

NOVEMBER 2020

NOMINATION STUDY + MASTER PLAN

SHERIDAN HOLLOW BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

ALBANY, NEW YORK

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|--|
| AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic | HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| ACAP – Albany Community Action Partnership | HVAC – Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning |
| ACDA – Albany Community Development Agency | IPH – Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless |
| ACES – Albany Center for Economic Success | LIHTC – Low-Income Housing Tax Credit |
| ACLB – Albany County Land Bank | NORC – Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities |
| ACLT – Albany Community Land Trust | NPRA – National Parks and Recreation Association |
| ADA – American Disabilities Act | NYS – New York State |
| AHP – Affordable Housing Partnership | NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation |
| BER – Business Environmental Risk | NYS DOS – New York State Department of State |
| BOA – Brownfield Opportunity Area | NYS DOT – New York State Department of Transportation |
| BOCES - Boards of Cooperative Educational Services | NYS EFC – New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation |
| CDC – Centers for Disease Control | NYS EPF – New York State Environmental Protection Fund |
| CDPHP – Capital District Physicians’ Health Plan | NYS ESD – New York State Empire State Development |
| CDTA – Capital District Transportation Authority | NYS HCR – New York State Homes and Community Renewal |
| CDTC – Capital District Transportation Committee | NYS OGS – New York State Office of General Services |
| CSO – Combined Sewer Overflow | NYSERDA – New York State Energy Research & Development Authority |
| DRI – Downtown Revitalization Initiative | PCB – Polychlorinated Biphenyl |
| EDF – Economic Development Fund | REC – Recognized Environmental Concern |
| ESA – Environmental Site Assessment | REDC – Regional Economic Development Council |
| FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency | RFP – Request for Proposals |
| FHA – Federal Housing Administration | SEQRA – State Environmental Quality Review Act |
| GHHI – Green & Healthy Homes Initiative | SHARE – Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy |
| GIGP – Green Innovation Grant Program | SONYMA – State of New York Mortgage Agency |
| HREC – Historic Recognized Environmental Concern | USDO – Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance |
| | UST – Underground Storage Tank |

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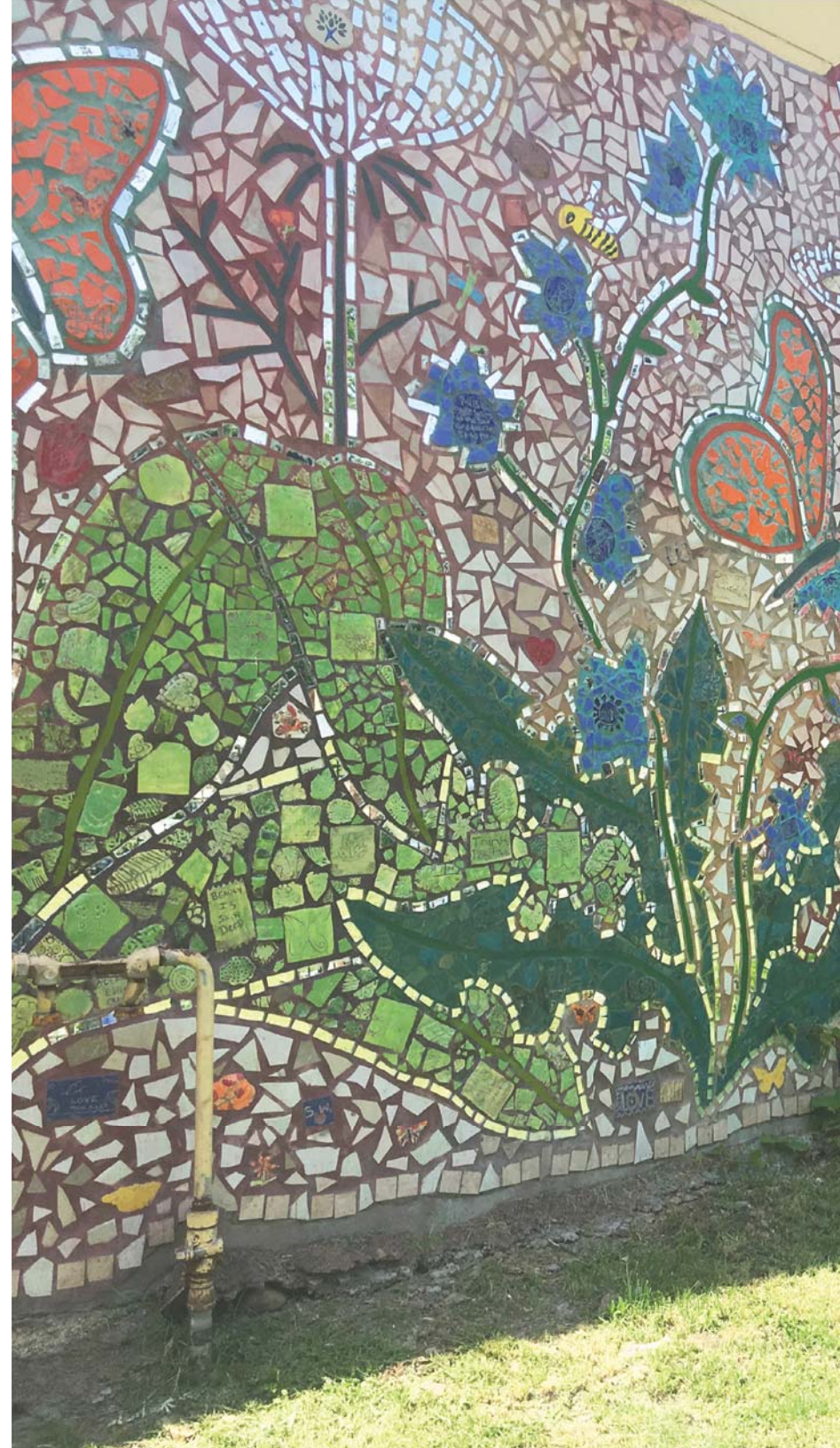
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**PROJECT
DESCRIPTION +
BOUNDARY**



Lead Project Sponsors

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

The Sheridan Hollow Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study + Master Plan is sponsored and led by the Affordable Housing Partnership. The Plan is funded by the New York State Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, and it will be submitted to the Secretary of State to request official designation of Sheridan Hollow as a BOA. Once designated as a BOA, Sheridan Hollow will receive support from DOS in implementing the Plan as well as preferential access to State grants. BOA designation will also help to encourage investment by promoting predictability in development and offering tax credits for eligible remediation and redevelopment projects.

AHP is joined in managing the project by the following key partners:

Sheridan Hollow Advisory Committee

Comprised of neighborhood residents, City officials, non-profit partners, housing activists, and development partners among others, the Sheridan Hollow Advisory Committee met regularly to guide and oversee the development of the Plan. All members of the Advisory Committee are listed on the Acknowledgments page of this document.

Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association

The Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association played a vital role in guiding the Plan and responding to development issues and recommendations.

Community Development Alliance of the Capital District

The Community Development Alliance of the Capital District – comprised of representatives from AHP, Albany Community Land Trust, the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, and the United Tenants of Albany – provided technical guidance in the areas of housing, redevelopment, and financing.

City of Albany Department of Planning & Development

The City of Albany Department of Planning & Development supported the Plan through mapping assistance and the coordination of current planning efforts, including the rezoning initiative.

Other Partners

Other key partners include: the Albany Department of Water & Water Supply, the Lexington Avenue Work Group – comprised of property owners and stakeholders – as well as State agencies, such as the Department of Health, NYS Homes and Community Renewal, and Empire State Development.

ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

The Affordable Housing Partnership of the Capital Region, Inc. is a neighborhood-based, non-profit organization that works to increase homeownership and housing affordability in and around Sheridan Hollow. AHP has over 30 years of experience promoting affordable homeownership and is a leader in coordinating future planning and development initiatives within the neighborhood. Its Homeownership Center is headquartered in the neighborhood.

In addition to facilitating community building, AHP also works with its sister agency, the Albany Community Land Trust, to increase the availability of and access to affordable housing by rebuilding and rehabilitating deteriorated structures. AHP has a strong track record of collaboration and coalition-building and is committed to working with its partner organizations to attract strategic investment and to make Sheridan Hollow a community of choice.



Project Overview

OVERVIEW

Location

The Sheridan Hollow Brownfield Opportunity Area is located within the City of Albany in Albany County, New York. The BOA boundaries roughly follow the extent of the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood – a relatively small, residential neighborhood nestled in a ravine between the Arbor Hill neighborhood and Washington Avenue. The BOA is bound by Clinton Avenue to the North, Pearl Street to the East, Elk and Spruce Streets to the South, and Lexington Avenue to the West. The New York State Capitol complex lies immediately south of the BOA, while its eastern edge is home to Downtown Albany’s arts and entertainment district.

BOA Characteristics

The Sheridan Hollow BOA is comprised of 106 acres and 828 parcels, including 9 strategic sites. The neighborhood is characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, a compact and walkable street grid, and nearby connections to major employers and Downtown Albany. Sheridan Hollow is home to a large minority community and has a diverse and growing population. It struggles, however, with poverty and unemployment and is one of the most economically-depressed neighborhoods in the City of Albany. It also has high vacancy rates, deteriorating building conditions, and potentially contaminated sites that disrupt the urban fabric, contribute to blight, and complicate redevelopment.

The Sheridan Hollow neighborhood struggles in particular with:

- **Uninhabitable residential properties.** Nearly every block in Sheridan Hollow has a vacant structure. Many are beyond repair or are in need of significant reinvestment up to and beyond their after-rehab market value.
- **Vacant parcels.** Vacant parcels create a pervasive negative image throughout the neighborhood, but are too small to support market-rate new construction. Demolition liens and potential contamination at these sites also make redevelopment financially infeasible.
- **Vacant commercial structures.** Many vacant commercial structures throughout the BOA are potential brownfields and possible contamination makes their redevelopment challenging and costly. Redevelopment of large commercial parcels, like the Freihofer complex, requires complicated financing schemes as well as access to scarce public investment.
- **Underutilized parcels.** Multiple underutilized parking lots and stretches of vacant land reinforce the sense of disinvestment.

Potential

While the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood has experienced historic geographic, political, and social marginalization, it is also positioned for revitalization when considered in a citywide context.

- **Increased demand for urban living.** Concurrent vacancies and increasing demand for urban living in the region highlight the opportunity to provide housing, work spaces, and neighborhood services that will attract new and retain existing residents in Sheridan Hollow – one of the city's most walkable and affordable neighborhoods.
- **Transform underutilized parcels into community assets.** Existing vacant and underutilized lots provide opportunities for new park or garden space or other community services that improve quality of life.
- **Increase housing options.** Providing mixed-income housing opportunities (e.g., homeownership opportunities and affordable rental housing units) will increase the economic potential of the neighborhood. New affordable housing developments, such as those undertaken by Habitat for Humanity and Home Leasing, have already begun in the neighborhood.
- **Build upon recent investments.** Recent public and private investments along the neighborhood's edges, such as the DRI and Redburn's housing developments, create catalysts for future investment.

- **Leverage local capacity and social capital.**

Stakeholders like non-profits, neighborhood associations, and local leaders provide community support and capacity, including: workforce training, small business development, and homeownership training and resources.

PURPOSE + NEED

This Plan represents the second step in the three-step NYS BOA Program, following the completion of the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Pre-Nomination Study in 2012. This Plan analyzes reuse and reinvestment potential for contaminated and underutilized sites within Sheridan Hollow and, from that analysis, identifies several key "strategic sites" with the greatest redevelopment potential whose reuse can be catalytic for the entire community. The Master Plan (Section 4) outlines site-specific plans for these strategic sites and also includes other recommended actions and policies to support neighborhood-wide revitalization, environmental remediation, economic development, and improved quality of life. A phased timeline, potential funding sources, and potential partnerships are identified for each proposed action in the Implementation Plan (Section 5). This Plan will build upon the success of recent initiatives and planning efforts and will provide an actionable strategy to transform Sheridan Hollow into the vibrant community that it has the potential to become.

WHAT IS THE BOA PROGRAM?

The three-step BOA Program provides municipalities and community organizations with technical and financial assistance (up to 90% of the total eligible project costs) to complete area-wide planning approaches to brownfield redevelopment. A "brownfield" or "brownfield site" is defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as "any real property where a contamination is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by DEC that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations."

A primary objective of the BOA Program is to address sites that have been negatively impacted by the presence, or perceived presence, of environmentally contaminated sites. The presence of these sites often has notable impacts on a community, including depreciation of property values and the discouragement of investment in surrounding properties. Through a community supported planning process, this program enables community leaders to establish a clear vision to revitalize and improve areas so they become economically and environmentally sustainable.

Step 1: Pre-Nomination Study

Step 1, which was completed in 2012 for Sheridan Hollow, provides a preliminary analysis of the area affected by brownfield sites and identifies potential strategic sites.

Step 2: Nomination Study

Step 2 provides an in-depth and thorough description and analysis of the study area:

- In-depth analysis of economic and market trends, existing conditions, opportunities and reuse potential for properties located in the BOA
- Identification of catalytic, strategic sites
- Description of key findings and recommendations to advance redevelopment of strategic sites and revitalize the area

we are
HERE

BOA Designation

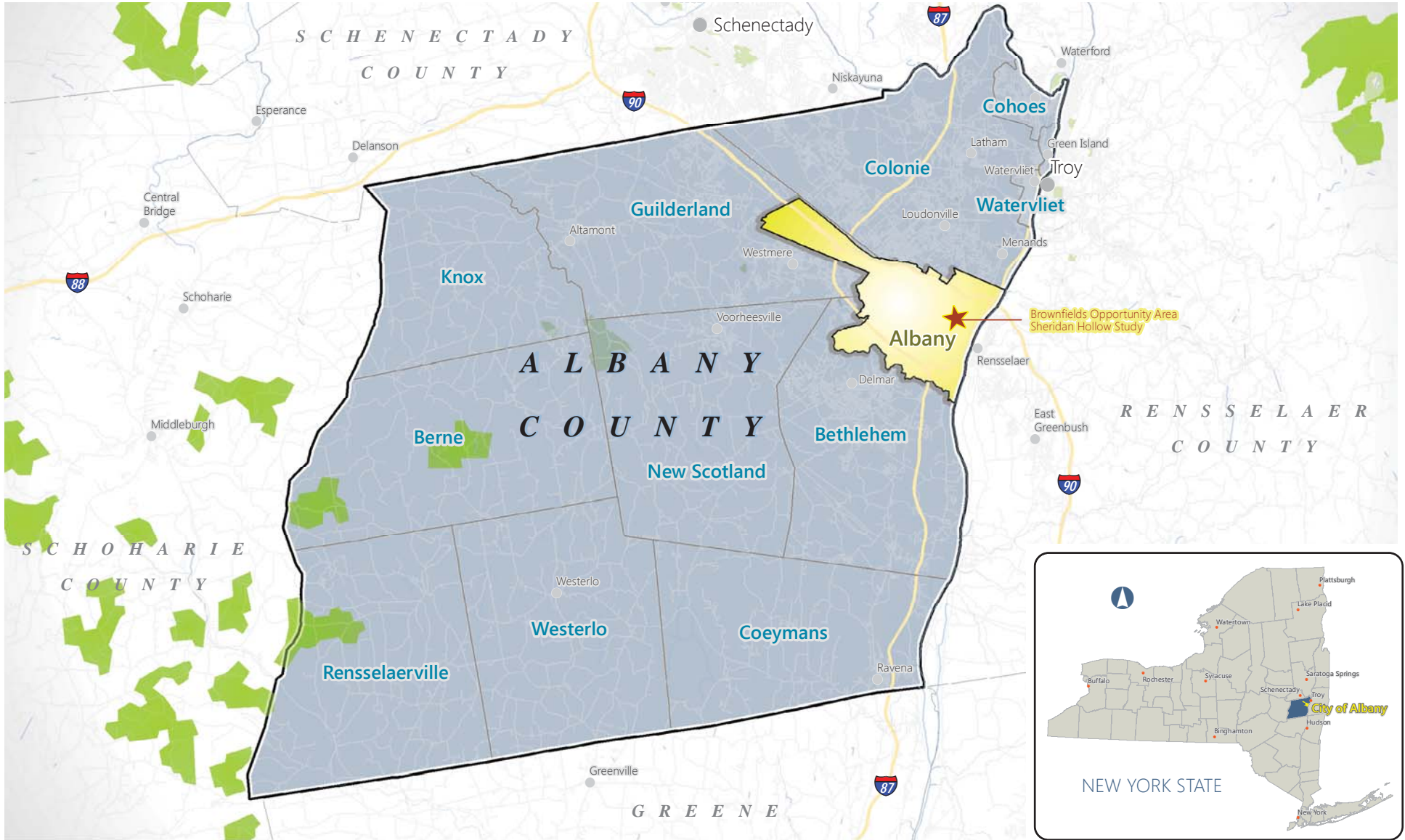
Upon completion of the Nomination Study, the community may request designation of the BOA by the Secretary of State. BOA Designation expands access to State funding and increases predictability for future developers.

Step 3: Implementation Strategy

Step 3 provides funding for a range of actions that advance implementation of the master plan and redevelopment of strategic sites.

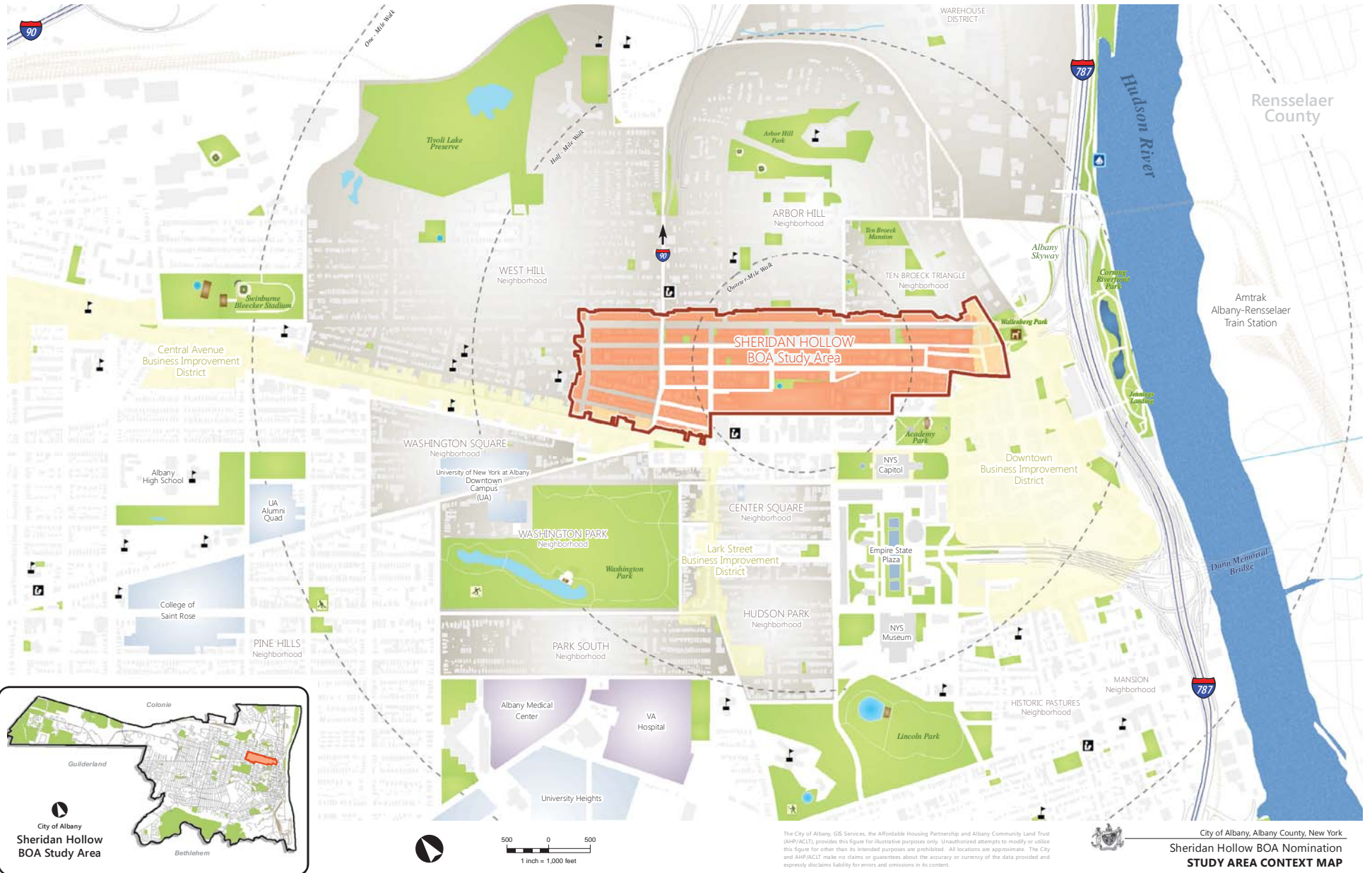
SECTION 1: PROJECT DESCRIPTION + BOUNDARY

Project Overview



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City of Albany, Albany County, New York
 Sheridan Hollow BOA Nomination
STUDY AREA CONTEXT MAP

Related Planning Initiatives

OVERVIEW

This Plan is intended to align with previous planning and design efforts undertaken in and around the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood in order to create a unified and comprehensive implementation strategy for key sites within the community. In recent years, the City of Albany, AHP, the University at Albany, and other organizations and institutions have been actively engaged in multiple, interrelated planning activities which have generated significant momentum in the BOA area. This Plan is informed by these planning initiatives and attempts to synthesize their ideas into realistic physical plans that can be implemented in both the near- and long-term.

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan (2003)

In 2003, the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan was created to provide a framework for residents and investors to approach development in Arbor Hill, including the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood. The plan focused on the areas of homeownership and rental housing, arts and culture, business and job development, and quality of life. It found that the neighborhood is rich in human resources, but that they need to be better coordinated to maximize their use by the community.

Sheridan Hollow: Steps Forward, University at Albany (2010)

In 2010, University of Albany planning students focused their studies around Sheridan Hollow. Their analysis found that Sheridan Hollow benefits from its location and walkability and that it is supported by an established group of committed stakeholders. It also found that the neighborhood is burdened by high vacancy rates, poor physical condition of housing stock, and the perception of crime. To address these concerns, the study recommended developing social capital by strengthening Sheridan Hollow's identity and sense of community, redeveloping vacant buildings and lots, and connecting Sheridan Hollow to the city and region.

Albany 2030 Plan (2012)

In 2012, the City of Albany partnered with stakeholders from across the city to improve quality of life and foster sustainability by adopting Albany 2030, a comprehensive plan to inform future development and planning goals. This plan includes strategies to promote reinvestment and redevelopment, inform future zoning, and to further expand upon the assets that Albany has to offer. The plan specifically promotes expanding resources in the city's low-income neighborhoods, including but not limited to development of new affordable housing, job opportunities, sustainable development, and efficient transportation.

Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Pre-Nomination Study (2012)

The Sheridan Hollow BOA Pre-Nomination Study represents the first step in the neighborhood's BOA planning process. It established an important baseline, upon which this Plan builds, by identifying the boundaries of the study area, creating partnerships with key stakeholders, and initiating the public engagement process. Through this process, residents and other stakeholders identified goals and priorities for Sheridan Hollow including providing existing homeowners with support for rehabilitation and repair, creating jobs, reusing vacant and underutilized buildings, increasing walkability, and building social capital and opportunities for community connections. In its preliminary review, the Pre-Nomination Study also identified several potential brownfields within the BOA and seven strategic sites with the potential to catalyze investment in the neighborhood.

Economic Development Gap and Resources Analysis (2016)

This study, completed by the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region and Rumuri IT Solutions, analyzed the retail and residential markets in Sheridan Hollow to determine gaps and identify ways to capitalize on potential. It recommended workforce development and business attraction programs. This study is included as Appendix 3.1.

Minding the Gap and Finding the Resources: Financing Housing and Redevelopment in Sheridan Hollow (2016)

This study found housing in Sheridan Hollow is severely deteriorated and that there are many vacant lots and little demand for market-priced housing. It also identified a financing gap between the cost to purchase and rehabilitate much of the housing in Sheridan Hollow and the market rental or sales value for those rehabilitated units. The study discusses a variety of methods for financing, incentivizing, and supporting homeownership and housing rehabilitation and development in the BOA. It emphasizes the importance of creating a healthy, private market, with a mix of rental and homeownership opportunities that are attractive to households from a range of income levels. This study is included as Appendix 5.1.

ReZone Albany (2017)

In 2017, the City of Albany updated its zoning code with the adoption of its Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance, which includes land use regulations that are intended to incentivize quality, sustainable development and balance the interests of the community with the protection of the natural environment. Zoning districts and regulations in Sheridan Hollow were updated.

Hope in the Hollow, University at Albany (2017)

In 2017, the University at Albany partnered with AHP and the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association to identify recommendations around the themes of economic development, water and infrastructure, parks, energy, and housing. The study recommended a variety of strategies including establishing a Sheridan Hollow Merchants Association, implementing green infrastructure, and undertaking energy audits and updates for existing structures. It also noted the importance of public engagement and capacity building, and recommended ways to strengthen the neighborhood's sense of identity and community. This study is included as Appendix 2.1.

Survey of Mixed-Use Buildings in Sheridan Hollow (2017)

A team of graduate students from the University at Albany conducted a survey of mixed-use buildings in Sheridan Hollow and determined that many of the storefronts were in unsatisfactory condition. The study recommended establishing a facade improvement program and exploring a variety of redevelopment scenarios for mixed-use buildings including live-work spaces or pop-up galleries. This study is included as Appendix 3.2.

Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Plan (2018)

Informed by extensive public engagement and community involvement, this plan identifies “five big ideas” to ensure future development in Sheridan Hollow aligns with and furthers the community’s vision. The Neighborhood Plan provides a roadmap to realizing these big ideas by identifying key projects and providing a detailed implementation strategy. The five big ideas include: 1) Better connections to and gateways into Sheridan Hollow; 2) Encourage a mix of uses to provide housing and jobs, support local businesses, and integrate food markets into the neighborhood; 3) Provide a variety of housing options for a variety of people to welcome and attract all ages and incomes; 4) Create more usable open spaces to expand and enhance existing parks, increase accessibility, and integrate green infrastructure; and, 5) Improve health and safety by mitigating flood risks, improving lighting, and addressing vacant and underutilized buildings/lots. This plan is included as Appendix 2.2.

Community Vision + Goals

OUR VISION

Sheridan Hollow will be a great place to live and work and a community where people want to stay. People of all ages, incomes and culture will make the neighborhood their home, attracted by its variety of quality housing choices, access to jobs, dynamic and accessible public spaces and the neighborhood's commitment to preservation and sustainability. Sheridan Hollow's engaged residents will live in and own their well-loved, healthy, and equitable neighborhood.

Within the next 10 years, the neighborhood envisions that a visitor to Sheridan Hollow will see homes that are well-maintained and occupied by a mix of homeowners and tenants who engage with their neighbors. Many homes will be new as in-fill housing has occurred on formerly vacant lots. If a lot is vacant, it is because it is being actively used and maintained for community garden space, off-street parking for residents, or a public use such as parks and playgrounds.

Commercial spaces in Sheridan Hollow will be filled by entrepreneurs, artisans, or service providers, such as day care centers. Sheridan Hollow residents will be able to find employment by participating in redevelopment activities or at the newly renovated Freihofer building, where they might be engaged in healthy food production and processing.

The neighborhood will be a desirable place to live because of its walkability and commitment to the

environment – thanks to well-maintained sidewalks and energy efficient street lighting. Sheridan Hollow will no longer experience flooding because green infrastructure practices have been implemented such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and well-maintained bioswales. The green space between the long stairs will be redeveloped into a park with walkable paths and fitness stations.

Major points of entry into the neighborhood will be welcoming – for example, Malcolm X Park and the Henry Johnson overpass will have good lighting and inviting murals. Neighborhood residents will benefit from a variety of renewable energy programs.

Sheridan Hollow will celebrate its history with a revitalized Veterans Memorial Park. Historic markers will remind residents of the neighborhood's importance in the early development of Albany and an oral history project will capture memories of the neighborhood's vibrancy, diversity, and community engagement when its population was at its peak.

Sheridan Hollow will have a strong neighborhood association that connects residents to resources and provides opportunities for neighbors of all ages to engage in activities. Through the association, neighbors will have a strong voice in the continued growth, development, and advocacy about the concerns of the people living in the neighborhood.

“Sheridan Hollow will be an attractive neighborhood that people of all ages, incomes, and cultures want to call their home. The neighborhood takes pride in its variety of quality housing choices, diverse job and business opportunities, dynamic public spaces, and its commitment to preservation and sustainability.”



SURVEY SAYS...

What do you like most about the neighborhood?

“ The people are helpful, there is family togetherness, and the neighborhood is quiet and peaceful!”

Community Vision + Goals



OUR GOALS

The neighborhood believes its vision to be achievable, and will work to implement this vision through the tangible and actionable goals and strategies described as follows and with the help of neighbors, small business owners, local employees, and engaged stakeholders.

Goal #1: Promote Housing Affordability

Redevelop housing to benefit households of all incomes and ages by providing better quality and more affordable housing options. Revitalize the neighborhood by decreasing the number of vacant buildings, which can attract undesirable activities and depress real estate values.

Strategy #1: Develop funding mechanisms and targeted investment strategies to redevelop and improve housing in the neighborhood, in conjunction with residents, area developers, and affordable housing property owners.

Strategy #2: Complete an evaluation of existing vacant buildings through partnerships with area engineering firms to determine redevelopment potential for buildings with upper residential uses and active first-level storefronts.

Goal #2: Create Economic Opportunity

Promote job creation to decrease the rates of poverty in the neighborhood and bring diverse commerce to neighborhood residents. Fill empty commercial spaces to increase the vitality of the community.

Strategy #1: Create a final development plan for the Freihofer buildings and 236 Clinton Avenue, with a focus on job-creating food businesses and start-up businesses, in partnership with the Albany Center for Economic Success.

Strategy #2: Find an economic reuse of the former Hungry Hollow space, in conjunction with the building owner Housing Visions.

Strategy #3: Create a plan for the reuse of existing small commercial spaces into live/work spaces.

Strategy #4: Promote and strengthen existing workforce training programs to match residents' skills with those required by area jobs. Emphasize training for growing industries (e.g., solar energy).



Goal #3: Strengthen Community

Strengthen social capital and quality of life by providing more opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another and connect on issues of common concern.

Strategy #1: Strengthen and develop resident leadership of the neighborhood association with regular meetings and communication via email, fliers and neighborhood bulletin boards.

Strategy #2: Provide more opportunities for residents to come together through increased availability of community event space, higher quality corner stores, a fitness center, parks, and neighborhood-wide activities, such as clean-ups.

Goal #4: Enhance Resilience

Facilitate stronger infrastructure and create a resilient, sustainable, green community through green infrastructure practices, energy efficiency, and renewable energy improvements.

Strategy #1: Invest \$1.5 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects throughout the neighborhood to increase energy resilience and improve local air quality. Funding through NYSERDA and implemented by AHP.

Strategy #2: Acquire vacant lots by the City of Albany or invested property owners (i.e., local residents committed to improving the neighborhood) to expand green infrastructure in order to help mitigate the impacts of flooding in Sheridan Hollow, in partnership with the City of Albany Water Department and local developers.

Strategy #3: Implement a program of roof drain connections to rain barrels and raised garden beds to further mitigate the impacts of flooding in the neighborhood, in partnership with the City of Albany Water Department.

THE FUTURE OF THE BOA

When asked how they would like to be able to describe the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood in the future, residents responded as follows:



BOA Boundary Description + Justification

OVERVIEW OF THE BOA

The Sheridan Hollow BOA is 106 acres, with boundaries including Clinton Avenue to the North, Pearl Street to the East, Elk and Spruce Streets to the South, and Lexington Avenue to the West. Primarily as a result of history and topography, Sheridan Hollow has maintained a fairly consistent identity and boundaries over time. While its steep ravines create connectivity and infrastructure challenges, the neighborhood's unique topographic features helped shape its character. Today, Sheridan Hollow is a dynamic, walkable neighborhood located close to many large cultural and recreational institutions and centers of employment.

Historic contamination and disinvestment have left many parcels in the neighborhood either underutilized or in need of remediation. One-in-four parcels in the BOA is vacant, leaving roughly 20 acres of unused land. Additionally, more than 140 sites were identified as potential brownfields and their redevelopment may be complicated by the possible presence of environmental contaminants. Remediating and reusing these sites is important to reclaiming them, bringing them back on-line, and making them viable and attractive for new development. In the process of creating this Plan, 9 "strategic sites" were identified as having the greatest potential for redevelopment. Further analysis and future planning for these sites is included in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this Plan.

North / South Boundaries

The southern boundary of the neighborhood is Elk Street (including Columbia Street further southeast and Sherman Street to the Southwest) which is at the top of the steep slope that separates the "Hollow" from government complexes and the Center Square Neighborhood. To the North, Clinton Avenue has traditionally served as the separating line between Sheridan Hollow and Arbor Hill, although there is considerable overlap in the two areas' interests, including their economic well-being. Clinton Avenue is home to many mixed-use buildings and, as a highly-traveled road, often creates visitors' first impressions of the neighborhood.

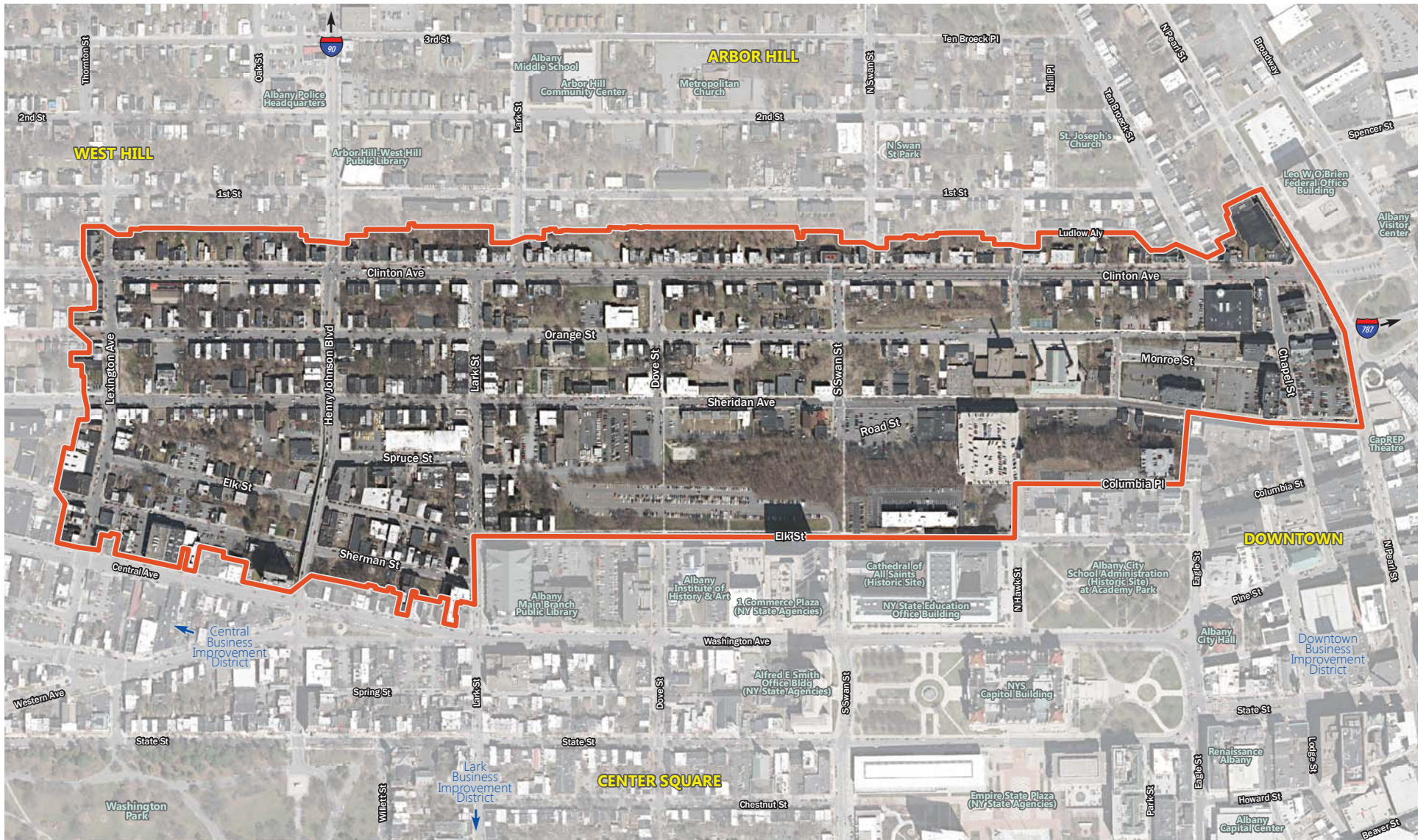
East / West Boundaries

To the West, the neighborhood demarcation has sometimes been Henry Johnson Boulevard, but the study area is proposed to extend one block west to Lexington Avenue, given its shared commercial history and similar housing stock. While it may appear that Henry Johnson Boulevard would be the natural border to Sheridan Hollow due to its role as a major traffic corridor into the heart of Albany from Interstate 90, Sheridan Hollow residents see the edge of their neighborhood as Lexington Avenue. Henry Johnson Boulevard becomes elevated at Sheridan Avenue. Residents frequently walk or drive under this overpass to reach the corner of Lexington and Central Avenues, which provides access to bus routes connecting residents to shopping and

employment opportunities. Extending the border to Lexington Avenue allows the neighborhood to include vacant and underutilized commercial and residential properties with redevelopment potential.

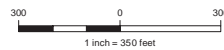
To the East, the neighborhood has occasionally been cut off at Eagle Street / Theater Row and sometimes on Chapel Street. The study area is proposed to extend further east to North Pearl Street in order to better connect to downtown. By slightly expanding the eastern border into downtown Albany, several benefits are realized:

- Areas where new development has occurred and continues to expand are included;
- The vibrant and commercially successful downtown Albany entertainment district and a portion of the City's Downtown Revitalization Initiative area are included;
- The ongoing redevelopment of former warehouses into market-rate condominiums and apartments is included; and,
- The BOA Plan can leverage the physical, and corresponding psychological, improvements in downtown Albany to catalyze future development throughout Sheridan Hollow as well.



 Sheridan Hollow Brownfields Opportunity Study Area (BOA)
The BOA is 140 acres, with a total of 1,124 tax parcels.

Data Sources:
City of Albany GIS Services
NY State GIS Program Office, 2017 Orthomage



The City of Albany, GIS Services, the Affordable Housing Partnership and Albany Community Land Trust (AHP/ACT), provides this figure for illustrative purposes only. Unauthorized attempts to modify or utilize this figure for other than its intended purposes are prohibited. All locations are approximate. The City and AHP/ACT make no claims or guarantees about the accuracy or currency of the data provided and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in its content.



City of Albany, Albany County, New York

Sheridan Hollow BOA Nomination
BOA BOUNDARY MAP



2

**COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION**



Community Participation

OVERVIEW

This Plan was developed by actively engaging the public in an open and transparent planning process. Each phase of the project built upon input gathered through collaboration between the public, government representatives, community organizations, business and property owners, and institutions. Active engagement and citizen input resulted in a Plan that is representative of the people and the community it serves.

Public Feedback Opportunities

Throughout the planning process, the public was asked to provide feedback on studies that informed the creation of this Plan. Public feedback was received on the:

- Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Plan led by Dover Kohl (Appendix 2.2)
- City re-zoning presentation (Appendix 2.5)
- Minding the Gap financing study (Appendix 5.1)
- Arbor Hill Community Benefits Agreement Plan (Appendix 2.3)
- University at Albany studies (Appendices 2.1, 3.2, and 5.4)
- TAP's housing market and design studies
- AHP/developers' presentations of strategic sites at Neighborhood Association meetings.

Other events that encouraged public and stakeholder feedback included the:

- TAP charrette for neighbors of the Sheridan Avenue fire site
- On-site meeting with Freihofer buildings developer
- Neighborhood walk-about with complete streets planners
- Meeting with veterans about the Memorial Park
- Surveys of residents at block parties and holiday parties
- Polling at neighborhood Zoom meetings
- Focus groups by the Albany Barn

Advisory Committee / Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association

At the beginning of the planning process, an Advisory Committee was established to guide and inform the development of this Plan. However, the Advisory Committee quickly morphed into the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association, which is comprised of neighborhood residents, local developers/entrepreneurs, non-profit partners, and elected officials. The Neighborhood Association held (and continues to hold) monthly meetings to advise on neighborhood needs, meet with potential developers, identify and prioritize projects, and direct the development of and implementation of this Plan.

Stakeholder Interviews

AHP conducted a series of stakeholder interviews with business owners, institutional representatives, and residents. The interviews revealed consistent themes like the presence of underutilized assets and barriers to redevelopment. Most stakeholders noted that conditions in the neighborhood had improved in recent years, but that more housing and business options were still needed.

Neighborhood Clean-ups

In partnership with local residents, the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association hosted several neighborhood clean-ups throughout the BOA planning process.

Tea with Residents

To learn more about the social history of the neighborhood, AHP invited long-time business owners and residents to "tea." The participants noted that the community used to be more integrated and vibrant, and that local political leaders were helpful in bringing services to the neighborhood.

Park Surveys

AHP conducted a series of surveys to understand how residents feel about parks in the neighborhood. AHP surveyed 69 adult residents and found that 81% of respondents rated the neighborhood parks as in good condition or better. About 80% said that they would use a community garden. Other high priority needs included picnic tables, play equipment, and sports spaces. AHP also surveyed 79 children who rated their favorite playground equipment as swings and jungle gyms.

Design Workshop

AHP, in partnership with the City of Albany, Clarion Associates, and Dover, Kohl & Partners, held a multi-day design workshop from August 7-10, 2017. The purpose of this workshop was to help the design team, in collaboration with neighborhood residents, develop an appropriate Form-Based Code for Sheridan Hollow as part of the ReZone Albany project. More than 30 community members attended the workshop.

Open Design Studio

As part of the design workshop, the design team worked in an open studio setting on August 8th and 9th, 2017. Community members were welcome to stop by, talk with, and provide feedback on designs while team members worked.

Feedback on Proposed Projects

Community input on the proposed projects and policy ideas generated from the BOA planning efforts was solicited in several ways:

- A series of online meetings were scheduled to obtain feedback from neighborhood association members. In the first session with neighbors, a summary of the planning efforts and description of project ideas were provided. In a second meeting, neighbors were asked to vote on which projects to prioritize during the next stage of planning and implementation work. Outreach for these meetings included emails, Facebook posts, and door-to-door leaflet drops. Residents had the opportunity to return “ballots” to AHP’s offices and enter to win gift cards.
- Feedback from other stakeholders was also solicited. This outreach included presentations to the AHP board of directors (which includes lenders, government agencies, and nonprofit housing groups); to the Community Development Alliance, which had been providing technical assistance to the project; and to elected officials, municipal employees, nonprofits, and other partners who assisted with the planning process.

This feedback directly informed the next steps for Sheridan Hollow’s redevelopment efforts, including the Implementation Plan presented in Section 5 of this Plan.

KEY FINDINGS: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

1. Community stakeholders identified many barriers to redevelopment in the BOA including: crime perception, deterioration of vacant buildings, light foot traffic, lack of parking, and poor market conditions.
2. Feedback from the design workshop centered around the need for better stair connections between the neighborhood and Capitol Hill, providing alternative housing types to attract homebuyers, and enhancing multimodal streets.
3. The community expressed a desire to make the neighborhood more vibrant and increase the quality of life for residents. Priority projects included: redevelop vacant buildings, increase homeownership opportunities, provide live/work spaces, redevelop the Freihofer Building and Orange Street’s vacant lots, rehabilitate housing on Lark Street, improve multi-modal infrastructure, create new public parks, and implement green infrastructure.
4. Overall, community support for the revitalization of the Sheridan Hollow BOA is strong. Residents, business owners, and community organizations are committed to advancing the neighborhood forward.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Techniques to Enlist Partners

OVERVIEW

Partnerships are important to the successful creation and implementation of this Plan, especially where these partnerships enable better access to public programs and financial resources. AHP has a long-standing history of building public-private partnerships and is committed to coordinating the cooperative efforts of local government, not-for-profit organizations, and the private sector.

To ensure a successful project, AHP partnered with the Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association, the City of Albany, the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, and the Albany Community Land Trust. These partners have local expertise and experience in Sheridan Hollow as well as a vested interest in the success of the neighborhood well beyond the planning phase. AHP worked closely with these partners throughout the planning process to ensure the final Plan accurately reflects the vision of the BOA community.



SURVEY SAYS...

AHP regularly conducts surveys to gather feedback about community concerns at events like the Community Block Party, National Night Out, and the Toys for Tots Party. Find responses to these surveys under this heading throughout this document.

Techniques for Public Outreach

In addition to these key partners, AHP also placed a strong emphasis on public engagement. Community members and landowners must have a strong interest in the progress of the neighborhood, and – most importantly – must become partners in implementing the recommendations of this Plan for it to be successful. To engage the community, AHP employed a variety of techniques including:

- Hosting community forums, like ice cream socials and a holiday toys-for-tots parties;
- Developing key contacts on each block;
- Distributing leaflets door-to-door on a monthly basis; and
- Sharing information through emails, social media posts, and Neighborhood Association meetings.

COLLABORATION

AHP worked deliberately to partner and contract with stakeholders in completing this Plan. Local nonprofits including Albany Barn, Historic Albany Foundation, and Arbor Hill Development were asked to provide input on their respective areas of expertise. The Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region was called upon to complete the economic development portion of the Plan given their experience working with women- and minority-owned businesses. AHP partnered with property owners of strategic sites – including ACES, Habitat for Humanity, and the owner of the Freihofer buildings – to assist them in advancing their development plans. The City of Albany’s Planning Department assisted with the complete streets plan and hosted the design workshop in partnership with Dover Kohl, while the Albany Water Department was instrumental in facilitating the green infrastructure plan.

Residents and stakeholders were also invited to attend presentations of several studies that were used to inform this Plan including:

- The State University at Albany Hope in the Hollow report (Appendix 2.1)
- Dover Kohl’s Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Plan (Appendix 2.2)
- Clarion Associates’ presentation of recent zoning changes (Appendix 2.5); and,
- The Minding the Gap Housing Finance study by Rachel Bratt and Laurie Gould (Appendix 5.1).



PARTNERS

Other partners engaged in the creation and future implementation of this study include:

Non-Profit Organizations

- Albany Center for Economic Success
- Habitat for Humanity
- TAP, Inc.

Community Organizations

- Albany Barn
- Albany Community Action Agency
- Arbor Hill Development Corp.
- Historic Albany Foundation

Government Agencies

- Albany Community Development Agency
- Albany Dept. of Buildings and Regulatory Compliance
- Albany Dept. of General Services
- Albany Dept. of Planning & Development
- Capital Region REDC
- Mayor Sheehan's Office
- NYS Department of Health
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- NYS Homes and Community Renewal