Draft Plan

November 1, 2019
1.0 Introduction

The City of Ithaca has undertaken a two-phase process for the preparation of its comprehensive plan. Phase I involved the preparation of Plan Ithaca, a city-wide plan that identified the goals and vision for the entire city. Plan Ithaca was adopted by the City of Ithaca on September 2, 2015 as Phase I of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Phase II includes specific neighborhood or thematic plans that build upon the topics addressed in Plan Ithaca.

Immediately following the adoption of Plan Ithaca, Common Council identified a plan for the waterfront area as a top priority for Phase II.

In order to develop recommendations for the plan and for the zoning, the City established a waterfront working group made up of members of the public and City Planning Staff. The group began meeting in September of 2016. In December of 2016 they hosted two open houses to solicit additional input from the public. Initially, they worked on developing recommendations for new zoning in the waterfront study area, which were adopted in August of 2017. Over the course of next two years the working group continued to meet and gather information and to draft a plan to address issues in the waterfront.
Structure of the Waterfront Plan

The Waterfront Plan builds upon Plan Ithaca and incorporates the goals of the broader document. It addresses in greater detail issues that are specific to the waterfront area and offers recommendations to achieve the plan’s objectives.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the Waterfront Plan is organized into six chapters:

- Land Use
- Economic Vitality
- Community Livability
- Mobility & Transportation
- Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources
- Sustainable Energy, Water, & Food Systems

Three thread-through themes serve as overarching concepts that guide the entire plan. Each chapter reflects the principles of sustainability, equity, and collaboration as described below.

- **Sustainability**: Living in a way that allows present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A sustainable community must safeguard the health and well-being of its economic, social, and environmental systems — including food security, clean air and water, healthy ecosystems, and effective governance.

- **Equity**: The services, amenities, and opportunities that are available through City efforts are accessible to all residents through means that preserve dignity and that are free of discrimination. These may include participation in decision-making, as well as access to information, housing, transportation, economic opportunity, jobs and job training, recreation, and a safe and healthy environment.

- **Collaboration**: The City works in partnership with other municipalities, educational institutions, and community organizations to realize the goals of Plan Ithaca.

General Notes:

- Any mention of “Ithaca” throughout the plan refers to the City of Ithaca.
- The use of the word “City” (with a capital C) refers to the City of Ithaca as a government.
- The use of the word “city” (with a lower case c) refers to the city as a geographic area.
- Phrases or words shown in **small capitals** are defined in the Waterfront Plan’s Glossary (Appendix A).
- The topics included in the various chapters of Plan Ithaca are often connected to ideas in other chapters. To help make this connection, color-coded cross-references are
provided in a text box next to each section. If you are interested in the ideas in a particular section, you may also be interested in reviewing the referenced chapter. The key to these cross-references is as follows:

- **LU** – Land Use
- **EV** – Economic Vitality
- **CL** – Community Livability
- **M&T** – Mobility & Transportation
- **N&CR** – Natural & Cultural Resources
- **S** – Sustainable Energy, Water, & Food Systems

A comprehensive plan is, ideally, a living document — a written agreement the City makes with itself and its residents at a given point in time. A good comprehensive plan evolves organically and ages gracefully, as the City and the community members involved in implementing it “learn by doing.” As new trends emerge and community needs change, our priorities will evolve and implementation strategies will be revised. As a living document, the Waterfront Plan must be regularly revisited and updated to reflect our community priorities. The Waterfront Plan is a snapshot of our community in 2018: our collective effort to learn from our past, look into our future, and commit ourselves to a course of action that will make our city a better place to live, work, and play for all Ithacans.
Plan Ithaca
A Vision for Our Future

The City of Ithaca is proud to be known as a place of great natural beauty, rich heritage, diverse and vibrant community life, small city character, and steadfast pursuit of social equity, physical accessibility, livability, and environmental sustainability. By preserving and building upon these strengths, we strive to be a model community in which to live and work, and an exceptional destination for visitors.

Preserve & Enhance

Our Neighborhoods - Ithacans place a high value on the sense of belonging, support and connection that are inherent in our neighborhood identities. The character and livability of our existing neighborhoods must be protected.

Our Strong Community Bonds - Community cohesiveness relies on meaningful bonds among residents, neighborhoods, and community institutions. A strong sense of community is one of our greatest assets, and we must continue to cultivate these connections.

Our Historic & Cultural Resources – Ithaca is fortunate to have a rich heritage of historic buildings, an active arts community, and a diverse and significant cultural history. Stewardship must remain a priority in order to preserve our valuable cultural and historic resources.

Our Natural Resources – The striking beauty of our natural areas and open spaces is a source of delight for residents and visitors alike. We depend upon our water and land resources and use them actively. These must be protected and preserved for the enjoyment, recreation, and use of current and future generations.

Our Educational Resources – Educational resources for children and adults are of a high quality and draw many new residents to the City. Higher education is a key economic engine as well as a source of Ithaca’s vitality.

Create & Promote

A Strong Economy That Provides Opportunities and Economic Security for All Residents – To create a healthier, more prosperous community, it is essential to strengthen and further diversify our economic base while supporting local businesses and current employers. We will work to enhance our dynamic downtown and commercial centers. We will seek to create job readiness and well-
paying employment opportunities for all our residents to secure a rewarding future for both the individual and the community as a whole.

**A Range of Mobility & Transportation Options** – With an emphasis on environmental sustainability, we aim to enhance connectivity and mobility by all modes of travel for people of all abilities. We commit to improving universal accessibility and livability for residents and visitors.

**A Sustainable Built Environment** – Following best practices, we will promote forward-looking mixed-use, commercial, and residential development. We will continue to expand housing opportunities for all income levels and life stages. We are committed to investing wisely in the maintenance and improvement of our infrastructure to foster the community growth and development for which we strive.

**Engage & Embrace**

**The Diversity of Our Community & Our Cultural Heritage** – The City celebrates the strengths of the community that make Ithaca a truly special place for all of those who call it home. It is the people who make Ithaca such an extraordinary city, and we celebrate the diversity of our population and our cultural heritage. We will continue to pursue equality, inclusion, and fairness in our political, economic, and social systems.

**Our Innovative Spirit & Creative Thinking** – Ithaca has long been a place for creative thinking and groundbreaking ideas. Realizing that every member contributes to the community, we will continue to nurture this innovative spirit and draw upon the knowledge, creativity, and energy available to us.

**An Inclusive, Ongoing Public Dialogue** – We want an ongoing, public dialogue that reflects the diversity of our community and engages our residents to be co-creators of their future.

**Collaborative Efforts with Institutional Partners & Surrounding Municipalities** – We commit to working collaboratively as a community, with our institutional partners, and with surrounding municipalities to achieve our vision.
1.1 A History of the Waterfront

The lands of the Cayuga Nation, a member of the six-nation\(^1\) Haudenosaunee ("People of the Longhouse"), were located roughly within the watershed of Cayuga Lake and included the present day City of Ithaca. Like the other native tribes in the Central New York region, the Cayuga Nation was driven out of the area during the Revolutionary War period. At the conclusion of the war, New York State began negotiations with members of the Cayuga Nation remaining in the area to attain formal title to their lands. The tribe signed the Treaty of Albany on February 25, 1789 and ceded most of its traditional lands in and around Cayuga Lake to the government, opening up the area to European settlers. The tribe’s remaining lands, a 100 square mile reservation on the north end of Cayuga Lake, were sold to the State of New York in 1895.

The original non-indigenous settlement in the area that would become the City of Ithaca took place at the base of what is now East Hill because of the clear, dry soils and level topography of that area. Most of the area surrounding the lake and the Inlet at that time was very marshy, which created building difficulties. The development of the Erie Canal system and the railroads that followed soon made the water resources of the Lake and Inlet extremely valuable and development in that area economically viable...

With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, the Cayuga Inlet became a busy commercial waterway attracting water dependent trade and when the railroads arrived, the Inlet was an important railcar-to-barge transfer point for coal on its northbound journey from Pennsylvania to the Great Lakes. When the Erie Canal was enlarged to create the Barge Canal in 1911, the City of Ithaca was successful in having the Cayuga Inlet included as part of the Cayuga and Seneca Barge Canal System. Large steamboats travelled the waters of Cayuga Lake between 1820 and 1907. In the early to mid-19th century, timber, salt, and gypsum were transported to the south and coal was shipped from Pennsylvania north to Cayuga Lake and beyond. Cayuga Lake’s communities prospered from the commerce generated by lake transportation during this period.

In addition to the movement and distribution of commercial goods, transportation of passengers to regional ports was another important benefit of Ithaca’s connection to the State-wide canal system. Before the railroads emerged in the mid-19th century, passengers used the lake steamers as one leg of their journey between New York City and Buffalo. After the arrival of train service, the steamers

\(^1\) Originally there were five members of the Haudenosaunee, including the Mohawk ("People of the Flint"), Oneida ("People of the Standing Stone"), Onondaga ("people of the hills"), Cayuga ("People of the Great Swamp") and Seneca ("People of the Great Hill") Nations. At the conclusion of the Tuscarora War in 1713, most of the surviving members of the Tuscarora Nation ("People of the Shirt") migrated from North Carolina to the Pennsylvania and New York. There they joined the other five nations of the Haudenosaunee in 1722 and the confederacy became known to English colonists as the Six Nations.
were scheduled to meet the arrival and departure times of trains in Ithaca and Cayuga Bridge at the north end of the lake, creating an early, coordinated, multimodal transportation network in the city. The era of large steamboat travel ended in 1907, however, when the Frontenac dramatically burned off Farley’s Point towards the north end of the lake. This event reinforced the public's perception of the safety and convenience of passenger rail travel.

The introduction of railroad lines in the Inlet during the mid-19th century further established the area as a major transportation hub in the city. The land along the Inlet was the only area flat enough and sufficiently undeveloped to accommodate rail yards, freight houses, stations and coal docks. The route of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad ran along Six Mile Creek. The Lehigh Valley Railroad, established as the Geneva and Ithaca in 1873, also had lines in the Inlet. Like the canal system before it, the rail lines allowed for the convenient transport of goods and people to and from Ithaca and connected the city to major regional markets including Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Binghamton, and New York City.

Ready access to major transportation networks during the 19th and early-20th centuries supported the area’s growth into one of the city’s industrial centers. Early industries in the area included boatbuilding companies, sash and blind factories, ice houses, and lumber yards. One of the most significant manufacturers was the Stanford (Ithaca) Signworks Co. Built as a factory for by Ithaca Organ and Piano Company on Inlet Island in 1877, the Ithaca Signworks Co. moved into the three-story brick building around 1900 and quickly expanded to become one of the city’s largest industries in 1926. Founded by O.R. Stanford in 1879, the company manufactured exterior advertising signs, a rapidly expanding industry in the post-Civil War period. Another important manufacturer was the Thomas-Morris Aircraft Corporation, which produced the Thomas-Morris “Scout,” an advanced trainer for the U.S Army during World War I.

With the gradual decline in the industrial use of the railroad in the early-20th century, the expansion and improvement of passenger service became the principal focus of the area’s two major rail providers The Lehigh Valley Railroad constructed its first passenger station in the 1870s; this station was reconstructed in 1898 to accommodate increased demand. After significant internal restructuring, The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Company changed its focus to passenger service after decades of the transporting Pennsylvania coal to eastern and northern markets. The Company replaced its freight station with a passenger facility in 1912. Built as monumental entrances to the city and reflections of the prominence of this mode of transportation, these stations connected Ithaca to a nationwide network of passenger rails and represented the community’s social and economic aspirations during the period. The proliferation of automobiles through the mid-20th century resulted in a steep decline in passenger rail use, and by the early-1950s, passenger service to and from Ithaca had stopped.

Passenger rail service in the waterfront also resulted in the development of associated industries in the area. Shortly after the completion of the original Lehigh Valley Passenger Station, the Lehigh Valley House was constructed in
1878. This full service hotel, which housed a bar and restaurant and hotel rooms, provided comfortable accommodations for passengers on extended journeys and was conveniently located adjacent to the train station. Other hotels, grocers, and a variety of service industries were constructed or established along West State Street, formerly Junction Street, between the mid-19th and early-20th century to meet the needs of train patrons.

In addition to the waterfront’s use as a major transportation center, several small pockets of residential development grew in the area during the 19th century. Marked by industrial and environmental contamination, marshy soils, and poor sanitary and housing conditions, the Inlet became the home of Ithaca’s underserved populations, including the poor, uneducated, injured and/or sick, seasonal workers and the unemployable. The residents of “the Rhine,” as the area would become known, constructed simple homes from scrap or salvaged lumber on land they did not own near the present day site of the Hangar Theater. All of the residents of this makeshift neighborhood were relocated to Humboldt Street, later called Floral Avenue, and their homes removed by 1925.

Efforts to improve the lives of the “Rhiners” began in the late-19th century. In 1882, representatives from the five local churches established the Inlet Mission and constructed a chapel on lower Cliff Street to serve the residents of the Rhine. The Mission defined its purpose as “teaching Christianity and promoting Christian work in the vicinity of the Inlet in Ithaca.” Under the direction of its first leader, Elizabeth W. Beebe, the Mission conducted nondenominational services, advocated for the residents of the neighborhood, and provided other goods and services that helped to improve their lives.” Upon her death in 1905, the Mission was renamed the Inlet Beebe Mission in honor of its first missionary. The original chapel was later replaced and expanded in by a Gibb and Waltz- designed building in 1932.

Despite efforts to control the water, flooding remained a constant threat in the waterfront, and in 1935, a major flood that covered large portions of Ithaca’s neighborhoods hit the Inlet particularly hard. This catastrophe led the City to petition the Federal government for the construction of flood protection infrastructure near the Inlet. An Inlet flood protection project was finally approved and funded through the Federal Flood Control Act of 1960. Work began on the project in 1964.

The Flood Control Channel Project came in three phases. In the first phase, the mouth of the Inlet was deepened and widened. In the second phase, a number of projects at the south end of the city were completed, including a new bridge for the Lehigh Valley railroad. In the third phase, a realigned Flood Control Channel was dug all the way from the southwest corner of today’s Southwest Park, north to Cascadilla Creek. New York State controlled easement rights over the project, but the City retained property ownership. The Flood Control Channel Project was finished in 1970, and a new bridge was built by New York State to carry State Street traffic over the channel.
By 1970, the Flood Control Channel was complete. It benefited the city by providing flood protection and a beautiful new waterway; however, it destroyed the neighborhood along Floral Avenue, which was still home to many of the city’s poorest and most underserved citizens. Approximately 55 homes, a playground, and various other structures were seized by the City through eminent domain proceedings and demolished to make way for the expanded waterway. Demolitions also included Inlet Beebe Mission and the Westside House, a community center focused on providing domestic, industrial and carpentry-skills training for residents in the neighborhood.

After a century and half of significantly altering the natural features and processes of the Cayuga Inlet and waterfront through industrial, commercial, flood mitigation and transportation-focused developments, there has been a drastic change in the public’s appreciation of Ithaca’s water resources since the construction of the Flood Control Channel and in recent decades. Rather than viewing it as a utilitarian center, the aesthetic and recreational value of the waterfront is more broadly recognized the City and its residents and efforts to recapture, revitalize and incorporate this important amenity back into the community fabric are currently underway.
2.0 Land Use

2.1 Introduction

The Ithaca Waterfront Study Area is bordered to the north by the Newman Golf Course, to the south by Cecil Malone Drive and the City border, to the west by the Flood Control Channel, and to the east by Route 13/Fulton and Meadow Streets.
The Ithaca Waterfront study area is home to a wide variety of uses including a state of the art health and wellness facility, restaurants, bars, industrial and municipal uses, community gardens, and the Ithaca Farmers Market. However, there is still much underdeveloped land that could be a potential area of growth for the City.

Plan Ithaca, the City’s recently adopted comprehensive plan, categorized the waterfront study area as predominantly mixed use and enterprise areas intended to encourage higher density growth in the form of well-designed, compact, mixed use development. These areas are located on or adjacent to major transportation corridors within the City, making it easy for residents to get to jobs and services and for visitors to access local businesses. Additionally, there are some areas classified as environmentally sensitive and important locations where special consideration must be given to preserve unique natural features.
Future Considerations
As the Waterfront Study Area grows, there are considerations to address in order to encourage positive development trends:

- **Building Water Frontages** – Opportunities exist to encourage businesses along the waterfront to develop inviting waterfronts. A 25-foot maintenance easement exists along the Flood Control Channel in order for the Department of Environmental Conservation to protect the water edge and have access for care of the channel itself. However, beyond the easement, developers have the opportunity to treat the water and the water’s edge as a front yard.

- **Waterfront Identity** – Opportunities exist to develop cohesive signage, art, and landscape elements that could help create an identity for the waterfront.

- **Housing** – The City has a documented need for increased housing\(^2\) located on public transit routes and within walking distance to desirable amenities. The Tompkins County Housing Needs Assessment that was completed by Danter and Company in 2016, found that 54% of non-student residents and 33% of in-commuters seeking to relocate within Tompkins County would be looking for housing that is walking distance to shopping, employment, recreation, and schools.\(^4\)\(^4\)% of non-student residents and 40% of in-commuters seeking to relocate within Tompkins County said they would be looking for housing that has easy access to public transit. The waterfront area has several locations that would be ideal for additional housing and that would provide easy pedestrian, bike, and bus access to parks, the Farmer’s Market, and downtown retail centers.

- **Business Improvement District** – There is an opportunity to develop a business improvement district that can provide a platform for a unified vision for commercial and residential activity in the area.

- **Limited Season** – Ithaca’s climate does not provide a lengthy season for water-dependent uses. Any development options that rely on the water as an amenity could suffer during the winter months and should consider how to overcome the economic challenges of the off-season.

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\(^2\)“Tompkins County Housing Needs Assessment”, Danter, 2016
• **Develop Financial and Management Resources** – Unlike downtown Ithaca, this area does not have an established Business Improvement District, or any sense of established identity. Merchants, property owners, and business owners lack an organized structure for addressing concerns in the waterfront area or planning for future needs. Developing these resources would aid future planning initiatives and could also provide assistance for new and existing businesses.

• **Potential Flooding** – Potential flooding is a challenge for all portions of the waterfront area. Any new construction has to consider and be prepared for potential flooding. Similar to the accommodations that must be made for poor soils, special construction techniques must be used, which may result in higher building costs.

After the Flood Control Project was completed in 1970, responsibility for periodic and emergency maintenance dredging was transferred to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Portions of the channel were dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1973 and 1999, and the lower channel was dredged by the New York State Department of Transportation in the early 1980’s. Since the mid-1990’s, the City has been working with responsible agencies to designate a dewatering site that would allow dredging to take place. The delay in maintenance dredging has made the lower channel inaccessible to larger boats. This challenge pertains to all areas where commercial activity exists along the waterfront.
Goals

The following are Land Use goals outlined in the City of Ithaca’s Comprehensive Plan, “Plan Ithaca: A Vision for our Future” that are specifically applicable to the Waterfront Area. Goals that are specific to the Waterfront Area Plan are bolded and explained.

1. The city’s role as the economic, social, and cultural center of Tompkins County will be strengthened by attracting and retaining a larger proportion of the County population, reversing a half-century trend of population loss to the County. —The Waterfront provides the City with a unique opportunity for a space in which the City can encourage additional growth and retention of people looking to live in the City.

2. Additional housing will provide opportunities for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities to live in the city. —The Waterfront should be developed to include additional housing opportunities for people of all incomes, ages and abilities.

3. As the city continues to develop, green spaces will be enhanced and located to best serve residents and visitors. —As the waterfront develops, green spaces should be maintained and enhanced to serve the growing population in this area.

4. Transportation and housing options will reduce commuter traffic. —Housing along the waterfront provides opportunities for people to live within walking distance of major employers and to public transit, which may reduce commuter traffic into the City

5. An increased tax base will reduce the tax burden for residents. —The Waterfront offers ample opportunity for new development, which will increase the tax base and reduce the tax burden on others.

6. The community will be economically vibrant and offer a high quality of life. —Encouraging mixed-use development in the Waterfront will create an economically vibrant residential and commercial district.
A. **Encourage Mixed Use Development.** The City should encourage and support mixed-use development in the entire waterfront area that will enhance the existing character of each of the waterfront districts. Development should be sensitive to the predominant use in the district, including the industrial nature of the Cherry Street District, the West End Waterfront District as a vibrant commercial district, the Market District as a food production district, and the Newman District as a recreational/residential district.

B. **Encourage Housing Opportunities for all Income Levels.** The City should encourage residential opportunities for people of all income levels to be developed in the waterfront area. This can be accomplished by offering zoning incentives or tax abatements that encourage the inclusion of lower income housing opportunities along with market rate development.

C. **Encourage Public Access to the Waterfront.** As the waterfront develops, the area should remain a space open and accessible to all. The City should ensure that all new development reserves space for public walkways along the waterfront.

D. **Encourage Better Multi Modal Connections.** The City should encourage development at the waterfront to have better multi modal connections to all areas. New development should consider pedestrian, bike, water, and public transit connections and reserve space for these modes to allow access to and from all portions of the waterfront.

E. **Encourage a Vibrant Waterfront.** The City should encourage mixed use development that includes commercial and residential uses that will allow the waterfront area to be occupied at all times of day throughout the year, resulting in a more vibrant space.
2.2 Waterfront Area Map

As part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan, the Waterfront Study Area can be divided into four character area districts that elaborate on Phase I by identifying areas of similar existing and future planned uses. These districts are the Cherry Street District, the West End/Waterfront District, the Market District, and the Newman District. The trail network throughout this area acts as a link connecting the districts to the waterfront and to each other.
2.3 Character Areas

The Cherry Street District

Location

The Cherry Street District is bordered on the west by the Flood Control Channel, to the north by Six Mile Creek, and to the east by Nate’s Floral Estates and the rail yard. A portion also includes land between Cecil B. Malone Drive and Six Mile Creek.
Existing Characteristics

This district has an industrial character featuring several long-standing local businesses, including a metal scrap yard, manufacturing, a rail yard, and high-tech businesses, and other commercial establishments. There is also a 25-foot permanent maintenance easement between the water and the buildings, in which construction is prohibited.

Challenges

The Cherry Street District has a unique set of challenges that should be addressed in order to facilitate successful new and existing development.

- **Visibility** — Much of the district has little or no visibility from Route 13 and other main roads. This could pose a challenge to some businesses that might require street visibility.

- **Traffic Circulation** — The Cherry Street District has only one through street with no sidewalks and a railroad crossing at one entrance. In order to develop this district, a plan for safe multi-modal transportation in and out of this area is needed. Any traffic planning should also consider the opportunities that exist with the planned reconstruction and realignment of the Brindley Street Bridge, as well as a potential pedestrian bridge that would cross the Flood Control Channel and create a connection to West Hill.

- **High Development Costs** — As this area develops, the demand for waterfront land may drive up the cost of land. This, coupled with the expensive foundations that are required to offset the impact of poor soils, could pose challenges to development of non-residential uses, which could make it difficult to include a mix of uses.

- **Train and Rail Yard Operations** — The Ithaca Rail Yard is located along the eastern boundary of the district. Activities at the rail yard include maintenance and idling of engines, loading and unloading of cars, and delivery of cars on to individual tracks.

Opportunities

This district has several opportunities for development/redevelopment of sites, including the following:

- **Cherry Street Extension** - There is a large section of undeveloped City-owned land at the southern end of Cherry Street. This area contains some wetlands; however, there are approximately 3 acres of land for potential future development.

- **Infill Opportunities** — Throughout this district there are several large underutilized parking lots. With planning and sharing of parking, there is
potential for infill sites to become available for development. There are also opportunities to increase density on several sites.

- **Industrial Character** — This district has developed with a predominantly industrial base. This industrial base can be used as a guide to develop a cohesive look and to encourage additional development that is compatible with the existing character. The types of buildings include warehouses, factories, and commercial structures. Supporting these and similar uses will foster development that creates more jobs and helps the area serve as an economic engine for the City. While industrial uses are desired, businesses that locate in this district must have a low environmental impact, particularly given its proximity to the water. Housing is also a desired use in this area. The district’s character creates an ideal location to encourage alternate types of housing that makes use of industrial-style buildings and creates spaces for live/work activities.

- **Future Black Diamond Trail Connection** — Portions of the Black Diamond Trail are currently under construction outside of the City. A small segment has been constructed in the city on the western side of the Flood Control Channel between the water and Route 13A/Floral Ave. Current plans are for this segment of the trail to connect to a new bridge over the Flood Control Channel and continue along the eastern side between the water and Cherry Street, in a southerly direction, eventually connecting to a segment ending at Robert H. Treman State Park. The anticipated use of the trail will be for both commuting and recreation, improving multi-modal transportation opportunities and connecting the district to the regional trail network.

- **Expansion of Business Opportunities** — This district contains several long-standing, well-established businesses. The City should encourage new or expanded opportunities to create well-paying jobs.

**Planned Characteristics**

- **Encourage Mixed-Use and/or Live/Work** — The City should encourage and support mixed-use development that is compatible with the existing industrial uses and that allows for live/work opportunities. Mixed-use development can include residential uses and commercial uses. Additionally, light industrial and manufacturing uses would encourage job creation and allow for residential uses to coexist.

- **Retain Industrial Character** — The Cherry Street District is one of the few areas in the City that has existing industrial uses. This industrial character defines this district and should be retained and encouraged.

- **Improve Multi Modal Transportation Connections** — Given the limited road network in this district, alternative transportation is critical for development to expand in this area. The completion of the Black Diamond Trail will provide more opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
In addition, the planned reconstruction/realignment of the Brindley Bridge will allow for better automotive access into the district.

- **Seek Development Opportunities that Result in 24/7 Activity** — The encouragement of mixed residential/commercial development in this area will also encourage 24/7 activity.
The West End/Waterfront District

Location

The West End/Waterfront District is bordered to the south by Six Mile Creek, to the west by the Cayuga Inlet, to the north by Cascadilla Street and by the Flood Control Channel, and to the east by Route 13/Meadow Street.
Existing Characteristics

This district is the most developed portion of the waterfront area. It is characterized by several long-standing local businesses and a mix of historic buildings. There are still several areas of underdeveloped land that have potential to be redeveloped.

Challenges

The following challenges will need to be addressed in order for existing and future development to be successful:

- **Traffic** — One of the largest challenges to existing and future development in this district is traffic. The district is bound on the east by the southbound section of Route 13, which also contains major connections to the east and west. Several times throughout the day this area becomes heavily congested and can cause travel delays and difficulty for cars exiting businesses along Route 13. This results in patrons avoiding this area during peak times and diverting to other routes. In addition, trains can block traffic, further exacerbating the congestion.

- **Pedestrian and Bike Safety** — Parts of this area feel unsafe and stressful to bicyclists and pedestrians. This is due in part to the high levels of traffic, but also to the lack of infrastructure for these modes of travel.

Opportunities

Despite challenges that exist, the West End/Waterfront District has many attributes that encourage new and existing businesses.

- **Trail Connections** — Connections to the Cayuga waterfront trail. This is the only district that contains a portion of the Waterfront Trail that is not located directly adjacent to the waterfront.

- **Development/Redevelopment of Underutilized Properties** — Support the relocation of the Coast Guard Auxiliary
Planned Characteristics

- **City Gateway and Transportation Hub** — Work with TCAT to develop direct transport between the West End, downtown, and college campuses.

- **Safety** — Improve safety perceptions by creating improved, consistent lighting and pedestrian/cycling amenities.

- **Signage** — Create better way-finding signage, including electronic directory of places around the city.

- **Connections** — Enhance connections between the waterfront and the Ithaca Commons, particularly across Route 13 (Meadow and Fulton Streets) and along the State Street Corridor.

- **Retention of Existing Businesses** — Encourage and promote existing local businesses, especially water related businesses.
The Market District

Location

The Market District is bordered to the south by Cascadilla Street, to the west by the Cayuga Inlet, to the north by Cascadilla Creek, and to the east by Route 13.

Existing Characteristics
Existing uses in this district include the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant, the Ithaca Farmers Market, the Ithaca Community Gardens, the undeveloped Carpenter Business Park, surface parking, several commercial businesses, the NYS DOT Maintenance Facility, and the Cornell and IC Boathouses.

Challenges

Challenges related to the Market District include:

- **Railroad** — The Norfolk Southern Cargo railroad tracks run through the center of the Market District, dividing potential development sites. A single railroad crossing limits the district’s entry and exit options. When the trains arrive in the City, they are very long and slow moving, causing traffic to back up while waiting for them to pass. The trains also create noise and vibrations, a potential source of disturbance to future residential uses.

- **Fuel Storage** — Currently there is a fueling station with fuel storage located adjacent to the water. This is a potential safety risk for future residential development and of environmental concern due to the potential for leakage in such close proximity to the water.

- **Power Lines** — Currently, high tensioned power lines run through the Market District. This is a challenge for development of some parcels, since structures are not permitted beneath the power lines, reducing buildable area. Future development will need to take into consideration the limitations of particular sites.

Opportunities

This district has several opportunities for development/redevelopment of sites:

- **Highway Access** — The Market District is located along NYS Route 13. The proximity to this highway provides easy access for deliveries and excellent visibility for any future development of this site.

- **Future Microgrid** — The Tompkins County Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) is located in the Market District. This facility provides an excellent opportunity to utilize excess energy to provide alternate sources of electricity. Plans are currently being developed to create a Microgrid system that would distribute electricity to surrounding area.

- **Make Use of WWTP Excess Heat Energy** — Future development opportunities should consider how to incorporate waste heat from the WWTP.

- **NY State Department Of Transportation Site (NYSDOT)** — A large 6-acre site located within the Market District is currently being used as a NYSDOT maintenance facility. The land is valued at approximately $1.5 million. The site is located beside the Ithaca Farmers Market and is adjacent to the waterfront. The City and the County have been working with the NYSDOT to
try and re-locate the DOT facility and free up the land for redevelopment. This parcel has tremendous redevelopment potential and has generated a great deal of developer interest over the years.

Planned Characteristics

- **Encourage Mixed-Use Development** — Future development should include a mix of development types and uses, including commercial and residential uses.

- **Support Established Uses** — Future development should enhance/protect the existing uses, including retaining a space for the Ithaca Farmers Market and rowing and boating users.

- **Encourage Synergistic Uses** — This area could benefit by incorporating synergistic uses into planned projects, such as food production and community kitchens, which could enhance the Ithaca Farmers Market.
The Newman District

Location

The Newman District is bordered to the south by Cascadilla Creek, to the west by the Cayuga Inlet, to the north by the Newman Golf Course, and to the east by Route 13 to the East.

Waterfront Character Areas-Newman District
Existing Characteristics

Existing uses in this district include the City's Streets and Facilities buildings, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) facilities, and docks. Several existing, long-time businesses are located in this area. A fire-training center is located to the north in Stewart Park.

Challenges

Challenges to development in this district are similar to those in other parts of the waterfront, including poor soil conditions and expensive construction costs. Further challenges in the Newman District include:

- **City and TCAT Facilities** — Much of the land in the Newman District is occupied by the City’s Streets and Facilities building and storage and by the Tompkins County Area Transit Facilities. The City and TCAT have discussed the possibility of relocating these facilities in order to free up this prime waterfront land for other development options.

- **Limited Railroad Crossing** — There is only one crossing over the railroad tracks into this district. Since the railroad company is unlikely to grant additional crossings, any development will have to deal with a single point of access into the site.

Opportunities

While there are challenges that need to be addressed in order to allow for any additional development in this area, there are also several attributes that are unique to this area that make it very desirable for future waterfront development, including:

- **Location** — This district is located adjacent to Stewart Park, the Newman Golf Course, and has potential for access to and views of the water.

- **Trails** — The Cayuga Waterfront Trail runs through this district. This allows for easy walking or biking to Stewart Park, the Ithaca Farmers Market, and other points beyond.

Planned Characteristics

- **Relocation of City Facilities** — The City should consider the relocation of TCAT, Streets and Facilities, and the Fire Training Center to provide additional waterfront land for future development.

- **Future Development of Water Related/Dependent/Enhanced Uses** — This district is an ideal place to encourage development of condos and
townhomes, ground floor retail and/or restaurants and other uses that would be enhanced by their location along the waterfront. In addition, water dependent uses, such as boating centers and docks should also be encouraged.

- **Encourage Public Access** — This area should be developed to allow for full public access and enjoyment of the water. Any development that restrict public access should be discouraged.

- **Waterfront Trail** — The waterfront trail should be realigned to be located along the waterfront at the Newman Golf Course and the Cornell Biological Field Station or a loop trail should be added.
3. ECONOMIC VITALITY

3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The waterfront is home to many forms of commercial activity. Many businesses already take advantage of their close proximity to the water and the expansion of water related activities throughout the waterfront is encouraged. Proximity to the water provides a unique opportunity to encourage the growth and development of water-enhanced activities.

Specifically, in the West End Waterfront District, there is limited land area and businesses are able to encroach closer to the water. Uses that take advantage of the water, including restaurants, housing, and shops that can leverage waterfront seating and views, as well as boating outlets are strongly encouraged. Protecting the experience along the water, by requiring buildings to treat both the street and water faces as buildings fronts, allows for strong waterfront commercial activities to develop. In addition, there are many established businesses in this area that should be supported and encouraged to remain.

In the Newman and Market District the trail network provides for contiguous public access to the water and should be utilized as an economic engine for tourism.

Both districts contain large areas of land along the water that will likely be redeveloped in the coming years. The City should encourage private development to leverage the unique characteristics of the area to enhance and support businesses offering water-related activities along the waterfront.

The City is the economic and employment center of the region, and it is therefore our goal to capture new business growth within the city, including high-technology and knowledge-based businesses and manufacturing. The Cherry Street District is one of the few locations within the City where industrial uses are permitted. This is a critical use that creates jobs and provides opportunities for production companies and industries, including high tech industries, to locate in our community. While other compatible uses are also permitted in this district, the City should actively work to attract and retain employment generating businesses and other uses that will not interfere with the industrial nature of this district.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. The City will attract and retain firms valued by the community, including low environmental-impact manufacturing, green businesses, locally-owned businesses, and businesses owned by under-represented groups.

2. The economic environment will retain, nurture, and grow new and existing businesses within the city.

3. The creation and expansion of local employment, particularly well-paying jobs, will provide opportunities for all income levels and age groups.

4. A variety of businesses will diversify the economy and reduce economic dependence on a single sector.

5. Business start-ups and expansions will have adequate access to capital.

6. Tourism will remain a vital component of the city and regional economy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Support the creation and expansion of business opportunities, especially those related to tourism.

B. Work on retention of established local businesses and union training programs

C. Encourage water dependent uses and uses that interface with the waterways

D. Maintain the Cherry Street District for industries that create employment opportunities.

E. Encourage tourism related businesses to utilize the trail systems as an economic engine.

F. Identify opportunities for development of underutilized waterfront properties.

G. Embrace the unique characteristics of the waterfront area in order to enhance and support businesses.
4. COMMUNITY LIVABILITY

4.1 HOUSING

The City of Ithaca has a critical need for more mixed income housing across all income ranges, specifically for workforce or middle income units. The shortage of available housing has resulted in significant increases in residential rents and for sale housing with prices increasing dramatically in recent years.

Between the years of 2006-2019, 1175 new housing units have been built in the City. Of those new units approximately 23% of them have been housing for those earning low to moderate income levels. The vast majority of these new housing units have been market rate housing and much of it has been housing for students. This has left a major shortage in housing options for the majority of the workforce for whom market rate housing is not affordable. In order to address this situation, it is critical to increase the supply of high quality, safe, accessible housing that is affordable to people across all income levels.

Until 2016, much of the Market, Newman, and Cherry Street Districts did not allow for residential uses. Most of the waterfront, with the exception of the lower Cherry Street District, are now zoned to encourage residential and mixed use development. Current zoning in the Waterfront Districts does not allow for single-family homes in order to prevent construction of market rate private homes along the waterfront. This type of development is prohibited in order to encourage more density along with public access to the water. However, opportunities exist for various types of residential options, including rental units and for sale owner-occupied condominiums and townhomes. As this area is developed it is important to encourage a mix of housing types that includes both for sale and rental housing options.

3 "Tompkins County Housing Needs Assessment", Danter, 2016

Downtown Ithaca Housing Demand Study-the Danter Company, 2016
The waterfront area is also within walking distance to downtown and has access to public transportation to various locations, including major employers, shopping, and business centers within the City and beyond. It also has easy access to the Ithaca Farmers Market, the Ithaca Community Gardens, Cass and Stewart Parks, the Waterfront trail, and the Finger Lakes Trail network. All of these attributes make the waterfront an ideal location for residential uses.

Much of the land adjacent to the waterfront is underdeveloped and offers many desirable locations for residential development, including a large City-owned parcel in the Newman District that currently houses the City’s Division of Streets and Facilities. As a part of the City’s Master Planning for City Facilities, which began in 2016, the City has outlined a goal of relocating this department out of the waterfront area in order to make this site available for redevelopment. This site is located on approximately 10 acres of land adjacent to the City Newman Golf Course.

The Market District contains over 8 acres of currently undeveloped land located adjacent to the Ithaca Farmers Market, the Ithaca Community Gardens, and the Cayuga Waterfront Trail. In addition, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) owns a 6 acre parcel of land adjacent to the water that has been identified as having tremendous redevelopment potential. This redevelopment potential provides a unique opportunity to plan for and encourage new developments that accommodate mixed income levels, diverse age groups, and a variety of uses.

Historically, the high cost of construction and zoning restrictions limited development in the waterfront districts. However, the recently adopted waterfront zoning has opened up opportunities for residential uses and development interest has increased in this area. In 2018, the City also adopted a Planned Unit Development Overlay District (PUDOD) that includes most of the waterfront. This allows for greater zoning, flexibility encouraging projects that provide additional benefits to the community.

Beyond zoning flexibility, the City can encourage desired development in this area by offering tax abatements to projects that will benefit the greater community and fill these needs. In 2000, the City established a Density District where projects that meet specific criteria may apply for property tax abatements for a portion of the taxes on new
development for a period of 7-10 years. This abatement program has been amended several times and is now part of the established **Community Investment Incentive Tax Abatement Program (CIITAP)**. The Density District does not currently extend to the Waterfront Districts. A proposal to expand the Density District to include the Waterfront Districts is currently being considered. This would further encourage investment in this area and would help to offset the high costs of foundations for new construction along the waterfront. This tool can also allow for the City to mandate desirable types of housing and prevent new development from being used exclusively for high-end housing.

Tools such as the PUDOD and the CIITAP can be used to encourage projects that provide benefits to the community, and have the potential to satisfy identified needs such as:

- Housing for Mixed Ages and Incomes, Including Affordable/Work Force Housing
- Senior and Family Housing Options
- Public Recreational Opportunities, including Options for Universally Accessible Amenities
- Universally Designed Buildings that are Accessible to People of All Ages and Abilities
- Net Zero Buildings

This area of underutilized land, with direct visual and physical access to the waterfront, within walking distance to the Commons, the Ithaca Farmers Market, Cass and Stewart Parks and the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, offers a unique opportunity to plan for and realize a completely new area of development in the City. Capitalizing on these assets and amenities will not only offer tremendous economic benefits that include strengthening our tax base, but will open up housing possibilities that will help to address many of the current needs of the community.
**HOUSING GOALS**

1. Ithaca will have an adequate supply of safe, accessible, and affordable housing available to all residents, regardless of their life circumstances or special needs.

2. The city will be home to a range of housing options, including different levels of affordability and housing types, in each neighborhood.

3. New residential units will be compatible with the essential character of established neighborhoods, in coordination with the goals of the Land Use chapter.

4. Homeownership and owner-occupancy of residential units will increase throughout the city.

**HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS**

A. Support the construction of new housing throughout the study area.

B. Encourage home ownership opportunities within new development projects, including condominiums and townhomes.

C. Encourage housing that is designed to accommodate families with children by offering open spaces, play areas, and multiple (3+) bedrooms.

D. Encourage housing for single adults, professionals, and live/work spaces.

E. Work with developers to ensure that new housing in the West End is designed to be sympathetic to the area’s existing character.

F. Look for opportunities to renovate and retain any existing housing

G. Incentivize affordable housing units through tax abatements and zoning.

H. Strongly encourage new housing units to be universally designed so they are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

I. Consider requiring redevelopment projects on publicly owned land to include higher amounts of affordable housing at all income levels.
4.2 Historic Preservation

Major infrastructure changes in the mid-20th century and the subsequent commercial, industrial and residential development of the waterfront area have resulted in a significant loss of historic fabric and context for this area of the city. However, architectural remnants of the area’s historic use as an industrial center, transportation corridor, and residential area are scattered throughout the district and reflect the visual, social, economic and political characteristics of the area from the early-19th through mid-20th centuries. Examples include a few factory buildings, architect-designed passenger train stations, service industry buildings, and humble residences. These resources connect residents and visitors to the history of the area and contribute significantly to its sense of place, identity, and vibrancy. Preservation is a way to celebrate and interpret this history and protect the cultural value of these resources.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Station at the 806-810 West Buffalo Street is the only Locally Designated Historic Resource in the waterfront. Built in 1898 and designed by a locally prominent architect, this yellow-brick passenger train depot represents the importance of passenger rail service in Ithaca during the late-19th and early-20th centuries and the railroads’ influence on the character and development of the waterfront during this period. It was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1974 and designated an Individual Local Landmark that same year.

What does it mean to be a “designated historic resource”?

Exterior alterations to designated resources are regulated by the Landmarks Ordinance and reviewed by the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission to ensure that the historic quality and cultural value of individual properties and historic districts are retained and preserved. Property tax abatements, and State and Federal income tax credit programs are available to residential and commercial property owners to assist with the maintenance and/or rehabilitation of their properties.
There are also several undeclared historic resources that represent the area’s historic land use patterns. Listed in the Waterfront Resources Worthy of Further Research and considered in more detail in Appendix XXX, they contribute to the district’s unique identity, sense of place and economic vitality, and their protection is essential to preserving important connections to the past as the area develops according to the goals of the Land Use chapter. These resources should be appropriately protected through local landmark designation, CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, design guidelines, or restrictions with a form-based code.

Our understanding of the architectural, historical, and cultural heritage of the waterfront continues to grow as new information about the area is discovered and interpreted. In response, we must continually work to identify resources that represent newly discovered aspects of its heritage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterfront Historic Resources Worthy of Further Research:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Thomas-Morse Aircraft Factory</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Delaware, Lackawanna &amp; Western Railroad Station,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stanford (Ithaca) Sign Works</td>
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<td>- Lehigh Valley House</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Filling Station (now K &amp; H Redemption Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Beebe Mission Well House, Brindley Park Fountain</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pumping Station on Cherry St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Residential Structures</td>
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

1. The community will understand the importance of historic preservation and take pride in the collective history represented by the built environment.

2. All historic resources worthy of preservation will be protected, whether formally designated or not.

3. Improvements to designated structures will conform to the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

4. Existing historic buildings will be rehabilitated or adaptively reused rather than demolished.

5. New construction within or adjacent to historic districts or individually listed landmarks will be compatible with the existing built environment.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Install signage identifying and explaining the historic context and significance of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Station.

B. Provide similar denotive and interpretive signage for all future landmarked properties.

C. Make accessible to the public information on designated historic resources through its inclusion in publicly assessable online repositories or applications like HistoryForge or PocketSights: Tour Builder.

D. Identify all properties with architectural or historic value in the waterfront district, particularly those noted as Waterfront Historic Resources Worthy of Further Research, and designate an appropriate level of protection for each.

E. Continue to annually notify owners of historic properties about the designated status of their property; local, state and federal tax incentive programs for the maintenance and rehabilitation of designated historic resources; and the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission (ILPC) approval process.

F. Conduct intensive-level surveys of identified historic resources in the waterfront area, particularly those included as Waterfront Historic Resources Worthy of Further Research, to determine the appropriate level of protection for these resources.

G. Draft design guidelines and adopt a form-based code for the area to ensure new buildings reflect the architectural quality and character of the historic resources.
4.3 – Public Safety

The City anticipates that there will be new development and redevelopment of the waterfront districts. Public safety is critical when planning for new neighborhoods and commercial districts. The City Police Force currently struggles to maintain adequate staffing to serve the existing population. Given the potential growth for this area it may be beneficial for private development to be encouraged to provide private security. This can cut down on the number of non-essential police calls.

Water Safety

The adjacent waterways pose safety issues that are not present in some other areas of the City. With increased residential development anticipated, it is essential that residents be educated and provided with the tools for water safety. While water provides many recreational opportunities, it can also create hazardous conditions when safety precautions are not respected, especially with families and children living near the water.

As construction occurs, private development should be encouraged to install tools along the water such as blue light emergency phones and water rescue devices on private land. The Coast Guard Auxiliary provides courses on boating and water safety. Developers should encourage tenants to use this service or should provide alternative water safety educational opportunities to their tenants. In addition, the City should explore locations along the waterfront trail where life vests, safety ropes, and life preservers can be installed on public land.

The Ithaca Fire Department currently has three different types of boats and water rescue gear that are used for emergency access to the waterways adjacent to the Waterfront District. The fire department has firefighters trained in swift and calm water rescues. The department does not have the personnel or the resources for underwater rescue or recovery. The training requirements and the cost of underwater rescue equipment are costly as compared to the very few times that they would be needed. The City relies on the NYS Police Dive Rescue Team to perform underwater rescues and recoveries.

The City Police Department currently does not patrol the City waterways. Police presence on the water only exists with the County Sheriff and the State Parks Police, which have a much broader jurisdictional boundary and are therefore not often able to have a presence on the City waterways. Given the City’s scarce resources, it would be advantageous to develop relationships with the other jurisdictions. In addition, given that the City contains several waterways within its boundaries it is critical that all emergency response personnel be trained in water and boating safety. Currently City Police are not required to be trained for water/boating specialties, however, given the expected growth in the waterfront area, this should become a City priority.
Emergency Response

The waterfront area is a unique part of the City that requires alternative forms of emergency response in order to keep residents and guests safe. In addition to water safety, the City should be prepared to respond to emergencies on the water and will need to have access to boats or other water vehicles. Similarly, the first responders in the City should have access to alternative vehicles that can respond to emergencies on trails. As with trainings and educational opportunities, it may be possible to share resources/equipment with other agencies.

Another obstacle to first responders in the waterfront area is the train. The train tracks that are located along the edge of the waterfront districts carry trains that are required to travel at highly reduced speeds while in the City limits. These slow moving and sometimes lengthy trains prevent access into or out of several of the Waterfront Districts while they are passing through. In the event of an emergency this is an obstacle for first responders. Currently, the police are informed when a train will be arriving so that they can be located on either side of the tracks. This is an important practice that needs to continue and should be mandated so that emergency responders can be prepared to respond in the case of an emergency.

Traffic Issues

Traffic issues are a major safety concern in the Waterfront Districts. In the past two years over 40% of all of the police calls from this area were related to traffic concerns. Heavy congestion, irregular traffic patterns, and missing bike lanes and sidewalks create difficult conditions for vehicles as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. Planned infrastructure improvements to this area should address some of these issues; however, the City should continue to recognize that a high level of traffic related issues creates a strain on Ithaca’s understaffed police department.
PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS

1. The city will be a safe and secure environment for all members of the community.

2. The City will provide a timely and appropriate response to emergencies.

3. All segments of the community will have strong relationships with first responders that encourage collaboration, communication, trust, and understanding.

4. The community will be well educated on personal safety and emergency preparedness.

5. Members of the public will have a way to communicate with neighbors or first responders in an emergency situation.

PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Encourage private commercial businesses and residential developments to contract with qualified, well trained private security to manage their properties and reduce the number of non-essential police calls.

B. Encourage residential developments along the waterfront to provide water safety educational opportunities for tenants living in these areas.

C. Encourage private residential developments to implement water safety infrastructure, including blue light phones and rescue devices along the waterfront.

D. Explore areas along trails and waterways where life vests, safety ropes, ladders, and life preservers should be installed, as well as identifying access points to the water for emergency equipment and personnel.

E. Consider installing emergency communication devices, such as blue light phones, along the trails and in other locations in the waterfront district.

F. Explore options for Alternative City Safety vehicles that could get on the trails in emergency situations.

G. Encourage the public to bring safety concerns and suggestions to the City Public Safety and Information Commission (PSI).
H. Support ongoing boating and water safety educational programs by the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

I. Offer volunteer opportunities for community members to engage in waterfront clean-up activities.

J. Provide public safety personnel with all tools — including personnel, equipment, and training — necessary to meet city and regional public safety needs and strive to meet the minimum recommended safety personnel quotas for the existing population.

K. Work with the railroad company to request that emergency personnel be notified when a train will be coming into the City, so that emergency response officers can locate on both sides of the railroad tracks when a train will be coming through.

L. Evaluate the intersection of Cherry/Taber for safety measures that could reduce traffic issues.

M. Consider how City emergency personnel could work collaboratively with Sheriff, Coast Guard, and Parks Police in order to patrol the waterways.

N. Mandate water/boating safety training for all City emergency responders.

O. Investigate locations for establishing an emergency shelter on the west side of the railroad tracks.

P. Consider creating a City box in the local papers to inform the public of emergency response tools, such as SWIFT 911.

Q. Explore methods to educate residents and visitors on water safety, safety during flooding, and ice safety.

R. Improve lighting along public spaces, north of Green Star towards the Farmers' Market.
4.4 – Physical Infrastructure

Many of the goals established in this plan rely heavily on the availability of appropriate and reliable physical infrastructure. While much of this infrastructure may not be visible to the general public, it is essential to the growth and livability of the community. The City is responsible for supplying and maintaining municipal water, sewer, and stormwater services, as well as maintaining bridges, roads, sidewalks, creeks, and parks. Additional utilities are supplied and maintained by utility companies and are usually located within the City-owned right of ways.

Unfortunately, much of the anticipated growth in this area is not attainable without upgrades to the underground utility services. In addition, the Market and Newman Districts currently do not have adequate water supply available for major commercial development. The Market District, in particular, contains the large NYS DOT parcel that is expected to be redeveloped if the DOT relocates. This site is currently served with 6” water pipes that will not have adequate capacity for a large redevelopment and will need to be increased to 8”. As new development options arise for these areas it is important to consider the necessary upgrades that will need to be completed in order to support this growth.

In addition to underground utility needs, various upgrades to transportation infrastructure are required to support existing and future development. The City is currently planning for an expansion and realignment of the Brindley Street Bridge which will allow vehicles to travel a more direct route between the West End/Waterfront District and the Cherry Street District. This realignment will likely encourage additional traffic to re-route their travel to this alternate route. The Taber Street-Cherry Street intersection is dangerous due to very limited visibility. As improvements are completed in this area and traffic increases, it may become necessary to realign the roadway to extend Brindley Street directly to Cecil A. Malone Drive.

It is expected that the old Brindley Street Bridge will be maintained as a non-vehicular bridge. The City recently completed a large pedestrian improvement project on the Route 79 bridge across the Flood Control Channel. These improvements are expected to alleviate some of the existing and anticipated congestion and make for safer pedestrian travel in this area. The Newman and Market Districts will require new road networks, including a possible Fifth Street extension to connect these areas to the neighborhoods on the other side of Route 13.

A major concern beyond expansion of infrastructure is the ongoing maintenance of existing infrastructure. The City’s Department of Public Works does not have the staff or resources to cover all of its required maintenance work. The Department regularly seeks funding from the New York State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and various other funding sources in order to make infrastructure improvements.

Physical Infrastructure Goals
1. City infrastructure and private utilities will be regularly maintained and upgraded to ensure continued operation and service to the community.

2. Physical infrastructure will be designed to be compatible with the built environment.

3. Investment in infrastructure will be prioritized based on existing condition and level of use as well as impacts on commercial activity and quality of life.

4. Construction activity by City departments, New York State, Tompkins County, the Town of Ithaca, utility companies, and private developers will be well-coordinated.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invest in increased staffing and resources in order to maintain physical infrastructure and keep up with the demands of new development in the waterfront area.

2. Consider extending the new Brindley Street directly to Cecil A. Malone Drive to avoid the Taber/Cherry Street intersection with very limited visibility.

3. Consider upgrading sewer capacity in the Cherry Street District to allow for additional development.

4. Construct a second sanitary sewer crossing over Six Mile Creek, to increase capacity for recent and future growth.

5. Plan for necessary water and sewer upgrades on Inlet Island to support ongoing development.

6. Plan for additional water upgrades to support redevelopment of the NYS DOT site and other areas of the Market District and the Newman District.

7. Consider areas where new roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes may need to be added, including a possible Fifth Street extension into the Market District.
4.5 – Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness are essential components to developing neighborhoods with high standards of living. The waterfront area contains many recreational opportunities that can enhance physical and mental well-being. Given the growth potential for this area, it is critical to maintain and expand these opportunities.

Trail Networks

Expanding the trail network to create a waterfront trail that is not only for recreational use, but also serves as an alternate commuting route can create living conditions that encourage alternative transportation. This has tremendous health benefits to the residents, as well as to the greater community, as it would reduce traffic congestion, exhaust, and improve safety. The completion of the Black Diamond trail should remain a priority for the City. A connection across the Flood Control Channel to Cecil Malone Drive would create an alternate route into the City from the West Hill neighborhoods.

In addition to expanding the trail, ongoing maintenance of the existing trails is also essential. In order to encourage residents to use the trail as a regular transportation route, the City has to ensure regular maintenance. Unfortunately, trail maintenance can become a costly expense that may not always be covered in municipal budgets. The City should seek alternate sources of funding for ongoing maintenance, including exploring the possibility of creating “Adopt a Trail” programs, or “Friends of Trail”. The community could also be engaged to help with ongoing maintenance by creating “Clean up the Waterfront” days.

Open Space/Recreational Opportunities

Access to parks, water, open space, and other recreational resources is also a critical element in creating healthy living conditions. As new development expands in the waterfront, it is critical to maintain access to these elements for both waterfront residents and the general public.
HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SUPPORT GOALS

1. The community’s use of active modes of transportation will improve individual health and wellness, as well as environmental sustainability.

2. All residents and visitors will have access to parks, trails, recreational facilities, and community activities that support social interaction and physical activity.

3. Recreational opportunities will be provided for youth throughout the city.

4. Preventive, ongoing, and emergency health care will be accessible and available to all.

5. Physical, economic, and social barriers to health and wellness will be eliminated.

6. Public spaces will be welcoming to all residents and visitors.

7. The built environment will be accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

8. Public and private properties will be free from contamination.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Complete the Black Diamond Trail.

B. Seek funding to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Flood Control Channel that would connect the Black Diamond Trail to Cecil Malone Drive.

C. Seek funding for maintenance of the Waterfront Trail, including exploring the possibility of creating an “adopt a trail” program or a Friends of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail program.

D. Create waterfront clean-up days.

E. Encourage environmentally-friendly businesses to locate near the waterfront.

F. Create access points for paddle boats.

G. Ensure access to the water and to playgrounds, include open space in new development.

H. Plan for new neighborhoods to include community gardens and trail connections.
I. Consider adding amenities along trails, such as electrical outlets and additional
seating areas, in order to allow for individuals with needs and abilities to utilize the
trails.
5.0 Mobility and Transportation

5.1 Introduction

As stated in Plan Ithaca, the City’s current transportation system is primarily designed for vehicular traffic. It is the goal of the City to create a balanced transportation network that supports vehicular traffic while creating comfortable and sustainable options for alternatives to single occupancy vehicular trips.

The intent of this chapter is to document specific concerns regarding the transportation network in the waterfront area and to examine how the transportation goals of Plan Ithaca should be implemented in the waterfront area.

The waterfront area is a City gateway from areas to the west and north. Portions contain heavy vehicular traffic congestion without adequate amenities for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel. Other parts of the waterfront area also lack adequate internal circulation and transit connections.

This plan will make recommendations for improvements to the transit system to create a safer and more welcoming experience for all modes of travel.
Goals for the Waterfront Area

1. Ithaca will provide an interconnected transportation network that makes it convenient, routine, and feasible for all residents and visitors to walk, bike, and use transit.

2. Ithaca’s transportation infrastructure will be designed to increase multi-modal connectivity, creating an interwoven network that extends into adjacent municipalities.

3. To reduce auto dependency, transportation modes shall be prioritized in the following order: pedestrian, bicycle, transit, private cars, and goods movement.

4. Every City street will be a complete street that accommodates multiple modes of transportation, including active transportation modes.

5. Pedestrian travel will be supported on all city streets through well-maintained and enhanced facilities that meet, at a minimum, Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

6. Attractive new pathways will run along natural features — such as creeks and gorges — and connect to the street system, enhancing neighborhoods and serving as active transportation corridors.

7. Convenient, well-designed, and well-maintained bike facilities will encourage increased bicycling on city streets.

8. Frequent transit service, along with improved stops and shelters, throughout a broad service area will offer increased comfort, safety, and accessibility, particularly in areas serving low-income and elderly people.

9. The public parking supply will be managed to enhance vitality in city neighborhoods and commercial areas, support programs that provide alternatives to private car use, and be cost-neutral to the City.

10. Innovative ways to improve the delivery of goods and services will be in place.

11. Pedestrian, bike, and transit improvements will be spread equitably throughout the city so people of all income levels and abilities will benefit from them.

12. Shared transportation services, such as bike and carsharing programs, ridesharing and vanpooling, will be actively supported.

13. Coordinated regional transportation improvements — ranging from better pedestrian, bicycle and street connections with adjacent municipalities to better bus, rail and airline connections with other cities and states — will help ensure convenient regional mobility.
14. All city streets, including State highways, will meet transportation needs while knitting together, rather than separating, adjacent city neighborhoods and areas.

Recommendations for the Waterfront Area

A. Conduct a formal traffic study of the entire waterfront area and evaluate the feasibility of complete streets in each of the waterfront districts. Where complete streets are not feasible, consider how to accommodate all modes of transportation.

B. Work with Tompkins County Area Transit to ensure that there is easily accessible local public transit throughout the entire waterfront area and to encourage the use of “right sized” transit in the neighborhoods. Explore the uses of smaller transit options.

C. Include accommodations for pedestrians and bikes on all streets in the waterfront area and complete an off street trail network that connects the entire area.

D. Encourage developers in the waterfront area to work together to develop and implement traffic demand management plans in order to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles and reduce traffic congestion.

E. Consider locations for shared parking.

F. Explore alternatives to surface parking and encourage private properties to have shared parking areas.

G. Explore locations for pedestrian bridges over the water to enhance pedestrian connections.

H. Encourage private boat ferry or water taxi between Cass Park and the Farmers Market and other areas in the waterfront.

I. Strengthen connections across Route 13 between the waterfront area and downtown.

J. Work with Ithaca Carshare to provide additional vehicle locations throughout the waterfront area.
5.2 West End/Waterfront District

Traffic
One of the largest challenges to existing and future development in this district is traffic. The district is bound on the east by the southbound section of Route 13, which also contains major connections to the east and west. Several times throughout the day this area becomes heavily congested and can cause travel delays and difficulty for vehicles patronizing businesses in the area. In addition, trains occasionally block traffic, which further exacerbates the congestion. This results in patrons avoiding this area during peak times and diverting to other routes.

Pedestrian and Bike Safety
Heavy traffic in this area, along with areas lacking sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes, make this district feel unsafe and unwelcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists. Between Court Street and State Street there are only sidewalks on one side of Route 13. Sidewalks on the side streets that turn onto this road make it appear that pedestrians should walk along the railroad tracks, which is not a safe or acceptable option. This area would also benefit from a dedicated bike lane for the protection of bicyclists on these heavily trafficked roads.

Trail Connections
Improvements need to be made for connections to the Cayuga waterfront trail. There is an opportunity to realign the waterfront trail so that it is adjacent to the water.
Recommendations for the West End/Waterfront District

1. Install protected bike lanes wherever possible, particularly in high trafficked areas, such as West Buffalo and West State Streets, and also consider installing protected bike lanes on the outside of the West State Street bridge.

2. The City should encourage multi-modal transportation by providing amenities throughout the district, such as covered bike shelters with bike pumps, and bus shelters.

3. Work with NYSDOT, the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC), and other interested agencies to transform the Route 13 corridor into a complete street.

4. Consider replacing the traffic light at Rt. 13 and Cascadilla Street with a traffic circle or other options for managing speed and traffic flow.

5. Work with the Town of Ithaca and Ithaca Tompkins County transportation Council to provide seamless pedestrian and bicycle linkages, such as continuous sidewalks between destinations in the two municipalities, and secure transportation connections along the west City line to allow for alternatives to Route 79 for travelers.

6. The City should install crosswalks at Buffalo and State Streets to allow for safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists to the (old) Brindley Street Bridge and to enhance the pedestrian connections to the planned new Brindley Street Bridge.

7. The City should investigate the feasibility of installing bus shelters on West State Street, in front of Cayuga Lumber or some other nearby location, in order to create paired bus stops for incoming and outgoing transit service at this location.

8. The City should work with private property owners to install a screening with plantings, decorative fence, or landscaping stones between the railroad tracks and Route 13 between Court Street and State Street.

9. Consider installing sidewalks along Fulton Street between the railroad tracks and the area business on the 100 and 300 blocks. Where space doesn’t exist within an existing right of way, explore options for installing the sidewalk on private property.

10. The City should complete the construction of the seawall on Inlet Island and complete the Promenade Plan and consider adding docks off the north point of the island.

11. Explore options to realign the Cayuga Waterfront Trail to be located directly adjacent to the water and improve signage and trail markings.

12. Explore the possibility of creating a dedicated trail connection to the Cayuga Waterfront Trail from Court Street.

13. The City should complete the planned portion of the Black Diamond Trail that would create a continuous trail connection under the West State Street Bridge.
14. Work with the Railroad to formalize the crossing at Cascadilla Street.

15. Consider the feasibility of a Southwest Area Connector Road and explore options for more direct connections from West Hill to the Southwest Area.

16. Consider locations for additional connections to the waterfront trail.

17. Consider options for encouraging pedestrian and bicycle travel on Inlet Island, while reducing or prohibiting vehicular traffic in certain portions of Inlet Island.
5.3 Market District

Railroad
The Norfolk Southern Cargo rail runs through the center of the Market District and divides potential development sites. The few railroad crossings limit entry and exit options into the district. When trains arrive in the city, they create significant congestion along these crossings. Further the trains also create considerable noise and vibrations, which has the potential for creating disturbances to future residential uses.

Highway Access
The Market District is located along NYS Route 13. The proximity to this thoroughfare provides easy access for deliveries and excellent visibility for any future development of this site.

Internal Circulation
Currently there is only one way in and out of the district and there is no established internal road. The existing roads lack sidewalk or bike infrastructure and do not provide through access to the waterfront from the major thoroughfare.

Traffic/Parking
The popularity of the Ithaca Farmers Market causes heavy traffic congestion in this area on weekends. During peak times the number of visitors to the Market exceeds the parking capacity. Alternative parking for the Farmers Market is available across Route 13 in the parking lot at the corner of Hancock, Adams and Third Street, in Stewart Park, or along the road of the undeveloped Carpenter Business Park parcel. These overflow parking areas do not currently provide for safe, easy travel for pedestrians to and from the Farmers Market. Parking in the Hancock/3rd/Adams Lot requires pedestrians to cross the heavily used Route 13. Parking areas along the road in Carpenter Business Park may not be available in the future depending on the development of the site.

Transportation Recommendations for the Market District

1. Consider how to connect the Market District to the adjoining Northside neighborhood and to downtown, including creating safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Route 13, and possibly connecting this area with the Northside grid network by adding a connection at 5th Street.

2. Work with property owners to develop a plan for internal circulation that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles and public transit vehicles.
3. Work with NYSDOT, the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC), and other interested agencies to transform the Route 13 corridor into a complete street, including exploring the possibility of installing a pedestrian island in the center of the roadway to provide an area of refuge for pedestrians.

4. Work with the Ithaca Farmers Market to encourage alternative transportation for accessing the Market.
5.4 Newman District

City and TCAT Facilities
The majority of the land in the Newman District is currently occupied by the City of Ithaca Streets and Facilities buildings and storage and the Tompkins County Area Transit (TCAT) facilities. The City and TCAT have discussed the possibility of relocating these facilities to provide additional waterfront land for other development opportunities.

Limited Railroad Crossing
There is only one crossing over the railroad tracks into this district. Since the railroad company is unlikely to grant additional crossings, any development will have to deal with the challenge of having only one point of access into and out of the site.

Trails
The Cayuga Waterfront Trail runs through this district. This allows for easy walking or biking to Stewart Park, the Farmer’s Market, and other points beyond. The trail currently diverts away from the water as it crosses the Newman District.

Lack of an Existing Transportation Network
There is no established network in this district. Currently the only roads that exist in this district serve the city facilities. If City and TCAT facilities relocated as recommended, a multi-modal network would need to be established to ensure visual and physical connections to the water, as well as pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access to Newman Golf Course, Stewart Park, and to the Market District.

Transportation Recommendations for the Newman District
1. Create a trail along Fall Creek that connects to the Cayuga Waterfront Trail and creates a continuous trail loop around the district.
2. Improve connections between the Newman District and Cayuga Street by creating a safe crossing or perhaps a formal pedestrian walkway across Route 13 (near the high school).
3. Any new development in this district should make accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the site, including internal walkways through large blocks.
4. Evaluate potential pedestrian bridge locations to span Cascadilla Creek and directly connect the Newman District and Market District.
5. Look for more opportunities for boat docking locations and slips for launching boats.
5.5 Cherry Street District

Traffic Circulation

The Cherry Street District has only one through street and no sidewalks. Furthermore, once the planned construction of the new Brindley Street Bridge is completed, vehicular traffic in the area will likely increase.

To develop this district, a plan for safe multi-modal transportation into and out of this area is needed.

Any traffic planning should consider the following:

- The planned reconstruction and realignment of the Brindley Street Bridge
- A potential pedestrian bridge that crosses the Flood Control Channel and creates a connection to West Hill.
- Protecting bikes and pedestrian traffic from large truck traffic, which may increase if additional industrial uses develop in this area.

Improve Multi Modal Transportation Connections

Given the limited road network in this district, support for all modes of transportation is critical for the continued development of this area. The completion of the Black Diamond Trail will provide more opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. In addition, the planned reconstruction/realignment of the Brindley Bridge will allow for better vehicular access.

Future Black Diamond Trail Connection

Portions of the Black Diamond Trail are currently under construction outside of the city. A small segment has been constructed in the city on the western side of the Flood Control Channel between the water and Route 13A/Floral Ave. This segment will connect to a new bridge over the Flood Control Channel and continue south along the eastern side between the water and Cherry Street, eventually connecting to a segment ending at Robert H. Treman State Park. The trail will be used for both commuting and recreation, improving multi-modal transportation opportunities and connecting the district to the regional trail network.
Transportation Recommendations for the Cherry Street District

1. Look for opportunities to reduce driveway widths, while keeping them suitable to the use of the property.

2. Consider design widths of curb cuts to ensure proper circulation for the property as well as to ensure pedestrian safety.

3. Planning for this area should include a continuous sidewalk and tree lawn along at least one side of the street, especially from the Brindley Street Bridge to the intersection of Cecil A. Malone Drive and Cherry Street.

4. The sidewalks along Cecil A. Malone Drive should be contiguous all along the street.

5. Work with property owners to share and consolidate parking on Cherry Street.

6. Provide lighting for the bridge across the Flood Control Channel and the Waterfront Trail during the evening hours that is safe for trail users, but also minimizes light pollution to nearby residential areas.

7. Consider locations where protected bike lanes may be appropriate to minimize sharing roadways with the large trucks that service the industrial businesses in the Cherry Street District.
6.0 Natural & Cultural Resources

6.1 Natural Resources

We are fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources in Ithaca, and the waterfront area is home to many of the city’s parks, trails, and scenic views. Residents and visitors alike have the rare opportunity to interact with the natural environment while being close to an urban setting. Waterfront parks and trails offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities ranging from ice hockey, soccer, and swimming to playgrounds and open fields for games as well as quiet spaces to enjoy scenic views of the lake or a good book on a nice afternoon.

Our natural resources also have critical ecological functions. In parks, trees, native grasses, and other plantings can remove greenhouse gases from the air and harmful pollutants from groundwater. While the focus is often on parks, green spaces and plantings in and around development are essential for collecting and filtering stormwater runoff. This is particularly important in the waterfront area, as these natural filtration systems form a final barrier before pollutants enter our waterways.

The City currently owns and operates over 280 acres of waterfront parkland and more than three miles of publicly accessible waterfront. While most of this property is outside of the waterfront study area, two of the City’s smallest neighborhood parks, Brindley and Van Horn Parks, are located in the waterfront area. This study area plays a critical role as a corridor that connects the two largest regional waterfront parks, Cass Park and Stewart Park. These parks are directly linked by the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, which runs through most of the waterfront area. The trail itself is an amazing recreational resource and is also an important means of travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. As development occurs in the waterfront area in the coming years, we must ensure that these connections to important green spaces are maintained and enhanced so that they are accessible and welcoming to all. As the Cayuga Waterfront Trail begins to age, maintenance of the trail will become a critical issue and resources must be dedicated to preserving and enhancing the trail. In addition to routine maintenance, the City should also collaborate with partners to consider expanding maintenance to allow all-season use of the trail.

Our access to the natural environment is a distinctive feature that makes our community unique. As the waterfront area continues to change, we must ensure that this access is preserved so that all residents and visitors will continue to experience the natural beauty that the area has to offer. Private developments are encouraged to provide direct public access to the water through waterfront shops and restaurants, play areas, public walkways, marine activities, and other uses that take advantage of the area’s unique

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4 This chapter focuses on natural resources (including parks and trails) within the Waterfront Study Area, as shown on page X. For more information on goals and recommendations for Cass and Stewart Parks (including the Newman Golf Course), please see the City of Ithaca Parks and Recreation Master Plan at www.cityofithaca.org.
location. Additionally, new development should consider visual access to the waterfront and should be sited to preserve this access when possible. These types of uses and activities will help make the waterfront a lively commercial area while providing additional access to the water for members of the community.

**Natural Resources Goals**

1. The City will provide and adequately fund well-maintained and safe parks, trails, and natural areas.

2. Community partnerships will support the maintenance, enhancement, and promotion of parks, trails, and natural areas.

3. City parks, trails, and natural areas will form a well-established network of interconnected green spaces.

4. All members of the community will have access to the waterfront.

5. Existing green space in the city will be preserved and opportunities for additional green space will be strategically considered.

6. Distinctive, noteworthy, and characteristic community viewsheds will be protected.

7. City trees and plantings will help preserve and enhance local vegetation diversity. Existing tree canopies in City parks and on streets and right-of-ways will be maintained, enhanced, and, where appropriate, expanded.

**Natural Resources Recommendations**

A. Provide ongoing maintenance of waterfront trails and ensure their accessibility for all residents.

B. Explore opportunities for funding, including public-private partnerships, for trail maintenance and winter maintenance of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail.

C. Seek funding to complete the Inlet Island Promenade, in accordance with the 2003 *Inlet Island Promenade Master Plan*.

D. Work with Tompkins County to complete the city’s trailheads of the Cayuga Lake Blueways Trail as well as needed site improvements at these locations.
E. Formalize informal boat launches on City property, and identify additional locations for public boat launches, docks for muscle-powered boats, and boat rentals.

F. Install wayfinding signage to direct residents and visitors to parks, recreational facilities, and other key destinations throughout the waterfront area.

G. Work with TCAT to provide regular bus service to the waterfront parks throughout the year.

H. Protect the **RIPARIAN ZONE** immediately adjacent to the water and provide landscaping for wildlife and areas for water filtration where appropriate.

I. Install educational signage at key locations to inform both residents and visitors about waterfront ecology.

J. Encourage developers to incorporate green spaces and play areas into new construction projects.

K. Guide new construction to allow views of the water and the surrounding hillsides through façade breaks, materials, building siting, and other design techniques.

L. Design future roadways to provide visual breaks to the water and to be sensitive to residential needs and impacts.

M. Preserve the undevelopable portion of City-owned property at the south end of Cherry Street as open space and possible substitute parkland.

N. Implement the park improvements for Brindley and Van Horn Parks identified in the *City of Ithaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan*, including park signage, additional lighting, and trail enhancements.
Cultural Resources

The waterfront has a rich and diverse history that is unique to this particular area. As the waterfront redevelops and the character of the area begins to change, it is important to embrace this history. We must seek ways to celebrate the past and educate residents and visitors on the waterfront’s unique story. Community events, festivals, public art, historic markers, and educational signage could all play a role in commemorating history and culture.

In addition, the anticipated redevelopment and renewed focus on the waterfront area present an opportunity to create a cohesive identity for the district. Such an identity or brand can be a great way to celebrate and promote the area’s past as well as its current cultural resources. Tourism and local businesses would also benefit from this as a marketing tool.

Cultural Resources Goals

1. The City will provide and adequately fund City-sponsored events, programs, and other resources, such as GIAC and Ithaca Youth Bureau programming, the Martin Luther King Jr. Walkway, neighborhood investment programs, and public art.

2. Privately-sponsored events and organizations will be encouraged and supported.

3. The community will be aware of events, exhibits, and other programs open to the public.

4. Collaboration with community partners will help preserve and promote cultural and historic resources.

5. Cultural resources will be accessible to the entire community.

Cultural Resources Recommendations

A. Support community festivals, particularly those that encourage use of the water or highlight the historic culture of the area (e.g., cultural festivals, such as the Rhine festival in the West End, the underground railroad)

B. Work with community organizations to offer winter festivals to increase off-season use of the waterfront.
C. Identify locations for public art and seek funding for new installations, particularly those that highlight the history, culture, and identity of the waterfront area.

D. Create interpretive signage and art to celebrate the history of Ithaca’s waterfront and explain the importance of individual historic sites.

E. Install comprehensive wayfinding signage to direct residents and visitors to cultural resources and other key destinations throughout the waterfront area.

F. Involve local businesses in developing a brand for the waterfront that will help identify the area as a cohesive district and celebrate the area’s rich and diverse history.
Sustainable Energy, Water & Food Systems

7.1 Energy

In Plan Ithaca, we identified our goals of becoming a carbon-neutral community, reducing community-wide emissions to 80 percent below 2010 levels by 2050, encouraging energy conservation and waste reduction, and promoting renewable energy infrastructure. In order to achieve these goals we must look at energy consumption in all areas of the city, particularly locations where additional growth is expected. Potential development opportunities make the waterfront area a great location to build to these higher energy standards and to meet city objectives related to energy conservation and waste reduction.

The Ithaca 2030 District, which includes much of the waterfront area, is one of 18 other districts around the country that carry forth the principles of “Architecture 2030.” Their mission is to rapidly transform the built environment to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to the energy reduction goals of the 2030 Challenge (carbon neutral buildings by the year 2030). Nationally, these districts are meeting incremental energy and greenhouse gas reduction targets for new and existing buildings while validating the cost efficiency of high performance buildings. The City is a founding adopter and member for the steering committee for the Ithaca 2030 District. Within the waterfront area, private property owners, businesses, and community organizations can become members of the district and help work toward meeting these goals in Ithaca.

The waterfront area also has the unique opportunity to pursue innovative, shared energy sources that would benefit surrounding properties while reducing our carbon footprint. The City has been exploring options for a DISTRICT ENERGY SYSTEM that would share excess heat produced at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility (IAWWTF) with nearby properties. Steam or hot water from the IAWWTF would be shared for heating nearby properties. In addition, the City is considering a possible microgrid at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility. A microgrid would connect the facility’s electrical infrastructure to a network of nearby buildings and allow the whole system to “island” itself, ensuring delivery of services, even in times of electric grid failure.

With the potential for new green buildings, shared energy resources, and ongoing community collaboration on reduced greenhouse gas emissions, there are a lot of exciting opportunities to advance our collective goals for sustainable energy within the waterfront area, and as these ideas are
successfully implemented, the waterfront area can become a model for other areas of the city and beyond.

**Energy Goals for the Waterfront Area**

1. Ithaca will be a leading model, facilitator, and educator for small-city transitions to higher energy efficiency, energy conservation, waste reduction, and reuse.

**Energy Recommendations for the Waterfront Area**

A. Continue to investigate the feasibility of a microgrid based at the IAWWTF.

B. Continue to investigate the feasibility of a district energy system based at the IAWWTF and encourage new developments to be designed with consideration given to the future possibility of accepting excess heat from the IAWWTF.

C. Encourage synergistic relationships with neighboring businesses, for example a partnership with a food manufacturer could provide organic waste to fuel the biogas production system at IAWWTF.

D. If upgrading or relocating City facilities, consider energy efficiency improvements and the installation of onsite renewable energy sources.

E. Provide support for the Ithaca 2030 District and encourage developers and building operators to participate in the District.

F. Ensure compliance of new development with the City’s Green Building Policy.

G. Consider offering incentives for pervious paved streets

H. Work with local developers to learn about opportunities to utilize energy from the IAWWTF.
7.2 Water Resources & Stormwater Management

Water is a tremendous resource to the Ithaca community. Our water resources are treasured for their natural beauty, their ecological significance, their recreation opportunities, and their economic value. Protecting our water resources is and will remain a top priority.

Stormwater Runoff

As development increases in the waterfront area, a major concern is stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff carries pollutants such as oil, dirt/sediment, chemicals, and lawn fertilizers into the nearby water, where they can harm water quality. To protect surface water quality and groundwater resources, development should be designed and built to minimize increases in runoff. It is critical to educate developers, property and business owners, and residents on practices that will reduce both the overall amount of runoff from a property and the amount of pollutants in the water. Such practices include incorporating more pervious surfaces, maintaining vegetation near waterways, and avoiding chemicals that can contribute to water contamination. These techniques should be incorporated into new development and on existing properties where feasible.

Dredging

Periodic dredging is needed to maintain the navigability and flood protection properties of the waterways. The Cayuga Inlet has the highest concentration of boat traffic in the county and many boating-based businesses rely on the significant annual sales for boating specific uses. This sector of the local economy depends on the channel to Cayuga Lake being maintained to a depth that insures navigability. The waterways also serve a flood protection function and require periodic dredging to effectively convey stormwater and prevent winter ice jams.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYS Canal Corporation are responsible for maintaining Cayuga Inlet and the Flood Control Channel, while the City is responsible for maintaining Six Mile, Cascadilla, and Fall Creeks. Until recently, inability to secure funding and the need to determine an appropriate location for storing the dredged spoils has prevented maintenance dredging. However, in the last several years, state funding has been allocated and the City has been working with the NYS DEC, Canal Corporation and other involved parties to finalize and implement plans for dredging the Cayuga Inlet, the Flood Control Channel, and Cascadilla Creek. Once these projects are completed, these navigational channels will be improved, but ongoing maintenance dredging must occur on a regular basis.
Water Resources and Stormwater Management Goals for the Waterfront Area

1. Cayuga Lake, its tributaries, and the local watershed will be protected from pollution, sedimentation, erosion, flooding, invasive species, and other threats to drinking water supplies, wildlife, recreation, and economic development.

2. Stormwater run-off will be significantly reduced.

Water Resources and Stormwater Management Recommendations for the Waterfront Area

A. Commence the dredging project as soon as possible in order to support the economic vitality of the waterfront area, allow for boat access in the channels, and prevent flooding and ice jams.

B. Develop a plan for regular maintenance dredging with suggested time frames.

C. Maintain water channels, ensuring navigability, especially after flooding or other weather-related events.

D. Consider requiring the use and maintenance of pervious surface materials for all new paved surfaces and encourage conversions of existing impervious pavements.

E. Encourage the use of green roofs in new development and major renovations.

F. Consider allowing GRAYWATER and rainwater harvesting for use in buildings, landscaping, and for irrigation of the golf course.

G. Explore state of the art technologies to help deal with stormwater runoff, such as pervious pavement and vortex units.

H. Encourage bioswales and other natural means for filtering stormwater runoff along streets, in tree lawns, and as part of sidewalk plans and parking lot landscaping.

I. Identify existing areas that filter stormwater runoff and preserve and enhance that function.

J. Develop a review process to address potential impacts on stormwater runoff caused by the removal of trees and large areas of vegetation.

K. Consider areas where it is feasible or more effective to have shared stormwater facilities.
L. Educate property owners on why it is important to maintain vegetation near water edges and in the waterfront area.

M. Discourage any new development from using fertilizers, salts, and other chemicals that may contribute to water pollution and degradation of water quality.

N. Consider installing educational signage along the waterfront trail that would educate people on watershed protection and the importance of maintaining a healthy waterfront ecosystem.
7.3 Food Systems

It is our goal to have a sustainable, locally-based food system that makes nutritious food affordable and accessible to all Ithacans. The waterfront area is fortunate to be home to businesses and organizations that are working to achieve this goal, and as we move forward, we can work together to continue to improve the community’s access to foods and offer new economic opportunities for local food production businesses.

Community gardens are an important asset for residents. They allow families and individuals the opportunity to produce their own food while also increasing a sense of community ownership and stewardship. The City will continue to encourage and support community gardens throughout the waterfront area. The City will also encourage developers to include gardens in private development projects.

In addition to having access to sites for growing produce, it is also beneficial to provide spaces for local food producers to provide their goods to the community. Farmers’ markets offer residents access to fresh local produce and are a strong generator of economic and tourism activity. The very successful Ithaca Farmers Market is located within the waterfront area. Due to its success, the Market faces issues with excess traffic, insufficient parking, and inadequate loading/unloading areas. Currently, there is not enough on-site parking to cover the needs during busy summer weekends. The City recognizes this as an incredible community asset and will continue to support the Ithaca Farmers Market and any other farmers’ markets in the waterfront area.

The waterfront is also an ideal location for businesses that could support or enhance the existing food system. Local food production and processing enterprises are welcomed in the Cherry Street and Market Districts, and coordination among businesses that can expand the community-based food network is encouraged. The Market District could also offer possible collaboration with a future district energy system at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Residents and visitors rely upon safe and easy transportation connections to patronize the farmers’ markets and local businesses and purchase local foods. Safe transportation is thus critical to the economic viability of those enterprises. The Ithaca Farmers Market, local businesses, and the City must collaborate to address accessibility needs, such as bicycle paths and sidewalk connections, access to nearby parking, and/or access to regular public transit.
**FOOD SYSTEMS Goals for the Waterfront Area**

1. Residents will have opportunities to grow their own food locally through private or community gardens.

2. Ithaca will be home to local food-production and food-processing enterprises that capitalize on our location at the heart of a thriving agricultural region.

3. All city residents will enjoy food security.

**Food Systems Recommendations for the Waterfront Area**

A. Support community gardens in all waterfront districts and work with non-profit agencies and private property owners to find suitable locations.

B. Encourage developers to create small gardens on their properties or set aside land for tenants to do so.

C. Encourage roof top gardens in new development.

D. Encourage edible landscapes in new development and along public spaces.

E. Promote physical connections for bicycles and pedestrians and public transit connections to the Ithaca Farmers Market and to agricultural sites outside of the study area.

F. Continue to support and encourage the growth and economic vitality of the Ithaca Farmers Market as a source for fresh and local foods and to support local farmers.

G. Collaborate with TCAT to establish a regular shuttle to the Ithaca Farmers Market from other areas of the city, especially on Sundays.

H. Encourage food production and food processing businesses throughout the waterfront districts, particularly in the Market District, and especially regional sourced food suppliers.

I. Maintain fishing access to Cayuga Lake and the creeks

J. Explore options for alternate transportation options that would ensure access by all portions of the community to the Farmers Market, grocery stores and other food providers