified a number of basic opportunities and constraints for the City of Elmira. These include:

Opportunities

- *Well-Defined Downtown Core* - Elmira has a spatially and visually defined downtown that highlights the geographic center of the community. The surrounding neighborhoods and roadways make the downtown area easily accessible to area residents as well as regional visitors.

- *Chemung River* - This river is a very important, underutilized natural, cultural and economic resource for the City. Significant opportunities exist to make the river a key recreational and open space link to the downtown, residential neighborhoods and outlying communities.
- *Quality Residential Neighborhoods* - Quiet tree-lined residential neighborhoods, such as those found in the northwest, southwest, and southeast quadrants of the city, are among Elmira's strongest assets. Houses in the more economically stable neighborhoods are generally well constructed and are in good condition. Together, these factors contribute and help to maintain the high quality of life in the City.
- *Active Community Development Programs* - The City of Elmira Business and Housing Development Office actively seeks state and federal funding for community development projects and has successfully secured funds for some of the City's less stable neighborhoods.
- *Recreation* - Elmira possesses numerous parks and recreational facilities for its residents throughout the City.
- *Manufacturing Base* - The City of Elmira has fared well in the face of a declining manufacturing base in New York State. A number of small and locally owned businesses still operate in the City and, given available economic development programs, the potential for businesses expansion and attraction is relatively high.
- *Quality of Life* - Elmira residents possess a strong sense of community pride. They favor the quality neighborhoods, readily available goods and services, close proximity to a major tourism area, good schools, and a relatively low cost of living compared to other Southern Tier communities.

Constraints

- *Downtown Core* - While well-defined, the downtown core suffers from retail expansion and business relocation to Big Flats and Consumer's Square. Downtown businesses are closing and numerous vacancies force residents to shop elsewhere. Further, the downtown no longer serves its central purpose as the social, cultural and economic link to the community. Additionally, a number of one-way streets within the downtown area make it difficult to direct visitors.
- *River Access* - The Chemung River provides a great deal of potential, however, access to the river's edge is limited to some small areas on the south side of the City. Additionally, very little public lands exist along the river's edge on which to develop public access.
- *Deteriorating Neighborhoods* - Many residential properties in the City's poorer neighborhoods, such as those near Columbia Street, Spaulding Street and Magee Street, suffer from a significant

lack of maintenance and the conversion of larger single family homes to multi-unit apartment buildings. These neighborhoods typically lack a cohesiveness of land uses, an edge and a center.

- *Strip Development* - Haphazard mixed-use development, multiple sign styles and numerous curb cuts on some of the City's major thoroughfares detract from the overall visual quality of the City. Bringing clarity and harmony to these areas would enhance the City's aesthetic character and create positive community gateway.
- *Brownfield Industrial Sites* - Numerous industrialized or a abandoned industrial sites limit industrial redevelopment. These sites should be equipped with modern industrial infrastructure.
- *Lack of a Quality and Quantity Labor Force* - Although the City has seen an expansion in their manufacturing base, there are issues with the lack of an adequate work force.
- *City's Image* - Many Elmira's enjoy the quality of life that the City offers. However, a key catastrophic event, the 1972 Agnes Flood, left a permanent negative image in many peoples minds. The result forced the city to look elsewhere for recovery assistance and not from within the community. The City must now look with and develop a local, can-do attitude and use the positive environment to leverage positive attitudes from local residents.

Together, these opportunities and constraints help shape and provide direction for the Comprehensive Master Plan Update. The following sections outline and explain recommendations for future actions and specific district plans that will serve as catalytic projects towards the City's future.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. LAND USE AND ZONING

Figure II-1 - FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP graphically illustrates the following land use and zoning concepts.

1. Traditional Downtown District

The Elmira Central Business District (CBD) is in transition. Over the years retailers have moved to Consumer Square in Big Flats causing a change in the use of the downtown. Given the reality of the situation, Elmira must consider the direction of downtown in today's competitive economy. Vital downtown's have several common characteristics. These include (1) compact and walkable in size, (2) social, cultural and economic centers of the community and (3) layers of activity that are both seasonal and daily. The focus for Elmira is to recapture these attributes and purpose and plan ahead for the next 10 year period. Toward this end, the purpose of downtown Elmira should serve as a destination mixed use district which offers a variety of uses including recreation, government, retail, business, and entertainment activities. Each of these activities can service adjacent neighborhoods, city residents and a regional market.

The community survey supports this statement. Question #21 of the Community Survey listed a variety of activities which, if available, might attract people downtown. These activities were broken down into four different categories: Arts and Entertainment, Shopping, Recreation and Services. The responses indicate that people would like to see more community events, such as park concerts, outlet shops, and an indoor recreational complex. In addition to events, people indicated they would like to see more professional offices located downtown.

The primary advantage of Elmira's CBD is its location in relation to the City as well as the County. Elmira's CBD is the geographic center of Chemung County, and three of the City's major north-south arterials move through it. Long term planning should focus on mechanisms to capture this market and redevelop downtown as the community's functional center. Creating a downtown with cultural, entertainment, recreational and specialty retail will help it compete with retail development taking place near the Arnot Mall, Consumer Square in Big Flats and neighboring communities such as Corning. The following recommendations will assist in achieving a mixed-use district which fulfills this goal:

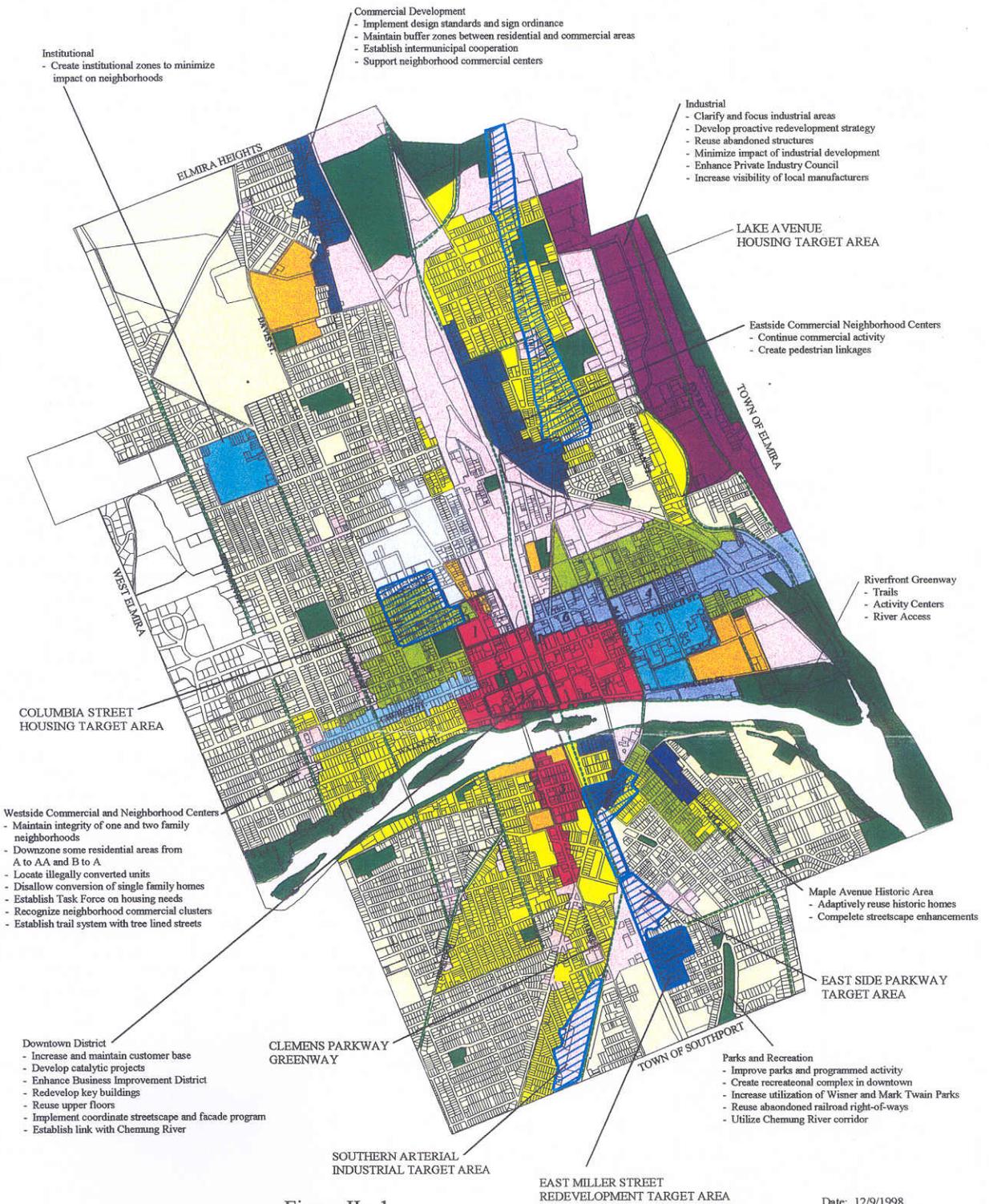


Figure II - 1

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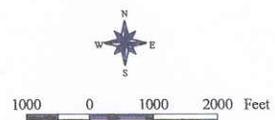
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA, NY

FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP

Land Use District

- Large Lot Single Family (R-AA)
- Single Family (R-A)
- 1 to 2 Family (R-B)
- 1 to 4 Family (R-C)
- Multi Family (R-D)
- Neighborhood Commercial (B-A)
- Central Business District (B-B)
- Specialized Commercial (B-C)
- Historic Commercial (B-D)

- General Commercial (B-E)
- Light Industrial (I-A)
- General Industrial (I-B)
- Gateway Business (BG)
- Higher Educational (HED)
- Hospital (HA)
- Parks/Conservation (C)



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Land Use

- *Develop Sub-Districts.* A successful downtown is compact and walkable. Currently, Elmira's downtown is too large and does not possess this important attribute. To address this issue, divide downtown into four sub-districts which serve different functions. Similar activities should be clustered into "Critical Mass Centers" to efficiently utilize and share existing and future infrastructure and support services and to create recognizable downtown districts. Figure II-2 DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES on the following page highlights the following sub-district boundaries.

The second purpose of these sub-districts is to fulfill the purpose of redevelop downtown as the community's functional center. The activities defined for each district have a unique purpose and when combined, will help catalyze and create a functioning downtown.

1. *Downtown Sports/City Center/Hotel Complex in the Center of the CBD.* The crossroads of Water Street and Main Street have traditionally served as the center of downtown and is where local and area residents most often identify with when discussing "downtown". Over the past years, this area of downtown has, like many others in the US, lost businesses to suburban development. As a result, the City has made redevelopment of this area a top priority. Therefore, it is recommended that the city focus on the development of a downtown sports/city center complex as a primary catalytic event that will revitalize development.

As a primary people generating activity, a recreational/meeting center in the heart of the Central Business District can serve to spur additional development. Depending on program size, locate the complex between Water Street and the parking garage (also known as Centertown) or on a portion of the Midtown parking lot. If the center is between 2,000 and 3,000 seats utilize the first site. If it is desired to have a larger complex (i.e., a soccer arena and ice arena attached by a common area), locate the facility on the Midtown parking lot. The facility needs to be programmed with potential users and/or sponsors to confirm role, program, scale and location.

As part of the Comprehensive Master Plan process, both committees (the TAC and the CWC) were asked to contemplate key projects they felt were important to the redevelopment of the City. The recreation/entertainment complex mentioned here was suggested as one of six areas that will catalyze the revitalization and redevelopment of key districts. (Figure II-1 FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP highlights each of the six locations. A reduced version of the graphics and a more detailed description of each of the plans is located in Chapter III - Implementation).

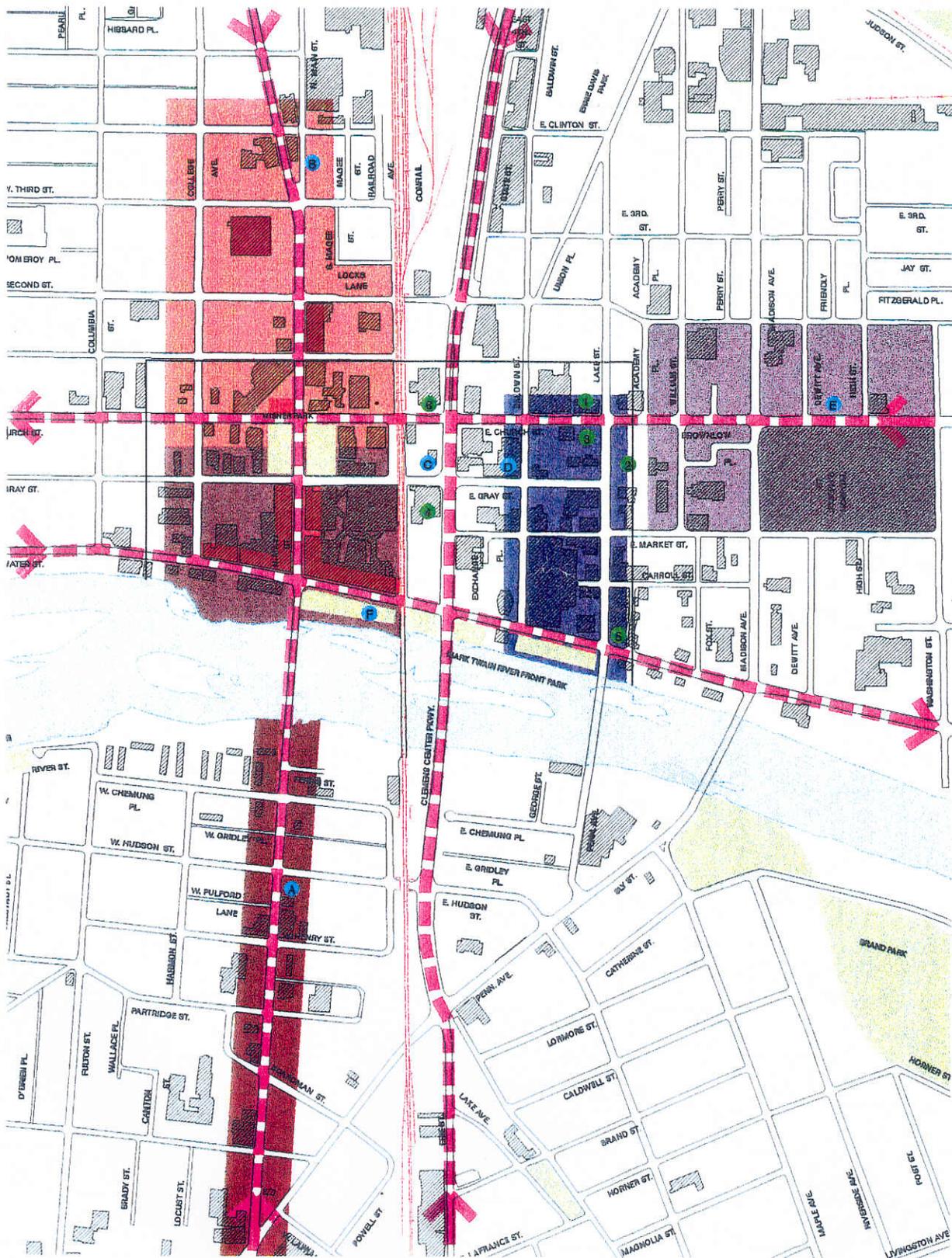


Figure II - 2

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA, NY

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N. Main St. (North) - Retail N. Main St. (South) - Retail/Office Lake St. - Service/Civic S. Main St. - Retail Retail Shopping Area Church St. Gateway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Points Of Interest <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City Hall 2. Court House 3. Arnot Art Museum 4. Clemens Performing Arts Center 5. Historical Society Museum 6. Steel Memorial Public Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalytic Project Sites <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Tops Plaza B. Main St. & College Ave. C. Bus Station D. Vacant Lot E. Open Land - Gateway F. River Front Park Office District |
|---|---|--|



SCALE 1 : 120000



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In addition to the Sports/City Center Complex, designate the center of the CBD, as a specialty retail core. Specifically, attract niche retail or outlet shops and cluster them in key areas to create a critical mass of activities. Retail uses should not compete with those offered in the Arnot Mall and/or Consumer's Square.

2. *Civic and Office District.* With the exception of the scattering of major banks throughout downtown, the area in the vicinity of City Hall, Lake Street and Market Street currently functions as the primary government and office area. Retain this purpose and continue to focus on service base industries.
3. *Museum and Entertainment District.* Elmira has a number of museums that service both local residents and regional visitors. In general, they are located between Clemens Center Parkway and Williams Street and include the Clemens Center Performing Arts Center (entertainment), the Arnot Art Museum and the Chemung County Historical Museum.

With regard to the Clemens Center Performing Arts Center, the City should continue to support the current expansion efforts to help re-create a regional center for cultural entertainment. Although proposed as different sub-districts, the expansion of the Performing Arts Center should coincide with the proposed Civic Center. Uses should be complementary and serve to enhance the potential of downtown to serve the regional market. For example, if the Civic Center is located by the parking garage, the playing field can serve as break-out space for vendors at conferences. Likewise, WETM-TV should be contacted to create a partnership to provide advanced telecommunications for conferences. The City Center Complex redevelopment plan in Section III illustrates this concept.

The City should help facilitate discussions between the Chemung County Historical Society and the Arnot Art Museum. Discussions should focus on how to maximize on tourism activity such as packages which offer groups to visit both museums on the same trip at a reduced rate.

4. *South Main Street Retail District.* South Main Street once functioned as an extension from the CBD on the north side of the river. Today, it still functions as a retail center, however, it is more neighborhood and regionally oriented. The new Tops Supermarket has been a catalytic event which spurred new economic activity in this area. Continue to support this scale of retail activity, including such uses as a video store, pharmacy, hardware/home improvement store and others, in this district.

This area of South Main Street was also chosen as a redevelopment area by the committees; as such a redevelopment plan similar to the Civic Center plan was created and is located in Chapter III - Implementation. The City should utilize the plan to

express concepts and ideas on site layout, architectural standards and landscaping. Because this district is in the heart of the City, care should be given to avoid the typical “suburban style” shopping center. Locating buildings at the sidewalks edge and locating parking behind will help preserve the existing form of the CBD. (See the discussion on Site and Architectural Design Guidelines Manual under Commercial Development recommendations starting on page II-8).

Management

- *Enhance Elmira Downtown Development.* To assist in some of the efforts outlined above, the City should greatly enhance Elmira Downtown Development - the Business Improvement District (BID). Its focus should be broadened to include a coordinated business attraction and retention, marketing, events and promotions, and other associated functional requirements such as parking and streetscape aesthetics. The BID’s, or Elmira Downtown Development’s, primary goal should be to reinforce Elmira’s CBD as a Traditional Downtown District serving as the primary meeting place within the city as well as the region.

The BID should focus on uses that do not compete with the recent development occurring near the Arnot Mall and Consumers Square. Specifically, the BID could encourage specialty retail or outlet shops, and cluster them in key areas to generate a critical mass of retail activity.

To ensure the success of the BID, continue to coordinate regular meetings of business and property owners.

Programs

- *Create a Strategy to Reuse upper floors of the Downtown Buildings.* Numerous buildings in the downtown area have vacancies on the upper floors. Another method of infusing economic activity and generating additional people in the downtown would be to allow a mix of use on the upper floors of these buildings.

To help achieve this goal, the City should utilize the vacant buildings inventory to evaluate and prioritize opportunities available for each building. If reuse appears feasible, a vertical grant and/or loan could be used to capitalize private projects to provide access. The program could take the form of a 50/50 grant and/or loan towards the development or redevelopment of an elevator that could service multiple buildings along a common corridor.

- *Implement a Coordinated Streetscape and Facade Improvement Program.* Aesthetics and functionality of downtown streets, buildings and sidewalks are important factors in attracting people to the downtown. The City should work to improve the appearance of downtown to create an inviting and pleasant environment. Examples of improvements include facade

restoration and sidewalk improvements such as those which occurred on North Main Street. Improvements could include historical lighting, tree planting, parallel parking and appropriate street furniture. Together, these standards will help re-create a “traditional downtown”.

All of the enhancement recommendations should be located in one Site and Architectural Design Guidelines; an example of which can be found in Appendix B. The City should create a Traditional Urban Design District and implement the standards as a development requirement in the district.

Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation should also be addressed. For the pedestrian, the City should establish highly visible cross-walks across Main, Church and Water Streets, and the Clemens Center Parkway to enhance safety. With regard to the automobile, the City should install signage at key intersections along the Clemens Center Parkway to draw and direct people into the Traditional Downtown District as they enter the city from the north or south. Additionally, to help increase access to downtown businesses, the City should maintain parallel parking along portions of Main, Church and Water Streets. With regard to the bicyclist, efforts should be made to install bicycle lockers at the new Regional Transportation Center and other forms of bicycle racks throughout downtown.

- *Establish a Functional Link with the Chemung River.* To further enhance the downtown area, a highly visible connection to the River, and the proposed Chemung River Corridor (refer to Section 5. Recreation and Open Space for additional discussion of this concept), should be established. This enhancement will add a recreational and tourism component to the mix of uses in the downtown area thereby contributing to a multi-purpose of downtown.
- *Link Downtown within Sub-districts and Adjoining Districts.* Connections between the downtown and sub-districts is important to the success of each district. Equally important is linking the adjacent districts such as Elmira College, St. Joseph’s Hospital and adjacent neighborhoods to downtown. Within each of these districts are potential users that can contribute to the success of downtown. The function of the linkages should focus on pedestrian circulation. The streetscape should be an inviting and safe place for the pedestrian and bicyclist.

Utilize circulation improvements suggested in the Site and Architectural Design Guidelines to enhance these connections. Specifically, plantings, pavement enhancements, crosswalk improvements, awnings etc. can be added to improve the pedestrian realm.

2. Commercial Development

Elmira has a number of commercial “areas” located throughout the city which can take on many forms such as a commercial “hub”, commercial arterial, converted residential districts, or

neighborhood scale districts. Although the method of enhancing and preserving these areas may differ, all should continue to be made attractive and functional to help increase the economic activity in the City.

Land Use

The different types of commercial areas described above are significantly contribute to the local economy. Some districts are fairly homogeneous in nature (such as College Avenue and Hoffman Street between Church and Water Street), and each services a different region of the city. Following are the most notable examples. In all cases, development should conform to Site and Architectural Design Guidelines; a discussion of which is contained in the first recommendation under program ideas.

1. *Tops and Wegmans.* Tops, on South Main Street, and Wegmans, on the Clemens Center Parkway, are two newly constructed supermarkets and draw shoppers from as far away as Pennsylvania. Each of these markets is an important addition to the City's economy as it attempts to compete with the outlying commercial areas in Big Flats.

Continue to maintain the Tops and Wegmans areas as the City's primary commercial districts. In addition to major grocery stores, these two areas should include uses that service the local and regional population such as hardware stores, pharmacies, video stores, bookstores, small restaurants, etc.

Although not directly competing with Consumers Square in Big Flats, these commercial districts should contain some similar businesses so that City residents once again have locally available services. The primary difference between Consumers Square and these commercial districts will be in scale. The areas in Elmira should not contain large footprint users such as Walmart. Rather, businesses should be in a series of smaller buildings surrounding an inner parking lot. The SOUTH MAIN STREET REGIONAL & NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTER redevelopment plan in the Implementation chapter illustrates this concept.

2. *North Main Street.* This area of North Main Street was chosen as one of the six redevelopment areas because it can play a critical role in revitalizing the northern edge of downtown. Specifically, retail development and an enhanced streetscape design will encourage pedestrian movement from the surrounding neighborhoods as well as Elmira College. The NORTH MAIN STREET/COLLEGE DISTRICT redevelopment plan in the Implementation chapter illustrates the concepts that should be employed to achieve an aesthetically pleasing environment that will entice pedestrian movement. The City should work with private business and property owners in this area to implement improvements. Include concepts such as increasing landscaping, improving sidewalks, adding canvas awnings, continuing the historic lighting pattern from the center of downtown into this area

and encouraging in-fill development on some of the vast open parking lots such as those found at Weiss Markets (See discussion of Site and Architectural Design Standards below).

3. *Other Commercial Districts.* Other areas containing a “hub” of commercial activity include West Church Street between College Avenue and Walnut Street and Maple Avenue near Brand Park. The dominant uses are professional office, gift shops and antique shops with residential above. These areas have a much different character than the larger commercial districts. The same type of use and scale of use should be continued as it currently exists.
4. *Commercial Strips.* Elmira has a number of main transportation arterials that traverse the City including College Avenue, Main Street, East Church and Water Streets, Pennsylvania Avenue, Maple Avenue and Broadway. Commercial activity in these areas is similar to what is found along many of America’s busier arterials. The uses are spread out, there is no connection between them and each competes with dominant signs and building size. Some businesses in these areas have been located there for some time and serve the local and regional population.

Continue the type of uses currently found in these areas, however, implement the Site and Architectural Design Guidelines to make these areas more attractive (see discussion regarding the guidelines below).

5. *Major Arterial.* In the early 1970s Elmira committed to the construction of a four-lane limited access roadway to improve north-south traffic flow. A portion of the Clemens Center Parkway, or “arterial”, was constructed from Eldridge Park to Pennsylvania Avenue. The southern extension of the arterial has begun and should be completed by 2000 and will connect to NYS Route 14 and 328. The existing portion of the arterial (between Eldridge and Pennsylvania Avenue) is beginning to realize some commercial development in the area near Washington Avenue and near downtown. The completion of the arterial will play a critical role in the commercial development of the City. Although the arterial is designated as “limited access” care should be given to prohibit “strip” development along the City’s main roadway.

Neighborhood Commercial Districts. Examples of these centers include Hoffman Street, Washington Avenue, and Broadway and Franklin Street. These small centers are scattered throughout the City and they provide small-scale services to the surrounding population and contribute to the economic development of the City. Reexamine the Zoning Map and Ordinance to show expansions and other new districts that have emerged.

Apply concepts of the Site and Architectural Design Guidelines Manual to ensure that neighborhood commercial districts remain at the current scale and character that currently exist.

Programs

- *Create a Site and Architectural Design Guideline Manual.* Development along some of the City's major arterials and within the commercial districts is quite typical of business development occurring throughout the country. Businesses requiring significant on-site parking or outdoor display space compete for visibility by using dominant signage, site lighting and other means of attracting attention. The result creates a haphazard, "suburban-like" appearance with little continuity. In an effort to bring clarity to the commercial areas and to ensure that new development fits in with the character of the City, a Site and Architectural Design Guideline Manual should be created. Examples of the manual can be found in Appendix B. The redevelopment plans contain many examples of the application of design principles within the City. Once created, the guidelines should be incorporated into the City's Zoning Ordinance as a required set of standards.

To lessen the initial burden on the property owner and/or developer, different levels of design guidelines can be implemented.

- a. **Site Standards** - The first, least restrictive, level should focus on site standards such as landscaping parking lot interiors and along the sidewalk edge. Site standards should also include improved signage controls, awnings, and appropriate curb cut spacing. To ensure that these basic level of site improvements are completed and to entice the developer to move to the next level, the City can offer incentives. For example, a density bonus can be offered if the developer agrees to landscape, reduce the sign area and place the building on the site per the next level of standard.
- b. **Building Placement** - The ideal building placement within the City would be at the back edge of the sidewalk with parking behind. Parking in front with the building set back from the street should be discouraged. A compromise would be to place one edge of the building at the edge of the sidewalk with parking on the side. The City should strive for the most preferred building placement and, if unsuccessful, move to the other levels. Incentives, such as increase density and reduced parking, can be offered to the developer to meet these standards.
- c. **Architecture/Facade** - The highest level of standard deals with the architecture of the building. Ultimately, all retail buildings should meet with the existing historic character of the City. This can be achieved by controlling the size of the windows, facade material, roof lines, and other architectural features.

The Site and Architectural Design Guidelines should be workable to allow the marketplace to function while at the same time allowing high quality of development that does not detract from the character of the community.

- *Revise General Sign Regulations.* In order to help limit sign size, number, style, placement, color and lighting, amend the sign regulations section of the municipal code to address new and existing signs in the downtown and commercial corridors. Advertising signs, such as brightly colored banners, flags, bunting and reflective garland should not be permitted. Review of signage design should be part of the site plan approval process for individual development projects. Existing non-conforming signage should be given an appropriate amortization period before removal or reconstruction is required. Code changes should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

- *Increase Buffer Zones Between Residential and Commercial Areas.* Some of Elmira’s residential neighborhoods closely border commercial areas. These areas should be targeted for increased buffering. When new commercial development occurs or existing development is expanded, give special consideration to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Residents should be protected from noise, fumes, lack of privacy and other intrusive aspects of the commercial uses. Buffering could include additional open space separation, plantings, berms and wooden fences. The Site and Architectural Design Guidelines articulates the buffering concept.

- *Continue Maple Avenue Task Force.* This task force was formed in response to a growing business district on Maple Avenue. They discuss such items as proper uses, site and architectural improvements and special events.

The City should continue to support this task force. Activities undertaken should be expanded to include developing a brochure to market to potential customers, physical improvements (i.e., lights, benches sidewalks), combine marketing efforts and expanding the annual antique/craft fair.

- *Intermunicipal Cooperation.* Community development does not stop at the City’s edge. Rather, what happens in the surrounding communities directly impacts the City of Elmira. City officials should develop an Ad Hoc Task Force to oversee development in such areas as College Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, South Main Street, Broadway and others.

3. Industrial & Institutional Districts

Loss of Industrial Employment Base

Due to major plant closings in the early and mid-1980s, Elmira experienced little employment growth. According to the NYS Department of Economic Development , between 1980 and 1986, Elmira lost nearly 40% of its manufacturing base. Since 1986, Elmira gained approximately 2,200 manufacturing jobs making up for nearly half its loss. In recent years the City has seen successes in small to medium sized manufacturing firms which make up a large portion of the economy.

Rationalization of Industrially Zoned Property

A considerable amount of industrial property is located east of the railroad tracks and north of Second Street. Although a number of abandoned buildings exist in the area, the City has taken action and demolished buildings that could not be used for redevelopment. The most recent example is the Trinity site where the City prepared the site for development. This process created a number of development pads that can be used to redevelop of the City and its economic base. Maintaining a sufficient land bank of industrial property to accommodate future manufacturing opportunities is necessary in today's economy.

The activities undertaken by he City and County over the past few years are beginning to show results. To test these activities against the general public's feelings, a question was included in the community survey that dealt with city priorities. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that the City should acquire property for commercial and industrial development. Likewise, 92% of the respondents indicated that the City should demolish deteriorated, vacant buildings. These survey results provide clear direction for City leaders as they focus on industrial and commercial redevelopment.

Land Use

- *Clarify and Focus Industrial Areas.* Economic growth within the industrial sector will best be served by consolidating and expanding the Industrial zones on the eastern side of the City, primarily north of the river. Currently this area contains a haphazard mix of land uses. Bringing clarity will help hold industrial redevelopment potential. The result will be a rational delivery of services which minimizes negative impacts on adjoining land uses. The zoning map should be amended to reflect the consolidation of industrial zones. Figure II-1 FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP highlights all areas proposed for industrial development.

Due to the competitive nature of today's economy, it is becoming increasingly important to create an aesthetically pleasing environment in order to attract potential development. In this regard, utilize the earthen levee along Newtown Creek as a visual asset to attract large companies. This would give the City an advantage in that it could market and offer amenities for the industrial park.

- *Focus on Primary Target Areas Identified in the Elmira Corridor Economic Impact Analysis Study.* A 1993 study prepared for the Chemung County Planning Department focused on development adjacent to the planned southern arterial extension. In that report, primary target areas were identified and a preferred development approach was prepared. The goal is to redevelop critical areas for contemporary industrial use.

Given the fact that a significant investment was made in the infrastructure in this area, the City should implement other recommendations set forth in the study. These include:

- (1) Marketing the three Primary Target Areas as a single industrial project that is differentiated by the type of use planned for each area;
- (2) Defining East Miller Street area as clean high-technology industries;
- (3) Marketing Cedar and South Main Street area to a user requiring a large tract of land;
- (4) Linking the Target Areas by roads;
- (5) Separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic;
- (6) Regulating new development by design guidelines;
- (7) Soliciting help from the Chemung County IDA to acquire necessary land; and
- (8) Initiating strong marketing efforts.

- *Minimize Impact of Industrial Development.* To eliminate significant land use conflicts, disallow all residential uses within all industrial zones. Commercial uses should only be allowed as an adjunct to industrial activity. Where residential uses are next door neighbors, adequate buffers and screens should be provided. Finally, development guidelines and zoning modifications such as performance standards to mitigate the effects of noise visual and traffic impacts.
- *Clarify East Second Street's Image as an Industrial Area.* A number of industrial vacancies exist throughout the City, the majority of which are located near downtown east of the Clemens Center Parkway. This is one of the City's most distressed areas and one of the "gateways" into it. The East Second Street area was chosen as one of the redevelopment areas by the committees; as such a redevelopment plan was created. The City should utilize the redevelopment plan to express concepts and ideas and carry-out the primary activity of in-filling this area with light industrial uses. Buildings should be small and organized around shared parking lots.
- *Create "Institutional" Zones.* The City of Elmira contains a number of key institutions that play a large role in the economy. These include Elmira College, St. Joseph's Hospital and Arnot Ogden Memorial Hospital. To date, only the Arnot Hospital is located within a zoning district appropriate for such a use; St. Joseph's is in a commercial zone and Elmira College is in a mixture of residential zones (single and multi-family). Establishing districts for these institutions can help meet their expansion needs while minimizing impacts and protecting the surrounding neighborhoods. The Hospital District surrounding Arnot Hospital should remain as it is currently delineated. The area in and surrounding St. Joseph's Hospital should be rezoned to the Hospital Zone. Elmira College should be rezoned to a Higher Educational Zone.

- *Resolve Access Issue at Trinity Foundry.* The City has actively taken the lead role and prepared the Trinity Foundry site for industrial redevelopment. Although this site provides much needed industrial land, access from the Clemens Center Parkway is limited. The underpass along Woodlawn Avenue is too low for trucks to pass under. To address this issue the City should undertake a focused study of traffic patterns in this area and determine a workable circulation plan. If it is determined that the roadway under the underpass will be heavily used, the study should provide options to provide room for trucks to pass.

Programs

- *Develop a Proactive Industrial Redevelopment Strategy.* One of the City's economic development strategies is to encourage development anywhere in Chemung County under the assumption that Elmira will benefit with any amount of growth and development.

The City should work in conjunction with appropriate economic development entities to initiate a coordinated business attraction, retention and expansion program. Potential programs and services should help retain existing firms. A marketing program should be initiated to attract new small and mid-sized manufacturing firms to the City.

- *Reuse Abandoned Structures and Underutilized Sites.* The City should establish programs that resolve issues of environmental quality at key vacant industrial and underutilized buildings and sites. Examples include Trinity Foundry, Hygia Plant, American LaFrance, and buildings in the vicinity of Second Street and Clemens Center Parkway. Should the environmental status of certain buildings be in question, the City can examine opportunities for redevelopment in the State's Voluntary Clean-up Program and solicit Environmental Quality Bond Act funds. Participating in these programs can help redevelop sites that might otherwise be left vacant due to risks associated with environmental liability.
- *Formulate a Private Industry Council.* Businesses in the City have various needs associated with their success or failure. In today's economy, businesses must formulate relationships between the public and private sector to remain competitive. This is accomplished through various means including maintaining the tax base, providing jobs for residents and helping compete in a global economy. The needs of the City and businesses should be discussed and an approach to solve the desires of each should be established. The Private Industry Council should be continued to accomplish this task. City staff and interested council members should serve on the Council to help improve the dialogue between the community's needs and the business needs.
- *Increase Visibility of Local Manufacturers.* The City of Elmira has an above average number of small manufacturing businesses compared to other communities in New York State. Many of these businesses are new or have recently expanded and thus make up an important portion of the City's economic base. To help increase the visibility of these successes, educate the

general public by offering tours of local facilities and increasing the involvement of the local chapter of Junior Achievement.

- *Provide Business Facilities.* During a focus group meeting with key business leaders, it was brought to the City’s attention that there is a lack of adequate business related support facilities. The City should encourage development of larger modern facilities such as a convention center, hotel and a high-end restaurant.

4. Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Stability

As in many communities, social problems associated with a decline in high paying industrial employment have resulted in the deterioration of many City neighborhoods. An aging housing stock, deferral of maintenance, and absentee landlords often result in non-conforming poorly maintained properties. Many of the homes that were originally constructed as single family homes have been converted over time to multiple family dwellings. Conversions in an area that was not originally planned for such density contribute to overcrowding service problems and under-maintained rental units.

Not all of the City’s neighborhoods are experiencing these pressures. Some neighborhoods, such as the Near Westside, contain a healthy rental market. Others neighborhoods contain well maintained single family homes. The mix of use in some neighborhoods creates a positive environment. These characteristics help shape the City and provide a high quality of lifestyle.

Survey Results

Over two-thirds (69%) of survey respondents indicated that their neighborhood was an excellent to good place to live. However, when asked to rank specific assets such as, a sense of belonging, nice houses, housing costs, and convenient neighborhood businesses, survey respondents ranked them as good to fair from the choices of poor, fair, good and excellent. None of the overall tallied results was ranked as excellent.

Land Use

- *Maintain the Integrity of the Single Family Neighborhoods.* Currently, the City's zoning ordinance has four residential categories - AA, A, B and C. The AA district is the only district that allows strictly single family homes and, to date, only a small portion of the City falls within this district.

Existing low density AA should be rezoned to a new single-family large lot zone (AAA). Many A residential areas should be rezoned to AA single family in an effort to make the neighborhoods attractive and stable. Generally, this includes such areas as around Grove Park, Roe Avenue west of College Avenue, the area east of Walnut Street and Broadway, east of Riverside Avenue and south of Miller Street near Miller Pond. The specific areas are highlighted in Figure II-1 - FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP.

Strict code enforcement and disapproval of inappropriate use variances should be continued to maintain the positive character of these neighborhoods.

The Planning Commission should continue to work with the Zoning Board of Appeals to enforce the intent of the Comprehensive Master Plan. It is extremely important to remember that poor administration and the indiscriminate granting of variances can dilute the effectiveness of the zoning ordinance in a short period of time.

- *Downzone Portions of B Zones to Single and Two Family Residential (A) Zones.* Like many of the A zones that have not experienced a large amount of two family conversions, the City has zones that have not yet experienced significant two-three family conversions. Continuing to allow such conversions will lead to diminution of the tax base and reduced living conditions for residents of these neighborhoods.

Portions of the B zone areas identified in Figure II-1 - FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP, should be rezoned to A (one and two family) as a measure to prevent outward migration of blighting conditions into currently stable residential neighborhoods. This action will reestablish neighborhood integrity and potential homeowners will regain confidence in housing investments in the City.

- *Disallow Continued Conversions of Larger Single Family Homes.* Currently, the City is over supplied with rental units. Approximately 51% of housing units in the City are renter occupied. As a result, landlords are eager to take a tenant without conducting a background checks, and once they have a tenant they do not take the time to follow up on routine maintenance. The continued conversion of homes into multi-unit apartments will only add to the glut of apartment units in the City.

Figure II-1 highlights all of the residential areas and the density allowed in each. Use this as the basis for the zoning map revisions which will highlight the extent of the residential zones.

Once the map is adopted, the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals should not grant use variances that allow conversions beyond uses allowed in the zoning ordinance.

- *Maintain the B and C Districts Boundaries and Integrity.* These higher density residential zones should continue to provide a transition between the City's central core and its lower density single and two family neighborhoods. Continuation of these uses will provide affordable living and property investment opportunities within the City.
- *Ensure that Renovations and New Development Conform to Character of the City.* Develop and adopt voluntary architectural guidelines for new or renovated housing in existing neighborhoods. In order to create a positive pedestrian realm, the guidelines should address setbacks, parking, public parkways along the street and sidewalks.
- *Continue Code Enforcement.* The City has a strong Code Enforcement Office in place. Continue to support their efforts to assure descent, safe and sanitary housing among rental units.
- *Reduce Effects of Non-Compatible Land Uses.* In some areas of the City, such as in the northeast quadrant, a mix of incompatible land uses exists. Inappropriate mixes of certain land uses can cause neighborhoods to deteriorate making them unattractive for investment.

Design guidelines should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance to develop compatible transitions between adjoining land uses. Items such as height and appropriate buffering and screening should be defined. The design guidelines can also regulate the amount of noise and light of non-residential uses to minimize impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Programs

- *Establish a Task Force on Housing Needs.* The Code Enforcement Office actively inspects of rental units throughout the City. This department sees the effects of increased density of apartments on once stable neighborhoods. Many times, the inspection exposes substandard living conditions for low to moderate income families. Because a large percentage of the demographic group associated with these living conditions receives public assistance, the Departments of Social Services and Welfare are often involved in the family's lives.

Although each department and agency involved intends to act in the best interest of these income groups, they often do not communicate with each other. In an effort to increase communications across these groups and to gain a complete understanding of low to moderate income groups housing needs, a Housing Task Force should be established made up of representatives from every agency involved in providing housing. Topics of discussion should include: providing safe and affordable rental units, housing affordability, absentee landlords and others.

- *Target Selected Neighborhoods for Improvements.* The City's active and successful community development housing programs should be continued to encourage residential reinvestment and restoration of multi-family neighborhoods. Specific target areas are highlighted in Figure II-1 and include: the neighborhood surrounding Columbia Street, neighborhoods along the Lake from the City line to Washington Avenue, and the neighborhood surrounding Spaulding Street. These neighborhoods were selected based on their need and strategic location in the City. For example, the Columbia Street neighborhood contains a high amount of apartments and many of the structures are in a state of disrepair. Additionally, this neighborhood can serve as an important link between Elmira College and the central business district. Improving this area will enhance the environment, improve the housing conditions and facilitate a link between the College and downtown businesses.

Neighborhoods should be continually inventoried to determine areas of sub-standard housing. Research availability of Federal and State funding sources to assist with housing and neighborhood improvements.

- *Locate Illegally Converted Units.* After the 1972 flood in the City, many larger homes were illegally converted to multi-unit apartments. Whereas legal units pay for community facilities and services, these illegal multi-units do not pay for their impacts such as increased traffic, additional on-street parking and demands on other community services such as schools. That, in turn, creates a potential for increased property taxes for all residents and changes the character of the neighborhoods.

The City should locate illegal conversions in an effort to realize the appropriate amount of property tax. In an effort to locate the units, an amnesty program should be created to encourage owners of illegal units which can be legalized to comply with the zoning law. Landlords that willingly participate should not be prosecuted.

- *Solicit Citizens to Protect Neighborhoods.* The Neighborhood Watch Group program administered by the Department of Business and Housing Development should be continued as one way of maintaining neighborhood stability.
- *Recognize and Create Neighborhood Centers.* Understanding that the basis of defining a neighborhood is a 1,500 foot walkable distance from a center point such as a park, church or school, the City should work to recognize the different neighborhoods and establish an identity and sense of public ownership for each.

Identification can be achieved through a coordinated sign program. Signs can be installed along the roadways indicating the general neighborhood name and whether or not there is a neighborhood watch group in place.

Another method of identifying a neighborhood is through small commercial districts. Revise the zoning map per Figure II-1 to reflect the increase in size of the neighborhood business district. Allowable uses should continue to be small scale (less than 3,000 sq. ft.) and oriented towards walking and bicycling rather than the automobile. Examples include pizza shops, bakeries, delis, dry cleaners, convenience goods and other. Neighborhood commercial districts include the area along Hoffman Street near Church, Washington Street and Walnut Street, Washington and Lake Street, Broadway and Franklin Street and Miller and Erie Street.

- *Create an Owner Occupancy Program* - In areas with high amounts of renter occupancies, consider establishing a program that will help increase the conversion of the rental units to owner occupancy.

A temporary “rent-to-own” overlay district can be created where the goal is to convert rental units to owner occupancy during a 5-7 year period. Once an area is successfully converted, the district should be relocated so that other areas in the City can be phased through in a similar fashion.

The master plan committees chose the corner of Washington Avenue and Lake Street as one of the six redevelopment areas. The focus of this area is to create in-fill development surrounding the old Tops Supermarket. Specifically, the old supermarket is proposed for use as a community center. What was once vast open parking lots could be in-filled with small affordable homes. Homes can be constructed to fulfill the need for increasing owner-occupied housing in the City. A copy of the graphic can be found in the Implementation chapter.

- *Home Occupations.* Home occupations play an increasingly important role in our everyday lives. As technologies advance, more and more people are able to stay at home and telecommute. Because of this fact, the definition of home occupations has changed.

The zoning ordinance should be modified to allow home occupations in AA and A residential districts. Home occupations can be allowed in two categories (1) uses that do not require a sign, parking or employ 1 to 2 people would be allowed by right and (2) uses requiring a sign, parking, deliveries or more than 2 employees would require a special use permit.

Recognize Aging Population

As with many communities, Elmira’s population is increasingly aging. The City has a number of benefits for the elderly, such as its central location, developed infrastructure and numerous amenities. Considering these facts, it is conceivable that many seniors will look to the City as a place of retirement. The City should respond to the growing housing needs of this population.

- *Create Senior Housing.* Demands for senior housing should continue to be met. Appropriate housing such as large-scale high rise apartment building with one- to two-bedroom apartment units, or assisted living centers. An appropriate location for such housing would be adjacent to the Central Business District which can provide numerous services within walking distance. Other potential areas include the southside adjacent to the old Hygea Plant and East Church Street across from St. Joseph’s Hospital. The master plan committees chose South Main Street as a redevelopment area as noted in the Implementation Chapter.
- *Ensure Access to Public Transportation and Public Services.* For retirement housing, public transportation and community services should be located within reasonable walking distance and should be accessible via paved walkways that are lighted, secure and well maintained. If no services are available, then the housing developer should provide a shuttle bus service to such services.

5. Recreation and Open Space

Elmira contains parks and recreation areas located throughout its neighborhoods which include active recreational facilities such as picnic areas, play equipment, baseball, tennis, softball, and horseshoes. When compared to national park standards, the City has a 62% shortage in parkland. However, City residents utilize 133 acres on city school property for recreational purposes. When factoring in these numbers, Elmira actually has a surplus of parkland by 7% or 21 acres.

Eldridge Park is a unique recreational opportunity. The City recently completed a park feasibility study and, coupled with master plan survey results, has found that residents would like to see the park developed with additional ballfields and other recreational opportunities. The development of this park will provide numerous opportunities for Elmira residents and regional visitors.

The parks and recreation section of the community survey provides additional insight to the City with regards to activities and programs. Overall, 60% of the survey respondents indicated that the park facilities are inadequate for public needs and should be upgraded. Likewise, over 57% of the respondents indicated that Elmira’s parks are underutilized. With regard to the Chemung River and abandoned railroad tracks, 59% indicated that the Chemung River should have points of public access for boating/swimming and fishing and 51% indicated that abandoned railroad right of ways should be developed as recreational trails. Finally, with regard to Eldridge Park, 173 of the respondents indicated that the park should be developed as a recreational complex with a variety of sports offered.

Land Use

- *Implement Recommendations in City Parks Analysis Plan.* As part of the Comprehensive Master Plan process, a complete analysis of the City park system was completed and the

results can be found in Appendix C. The separate study specifically focused on the City park system.

- *Create a Recreational Complex.* Through the public participation process of the master plan update, it was discovered that many residents felt that a recreation complex in the central business district would attract more people downtown and fulfill a shortage in sporting facilities. The proposed Sports/City Center/Hotel Complex discussed in the downtown section of this chapter is proposed as a solution to this need.
- *Develop Eldridge Park as a Recreational Complex.* As the master plan survey indicated, people would like to see Eldridge Park developed as a recreational complex with a variety of sports offered. Some of these sports should include: baseball, jogging/running trails, miniature golf and tennis. The City recently received a grant from NYS Office of Parks and Recreation to begin fulfilling this need. The City should continue its plans to redevelop this area. Once the playing fields are constructed, a recreational trail system that connects to the proposed rail-trail should be provided. Ultimately, Eldridge Park should connect to the Chemung River Trail (discussed below).
- *Investigate the Need for Additional Park on the City's Northwest Quadrant.* During the inventory stage of the master plan and the parks analysis that was completed under a separate cover, it was discovered that the northeast quadrant of the City does not have an adequate amount of parkland.

The City should undertake a detailed study of the northeast quadrant to assess the availability of land that can be utilized as a park. Because the City's northeast quadrant has Grove Park and the Elmira Free Academy, investigate the possibility of locating a new park away from these existing facilities. Investigate the area south of West Second Street for the park location.

Programs

- *Create Coordinated Neighborhood Trails.* In an effort to link some of the City's existing parks and neighborhoods together, create a series of bicycling, walking, nature, historic, tourist and theme trails. Follow residential subcollectors such as Hoffman Street, Grove Street, Davis Street, Washington Street, West Hudson Street, Fulton Street, and Spaulding Street. Target these corridors for street and sidewalk improvements to ensure that the pedestrians and bicyclists have safe and convenient access. Reinforce routes with signs and trees.

Utilize the theme trails to form linkages between each of the parks and the proposed Chemung River Corridor. A trail that follows Walnut Street and connects Grove Park to the proposed Chemung River Trail could be created.

- *Improve Parks and Playgrounds and Expand Program Activity.* The master plan survey results indicate that City parks are inadequate for public needs and they should be upgraded. The City should increase its annual park maintenance program to ensure the quality of its recreational resources.

In an effort to reestablish programmed activities offered at some the parks, a Parks Conservancy Group made up of private sector businesses should be created. The Group should formulate a relationship between the City and the private sector to sponsor programmed activity and expanded park development.

- *Program and Increase Utilization of Wisner and Mark Twain Riverfront Parks.* Wisner Park and Mark Twain Riverfront Park both provide opportunities for social interaction and create image focal points for Elmira's downtown. These parks should add to the vitality of downtown's street life.

Both parks should be programmed with special events and attractions to draw people downtown. The design of the Wisner Park should be kept simple and Mark Twain Park should be simplified to avoid creating hidden spaces that may cause security problems. Successful downtown parks are typically simple in design, with high quality lawn areas and canopy trees.

The Chemung River's edge can serve as a natural magnet for people and as a valuable visual resource. However, the cement floodwall in the Mark Twain Riverfront Park blocks access and views to the river. Private sector cooperation should be solicited to address this issue and create a waterfront promenade. An engineering study should be conducted to determine the most appropriate method of attaching the promenade to the floodwall.

- *Reuse Abandoned Railroad Right-of-Ways.* The Executive Transportation Committee for Chemung County completed a feasibility study on the conversion of abandoned railroad right-of-ways to trails. Their recommendations should be implemented to create a north-south trail connecting residential neighborhoods and Eldridge Park in Elmira, Memorial Park in Elmira Heights, and the Chemung County Fairgrounds. An inter-municipal committee made up of officials from Horseheads, Elmira Heights, the City of Elmira and County officials should be formed to address the issue of cross jurisdictional access, improvements, and trail maintenance. The committee should also undertake a public relations campaign to build consensus from landowners bordering the trail.
- *Utilize Area Recreational Assets.* Elmira is fortunate to be located close to numerous recreational assets. These include Tanglewood Community Nature Center, Park Station Recreation Area, Newtown Battlefield Reservation, Harris Hill/National Soaring Museum,

West Elmira Park, and others. Combined, these areas offer educational, historical and recreational opportunities.

When attracting new businesses to the City, these areas should be promoted these areas as an asset to the quality of life in Elmira.

The City should work with the Executive Transportation Committee to ensure that disadvantaged residents have adequate access to these facilities.

Under-utilization of the Chemung River Corridor as a Recreational Resource

The Chemung River is a largely untapped recreational resource and should become the recreational and visual centerpiece of the City. As City's the primary natural open space area, the River is highly under-utilized for both passive and active recreational opportunities. The river's central location and proximity to downtown highlight its potential to be a major recreational addition with linkages to residential neighborhoods.

- *Create a Series of Trails near and along the Chemung River.* The earthen levees along the Chemung River are the basis for an intricate flood protection system for the City. Although a recreational trail located on the elevated portion of the levee would provide for scenic views of the river, it is illegal to locate a path there and it also places the entire system in danger due to erosion along the footpaths.

Given the threats a trail on the levees would create, the City should locate any multi-use recreational trails immediately adjacent to the river. Figure II-3 - RIVERFRONT TRAIL AND POTENTIAL ACCESS POINTS on the following page illustrates a trail concept that can be utilized. The system can be broken down into multiple trails that can be thought of in the following ways:

- Bridge-to-Bridge Trail: This trail should utilize Water Street and the southside of the river between Walnut Street bridge to Lake Avenue bridge. Residents within the adjacent neighborhoods could utilize the trail system to have access to downtown, Mark Twain Riverfront Park and the proposed river access point at the base of Grove Street.
- Riverside Trail: A trail should be located along the river's edge behind the Elmira Water Board building on Winsor Avenue. Access to the trail can be provided over the levee at the end of Grove Street and the trail can begin at the access point/boat launch area proposed by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and continue west into the Town of Elmira. The trail should be slightly improved with a sintered base and some benches

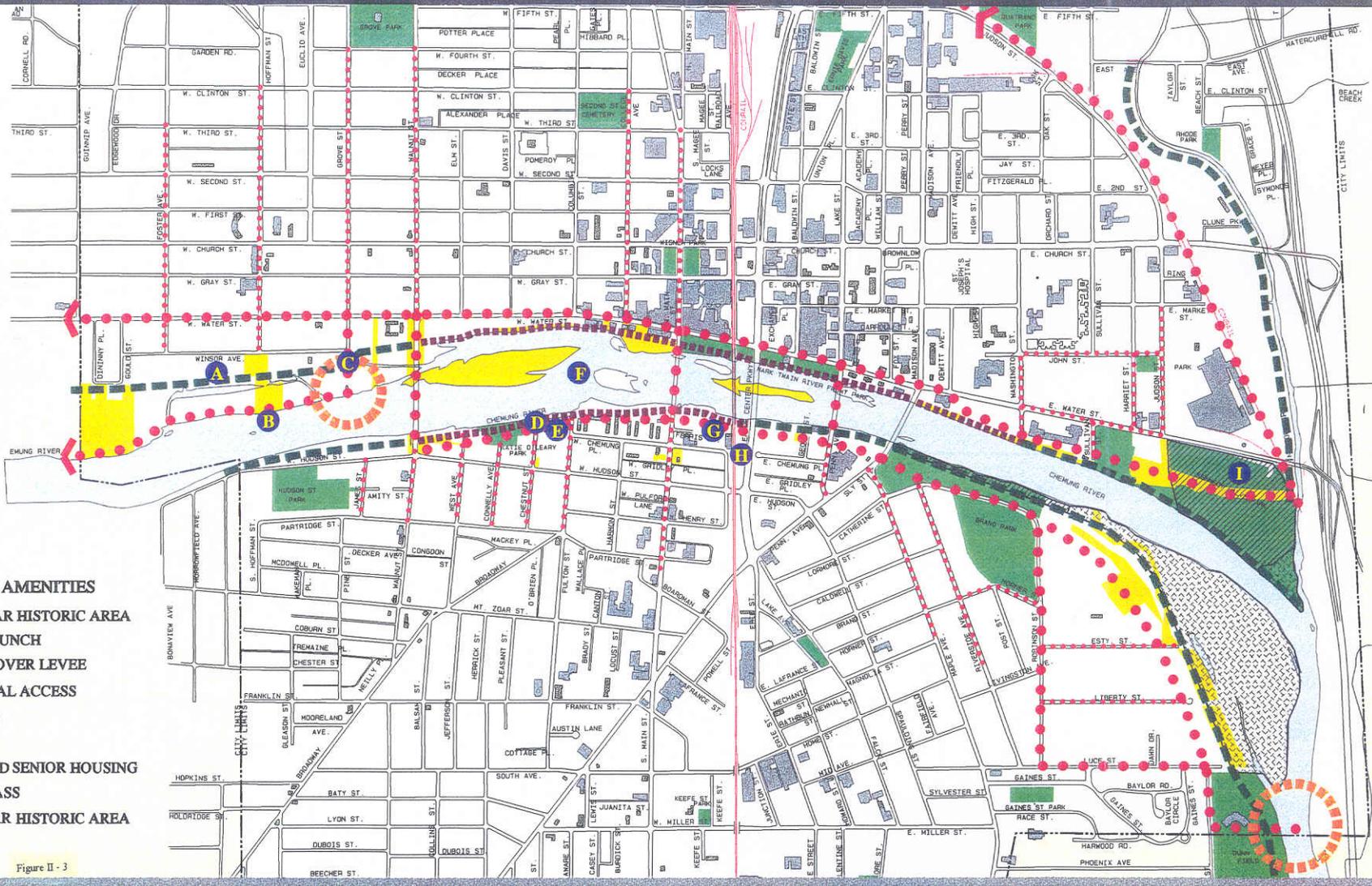
at key resting areas. Coordinate with the Town of Elmira to continue the trail west to the Town Hall recreation area. **A potential configuration of the trail system can be found following the Chemung River Trail recommendations on page II-23.**

An historic kiosk interpretation system should be established behind the Water Board building to portray the extensive Civil War history of the area. Also, the City could sponsor an Historic Festival and organize Civil War reenactments along some of the flat areas between the levee and the river.

- **Brand Park-Dunn Field Trail:** A trail running between Brand Park and Dunn Field should be created. Connecting these two parks can offer a trail system for the neighborhoods surrounding the area and for people parking at either Brand Park or Dunn Field. Signage should direct users to the second proposed NYSDEC access point/boat launch at Dunn Field.
 - **Eastside Trail System:** A trail should continue from Lake Avenue east to Kennedy Valve Park and the Huck Finn Baseball field. The trail can end behind Kennedy Valve at the proposed rail-trail on the abandoned Conrail railroad bed.
 - Tree lined streets should link the neighborhoods with the riverfront trail. Reinforce linkages from the trail to adjacent neighborhoods with signs and sidewalk and street improvements.
 - In addition to a linear type park, public access points along the trail should offer river access for fishing and boating activities. The NYSDEC plans to construct such access points on the north shore near Grove Street and on the south shore near Dunn Field. Continue to coordinate with NYSDEC) to locate such areas. Facilities at such areas should include a boat launch, picnic tables, benches and other amenities suitable for passive recreation.
- *Coordinate with Local Not-for-Profit Groups.* As a trail system begins to take shape along the river's edge, it should be coordinated with such groups as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America to provide light maintenance activities such as cleaning up litter and other debris.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Although a developed city, Elmira has a number of environmentally sensitive resources. These resources contribute to the quality of life in the City and should be maintained for the purposes of upholding environmental quality.



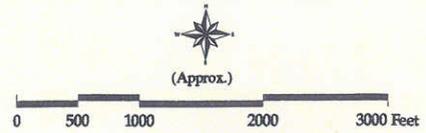
TRAIL AMENITIES

- A** CIVIL WAR HISTORIC AREA
- B** BOAT LAUNCH
- C** ACCESS OVER LEVEE
- D** POTENTIAL ACCESS
- E** PARKING
- F** DAM
- G** PROPOSED SENIOR HOUSING
- H** UNDERPASS
- I** CIVIL WAR HISTORIC AREA

Figure II - 3

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA, NY
RIVERFRONT TRAIL AND POTENTIAL ACCESS POINTS

- Earthen Levee
- Concrete Wall (18 Ft. Approx.)
- Main Trail System
- Riverfront Trail Connections
- Potential Public Access Point (Medium-High Use Areas)
- Potential Public Access Point (Low Use Areas)
- Parks
- Other Riverfront Public Land
- Access Points



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Date: 1/14/98
 Project: 95072

Assisted By
THE SEAR-BROWN GROUP

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Land Use

- *Implement Wellhead Protection Measures.* The Southern Tier Central Regional Planning Board recently undertook a study to evaluate the quality, quantity and potential contamination sources to area drinking water wellheads including some within the City’s boundaries. Specific recommendations relating to the protection of groundwater from contamination were one of the results of the study.

The City should review the recommendations and work with the Regional Planning Board to adopt a wellhead protection overlay district. Limit future development within this area to those uses that would not impact the water quality and protect the recharge area of the wellhead. Finally, because the recharge area for the wellhead moves beyond the City’s boundaries and into adjacent communities, the City should coordinate with area officials to implement the overlay protection district over the entire recharge area.

Programs

- *Upgrade and Protect the Water Quality of the Chemung River.* The water quality of the River within the City’s border is a “C” Classification which indicates that the river is suitable for fishing and fish propagation. Outside of the City limits, the river is an “A” Classification (the highest possible classification is “AA”) which is suitable for drinking and all other uses. With regard to this fact, the City should take proactive measures to ensure the water quality of the river.

The City should ensure that storm water runoff is directed to appropriate holding areas and it is not emptying directly into the river. Second, the City should ensure that all residents are properly connected to the sanitary sewer system. Finally, to ensure that hazardous materials are not reaching the river, each resident should have the opportunity to properly recycle household generated hazardous waste.

C. TRANSPORTATION

The movement of people and goods is critical to the on-going competitiveness of a community. The City of Elmira has a large network of streets that are not without their problems. There are a number of arterials that quickly and easily move people and cars through the City and not necessarily within it. There are a number of one-way streets where the main purpose is to move automobiles quickly through the City. Additionally, there is an existing truck route that does not provide easy access to some industrial areas as well as the Industrial Park on the east side of the City. The focus of the transportation network in the City should be to allow the efficient and safe

TYPICAL RIVERSIDE TRAIL SECTION

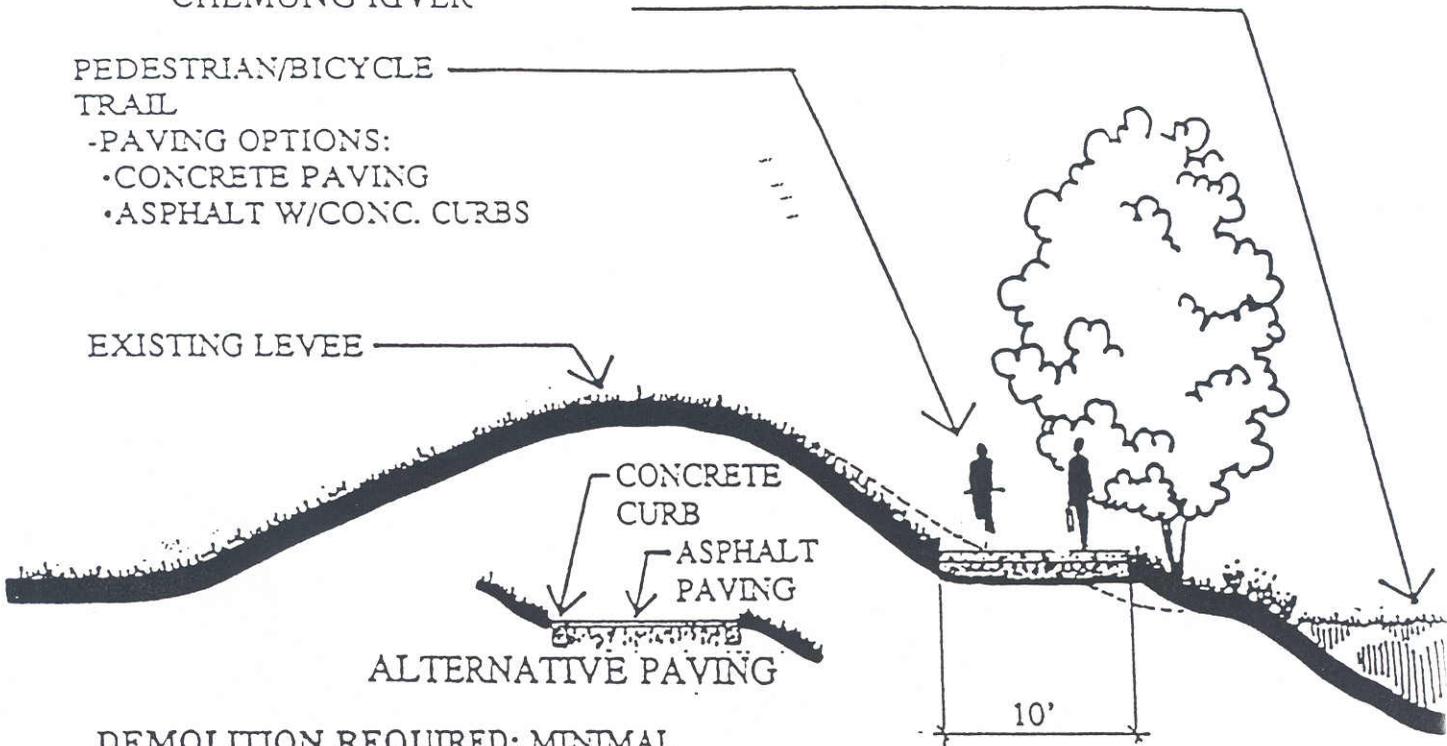
10' WIDE TRAIL ALONG RIVER'S EDGE

CHEMUNG RIVER

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE
TRAIL

- PAVING OPTIONS:
 - CONCRETE PAVING
 - ASPHALT W/CONC. CURBS

EXISTING LEVEE



DEMOLITION REQUIRED: MINIMAL

GRADING REQUIRED: MODERATE

ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING REQUIRED: MODERATE

CONCRETE PAVING WITH 6" CRUSHED AGGREGATE SUBBASE
TRAIL

BITUMINOUS PAVING WITH FLUSH CONCRETE CURBS AND 6" CRUSHED
AGGREGATE SUBBASE

ADVANTAGES: VIEWS, ACCOMMODATES PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

DISADVANTAGES: MODERATE-HIGH INSTALLATION COSTS, POTENTIAL FLOOD
DAMAGE TO TRAIL

movement of truck transportation as well as creating an efficient system to allow easier access throughout the city and to downtown businesses.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation are also important aspects to a healthy City. In addition to improving vehicular circulation, the streets and sidewalks must be made safe and enjoyable for non-traditional circulation.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and the Streetscape Environment

- *Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Circulation.* Certain streets serve as key pedestrian walkways throughout the City. Some of these include Clemens Center Parkway in the downtown area, Main Street from the College to South Main Street, downtown sections of Church and Water, and many others. Pedestrian walkways should be improved by landscaping the sidewalks with trees and shrubs, buffering the parking lots with screening, adding awnings to the front of buildings, and creating in-fill development. Key pedestrian crossings should be fabricated using highly visible crosswalks that are easily seen by the driver. In the interim, the City could brightly paint crosswalks until funds are appropriated for reconstruction.

In an effort to improve bicycle safety in the City, shoulder width on major roadways should be maintained and kept clean of debris. Additionally, in areas that receive a high amount of bicycle traffic, traffic signals should be adjusted so that they are tripped by a bicycle. The new transportation center in downtown Elmira is providing for bicycle storage in bike lockers. The City should monitor their use and assess their popularity for use elsewhere in the City. Proper bike storage can be influential in encouraging residents to travel by bicycle.

Vehicular Circulation

- *Continue with Truck Ordinance.* The existing truck route system in the City had numerous restrictions that force truck traffic into residential neighborhoods. As a result Elmira's truck route system was studied by The Sear Brown Group who then developed a Truck Route Study for City of Elmira completed July 18, 1996. As a result of this effort, the City adopted a Truck Ordinance that implements the major recommendations of the study. It is recommended that this ordinance remain in effect and future monitoring of the effects of truck traffic on the neighborhood streets be conducted.
- *One-Way Street System.* The City has numerous one-way streets which provide for the efficient movement of vehicles, but create some confusion when trying to access downtown businesses. The Sear Brown Group analyzed the one-way street system in a report entitled One-Way Street and Arterial System Study, completed April 4, 1997. The report contained the following conclusions:

- Results of the Transit-7F analysis indicate that all four Alternative one-way configurations of the Water Street/Church Street couplet are feasible. They can be implemented without pavement widening and without significant loss in on-street parking. Sufficient capacity exists to provide one through travel lane per direction on each roadway, with provisions for left and right turn lanes at the signalized intersections.

The analysis results reveal that conversion to two-way operation can be achieved without a significant increase in vehicular delay, total travel time, or reduction in travel speed. Although the study was primarily focused on the technical feasibility of converting streets to two-way, the ultimate conversion will also help visitors and residents gain direct access to the central business district. Currently, the one-way system is confusing and inhibits the ability to move about the downtown area easily.

To implement the suggestions from the one-way study the City should complete signal upgrades, intersection and roadway restriping, new signs, and signal coordination.

- *Lake Road Connector.* In an effort to relieve traffic and truck congestion in the northern portion of the City, Elmira should continue to coordinate with the Executive Transportation Committee for Chemung County (ETCCC) to complete the Lake Road Connector from Grand Central Avenue to Lake Road.
- *Completion of the Elmira Arterial.* The completion of the Elmira Arterial (“Clemens Center Parkway”) has been an important community goal for many years. The primary objective is to provide a continuous north-south highway from NYS Routes 14 and 328 in Southport to Route 17 in Horseheads. This is a critical objective as the corridor will provide improved access for existing business, commercial and industrial development and encourage future development of sites along the corridor. (See 3. Industrial & Institutional Districts on preceding pages) The project will also relieve traffic congestion on the existing street network.

Construction on the southern section of the arterial has begun and is scheduled to be complete to NYS Routes 14 & 328 by 2000. In an effort to help the City realize the complete benefits of the southern connection, it is imperative that this schedule be adhered to. If the arterial does not connect to Cedar Street, the initial goals and objectives of the roadway as they relate to the economic development of the southside of Elmira will not be realized.

In 1993 the “Alternative Route Evaluation for the Elmira Arterial Northern Section” study was completed. The study examined various alignments for the northern section and identified three alternatives. Selection of the best alternative is highly dependent upon the

routing of the Horseheads By-Pass. The City must play a key role in expediting completion of the Northern Arterial. As the study states, “The entire arterial needs to be completed in order to satisfy the primary objective and to capture the full potential benefits of the corridor”.

- *East/West Arterial.* The Church and Water Streets on-way “couplet” serves as the City’s primary east/west arterial. The City should convert to a two-way operation and designation of Church Street as the principal arterial. Church Street provides full directional access to Route 17. Water Street should be downgraded to a minor arterial.

D. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The interests of a community in its cultural character say a lot about the way a community views itself and the impression it wants to extend to others. Attention to the historic and visual aspects of the City will help to restore a positive self image. Figure II-4 HISTORIC DISTRICTS illustrates the historic districts and many historic points throughout the city.

Programs

- *Increase Utilization of Historic Resources.* Elmira is rich in cultural heritage. From the buildings and churches in and near the Central Business District to various residences and government/public buildings, numerous structures remain to tell the story of Elmira’s development. The City should continue to designate historic districts and/or individual structures to celebrate and reinforce the significance of the City’s heritage and confirm the community’s commitment to historic preservation.
- *Increase the Visibility of Existing Cultural Institutions.* The City has a number of cultural institutions that serve the local and regional population. These include the Arnot Art Museum, the Clemens Center Performing Arts Center, the Chemung County Historical Society and others. To help increase the visibility of these institutions, the City should create a committee made up of officials from each institution as well as city staff, Chemung County Transportation staff and others. The committee should coordinate special events, promotions and bus tours to ensure that each visitor is realizing the maximum benefit from Elmira’s cultural institutions.
- *Increase the Role of the Historic Review Commission.* In past years the Historic Review Committee has help guide development within the City. Once proposed design guidelines are established, the Historic Review Commission should be given increased support to see that

the guidelines are properly adhered to. Their actions can help give a sense of character to new development while at the same time continue to preserve the City's heritage.

E. FISCAL MEASURES

In the reality of today's economic climate, it is becoming increasingly difficult to operate within community's budget constraints. In an effort to assist communities meet these challenges the NYS Comptroller's Office began an outreach program.

- *Participate in the State Comptroller's SMART Program.* The State Comptroller's Municipal Advisory Review Team (SMART) is a voluntary review program operated by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Its goal is to develop recommendations which maximizes revenues without tax increases, and minimizes expenses while still providing necessary services.

The OSC is currently conducting pilot reviews and, after they are complete, will be accepting applications from other areas. Participation in the SMART Program, will allow Elmira to receive an objective analysis of municipal operations. Participation is voluntary and SMART reviews will be conducted at no cost to local governments.

Results of the SMART review includes providing the City with ideas to make their operations more efficient. A conference will be held to discuss the draft results. A formal written report will be issued and the City Council will have the final vote on whether to implement the recommendations.

F. IMMEDIATE SMALL AND LOW COST PROJECT IDEAS

This section recommends a series of ideas that can be implemented with the help of the general public and other community leaders at relatively low cost and within a short time frame. Implementation of some of the ideas suggested throughout this section of the Comprehensive Master Plan may occur immediately, while others may be implemented over time. In an effort to engage the public early in the implementation process, a number of smaller projects that can be implemented in a short period of time are suggested.

- *Establish a City Beautification Committee.* Many of the survey results indicated that Elmira residents would like the City "cleaned up". To this end, a group of volunteers can be assembled to undertake small scale projects that will have large effects on bettering the environment. One project may include annual painting of the viaduct in downtown Elmira.

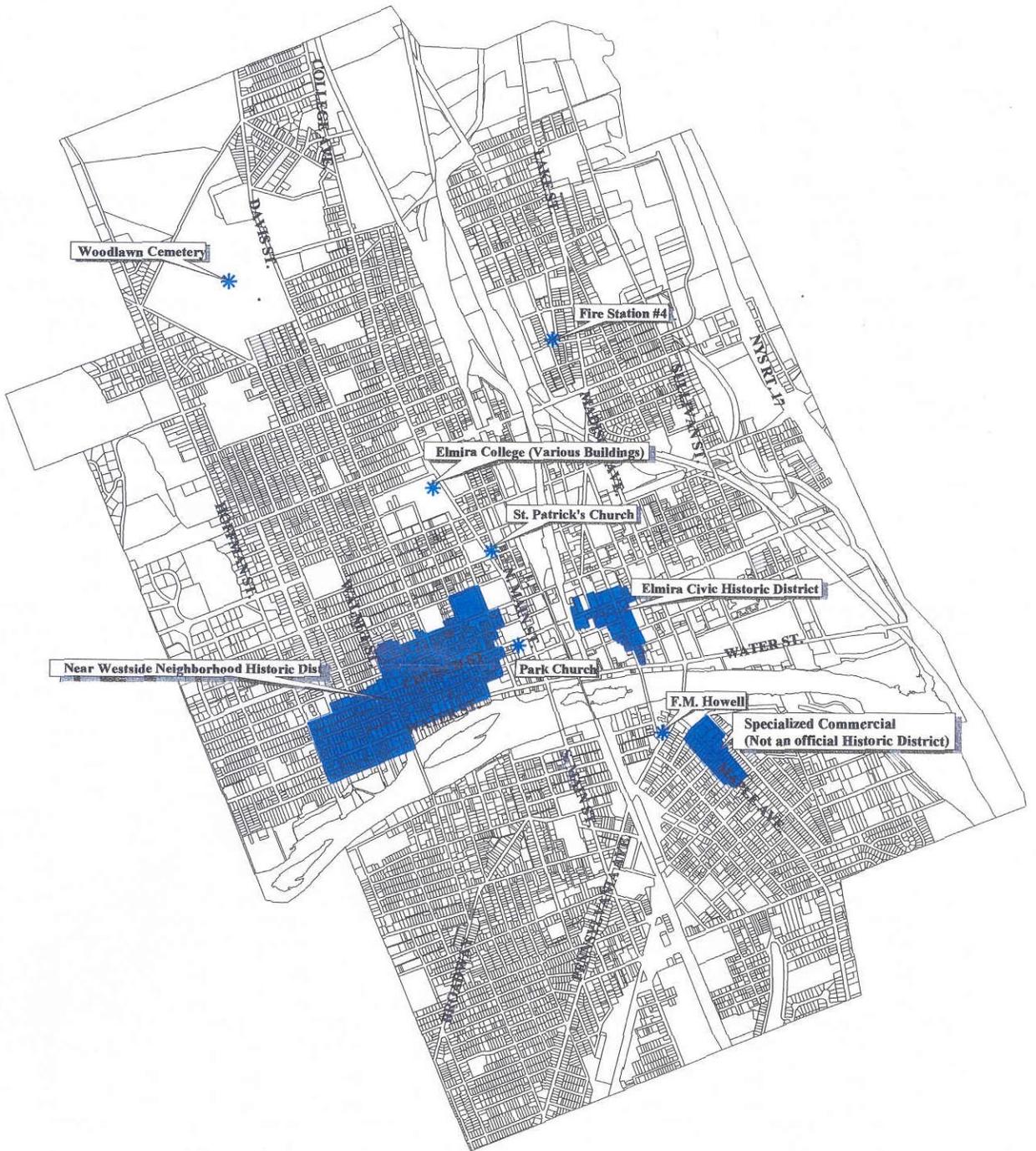


Figure II-4

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
 CITY OF ELMIRA
 AREAS OF HISTORIC INTEREST

- LEGEND
-  Historic Points
 -  Historic Districts
 -  Tax Parcels



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Figure 1

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

CITY OF ELMIRA, NY

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

Land Use Breakdown

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Agriculture |  Recreation & Entertainment |
|  Residential |  Community Services |
|  Vacant |  Industrial |
|  Commercial |  Public Services |
|  Apartments |  Conservation Lands |



0.3 0 0.3 0.6 Miles

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- *Accent Elevated Railroad.* The elevated railroad lies between the Performing Arts Center and the main cluster of downtown buildings along Main and Water Streets. Unlike some urban centers, where railroad tracks serve as an impediment to pedestrian movement, the elevated tracks in Elmira do not. In order to continue this outlook, continue annual maintenance of the structure and accent it with lighting.

III. EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter II of the Comprehensive Master Plan lists a series of recommendations geared toward the redevelopment of the City. Some of these recommendations will occur immediately, while others will be accomplished over a ten year period. Although the City would prefer to implement all of the recommendations as soon as possible, they, like many other communities, have a limited pool of resources. Recognizing this situation, the City must focus on an implementation strategy that will allow the most efficient implementation of the recommendations.

As the City contemplates an implementation strategy, a certain logic should be followed to allow the City to implement the numerous recommendations set forth in Chapter II. These include, formulating and implementing those **regulations** necessary to shape the development and preserve neighborhoods, selecting and completing **projects** which catalyze development, and creating **programs** which sustain the recommendations into the future.

The City should also consider assembling key people and community leaders into a series of task forces based on topic areas (see below). The third issue of consideration should deal with the capability to assemble the funds required to complete the recommendations. Section III - 5 lists potential resources to help meet the City's financial need.

1. "Blueprint for Action"

Implementation Committee

To help guide this effort, an Implementation Committee made up of the staff of the Department of Business and Housing Development, the City Manager, the Chairs of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board and others as identified by the City Manager should meet to clarify and implement a "Blueprint for Action" that will outline activities on a yearly basis. The list should prioritize the recommendations by category (i.e., downtown, neighborhoods, industrial, etc.) Additionally, to make the most efficient use of the City's resources, the Implementation Committee should identify public/private partnerships that can be formed to carry-out certain recommendations. For example, a partnership could be formed to complete the recreational trails along neighborhood streets and the abandoned Conrail railroad right-of-way. The committee should meet two times a year to review the priorities and to insure that the list is adhered to.

Task Forces

To assist the Committee prioritize recommendations for the coming year, the City Council may create a series of task forces on a topic basis. For example, a task force may be formed to focus on neighborhood issues. The purpose of each task force would be to refine the ideas and recommendations set forth in Chapter II of the Comprehensive Master Plan and make recommendations to the Implementation Committee as to priorities they feel need to be addressed.

An annual list of action items builds accountability allowing citizens, business owners and community organizations to see how the City of Elmira intends to carry-out the plan. Initial successes will ensure that this plan continues to be a focus for successful action in the future. Comprehensive Master Plan Committee members emphasized the importance of a monitoring process to assure citizens that the plan will actually be implemented. At the end of each year, an annual report can be prepared which records progress during the calendar year, describes the status of current projects and identifies projects needing additional action.

Over time, conditions in the City and region will change and new opportunities for action to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Master Plan will arise. For this reason, a broader view of the plan and its implementation should occur every five years (or sooner if changing circumstances warrant). A “report card” can be generated that provides a checklist of achievements, a list of recommendations yet to be undertaken and a summary review accomplishments. This review provides the flexibility to ensure that the Comprehensive Master Plan continues to reflect the most effective and appropriate means to make Elmira the City of Choice for residents, businesses and investors.

2. Regulatory Actions for Plan Adoption

Completing the Comprehensive Master Plan is the first step towards moving the City into the future. Adopting the Comprehensive Master Plan is the second, and one of the most important, steps that will ensure that the City staff, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and citizens adhere to the plan when considering future actions. Adopting the plan provides the blueprint for coordinated change and a framework for all projects (public and private). Combined, the incremental completion of projects will contribute to the larger vision of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The following steps are necessary for the complete implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Update:

1. Council adoption of the Comprehensive Master Plan as a policy statement
2. Council adoption of the amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan

3. Zoning Ordinance and Map Revisions and Adoption
 - a. Develop recommendation in zoning language
 - b. Incorporate design guidelines into zoning
4. Educate development community - sponsored by City Administration and Business and Housing Department
 - a. Brochure
 - b. Seminar
5. Capital Budget - addition of catalytic projects list in a 5 year schedule
 - a. Prioritize projects and programs
 - b. Determine annual budget allocation/commitment
6. Create department and subcommittee Task Force for project implementation
 - a. Trail & Recreation
 - b. North Main Street
 - c. South Main Street
 - d. Washington Avenue District
 - e. Manufacturers
 - f. Civic Center
 - g. Downtown/BID

3. “Seven-in-Seven” - Key Implementation Projects

During the formulation of the Comprehensive Master Plan, the Committees were asked to contemplate key projects they identified as important to the redevelopment of the City. The projects were chosen based on their ability to be catalytic leading to revitalization and redevelopment of key districts. Additionally, the projects were selected because they are:

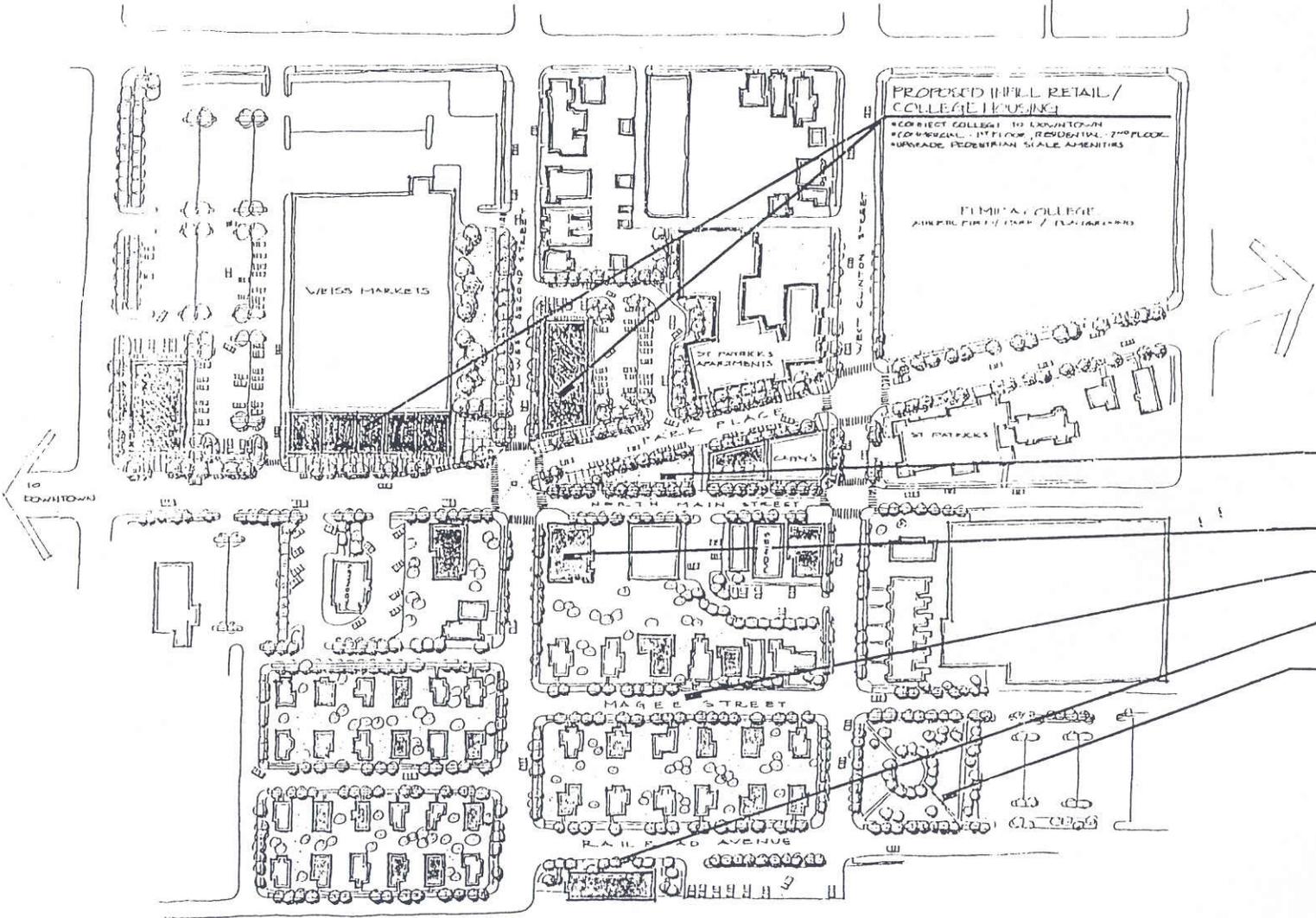
- visible;
- along major arterials;
- in the center of the City; and
- respond to a specific need.

Given this rationale, the following districts were identified:

1. North Main Street / College District
2. City Center District
3. South Main Street Neighborhood Commercial Center
4. Church Street Retirement & Housing Center
5. Washington Avenue Neighborhood Commercial
6. Madison Avenue/Second Street Redevelopment Plan
7. Chemung River Trail

The first six projects identified above were developed to focus on key areas within the City that are in the greatest need (Please see Figure II-1 - FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP in Chapter II - Recommendations for their location in relation to the entire City). For each area, a detailed redevelopment plan was created showing existing conditions and proposed improvements. The following pages contain a reduced version of the graphics. The redevelopment plans provide precise recommendations that will help maximize the limited resources of the City. If followed, City redevelopment will occur in critical areas within the City. Combined, the plans will catalyze commercial, industrial, and residential development in the community.

Although some projects have begun (i.e., the Downtown Civic Center), others have yet to begin. The following table provides indicating the necessary steps to see each project to completion. General cost estimates are provided in thousands of dollars.



AREA 01 - North Main Street College District

Purpose and Program

Currently an underutilized commercial corridor, Florida College and the mixed-use development within the district will add a new level of activity, increasing local business and creating a vibrant, walkable neighborhood. The proposed Florida College and De Patrick's Apartments and existing infill projects will create a more vibrant and pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. Existing opportunities for infill will only be realized if every parcel in the college district is brought on-line as a whole when the buildings are renovated along the back side of the site with.

Key Improvements

- Upgrade improvements
- Redesign the street corners and widening parking bay with on-street parking
- Infill retail in vacant
- Converting on street parking
- Encouraging pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential development
- Creating green areas with a tree canopy to improve air quality and the overall feel of the area. This projects an improved street character when the tree canopy and on-street parking and bike lanes.
- Creating pedestrian-friendly environments
- Adding pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as lighting, benches, water fountains, and on-street parking. Also provide accessible sidewalks and ramps and directional signage.

Beneficial Impacts:

- Increased spending generated by new infill activity
- Employment opportunities for local businesses
- Increased property values and increased tax revenue for the community
- Increased quality of life through improved access to pedestrian amenities
- Creating a sense of place and neighborhood identity
- Encouraging citizens to walk and bike to work and school

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT INTERSECTION

- INCREASED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACTIVITY
- INCREASED RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY
- PUBLIC SQUARE DESIGN DISTRICT RETAIL POINT OF PEDESTRIAN SCALE RETAIL DISTRICT

EXPAND PRIMARY RETAIL (TOP)

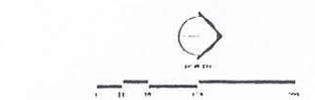
GAS LIGHT HOUSING DISTRICT

- ZERO LOT LINE, WHOLE PARCEL HOUSING

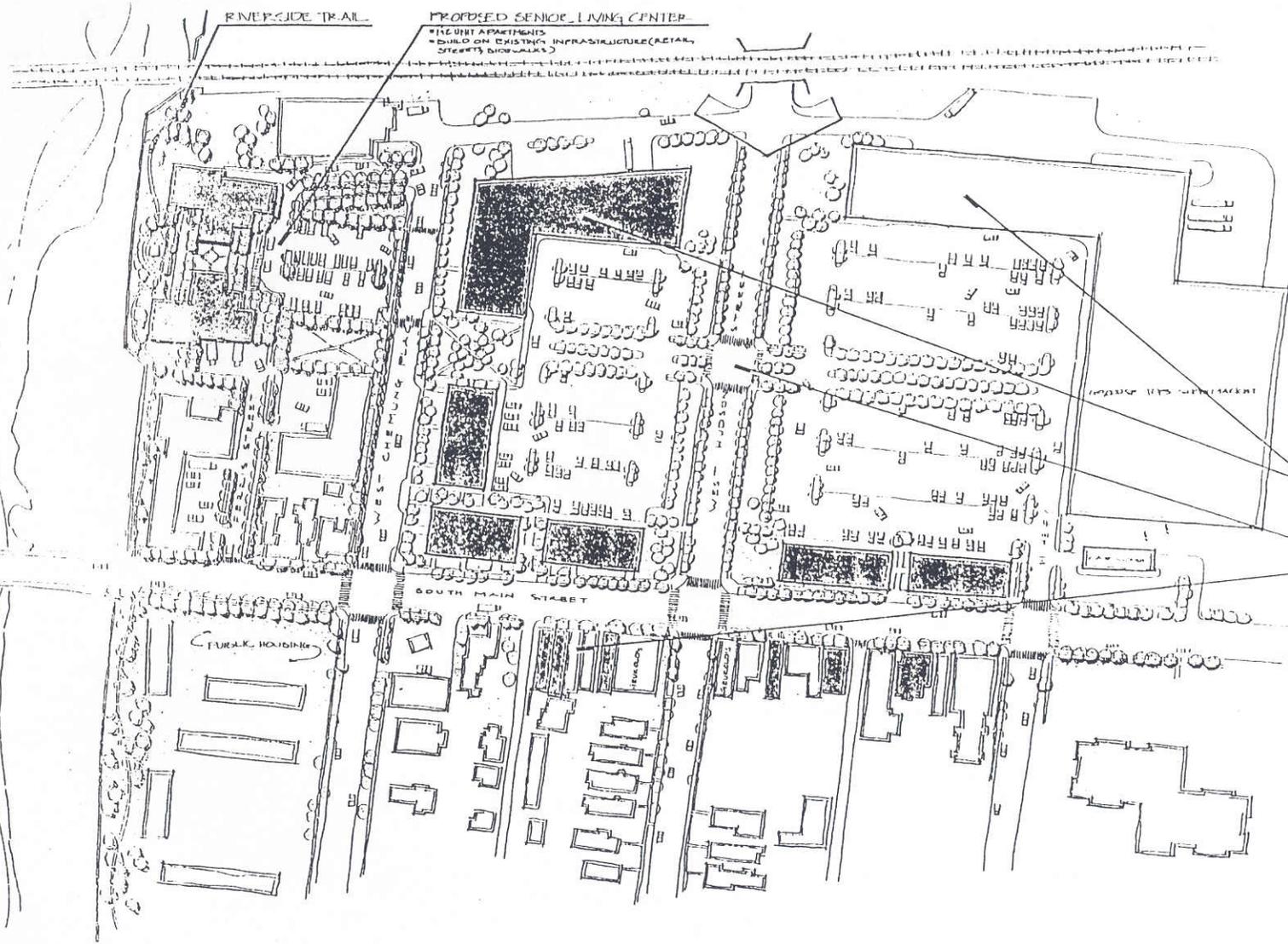
HISTORIC TRAIN STATION

- FLEXIBLE REUSE AS A RESTAURANT, OFFICE OR GALLERY

PARK



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
 CITY OF FLORIDA
 DISTRICT PLANS
 AREA 01 - North Main Street College Corridor
 PREPARED BY
 THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES



AREA B1
South Main Street Neighborhood Commercial Center

Purpose and Program
 South Main Street is an extension of the Central Business District. Today it functions primarily as a neighborhood commercial center. With the addition of a 100,000 square foot multi-unit apartment building and the addition of a 100,000 square foot multi-unit apartment building, the area will become a more vibrant and diverse neighborhood. A program of multi-unit apartment development in the area will help to address the housing needs of the community. The program will also help to address the needs of the community by providing a mix of housing types and units. The program will also help to address the needs of the community by providing a mix of housing types and units. The program will also help to address the needs of the community by providing a mix of housing types and units.

- Key Improvements**
- Encouraging a variety of housing types to address the needs of the community.
 - Encouraging a mix of housing types to address the needs of the community.
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 - Encouraging a mix of housing types to address the needs of the community.

- Beneficial Impacts**
- Increased neighborhood diversity.
 - Increased neighborhood diversity.

PROPOSED 100,000 SQ. FT. COMMERCIAL CENTER
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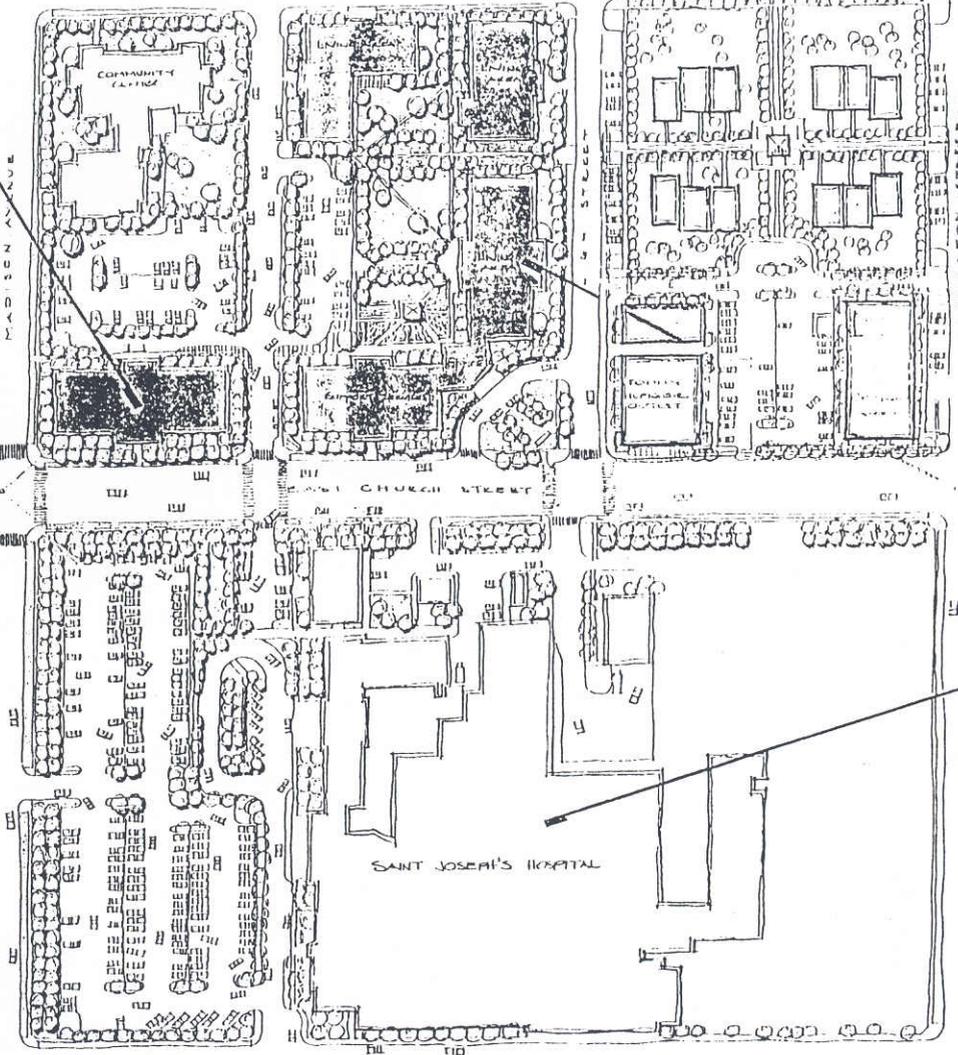
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 PROPOSED 100,000 SQ. FT. COMMERCIAL CENTER

EXPAND PHYSICIAN OFFICES

CITY OF ELIJAH A "GATEWAY"

- REINFORCE THE DISTRICT CENTER TO CUT THROUGH TRAFFIC
- ADD INFORMATION KIOSKS & DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
- CREATE A PLEASANT TRAVEL EXPERIENCE BY ADDING STREET TREES, CREATIVE DRIVE, ETC.



AREA #1 - Church Street Retirement & Housing Center

Purpose and Program

Church Street is the City's major retirement center. The center is a purpose-built facility that provides a high-quality retirement community for its residents. The center is a major employer in the district and provides a wide range of services to its residents. The center is a major asset to the district and provides a high-quality retirement community for its residents.

Notes

Notes that should be considered in the development of the center should be directed to the district center. The center is a major asset to the district and provides a high-quality retirement community for its residents.

- Key Improvements**
- Developing a multi-story building complex to house the center.
 - Reconfiguring parking spaces to improve flow.
 - Planting trees and landscaping to improve the center's appearance.
 - Improving the center's accessibility to public transit.
 - Providing a high-quality retirement community for its residents.
 - Adding a new building to house the center's administrative offices.

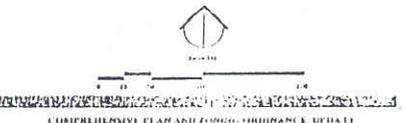
- Beneficial Impacts**
- Improved neighborhood and quality of life for its residents.
 - Addition of new jobs to the district's economy.
 - Improved accessibility to public transit.
 - Adding a new building to house the center's administrative offices.

PROPOSED PLACEMENT OF MEDICAL CENTER

- MEDICAL CENTER (PHYSICIAN OFFICES)
- MEDICAL CENTER (PHYSICIAN OFFICES)

MEDICAL CENTER

- MEDICAL CENTER
- MEDICAL CENTER
- MEDICAL CENTER



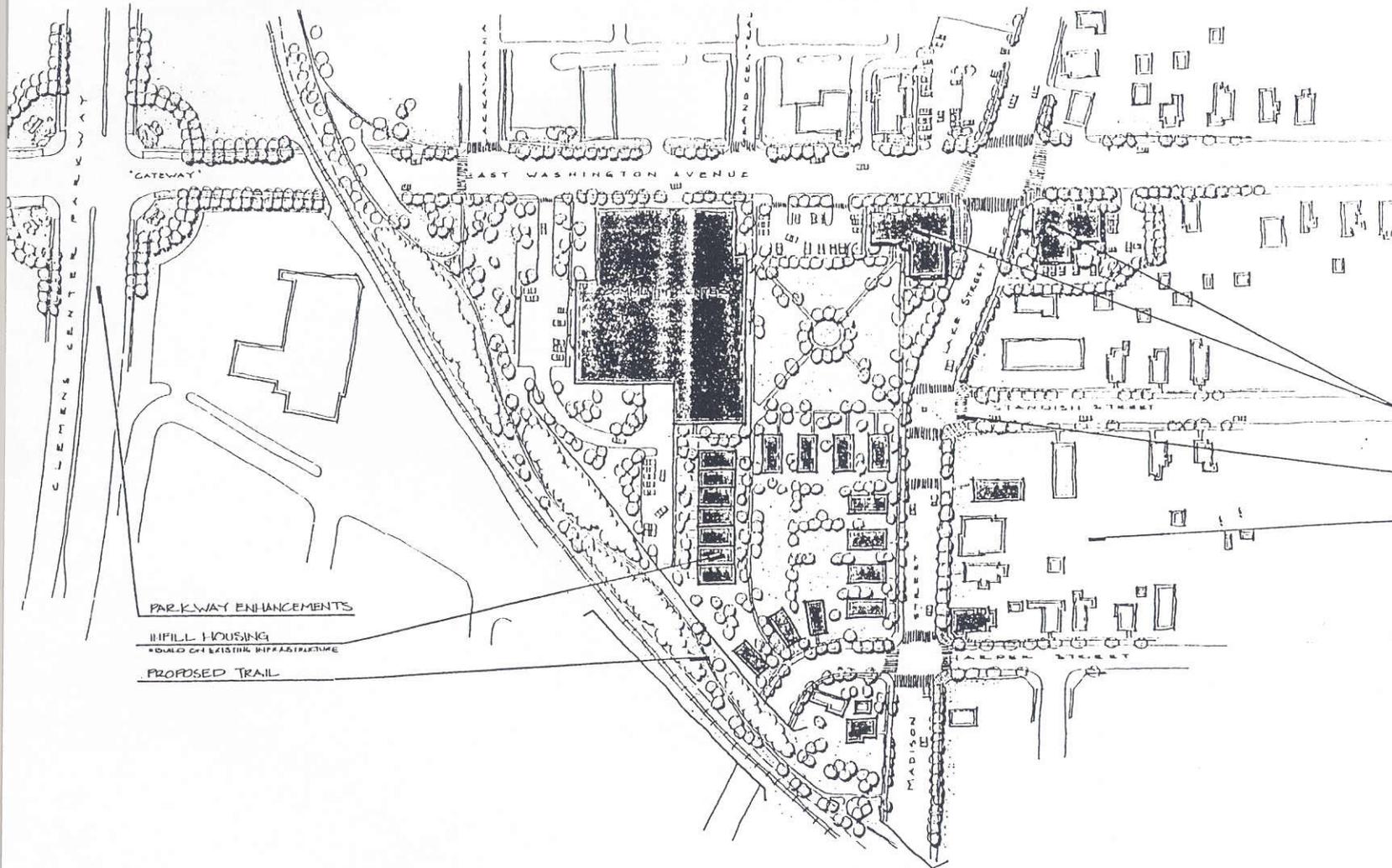
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

PREPARED BY

DISTRICT PLANS

AREA #1 - Church Street Retirement & Housing Center

THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES



WASHINGTON CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREA

AREA #3
Washington Center Neighborhood Commercial

Purpose and Program
The basic purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the development of the Washington Center Neighborhood Commercial Area. The plan is intended to guide the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives. The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.

- Key Implications**
- The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.
 - The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.
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- Beneficial Impact**
- The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.
 - The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.
 - The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.
 - The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development of the area in a way that is consistent with the City's overall goals and objectives.

- IN FILL HOUSING**
• TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AND THE CITY'S ZONING MAP.
• TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AND THE CITY'S ZONING MAP.
- EMPHASIS ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION**
• TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AND THE CITY'S ZONING MAP.
• TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AND THE CITY'S ZONING MAP.
- RE-DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC DISTRICT**

PARKWAY ENHANCEMENTS
INFILL HOUSING
• TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AND THE CITY'S ZONING MAP.
PROPOSED TRAIL



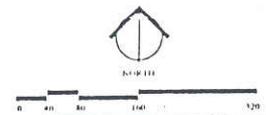
CITY OF SARATOGA
DISTRICT PLANS
AREA #3 - Washington Center Neighborhood Commercial
Prepared By
THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES
1000 WEST 10TH STREET, SUITE 100, SARATOGA, CA 95070
TEL: (408) 865-1111 FAX: (408) 865-1112

Purpose and Program

The area including Second Street and Union Pl. between Madison Ave. and East Church Street is an important area in the City of Elmira. It is an area of historic and architectural significance. The area is currently underutilized and the buildings are in poor condition. The proposed redevelopment of the area will provide a mix of residential, commercial and public uses. The program includes the following:

- Key Objectives:**
- Enhance existing historic architecture
 - Encourage high quality residential and commercial development
 - Encourage a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encourage a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encourage a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encourage a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encourage a mix of residential, commercial and public uses

- Expected Impacts:**
- Added high quality residential and commercial development
 - Revitalization of an important area of the City
 - Encouragement of historic preservation
 - Encouragement of a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encouragement of a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encouragement of a mix of residential, commercial and public uses
 - Encouragement of a mix of residential, commercial and public uses



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
 CITY OF ELMIRA, NY
 DISTRICT PLANS
 AREA #8 - Madison Avenue/Second Street Redevelopment
 Prepared by:
THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS AND PLANNERS P.C.
 SARATOGA SPRING, NY 12158-1154 • PH: 518-584-3300 • FAX: 518-584-3301
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PROJECT NAME	ACTIVITY	COST (000s)
Civic Center		
	1. Task Force	
	2. Feasibility study to determine program & size	\$50
	3. Public & private finance sources (commitments & grants)	\$10
	4. Solicit sponsor	\$10
	5. Architecture Plan - feasibility and cost estimates	\$35
	6. Property assembly	TBD
	7. Construction documents, bid and construct	
	8. Ownership and operation commitment	\$30
	9. Public infrastructure - demo buildings, street improvements, parking improvements and sewer and water.	
	10. Streetscape improvements	
North Main Street		
	1. Task Force	
	2. Detailed sub-district plan - clarify development, streetscape, developable lots, "Cappy" centerpiece	\$15
	3. Property owner consensus/commitments	\$5
	4. Funding strategy & source (i.e., grants)	\$10
	5. Public infrastructure improvements - parking lots, sidewalks, parks	
	6. Private sector investment - in-fill commitments	
	7. Target in-fill housing program	\$10/yr
South Main Street		
	1. Define and implement design standards	\$2.5
	2. Private sector assemble and develop property	
	3. Public land assembly - easement for public trail, access and promenade	TBD
	4. Public infrastructure - streetscape, trail, transit service, signs/kiosks, lighting	
	5. Organize South Main Street Merchant Group (BID) - coordinate all merchants - Tops and small stores. Coordinate service/retail transition in response to evolving retail trade.	\$30
	6. Solicit senior housing sponsor	\$5
East Church Street		
	1. Land assembly for expanded senior housing	
	2. Coordinate senior housing development with St. Joe's and 202 project sponsor. Solicit next project sponsor.	
	3. Madison and Church Street improvements - streetscape	

PROJECT NAME	ACTIVITY	COST (000s)
	signs, kiosks, bus shelters/transit service, landscaping, walkways to hospital.	
	4. Financing assistance - grants	\$10
	5. Public infrastructure	
Washington Ave.		
	1. Form Neighborhood/Business Task Force	
	2. Detailed development plan - integrate street closing, development pods/sites, sidewalks, retail, housing and community services. Determine costs estimates and funding strategy.	\$25
	3. Solicit project sponsors	\$10
	4. Public infrastructure - street closing, sidewalks, signs, lighting, landscaping, bus/transit service	
	5. Housing program - first time home buyers	
	6. Market development opportunities	\$5
	7. Land assembly	
Madison Ave./Second Street Redevelopment		
	1. Adopt Urban Renewal Plan	
	2. Detailed sub-district plan - integrates building structures to remain, new building lots, Second Street widening, sidewalks, landscaping, signage	\$19
	3. Market rendering, cost estimate, funding sources	\$6
	4. Public site control - large properties	TBD
	5. Solicit developer interest and investment	
	6. Demolition and site preparation	
	7. Public infrastructure improvements - streetscape, sewer and water	

4. Resources

Although it is true that the recommendations set forth in Chapter II will benefit the City's fiscal health as well as the quality of life, some may require additional funding to see them to fruition. In recent years, the City's Department of Business and Housing Development has aggressively sought and received assistance from federal and state governments to further the City's initiative. Although the Department of Business and Housing Development should be the main contact for funding sources, the following abbreviated list provides a general outline for others to reference.

Federal Programs

Department of Commerce, Economic Development Agency (EDA)

1. Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Infrastructure Development:
2. Economic Development Corporation:
3. Title IX:

USDA Rural Economic and Community Development (RECD)

1. Water and Waste Water Program
2. Community Facilities Program

HUD Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

1. Employment Services and Job Training Pilot and Demonstration Programs

State Programs

Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC)

1. JOBS Now
2. Empire State Development Fund
3. Regional Economic Development Partners Program (REDPP)
4. Job Development Authority (JDA)

Other ESDC Programs

1. Centers for Advanced Technology
2. Economic Development Zones
3. Entrepreneurial Assistance
4. Manufacturing Productivity Improvement

NYSDEC Voluntary Remediation Program

NYSDEC Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC)

NYSDOT ISTEA - Transportation Enhancement Program

NYSDOT - Industrial Access Program

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The City of Elmira produces a capital investment plan (CIP) annually. The purpose of the plan is to establish a framework for programming and financing those new or expanded public service facilities that are needed to accommodate projected growth and development and that constitute major capital improvements for which the City has fiscal responsibility. In order to guarantee some of the recommendations set forth in Chapter III the following should be incorporated into the City's CIP:

■ Recreation and Open Space -

- Purchase and install signs along roadways designated as a walking/bicycling trail on the Future Land Use Plan (Figure II-1).
- Continue annual maintenance program to improve and expand the City's parks, playgrounds and program activity.

■ Environmental Resources -

- Implement wellhead protection measures in coordination with the Regional Planning Council.

■ Transportation and Infrastructure -

- Where there are vast open parking lots, utilize fencing, trees, shrubbery and hedgerows to screen the interior from pedestrians.

APPENDIX A

EXISTING CONDITIONS

APPENDIX A - EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Settlement in the City of Elmira began as early as 1790 with the encampment of veterans from General Sullivan's campaign. In 1815, the Village of Newtown was incorporated and, in 1828, changed the name to Elmira.

Many of the Village's enterprises settled primarily along Water Street and in 1827, Isaac Baldwin built a dam across the river to power a flour mill at the foot of College Avenue. Many more entrepreneurs opened shop in Elmira as the City began to grow.

In 1833 the Chemung Canal opened, connecting Elmira to the Erie Canal via Seneca Lake. The railroads reached Elmira in 1849, with intersecting lines running north and south added in 1853. New markets became available for farm products, lumber, tobacco, and output from the mills and tanneries.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Elmira was selected as one of three Union Army Depots in New York State. Additionally, a Civil War prison camp was built on a 30 acre tract off Water Street. The local economy prospered by supplying the Army.

In 1864 Elmira became a city, with a population of 13,130. Elmira grew due to technological advances of the post-war period, and the advent of national markets overseas. By 1890, the City had a population of 30,893 with 539 manufacturers in more than 80 industries. The census listed an industrial output of \$8.8 million that year.

One distinct neighborhood which housed many of Elmira's residents was what has become known as the Near Westside. People of all social backgrounds, races and economic levels and occupations lived in this area. Those of modest means lived in one room structures, others rented rooms, and the middle class citizens erected fashionable homes. More than 80% of the homes in the Near Westside were built before 1914. The Near Westside neighborhood is listed on the national register of historic places and at the time of designation (1970s) it was the largest residential historic district in the country. .

Elmira continued to grow primarily as a manufacturing community as its population grew to its peak of 46,517 by 1960. Since 1960, Elmira's population has declined 28% to 33,724 in 1990 due primarily to outmigration from the area.

One reason contributing to the population decline is the result of a major catastrophic event. In 1972 Elmira experienced a flood attributable to Tropical Storm Agnes. Much of Elmira was covered in 5' to 14' of water and there was an estimated \$292 million worth of damage to residential homes, businesses and industries. The federal government stationed many different agencies in Elmira and federal and state funds came in by

the millions. The Elmira Urban Renewal Agency estimated that 45% of Elmira was affected by the flood, that 25,000 residents were distressed, and nearly 7,000 buildings were in the flood zone.

In October, 1972 the New York State Urban Development Corporation (NYS UDC) released \$71.2 million for an urban renewal plan for Elmira. The plan was to include a change of face for downtown, produce new housing units, create new industrial and commercial areas, and do away with dilapidated buildings along the riverfront. UDC also announced they would fund the building of a new north-south arterial.

As a result of this planning effort, Elmira now has the north-south Clemens Center Parkway which is scheduled for expansion, the Mark Twain Riverfront Park along the south side of Water Street, new housing developments, and the rehabilitation of some commercial areas. While most of the goals of the Urban Renewal Plan have been met, some never came to be. One plan called for closing the section of Main Street between Church and Water in order to create a pedestrian mall. Although a good deal of redevelopment was completed in this area, the street was never closed. Rather, buildings were rehabilitated and reoccupied by commercial businesses, and two relatively large parking garages were built within downtown.

In addition to Urban Renewal efforts, the City of Elmira has worked to rebuild the community. The City sponsored a number of community development programs to help Elmira grow and prosper. Following is a list highlighting some of these programs.

1974 - The City adopted the General Project Plan, Urban Renewal Plan for the New Elmira Project in the City of Elmira, NY. Goals of the project ranged from restoring and rehabilitating buildings damaged by the flood, providing sites for housing low, moderate, and middle income families, rejuvenating the Central Business District (CBD), and more. The outcome was a proposed Land Use Plan that helped to direct appropriate forms of development.

1977 - Chemung County Economic Study, Part I, Background & Initial Recommendations report was prepared to provide a descriptive background for further detailed analysis of possible actions and to indicate the overriding conditions that must be addressed before the County could realize truly successful activity.

1981 - The Historic Near Westside book inventory was published in order to log the homes in the area including describing their architectural style, floor plan, and location.

1989 - The City, in responding to a 1985 study, established a Downtown Development District representing an innovative organizing and financing mechanism to enhance business, cultural and economic activity in the downtown. Results of these efforts are described in the Elmira Downtown Development District Plan. The Elmira Downtown Development Inc. was established as the managing agency.

1991 - Elmira Downtown Development sponsored a report that addresses the retail and office opportunities for Downtown Elmira. The report, entitled Downtown Elmira Retail/Office Space Analysis, Part I -

Background Information Report, Part II - Visions & Goals, Part III - Retail Recruitment Plan, and an Executive Summary, gives detailed facts on the condition of downtown Elmira.

1993 - Elmira Corridor, Economic Impact Analysis & Redevelopment Plan was developed to help evaluate the development potential, opportunities, and needs resulting from the planned extension of the Elmira Arterial Highway within a defined study area.

1994 - Chemung County Transit System Transit Development Plan Update was prepared with funding from the Federal Transit Administration to examine the service levels and efficiency of the Chemung County Transit System. The purpose of the Plan was to allow transit systems and agencies involved in transit issues to reevaluate transit's purpose, investigate alternative revenue sources, and to implement budget control strategies.

1994 - Transportation Planning & Implementation for the 21st Century is a long range plan that forms the basis for completing essential elements of the Regional Transportation Network.

1994 - The Elmira school system supported a study entitled Vision 2004, Elmira City School District which helped redefine the system for the next century. Based on current and projected community realities, new standards for student excellence were developed during the plan's initial implementation phase.

1994 - A Status Update on Eldridge Park was developed by the City which included recommendations for renovating the park to include recreational fields, renovating the dance hall, and beginning a Carousel Farm and Craft Market.

1995 - An Engineering Study for Centertown and Easttown Parking Garages was prepared which highlighted repairs that are necessary for complete restoration.

1995 - Preliminary Master Plan for Mark Twain Golf Course was prepared and lists project construction costs for full rehabilitation of the publicly owned golf course.

1995 - The City sponsored a Survey and Needs Assessment of the City Park System which highlights a park-by-park assessment of needs with estimated values.

1995 - Because of the age of the City's 48 year old swimming pool, a Brand Park Pool study was prepared by Sear-Brown. The study lists construction costs for rehabilitating the facility.

1995 - Development Program 1996 Annual Update

1995 - The City prepared an Emergency Flood Operations Plan for the City of Elmira to document the duties of city staff and officials in the event of a flood.

1995 - Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board (STCRPDB) prepares an annual Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) for the counties of Chemung, Stueben, and Schyler. The OEDP is a comprehensive planning approach for the coordinated growth and development of their municipalities.

1995 - The Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board (STCRPDB) Areawide Action Plan, 1995-96 is a human needs assessment for the STC region. The Plan examines the needs of the younger working population by offering suitable jobs so that they remain in the region.

1995 - The City of Elmira, Fiscal Overview provides an indepth look at the present and future economic climate for the City. The Overview lists issues and opportunities, describes the city administration, examines the fiscal considerations, and lists demographic and leading economic indicators.

1995 - The City prepared a Consolidated Plan which examines housing needs and economic opportunities for low income people. The purpose of the Plan is intended to offer local municipalities a better chance to shape community development programs and the HOME Investment Program into effective, coordinated neighborhood development strategies to revitalize the community.

1995 - The DRAFT Proposed Capital Improvement Program 1996 - 2000 sets to establish the needs of the physical development and improvement of the community. The document lists capital expenditures for the upcoming 12 months as well as the next four budget years.

B. EXISTING LAND USE & ZONING

1. Generalized Land Use

The City of Elmira has developed very traditional land use patterns and when studying the City, it is natural to divide it into four quadrants centered around the Central Business District (CBD). The quadrants can generally be described as northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. The natural boundaries between these areas are formed by a north-south railline and the Chemung River that flows east-west. The center of the city, or CBD, can be described as the area surrounding the point at which Main Street and the Clemens Center Parkway cross over the river.

Leading away from the CBD, one will find different uses within each of the four quadrants. Examining each of these quadrants can lend insight as to the past development patterns of the city and also point out conflicting uses. Figure 1, LAND USE - CITY OF ELMIRA illustrates existing development patterns of the City.

2. Downtown & Commercial Districts

In the 1830s and 40s Elmira became connected to new markets via waterways and rail transportation. Manufacturing and retail establishments were built along Water Street and the Chemung River. Today the area is known as the Central Business District (CBD).

The CBD generally extends from Main Street west to Columbia Street and from Main Street east to Madison Street on the north side of the River. South of the river, the business district extends along Main Street in a linear fashion towards Pennsylvania Avenue. Within the CBD the primary land uses are commercial and community service buildings such as the post office and City Hall with a slight mix of recreational use. Traditionally, the CBD was the retail center of Elmira. Recent expansions within the district have moved away from this trend as retail businesses are being replaced with businesses that generate people (offices). Secondary to this activity is the existence of coffee shops and small lunch time restaurants to support downtown workers.

Recently, Elmira Downtown Development has helped attract or expand businesses within the CBD; specifically within a state designated Economic Development Zone (EDZ). Many of these businesses are retail and/or banking/financing in nature. For more detailed information on the CBD, please refer to Section E - Downtown and Commercial Districts.

In addition to attracting new businesses, Elmira Downtown Development is sponsoring a study of the upper floors in the downtown. The study will examine each building and document style, rooms, elevators, stairwells, etc. The results will form a basis for adaptive reuse of the largely vacant upper floors in the downtown area.

3. Other Commercial Districts

There is a relatively large number of commercial establishments situated along the northern end of College Avenue near the border with Elmira Heights. There is a mix of uses in this area including some retail shops, restaurants/bars, and professional offices. This area directly leads into the “Miracle Mile” which is a four lane road in Elmira Heights that is a primary area of commercial activity in the area.

Other commercial areas include portions of the city east of Eldridge Park, east of Sullivan Street near the industrial park, land along the Clemens Center Parkway, and parcels centered around the intersection of Hoffman and Church Street. These are the primary "pockets" of commercial activity. It is also important to note that there are many scattered commercial parcels throughout the entire city. These areas should be examined to determine if they are potentially conflicting with the surrounding land uses. Specific areas include the Near Westside Historic District where older residential homes are being subdivided for commercial businesses and infilling among residential units.

4. Industrial Development

The majority of Elmira's industrial land is located in the northeast quadrant of the City immediately adjacent to Sullivan Street. Within this area there are manufacturing facilities, warehouses and storage, and distribution facilities. Another primary area of activity is situated along the Clemens Center Parkway primarily south of the river. This area has historically been one of Elmira's manufacturing area as this is where American LaFrance was located. There are additional scattering of industrial use within the downtown area and many of these parcels are surrounded by commercial uses. Generally, nearly all of Elmira's industrial land is east of the north-south railroad.

5. Residential Uses/Neighborhoods

As with many American cities, residential land use in Elmira generally surrounds CBD. The majority residential land use in Elmira is situated in the northwest, southwest, and southeast quadrants of the City. Many of these homes are single and multi-family homes aligned along a gridlike street pattern. Although the northeast quadrant of Elmira has some residential uses, commercial and industrial are more common.

Because of the mix of land use in the northeast quadrant, conflicts may be more common as the neighborhoods become increasingly isolated. Currently, there are many pockets of dilapidated structures within these neighborhoods which may be a result of incompatible land use throughout the quadrant. Measures should be adopted that can protect these neighborhoods from further deterioration.

A second area that may have conflicting land uses is in the vicinity of the Historic Near Westside along W. Church, W. Gray and W. Water Streets. The parcels along these streets are a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Many of the commercial uses are a result of the conversion of large residential structures to service commercial uses such as professional offices, real estate offices, etc. Land use within this area should be carefully examined to eliminate conflicts between continued conversion of homes to commercial uses and residential properties.

An additional issue within the Historic Near Westside is the availability of parking. Many of the streets are narrow making the enforcement of odd/even parking difficult due to the lack of availability. It is becoming increasingly difficult to support businesses and apartment buildings in this area because there is very little space for off street parking.

6. Vacant and Underutilized Properties

Vacant properties throughout the City are in four major land use categories and can be found throughout. Vacant properties were analyzed using the tax parcel information provided by the City of Elmira Assessor's office. Following is a summary of properties.

- *Industrial Vacancies* - The steady decline in manufacturing in the City of Elmira has resulted in partially and totally vacant industrial buildings throughout the City. These buildings can be classified as “brownfields”, or abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial facilities. Additionally, there is vacant land available in the form of “greenfields” which are areas containing complete infrastructure but no development has ever taken place.

There are a number of industrial sites scattered throughout the City with the majority being at the north and south ends of the Clemens Center Parkway. Specifically, there are large vacant parcels just off of Grand Central Avenue near the north end of the Parkway, adjacent to the railyard just south of Eldridge Park, just off of Church Street on the north side of Kennedy Valve, at the intersection of the Clemens Center Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue, and in the vicinity of Erie Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

The majority of greenfield industrial space can be found east of Sullivan Street along Industrial Park Boulevard. Although this industrial park is in an ideal location for Elmira in that it has relatively easy access to Route 17, it does create problems with truck traffic. There is no convenient access to the industrial park for trucks, therefore trucks frequently drive through local neighborhood streets thus causing advanced deterioration of streets and creating a safety hazard.

- *Commercial Vacancies* - There are a number of commercial vacancies located throughout the City; the majority of which are within the downtown area east of the Clemens Center Parkway. There is a pocket of commercial vacancies situated along E. Clinton Street adjacent to Ernie Davis Jr. High. and just south

of this area near the intersection of Church Street and Madison Avenue. This is one of the City's most distressed areas and one of the "gateways" coming into the City.

There are some larger parcels of vacant commercial space including the land that is currently being used as the Huck Finn Ballpark, the area around the Fays Plaza just off of Miller Street, and portions of the commercial plaza where Artistic Greeting is located.

Finally, there are additional scattered vacant parcels most of which are directly adjacent to vacant industrial land.

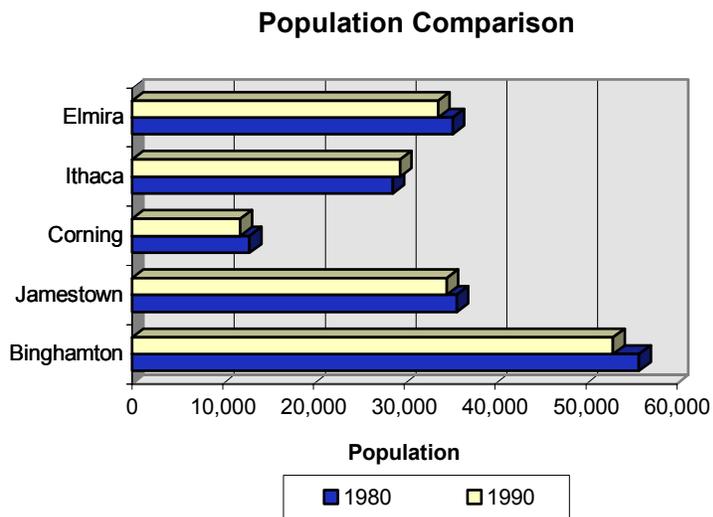
- *Residential Vacancies* - Whereas the vacant industrial and commercial areas are a major concern in the redevelopment of Elmira, other land which has never been developed provides another kind of opportunity. Alternatively, vacant lands can be reserved for future use when the development potential has reached its highest and best use.

The majority of these areas are greenfield providing excellent opportunities to potentially develop this land in accordance with its surroundings. The largest residential tracts of vacant land occur adjacent to Elmira Free Academy, the Elmira Correctional Facility, and Woodlawn Cemetery. Other smaller areas are scattered throughout and include a parcel directly across from the commercially zoned Huck Finn Ballfield, some parcels within the industrial park, a parcel of land along the Chemung River just east of the western city boundary, and some vacancies on the north side of Church Street just east of Madison Avenue.

C. DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC TRENDS

1. Population

The 1990 population of 33,724 is 4.5 % less than the 1980 population of 35,327 and 28% less than its 1960 peak. In contrast, Chemung County’s population decreased 2.5% from 1980 to 1990. The decline in Elmira’s population is largely attributable to outmigration from the area.



In comparison to other Southern Tier Communities, Elmira is smaller than Binghamton and roughly the same size as Jamestown. As the chart above illustrates, each southern tier city experienced the same phenomena as Elmira and lost population between 1980 and 1990. Ithaca, in Tompkins County, is the exception as it gained 2.82% population during the same time period.

The median age in Elmira increased from 28.5 to 30.5 during the 1980s. The majority of the population (44.8%) is between the ages of 25 and 64; young adults (ages 15-24) and children (ages 5-14) represent 17.9% and 13.9% of the total population respectively. The number of young adults in the City has declined considerably, 27.4% since 1980. Although national trends indicate an increase in the elderly population, the number of individuals over age 65 in the City of Elmira actually decreased somewhat (-2.5%). It is important to note that the population at the Elmira Reformatory is included in these figures. When accounted for separately, the prison population accounts for roughly 5% of the total population with a median age of 23.4 years.

Families below poverty is a high 22.2%, based on the 1990 Census. This rate is nearly double the county poverty rate. Among female headed households in Elmira, the poverty rate is considerably higher and

nearly two-thirds of children residing in a single parent household are in poverty. In contrast to these findings, 13.8% of elderly persons, age 65 and over, are below poverty level.

2. Income Characteristics

The City has a high concentration of low income persons. 1990 Census data indicates 35.9 percent of the City population is low income (income less than 50% of the MSA median) and 19.1 percent have extremely low incomes (earning less than 30% of the MSA median).

The Town of Southport and Chemung County drawn a disproportionate share of the community's more wealthy residents. The Town of Southport's median household income is 51.1% higher than the City of Elmira and Chemung County's median household income is 40.6% higher. The following table illustrates this point:

Table 1
Income Comparison
1980 and 1990
In Constant 1991 Dollars

	Median Household Income			Per Capita Income		
	1980	1990	% Change	1980	1990	% Change
City of Elmira	\$21,470	\$20,410	-4.9%	\$9,270	\$10,440	12.6%
Town of Southport	\$26,100	\$30,850	18.2%	\$14,830	\$13,410	-9.6%
Chemung County	\$28,540	\$28,710	0.6%	\$13,960	\$16,530	18.4%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census

3. Economic base

The City of Elmira traditionally has had a large blue collar workforce, employed in durable goods and manufacturing. With the changing national economy, the area suffered economic turmoil accompanying the shift from manufacturing to service industries.

Employment growth slowed significantly during the early 1980s due the closing of major manufacturing plants. This list includes American LaFrance, Moore Business Forms, and Anchor Glass. According to the NYS Department of Economic Development, between 1980 and 1986, Elmira lost nearly 40% of its manufacturing base over six years, as measured by the number of jobs.¹ However, due to company expansion, Elmira regained nearly half its loss and increased manufacturing jobs by 2,200 from 1986 to 1989. In addition, the City of Elmira and Chemung County have been somewhat successful in attracting and expanding small to medium sized companies over the past few years.

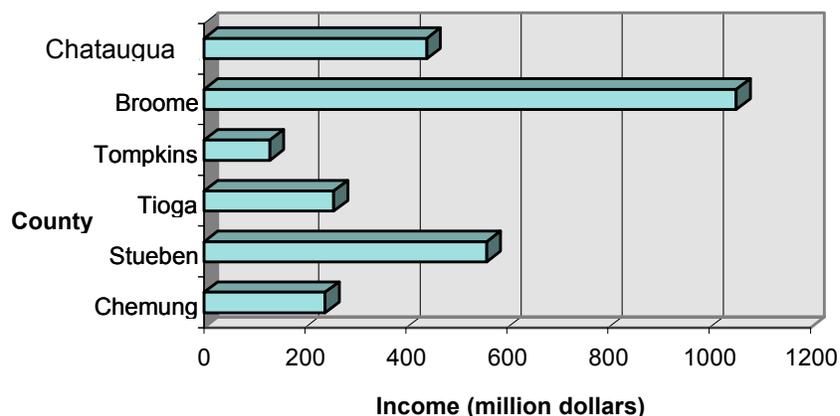
¹ Figures taken from the City of Elmira Consolidated Plan, July 1995.

Some of the accomplishments over the past five years include:

- Expansion of Trayer Products by 13,000 - 17,000 SF;
- Expansion of Hilliard Corporation by 28,000 sq. ft. which resulted in an increase of jobs;
- 750 new manufacturing jobs at Toshiba (although located outside of the City limits, financial assistance was provided by the City to attract them to the area);
- 400 new jobs and building expansion by Artistic Greetings, a check printing company;
- The new construction of Top's Friendly Market Superstore on West Hudson Street; and
- New construction of a Wegmans supermarket chain on Elmira's northeast side.

Several new stores have opened downtown and the City has demolished the Trinity Foundry to prepare land for industrial/manufacturing development.

Manufacturing Labor and Proprietor's Income 1990



To gain additional perspective on the contribution of the manufacturing industry to the region, the above chart compares Chemung County's labor and proprietor's income to other counties in the Southern Tier. These figures give an indication of the total amount of income that is received in an area from manufacturing. As the chart indicates, Chemung County receives roughly the same amount of income as Tioga County and it is much lower than Broome, Steuben and Chataqua Counties. Two anomalies within this chart exist: (1) Broome Counties figure is high due to the influence of IBM and (2) Tompkins County is low because much of the county is influence by Cornell University and Ithaca College. Additionally, Steuben County is higher than Chemung due to the influence of Corning, Inc. Nonetheless, much of Chemung County's history is based on manufacturing, yet income received from this sector is lower than other Southern Tier counties.

To help create a competitive environment, Elmira adopted a somewhat unique approach towards economic development where the overall strategy is designed to strengthen, build, and increase its current base. Rather than competing with adjacent towns and villages for commercial expansion, the City has encouraged and assisted in locating development with the County, regardless of its specific site location. The theory being that Elmira as a whole will benefit from business expansion. Thus, Elmira actively participates in several economic development strategies including:

- Southern Tier Economic Growth, Inc. (STEG)* - the primary economic development agency in Chemung County.
- Chemung County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA)* - a public benefit corporation which is administered by STEG.
- Elmira Downtown Development (EDD)* - which assists in business start-ups, relocation, expansion, and the renovation of vacant buildings. EDD is also a public benefit corporation and receives funding from a special district tax placed on local business.
- The Elmira Urban Renewal Agency (EURA)* - is the administrative agency for the Community Development Block Program.
- The Chemung County Chamber of Commerce* - is the County's official Tourism Promotion Agency.

Economic Development Zone:

A New York State Economic Development Zone (EDZ) exists in Elmira and encompasses a two square mile area. Businesses within this zone are eligible for special State financial opportunities and tax incentives. The EDZ is located primarily within the City although some portions of Southport and Horseheads area also included. According to Southern Tier Economic Growth, as of 1996 there were 75 certified businesses within the EDZ contributing 2,600 employees to a total EDZ workforce of 3,086 as of December 1994. The projected investment within the EDZ was \$103.2 million and the actual recorded investment was \$111.8 million.

These numbers are much higher when compared to the other 12 Economic Development Zones in New York State. On average, there are 45 certified businesses within each zone contributing 1,319 employees. The average number of employed persons as of December 1994 was 1,716. The projected investment is \$46.8 million and the actual investment is \$57.4 million. Elmira's recorded investment is 51% higher than the average recorded investment for the other 12 Economic Development Zones.

Labor Force:

Elmira's civilian labor force consists of individuals aged 16 and older who are employed or looking for work. As of 1995, The City's labor force totaled 13,800. This accounts for over half of the eligible working population.

Unemployment in Elmira has been high, with a rate of 11.0% in the City compared with 7.3% in Chemung County in 1990. In 1994 the NYS Department of Labor reported that Elmira's unemployment rate was 5.9%, roughly half of the rate in 1990. In comparison, the unemployment rate in 1994 was 6.9% in NYS, 5.5% in Chemung County.

More than one-third of Elmira residents who are employed work in the service sector, including 1,652 in health services (13.2%) and 1,179 in educational services (9.4%). Other areas of high employment include retail trade (18.9%) and public administration (8.3%). Overall, service employment has increased but not at a rate fast enough to compensate for the loss of manufacturing jobs. Table 2 - EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY summarizes job growth by industrial sector from 1980 to 1990. Elmira saw substantial growth in construction, communications and utilities, finance insurance and real estate, business repair services, and public administration. In contrast, there were significant losses in manufacturing, transportation, wholesale trade, and personal, entertainment, and recreation.

Table 2
Employment by Industry
City of Elmira

	1980		1990		Percent Change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Total employed workers	12,394		12,530		1.1%
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	32	0.3%	76	0.6%	137.5%
Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	364	2.9%	539	4.3%	48.1%
Manufacturing	3,174	25.6%	2,365	18.9%	-25.5%
Nondurable	801	6.5%	626	5.0%	-21.8%
Durable	2,373	19.1%	1,739	13.9%	-26.7%
Transportation	419	3.4%	374	3.0%	-10.7%
Communications, public utilize	230	1.9%	287	2.3%	24.8%
Wholesale trade	581	4.7%	482	3.8%	-17.0%
Retail trade	2,183	17.6%	2,363	18.9%	8.2%
FIRE (*)	405	3.3%	500	4.0%	23.5%
Services	4,250	34.3%	4,501	35.9%	5.9%
Business and repair services	274	2.2%	544	4.3%	98.5%
Personal, entertainment, recreation	517	4.2%	401	3.2%	-22.4%
Health services	1,591	12.8%	1,652	13.2%	3.8%
Educational services	1,281	10.3%	1,179	9.4%	-8.0%
Other professional services	587	4.7%	725	5.8%	23.5%
Public administration	756	6.1%	1,043	8.3%	38.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the
Census

FIRE = Fire, Insurance, Real
Estate.

4. City Budget and Financing Limitations

The City functions in a very difficult and constraining local economic climate. Like most urban cities in the Northeast, Elmira has experienced an eroding tax base, out migration of the middle and upper income residents, a declining retail and industrial base resulting in the general decline of the quality of life. It is estimated that 31.8 percent of the value of the City's tax assessment base is fully and partially tax exempt. The City's present annual debt service payment is approximately \$683,425.

Since 1991, the City's tax rate has changed from \$86.60 to \$104.88 per \$1,000 AV, an increase of 21 percent over six years. The City's tax rate since 1990 include:

Year	Rate per \$1,000 AV	% Change
1990	\$86.6	
1991	\$101.4	17.1%
1992	\$108.4	6.9%
1993	\$114.7	5.8%
1994	\$118.1	2.9%
1995	\$104.9	-11.2%

As the table above indicates, the City has seen a decrease in the tax rate from 1994 to 1995 of 11%. Currently, the City has completed its first revaluation since 1960 which has increased the revenue the City receives from the property tax. Additionally, the City Council recently rejected the Homestead Act, which would have instituted a two-tiered property tax system separating residents and businesses. Finally, the City plans to implement another tax cut in 1996.

Although the City has administered a tax cut in the last two years (1995 and 1996), it was forced to increase property tax rates from 1990 to 1994. This was especially true in 1991 when the City lost a substantial amount of State aid. These tax rates create a apparent obstacle for economic attractiveness that must be carefully managed. As will be discussed in greater detail below, Elmira's place in the regional economy has changed in the past twenty years. As the city attempts to attract new business, it must consider how its assets and liabilities compare to those of regional competitors. With a tax rate of 3.21% in 1992, the City of Elmira had the highest combined tax rate in the county. The Town of Southport had a tax rate of 1.78%. The majority of towns in Chemung County had a tax rate between 1.25 and 2.0%.

Tax rate and tax burden are not synonymous, of course. While the tax rate in Elmira is the highest in the county, Elmira also has relatively low property values. When the two are combined, the tax burden on Elmira residents is more comparable with that of other communities in Chemung County. In fact, the tax bill for the median housing costs in Chemung County (as reported in 1990) is 43% less than the median housing costs of nearby Tompkins County.

Additionally, the tax rate needn't be an impediment to industrial recruitment if the City and County are willing to promote aggressive tax reductions for business. The City's Economic Development Zone status provides the City with a powerful vehicle for reducing cost for businesses locating within the zone. Effective marketing of the zone and the benefits that zone status permits will significantly reduce the negative impact of relatively high tax rates.

D. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

1. Description of Housing Market²

The 1990 Census indicates there are 13,301 units in the City broken down to include 5,972 owner occupied (44.9%), 6,450 renter occupied (48.5%), and 877 vacant units (6.6%). These figures represent a 2.8% decline in housing units since 1980. During the same period, Chemung County experienced a 1.6% increase in the number of housing units. There has been minimal change in the housing stock since 1980, although there are fewer single-family and more multi-family dwellings. Currently, single-family homes account for 48.3% of housing units, and multi-family account for 23.3%. It is the City's assessment that the reduction in single family residences is due to conversion of multiple units.

Table 3
Comparison of Housing Statistics
1990

City	Housing Units	Owner Occupied	% Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	% Renter Occupied	Vacant	% Vacant
Elmira	13,301	5,972	44.9%	6,450	48.5%	877	6.6%
Binghamton	24,626	10,046	40.8%	12,571	51.0%	2,009	8.2%
Jamestown	15,461	7,402	47.9%	6,867	44.4%	1,192	7.7%
Corning	5,585	2,483	44.5%	2,437	43.6%	305	5.5%
Ithaca	10,075	2,778	27.6%	6,839	67.9%	458	4.5%
Chemung Co.	37,290	24,095	68.3%	11,180	31.7%		
NYS	7,226,891	3,464,436	52.2%	3,174,886	47.8%		
USA	102,263,678	59,024,811	64.2%	32,922,599	35.8%		

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Census

When comparing Elmira to other southern tier communities, Table 3 shows that it has the third highest number of housing units and second highest percentage of owner occupied units. Binghamton, which has nearly double the amount of housing units than Elmira, has a lower owner occupied housing rate. And, only Jamestown has a higher owner-occupancy rate. The same distribution carries over to renter occupied housing unit category. The only exception is Ithaca which is where Cornell University and Ithaca College are located thereby inflating the renter occupancy rate.

Almost two-thirds of Elmira's housing stock was built prior to 1940. Table 4 - AGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURE, gives the percentage of housing units built during different time periods. The chart following the table shows the percentage of housing units built prior to 1940. Over 65% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1940 with census tracts 6 and 7 containing the highest proportion with 91.4% and 98.9% respectively. These tracts are located on the north side of the river and primarily cover the downtown area.

Most substandard housing in the City is concentrated in census tracts 7, 8, 10 in the northeastern and central sections of the City. This is the City's most distressed and contains a very high concentration of families with extremely low income (i.e., with incomes less than 30% of the median family income of the Elmira MSA). This area also includes several of the areas assisted housing projects. The demographic breakdown of this area includes 2,741 households of which 60% were constructed prior to 1939. Census tract 7 had 98.9% of its households constructed prior to 1939, tract 8 had 28%, and tract 10 had 53.8% constructed prior to the same time frame.

The city's northeastern neighborhoods (census tracts 1, 2, and 6) possesses many of the same characteristics as the East-Central neighborhoods. Each of the tracts has approximately 25% of its families with extremely low income and nearly half of its families with low income (i.e., with incomes less than 50% of the MSA median)

² Characteristics taken from the City of Elmira, NY Consolidated Plan, 1995.

2. Assisted Housing

There are a total of five different public housing projects within Elmira, each reaching out and assisting a broad range of residents. Each is operated by the Elmira Housing Authority and include a total of 857 units, including 355 in projects for the Elderly.

Following is a table summarizing public housing in Elmira:

Project Description	Location	Bedroom Size	# Units
George Bragg Towers Section 202 Elderly	Census Tract 8, adjacent to CBD	Efficiency	66
		1 BR	80
Ed Flannery Apts. Section 202 Elderly	Census Tract 10, south-central	1 BR	208
		2 BR	1
Hathorn Court State subsidized 250 rowhouses and 24 duplexes	Census Tract 2, north-central	1 BR	24
		2 BR	176
		3 BR	62
		4 BR	10
		5 BR	2
Hoffman Plaza Federally subsidized elderly/low income family	Census Tract 4, northwest	1 BR	20
		2 BR	88
		3+ BR	36
Jones Court State-subsidized	Census Tract 8, northeast	1 BR	9
		2 BR	48
		3 BR	21
		4 BR	6

Other Assisted Housing:

Eastgate: This project contains 102 units, 30 of which are specifically allocated to elderly or disabled individuals who pay no more than 30% of their income for housing costs.

Dewittsburg: This is a low income project with 212 units built under the Section 8 program. There are some vacancies in this project.

Riverview north and south: These are Elmira's newest Section 8 housing units and they are split between two census tracts. There are 42 units on Madison Avenue and 86 units on West Chemung Place. There is a long waiting list for these units and it is reported that the average wait is three to five years.

St. Joseph's Apartments: Completed in 1994 this project involved redeveloping a site into 66 units for the elderly and disabled. The City approved a Low Income Tax Credit for this project and many of its residents are of low and moderate income levels. There is a one year waiting list for these apartments.

St. Patrick's Apartments: This project involved rehabilitating an old parochial school for elderly and disabled individuals. Some of the units are in the Section 8 program and 9 are set aside for persons with income at or below 60% of the median income for Elmira. There is a waiting list of one year for this project.

In addition to the rental units described above, Elmira has two projects to encourage homeownership to low income families:

Parker I Subdivision: This subdivision has 42 single family owner occupied homes built in the late 1970s. The program provides qualifying families with reduce rate mortgages with subsidies from the federal government for the purchase of homes.

Powell Project: Constructed in 1990 in the southeast portion of the City, this project contains then units of single family housing in five townhouses. The program provides downpayment assistance to eligible low and moderate income property owners. Under the program, owners must occupy the home for no less than 10 years.

Special Needs Housing:

In addition to providing assisted housing to low income persons and families, the City of Elmira has several organizations which offer facilities and services for persons with special housing needs. These include:

Program/House	Operator	Program Assistance	Size
Lormore House	Salvation Army	Assistance for men with drug addiction; men required to attend GED classes	12 people
Gateways Community Residence Program	Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier	Provides case management and housing services to the mentally ill.	scattered sites with 50 bed capacity; 14 beds in a group home; 38 participants in a supportive housing program.
Association for Retarded Citizens	Chemung Co. ARC	Operates Intermediate Care Facilities 24 hours a day; Help promote personal and social growth in the community.	scattered sites with a total capacity for 58 residents.
United Cerebral Palsy	UCP	Offers residence for individuals	15 residents
Elmira Glove House	Elmira Glove House, Inc.	Schooling and group counseling for boys and girls aged 10 through 18; prepared students for self-sufficiency; provides discharge and aftercare services.	38 residences at four locations.

3. Housing Affordability

Housing costs in Elmira are much lower than other parts of New York State. In a survey of 179 metropolitan areas conducted by the Associated Press, Elmira placed third among the most affordable housing markets in the U.S. Nevertheless, the median value of owner-occupied housing in the City increased by nearly 48% from 1980 to 1990, from \$28,000 to \$42,400 with more dramatic increases in census tracts 7 and 5. The rate of increase is less than the median household income for the City for the same period.

Table 5
City of Elmira

Housing Costs by Census Tract

	Median Gross Rent			Median Housing Value		
	1980	1990	% Change	1980	1990	% Change
City Total	\$188	\$343	82.4%	\$28,600	\$42,400	48.3%
CT 1	\$231	\$407	76.2%	\$22,600	\$33,800	49.6%
CT 2	\$163	\$281	72.4%	\$29,300	\$44,100	50.5%
CT 4	\$178	\$302	69.7%	\$33,900	\$54,100	59.6%
CT 5	\$220	\$398	80.9%	\$37,700	\$62,700	66.3%
CT 6	\$190	\$366	92.6%	\$27,500	\$34,700	26.2%
CT 7	\$178	\$287	61.2%	\$29,000	\$47,100	62.4%
CT 8	\$136	\$240	76.5%	\$21,900	\$30,200	37.9%
CT 9	\$210	\$372	77.1%	\$26,900	\$40,000	48.7%
CT 10	\$178	\$318	78.7%	\$25,000	\$37,100	48.4%
CT 11	\$215	\$399	85.6%	\$27,400	\$42,200	54.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The median gross rent, including utilities, has increased 82% from 1980 to 1990, from \$188 to \$343. These rising housing costs exceed income growth of Elmira and could limit the efforts of Elmira citizens to find affordable housing.

In July 1995, the City of Elmira prepared a Consolidated Plan in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The primary purpose of the plan is to coordinate the Community Development Block Group (CDBG) program and the HOME Investment Partnership Program. The plan assesses housing and community development needs in the City and sets goals and objectives to meet those needs. The plan examined many aspects of the City including demographic trends, economic trends, housing needs analysis, assisted housing needs, homeless needs, and priority non-housing needs.

One aspect of the housing needs analysis included an examination of housing affordability. The plan considered at many factors and noted that the median household income in Elmira was \$18,548. The average price of a home in the City of Elmira is approximately \$39,870 on the southside of Elmira and \$60,544 on the northside (telephone conversation with local realtor, January 1996). The southside figure reflects a more accurate depiction of the average selling price in Elmira. The northside figure is inflated due to the recent selling of a large grand style home. Typically those making less than 80% of the median household income cannot afford to purchase a home at the average price. Figure 5 gives a good indication of where residents of Elmira stand with regard to affordability.

Measuring Affordability is another method of examining household income by census tract in the City. Based on the MSA median household income, more than half of Elmira's households were moderate income (i.e., less than 80% of the median income of the Elmira MSA) and 35.9% were low income (with incomes less than 50% of the MSA median) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Additionally, an estimated 19.1% of households were extremely low income, earning less than 30% of the MSA median. Census tracts 10, 7, and 8 have the largest portion of extremely low income families. In addition, several assisted housing projects are located within these tracts. Conversely, census tracts 4 and 5 have the smallest number of extremely low income families.

4. Neighborhood Districts

The residential areas of the City can be broken down into general neighborhood districts. Understanding the character of these neighborhoods can help lend insight as to the stability of the neighborhood as it relates to the infringement of surrounding land uses or even the changing structure from within.

Beginning in the northwest quadrant of the city near the Reformatory, there area predominantly single family one and two story homes. These types of homes continue south towards the Arnot Ogden Medical Center where they become slightly larger and closer together. With the exception of the assisted housing project off of Hoffman Street, much of the area around the hospital and the high school are single family, owner-occupied homes.

Continuing east towards Elmira College, there are more multi-family, renter occupied homes responding to the needs of the College students. South of the College the housing becomes partially deteriorated, especially in the vicinity of Clinton Street, W. Third St, W. Second, W. First and the area surrounding the Second Street Cemetary. This area contains traditional row housing and borders on the commercial businesses situated along N. Main Street.

The neighborhood in the vicinity of the Near Westside Historic District has numerous large homes that serve as rental units and single-family owner-occupied homes. Some potential problems within this area is the infringement of commercial activity in the form of conversion of these homes to businesses and the conversion of single family homes into multi-unit apartment buildings.

The northeast quadrant of the City has the greatest potential for conflict between land use types. Many of the neighborhoods are isolated by surrounding commercial and industrial uses and busy streets. Many of these neighborhoods are some of the City's poorest and consist of larger homes that have been divided up into apartment buildings that are randomly mixed in with single family homes. Generally, many of the homes are in fair condition, with an occasional pocket of completely deteriorated homes.

Moving closer to the downtown and in the vicinity of Ernie Davis Jr. High, the homes become increasingly deteriorated and occasionally vacant. Many homes have been converted into storefront churches which become the center of activity. This area also is the location of some assisted housing projects. In terms of housing condition, this is the worst section of the City.

The southside of the City has a mix single family and multi family homes spread generally throughout. West of S. Main Street, the homes are on small lots and are close together. The street pattern is relatively uniform and there is an occasional neighborhood type store to service area residents.

Directly east of S. Main Street, are larger homes that have been divided up into apartments. Many of these homes are run down and are in need of repair. Continuing east, and closer to the river, the homes become much smaller in the form of ranches and small colonials.

E. DOWNTOWN & COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

1. General Description of the Downtown/CBD Area

Elmira's downtown and Central Business District (CBD) generally runs from Clinton Street to the north, Columbia Street to the west, the intersection of S. Main and Pennsylvania to the south and Madison on the east. Within this area there is a mix of use including commercial uses in the form of retail and service, community service buildings, parks & recreation, and some residential uses.

Portions of the downtown have survived Elmira's economic downturn, while others have not fared as well. Figure II-2, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, is located in Chapter 2 and displays the general layout of the downtown, sub-districts, points of interest, an office district boundary, and key catalytic project sites.

One main issue with Elmira's downtown is the fact that it is naturally and functionally disconnected and Figure 6 shows the general boundaries of the likely downtown subdistricts. Although these subdistricts are described in greater detail in a following section, it is important to note the primary differences between them.

The N. Main Street (north) section has viable retail services for City residents. There is the Clemens Center Plaza, a row of stores between First St. and Second Street, a supermarket, and various restaurants. This area has always generally been healthy. Elmira College, with a student population of approximately 1,000 is also close to the downtown.

The N. Main Street (south) section was, at one time, the healthy, viable portion of the downtown. As with much of Elmira, this area has lost commercial businesses and is changing towards an office environment. There are few retail stores in this area and many vacancies.

The S. Main Street section runs from the river to the intersection of Main and Pennsylvania. This area has traditionally been retail oriented with clothing shops, furniture stores, a pharmacy, and restaurants/bars. Although this area generally been healthy, it recently received a major boost when Tops Supermarket decided to located a store in this area.

Finally, the Lake Street district has traditionally been the office, financial, and community services area of the City. Within this district is City Hall, the Post Office, office support services, and tourist attractions such as Clemens Center Performing Arts Center, Arnot Art Museum, and the Chemung County Historical Society.

Breakdown of space and functionality:

There is an estimated 682,000 square feet of retail space in Downtown Elmira, of which 448,000 square feet (66%) is taken by retail merchandise operations, 161,000 square feet (23%) is used by service operations, and 73,000 (11%) is vacant.³ In 1991, downtown Elmira had notable strengths in home furnishings and gift ware.

³ Description of the downtown area taken from Downtown Elmira Retail/Office Space Analysis, September 1991.

As with many downtowns, Elmira's has advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages include: sizable trade area population, regional center for cultural events and facilities, major center for office space, and center of government for the county. Some disadvantages include: strong competition from the Arnot Mall, Consumer Square (Walmart/Sams's), and the Miracle Mile, some image problems due to vacancies, appearance and an apathetic attitude toward downtown, physical barriers divide the downtown area and make linkages difficult, and strong competition from larger cities in the field of office recruitment.

2. Shopping Patterns and Habits

Based on results from a Star Gazette 1990 survey, the majority of the shoppers (82%) had visited the Arnot Mall in the preceding 30 day period and downtown Elmira was visited by 47%. When the demographic breakdown of the shoppers was examined, it was found that the majority of shoppers to downtown have household incomes of between \$15,000 to \$35,000 followed closely by those under the \$15,000 bracket. In contrast, the majority of shoppers to the Arnot Mall fell in the \$50,000 and up category.

In summary, downtown Elmira seems to appeal to lower income consumers and those aged 35 and over. It does not attract very many young adults. Arnot Mall on the other hand appeals to consumers with moderate to high incomes and all age groups except those 65 and over.

3. Downtown Retail Districts

The retail study previously conducted broke downtown into four retail districts. Although these provide a clear definition of retail areas, the boundaries should be confirmed based on current information.

N. Main Street (North) - is divided from the southern part of Downtown by Wisner Park. There appears to be some reluctance of shoppers to park in the north section and walk through Wisner Park to the N. Main Street - south section.

Strengths:

- Well balanced mix of retail enterprises with strong anchors or destination stores as well as general strength in food, home furnishings, and eating/drinking.
- Low vacancy rate

Weaknesses:

- Not many service facilities.

N. Main Street (South) - This area covers N. Main Street from the river to Gray Street including businesses along Water Street from College to the railroad viaduct. This area is not only separated from the north section but also from Lake Street due to the railroad viaduct and the fact that there is no continuous block of stores on any of the east/west streets. Perhaps the riverfront park could be used to create a continuous link.

Strengths:

- Very strong in home furnishings, miscellaneous retail and general merchandise.
- Good mix of eating/drinking establishments but most are located on the periphery of the district rather than centrally.

- Well balanced mix of service facilities, the strongest district downtown for entertainment services.

Weaknesses:

- Very low amount of space given over for retail food; however, this district borders one where retail food is particularly strong.

Lake Street - This area is relatively small and is isolated from the rest of downtown due to the railroad viaduct and the Clemens Center Parkway. This area was included in the retail study because of its potential as a secondary retail node.

Strengths:

- Very strong in business services, particularly financial services.
- Strongest retail categories are home furnishings/hardware and miscellaneous retail.
- Most of the retail categories are made up of business merchandise, e.g. office products.

Weaknesses:

- Generally weak in all retail categories
- Notably weak in apparel, and eating/drinking
- Personal services are poorly represented

South Main Street - Historically, this area has never been considered by the community as part of the “downtown”. This may due to the natural divide the Chemung River creates although the actual distance is quite small. This area is set in a residential community and is easily accessible by motorists traveling north from Southport and Northern Pennsylvania.

Strengths:

- Strongest retail is miscellaneous due to the high amount of space used by drug store operations
- Has distinct position involving lower priced, discount or second hand products.

Weaknesses:

- No space in district given to apparel
- Little space given to personal service and entertainment.

4. Downtown Office District

The downtown office district is generally defined as the north side of the river bounded by College Avenue on the west, First St. on the north and Lake Street on the east. There is an estimated 642,300 square footage of space available and it can be divided into the following categories:

	Sq. Footage	% of Total	% Vacant
Class A	301,600	47%	8%
Class B	231,200	36%	20%
Class C	109,500	17%	73%
TOTAL	642,300	100%	100%

SOURCE: Downtown Elmira Retail/Office Space Analysis, Sept. 1991.

The greatest amount of office space is concentrated between Clemens Center Parkway and Lake Street close to City Hall, the Court House, and other County buildings. This area has a high proportion of financial institutions and professional office buildings.

The southern part of N. Main Street (north of the river) has the next largest concentration of office space. It includes the Komer Center, the Wellco building, the Mark Twain buildings, and the Midtown buildings.

5. Potential Catalytic Project Sites

Figure II-2, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, located in Chapter 2, shows the location of key catalytic project sites within the downtown area. Many of these sites were identified in the 1991 retail study which were supplemented with the help of City staff. Key criteria chosen to select the sites include location, availability of land, and potential usage based on surrounding land use.

These sites include Tops Plaza on the southside, the intersection of Main St. And College Ave., the location of the new transportation center, a vacant lot on Gray Street near Baldwin St., the open land on the north side of Church St. near the eastern border of the City, and the Riverfront Park. If efforts are properly focused, these sites can provide the basis for redevelopment of the downtown.

In addition to these sites, Elmira has the Clemens Center Performing Arts Center which is located in the heart of downtown and has served area residents for many years. This facility, as well as the surrounding area, has the potential to become a large hub of cultural activity if it is developed properly. When finished, it could service a large portion of the Southern Tier and the Finger Lakes drawing visitors and tourists from Corning, Ithaca, Waverly, Sayre and beyond.

6. Financial Incentives

The City of Elmira operates programs which offer incentives to businesses located or relocating within the state designated Economic Development Zone (EDZ). These include both EDZ state and local initiatives which primarily provide tax incentives in the form of reductions to businesses, job training, expedited business permits, technical assistance and minority and women-owned business assistance. Local EDZ incentives include sales tax refund on building materials, selective utility rates, and waved closing fee for bond issuance.

Other incentives include low interest financing from Elmira Downtown Development, Job Development Authority financing assistance, low interest financing and other programs, and various state level financing programs. Together these incentives have helped grow the downtown over the past few years.

F. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

1. Existing Facilities

The City of Elmira has a number of parks and public areas that provide a variety of activities, supervised recreation, and educational programs. The City also owns and operates a public golf course, known as the Mark Twain Golf Course. Additionally, within a short drive is Harris Hill Soaring Site, a county maintained facility for motor-less aircraft and home of the National Soaring Museum.

There are a total of 25 parks totaling 181 acres. The local city owned parks have continued to serve the City of Elmira and its citizens for the past twenty years. Recently, the City completed a Parks Master Plan which evaluated the equipment and use of the parks. All equipment was surveyed and a determination was made to the viability of needed repairs and replacement. Park improvements will cost \$724,446 over the next five years which averages \$31,497 per park. Parks slated for improvements in 1996 include McKinnon Park, Miller Pond, Sly Park, and Wisner Park.

Additionally, the City is in the process of completing a Master Plan for the Mark Twain Golf Course. The Master Plan will work to upgrade the facilities, improve parking lots and grounds and renovate the clubhouse, pro shop and snack bar. The total cost for renovating the course will be \$1,875,000.

As noted, Elmira has several parks and some of the largest include:

Eldridge Park - 57.7 acres and houses the Carousel Market, softball fields, picnic areas, a small lake, concession stands, a dance hall, and many other activities.

Brand Park - 27.2 acres which has a public swimming pool, an exercise trail, softball courts, basketball courts, tennis courts, a playground, and other activities.

McKinnon Park - 15.3 acres and has many different recreational fields, tennis courts, a playground, and a swimming pool.

Table 7 lists the parks and playground facilities in the City .

TABLE 7
Existing City Parks

Park	Acres	Activities
Brand Park	27.2	Pool, exercise trail, softball, basketball, picnicking, horseshoes, playground
Brick (Weyer)	12.68	Pavilion, playground, picnicking, pond
Clemens Square	1.6	Passive recreation
Cypress St. Park	2.2	Wading pool, basketball, baseball, playground, tether ball
Eldridge Park	57.7	Carousel Market, pavilion, picnicking, softball, dance hall
Ernie Davis Park	3.1	Swimming pool, pavilions, picnicking, playground, horseshoes, basketball
Fulton St. Cemetery	1.7	Passive Recreation
Gaines St.	0.9	Shelter, playground, basketball
Grove Park	8.3	Pavilion, wading pool, horseshoes, basketball, picnicking, playground
Harriet St. Park	1	Wading pool, playground
Hathorn Park	3.68	Wading pool, playground, picnicking
Hudson St.	7.3	Basketball, baseball, shelter, playground, tether ball
Katy Leary Park	2.74	Wading pool, basketball, shelter, playground
Keefe St. Park	0.56	Basketball, playground
Kennedy Valve Park	5.69	Baseball
Magee St.	0.2	Playground,
Mark Twain	6.59	Picnicking, board games
McKinnon Park	15.3	Baseball, pavilion, tennis, picnicking, playground
Miller Pond	8.2	Pavilion, playground, picnicking, tennis, shelter
Pulaski Park	8.4	Horseshoes, playground, baseball, basketball
Quatrano Park	3.29	Baseball, tennis, playground, pavilion, basketball
Rhode (Beach St.)	0.4	Pavilion, picnic, basketball
Sly Park	0.96	Shelter, playground
Wisner Park	2.1	Passive recreation
TOTAL	181.79 (*)	

SOURCE: City of Elmira Buildings and Grounds Division, Survey and Needs Assessment - Park System, June 1995.

(*) This total does not reflect 132.9 acres of land available for recreation at local schools.

2. Recreational Needs Assessment

The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends the following standards for parkland:

<u>Park Land</u>	<u>NPRA Standard</u>	<u>Standard for Elmira</u>	<u>Actual Elmira Parks</u>
Neighborhood Park or Playground	1.7 ac./1000 pop.	57.33 acres	30.51
<u>Community Park</u>	<u>7.0 ac./1000 pop.</u>	<u>236 acres</u>	<u>151.28</u>
Total Parkland	8.7 ac./1000 pop	293.33 acres	181.79(*)

(*) This total does not reflect 132.9 acres of land available for recreation at local schools.

At first glance it appears that, Elmira is 62% short in acreage in parkland. However, there is 132.9 acres available for recreation on city school property. When factoring in these numbers, Elmira actually has a surplus of parkland by 7% or 21.36 acres.

In addition to parkland within the City, Elmira citizens also have a wealth of activities in close proximity including county owned Harris Hill Park, the Mark Twain Golf Course, and the Finger Lakes region namely Seneca Lake which is 25 miles away. Finally, Elmira is the center of cultural activity in the county. It houses the Arnot Art Gallery, the Watson Art Gallery at Elmira College, and the Chemung County Historical Society. Finally, many of Elmira's residents utilize the earthen levees along side of the Chemung River and Newtown Creek as recreational trailways. Although this activity is prohibited by law, many residents find the levees a convenient way to recreate. The location of the levees in comparison to other city parks should be examined. The potential exists to utilize the levees as connectors to neighborhood parks if the law would permit.

Although there are additional recreational activities within close proximity to the City, it is important to keep in mind that not all residents may be able to utilize these additional resources. Some limiting factors for residents include lack of transportation therefore isolating residents to a confined area, lack of financial resources available for fee paying areas, and/or physical disabilities. Measures should be taken to make sure all of Elmira's citizens have access to adequate recreation facilities.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

1. Streams and Floodplains

Within the City boundaries, there are two creeks and one river. The largest of the two creeks, Newtown, runs north/south between Sullivan Street and NYS Route 17 eventually emptying into the Chemung River.

At one time this creek had a very large 100 year flood plain that spread out west of the creek. The Federal Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) indicated that the floodplain extended from the creek west to approximately the railroad tracks running north/south through Elmira with some minor exceptions in the downtown area and near Eldridge Park. Since the FIRM maps were last updated in 1984, the City of Elmira constructed a levee along the west side of the creek. As a result of this new construction, the City sponsored a study to update the FIRM maps and revise the floodplain boundary. The floodplain boundary was significantly reduced and it is comprised of mostly small patches west of the Creek. Specifically, some areas in the Industrial Park along Sullivan Street still reside in the floodplain. At one point, the floodplain continues across Sullivan Street just south of Weyer Pond. Some homes in this area could be in danger should flooding occur. The next largest area of potential flooding is just east of Dewittsburg and is centered around Judson Street.

The Chemung River is Elmira's primary waterway and runs east/west through the City. In 1972, Elmira experienced a devastating flood as a result of Hurricane Agnes. Much of the City was underwater during this flood causing millions of dollars worth of damage. Since that time, a levee and flood prevention system was constructed along the north and south shores of the river within the City boundary and beyond. As a result, the 100 year floodplain limit is the levee. There is, however, still a 500 year floodplain that extends beyond the levee and into the City. Along the north side of the river, the 500 year floodplain extends to Water Street and occasionally to Gray Street with the exception of the area along Hoffman Street which is in the vicinity of Hoffman Creek. The 500 year floodplain on the southside is much larger, especially in the southeast. The floodplain's boundary is a diagonal line running southeast from West Hudson Street to Miller Pond. Many of the streets east of the north/south running railroad tracks are within the floodplain. On the west side of the railroad tracks, the floodplain's furthest reach is to the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and South Main Street.

Hoffman Creek is the third creek and runs from the Elmira Reservoir and empties into the Chemung River. Much of the creek runs through less developed areas of the City until it reaches the area of Clinton Street where it runs in and out of culverts until it empties into the river. There are no mapped floodplain boundaries for this creek.

2. Water Quality

As part of the Federal Clean Water Act, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has classified every water body in the state as to its "best use", a designation that takes into account such factors as stream flow, water quality, past, present and desired uses of the water and bordering lands. NYS DEC has assigned a classification of C to the section of Newtown Creek that is within the City.

This reflects a best use of fishing and fish propagation. All of the tributaries emptying into Newtown Creek also have a class C designation.

Weyer (Brick) Pond , located just west of Sullivan Street , and Eldridge Lake both have a classification of C. These lakes and tributaries are located within the watershed of Newtown Creek. The watershed covers a large area and incorporates the northeast portion of the City of Elmira and extends northeast through the Village of Horseheads.

The Chemung River is listed by the NYSDEC as the third interstate tributary of the Susquehanna River. The mouth of the river is just east of Waverly and runs to just west of Corning where the Cohocton River and Tioga River meet. The drainage basin for the Chemung Rivers is nearly all of Schuyler County and two-thirds of Chemung County. The section of the river within the City of Elmira has a C classification. An important note, much of the river has an A classification, which is one under the best classification of AA. The sections running through the Cities of Elmira and Corning drop down to a C classification.

Hoffman Creek is one of the primary sources leading into the Elmira Reservoir. The creek, leading into the reservoir has an A classification. From the reservoir to the Chemung River, the creek drops two classifications to C.

3. Habitat

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Region 8 in Avon, NY, there are no rare species of plants or animals or significant habitats in the City of Elmira. This is a result of an examination of the Natural Heritage Program and other file materials the DEC references. The NYSDEC Wildlife Resources Center in Latham, NY has also reviewed biological information for the City and found that there is an occurrence of *Allium Cernuum*, or Wild Onion, somewhere within the City. Because this information is considered sensitive, the exact location of the occurrence cannot be given without permission from the New York Natural Heritage Program.

4. Topography

The City of Elmira is relatively flat because it is situated in a valley made primarily from floodplains. topographically. The elevation ranges from approximately 950 feet above sea level near the reformatory to approximately 860 ft near Newtown Creek. Elmira is naturally protected from as it is completely surrounded by old mountains which offer spectacular views of the valley. As discussed in the floodplain section above, Elmira's southside is lower in elevation than the northside.

5. Visual Resources

There are a number of important receptors, or viewing areas, in the City of Elmira that should be noted. These “view-sheds” are important as they project the image of Elmira upon visitors, tourists, and even current residents.

Some of these include the view of the City from Rt. 17, the view up Church Street upon entering the city from Rt. 17, the views of the City when crossing the bridges over the Chemung from the south, the general openness of the Clemens Center Parkway, and the view of the City from behind the Elmira Free Academy.

More specifically, there are areas in the city that add to the overall image. One such place includes the intersection of Church St. and Main Street. This intersection is surrounded by three beautiful churches (one is on the national register of historic places), two parks, and a viable shopping plaza. It is a key intersection that feeds people to the downtown area to the south, residential areas to the west, and retail shopping to the north. Another such area is the Woodlawn Cemetary which has a large military burial area, Mark Twain’s and Ernie Davis’ grave sites, and is pleasantly landscaped throughout.

H. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

1. General

The City of Elmira maintains 125 miles of streets, arterials and collectors within the corporate boundaries. The only highway within City limits which is not maintained by the City is NYS Route 17, a regional east-west highway, which borders the eastern edge of the City. NYS Route 17 is the primary east-west route through the Southern Tier of New York State, and is maintained by NYSDOT

The primary arterials through the City are Clemens Center Parkway (north-south) and NYS Route 352 (east-west) which consists of Church Street one-way, two-lane westbound and Water Street one-way, two-lane eastbound. Church Street at its eastern terminus has a full interchange with NYS Route 17 (a small portion of Church in this area is actually two-way). Water Street, at its eastern terminus, has a partial interchange with NYS Route 17 (a portion of Water in this area is also actually two-way). Neither of the Route 17 interchanges meet current FHWA standards and the signage is confusing.

The Chemung River flows easterly bisecting the City, with Church Street, Water Street and most of the core downtown business district located on the “northside”. The “southside” is predominantly residential with a few pockets of commercial and industrial uses. Five bridges cross the river - Madison Avenue,

Lake Street, Clemens Center Parkway, Main Street and Walnut Street, providing adequate access between northside and southside.

Clemens Center Parkway is a four lane arterial with five signalized intersections at key intersections in the heart of downtown. The Parkway currently extends south, crossing the Chemung River and terminating at Pennsylvania Avenue, currently the primary collector through southside. The Parkway was recently extended south, running parallel to Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Parkway currently extends north to Grand Central Avenue, a major collector which continues north to urbanized areas north, namely Elmira Heights and Horseheads. The Parkway is planned to be extended north providing a more direct connection back onto Route 17. This extension is contingent upon completion of a related project, the Horseheads Bypass, which is the re-routing of Route 17 through Horseheads. This project is currently in the preliminary design stage. Once this project is completed, planning and design will then begin on the northern extension of the Parkway.

2. Truck Routes

A recent truck route study was completed and submitted to the City under a separate cover. As a result of the study, a truck ordinance was adopted by City Council. The primary reason for the truck ordinance was to deal with deficiencies with the previously designated truck route system so that it could serve key areas of demand within the City. Consequently, truck traffic was removed from residential areas.

3. Arterials/Collectors

As previously stated, the major arterials through the City are Clemens Center Parkway (north-south) and NYS Route 352 (Church and Water Streets, east-west). NYS Route 17 is the regional east-west highway and is the primary access to and from Elmira. Figure 2 shows all arterials and collectors within the city.

North-south regional access is via the following collectors:

- NYS Route 14 which travels through the Elmira urbanized area,
- NYS Route 328 extending southwest from Elmira eventually connecting US Route 15 in Pennsylvania,
- NYS Route 13 extending northeast to Ithaca.

An issue with the primary arterials is access to NYS Route 17. As previously mentioned, the Water Street and Church Street interchanges are substandard and signage is confusing. From 17 eastbound, the Church Street exit sign makes no mention of “Church Street”. The sign emphasizes NYS Route 352 which is not the common terminology for the Church/Water collector.

Within the City, primary north-south collector streets include:

- NYS Route 14 which begins at the north as College Avenue, then changes to Park Place near Elmira College, then changes to North Main Street as it enters the heart of the downtown area. It then crosses the river, becomes South Main Street, then merges with Pennsylvania Avenue and continues south into the Town of Southport.
- Lake Road/Lake Street is another north connector similar to NYS Route 14. There is significant retail along this road in the Towns of Elmira and Horseheads and it is a convenient link to NYS Route 13. Lake Street extends south and merges into Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Broadway/Walnut Street/Davis Street runs primarily through residential areas along the western section of “northside” and “southside”.
- Hoffman Street is a northside street running along the west edge of the City, also primarily through residential areas.
- Maple Avenue is a street running along the east edge of the southside City.
- Madison Avenue runs along the east edge of the center-city. It provides a direct connection to southside via the Madison Avenue bridge, however, the street is one-way northbound from Water Street north.

Primary east-west collectors include:

- Hudson Street, an east-west street on the southside connects Walnut to Pennsylvania Avenue just south of the river.
- Washington Avenue, an east-west street in the middle of the City's northside, traverses across the entire City from Hoffman Street to Sullivan Street.
- Woodlawn Avenue, a secondary east-west street at the north end of the City connects NYS Route 14 (College Avenue) to Clemens Center Parkway near the northern terminus of the Parkway.

General observations concerning the City collectors include:

- Changes in street names over the same route creates confusion.
- Inadequate street geometrics provide insufficient capacity.
- Signals are not coordinated, some may not meet signal warrants and some are badly deteriorated.
- Intersection geometrics are constricted with inadequate lane widths, tight curb radii and limited sight distances.

4. One-Way Streets

There are a series of one-way streets which exist throughout the City. Confusion begins when Church Street becomes one-way, especially when it intersects with another one-way street (Madison). Similarly, Water Street is confusing at its change from one-way to two-way at its intersection with Lake Street. Vehicles traveling in the Water Street eastbound left lane have been observed to continue through the Lake Street intersection and into the oncoming lane.

Where the one-way portions of Church and Water intersect with north-south arterials (Clemens Center Parkway for instance), vehicles can see their destinations but cannot directly access them due to the one-way restriction. This creates confusion, especially in the downtown business district.

Madison Avenue is one-way northbound from Water to its terminus at Lake Street to the north. When east-west traffic intersects this street, it sees the street as a major collector due to its wide configuration. Designation as a one-way street restricts flow south to Madison Avenue bridge, which is the eastern-most access to southside.

Additional one-way streets which may warrant study but are not considered immediate concerns are identified here for information purposes:

- West Gray Street
- East 3rd Street

- East Market Street
- North Main Street

APPENDIX B

DESIGN GUIDELINES

CITY OF ELMIRA



DESIGN GUIDELINES

DECEMBER 21, 1998

PREPARED FOR:
CITY OF ELMIRA

PREPARED BY:
THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, AND PLANNERS P.C.

SARATOGA SPRINGS NEWYORK CITY BUFFALO BOSTON, MA

This manual was originally prepared by the Fort Drum Land Use Team under the direction of the Temporary State Commission on Tug Hill under the title *Fort Drum Land Use Team - Community Design Guidelines Manual*. The content of the original document has been reused, and repackaged, with the permission of the Temporary State Commission on Tug Hill, to address site development conditions relevant to the City of Elmira.

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CITY OF ELMIRA
Site Design Guidelines Manual

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SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

Purpose and Intent

The guidelines contained in this manual are intended to assist developers, planning staff, and planning commission members in addressing various site development issues. The guidelines provide design criteria and suggest development approaches which will help both the City and developers consider issues of site organization, landscape design, architecture, off-street parking, pedestrian circulation, signs, and streetscape design. The purpose of these design guidelines is to:

- clarify and define design objectives pursuant to the City's zoning laws;
- reduce delays and confusion that developers may encounter during the design phase of proposed projects;
- maintain or improve the visual attractiveness of the City;
- encourage innovation and quality in architectural and landscape design;
- minimize land use conflicts;
- establish a clear and consistent method for analyzing new projects; and,
- stimulate dialogue among decision makers, the planning staff, the development community, and City residents, focusing on the issues involved in achieving quality design.

The site design guidelines are intended to be advisory and do not impose legally binding requirements. This document is not a suggested model for local law; rather, these guidelines are established to outline what is expected of architects, landscape architects, developers, engineers, planners and property owners pertaining to new site plan proposals.

These design guidelines provide basic information, but do not attempt to address all the design issues relevant to a proposed site plan. The guidelines should, however, present a clear enough understanding of critical issues that both the developer and review boards will be able to recognize when circumstances require the additional assistance or review by a specialized consultant to assure proper decision-making.

The interpretation of the site design guidelines should remain the responsibility of the staff planners and ultimately the City of Elmira Planning Commission.

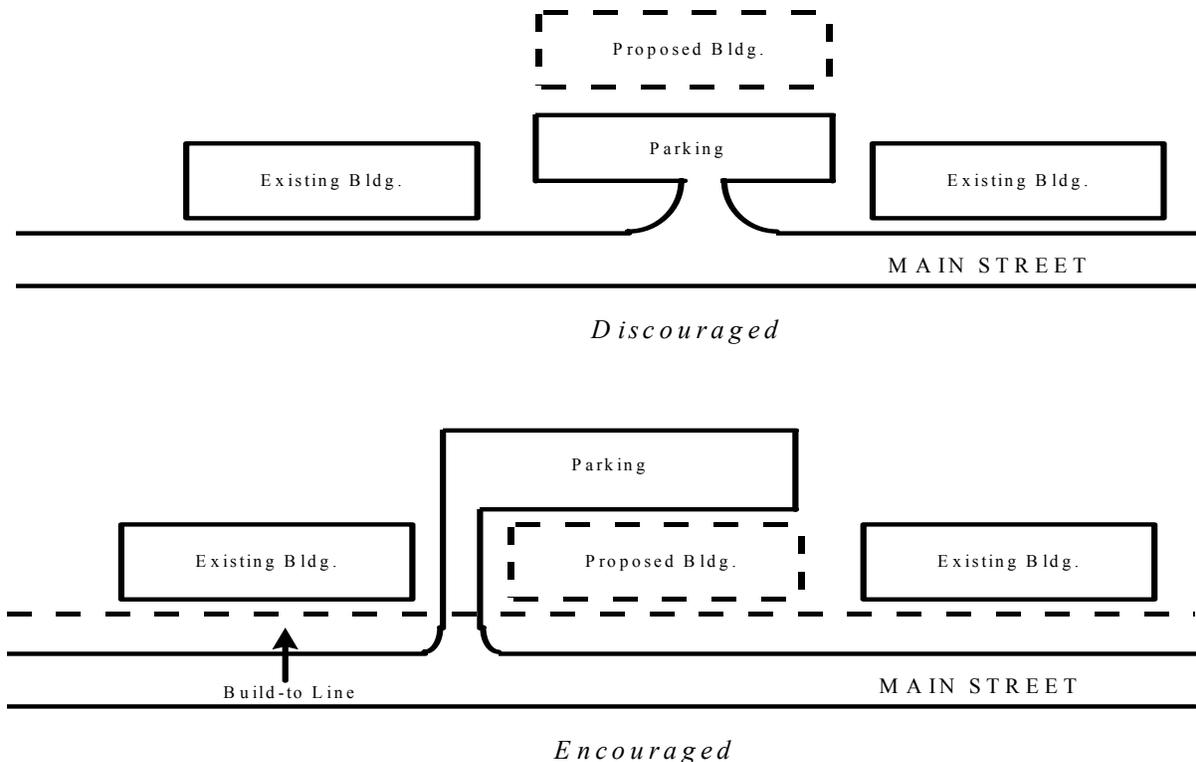
A. SITE ORGANIZATION

Proposed land development should address the opportunities and limitations present on a site and its adjacent surroundings. Site opportunities should be maximized to enhance the quality of the development, and conscientious steps should be taken to lessen potential negative impacts on the site and the surrounding community. A comprehensive site analysis should be undertaken and a land use plan prepared prior to any land clearing and subsequent development. The impacts of the proposed development on adjacent properties should be allocated a high priority by consideration during the design phase of the site planning process.

Building Setbacks

In established residential and commercial areas, it is desirable to continue the existing setback pattern to retain the character of the area. The maximum or minimum setback for new construction should reflect the average setback of the existing adjacent structures. For example, the buildings in the area along West Church Street between College Avenue and Walnut Street are all set back approximately twenty (20) feet and have a front lawn. Any new development in this corridor should match the existing character.

1 - Infill development can help close the gap in an otherwise continuous line of buildings. Development should conform to the



surrounding character and there should be landscaping alongside the road. Setbacks should be changed from a minimum to a maximum

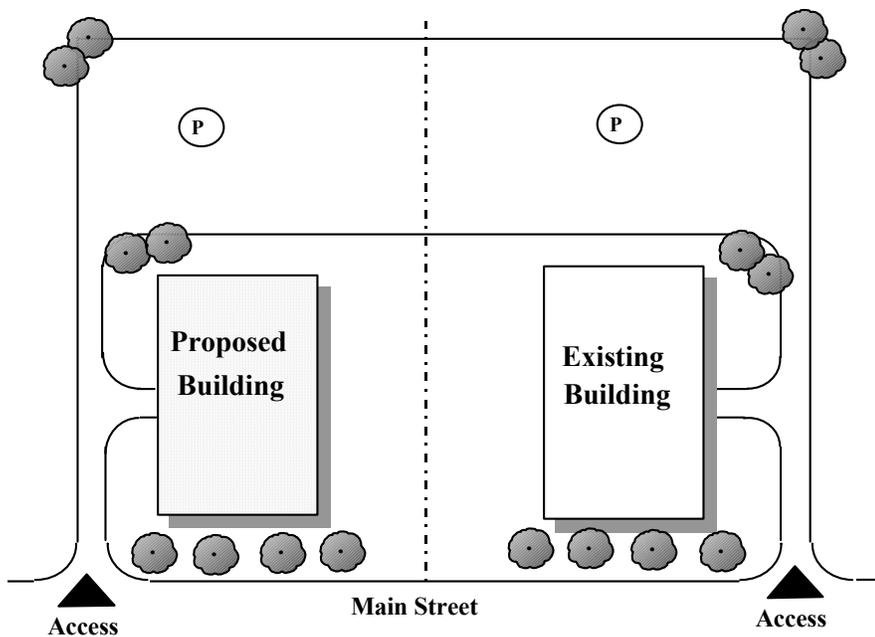
In the more densely urban areas of the City, such as South Main Street near TOPS and North Main Street near Weiss, new infill development should match the existing urban character and be built to the back side of the sidewalk. This can be accomplished by changing site plan language from a minimum setback

to a maximum setback of zero (0) feet. If this cannot be achieved the setbacks should be at least a minimum distance equal to the height of the buildings.

Where nonresidential uses are adjacent to residential uses such as the area along Sullivan Street and the Clemens Center Parkway, the specific siting of the nonresidential building should be responsive to the character and use of surrounding residential properties. A minimum side yard setback of 30 feet should be observed for buildings, parking or storage. Buffer plantings should be established to lessen the impacts of adjacent land uses and to create a transition between buildings of contrasting scales.

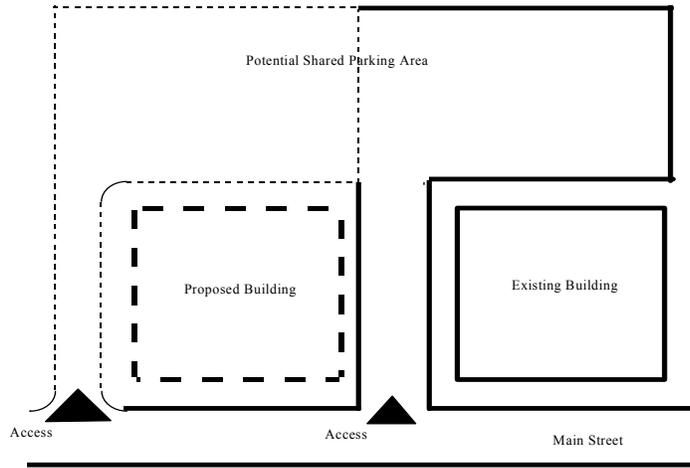
Joint and Cross-Access

Similar land uses, like those found along North and South Main Streets and College Avenue, should provide, when possible, cross-access between properties and joint access to arterials and/or collector streets adjacent to the development. While individual driveways may be necessary, shared access minimizes disruption of highway traffic flow, reduces potential points of conflict between through and turning traffic, and facilitates the control and separation of vehicles and pedestrian movement.



2- Shared access with parking located behind buildings permits landscape plantings along the highway to maintain visual quality.

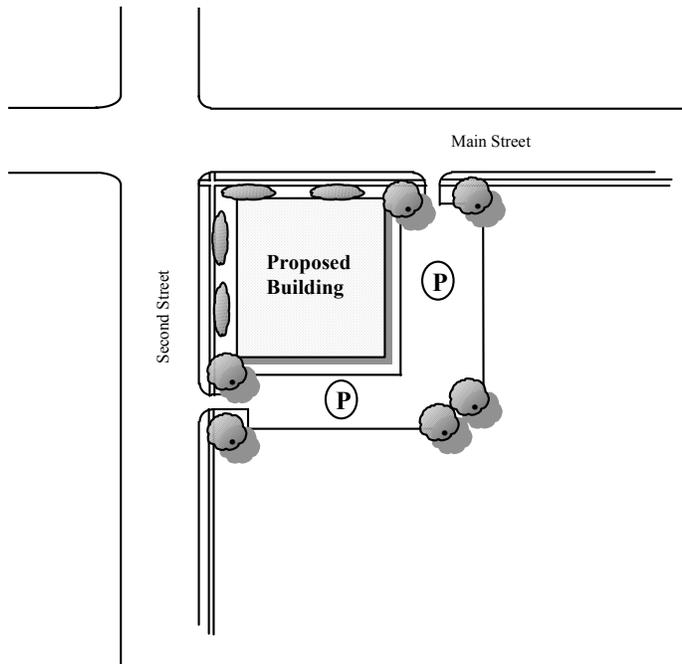
Where possible, shared access is recommended when two or more similar projects are proposed for adjacent parcels. The City may also encourage individual developers to construct a site layout which facilitates future joint access in anticipation of future adjacent development. For example, commercial driveways should be located along a side yard property line rather than at the center of the front yard property line.



3 - In areas of high commercial development pressure, driveways should be located along a side property line to facilitate future joint access.

Curb Cuts and Curbs

Curb cuts should be carefully placed to assure vehicular safety and to maintain vehicular flow. Adequate sight distances, determined by highway traffic speed, must be established at all curb cuts. Curb cuts for highway commercial areas should be minimized and controlled. One or two access points should serve clusters of commercial establishments. Within a development, commercial establishments should be connected by interior access roads and shared parking areas. Adequate setbacks should be maintained along the road to permit buffer plantings to screen parking areas from highway view.



4 - An example of curb cut locations on a street corner.

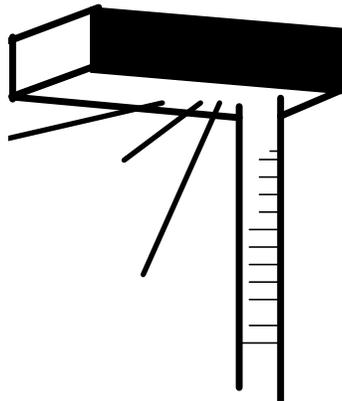
Numerous curb cuts will significantly slow traffic flow and create conflict between through traffic and turning vehicles. Increasing the number of driveway intersections along a street corridor decreases capacity and reduces speed. The number of entrances to residential developments from arterial streets and highways should be minimized. Entrances should be designed for safety and convenient turning, permitting access by fire and rescue vehicles. The City should endorse a curb cut policy which would limit the number and widths of proposed curb cuts for side streets and driveways based on the type and intensity of proposed land uses.

Noise Impacts

Structures within a well-designed site plan should be located, constructed, and insulated to prevent on-site noise from interfering with the use of adjacent properties. Similarly, buildings should be situated to prevent off-site noise from unnecessary intrusion for property users. Additional methods for blocking noise include fencing, walls, landscape buffers, mounding, setbacks, and the use of state-of-the-art building materials.

Lighting

The lighting of a site should provide security and visual interest while not projecting adverse glares onto adjacent properties. On-site lighting should be located to avoid harsh glares which distract the motorists line of sight.



5 - Invisible source light fixtures (such as "shoe-box type fixtures) should be used to provide security and functional lighting. It is recommended that excessive lighting for promotional/visibility purposes be discouraged. Visible source light fixtures are appropriate as architectural or site landscape accent features.

Outdoor Storage, and Service Areas

Outdoor storage and service areas for new residential complexes or commercial buildings should be hidden or screened from the street and from other adjacent residential areas. This may be accomplished by site placement and/or the addition of conifer plantings or architectural elements.

All outdoor storage areas should be screened from public view as well as from adjacent residential and commercial uses.

Fire/Emergency Access

All modifications to the site should conform to New York State Fire Hydrant and Emergency Access Standards.

Utility Access

All new projects are encouraged to install underground utility service systems. When economically feasible, existing aboveground utility service systems should be placed underground.

Art Features

The use of art features such as sculptures, fountains, distinctive landscaping and murals add a unique identification and style to a development. Art features should be appropriate to the historic, architectural, and visual character of the site.

B. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Landscaping is an integral element of the comprehensive site development plan. It should complement the building architecture and may provide the following:

- air movement
- air purification
- shading
- noise and dust abatement
- wind buffering
- oxygen regeneration
- groundwater recharge
- glare reduction
- visual screening
- definition of spaces
- highlight architectural features
- accentuate major entrances
- regulate circulation
- enhance property values
- site beautification

Landscape Plan

Comprehensive landscape plans should be prepared and presented with all development proposals. The plans should locate all existing vegetation to remain and the location, species, and size of all new stock.

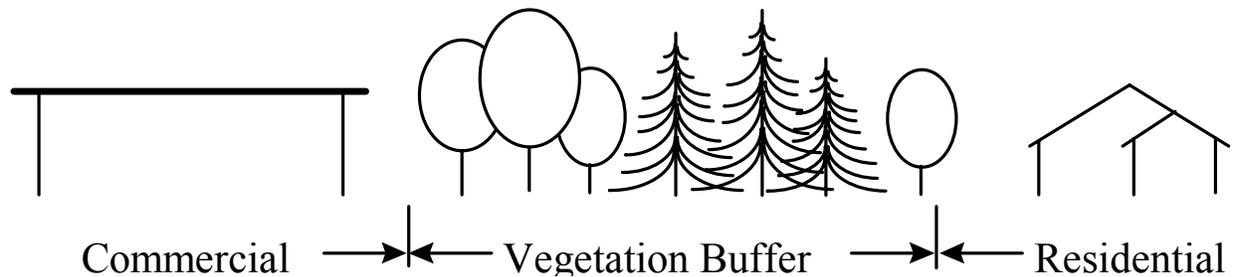
Preservation of Existing Features

Mature tree stock takes years to reestablish once removed from a site and replacement is a difficult and expensive process. Existing vegetation can provide a sense of permanence and continuity to a new development.

- Existing Vegetation. Existing vegetation should be recognized in the design development process for all new development. The preservation of mature plant species, hedge rows, and woodlots should be encouraged and included as a design element in the comprehensive site landscape plan.
- Tree Protection. When developing a site, every effort should be made to protect existing tree stock over 8" in diameter. Uncontrolled removal of trees and vegetation may speed up the process of erosion, sedimentation and stormwater runoff. Trees to be saved should be noted on the site plans and appropriate measures should be outlined to protect the tree stock from damage during construction.

Boundaries and Transitions

Landscaping can be used to create boundaries and transitions between neighborhoods and areas of differing development intensities as well as to separate areas of incompatible land use. Examples of these areas include the neighborhoods west of Sullivan Street, in the vicinity of St. Joseph's Hospital, surrounding TOPS and Wegmans and the neighborhoods near the new southern arterial extension. A minimum landscaped area of ten (10) feet is recommended adjacent to all property lines.



6 - Open space and buffer plantings establish appropriate relationship between different land uses

In areas where physical space is limited, hedges, shrubs and fences, softened by adjacent plantings, may be used to create boundaries or buffer separations. In residential development, these techniques may be used to define outdoor living spaces and to maximize privacy for each unit.

Buffers

Landscape buffers between dissimilar or conflicting land uses are encouraged. Well-designed landscape treatments lessen adverse visual impacts between different types of land uses, reduce noise levels, mitigate effects from fumes, and increase privacy levels. Landscape buffers can take a variety of forms including open space separation, buffer plantings of various heights and widths, berms and fences. When residential uses are adjacent to highway or commercial uses, they should be separated by a buffer edge which protects residential activities while providing pleasant visual experiences when viewed from the public right-of-way. A good example of buffering in the City exists near Wegmans on the Clemens Center Parkway. Wegmans used a combination of vegetation, berms and wood fencing to screen the residential properties behind the store.

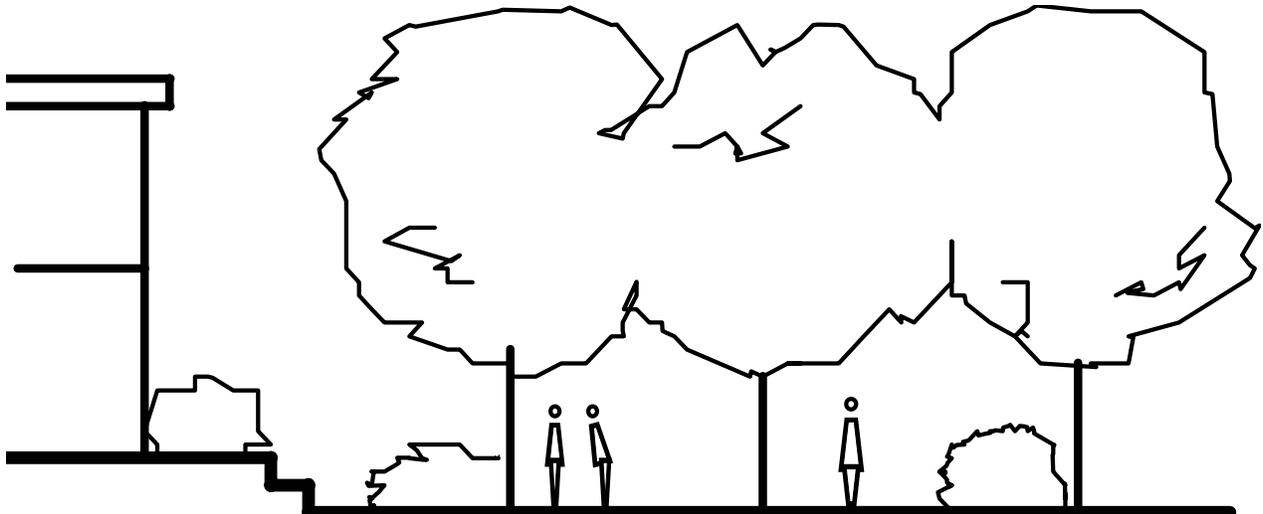
Generally, buffer and highway plantings should include a variety of local species and have low maintenance requirements. Their appearance should be natural, and clustering is preferred over planting in rows.

Site Balance

The amount and scale of on-site landscaping should effectively correspond with the proposed land use. Specific development may require more landscaping if the proposed use is not compatible with adjacent land uses. For example, if a large commercial development locates in an older, established residential neighborhood, a good deal of landscaping may be required to lessen the impact of the intrusion.

Foundation Planting

Landscape planting should be encouraged around residential, commercial, and industrial buildings to create pedestrian scale spaces and maintain a landscape continuity within the community.



7 - Plantings, like architectural elements, should be used to create spaces which are pleasant for people. Planting can provide shade, privacy, visual interest, etc.

Selection and placement of plant materials should be appropriate to adjacent land use activities. The addition of plantings around new structures will soften the visual harshness which often occurs as a result of grading and clearing during the construction process.

Maintenance

All landscaping within the site should be designed to facilitate ongoing maintenance. Where appropriate, low maintenance plants are encouraged. To ensure survival and usefulness of new plant materials in the near future, the following minimum sizes are recommended for this region:

Plant Type	Size
Large deciduous trees	3" to 2" caliper (diameter)
Conifers	6' to 8' height
Small flowering trees	1" caliper (diameter)
Large shrubs	30" to 36" height
Small shrubs	18" to 24" height

The selection of landscaping materials should be compatible to the Southern Tier of New York climate, soil types, and water availability.

Safety

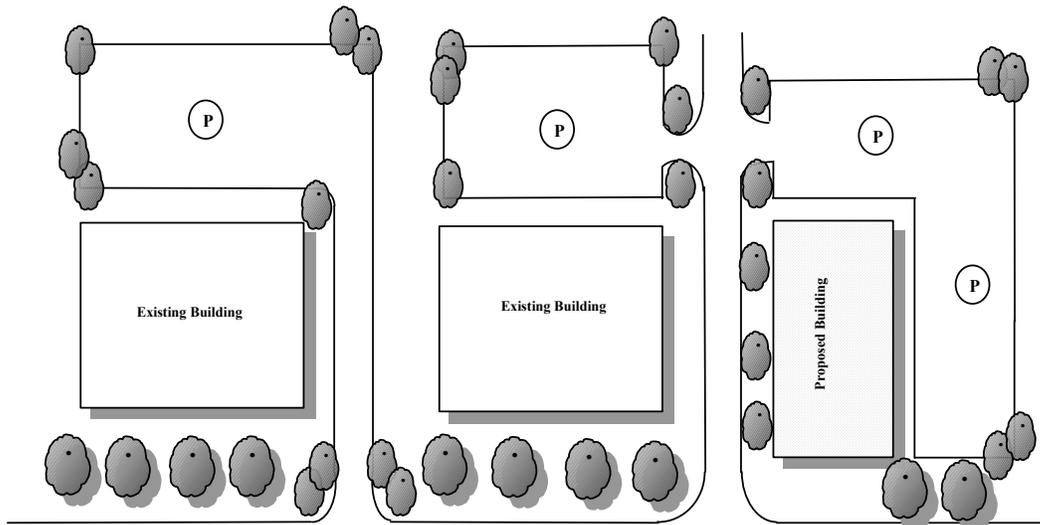
Along streets and highways plant materials must be selected and placed to avoid blocking sight lines at intersections and curb cuts. Along utility rights-of-way, plantings should not disrupt service or access to overhead or underground equipment.

C. OFF-STREET PARKING

Some commercial corridors, such as College Avenue and S. Main Street, provide off-street parking to accommodate the needs of citizens to engage in business, shopping, running errands, etc. The design and location of parking lots should be such that conflicts between the motorist and the pedestrian are avoided while at the same time creating a visual attractiveness within and around the site.

Location

Parking areas should be located in close proximity to the proposed land use. Where possible, all parking areas should be sited behind the structure and a planting buffer should be established adjacent to the highway.



8 - Parking should be placed in the rear and/or side of the building. Setback provides room to preserve existing vegetation or establish new buffer planting along the roadway.

Number of Parking Spaces

The dimensions and number of parking spaces required by the zoning ordinance must be adhered to. Parking space variances should be discouraged except in mixed-use developments or retirement centers.

Handicap Access

New York State law requires that any shopping center with at least five separate retail stores or at least 20 off-street parking spaces provided for the public must designate at least five percent or ten spaces, whichever is less, for persons with disabilities.

Bicycle Parking

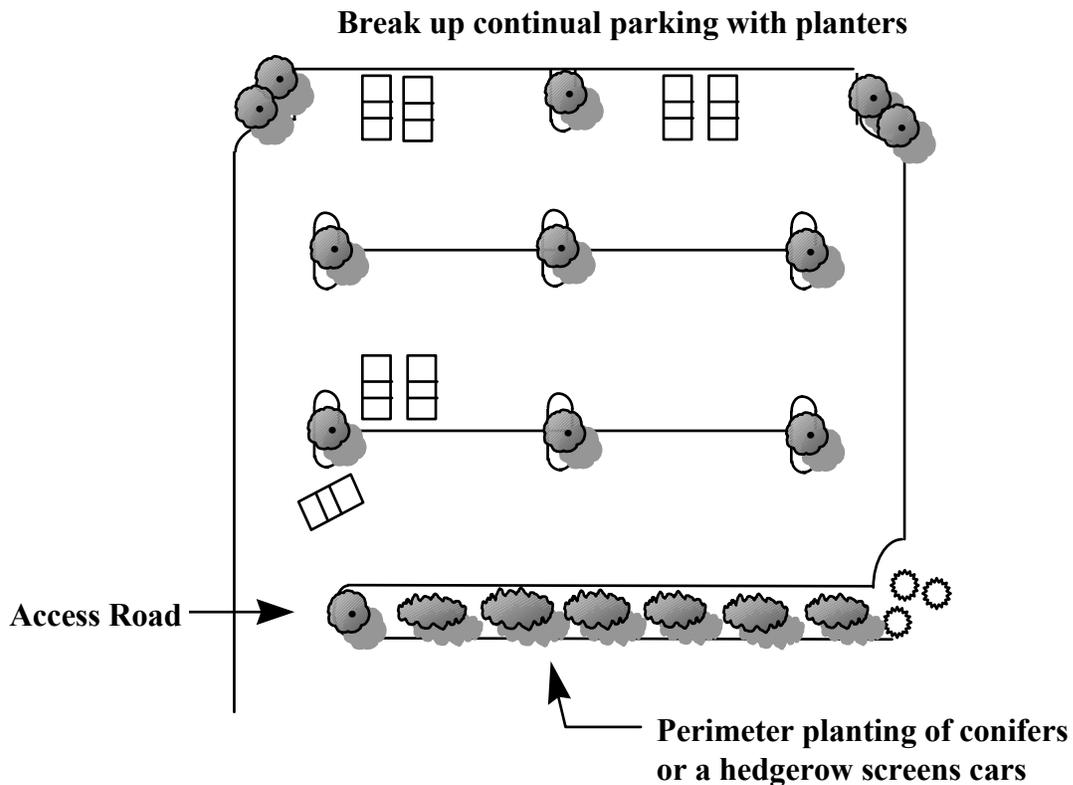
Regardless of uses on site, space should be provided for the parking of bicycles. Bicycle racks and/or bicycle lockers should be provided.

Maneuvering Areas

Regardless of where the parking lot is located, all vehicular maneuvering requirements for entry and exit to and from individual parking spaces should be executed entirely on site.

Landscaping

The paved areas of large parking lots should be interspersed with landscaped views containing trees and/or other natural growing materials. Unrelieved expanses of asphalt or concrete are monotonous while



also detracting from the overall attractiveness of the site.

9 - Planters and curbed planting beds help control traffic movement and parking and contribute to the attractiveness of commercial/office developments.

Parking Curbs

Parking spaces should have wheel stops and/or curbs to assist in orderly parking and to separate pedestrian walkways from vehicular traffic.

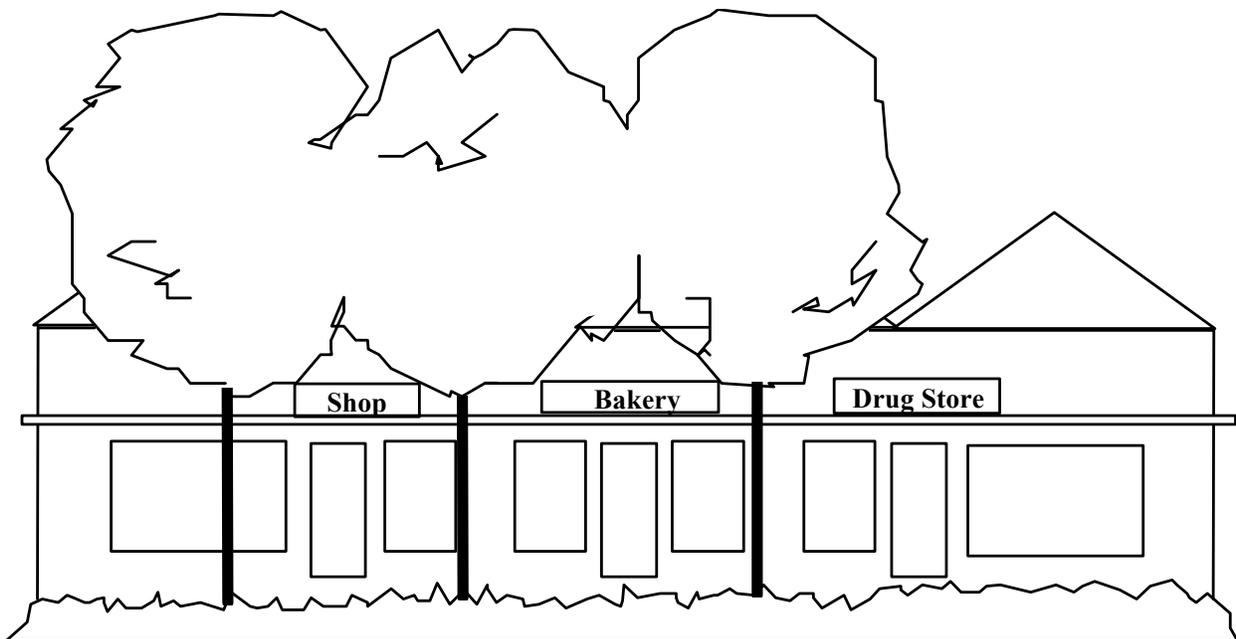
Parking Area Lighting

Adequate exterior lighting should be provided within parking areas. Particular emphasis should be placed on appropriate lighting at parking lot entrances, exits and barriers. All lighting should be positioned to minimize glare and illumination beyond the development.

Screening

It is preferable to place off-street parking behind structures and away from the highway. When parking lots must front a public right-of-way, screening is strongly recommended. In addition to a minimum 10' landscape buffer, a wall, hedge row, berm or combination of the above, is encouraged as an effective screening treatment.

A good example of this practice can be found along many of Elmira College's recently constructed parking lots. In most cases, a thick planting of an approximately five (5) high hedgerow buffers the passer-by from the interior of the parking lot.



10 - Planting buffers around parking lots improve views onto the site.

Covered Spaces

When covered parking is included as a segment of the site plan, the structure should be architecturally compatible with the remainder of the development.

Glare

The glare from auto headlights within the parking lot area should not have an adverse impact on adjacent land uses or public rights-of-way.

Traffic Impact

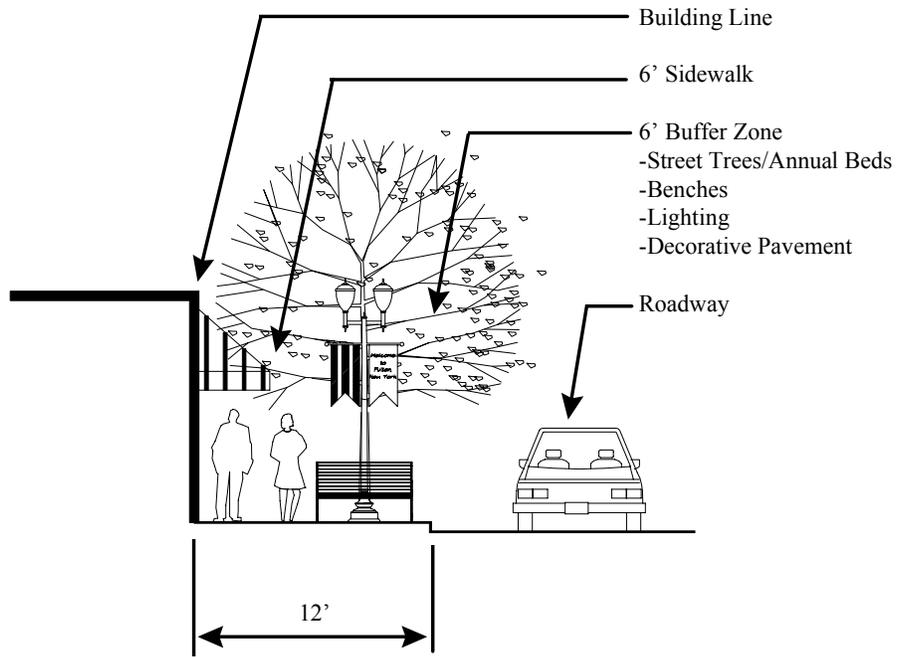
During the project design phase, an analysis of the proposed development's impact on increased traffic flow should be provided to the appropriate local officials for review.

Public Rights-of-Way

Retain public ownership of public rights-of-way to provide continued, convenient access to public utilities and to permit streetscape improvements such as street furniture, grass and planting strips, etc. Design treatments within the public right-of-way should be unified and consistent throughout the length of the street corridor. Infrastructure elements should be compatible with each other to achieve design cohesiveness with adjacent private sector development.

Landscape Buffers

Areas between curbs and the sidewalks and/or public right-of-way lines should be landscaped as an alternative to paving. Street trees are the most suitable plants within the public right-of-way corridor and should be spaced at approximately 50 feet apart for large trees and 30 feet for small to medium trees, closer spacing may be used in areas with low traffic speeds and frequent pedestrian use to strengthen street edges. Trees lessen glare and allow the motorist to concentrate on the street. When streets carrying heavy traffic abut residential, recreation or pedestrian areas, steps should be taken to screen and minimize the noise, fumes, and other adverse effects of the traffic. This may be achieved through building berms or fences. Berms and fences should be softened by installing plants, trees, and shrubs.



11 - Plant materials and landscaping in the public right-of-way provides shade for pedestrians and minimizes glare for drivers.

D. PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Convenient and safe pedestrian access to and from commercial and residential development is essential for the well-being of a community. This is especially true when connecting area neighborhoods with downtown Elmira as well as neighborhoods that surround pockets of neighborhood commercial businesses. The absence of a sidewalk/walkway system discourages pedestrian traffic or renders the pedestrians watchful of vehicles, but mostly, it deprives communities of places for people to casually visit with other people.

Residential Walkways

Secure and efficient pedestrian walkway systems should be encouraged and maintained. Pedestrian connections should be provided from residences to recreation areas, neighborhood schools, commercial areas, downtown, churches, parking areas, and other public facilities.

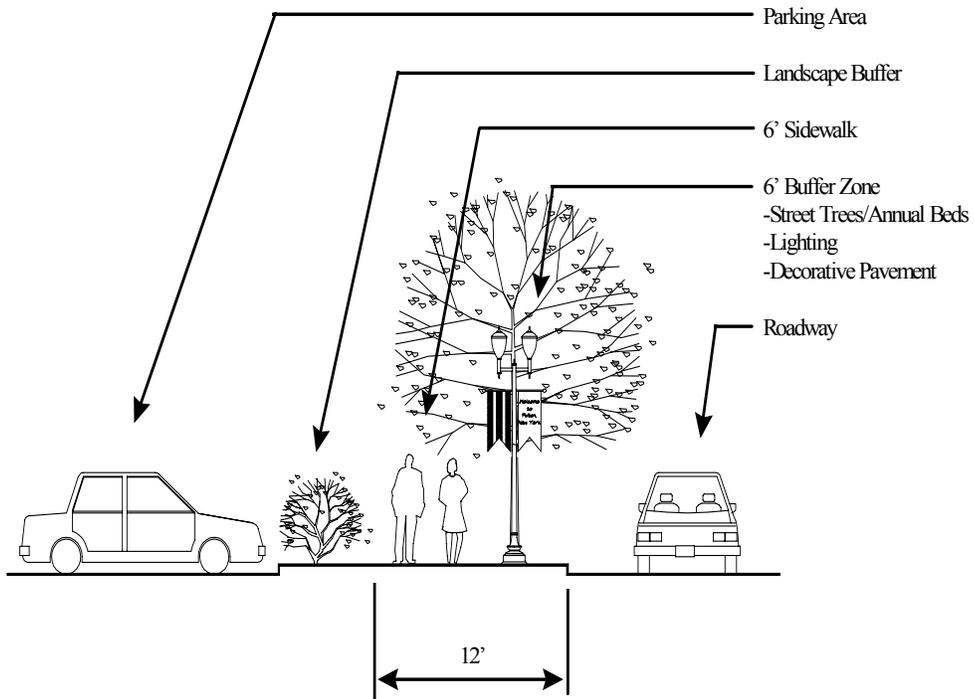
The width and types of walkway paving is dependent upon the use volumes and the walkway locations. Landscape plantings should be provided along these walkways to provide a pedestrian scale, enclosure, and shade. Barrier-free circulation should be incorporated into residential walkways systems for use by the handicapped. Sidewalks should be located at least on one side of both public and private rights-of-way. For higher density projects, sidewalks along both sides of the residential street are strongly encouraged. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 40" wide. Sidewalks and pedestrian walkways should not be used for drainage.

Commercial, Industrial, and Office Walkways

Secure and convenient pedestrian walkway access should be provided from parking lots, sidewalks, and primary entrances to commercial, industrial and office facilities. Sidewalks in and around commercial and industrial facilities should be a minimum of 40" wide. Barrier-free circulation should be incorporated into commercial, industrial, and office walkway systems for use by the handicapped.

Pedestrian Safety

Street design which delineates pedestrian uses from vehicle uses can make a significant contribution to pedestrian safety. During the day, differentiation of paving materials can be used to provide positive optical guidance. At night, delineation of pedestrian and vehicular pathways can be achieved through differentiations in the paved width and by the lighting layouts, and by providing curbs or other barriers to protect pedestrian walkways.



12 - Physical separation of vehicular and pedestrian movement creates a pleasant and safer environment for walkers.

E. ARCHITECTURE

New architecture should relate to the surrounding environment in regard to texture, scale, mass, proportion, and color. A strong visual relationship between the building, the site, and adjacent development is vital for overall design compatibility. The exterior appearances of a building should complement the historic character of Elmira. High standards of construction and quality materials should be incorporated into each new development.

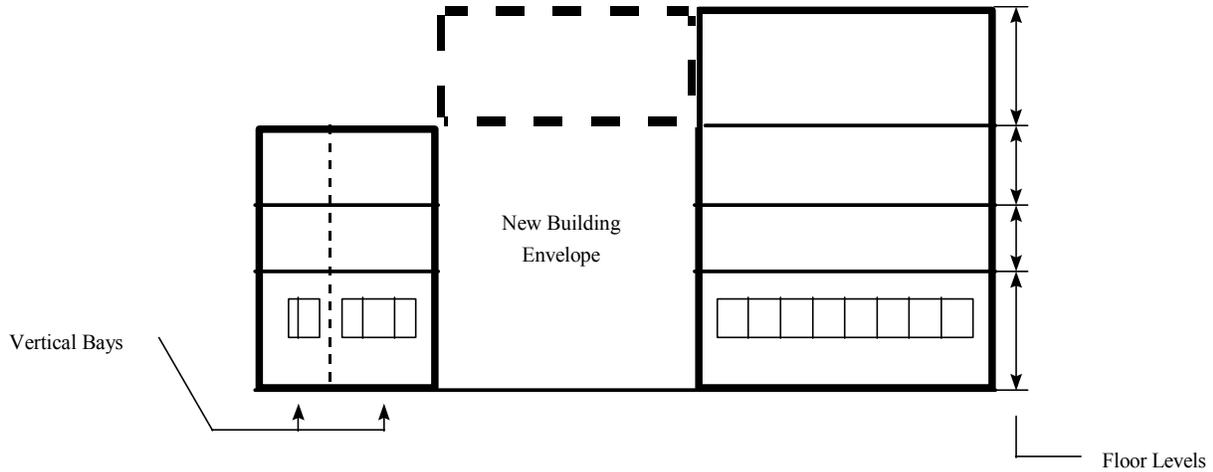
Architectural Form

Architectural standards should be applied consistently throughout the development. Emphasis should be placed on creating an interesting visual impression, particularly from public rights-of-way and adjacent lands. The use of different textures, complementary colors, shadow lines, detailing, and contrasting shapes to create an appealing facade is strongly encouraged. The use of single colors and/or blank walls is discouraged. All proposed buildings or structures should be sensitive to the existing community character. This includes:

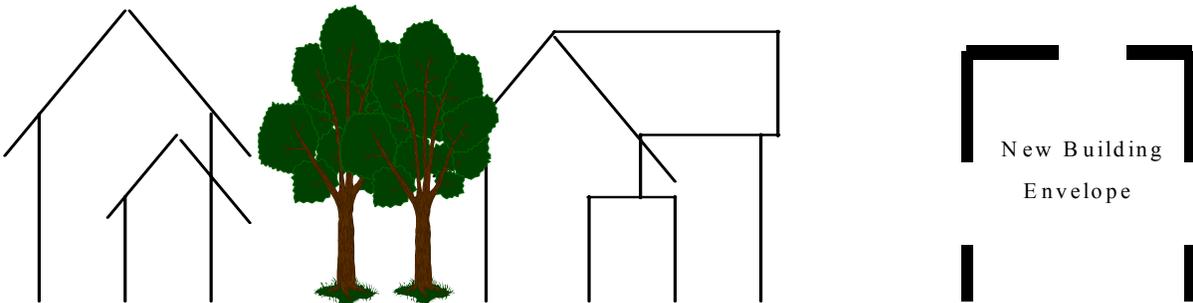
- Maintain the existing proportional relationship between buildings, open space, and building setbacks.
- The color, height, materials, and facade treatment of new development should not dramatically contrast with the predominant style of adjacent buildings.
- Provide strong, clear boundaries between neighborhoods, different land uses, and land use intensity.
- Architectural form should retain and strengthen the character of historic districts.
- Buildings should achieve a human scale and interest.

Building Height

The scale of the development should not overpower neighboring buildings. Through the use of variations in building height, roof line and grade definition, the perceived height of the building or project can be effectively reduced.

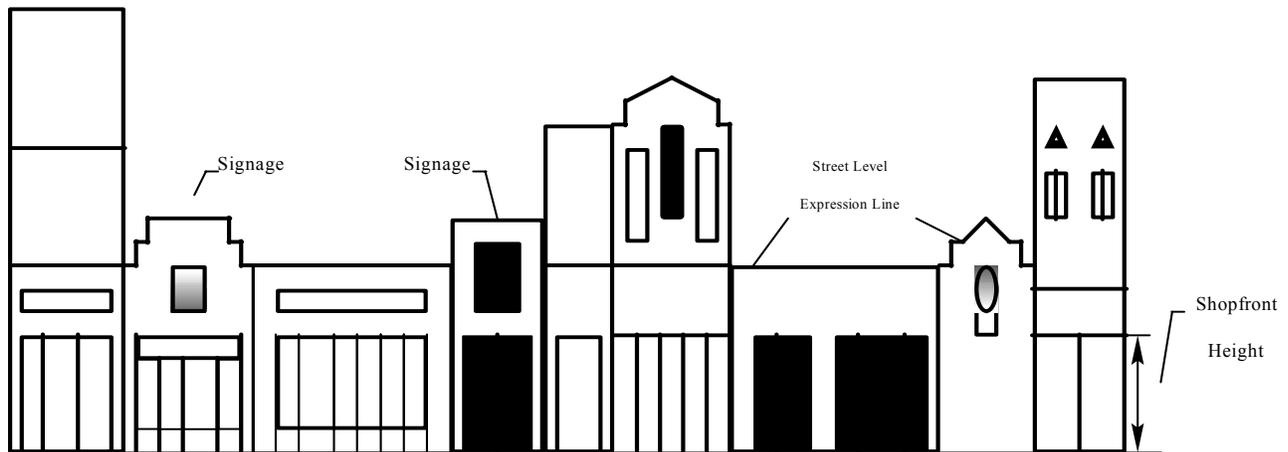


13 - Infill buildings should fill space defined by adjacent buildings, harmonize with surrounding character, and maintain facade rhythms and street lines



14 - New development in residential areas should reflect the character of surrounding architecture in scale, street setback, roof pitch, etc.

Building Elements



15 - Building elements forming a collective identity.

Phased Development

Each phase of a phased development project should be able to attain a stand alone as a visual unit.

Exterior Materials

The quality of exterior materials should be sufficiently durable to guarantee low maintenance, stability, and a reasonable life span.

Mechanical Equipment

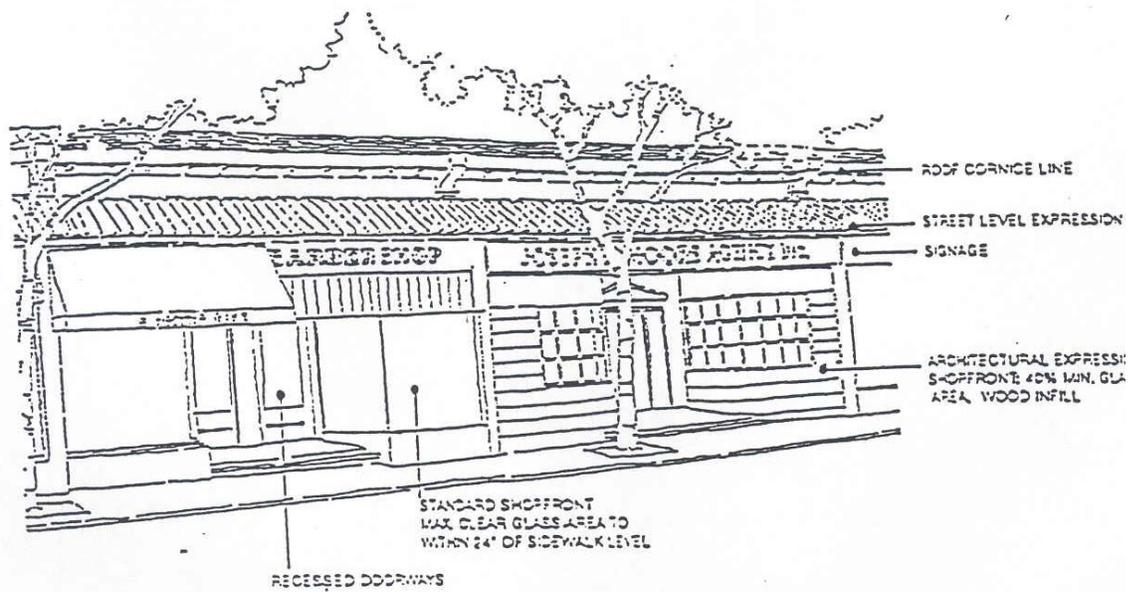
- Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from public view by the use of architecturally compatible materials.
- Ground level mechanical and service equipment (such as air- conditioning equipment, and utility boxes and meters) should be screened from public view by the use of landscaping, walls, fencing or other design treatments compatible with the finishes of the principal structure.

Hazardous Glares/Reflections

Highly reflective surfaces that create hazardous glares are discouraged.

Reference Buildings

Figures 16, 17 - Various architectural styles.

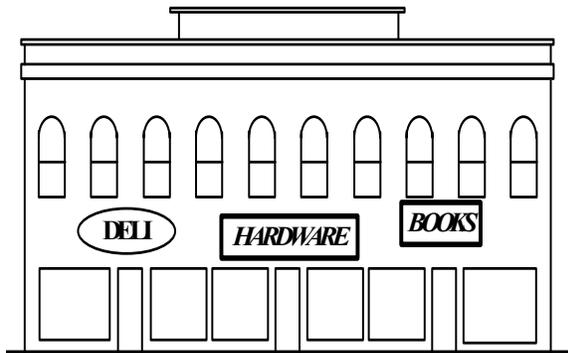


F. SIGNAGE

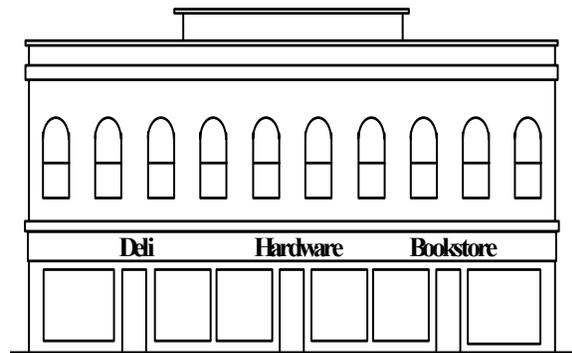
Attractive, coordinated, well-designed signs have a positive impact on both local businesses and the community. They provide a defined identification of individual businesses, stimulate business performance, create a pleasing environment that will attract people, and enhance the image of the community.

Commercial/On-Premise Signs

Signage needs should be determined primarily by criteria established by the building's architecture, the relative size of the sign, and the message. Signs should be an integral design element of a building's architecture and be compatible with the building's style in terms of location, scale, color and lettering.



Avoid



Preferred

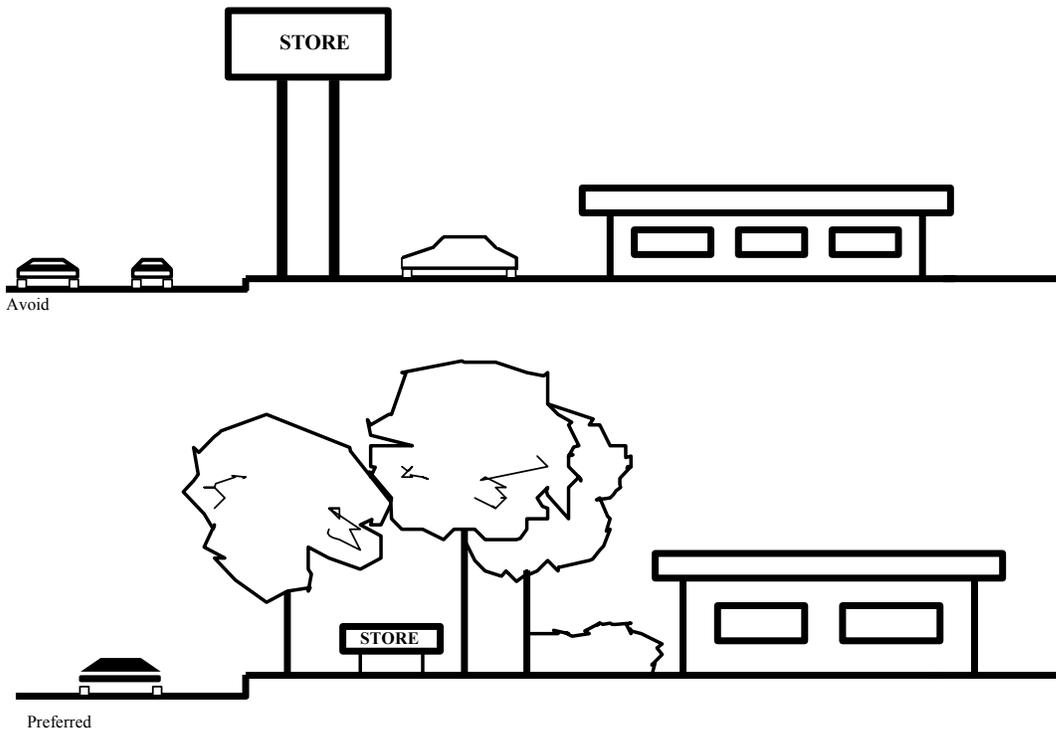
18 - An example of curb cut locations on a street corner.

Consideration for sign placement should take into account whether the sign will be viewed by pedestrians, motorists or both. Signage should be considered within its setting and designed according to the scale, texture, and proportion in which it will ultimately be viewed. Signs should be legible and appropriate to the business and its project image.



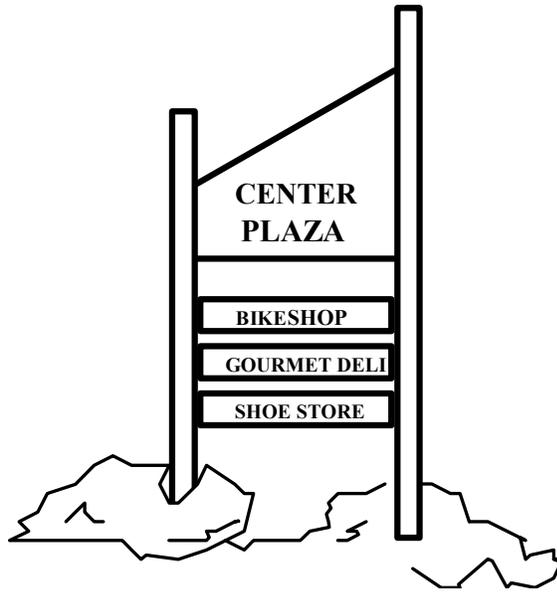
19 - An example of a sign with a strong visual relationship to business image.

Freestanding signs should consist of materials and colors similar to the primary structure. Wall signs should not be more than 15 feet above grade level. Monument signs, along major corridors, should be integrated with the landscaping for the site.



20 - Signage along commercial corridors should be integrated with site landscaping

Freestanding signs relating to an assemblage of businesses, e.g., shopping centers, should be grouped and visually coordinated to reduce confusion.



21 - An example of coordinated signage appropriate for small shopping centers or plazas.

Commercial/Off-Premise Signs

Off-premise signage should be in scale, color and proportion to surrounding properties to which the message is being conveyed. Particular emphasis should be placed on the size of the sign in relation to the speed limit along the corridor where it is placed.

Traffic Signs

Signs play a significant role in forming the character of a street corridor. Signs can either contribute significantly to or detract from the visual quality of a public right-of-way. Street and highway signs must be clean, simple, and easy to read if they are to be legible for drivers who always have other demanding visual tasks to perform simultaneously. The relevant governmental agencies should strive to locate all sign poles at a consistent dimension from the curb. The cumulative effects of signs within the public right-of-way should not create confusion for motorists or adverse visual impacts on the surrounding community. Signage which is redundant or excessive should be removed. The following guidelines for public sign control are recommended:

- To minimize information overload at intersections, decision points for the driver, signs located at street corners should be limited to those whose message is critical at that place, as, for example, directional signs and street name signs.
- To keep the number of poles along streets to a minimum, signage should be mounted on light fixture poles wherever possible. If required, supplementary poles should be sturdy and deeply set.
- In order not to compete with or be obstructed by poles, all signs should be sidemounted parallel or perpendicular to the street axis as appropriate. When the pole-to-curb distance is not sufficient for sidemounting on the curb side without the risk of damage by passing vehicles, signs should be sidemounted on the sidewalk side of the pole. Vertical spacing between signs should be standardized.
- All mounting hardware and the backs of all signs should be painted to match the poles. Traffic signs should be considered part of the total streetscape and should be designed accordingly.

APPENDIX C

CITY PARKS ANALYSIS

**MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA
CITY PARKS ANALYSIS**

I. Introduction

There are a number of factors that contribute to and shape a recreation plan. As the master plan update process nears completion, the city felt it was important to examine individual parks to determine if additional ones should be developed, closed, or expanded (both in terms of size and programmed activity). Reviewing and analyzing this situation will help the city determine the future course of action in terms of park management.

When considering park management, there are a number of factors that influence open space and recreation plans. These include:

- children starting organized athletics at an earlier age;
- greater level of sophistication in management of organized sports;
- organized competition throughout the year (rather than 1-2 seasons);
- introduction of new sports (i.e., roller-hockey);
- extended school programs could reduce availability of school facilities for non-student uses;
- increased cost for land and capital improvements are forcing changes in the design of recreational facilities; and
- physical fitness is increasingly important to our well being as we grow older as a society.

These factors and trends point out that city staff is faced with important decisions regarding parks and recreation. To assist them in making decisions a detailed look at city parks was conducted and this report summarizes those findings. In addition to the information in this report, the city conducted a community survey which contained a parks and recreation section. Combined, the report and survey can help city officials make informed decisions.

II. Community Survey - Parks and Recreation

In March, 1996 a survey was sent to 879 randomly selected households. The names and addresses were obtained from the voter registration roll. A total of 390 responses were received from the sample pool which allows the City to be 95% confident that the resulting statistics will have a sampling error of $\pm 5\%$. This statistic indicates that the City can be between 90% and 100% confident that the survey responses will accurately depict the community's feelings as a whole. The City Council, staff, Master Plan Committees and consultants utilized the survey results to shape the Master Plan Update. Because the survey was statistically controlled, the results were interpreted as the consensus of the general public.

In general the survey had 7 sections that touched on various issues. These included: citywide issues, city priorities, neighborhood issues, traffic and transportation, parks and recreation, downtown issues and respondent profile. Each issue is discussed on a topic basis in the Master Plan. However, the results relating to parks and recreation are presented here as a means to direct the general goals, policies and recommendations within this analysis.

When community residents were asked about the overall impression of the parks in the City, 60% felt that the facilities in the parks are inadequate for the public needs and should be upgraded. Another 25% of the respondents felt that the City has the right number of parks, but they could be located in more useful places. When asked if additional improvements or attractions (i.e., rides, ball fields, etc.) are needed in the City parks, 52% responded in favor. However, 47% answered no to the same question. One reason for this discrepancy may be due to lack of awareness and/or simply not having an interest seeking this type of activity.

Residents were to describe their observations regarding City parks. Given a predefined list, 57% of the felt that the parks were underutilized, 43% indicated that youths utilize public school facilities more than City parks, and 37% thought that Elmira City parks are utilized predominately by organized sports leagues. The observations expressed in this question relate directly to the factors that influence recreation listed above.

Nearly half of the respondents (47%) felt that Eldridge Park should be developed as a recreational complex with a variety of sports offered. When asked what sports they would like to see, respondents indicated baseball, miniature golf, jogging/running trails, tennis, ice skating, horseshoes and basketball. Each of these categories received over 30% of the total response rates. Only 2% of the respondents indicated that the park should be fully developed with no recreational opportunities available. In response to these results, City staff has recently acquired a grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to construct new baseball, soccer, and other play fields in Eldridge Park.

The purpose of this survey was to cover a broad range of issues to give direction to the City's Master Plan. Therefore, the survey results with regard to park utilization do not provide the level of detail that is required to answer specific questions. For example, 25% of the respondents indicated that the City has the right number of parks, but that they should be located in more useful places. A logical next question would be "where?" Although specific details were not covered in this survey, this report highlights where these detailed questions would be helpful to solidify the recommendations.

III. City Parks and Needs Assessment

The City of Elmira has a number of parks and public areas that provide a variety of activities, supervised recreation, and educational programs. The City also owns and operates a public golf course, known as the Mark Twain Golf Course. Additionally, within a short drive is Harris Hill Soaring Site, a county maintained facility for motor-less aircraft and home of the National Soaring Museum and Erin Park Station. Both of these facilities are served by public transportation. There are a total of 25 parks totaling 181 acres. The local city owned parks have continued to serve the City of Elmira and its citizens for the past twenty years.

Recreational Needs Assessment

Utilizing National Standards can provide a starting point in understanding of the city's status in terms of deficiencies or capacity. In this regard, the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends the following standards for parkland:

<u>Park Land</u>	<u>NPRA Standard</u>	<u>Standard for Elmira</u>	<u>Actual Elmira Parks</u>
Neighborhood Park or Playground	1.7 ac./1000 pop.	57.33 acres	43.03
<u>Community Park</u>	<u>7.0 ac./1000 pop.</u>	<u>236 acres</u>	<u>137.06</u>
Total Parkland	8.7 ac./1000 pop ²	293.33 acres	180.09(*)

(*) City residents frequently utilize facilities at the public schools. There are a total of 132.9 acres of land available for recreation at local schools which is not reflected in the total listed above..

City Owned Parks

Following is a list of city parks by type (neighborhood or community), the size and the available activities.

Park	Acres	Activities
<u>Neighborhood Park</u>		
Cypress St. Park	2.2	Wading pool, basketball, baseball, playground, tether ball
Ernie Davis Park	3.1	Swimming pool, pavilions, picnicking, playground, horseshoes, basketball
Gaines St.	0.9	Shelter, playground, basketball
Grove Park	8.3	Pavilion, wading pool, horseshoes, basketball, picnicking, playground
Harriet St. Park	1	Wading pool, playground
Hathorn Park	3.68	Wading pool, playground, picnicking
Hudson St.	7.3	Basketball, baseball, shelter, playground, tether ball
Katy Leary Park	2.74	Wading pool, basketball, shelter, playground
Keefe St. Park	0.56	Basketball, playground
Magee St.	0.2	Playground,
Pulaski Park	8.4	Horseshoes, playground, baseball, basketball
Quatrano Park	3.29	Baseball, tennis, playground, pavilion, basketball
Rhode (Beach St.)	0.4	Pavilion, picnic, basketball
Sly Park	0.96	Shelter, playground
Subtotal	43.03	
<u>Community Park</u>		
Brand Park	27.2	Pool, exercise trail, softball, basketball, picnicking, horseshoes, playground
Brick (Weyer)	12.68	Pavilion, playground, picnicking, pond
Clemens Square	1.6	Passive recreation
Eldridge Park	57.7	Carousel Market, pavilion, picnicking, softball, dance hall
Kennedy Valve Park	5.69	Baseball
Mark Twain	6.59	Picnicking, board games
McKinnon Park	15.3	Baseball, pavilion, tennis, picnicking, playground
Miller Pond	8.2	Pavilion, playground, picnicking, tennis, shelter
Wisner Park	2.1	Passive recreation
Subtotal	137.06	
GRAND TOTAL	180.09	

SOURCE: City of Elmira Buildings and Grounds Division, Survey and Needs Assessment - Park System, June 1995.

Other Recreational Facilities

City School District

In addition to city owned facilities, the Elmira City School District owns and maintains a number of recreational facilities. Typically, it is unsafe to assume that city residents have full access to recreational facilities at public schools. However, in the early 1980s the City of Elmira contributed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to improve recreational facilities with the agreement that the facilities would be available to city residents. Additionally, the larger recreational facilities, such as the natatoriums at EFA and Southside, are available to city residents during the summer and school year.

The following table lists the available “green area” that is available at each public school. Green areas can be defined as playing fields (soccer, baseball, football), passive green areas, tennis courts, and running tracks. Although these types of facilities are not available at each school, City residents have complete access to the facilities unless a school event is taking place.

Public School Facilities

School	Acreage of Green Area
Beecher	4.7
Booth	0.8
Broadway	34.9
Coburn	3.5
Diven	4.4
Ernie Davis	4.9
EFA	33.3
Fassett	5.7
Riverside	1.9
SHS	27.9
Washington	2
McNaught	8.9
TOTAL	132.9

Regional Recreational Facilities

In addition to parkland within the City, Elmira citizens also have a wealth of activities in close proximity including county owned Harris Hill Park, the city owned Mark Twain Golf Course, Erin Park Station, Tanglewood Nature Center, and the Finger Lakes region, namely Seneca Lake, which is 25 miles away. Elmira is also the center of cultural activity in the county. It houses the Arnot Art Gallery, the Watson Art Gallery at Elmira College, and the Chemung County Historical Society. Although these facilities are outside

of the City boundary, each can be accessed via public transportation making additional recreational facilities within relatively easy access for city residents.

IV. Proximity Analysis

To help understand the relationship of city parks to each other, to city residents, and to the proposed zoning changes, a map was created illustrating each of these aspects. Figure 1 - CITY PARK ANALYSIS shows the location of each park, city tax parcels, and the proposed zoning.

Methodology

Churches, small commercial centers, and community parks often serve as unifying elements for neighborhoods. They are often found at the center of neighborhoods and are surrounded by a high population density. Because people will walk approximately 1,500 feet within their neighborhood, a neighborhood boundary can be roughly estimated as a 1,500 radius from any of these elements. As stated above, Figure 1 highlights the location of each of the city parks. Surrounding each park, a 1,500 foot buffer was created to approximate the area served. Utilizing the 1,500 foot buffer, a number of analyses were completed and are summarized in the table on the following page. Based on this information, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Many of the parks are within 1,500 feet of each other indicating adequate coverage for the majority of the City.
- The northwest section of the city, defined as west of Euclid Avenue to the city line and north of the Chemung River, is the only area that does not have adequate park coverage. Within this section, there is one neighborhood park - Grove Park. Historically, there was a park at the corner of Hoffman and Church Streets, but it has been developed as a professional office.
- The total number of people and number of apartment buildings within 1,500 feet of each park was estimated. Grove Park, Cypress Street Park, Pulaski Park, Sly Park, and Gaines Street Park all have over 1,000 people living within 1,500 feet. Although Ernie Davis Park, Katy Leary Park, and Wisner Park have a lower population residing in single to multi-family dwelling units around them, they have the highest number of apartment buildings indicating that they serve a large population.
- Parks with a relatively low population and low number of apartment buildings surrounding them include: Harriet Street Park, Hathorn Park, Keefe Street Park, Patch Park, and Rhode (Beach Street) Park.
- Magee Street Park has almost 1,000 people living around it, however, it is within 2 to 6 blocks of two larger parks including Pulaski and Eldridge.
- Patch, Eldridge, Parks are located in Industrial Districts and Kennedy Valve, Wisner, and Mark Twain Parks are located in commercial districts.



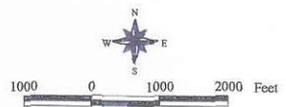
Figure 1

Date: 12/9/1998

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE
CITY OF ELMIRA, NY

CITY PARK ANALYSIS

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ 1,500' Buffer | Large Lot Single Family (R-AA) | General Commercial (B-E) |
| ■ Parks | Single Family (R-A) | Light Industrial (I-A) |
| | 1 to 2 Family (R-B) | General Industrial (I-B) |
| | 1 to 4 Family (R-C) | Gateway Business (BG) |
| | Multi Family (R-D) | Higher Educational (HED) |
| | Neighborhood Commercial (B-A) | Hospital (HA) |
| | Central Business District (B-B) | Parks/Conservation (C) |
| | Specialized Commercial (B-C) | |
| | Historic Commercial (B-D) | |



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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, AND PLANNERS P.C.
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Park	Current Zone	Proposed Zone	Park w/in 1,500' ?	Approx. Population w/in 1,500'	Number of Apt. Bldgs. w/in 1,500'	Observations
<u>Neighborhood Park</u>						
Cypress St. Park	1, 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	N	1,510	1	In center of single family neighborhood
Ernie Davis Park	General Commercial	1 to 4 Fam.	Y	344	13	Surrounded by Industrial and CBD and close to Jones Court
Gaines St.	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	1,139	3	Center of neighborhood but 3 blocks from Brand Park
Grove Park	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	N	1,609	21	Center of neighborhood; only park west of Walnut St.
Harriet St. Park	Multi Fam (4+)	Multi Fam.	Y	189	6	Close to Kennedy Valve park, dike, and play areas at Dewittsburg housing complex.
Hathorn Park	1 to 2 Fam	Multi Fam.	Y	541	1	Adjacent to play areas at Hathorn Ct. Apartments and Woodlawn Cemetery
Hudson St.	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	770	0	Center of neighborhood, adjacent to river. No access to river due to cement wall
Katy Leary Park	1 to 4 Fam.	1 to 2 Fam.	Y	935	32	At edge of neighborhood and adjacent to large number of apartment buildings
Keefe St. Park	Industrial	1 to 2 Fam	Y	765	7	Next to SS High School
Magee St.	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	915	2	Within 2 to 6 blocks of 3 parks (Hathorn, Pulaski, and Edridge)
Pulaski Park	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	1,456	4	Center of neighborhood; near Woodlawn Cemetery
Quatrano Park	General Commercial	1 Fam.	Y	748	4	At fringe of single family neighborhood
Rhode (Beach St.)	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	312	3	Center of an isolated neighborhood
Patch Park	Light Industrial	Light Industrial	Y	608	4	City received approval to develop this park.
Sly Park	1 to 4 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	1,375	18	In center of neighborhood and only park north of Miller St. between arterial and Maple Ave.
<u>Community Park</u>						
Brand Park	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	519	15	Large park with multiple activities; only public pool outside of highschoools
Brick (Weyer)	1 to 4 Fam.	1 to 2 Fam.	Y	849	9	Close to McKinnon Park but small pond offers nice atmosphere
Clemens Square						
Eldridge Park	Industrial	Industrial	N	Not Avail.	Not Avail.	Large regional park; city is currently improving
Kennedy Valve Park	Urban Arterial Business	General Commercial	Y	24	2	Not a large surrounding pop. but offers baseball fields and access to river
Mark Twain	CBD	CBD	Y	194	14	Riverfront park and integral to providing public access to river
McKinnon Park	1 to 4 Fam.	1 to 2 Fam.	Y	684	3	Provides area for small fry football
Wisner Park	CBD	CBD	Y	295	34	Focus area of downtown
Miller Pond	1 to 2 Fam.	1 Fam.	Y	583	0	Integral park to southside neighborhood

V. Brand Park Pool and Mark Twain Riverfront Park

Brand Park Pool and Mark Twain Riverfront Park are two of the City's largest parks and each is located at very visible sites within the community. Key questions regarding future use have arisen with regard to these facilities.

First, Brand Park Pool underwent a structural integrity study in January 1995. The study concluded that, although structurally sound, the pool is in need of major reconstruction. City officials are now asking whether or not they should invest \$1.03 million to complete the improvements.

Second, Mark Twain Riverfront Park was constructed after the 1972 flood with Urban Renewal funding. As a result, the land is obligated to remain as parkland until 1998. As this deadline approaches, City officials are asking whether or not the park should remain. If so, what types of improvements, if any, should be made?

These questions are important policy decisions for the City Administration with profound implications for both the immediately affected neighborhoods and the general population. The following discussion attempts to present some preliminary findings in an effort to direct City officials in their decision making.

Brand Park Pool

Brand Park Pool is the City's only outdoor swimming facility. It is open from late June to late August and the entrance fees are \$.50 for children under 17 and \$1.00 for adults. Throughout the summer, the pool is used daily by local children, YWCA, Latch Key, and daycare programs. Chemung County Summer Cohesion sites also attend Brand Park Pool. For 1997, a total of 415 adults and 7,557 children (not including 2,744 bathers during the "free swim") used the pool generating \$4,343.45 in revenue.

With regard to swimming facilities, City residents also have the ability to use the natatoriums at EFA and SHS both during the school year and during the summer and Harris Hill swimming pool and Erin Park Station during the summer. Additionally, residents have the option of accessing these parks via public transportation.

In January 1995, the City sponsored a study by the Sear-Brown Group to investigate the structural integrity of the pool. Sear-Brown concluded that the 48 year old facility is in need of major reconstruction and it no longer meets the NYS Department of Health's Sanitary Code nor the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In an effort to comply with all of the regulations, Sear-Brown provided a line by line estimate and concluded that it would cost the City approximately \$1.03 million to address each.

The City must now decide whether to close the facility, modify it so that it can be used year-round, or maintain the facility and complete the structural enhancements as recommended by Sear-Brown.

In making recommendations for future use and operation of this facility it is important to consider a number of factors. Is there enough capacity at the other swimming facilities to accommodate Brand Park Pool users? If Brand Park is closed, will the displaced recreational users have comparable access to alternative facilities? Is Brand Park Pool a public health hazard in terms of its structural integrity? Who, in terms of demographic make-up, is utilizing this facility the most?

The Sear-Brown study addressed the physical condition of the pool and the associated costs to repair the facility to bring it into compliance. The unanswered question relates to the user group needs, access, convenience, and choice. These questions warrant similar detailed review as the physical analysis. Given this discussion, the following general conclusions can be drawn.

If the City should decide to close Brand Park it is believed, after telephone interviews with Chemung County Youth Program Coordinator and the City School Athletic Director, that there is adequate capacity to accommodate additional swimmers at other facilities. For example, Harris Hill Pool, operated by the County, could handle another 1/3 to 1/2 the volume they are handling now. However, although the natatoriums at the high schools have adequate capacity during the summer months, it is believed to occur due to the general preference to swim outdoors during this time frame.

In terms of accessibility, each one of the swimming facilities in the City, Harris Hill, and Erin Park Station can be reached via public transportation. Although public transportation is a viable, these facilities are not as centrally located and as easily accessible as Brand Park Pool.

The final question, the demographic make-up of the user group, is one that cannot be answered without further study. Based on adequate accessibility and capacity of other swimming facilities and the tremendous costs to bring the pool into compliance, the initial recommendation could be to close this facility. However, any recommendation with regard to recreational facilities must also consider the user group needs, access, convenience and choice. Therefore, we recommend a user survey be conducted to profile the typical patron of this facility. This information could then be the basis for a more refined study and recommendations.

The survey should include questions with regard to frequency of use, age, income, address, whether the respondent has the means (i.e., money to use public transportation or a personal vehicle) to access other swimming facilities, and whether or not other the respondent currently uses other swimming facilities. This information, in combination with attendance figures, will provide the City with the necessary data to be able to make an informed decision. If it appears, as a result of the survey, that the existing user group can easily access to the natatoriums, Harris Hill, or Erin Park Station and therefore would not be seriously affected by the closing of Brand Park Pool, then consideration can be given to closing the facility.

Mark Twain Riverfront Park

As stated above, this park was created as a result of the 1972 flood. Buildings along the southern edge of Water Street from Main Street to Maple Avenue were demolished. With regard to this parks analysis, the future use of the area between Main Street and Clemens Center Parkway has been put into question.

Before making any recommendations, a key question must be addressed. What is the meaning or purpose of the park in the community? Is it to act as a neighborhood park or as green space in a dense urban environment? The answer to these questions provides the framework for the following recommendation.

As the park exists, it is physically unattractive, it is located in the middle of a “dead space” surrounded by a concrete sea wall on one side and a two lane road on the other, one has to make a conscious effort to go to the park, there is no compelling reason drawing visitors, and no one has “ownership” of the park, or in other words, it is not “part” of a neighborhood in the same way other City parks are.

Although this list appears negative, the park serves an important function in that it provides much needed green space in an urban environment. Additionally, it allows continuous public access to the Chemung River. Given these important attributes, it is important to define the role of the park in the context of downtown Elmira.

A portion of the answer resides in the park design. As it currently exists it is fundamentally flawed in that there is no compelling reason to risk crossing two lanes of traffic to go there. As a result, there are few users, no sense of public purpose, and without constituent group advocating the upkeep the park facility continues to deteriorate. At a practical level, there are no features drawing in visitors, no scenic vistas, and there are a variety of trees, shrubs, and berms that, when combined, create “hidden” spaces that are perceived as unsafe.

Examining the park in the context of the entire community and planned activities in downtown (i.e., the Civic Center and Sports Complex), provides direction. The following recommendations are put forth in an effort to bring clarity and purpose to the Mark Twain Riverfront Park:

Choices:

1. **Simplify** the greenspace to remove “hidden” spaces. This does not mean removing trees, however, relocating trees and separating shrubs will open up the park making it feel safer to visitors. In addition to creation open green space, design changes could be made so that a viewing area/platform is created for the river.
2. **Redesign Recreational Zone** - Create active, passive, and supporting recreational zone related downtown area.
Examples:
 3. Bocci, basketball, in-line skating, volleyball
 4. Limited supporting recreation/tourism - relate to art/historical societies or other civic organizations.
 5. Rotating large-scale public art program
6. Retain the park and target specific areas for infill development that compliments the recreation/open space and provides activity. Any development should be recreation related with the intention of making the park a “3 season” park thereby extending the annual use. For

example, should the Civic Center/Sports Complex be located downtown, a small restaurant or a facility that rents in-line skates or bicycles could be added to provide additional options for people visiting downtown Elmira.

VI. General Conclusions

After completing the proximity analysis it was determined that the majority of the parks within the city are in close proximity to many city residents. Based on the information presented, the following recommendations are put forth:

- *Develop New Park on City's Westside.* Although the City is fortunate to have adequate park coverage for the majority of its residents, the northwest section of the city, defined as west of Euclid Avenue to the City line and north of the Chemung River, does not. There was once a park at the corner of Hoffman and Church Streets but it was developed as a professional office. The result left only Grove Park and EFA for many west side residents. It is recommended that the City identify an area and develop a neighborhood park for west side residents. The purpose of the park would be a small play area with fixed structures that can serve the dense neighborhoods in and around the Near Westside Historic District. The new park should be located within the area defined as west of Walnut Street and south of Third Street.
- *Retain Remaining Parks.* The city is fortunate to have a wide variety of which significantly add to the quality of life of the city. As such, it is recommended that the remainder of the city parks be retained in their current state and that the recommended improvements outlined in the City's 1997 - 2001 Capital Improvement Program be completed.