

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

City of Batavia, New York



**October 2017**

*Adopted by City Council October 10, 2017*



This report has been formatted for two-sided printing.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1

## Introduction

Purpose & Overview .....	1
Previous Comprehensive Plans .....	1
Plan Organization .....	2
Planning Process & Public Engagement .....	2
Review of Existing Documents .....	5
Alignment with Implementation of Strategic Planning Efforts .....	5

2

## Existing Conditions

Location .....	9
Land Use .....	10
Zoning .....	11
Demographics & Households .....	13
Housing .....	16
Workforce & Employment .....	19
Public Infrastructure & Community Facilities .....	21
Environmental Features .....	23
Transportation & Circulation .....	24
Utilities & Infrastructure .....	25
Historic Resources .....	26

3

## A Guide to Batavia's Future

City of Batavia Mission .....	29
City of Batavia Vision .....	29
Comprehensive Plan Value Statement & Organizing Principles .....	31
A Resilient Batavia .....	33
A Dynamic Batavia .....	43
A Prosperous Batavia .....	47

4

## Future Land Use Plan

Future Land Use Definitions .....	57
Future Land Use Map .....	59

5

## Creating a Roadmap for Implementation Success

Priority Projects .....	61
Implementation Matrix .....	69

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# 1. Introduction

## Understanding the Project and Process

### Purpose & Overview

The 2017 City of Batavia Comprehensive Plan Update (the “Plan”) provides a roadmap for the City to guide growth and enhance the vibrancy and quality of life throughout the City. The plan is based on a detailed examination of current conditions and trends in the City and input from residents and stakeholders. The resulting plan includes key recommendations and steps to achieve a shared vision for the future of Batavia.

A future land use plan is included in the plan to highlight areas of the City for future land use changes that will accommodate new growth responsibly, enhance economic development, respond to natural constraints, and create dynamic neighborhoods. The Plan also includes detailed implementation strategies including the specific actions and projects that must be undertaken along with timeframes and priority levels.

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update is funded, in part, by a NYSERDA Cleaner, Greener Communities Phase II (Implementation) grant.

### Previous Comprehensive Plan

The City’s Comprehensive Master Plan was adopted in 1997. Much has changed in Batavia since then, including numerous projects such as the redevelopment of the downtown area, formation of a Business Improvement District, changes to the zoning code, reconstruction of several major roads, and completion of a variety of economic development projects.

Additionally, there have been several recent and ongoing development initiatives including Brownfield Opportunity Area Strategic Site redevelopment, construction of the Ellicott Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail, various neighborhood improvement efforts, and the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Project (STAMP) in Genesee County, among others.

This update was prepared to ensure that the City’s policies and actions are aligned with a vision that is grounded in current information and accounts for changing demographic patterns, shifting market dynamics, community desires, and other local and regional forces.

## Plan Organization

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update is organized into the following chapters:

1. **Introduction:** An overview of the planning background and process including public engagement efforts.
2. **Existing Conditions:** A review of demographics, housing, economic, and physical characteristics and trends within the City.
3. **A Guide to Batavia's Future:** A Comprehensive Plan value statement and three over-arching organizing principles along with the goals, recommendations, and actions consistent with the City's mission and vision.
4. **Future Land Use Plan:** A map that highlights areas of the City for future land use changes, which will accommodate new growth responsibly, enhance economic development, respond to natural constraints, and foster the evolution of dynamic neighborhoods.
5. **Implementation:** A detailed implementation matrix that, for each action, identifies potential partners, priority level, timeframe, and potential funding sources.

## Planning Process & Public Engagement

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update was developed with extensive stakeholder and public input. A team of planning, design, engineering, and economic repositioning specialists, led by Elan Planning, Design & Landscape Architecture (Elan), worked closely with the City's designated Steering Committee to facilitate the creation of this plan.

### Steering Committee

The City of Batavia appointed key City officials and other stakeholders to a Project Steering Committee that met regularly with the consulting team. The Steering Committee included the following members:

- Bob Knipe
- Duane Preston
- Ed Flynn
- Rachael Tabela
- Matt Gray
- Laurie Oltramari
- Marc Staley



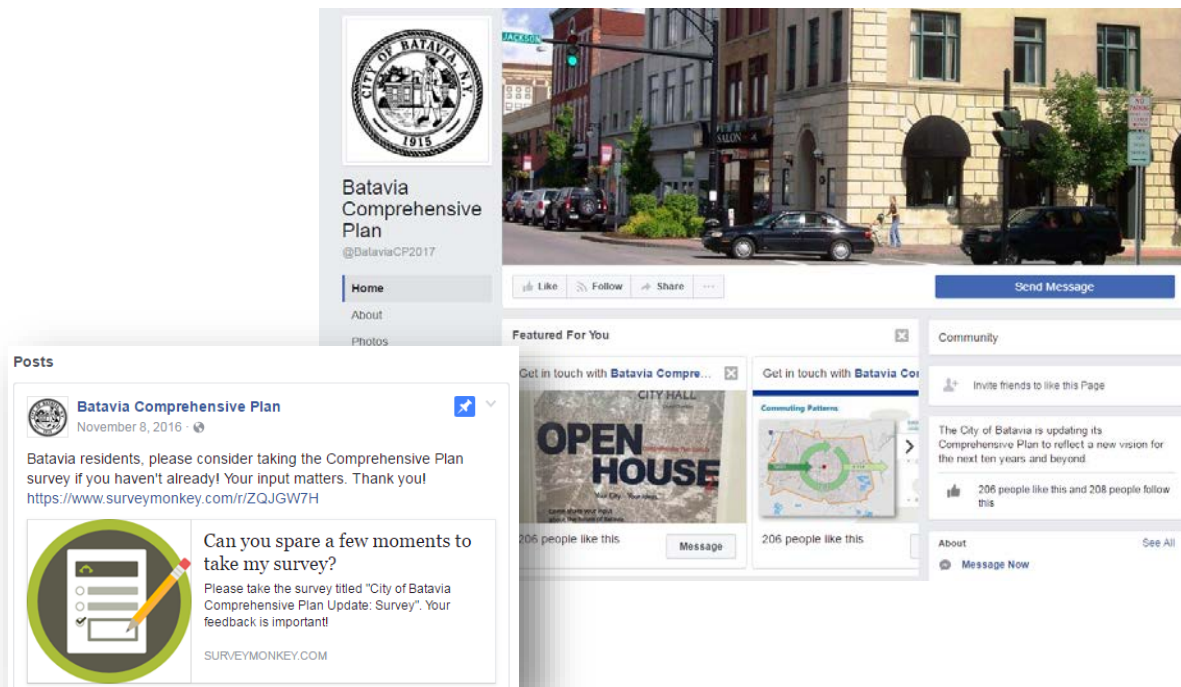
## Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups

The consulting team facilitated focus groups with local experts and stakeholders to better understand the issues and opportunities facing the City of Batavia. The focus groups were conducted on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Covered topics included business, housing and neighborhood development, quality of life, and schools. A total of 21 individuals representing a wide variety of organizations and constituencies participated in the focus groups.

Along with the stakeholder focus groups, other key stakeholders were interviewed individually to collect additional insights for the planning process.

## Facebook Page & Survey

A Facebook page, shown in the image below, was set up to provide information and updates on the plan. The page was used to raise awareness of the project and public meetings, as well as to gather public feedback through informal survey questions posted periodically to the Facebook page.



## Public Open Houses

Over the course of the planning process, two public open houses were held that allowed residents to learn about the project and provide input on a casual drop-in basis. An overview of the open houses are below:

### Open House #1

April 20, 2016 | 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM | 52 signed-in participants

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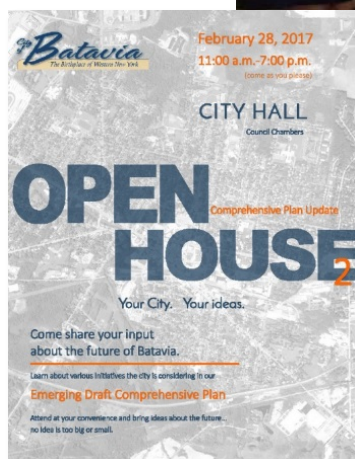
The first open house was held early in the process to solicit input on (1) local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; (2) developing value statements; (3) ideas around specific topic areas such as housing, recreation, arts, etc.; and (4) thoughts on improving specific places in the City.

### Open House #2

February 28, 2017 | 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM | 23 signed-in participants

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The second open house was designed to collect feedback on draft value statements, draft recommendations and actions, and a proposed future land use map. The results of the public open house were used to revise and finalize these elements of the plan.



## Review of Existing Documents

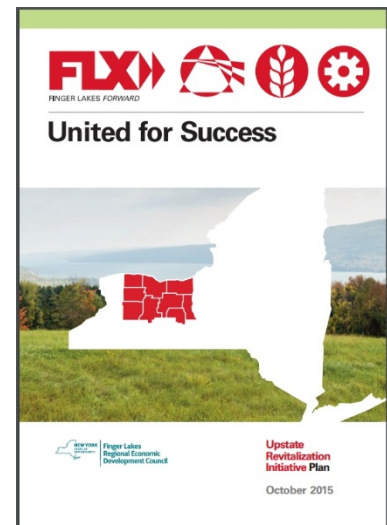
The consulting team reviewed numerous plans and documents relevant to the Comprehensive Plan Update, including:

- The City of Batavia Comprehensive Plan (1997)
- Genesee County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2008)
- Genesee County Central Corridor Plan (2011)
- Batavia Community Improvement Plan (2012)
- Genesee County Smart Growth Plan (2013)
- Genesee County Cultural Plan (2013)
- Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan (2013)
- Batavia Opportunity Area Nomination Study (2014)
- Batavia Walkability Action Plan (2015)
- Batavia Strategic Plan (2015)
- Batavia Business Plan (2015)
- Ellicott Trail Design Report (2015)
- GHD Parking Study (2015)
- Genesee Region EV Charging Station Plan (2016)
- City of Batavia Tree Management Plan (draft 2017)

## Alignment with Implementation of Strategic Planning Efforts

### Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC)

The Regional Economic Development Council Initiative was established in 2011 to develop long-term strategic plans for economic growth for each region of the state. Through the New York Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI), the Regions are awarded state funds to distribute to priority economic development projects that are selected on a competitive basis. The City of Batavia Comprehensive Plan Update was designed to align with the overarching goals, priorities, and recommendations in the Finger Lakes Region URI Plan.



The URI Plan stresses the quality of life as a competitive advantage for the region as an attractive place to invest, live, work, visit, and play. The plan also emphasizes the importance of maintaining and attracting a skilled

workforce, which depends largely on the local quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to enhance the quality of life for its residents, and those of the surrounding region, by making the City pedestrian and bicycle friendly, strengthening neighborhoods, improving transit, protecting the natural environment, and supporting and growing business opportunities.

Enhancing quality of life is also essential to supporting key industries and projects that are priorities in the URI Plan. For example, the Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park in the Town of Batavia was identified as a key regional asset. If the City of Batavia is able to offer a premier high quality of life, variety of housing options, and other amenities, it will help attract businesses to the Agri-Business Park because those companies know they can attract a high-quality workforce. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan not only supports the REDC's focus on attracting a skilled workforce, but it also supports growing the Agriculture and Food Production Industry, a priority of the URI plan.

### **Batavia Opportunity Area (BOA)**

The Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program provided Batavia with guidance, expertise and financial assistance to complete BOA Nomination Plans. The BOA is a revitalization strategy for neighborhoods and areas affected by brownfields or economic distress. In 2014 the City of Batavia completed a Nomination Study for the Batavia Opportunity Area.

The Batavia Opportunity Area is located at the core of the City and generally includes the area between East Main Street and Ellicott Street to Harvester Avenue. Unlike many planning projects, the Batavia Opportunity Area plan is strategic in nature. The plan focuses specifically on reinvestment in underutilized strategic sites that are hindering progress within the area and, if redeveloped, will act as catalysts for additional investments in the area. The strategic sites chosen by the BOA Steering Committee include City Centre, the Downtown Medical Corridor, the Harvester Center, the former Della Penna Site and the Creek Park Area, all of which are currently underutilized. The adjacent Downtown and Harvester residential neighborhoods were also added as secondary strategic areas for analysis and to recognize the synergy between economic development and neighborhood revitalization.

The vision for the Batavia Opportunity Area is to "strive to be a sustainable, mixed use urban center that will embrace and celebrate its history and natural resources by creatively revitalizing properties for new uses in a new economy." This is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan to make Batavia a resilient, dynamic and prosperous community. Key strategic areas identified in the BOA are now moving forward to realize the recommendations set forth in the BOA. The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the importance of redeveloping these sites and the positive impacts it will have on the community as a whole, particularly downtown.





Downtown Batavia in the Summer.

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## 2. Existing Conditions

### Building an Understanding of the City Batavia Today

The Existing Conditions Inventory and Analysis documents the demographic, housing, economic, and physical characteristics and trends within the City of Batavia and provides insights into what those findings mean for planning the City's future. The inventory and analysis was used, along with public input, to create recommendations and strategies for the City.

#### 2.A LOCATION

##### Location

*Genesee County designated the City of Batavia as a Priority Development Area to Reduce Urban Sprawl*

The City of Batavia is located in central Genesee County between Buffalo and Rochester. The City is 5.2 square miles in size and is surrounded by the Town of Batavia.

##### Regional Location



With a population 2014 population projection of 15,077 residents, Batavia is a small City that functions as the urban center of Genesee County. The New York State Thruway (I-90) connects Batavia with the cities of Buffalo and Rochester within a 40-minute car trip.

City of Batavia: Basic Characteristics	
County	Genesee
New York State Dept. of Labor Market Region	Finger Lakes
2014 Population	15,077
Total Area	5.2 sq. mi.
Distance to Rochester	30 minutes
Distance to Buffalo	30 minutes
Distance to Genesee County Airport	5 minutes
Distance to Niagara International Airport	40 minutes
Distance to Toronto International Airport	2 hours
Transportation Network	Road: I-90, NYS 5, NYS 33, NYS 63, NYS 98

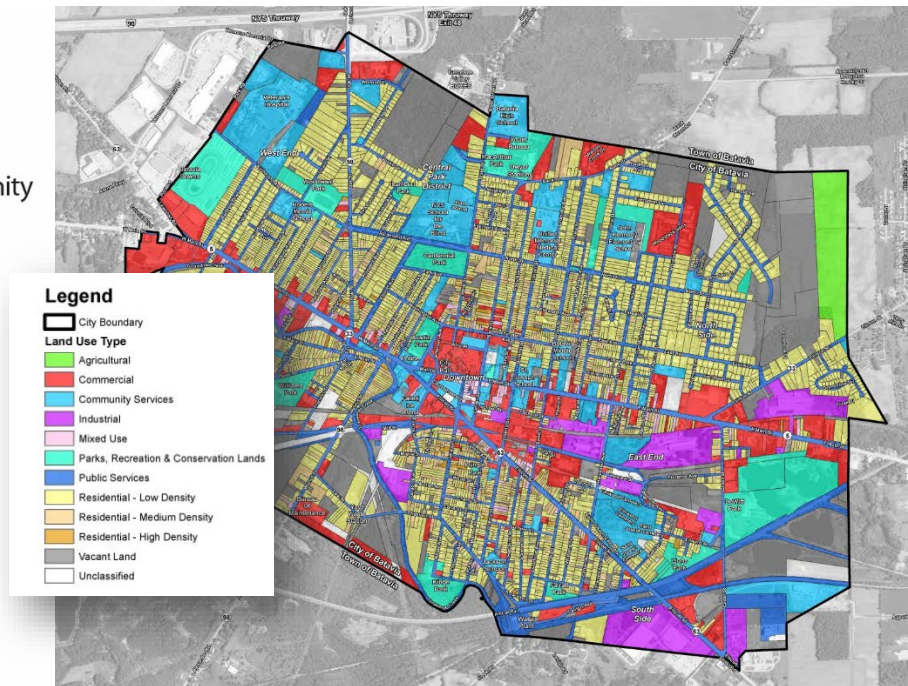
Source: Google Maps, U.S. Census 2014 Population Estimates.

## 2.B LAND USE

### Land Use

Land use in the City of Batavia is primarily residential (31% of land area) with most of that land being low-density residential (26% of land area). Land classified as either Public or Community Services accounts for nearly a quarter of total land use in the City. Vacant land represents a significant 17% of all land uses.

Land Use Map







**3,639**  
Single family  
homes



**\$335 M**  
Assessed  
Value

City of Batavia NY, Land Use by Area			
Type of Land Use	Acres	Square Miles	Percentage
Residential - Low Density	882	1.38	26%
Vacant Land	556	0.87	17%
Public Services	526	0.82	16%
Commercial	382	0.6	11%
Community Services	293	0.46	9%
Industrial	169	0.26	5%
Parks & Conservation Lands	165	0.26	5%
Residential - Medium Density	157	0.25	5%
Unclassified	82	0.13	2%
Recreation & Entertainment	55	0.09	2%
Agricultural	50	0.08	2%
Mixed Use	28	0.04	0.8%
Residential - High Density	16	0.02	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,361</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: City of Batavia

The dominant land use, 'Residential-low density,' consists of single-family homes. There are 3,639 single family parcels in the City valued at a total of \$335.4 million, approximately 60% of the City's total taxable valuation of \$555.9 million (2013).

## 2.C ZONING

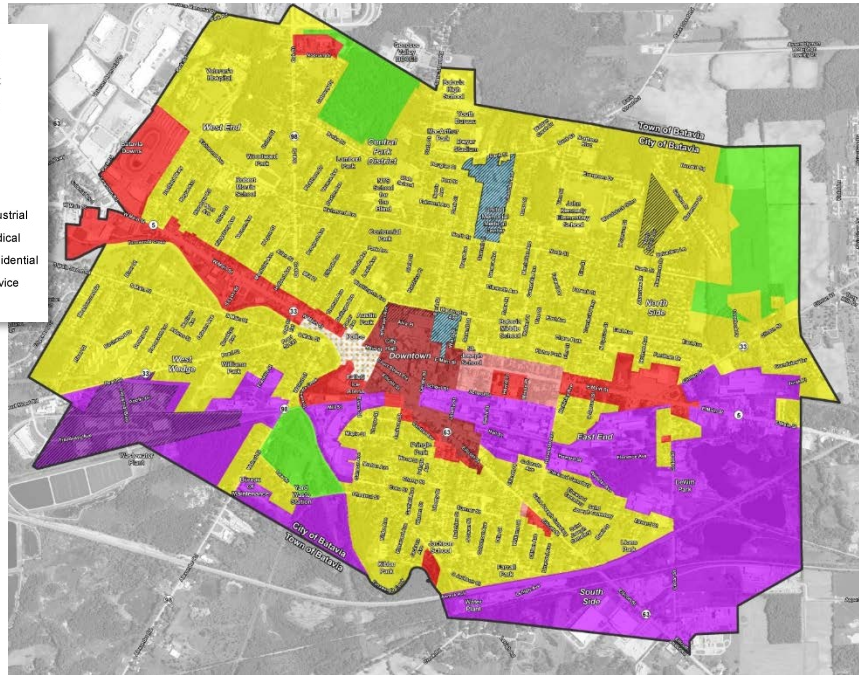
### Zoning

*"PDDs allow for flexible zoning of large lot developments as long as they meet the criteria established in the zoning code"*

Approximately 59% of the City's total area is zoned for residential districts, which are primarily located north of downtown and the Tonawanda Creek. Commercially zoned land is mainly located along West Main Street, East Main Street and Ellicott Street. The industrially zoned land in the City is predominately to the south of Main Street, mainly along the east-west rail lines traversing the City.

## Zoning Map

Zoning Districts	
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Central Commercial District
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	General Commercial District
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Limited Commercial District
<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Historic Overlay District
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Industrial District
<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Land Conservation District
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	Residential District
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Planned Development - Industrial
<span style="color: blue;">■</span>	Planned Development - Medical
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	Planned Development - Residential
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Planned Development - Service



City of Batavia Zoning by Area			
Zoning District	Acres	Square Miles	Percentage
Residential District	1,970	3.08	59%
Industrial District	682	1.07	20%
Land Conservation District	221	0.35	7%
General Commercial District	223	0.35	7%
Planned Development - Industrial	86	0.13	3%
Central Commercial District	75	0.12	2.2%
Limited Commercial District	32	0.05	1.0%
Planned Development - Medical	32	0.05	1.0%
Historic Overlay District	16	0.03	0.5%
Planned Development - Residential	16	0.02	0.5%
Planned Development - Service	6	0.01	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,360</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: City of Batavia

## Design Guidelines

The City asks that any development in Downtown Batavia consider a set of “Design Guidelines.” The guidelines are not mandatory but are intended to ensure that development in the central business district contributes to the existing community fabric and streetscape appropriately.

### Planned Development Districts

The City's zoning includes planned development districts (PDDs). PDDs allow for flexible zoning of large lot developments (5 acre minimum lots) as long as they meet the criteria established in the zoning code and fall within the classifications of Industrial, Medical, Residential, and Service.

### Empire Zones

Businesses located within New York State designated Empire Zones are eligible for tax incentives and technical support from the state. Batavia's Empire Zones cover a large portion of the City's industrial- and commercial- zoned land south of Main Street adjacent to the railroad lines. While the program is being phased out, several local Empire Zone participants remain eligible for tax breaks and other incentives. This program has been supplemented by local efforts including the Batavia Pathway to Prosperity (BP<sup>2</sup>), a PILOT Increment Financing (PIF) initiative that redirects local investment dollars into an Investment Fund for future brownfield redevelopment. BP<sup>2</sup> has the support and participation of all taxing jurisdictions, the City, county and school district, and is the first of its kind in the State of New York.

### Historic District Overlay

Batavia's Historic District Overlay zone is intended to provide for the preservation of historic sites, areas, buildings, and landmarks and to promote the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public. The Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for advising the City Planning and Development Committee on development activity within the district.

## 2.D DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSEHOLDS

This section describes Batavia's population characteristics such as age, educational attainment, and median household income.

### Population Count

Figure 1 below shows Census population counts for Batavia from 1900 through 2014. Since its peak population of 18,210 in 1960, Batavia's population has declined slowly—corresponding to the loss of local manufacturing jobs in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s—to its present number of 15,077. The current population represents a 7.2% decrease from the 2000 population of 16,256. While population in the City of Batavia decreased, the respective population numbers in the Town of Batavia increased.

## Demographics & Households

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*“Since its peak population in 1960, Batavia’s population has declined slowly – corresponding to the loss of local manufacturing jobs”*



**-7.2%**

City Population Growth  
(2000 - 2014)

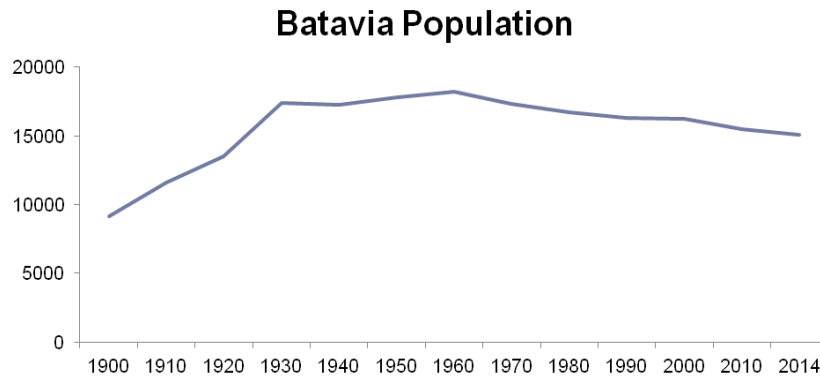


Figure 1. Source: U.S. Decennial Census & 2014 Population Estimates



**-9.3%**

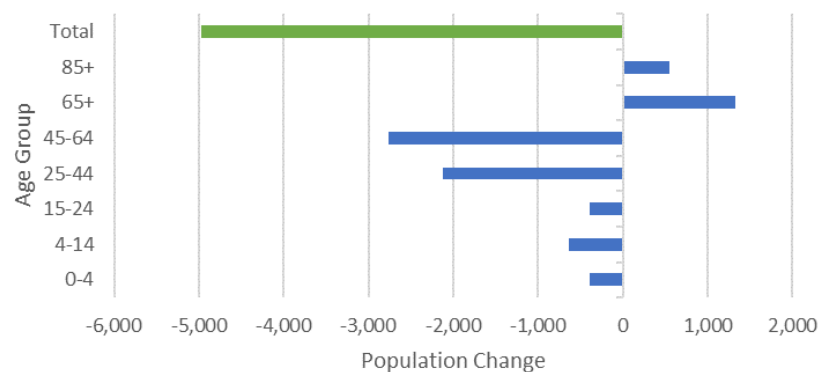
Projected Genesee County  
Population Growth  
(2014 - 2040)

Taken together, the population of the City and the Town of Batavia has remained stable since 1960. Therefore, it is possible that some of the population loss from the City has been redistributed to the Town. Despite the population loss, Batavia has done relatively well in population compared to Geneva, Lackawanna, Lockport, or Tonawanda.

### Projected Population Change

Genesee County's population is expected to decline from its current population of 59,702 to 54,153 by 2040, which represents a 9.3% decrease. Looking forward, only the 65-plus and 85-plus age segments are expected to see growth from 2020 to 2040. This is what could happen if City leadership does not proactively champion growth. In addition, as interest in walkable communities, aging in place living opportunities, and the mobility needs of an elderly population become more pressing, the City of Batavia may be able to reverse or at least stem its population decline.

### Genesee County Population Change by Age Group (2020 to 2040)



### Race

Batavia residents predominantly identify as white (85.6%), 7.7% Black or African American, 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.9 % Asian, and 1.2% as belonging to another race not included in these categories. Another 4.3% identify as multi-racial and 4.5% of Hispanic origin.

## Age

The median age in Batavia is 39.7 years, up from 37.9 years in 2000. While younger than Genesee County as a whole, which has a median age of 42, Batavia's population is older than that of New York State as a whole (median age 38.1) and the United States as whole (median age 37.3).

Between 2000 and 2010 the age groups that saw significant increases in population were the 85+ cohort and the 45-64 cohort. During this time, Batavia experienced a 17 % loss in its school-age population. This decrease is a concern, as in combination with the loss in the 24-44 cohort it signifies a decrease in the number of young families.

### Age Group Changes 2000-2010

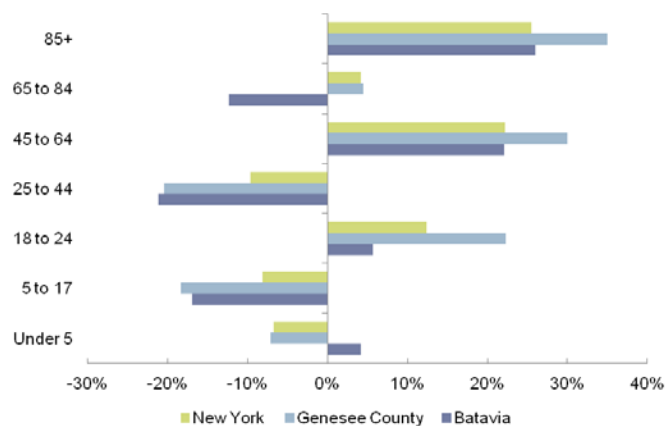


Figure 2. Source: 2010 U.S. Census.



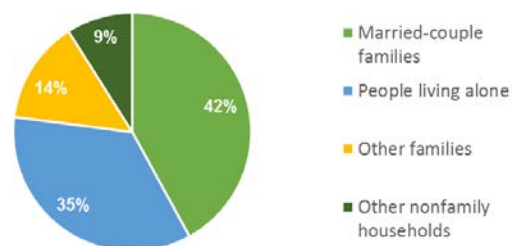
4 out of 10

Households are married-couple families

## Households and Families

In 2014, the City of Batavia contained 6,432 households. Households refer to the person or group of people living in any one housing unit. Generally, households that do not contain a family are made up of unrelated people living together. Of the 6,423 households in Batavia, 3,572 were family households.

### Household Composition



Source: American Community Survey (2014)

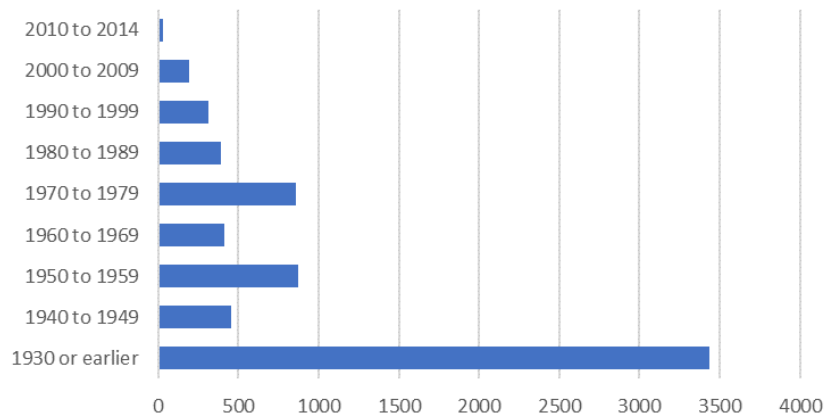


## 2.E Housing

As of 2014, Batavia has 6,960 total housing units. The largest portion of dwelling units (50 %) was built in 1939 or earlier indicating a relatively old housing supply. Another development spike occurred in the 1970s, when 11 % of dwelling units were built. Since then, the number of new units decreased every decade. As a result, middle class households looking to purchase a newer home that does not require major upgrades have better chances to find a place in the other parts of Genesee County, where the housing stock is relatively newer, or in Erie or Monroe Counties.

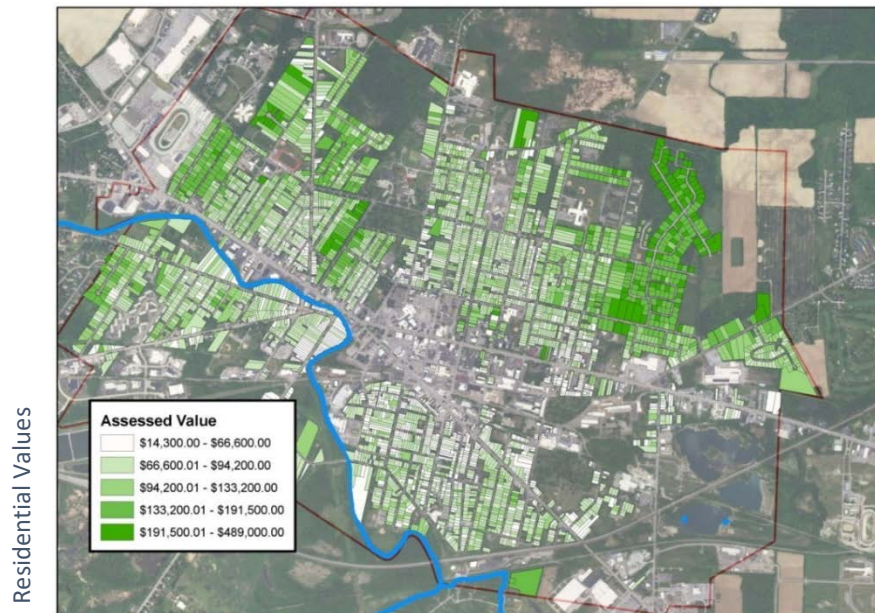


Housing Unit Construction Date - City of Batavia



Source: American Community Survey (2014)

**Home Values by Area:** Review of tax parcel data from the Genesee County Tax Assessment rolls reveal that neighborhoods to the south of the Tonawanda River show clusters of some of the lowest value homes. These



neighborhoods are typically within FEMA Flood Hazard Zones and built

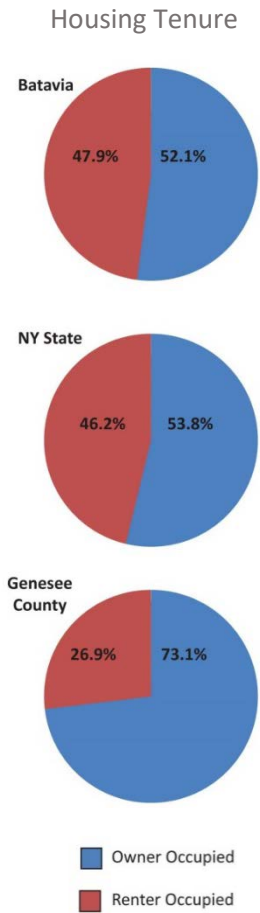
before 1940. Newer residential developments, north of Main Street to the east and west of downtown fetch higher sale values.

**Housing Costs**

Housing affordability in the City is on par with the county. The US Census Bureau uses the American Community Survey to measure household affordability for regions. Selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income (SMOCAPI) is a useful metric to determine whether or not home-owners are cost burdened by their mortgages. In the City of Batavia housing costs are on par with the overall SMOCAPI rates in Genesee County. In over 50% of homes with a mortgage, housing costs account for less than 20% of the median household income.

**Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income (GRAPI)**

Gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI) helps to understand how housing costs relate to the median household income. In the City of Batavia, the median gross rent is just under the Genesee County average. The GRAPI index shows that Genesee County and the City of Batavia have lower rents as compared to the state. The price differential between the City of Batavia and the rest of Genesee County is almost negligible (\$722 median rent in the county versus \$718 median rent in the City). This may indicate that the City of Batavia is not necessarily losing population to the Town of Batavia due to affordability issues but rather better quality.



GROSS RENT			
	Batavia	Genesee County	NYS
Occupied units paying rent	2,999	5,898	3,233,100
Less than \$200	2.70%	1.40%	1.10%
\$200 to \$299	4.90%	4.10%	4.20%
\$300 to \$499	10.90%	10.40%	6.40%
\$500 to \$749	39.90%	39.60%	13.40%
\$750 to \$999	28.60%	29.10%	16.70%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	11.20%	12.50%	30.50%
\$1,500 or more	1.80%	3.00%	27.60%
Median (dollars)	\$718	\$722	\$1,117

Source: American Community Survey (2014)

**Tenure and Ownership**

Of Batavia’s 6,960 housing units, 6,432 are occupied and 528 (or 7.6 %) are vacant. In Genesee County, outside of the City of Batavia, the vacancy rate is 6.5 %. Batavia’s housing market includes 52 % of occupied units being owner-occupied and 48 % of occupied units being rentals. The average household size of the owner-occupied units is 2.51, while the average rental unit holds a household of 2.00 residents. For a small City this is a good rate of owner to renter occupancy. In NYS the percentage of owners to renters

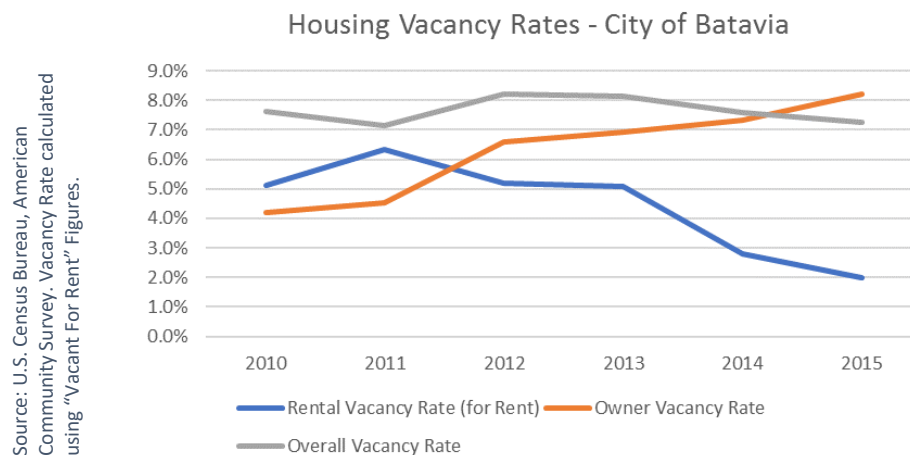
is 54% owner occupied to 46% renter occupied. In Genesee County there are 73% owners to 27% renters.

### Housing Vacancy

The City of Batavia has about a 7.6% overall vacancy rate including all housing units (apartments, condos, single-family homes, etc.). It is important to note that this vacancy rate includes properties that were sold but the new owners have not yet moved in (91 units)<sup>1</sup> and vacant housing that is for “seasonal” or “occasional” use (40 units)<sup>2</sup>. When these units are omitted from the vacancy rate calculation, the overall housing vacancy rate is 5.7% (2014) or 6.6% (2015).

Generally, a “healthy” rental market has vacancy rates of 5% to 7%, a figure widely accepted by experts.<sup>3</sup> This rate reflects the natural “churning” of the market related to people moving, units that aren’t appropriately priced, and other factors. When rates dip below 5%, it indicates that demand is outstripping supply. When the rental market has rates in the 5% to 7% range, the market is providing adequate housing choices. Low rental vacancy rates are generally bad for communities because it can lead to unjustified rent increases, provide a disincentive to property owners to maintain facilities, and reduce the choice and opportunity for renters. When rental vacancy rates are below 5%, it is typically followed by rising rents.

According to 2015 U.S. Census Bureau data, the rental unit vacancy rate in the City of Batavia is an estimated 4.7%, including units that are “for rent” and those “rented not occupied.” When only “Vacant for Rent” units are considered, the vacancy rate drops to 2.0%. Both measures indicate a tight market with vacancy rates below what would be considered healthy. As shown in the following graph, the overall housing vacancy rate has been relatively stable in the City of Batavia; however, the vacancy rate for owner-occupied units has been steadily climbing while the rental vacancy rate has been falling. This indicates a shift in demand for more rental units in the City.



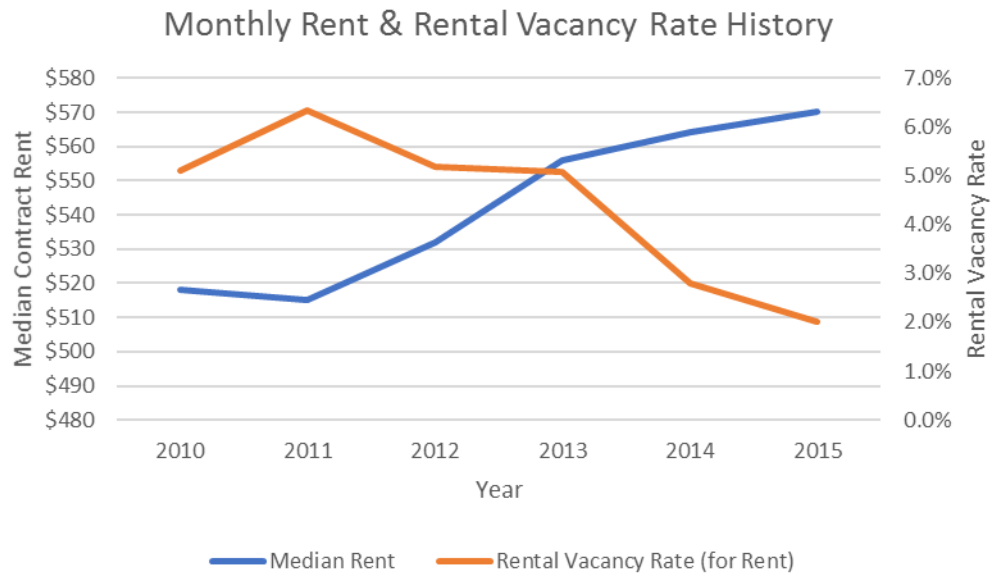
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mylongview.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1339>



In recent years the rental vacancy rate has been declining, and rental rates in the City have been rising, as would be expected with a tightening rental market.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. Vacancy Rate calculated using “Vacant For Rent” Figures.

## 2.F WORKFORCE & EMPLOYMENT

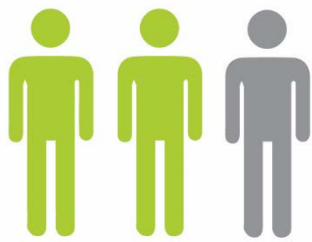
### Workforce & Employment

*“The composition of the workforce partially explains Batavia’s relatively low income levels”*

Approximately 60 % of the working age population are active participants in the labor force, while the unemployment rate is approximately 8.9 % (2013). In terms of commuting to work, the majority (81.0 %) drive alone although 7% either walk or ride their bikes to work, indicating the importance of pedestrian and bicycle amenities. The mean travel time to work is 17 minutes.

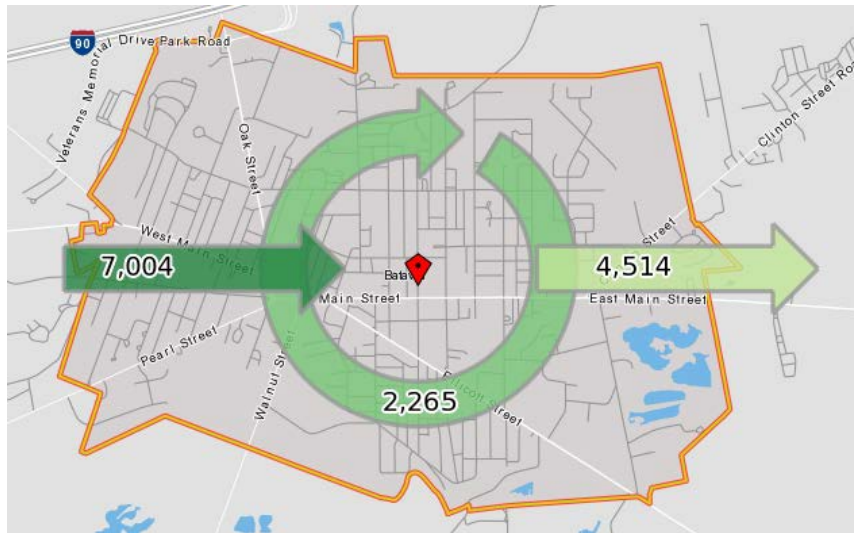
Batavia is an employment center for the county and the surrounding region. In 2013, 9,269 people were employed within the Batavia City limits. Of these jobs, approximately 2,300 are filled by City of Batavia residents while about 7,000 employees commute into the City.

Approximately 4,500 Batavia residents commute to jobs outside the City, indicating that more residents leave the City for work than stay in the City to work. Batavia residents working outside the City are most likely to commute to other municipalities in Genesee County (49.6 %).



**2 out of 3**  
Employed residents  
commute to jobs outside  
of City

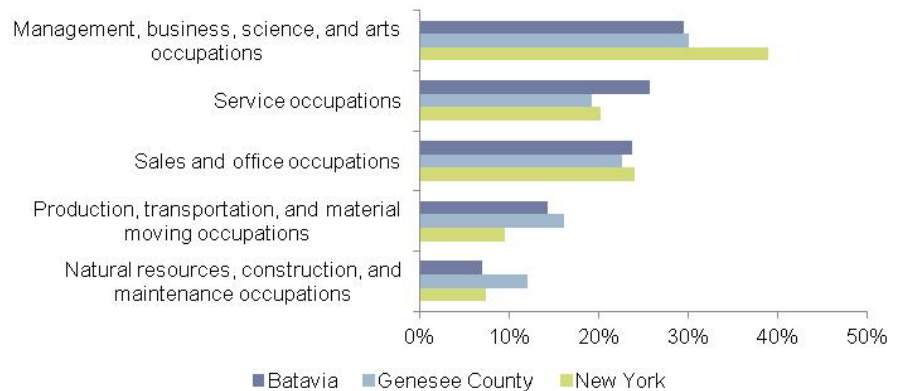
#### City of Batavia Commuting Patterns



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap

Slightly less than 30% of Batavia's working population is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. While this employment category has the highest share in Batavia, the New York State average is substantially higher at 39%. Service occupations (26%) and Sales and Office occupations (24%) are the next largest employment categories.

#### Workforce Characteristics – City of Batavia



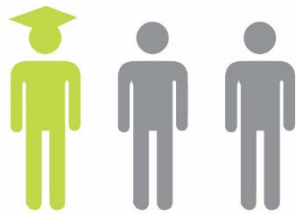
Source: American Community Survey (2014)

The composition of the workforce partially explains Batavia's relatively low income levels. If Batavia's composition was closer to the state average, the median household income would be 7.9% higher at over \$44,000 compared to the current median household income in the City of \$40,882.

## Household Income

*“The median household income in Batavia is \$40,882, which is significantly below the median for Genesee County and New York State”*

## Educational Attainment



**1 out of 3**  
Adults has a College Degree

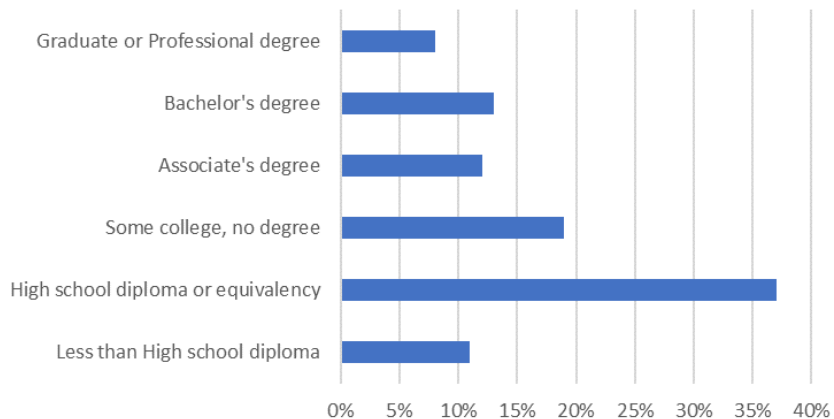
### Household Income

The City of Batavia median household income reflects many factors, including office and retail employment, the educational attainment of its residents, the presence of dual income households, and a population consisting largely of residents in their peak earning years. The median household income in Batavia is \$40,882, which is significantly below the median for Genesee County (\$50,573) and below that of New York State (\$58,687).

### Educational Attainment

A community’s overall education levels strongly influence the economic success of a community. In addition, an understanding of them is important as they are indicative of the types of jobs and industries a municipality can hope and strive to attract. Nearly 11% of Batavia residents 25 years and over did not complete high school, while the statewide average is nearly 15%. Batavia’s high school graduation rate is slightly below the Genesee County average and similar to the comparison communities.

Educational Attainment: City of Batavia NY



Source: American Community Survey (2014)

## Parks & Recreation

*“Most residents in the City of Batavia are within a short distance of a park, but the distribution of parkland is uneven.”*

### 2.G

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### Parks and Recreation:

Parks and recreational facilities are a vital part of quality of life. The residents of Batavia are currently well served by parkland. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) established best practice standards for number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and adjusts the number to account for population density.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “NRPA’s 2015 Field Report” A Parks and Recreation National Database Analysis. National Recreation and Park Association.



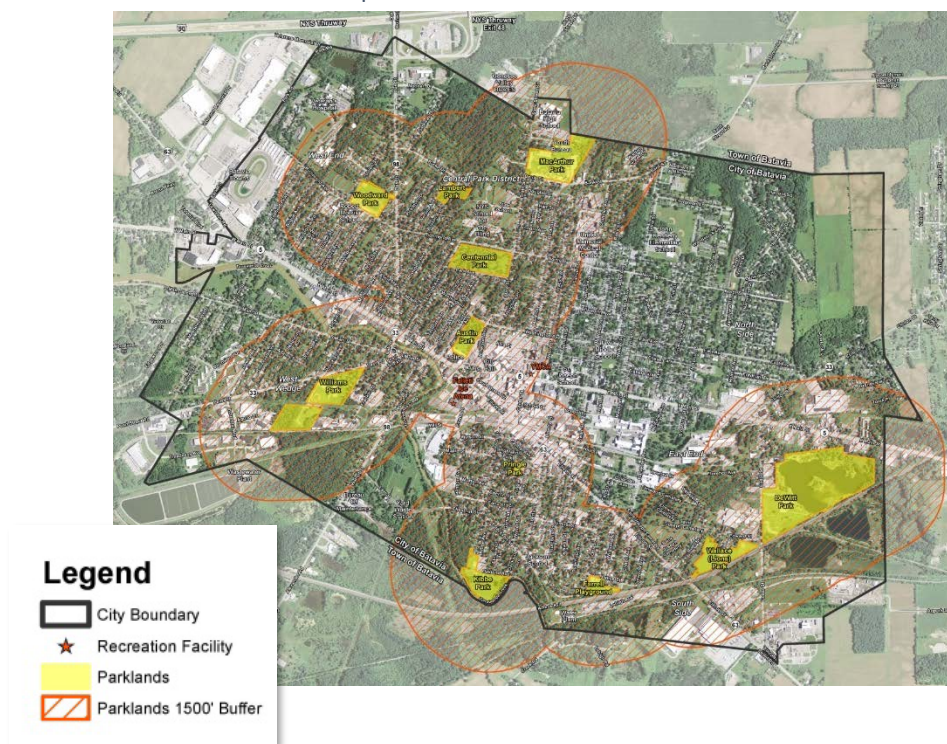
**11 Acres** of Parkland  
per Resident

With Batavia's population density of 4.49 residents per acres a rate of 10 acres of parkland for 1,000 residents is preferred. Within the City of Batavia there are 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. While these standards indicate that Batavia has sufficient parkland, the land is not well distributed throughout the community, particularly in the north-east portion of the City.

Most residents in of the City of Batavia are within a short distance of a park, but the distribution of parkland is uneven. (See map: "Parks and Recreation"). Most residents in the north-east quadrant of the City are not within the preferred 1,500' distance from a park/recreational facility. As the City of Batavia plans for the future, it may want to consider expanding the amount and distribution of parkland available to future residents.

**The National Recreation and Park Association recommends 9.6 acres of parkland per resident. In the City of Batavia there are 10.8 acres per person.**

Parks & Recreation Map



### Bridges in Batavia

The Tonawanda Creek runs through the City and is crossed by automobile routes at five different points. The most travelled bridge is just north of the central intersection of State Route 98 and South Main and Pearl streets. According to the Highway Performance Monitoring System, it is crossed by



## Environmental Features

*“Today, much of the southern area of the City lies within the 100-year flood zone.”*

an average of 16,000 vehicles a day. The NYS Department of Transportation last inspected the bridge in 2014 and gave it a rating of 4.65. The NYSDOT condition rating scale ranges from 1 to 7, with 7 being in new condition and a rating of 5 or greater considered as good condition.

Auto Bridges in the City of Batavia, NY		
Name/ Location	Year Built/ Replaced	NYS Condition Rating
@ junction of Route 98	1952	4.65
Law Street	1975	5.95
River Street	1975	4.25
South Lyon Street	1910	4.63

Source: NYSDOT

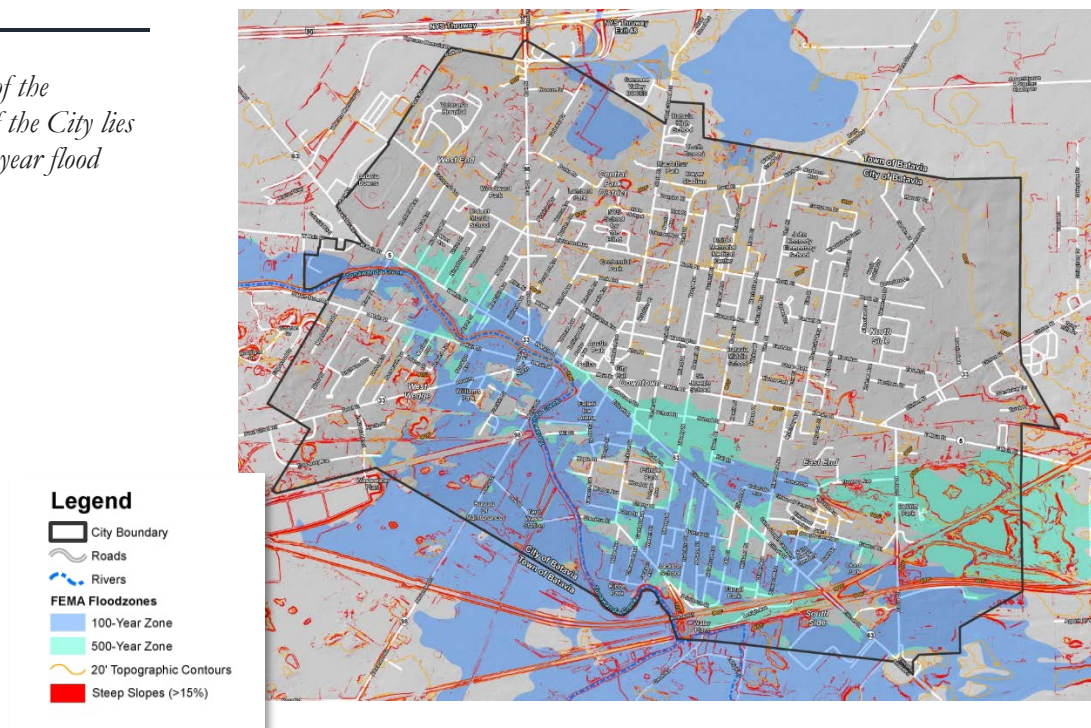
It should be noted that Genesee County is responsible for maintaining and repairing all of the bridges in the City. Currently, the River Street Bridge is scheduled for replacement in 2017. The abutments on the South Lyons Street bridge were set in 1910. The single lane span was built in 1982 as a "temporary" bridge. There is no timeline for the bridge replacement.

## 2.H ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

### Flood Zones:

Batavia's relationship with the Tonawanda Creek has not always been easy, with major flooding occurring multiple times in the City's history. Today, much of the southern area of the City lies within the 100-year flood zone.

City of Batavia Flood Zones



Currently there are 1,113 acres (1.74 square miles) of Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) flood zones within the City of Batavia, making up roughly 20 % of the City's total area. Of the 1,113 acres, 68 % (754.5 acres) are part of the designated "100-year flood zone," and 32 % (358.6 acres) are part of the "500-year flood zone."

The City has special zoning district overlays that mandate more stringent flood proofing efforts for structures built within the flood plain. (See Chapter 87 of the City of Batavia Code "Flood Damage Prevention" adopted in 2002).

A 2013 GIS analysis revealed that 1,030 single- and two-family homes are within the 100-year floodplain. The average assessed values of these properties was \$69,739 with a median year built of 1900. These are relatively older and lower value homes compared to other neighborhoods in the City.

#### **Wetlands:**

The City of Batavia contains few acres of wetlands (Refer to map Water Resources and Wetlands), with two NYS Department of Environmental Conservation-classified wetlands in the City limits. Both wetlands within the City are parts of a larger wetlands system across the City boundary.

#### **Topography:**

Batavia is roughly 900 feet above sea level. The terrain of the City is mostly flat (particularly those areas within the floodplain) with some small knolls. The NYS School for the Blind is located on one such knoll.

## **2.I TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION**

### **Transportation & Circulation**

*"Batavia has an extensive network of sidewalks to serve pedestrians"*

The City of Batavia has a functional network of local roads and pedestrian facilities. The City has freight rail access, but does not have any passenger rail facilities.

#### **Roadways**

As the County Seat of Genesee County, the City of Batavia is located at the confluence of several major highways--NY-63, NY-98, NY-5 and NY-33--and is just south of Interstate 90 via Exit 48. Exit 48 is located approximately one mile from downtown Batavia. Together, these roadways generate a substantial amount of through traffic. All local residential roads have a posted speed limit of 30 mph and are fairly well connected as part of a traditional grid system. There are a few suburban style cul-de-sacs in the residential areas surrounding the Central Business District.

#### **Pedestrian Network**

Batavia has an extensive network of sidewalks to serve pedestrians. The "Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Walkability Improvement Plan," (2016) highlights some of the opportunities and deficiencies in the existing pedestrian network.

## Utilities & Infrastructure

*“The City of Batavia is capable of providing 6 million gallons per day to City residents.”*

### Planned Capital Project

The City and Town of Batavia are currently engaged in developing the Ellicott Trail spanning from Pearl Street in the City and Seven Springs Road in the Town.

### System Deficiencies

As previously discussed, two vehicular bridges are classified as “functionally obsolete” with a third classified as “structurally deficient,” meaning that they will likely require maintenance in the near term.

### Public Transportation

Batavia is served by a small bus fleet with declining ridership trends. Transit is managed by the Rochester-Genesee Transit Authority.

### City Initiatives

Pedestrian Enhancements: Some of the initiatives in this realm include enhancements and a raised median on Main Street and Route 5, and in late 2015, the City of Batavia Healthy Schools Corridor. The Healthy Schools Corridor Initiative is part of the Safe Routes to School program and aims to increase pedestrian safety in the areas surrounding schools.

Bike Racks: Recently Vibrant Batavia and the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) spearheaded a successful effort to install bike racks downtown.

Parking Audit: The City of Batavia hired a consultant to conduct a parking audit in the downtown area surrounding the Batavia City Centre. The audit revealed that the amount of parking downtown far exceeded demand. The results of this parking audit may result in more bike and pedestrian friendly design considerations in the future.

## 2.J

## UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Overall, the City’s water and sewer infrastructure is aging and will need close monitoring, maintenance, and potential replacement as elements of the infrastructure approach the end of their life cycle.

### Water

The City of Batavia is capable of providing 6 million gallons of water per day to City residents. Water comes from the Tonawanda Valley Watershed via a series of wells drilled in the City and from surface water withdrawals from the Tonawanda Creek. According to water meter sales data, water consumption levels have decreased on an almost annual basis.

The specifications of the water system are:

- 60 miles of pipe

- 2.8 MGD average plant flow
- 4.2 MGD peak daily flow
- 6.0 MGD plant max design
- Water sources: Tonawanda Creek – 3.0 MGD & 2 wells – 2.9 MGD

### **Sewer and Wastewater System**

The City of Batavia treats the wastewater produced by its residents at a treatment facility in the Town of Batavia, near the southwest quadrant of the City. The plant is bounded by Route 33 to the north, Donahue Road to the west, Route 98 to the east and Rose Road to the south.

The system is a large lagoon-style facility that relies on natural processes to process its wastewater. The facility has created multiple wetlands and provides important habitat for native flora and fauna. A walking trail has been installed on the southwestern edge of the facility for public use.

The specifications of the sewer system are:

- 50 miles of gravity pipe
- Predominant material is vitrified clay pipe (VCP)
- Installed between 1960 and 1990
- Many deep sewer lines greater than 12-feet deep
- 5.5 MGD daily capacity; 7.5 MGD max design

### **Electricity and Natural Gas**

National Grid provides electricity and National Fuel provides natural gas. A vast majority of homes in Batavia used natural gas to heat their homes. Unlike New York State as a whole, fuel oil is used exponentially less to heat homes in the City.

The City has two internet providers, Time Warner Cable and Empire Access, the latter being a relatively new option for local internet, cable and digital phone.

### **Solid Waste Management**

Garbage is collected by a variety of private hauling companies in Batavia, all of which provide recycling services for free. The City also operates a yard waste collection facility to compost organic yard waste.

## **2.K HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Batavia has been an established settlement for over 200 years. Its primary claim to historical significance is the **Holland Land Office** on West Main Street. Built in 1815 by the City's founder Joseph Ellicott, the limestone structure was the headquarters for innumerable speculative land sales in the



## Historic Resources

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*“The City of Batavia has an adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance that provides an additional level of review to projects in the historic downtown.”*

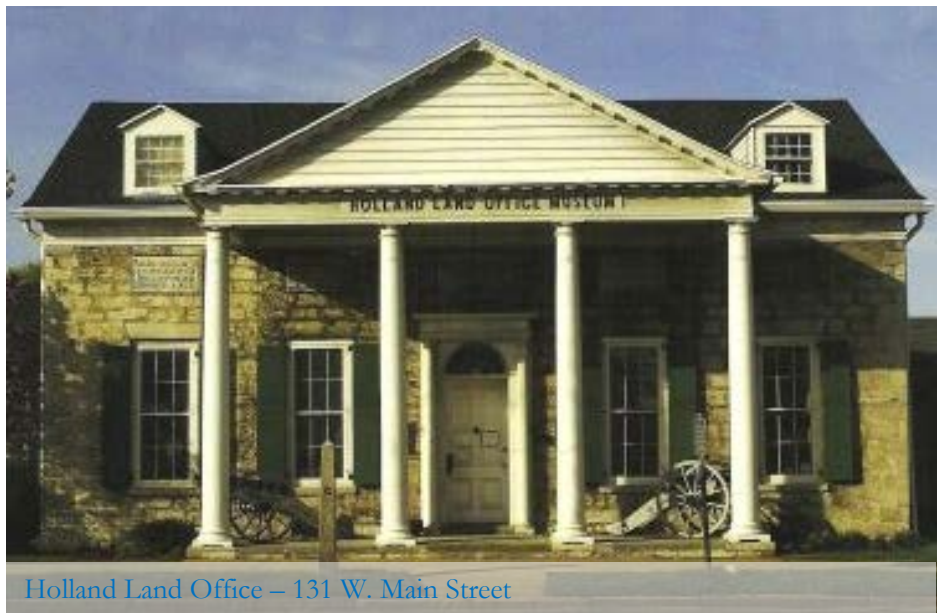
early years of American westward expansion. The structure is listed on the National Register of Historical Places and serves as a museum.<sup>5</sup>

**The Batavia Club** on Main and Bank Streets was built in 1831 and was one of the first banks ever built west of the Genesee River. It marks the edge of an area that fell victim to extensive urban renewal clearing.

The **Genesee County Courthouse** on Main and Ellicott Streets, completed in 1843, “is an architectural focal point in downtown Batavia and has played an integral part in the areas history since its construction in 1841,” (NRHP Nomination Documents. 1973). The building now houses county administrative offices.

The City of Batavia has an adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance that provides an additional level of review to projects in the historic Downtown.

The City of Batavia has 45 properties identified as historic landmark designations. The list of these properties is provided in the appendices. These sites have been identified because they are places that might be of interest to tourists due to notable physical features or historical significance.



Holland Land Office – 131 W. Main Street

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<sup>5</sup> National Register of Historic Places Nomination Documents 1979.

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### 3. A Guide to Batavia’s Future

#### SETTING A DIRECTION for BATAVIA

##### City of Batavia **Mission**

“Our mission is to create and sustain a vibrant, affordable, safe community where people choose to live and work and where, through a supportive environment, businesses continuously flourish.”

##### City of Batavia **Vision**

We consider our community to include its citizens, its business owners and employees and all those with whom we interact.

- We will continuously build upon our rich entrepreneurial history providing an infrastructure and support for businesses of all types to grow and flourish.
- We will lead and facilitate collaborative partnerships that support and enhance our vision and mission.
- We will encourage and provide opportunities for the physical, mental, emotional and cultural learning and enrichment for all our community members at every life stage.
- Our community members will be actively involved in the decisions we make and active in bringing our plans to life.
- Our thriving downtown will serve as a focal point, bringing community members together to engage in numerous and diverse activities.
- Our community members will enjoy the feeling of safety as they live, work and interact in our City.
- Our children, at all ages, will have choices to grow, learn, live, play and work in our community.
- We will continuously promote a healthy and active lifestyle for all individuals in ways that bring our community members together.
- We will be careful stewards of our environment recognizing its limited resources and continuously striving towards sustainability.
- We will proactively consider our financial picture and how we might best use our finances to help us achieve our mission.
- Our City will serve as a model for other small cities in its approach to an overall positive quality of life for all its community members.

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The Comprehensive Plan Value Statement and Organizing Principles reflect community input collected throughout the planning process, as well as previous plans and existing policies that help shape the community and its surrounding context. Steered by this Value Statement and Organizing Principles, the remainder of the Batavia Comprehensive Plan outlines a range of strategies and concepts. Further, the Value Statement and Organizing Principles should be used by local public and private decision makers when evaluating policies, programs and projects in the City of Batavia.

## Comprehensive Plan Value Statement

**“Batavia is a place of opportunity and prosperity; a proud community of families and neighbors planning for a resilient future.”**

### Comprehensive Plan Organizing Principles

***Resilient:*** Batavia’s prosperity is intimately linked to creating a walkable, bikeable, transit supported community connected with vibrant open spaces that celebrates and safeguards our community.



***Dynamic:*** Batavia’s success is a reflection of the pride, friendliness and creativity expressed by its most valued asset, its residents: families and singles, boomers and millennials, artists and business leaders, alike.



***Prosperous:*** Batavia’s policy framework and philosophy propel its prosperity, encouraging appropriate growth and adaptation to changing conditions.



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**Batavia's prosperity is intimately linked to creating a walkable, bikeable, transit supported community connected with vibrant open spaces that celebrate and safeguard our community.**

A Resilient Batavia is a City that is environmentally healthy, economically prosperous, and socially responsible. These three pillars are essential for creating a vibrant and enduring community. In this section, goals and strategies for maintaining an environmentally healthy City are discussed, with economic and social strategies discussed in following sections.

Environmentally healthy means the City proactively addresses issues of air and water quality as well as contaminated land when necessary. Resilient environmental practices are far ranging and include creating and maintaining parks and open space, planting street trees, managing stormwater through natural vegetation, and encouraging alternative transportation such as walking, biking, and public transit.

Batavia has already taken many positive steps towards being a resilient City including creating a tree management plan, participating in a walkability plan, and maintaining quality parks. The following recommendations will continue to advance Batavia as an environmentally healthy community.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R-1 Adopt a Complete Streets Policy
- R-2 Create a Bikeable Batavia
- R-3 Foster a Safe, Convenient and Comfortable Transit Network
- R-4 Implement Low-Impact Development (LID) Techniques in Parks and Open Spaces
- R-5 Manage Trees as an Important Part of the Urban Environment
- R-6 Create a City Parks & Recreation Master Plan
- R-7 Develop a *Welcome to the South Side* Corridor Revitalization Strategy for Ellicott Street/Route 63
- R-8 Re-Imagine the Areas of the City That Lie Within the 100- and 500-year Floodplains
- R-9 Develop and Adopt a Resiliency Policy Statement
- R-10 Support Renewable Energy Projects

## recommendation

## Develop and Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

### goal

*Enhance key street corridors to improve the City's image and boost economic activity*



Complete streets, according to Smart Growth America, are “streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work.” Thinking about streets as “complete streets” is a major transition from past thinking of streets as only transportation corridors for vehicles. A wide variety of elements can go into creating complete streets including sidewalks, bike lanes, bioswales and rain gardens, street trees, street furniture, lighting, transit stops, and more.

A complete streets policy will help ensure that future street planning and construction in Batavia considers the full set of potential users and should reflect the City’s needs and desire. Once a policy is developed, public officials and other relevant professionals (such as engineers) should be trained to understand the policy and become familiar with the complete streets framework.



### Key Corridors Include:

- Oak Street
- West Main Street
- South Main Street
- Pearl Street
- Walnut Street
- Ellicott Street
- East Main Street
- North Street
- State Street
- Bank Street
- Richmond Avenue
- Washington Avenue



## recommendation

## Create a bikeable Batavia

### goal

*Ensure safe multi-modal mobility access throughout the community*

Bicycling provides a healthy, low-cost, and environmentally friendly alternative form of transportation. Creating a bicycle-friendly City also increases the quality of life for local residents by providing new opportunities for recreation. A bike-friendly Batavia starts with thinking differently about roads as more than conduits for vehicle transportation. It also means making the City welcoming for those traveling by bicycle, including having safe and convenient bike parking. By making investments in a bikeable Batavia, like the Ellicott Trail, the City will help create safe pathways for families and children to bike to local parks and provide options for local residents to commute to jobs on their bicycles. This can also open doors to greater connectivity for students and faculty at Genesee Community College (GCC) just outside the City.



### Develop Dedicated Bicycle Lanes Along Key Corridors Throughout the City

The City should identify the key routes for current and future bicycle traffic and add dedicated bike lanes along these corridors. Key corridors include those between residential areas and parks and recreation points, as well as local employment centers and shopping areas. Bike lanes should be clearly marked and separated from traffic to the extent possible. Safety barriers can be added between bike lanes and automobile traffic in targeted areas that may be dangerous for cyclists.



### Provide Bicycle Racks Located Outside All Public Facilities

The City should take a leadership role in creating a bikeable Batavia by adding bicycle racks outside of public buildings and publicly-owned facilities. These racks encourage public employees to commute to work and local residents to ride their bikes around the community. This approach is also an opportunity to lead by example, encouraging private business and property owners to follow suit.



### Develop Wayfinding Signage for Bicyclists

Wayfinding for bicyclists should direct them toward existing bike paths and dedicated bike routes. Key destinations should be shown on signs along with approximate distances. Signage should also indicate where bike racks are located. Bicyclist wayfinding signage can be incorporated into a City-wide wayfinding system discussed separately.

## recommendation

## Foster a safe, convenient and comfortable transit network

### goal

*Ensure safe multi-modal mobility access throughout the community*

Batavia is served by a small bus fleet with declining ridership trends. The City should be proactive in supporting and growing the existing transit system, currently managed by the Regional Transit Service (RTS). Transit systems are critical infrastructure for communities as they offer access to education, employment, and other opportunities to those who do not have access to an automobile. They also enhance environmental sustainability as bus systems are more environmentally friendly compared to auto-only transportation.



### Provide Appropriate Lighting and Bus Shelters at Bus Stops

Most of the City's bus stops do not provide shelter or decent lighting. The City should help increase utilization of existing transit by providing appropriate lighting and covered bus shelters at bus stops to increase safety and protect riders from weather elements. The City should conduct regular maintenance checks to ensure the condition of bus shelters remains up to appropriate standards.



### Integrate Public Art into Bus Shelters

Bus shelters are an opportunity to incorporate public art into the City. The City could commission art for shelters or work with the local arts and cultural community and student groups. Public art integrated into bus shelters can also help give Batavia's different neighborhoods unique identities.

## recommendation

## Implement low-impact development (LID) techniques in parks & open spaces

### goal

*Create a functional and healthy open space network*

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Low-Impact Development (LID) refers to “systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.” In short, it is a more sustainable approach to handling stormwater than the traditional “drains and pipes” approach. The City should think of LID as being best practices and “standard operating procedure” when planning and constructing street and sidewalk infrastructure. LID techniques have the added benefit of making communities more attractive by replacing unappealing concrete expanses with attractive vegetation. The city is currently developing the Batavia Stormwater Capital Plan that will consider incorporating these concepts, as well as mitigating potential flood hazards furthering the City’s participation in FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS).



**Redirect stormwater away from existing storm drains and toward natural or constructed planted areas, where it can infiltrate into the ground or be taken up by plants**

When possible, the City should add natural (or “green”) infrastructure including rain gardens and bioswales (planted areas along roads and sidewalks that collected stormwater runoff). Stormwater runoff should be directed towards new and existing natural areas where it can infiltrate into the ground or be absorbed by vegetation. This approach may involve curb cuts to allow water to flow into these areas. This could alleviate stress on the City’s stormwater infrastructure and prevents contaminated runoff from reaching natural waterbodies.



**Integrate LID into designs for bike and pedestrian network improvements**

Pedestrian and bike improvements are ideal opportunities to integrate LID designs such as bioswales, shown in the image to the left. The city should consider developing LID guidelines and integrating them into the planning and development process.

## recommendation

## Manage trees as an important part of the urban environment

### goal

*Create a functional and healthy open space network*



Urban and community trees provide immense benefits including lowering temperatures in hot summer months, improving air quality, providing habitat for birds and other wildlife, and making neighborhoods more attractive and desirable to live in. The City of Batavia has approximately 4,300 trees along its streets and in its parks. By maintaining and growing the City's "urban forest," the City will become a more attractive and environmentally friendly community.

#### Implement recommendations made in the 2017 Tree Management Plan

The management plan includes goals to substantially increasing the City's tree canopy as well as implementing an efficient tree management system. Specific actions include removing defective trees and replanting new trees, among others. The City can engage neighborhood groups and volunteers to support efforts and enhance neighborhood pride. A healthy tree canopy from a well developed urban ecosystem benefits the community by improving conservation of building heating/cooling, removal of greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, improved air quality by filtering particle pollution, reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and provide a host of esthetic, social, economic, and health benefits.



## recommendation

## Create a City Parks & Recreation Master Plan

### goal

*Create a functional and healthy open space network*

This plan will provide guidance and policy direction for the Batavia Parks and Recreation network and will shape the delivery of parks and recreation services in a manner that is consistent with City goals and meets the community's level of service standards.





## recommendation

### Develop a *Welcome to the South Side Corridor* Revitalization Strategy for Ellicott Street/Route 63

#### goal

*Enhance key street corridors to improve the City's image and boost economic activity*

The Ellicott Street corridor connects downtown Batavia with the Southside neighborhoods and into the surrounding Towns of Batavia, Bethany, and Pavilion. The corridor is a varied mix of residential, commercial/retail, restaurants, professional and light industrial uses. The businesses along the corridor serve a mix of both local and regional needs. The corridor is an important gateway into both the city and the downtown.

The Ellicott Street Corridor plays a major role in the everyday activity of the City of Batavia, as it serves a dual role as both a major commercial district and major transportation corridor. This corridor is unique in that its length has led to the development of varying characteristics throughout. Its visibility and access presents many opportunities and challenges for businesses that choose to locate along the corridor.

Commercial development has been attracted to Ellicott Street because of its high visibility and easy access. Over time, however, the commercial frontage along the road has become fragmented and is in need of aesthetic modifications and structural improvements to meet current market demand. A redevelopment strategy for the Ellicott Street Corridor will seek to improve the economic vitality and market position of the corridor by developing a long-term vision based on a unified approach to improve business viability, visual image, and transportation and pedestrian safety. Elements of this strategy may include Southside branding/waypoint finding, zoning and land use revisions, façade enhancement programs, gateway/signage additions and infrastructure improvements, ranging from streetscape enhancements to relocating utilities underground.





## recommendation

### Re-imagine the areas of the City that lie within the 100- and 500-year floodplains

#### goal

*Preserve and protect the natural environment*

A significant portion of the City falls within regulatory floodplains, much of which is currently residential. These Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) are susceptible to destructive and potentially dangerous flooding from the Tonawanda Creek. The creek has reached flood conditions 24 times in the 65 years that the National Weather Service has been measuring levels. The image below shows flooding on Walnut Street in 2014. It is important to plan ahead to mitigate the devastating economic, environmental and social impacts of flooding.



#### Examine re-investment options for homes located within floodplains.



The city should evaluate different approaches for addressing residential areas located in flood hazard areas. One approach may be adjustments in the physical design of the built environment, such as relocating residents and removing homes. Other options include investing in flood mitigation measures to reduce the impact on existing residences. It is also possible to incorporate a combination of approaches such as selectively relocating residents in the most flood-prone areas and invest in flood mitigation infrastructure.

## recommendation

## Develop and adopt a resiliency policy statement

### goal

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*Preserve and protect the natural environment*

Being a resilient community means being a City that is prepared and able to recover effectively from environmental, economic, and other hardships – whether from local hardships such as flood events, or larger external factors such as regional, state, or national economic downturns. A resilient City has the policies, infrastructure, and tools to react, respond, and recover from such events. A resiliency policy statement provides a foundational framework to incorporate resiliency measures into a variety of existing City plans, policies, and practices.

#### Consider the following draft statement for adoption:

“The City of Batavia recognizes that municipal decision-making influences the viability of our businesses, the well-being of our residents, and the health of our environment. The City further recognizes that public sector leadership can both inform and inspire the public. The world is an ever-changing place, and we have a responsibility to constantly strive to improve our community.

The leadership of the City of Batavia has the duty to its citizens to provide the means to be a resilient community. We have an opportunity to adopt best-management practices to save money and build a livable, energy-independent and secure community with an innovative economy, healthy schools and a strong infrastructure. To this end, municipal decision-making and operations will pursue low-impact technologies and policies while integrating best management practices to the greatest extent possible. This will reflect our effort to be a resilient community in all aspects of the economy, the environment and society.”

## recommendation

## Support Renewable Energy Projects

### goal

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*Preserve and protect the natural environment*

With the foreseen build-out of the Western New York Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Park (WNY STAMP) (Alabama, New York) with semiconductor, energy and high-tech manufacturing companies over 10,000 green jobs are anticipated on site, with 30,000 more around the region.

The City of Batavia should continue to support renewable energy projects at all levels including municipal, community, residential and business projects. Potential opportunities for individuals, groups or businesses to participate in the green economy present themselves in many ways including energy performance audits, micro-grids, community solar projects, rooftop solar, green roofs, geothermal and electric vehicle charging stations, to name a few. Renovations and new-builds will incorporate greener standards as new building materials and technologies continue to advance. These collective efforts will reduce green-houses gases overtime and lead to a more resilient and prosperous Batavia.

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**Batavia’s success is a reflection of the pride, friendliness and creativity expressed by its most valued asset, its residents: families and singles, boomers and millennials, artists and business leaders.**

A “Dynamic Batavia” is a City in which residents are active and engaged in community events and civic life. Dynamic communities are rich in street life and artistic expression. It also means a well-designed built environment that is responsive to pedestrian needs and not only automobile convenience.

A Dynamic Batavia means creating and maintaining attractive public spaces suitable for a variety of formal and informal activities, such as spaces for street performers. It also means creating a City that is pedestrian friendly and easy to navigate.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- D-1 Develop a Historic Resources Inventory
- D-2 Celebrate Public Space
- D-3 Create a Local Online Social Network to Share Community Activities
- D-4 Activate Downtown Storefronts

## recommendation

## Develop a Historic Resources Inventory

### goal

*Create public spaces throughout the City that are expressions of particular places or events*

The City of Batavia has a rich history expressed in its many buildings scattered throughout the City. A survey of existing resources will provide a strong foundation for planning while creating an economic development opportunity to put vacant and underutilized buildings back into productive use. The project will also consolidate all existing survey data into a single digital repository to make it more accessible to City staff, property owners, and the public.

## recommendation

## Celebrate Public Space

### goal

*Create public spaces throughout the City that are expressions of particular places or events*

Vibrant, safe, accessible, and practical public spaces are integral to the vitality of Batavia. Typical public spaces in the City include parks, plazas, sidewalks, and streets. Places where private development meets public spaces are also opportunities to celebrate public space, even if those spaces are technically on private property. For example, courtyard areas in front of private buildings or street café seating areas are “quasi-public” spaces. These spaces are often overlooked, but should be actively planned for to enhance the experience of being in the City of Batavia.



**Create Community Gathering Spaces: designate flexible, active public spaces for short-term performances and/or displays (e.g., designated “busker” space)**

The City should identify appropriate community gathering spaces that can be used to create an active and vibrant streetlife. One example is to provide space for “buskers” or street performers. Other examples of potential users of flexible public spaces include food trucks, outdoor theater, fairs, and public art exhibits.



**Develop preferred design elements and cultural identity for consideration and voluntary application into private development projects.**

Private development projects can be opportunities to enhance public spaces through the provision of unique design or public art elements where private properties meet public areas (such as along sidewalks). By developing guidelines for design and cultural identity elements, Batavia can help bolster a unique sense of place for the City and its different neighborhoods. Some communities, as an example, incentivize private businesses and developers to provide public art amenities that use the same “blank canvas” to create an artistic piece, as illustrated by the heart image to the left – a public art element found throughout the Town of Bel Air, MD.





**Create a City-wide wayfinding system to help guide residents and visitors to points of interest.**

By developing a wayfinding system, Batavia can make itself more attractive and friendly to visitors, while also supporting pedestrian activity. Wayfinding systems include signs, maps, banners, and other elements to help pedestrians navigate the City environment and find key points of interest. A wayfinding system can also be used to help create a unique sense of identity for the City's different neighborhoods through things such as color-coded banners.

## recommendation

## Create a local online social network to share community activities

### goal

*Create public spaces throughout the City that are expressions of particular places of events*



Many communities around the country are turning to social media to connect with residents and tell community stories. It has proven to be an effective tool in engaging residents in civic life and marketing special events and programs. A social media strategy is best used in conjunction with an official community calendar of events.

### Create Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter Accounts for the City of Batavia

As the most popular platforms, these three social media platforms will allow the City to reach the majority of social media-using residents. There are also methods for duplicating posts on one platform to the others to increase efficiency and maximize the audience reached. This strategy represents minimal investment, requiring only staff time or potentially volunteers and interns.

## recommendation

### Develop a Strategy to Encourage Active Storefront Displays Downtown

#### goal

---

*Create public spaces throughout the City that are expressions of particular places of events*

Active storefronts enliven the street for pedestrians, attract more customers to existing businesses, market available commercial properties, and promote Batavia to prospective businesses. Eye-catching, creative displays in storefront windows generate awareness and draw from the products/services by the business, helping to market the business in a unique way. Regardless of theme, activating storefront windows will also be helpful in positioning downtown Batavia as an entertainment and dining hub.

**Batavia's policy framework and philosophy propel its prosperity, encouraging appropriate growth and adaptation to changing conditions.**

A Prosperous Batavia is a City with a strong and diversified economy, quality buildings, a variety of housing options, engaged residents, and unique neighborhoods.

Achieving a more Prosperous City requires the right mix of policies to catalyze and accommodate appropriate business growth and new development. This means aligning guidelines and regulations with the goals and vision of the comprehensive plan. It also requires the City to be engaged in economic development activities to grow local businesses and help create quality jobs for residents.

Housing for all income levels is a key ingredient to a prosperous City. Supporting a mix of housing ensures that there is housing for all types of workers in the City and therefore helps maintain a diversified workforce, while being socially responsible in addressing issues of poverty and income segregation.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- P-1 Continue to Redevelop the Batavia Opportunity Area Strategic Sites
- P-2 Update Zoning Ordinance to Reflect Goals of the Comprehensive Plan
- P-3 Support Small Locally-Owned Businesses, Employment, and Job Training
- P-4 Elevate the Role of Residents in Improving the Quality and Stability of our Neighborhoods
- P-5 Redevelop Vacant and Underutilized Buildings and Parcels Downtown
- P-6 Investments in Housing Should Strive to Include a Diverse Range of Housing Types, Creating a Seamless Integration of Low Income, Workforce, and Market Rate Housing Options Throughout the City.
- P-7 Strengthen Interagency Coordination and Maximize Resource Allocation

## recommendation

## Continue to Redevelop the Batavia Opportunity Area Strategic Sites

### goal

*Redevelop the BOA sites*



The Batavia Opportunity Area (BOA) plan identified 5 Strategic Sites, that if developed, can be catalytic components of City-wide revitalization that reinvigorates the City's core. In 2016 the City and BDC announced the first redevelopment of one of the Strategic Sites, **Ellicott Station** (formerly the Della Penna site). Propelled forward in 2017 the project has financing commitments from the NYS Brownfield Cleanup Program, the Empire State Development Corporation, the RESTORE NY program, National Grid and the City's BP<sup>2</sup> fund. The \$18 million redevelopment project sits on a 4-acre contaminated brownfield site, and is a strategic mix of market rate housing, entertainment, commercial office space and agriculture manufacturing, with the partnership of a regional micro-brewery. While this is the first BOA site to be targeted for redevelopment, the remaining sites must not be ignored as the benefits of brownfield redevelopment extend the beyond removal of contaminants; such as returning a site to active use and back on to the tax rolls, leveraging private investment, and creating businesses and jobs.

### City Centre/Medical Corridor

Break up "super block" between Bank and Jefferson Avenue by extending Jackson Street north through the site. Re-establish "street wall" on Main Street and Bank Street by introducing multi-story, well designed structures up to the sidewalk. Continue the process of turning the mall "inside out" started on Main Street by introducing facades on all storefronts. Tie City Centre together with the Medical Campus via alignment of parking lot entrances and traffic calming of Bank Street. Maximize use of City Centre property by re-organizing parking layout and minimizing concourse space. Improve circulation and parking to support medical redevelopment plans.

### Creek Park

Reclaim access to the Tonawanda Creek by implementing a modified Creek Park Plan that includes trails connected to the Ellicott Trail and a great lawn for passive recreation. Regain lost space by reorganizing parking, utilizing vacant properties and re-aligning a formal Rectory Drive between Ellicott and Evans Street. Provide shared parking to support Genesee County offices, the ice rink and new development. Provide opportunities for new housing or mixed use development along the creek.

### Harvester Center

Improve circulation and parking with the introduction of additional internal streets and parking areas. Convert the facility to an appropriate size by demolishing select buildings to provide space for parking, green space, circulation and new development. Create a mixed use Campus with loft housing, offices and retail on the north side of the site; move heavier industrial uses to the south side of the building over time. A new Erie Boulevard Complete Street on the former Erie Railroad ROW that includes sidewalks, streetscape elements, enhanced pedestrian crossings and parallel parking. Formalize Masse Place as a Gateway by introducing additional landscaping and streetscape elements and upgrading properties. Re-purpose Wiard Plow Site on Swan Street for new commercial development; save historic structures if feasible.

## recommendation

## Update zoning ordinance to reflect goals of the Comprehensive Plan

### goal

*Promote and support a business-friendly environment*

Zoning is the primary implementation tool to achieve the desired future land use in Batavia (discussed in further detail in Chapter 4). Zoning regulations dictate the form and use of properties within the City and therefore shape how and where future private development and redevelopment occurs within the City. The City's zoning regulations should be updated to reflect the Future Land Use Map (see Chapter 4).

### **Incorporate Form-Based code elements in the commercial, retail, business, and industrial areas**

Form-based codes represents “best practices” in zoning regulations. Conventional zoning provides general massing limitations, primarily through density, setback, and building height restrictions. Conventional zoning is traditionally very limited in terms of use and tends to discourage the mixing of uses. Form-based codes emphasize the design of development and tend to be more encouraging of a mix of appropriate uses. Typical form-based code regulations include street and building types, build-to-lines, and number of floors. The City should also look to build on its current relationship with the Town in creating a seamless zoning approach to residential development in the northeast quadrant of the City that overlaps into the town.

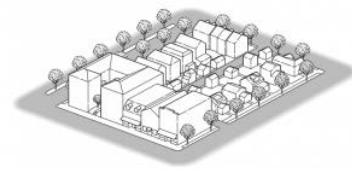
#### **Conventional Zoning**

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



#### **Form-Based Codes**

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.





## recommendation

## Support small locally-owned businesses, employment and job training

### goal

*Promote and support a business-friendly environment*

BATAVIA DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION



Locally-owned businesses are an important part of the City economy and employment base. They help make Batavia a unique place with retail and restaurant options not found in every other community. Locally owned businesses also have important economic development benefits. Profits earned by locally owned businesses stay in the community and are spent by local owners at other local businesses and service providers, thereby generating additional economic “spin-off” benefits.

**Collaborate with regional communities, planning organizations and business and economic development entities to strengthen the economic environment for the City.**

Partnerships are key to economic development. By collaborating with local and regional partners, the City can enhance its capacity to carry out economic development projects and programs. Coordination is also important to ensure that partners’ efforts are complementary and not redundant. The city should continue to support the Batavia Development Corporation (BDC), the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Genesee County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC).

**Support and foster incubators as a means to grow existing businesses and create new start-up opportunities.**

Incubators are shared work spaces offered to small business owners and entrepreneurs at little or no cost. The facilities are designed to get businesses off the ground by providing needed resources before businesses have a sustainable cash flow. Incubators do not necessarily provide office space only. Many also offer business assistance services, training, and access to equipment. As businesses grow and expand they move on to permanent locations. The formal concept of business incubation began in the USA in 1959 when Joseph Mancuso opened the Batavia Industrial Center in a Batavia, New York, warehouse. The USDA Rural Development sponsored **freshLAB** is the first restaurant incubator of its kind in the Finger Lakes region to include a micro-brewery, the Batavia Brewing Company.

**Install public parking signage downtown to help guide the public to available parking.**

Downtown has adequate public parking but needs better signage to direct residents and visitors to public lots. Attractive signage should be installed at key intersections and other locations – especially where on-street parking is limited or frequently occupied. Parking signage should be integrated with the recommended City-wide wayfinding system.

## recommendation

## Elevate the role of residents in improving the quality and stability of our neighborhoods

### goal

*Create pride and ownership within existing neighborhoods*

Batavia's neighborhoods are distinctive and the residents of each neighborhood are uniquely positioned to understand and deal with local issues such as necessary public improvements and safety concerns. Assisting local residents to deal with neighborhood-scale issues is an effective way for the City to increase capacity and improve the quality of life throughout the City. By getting residents involved in improving their neighborhoods, the City can also elevate community and neighborhood pride and ownership.



### Neighbors should initiate the organization of neighborhood associations for all neighborhoods throughout the City

Neighborhood associations are groups of neighbors who work cooperatively to make their neighborhoods better places to live. They typically focus on issues of land use, neighborhood improvements (such as signs or sidewalk repairs), dealing with safety concerns, and other similar topics. The City should support the creation of organizations, but not directly lead or run them.



### Work with neighborhood associations to sponsor neighborhood-based events and festivals

Neighborhood events, such as block parties, are great ways to increase the quality of life for residents and boost neighborhood pride and sense of community. This, in turn, encourages local residents to maintain and improve their local neighborhoods. Other examples of neighborhood-based events include: yard sales, book exchange, art show, kids performance, karaoke party, outdoor movie screening, charity bake sale or food drive, spaghetti suppers, cocktail parties, barbecues, and others. Other efforts include starting community gardens, tree plantings, clean-up days, painting murals, and other neighborhood beautification projects.



### Create unique neighborhood signage celebrating the history and heritage of each neighborhood

Distinctive neighborhood signage is a relatively simple way to create a sense of identity and pride for residents in each of the City's neighborhoods. A City-wide neighborhood signage effort could serve as an effective momentum-building first project for new neighborhood associations. Neighborhood signage can also be incorporated into the proposed City-wide wayfinding system.

## recommendation

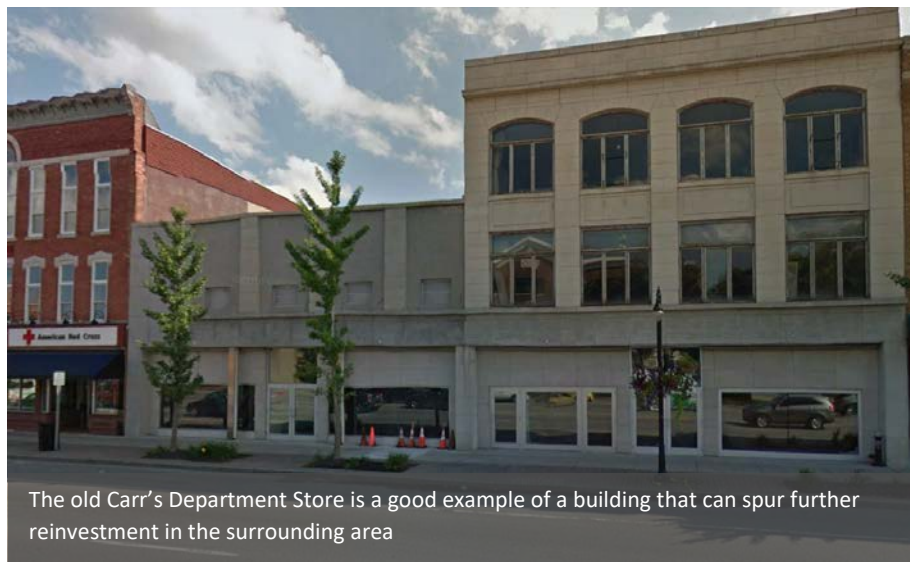
## Redevelop vacant and underutilized buildings and parcels downtown

### goal

*Create pride and ownership within existing neighborhoods*

Downtowns in small- to medium-scaled urban communities across the country have been experiencing investment and growth, particularly in residential development. Leading the charge have been young professionals and empty nesters. Studies have found that college-educated professionals between the ages of 25 and 34, tend to want to live in tight-knit urban neighborhoods that are close to work and have dining, entertainment, and shopping options within an easy walk. “The cities that capture the mobile, college-educated ‘young and restless’ are the ones who are most likely to revitalize their downtowns and accelerate economic progress in their cities,” says Lee Fisher, President, CEO for Cities.

A focused strategy to redevelop vacant and underutilized buildings in the downtown supports the BOA and complements the recommendation to develop a Historic Resources Inventory. Further, owners of buildings with historic significance can pursue historic designations that will, in turn, open the door for tax credits for building restorations and improvements. Very often these historic tax credits and other incentives make investments in vacant and underutilized urban buildings a profitable venture for investors. This strategy should include exploring the possibility with Genesee Community College (GCC) of bringing some of its classes (particularly Creative Arts classes) and resident opportunities into downtown, mixed use and upper floor redevelopment, façade improvements, upper floor accessibility and storefront activation.



The old Carr's Department Store is a good example of a building that can spur further reinvestment in the surrounding area

## recommendation

**Investments in housing should strive to include a diverse range of housing types, creating a seamless integration of low income, workforce, and market rate housing options throughout the City**

## goal

*Create pride and ownership within existing neighborhoods*

The City should actively plan to create mixed-income neighborhoods that are inclusionary of households of a wide range of income levels. Economic integration of neighborhoods is important to creating a dynamic City. The social benefits of such policies have been proven to help reduce poverty and specifically to help eliminate generational cycles of poverty. The City has representation on the steering committee for the Genesee County Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis.

### **Target distressed and vacant properties for investment and redevelopment of neighborhoods**

The City is the only community in the State of New York to have a property exemption (485-r RPTL) encouraging the investment in vacant “Zombie” homes providing for up to 25 years of exemption for investments in Zombie homes that become owner-occupied single family homes. However, there are also a significant number of distressed single-family homeowner houses in trouble because of the owners’ age, health, disability or economic concerns. These houses would benefit from weatherization, health and safety repairs, and improvements to the exteriors so that they again support the neighborhood. Investment strategies targeted at improving the market value of the City’s housing stock will result in providing safer and higher quality housing and neighborhoods for both current and new residents.

## recommendation

**Strengthen interagency coordination and maximize resource allocation**

## goal

*Create a unified voice*

Improving interagency coordination improves efficiency and builds capacity to get more done to improve the City of Batavia. Interagency coordination refers to the different groups and organizations within the City. Increasing coordination between these groups will help to reduce redundancies in activities and foster collaboration where visions, projects, and initiatives overlap to achieve more than is possible with each organization working alone.

### **Collaborate with the Town of Batavia to strengthen the City’s downtown businesses while supporting appropriate growth within the Town.**

The City should work closely with the town to ensure that economic development efforts are complementary and not competitive. This means identifying the types of businesses appropriate for downtown and those appropriate for the Town and tailoring business retention and attraction strategies accordingly.

**Evaluate need for staff capacity augmentation in planning, community development and economic development.**

Evaluating the need to expand staff capacity is a necessary first step to ensuring the City is able to effectively execute its planning and economic development goals and objectives. One approach the City can undertake is regular strategic planning re-evaluation that builds off of the implementation matrix of the comprehensive plan. The City should identify tasks that need to be completed and analyze the staff time to achieve those tasks. That time should be evaluated against current staff capacity to identify any gaps.





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## 4. Future Land Use Plan

### Planning for Land Use Changes

The **Future Land Use Plan** is a technique used to illustrate preferred future land use patterns. It is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Most importantly, the Future Land Use Plan sets the foundation for the City's zoning. In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what residents would like the Batavia of tomorrow to look like. The Future Land Use Plan presented here only highlights areas of proposed change from existing land use patterns.

It is important to state that the Plan is focused on the future – it does not imply that existing houses or businesses must “convert” to the future desired land use.

#### 4.A Future Land Use Definitions

**Low-Density Residential:** designation is intended to apply to lands that are not appropriate for urban levels of development and/or land that is appropriate for low-intensity larger-lot residential development.

**Medium-Density Residential:** designation is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods that offer a variety of lot sizes, housing, and ownership options. Residential Medium Density neighborhoods should include a variety of unit types designed to incorporate features from both single-family and multi-family developments, support cost-efficient housing, facilitate infill development, encourage use of transit service, and promote the efficient use of urban services and infrastructure.

**High-Density Residential:** designation is intended to encourage a variety of high quality multi-family living environments for people in differing living situations, from all income levels, and in all stages of life. Should be limited to where there is adequate infrastructure to accommodate higher densities with direct access to an arterial and adequate buffering from lower intensity land uses.

**Restoration Residential:** intended to enhance residential development on land that is significantly constrained by environmental factors, i.e. located within the floodplain.

**PUD:** designation to allow greater flexibility in development standards (lot coverage, setbacks, building heights, lot sizes, etc.) to facilitate adaptation of development to the unique conditions while permitting a mixture of uses which, with proper design and planning, will be compatible with each other and with surrounding uses or zoning districts all to permit a response to market demand.

**Light Industrial:** designated to establish and protect industrial areas for the use of light manufacturing operations and for the distribution of products at wholesale. The standards will be established to promote sound

light industrial development, and to protect nearby areas from undesirable aspects of industrial development.

**Auto-oriented Commercial:** designation is intended to encourage the redevelopment of strip commercial areas into vibrant business districts that are physically connected to the surrounding community by pedestrian pathways as well as major arterials.

**Highway Commercial:** designation is intended to encourage development of uses that cater to the needs of highway travelers.

**Gateway District:** The purpose of the Gateway District is to encourage the development of a safe and compatible mix of commercial, office and light industrial uses immediately adjacent to East Main Street, without compromising the safety of the adjoining neighborhoods, imposing hazards and nuisances on the community, or degrading the environment. A primary function of this district is to encourage the location of businesses that can service the broader regional community and to function as a gateway into the City of Batavia. Improving the visual integrity of this segment of East Main Street is a priority goal in this future land use designation. To encourage economic opportunity in this uniquely located area, future land uses should be more focused on the area's visual integrity and less on specific allowed uses. Additionally, in an effort to achieve improved compatibility between adjacent land uses, design standards should be adopted that minimize off-site impacts.

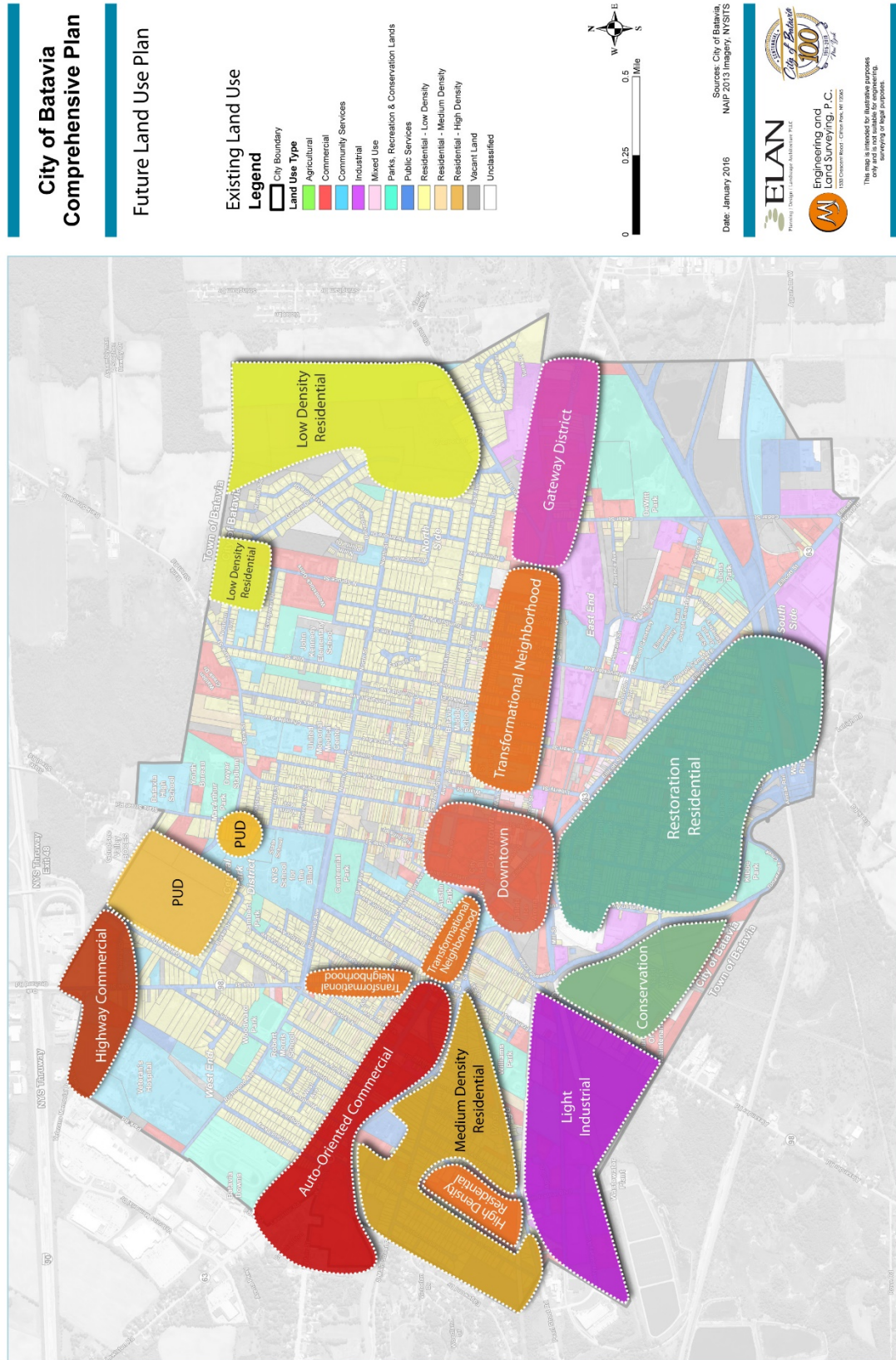
**Transformational Neighborhood:** designated for a compatible mix of residential, office and limited specialty retail uses in close proximity to downtown and the surrounding residential development. The designation recognizes the need to protect adjacent residential uses, thus the basic character of the designation encourages a compatible mixture of residential and office types of land uses. Review of building design, uses, buffers, landscaping, lighting and parking are recognized as essential for the establishment and maintenance of the character of this designation. This designation is not intended for moderate-to-large office centers.

**Downtown:** designation features a mix of private and public uses designed to create a compact, friendly small-town feel, with an emphasis on a strong pedestrian network and public realm. Public places, sidewalks, extensive landscaping, transit orientation, shared or structured parking, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and high-quality design and signage are key features. Permitted uses emphasize mixed or multiple use developments, and include high-density housing, civic and governmental, offices, medical, small-scale commercial and retail, and locally oriented professional and personal services.

**Conservation:** located within the floodplain, this area experiences repeated loss from flooding waters. Future regulations will be developed to alleviate these losses without adversely impacting natural resources.



## 4.B Future Land Use Map





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## 5. Creating a Roadmap for Implementation Success

The recommendations and actions included in the Comprehensive Plan Update cover a wide range of activities that will require the engagement of numerous agencies, staff, stakeholders, and others to successfully implement. This section is designed to help the City manage the implementation of the plan by identifying priorities, timelines, partners, and potential funding for each action.

Seven priority projects are identified for the City to focus its efforts on due to their importance and potential to positively improve the City. An implementation matrix is also included to summarize the key implementation details for each identified task.

### 5.A Priority Projects

#### Overview

**Timeframe:**

1-5 Years

**Lead:**

City Manager

**Potential Partners:**

City Council; Mall  
Owners; BDC; GCEDC

**Potential Funding:**

Private Funding  
Sources; ESD

#### 1. Reinvest in the Mall as a Mixed-Use, Multi-Story Complex



The Mall offers tremendous opportunity to transform the underutilized and auto-oriented suburban-style into a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use area of the City. The current Mall is surrounded by large expanses of surface parking areas. The buildings do not face Main Street, resulting in an uninviting pedestrian environment and overall lack of site organization.

Redevelopment of the Mall will help create a vibrant Main Street with opportunities for new businesses within walking distance of many residential neighborhoods. It will also help raise the City's tax base and property tax revenues, which will help support City services to residents.

The Mall has already been the focus of intensive planning efforts through the New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program. The BOA Step 2 study included a real estate market analysis that identified a variety of redevelopment options for the site. The City should prioritize moving from the planning phases into implementation and redevelopment of the Mall.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Gain site control over the mall property.** The City should explore options for site control, which could include an offer letter from the owner, a letter of intent to sell, or an option agreement. The option agreement is the preferable form of site control as it is a legally binding document that would give the City the right to purchase the property at an agreed upon price, but would not bind the City to do so. This would give the City the opportunity to solicit developer interest and proposals.
- **Develop high-quality marketing materials** to help solicit developer interest. A brief brochure or one-sheet should be developed, at a minimum, and should include positive trends and activities in the City as well as the key positive findings of the market analysis.
- **Engage local and regional developers** personally to discuss development opportunities. Use the marketing materials to follow up with developers that are potentially interested.
- **Consider creating a developer Request for Proposals (RFP).** The RFP will provide a summary of the characteristics of the mall property, the City's vision for the property, results of the market analysis, and other pertinent pieces of information.
- **Identify Incentives.** Discussions with developers and evaluating developer proposals may reveal the need for incentives to induce a developer to invest or the need for some form of public-private partnership.
- **Recruit Businesses.** Further along in the process, the City should work with the developer and economic development organizations to recruit businesses for the new commercial space.

## Overview

### Timeframe:

1-2 Years

### Lead:

City Manager

### Potential Partners:

Consultant Team;  
Stakeholders from CP  
Process

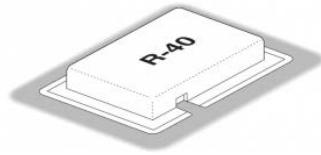
### Potential Funding:

General Fund

## 2. Update Zoning to Incorporate Form-Based Codes

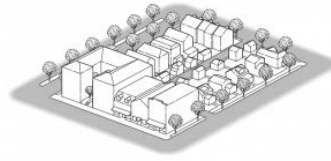
### Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



### Form-Based Codes

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.



The City currently has traditional zoning laws that should be updated to reflect the Future Land Use Map and incorporate form based code elements. Zoning regulations are the primary implementation tool to shape how and where future private development occurs. Form based elements emphasize high quality design compared to traditional zoning that includes only basic site placement and massing restrictions.

Form based elements should ensure that future development allows for an appropriate mixing of uses, emphasizes a mix of housing and building types that are complementary and of appropriate scale, requires well-designed buildings with proper architectural elements and facades, and create a pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment.

Form based codes should be based on recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan but also include opportunities for public input and engagement.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Identify Key Corridors and Districts within the City that would benefit from form-based code elements.** This would include Main Street and other major commercial corridors. The mall area would also be an ideal candidate for form based code elements.
- **Solicit Consultant Assistance.** The City should engage with a planning consultant to develop the codes, and coordinate with key City officials, staff and stakeholders.
- **Assess Existing Conditions.** The assessment will ensure that the code will build upon the unique characteristics of the City's distinct districts, corridors, and neighborhoods. The assessment will largely focus on the existing urban form at the neighborhood scale down the architectural details of buildings.
- **Engage the Community and Stakeholders.** The engagement process should focus on the community vision for the specific areas that the form based codes will apply to. Visualizations should be used to help community members understand the implications of different code elements. Use the community input to finalize the codes and adopt into law.

## Overview

### Timeframe:

1-3 Years

### Lead:

Public Works

### Potential Partners:

NYS DOT; GC Highway

### Potential Funding:

Grant funding

## 3. Develop and Adopt a Complete Streets Policy



A Complete Streets Policy will formalize Batavia's intent to create a more vibrant and dynamic City by ensuring streets are not just for automobiles, but also include amenities that make these public areas accessible and friendly for a variety of users including cyclists and pedestrians. Successful Complete Streets include things such as sidewalks, bike lanes, rain gardens, street trees, benches and seating, pedestrian-scale lighting, transit stops, and other elements.

A policy statement is incorporated into a variety of policies and plans including: ordinances and resolutions; rewrites of design manuals; inclusion in comprehensive plans; internal memos; policies adopted by the City; executive orders; and others.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Formulate a City of Batavia Complete Streets Policy** using best practices case studies and existing guides that addresses the ten elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets (see Smart Growth America website):<sup>1</sup> Examples of adopted policies of New York State communities can be found on the New York State DOT website. This may require the assistance of an engineering/planning consultant to best utilize staff time and achieve the best outcome.
- **Plan for Implementation.** Conduct an assessment of how transportation and streetscape decisions and projects are currently implemented in the City. Identify areas in the process where rules, procedures, and habits can be modified to reflect the policy statement.
- **Work with the Genesee Highway Department and New York State DOT.** Both agencies have jurisdiction of key roads in the City, including Main Street, Walnut Street, Ellicott Street and others. Note that New York State passed a Complete Streets Act requiring state, county and local agencies to consider all users when developing transportation projects that receive state and federal funding.
- **Consider Developing a Street Design Manual.** A street design manual would be the guiding document for designing new street projects.

<sup>1</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/the-ten-elements-of-a-complete-streets-policy/>



Overview
<b>Timeframe:</b> 1-2 Years
<b>Lead:</b> City Council
<b>Potential Partners:</b> Residents; City Staff
<b>Potential Funding:</b> N/A

## 4. Initiate the Organization of Neighborhood Associations



The City can support neighborhood improvement by helping to establish neighborhood associations for each of the City's distinct neighborhoods. Associations serve to create pride, which translates into neighborhoods where residents help maintain public areas creating places where others want to live and invest. Neighborhood associations also improve home ownership rates, which generally corresponds to greater maintenance of properties.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Identify Existing Community Leaders.** Utilize existing community leaders and groups to help form neighborhood associations that already have neighborhood social networks.
- **Convene a Public Forum.** Invite the public to a public presentation to kick-off the City's neighborhood associations initiative. Use the event to discuss the purpose of associations, how they will interact with the City, and what resources the City is providing. Provide a map of the different neighborhoods or use the event to delineate what the different City areas should be. Consider breaking into small groups by neighborhood to help forge connections. Utilize sign-in sheets by neighborhood with contact information to distribute to residents of each neighborhood area.
- **Provide Resources.** Explore what resources the City is able and willing to provide to associations. Resources may include meeting space. The City could also provide a mailing list for all addresses within each neighborhood for communications.
- **Coordinate with Associations.** Once neighborhood associations are established, coordinate directly with groups on clean-up projects, community events, and related neighborhood needs. Consider convening a quarterly meeting with representatives from each neighborhood association.

## Overview

### Timeframe:

6-10 Years (Initiate within 1-2 Years)

### Lead:

Assistant City Manager;  
Public Works

### Potential Partners:

City Council; NYS DEC

### Potential Funding:

NYS Climate Smart  
Communities; LWRP

## 5. Re-imagine the Areas of the City that lie within Floodplains



The City should study options for how to address existing development, including many homes that are located in flood prone areas. Many of these areas have already seen damage from floods and the City should identify ways to mitigate future flood damage.

Potential strategies include relocating residents out of the floodplain, constructing flood infrastructure, developing a program to “floodproof” existing structures, converting areas into parks and natural areas, and others. There is no simple solution to the flooding problem and a combination of approaches may be needed. A thorough study will identify the range of possibilities, address the pros and cons of each, and recommend strategies for future land use in the floodplain.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Hold Public Input Sessions:** Work closely with community members and businesses with properties in the floodplains to involve them in the planning process for the future of the floodplains and to identify preferred options.
- **Identify Potential Strategies:** Identify potential strategies based on best practices and case study research. The City may wish to utilize an outside specialist for this task. The strategies should be examined for their feasibility from a public and financial perspective.

## Overview

### Timeframe:

2-4 Years

### Lead:

Business Improvement  
District

### Potential Partners:

City; BDC; NYS DOT

### Potential Funding:

Grant sources

## 6. Develop a Revitalization Strategy for Ellicott Street



A revitalization strategy for this key corridor will help spur economic development and enhance the character of Ellicott Street. The plan should include detailed recommendations on how to improve the corridor, which may include design guidelines, business attraction strategies, a façade program, infrastructure investments, zoning changes, development incentives, site and corridor marketing, and others.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Secure Funding and Solicit Consultant.** The BID should explore outside grant funding such as the opportunities presented in the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). After securing funding, the BID should solicit a developer through an RFP process.
- **Convene an Advisory Committee.** The Advisory Committee will guide the consultant efforts and provide input on the development of the revitalization plan. The Committee should include key City staff and stakeholders.
- **Convene a Business Stakeholder Group.** The Stakeholder Group will be utilized for focus groups in preparing revitalization strategies. Forming a special stakeholder/focus group will ensure the plan is sensitive to the needs of the business community and will ultimately be implementable.
- **Assist in Community Engagement Efforts.** The BID should actively engage area residents and stakeholders in the planning process. This may include publishing meeting notices, hosting online surveys, and other efforts.
- **Commit to a Strategy and Implement.** Following consensus of the strategy, the BID should officially publicize it, and initiate the implementation recommendations. The strategy can be used for securing funding for implementation projects and initiatives.

## Overview

### Timeframe:

3-5 Years

### Lead:

Public Works & Youth  
Bureau

### Potential Partners:

County Parks

### Potential Funding:

General Fund; Grant  
Sources

## 7. Create a City Parks and Recreation Master Plan



A Parks and Recreation Master Plan is necessary to ensure that the City's parks and recreation offerings continue to meet the needs of residents and address any existing shortcomings. The Master Plan will inventory existing offerings including number of parks, acreage, and amenities (tennis courts, playgrounds, etc.) as well as the location and distribution of facilities. Through the process, existing amenities will be evaluated for their condition. The plan will also include an analysis of the needs and preferences of City residents.

The final plan will identify any gaps or needs for additional parks and recreational offerings as well as any specific maintenance or replacement recommendations for existing facilities.

### Tasks to Complete:

- **Secure Funding & Solicit Consultant.** The City should explore potential funding sources to conduct the plan including the grants offered through the CFA.
- **Review Existing Conditions:** The existing conditions analysis should examine population and demographic trends, feature site inventories, inventory and analyze current park facilities and recreation programs, map current and potential parks, and review facilities for accessibility to persons with disabilities. The City's role will be to provide existing documentation and other materials to the consultant.
- **Analyze Needs and Preferences:** This task will assess community needs and preferences for recreation. Note that while there are national standards for parks and recreation facilities, it is important to also tailor the City's offerings based on the community's input. Therefore, community involvement is important in addition to benchmarking the City's offering against established standards. The City's role will be the help convene public meetings and work sessions.
- **Develop Prioritized Plan:** The Plan should include prioritized recommendations for facilities, recreation programs, and management and operations. The City should work closely with the consultant to formulate recommendations.
- **Adopt and Implement Plan:** The final plan should be adopted by the City and made public. The City should focus on implementing the identified priority recommendations.

## 5.B Implementation Matrix

The following implementation matrix includes the full set of recommendations and actions included in the Comprehensive Plan Update. For each action, the timeframe, priority level, probable lead implementer, potential partners, and potential funding sources are indicated. The Priority Projects, discussed in the previous section, are highlighted in light green.

### Legend

Short-term (1-2 years)							medium priority
Medium-term (3-5 years)							high priority
Long-term (6-10 years)							top priority

\* Priority Project

Sustainable Batavia										
Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Develop and adopt a Complete Streets Policy*	Develop a Complete Streets policy that aligns with NYS DOT policy*							Planning Board	Public Works, NYS DOT	n/a
	Design decorative crosswalks at appropriate locations							BID	Public Works, Batavia City School District, GO ART!, BDC	Arts or private funding sources, General fund
	Integrate traffic calming techniques at appropriate locations							Public Works	NYS DOT, BDC	NYS DOT
	Provide pedestrian-scale lighting							BDC	Public Works, BID	NYSERDA



Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Create a Bikeable Batavia</b>	Implement high priority actions from the 2015 Batavia Walkability Action Plan							City Council	Public Works, Batavia City School District, BID, BDC	NYS DOT
	Develop bicycle lanes along key corridors							City Council	Public Works, BDC	NYS DOT
	Install bicycle racks outside all public facilities							BID	Public Works, GO ART!, BDC	General Fund, sponsorships
<b>Foster a safe, convenient and comfortable transit network</b>	Develop wayfinding signage for bicyclists							BID	City Council, Public Works, BDC	General Fund, sponsorships
	Provide appropriate lighting and bus shelters at bus stops							RTS Genesee	City Council, Public Works	
<b>Implement low-impact development (LID) techniques in parks &amp; open spaces</b>	Integrate public art into bus shelters							RTS Genesee	GO ART!, Batavia City School District	private funding sources
	Redirect stormwater toward natural or constructed planted areas							Site Plan Applicants	Public Works, City Council	n/a
	Integrate LID into designs for bike and pedestrian network improvement							City Manager	NYS DOT, BID	n/a
<b>Manage trees as an important part of the urban environment</b>	Implement recommendations made in the 2017 Tree Management Plan							City Manager	Public Works, BID	

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Create a City Parks &amp; Recreation Master Plan*</b>	Develop capital spending and maintenance priorities for open spaces							City Manager	Youth Bureau, County Parks	General Fund
<b>Develop "Welcome to the Southside" Corridor Plan for Rt. 63*</b>	Enhance the Route 63 corridor from the gateway into Batavia to the BOA							BDC	BID, Public Works, NYS DOT	ESD,
<b>Re-imagine areas of the City that lie within floodplains*</b>	Examine re-investment options for homes located within floodplains							Assistant City Manager, Public Works	City Council, NYS DEC	NYS Climate Smart Communities
<b>Develop and adopt a resiliency policy statement</b>	Create a policy statement reflecting the City's climate resiliency goals							City Manager	City Council	n/a
<b>Support renewable energy projects</b>								All municipal departments	NYSERDA	n/a

## Dynamic Batavia

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Develop a Historic Resources Inventory*</b>	Create database of historic buildings and potential historic resources							City Council	BID, BDC	NYS OPRHP
<b>Celebrate public space</b>	Create community gathering spaces							BID	City Manager, BDC, Public Works	BID
	Develop design and cultural elements for private development projects							BID	GO ART!, BDC	NYSCA
	Create a City-wide wayfinding system							BID	City Council, Public Works, BDC	General Fund, sponsorships
<b>Create a local online social network to share community activities</b>	Expand social network and communication opportunities							City Manager	Other City Agencies	n/a
<b>Activate downtown storefronts</b>	Make all storefronts active, even if the space is vacant							BID	GO ART!, BDC	n/a

## Prosperous Batavia

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Continue to redevelop the Batavia Opportunity Area strategic sites</b>	Implement City Centre/Medical Corridor strategy							City Manager	Consultant Team, stakeholders from CP process	General Fund
	Reclaim access to Tonawanda Park							Public Works	City Manager Consultant Team	NYS OPRHP, NYS DOS
	Continued investment in Harvester Center							BDC	City Manager, GCEDC, ESDC	NYS ESD, NYS DOT, EDA
<b>Update zoning ordinance to reflect goals of the Comprehensive Plan*</b>	Incorporate Form-Based code elements in non-residential areas							City Council	Consultant Team, stakeholders from CP process	General Fund
<b>Support small locally-owned businesses, employment and job training</b>	Collaborate to strengthen the economic environment for the Town and City							City Manager	Town Supervisor, City Council, Town Board, BDC	n/a
	Install public parking signage							BDC	City Council	General Fund
	Support and foster incubators							BDC	BID, GCC	NYS funding
<b>Elevate the role of residents in improving the quality and stability of our neighborhoods*</b>	Initiate the organization of neighborhood associations							City Council	City Manager, Public Works	n/a
	Work with neighborhood associations to sponsor events							City Council	City Manager, Public Works	General Fund
	Create unique neighborhood signage							Neighborhood Associations	City Council	private funding sources

Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe			Priority			Lead	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Redevelop vacant and underutilized buildings and parcels downtown</b>	Focus policies, initiatives, and resources to utilize upper level floors for residential uses (especially the Carr's Building)							City Manager	City Council, BDC, BID	n/a
<b>Include a diverse range of housing types throughout the City</b>	Work with developers and homeowners to construct and maintain a spectrum of quality housing							City Manager	City Council, Housing Authority	private funding sources
<b>Strengthen interagency coordination</b>	Collaborate with the Town of Batavia							City Manager	Asst. City Manager, City Council, Town Board, Town Supervisor	n/a
	Evaluate the need for staff capacity							City Manager	Asst. City Manager, City Council, City Agencies	n/a