Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan

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1. 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. On September 2, 2015, the City of Ithaca adopted Plan Ithaca as Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Plan. Phase II includes specific neighborhood or thematic plans that build upon the topics addressed in Plan Ithaca.

Following the adoption of Plan Ithaca, Common Council identified the preparation of a neighborhood plan for the Greater Southside area as a priority for Phase II. The City established a committee made up of neighborhood residents and Planning staff to prepare the draft plan. The committee began meeting in September 2016. The group conducted a neighborhood survey as one of its first tasks to better understand the changing population within the area. In the following months, the committee worked with staff to draft the Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, and the first full draft was released to the public in September 2018. The committee focused on gathering community input on the draft plan from September-November 2018, beginning with a table at Streets Alive! on September 16th. A neighborhood celebration was held in Wood Street Park in late September, and the committee hosted a community dinner at the Southside Community Center in October. Individual committee members also hosted neighborhood meetings in their homes, and an online survey gathered feedback from many who could not attend one of the meetings or events. Final revisions to the draft plan were then made based on public comments.

Structure of the Plan

The Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan builds upon Plan Ithaca and incorporates the goals of the broader document. The plan addresses in greater detail issues concerning the greater Southside neighborhood and identifies specific recommendations to achieve the plan’s objectives and goals.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the Greater Southside Neighborhood 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 Greater Southside Neighborhood 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 Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan must be regularly revisited and updated to reflect our community priorities. The 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.
NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY

Neighborhoods in Ithaca do not have set boundaries, and the interpretation of what areas are included within a neighborhood often vary from person to person. For the purposes of this plan, the greater Southside neighborhood is bordered to the north by W. Green Street, to the south by Spencer Street and Wood Street Park, to the east by S. Cayuga Street, and to the west by Meadow Street.
1.1 GREATER SOUTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The following history has been assembled to provide information on the key events and conditions that influenced the social and physical characteristics of the Southside neighborhood. It is intended to provide readers with an understanding of the complex and varied influences that shape current conditions and future development in the neighborhood.

The history of the Southside neighborhood is best organized around three important groups: the African Americans that settled around Cleveland Avenue; wealthy businessmen and politicians that built large homes along South Geneva and South Albany Streets; and working-class families that lived in the area south of Six Mile Creek. These groups established visually distinct areas within the neighborhood that are identifiable today, and continue to influence the distinct identity of the area.

Development of the area that would become known as the Southside began with Simeon DeWitt’s land acquisition. DeWitt was appointed the first Surveyor General of New York State after the Revolutionary War and was responsible for surveying and laying out the Military Tract that was carved out of lands originally settled by the Cayuga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy. After acquiring the land at the head of Cayuga Lake, DeWitt laid out a street grid centered on the intersection of Aurora and Owego (now State) Streets and sold urban-sized lots to encourage the development of a substantial settlement. It was named Ithaca in 1804, when a post office was established, and was incorporated as a village in 1821. Land north of Green Street was included within the original boundaries of the village. Five years later, the area that would become the present-day Southside neighborhood was annexed through an amendment to the village charter.

By 1807, DeWitt had laid out the street grid and development had begun; however, the lands south of Green Street remained relatively undeveloped. This area was, for the most part, swamp land prone to flooding from Six Mile Creek. The channelized creek that now flows through the Southside neighborhood once split into two separate branches east of Aurora Street. It was not until 1868-1869 that these branches were united and confined. Cement walls were constructed to further confine and regularize the path of Six Mile Creek in 1906.

Successful efforts to make the area south of Clinton Street suitable for residential development did not begin until the post-Civil War period. Recognizing the considerable difficulties associated with developing the marshy land, Dewitt sold the 400-acre parcel south of Clinton Street to Francis A. Bloodgood, who later conveyed the land to a speculative real estate development group from Polk County, Florida, in 1836. Plans to develop the area were stopped by the Panic of 1837, and efforts to improve the sodden land did not resume until reclamation of the marshes began in 1861. Completed after the war, these efforts helped reduce the hazard of flooding, expanded the area suitable for residential development in the city, and hampered the spread of diseases stemming from stagnant water. These newly drained lands were purchased by Charles M. Titus in 1868.

Born in Jacksonville, Town of Ulysses, Charles Titus amassed considerable wealth through Pennsylvania oil investments and successful manufacturing and farming businesses. He purchased the lands known as the “Bloodgood Tract” as a speculative real estate investment in 1868 and made
further improvements to actively promote residential development. The regularized street pattern was extended into the area, North and South Titus Avenues were constructed on either side of Six Mile Creek, street trees were planted, and large lots were laid out, ditched, and drained. He built the first house south of Clinton Street at the corner South Albany Street and North Titus Avenue in 1871 and several other fine homes on South Albany Street by 1874. These large, high-style homes set the tone for the other residences that would be constructed by individual purchasers of his lots. By the turn-of-the twentieth century, the area had become a fashionable and desirable neighborhood for some of the city’s most successful businessmen and influential politicians. Many of these homes are located in the Henry St. John Historic District, designated a local historic district in 2013.

While the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood developed into a residential center for Ithaca’s elite, the northwest quadrant developed into an African American enclave. The first recorded African American living in Ithaca was a slave in 1788. The 1820 Census reported fifteen individuals of African descent living in Tompkins County, of which six were slaves and nine were free. By the 1830 census, 19 families and a total of 112 free African Americans were living in Ithaca, and most of the families lived in the Southside neighborhood.1

The dramatic increase in the number of African Americans living in the village, and more specifically in the Southside neighborhood, during the first half of the 20th century can be attributed to several conditions. First, the village was an important “station” on the “Underground Railroad,” and many escaped slaves chose to settle here instead of continuing on to Canada. Second, there was a strong anti-slavery sentiment among area residents, allowing free and former slaves to feel secure in the community. Ithaca abolitionists hosted Anti-Slavery Society meetings, petitioned Congress to abolish the domestic slave trade in the District of Columbia, and invited important abolitionist leaders like Frederick Douglas to address the community. Harriet Tubman, the famed “conductor” on the Underground Railroad, visited Ithaca frequently and left several people she guided north in the community. Finally, the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion church in Ithaca and the construction of the St. James AME Zion Church on Cleveland Avenue (then Wheat Street) solidified the historic African American demographic of the Southside neighborhood.

Chartered on December 15, 1833, Ithaca’s AME Zion Congregations is one of the oldest in the nation. After meeting at a private residence for a number of years, the congregation purchased a small parcel on the newly-laid-out Wheat Street from Richard Varick DeWitt (son of Simeon DeWitt) for five dollars, and by early 1836, started the construction of the St. James AME Zion church in heart of the burgeoning African American settlement. The original church was a simple, square, one-story stone structure, but through several extensive construction campaigns, developed into an impressive religious building and a symbol of the African American community in Ithaca. A second story was added to this structure in 1861, increasing its seating capacity to two hundred. Further construction projects in 1872 and 1887 doubled this capacity and added the bell tower. A steeple was added to the building in 1904, a kitchen and choir loft in 1910, and the memorial rose window in 1945 to honor

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1 In 1799, New York passed a Gradual Emancipation act that freed slave children born after July 4, 1799, but indentured them until they were young adults. In 1817 a new law passed that would free slaves born before 1799 but not until 1827.
the congregants who fought in World War II. The St. James AME Zion Church was designated as one of the city’s first individual local landmarks in 1974 and is the city's oldest religious structure. It was also listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1982.

Apart from its principal function as a place of worship for free blacks in Tompkins County, St. James had several less obvious, but equally important, functions in its early years. The church was a documented stop on the Underground Railroad during the period before and during the Civil War, and many of its early pastors were celebrated conductors on the line. The church also served as a landmark around which the predominately African American neighborhood developed. The number of black families living on the blocks around the church more than doubled in the four decades following the churches construction, from an estimated 17 in 1830 to 36 in 1870. Home ownership among these household was also high, with approximately half of the families owning their homes.

In the decades following the Civil War, the number of African American living in the northwest corner of the Southside neighborhood continued to increase. Immediately following the war, more African-American veterans returned to Ithaca than had left to fight in the war and an abundance of construction and service jobs at Cornell University resulted in another influx in the 1890s. The 1900 census reported 117 African-American heads of households in the neighborhood. By the 1920, nearly all of the homes along South Plain and South Corn Streets, between West Green and West Clinton Streets, were occupied by African American families, as were two-thirds of homes on Cleveland Avenue.

The Southside community organized at this time to address the social needs of the youth in the neighborhood. Efforts to raise the money to establish a community center began in 1927, and The Servus League organized the following year to take up this cause. This organization would become the Southside Community Center in 1930. The intent of the group was to establish a nonsectarian and nonpolitical health-educational-cultural and recreational center for the youth of the neighborhood, with all efforts directed toward uniting the community for the betterment of everyone. The first “community center” was a rented house in the 200 block of South Plain Street. Membership grew, and by 1932, the Center was able to purchase a house at 305 South Plain Street, less than a block away from the St. James AME Zion Church. The center purchased the lot adjacent to this house in 1936, and with the help of the Common Council and the Work Progress Administration, constructed the present-day, two-story, brick-faced community center. The new Southside Community Center was dedicated by Eleanor Roosevelt on February 17, 1938.

Intensive development in the area south of Six Mile Creek, also known as Titus Flats, began shortly after the turn-of-the-20th century. After Titus's death in 1901, most of the unsold lots auctioned were south of Six Mile Creek, in an area that would become known as Titus Flats. Only a handful of homes had been built. The lots were purchased by developers and subdivided into lots on which modest homes were constructed, becoming the city's first tract housing. One of the most prominent and prolific of these developers was Andrew Cameron Hyers, who built ninety homes in the neighborhood before his death in 1929. Based on popular pattern book designs and constructed quickly and inexpensively, his houses, as well as those built by other similar developers, provided
affordable homes for the city’s growing industrial work force. The one-block-long Hyers Street between South Albany and South Plain Streets is named for him.

By the early 1930s, single-family homes and duplexes occupied most of the lots in the Southside neighborhood, establishing its small scale residential character that is still visible today. Buildings constructed in the neighborhood after this point tended to be larger and had an institutional focus. Established in one of the grand homes on South Albany Street in 1920, the Reconstruction Home of Infantile Paralysis was the first facility in the country devoted to the after-care of polio patients. The facility’s residential quality and innovative treatment approach attracted patients from throughout the region, requiring at least three extensive additions to meet the needs of the increasing population. The facility could house 125 patients at its peak. With the development of the Salk vaccine in the 1950s, the number of new patients seeking post-Polio care declined and the focus of the facility transitioned to senior care and rehabilitation. In the 1980s, the outdated facility was replaced by the modern, three-story facility, now known as Beechtree Center, that occupies the west side of the 300 block of South Albany Street.

Another major construction project in the neighborhood during the early 20th century was the Henry St. John School at the corner of South Geneva and West Clinton Streets. At the turn of the 20th century, the city’s existing school facilities failed to meet state and federal standards and they could not accommodate the surge of student enrollment during the first two decades of the century. To solve these problems, the school district decided to construct four new elementary schools. The Henry St. John School was one of them. Constructed in 1925, the Southside’s new school was named for the City’s first Superintendent of Public Works, third Mayor, and longtime school board member Henry Ancel St. John. The school closed due to declining enrollment in 1983 and was purchased by Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services. The organization converted the building into affordable apartments and office space.

The mid-20th century brought the construction of several affordable housing complexes in the neighborhood, including Titus Towers and McGraw House. Noting the need for affordable housing in the city, the Ithaca Housing Authority (IHA) began planning for the construction of affordable units in the 1960s, and many of them would be located in the Southside neighborhood. The first project in the neighborhood, the Plainview Complex, was a twenty-four unit development at the corner of South Plain and Center Streets constructed in 1969. Their largest project, however, was Titus Towers. Completed in 1972, the fourteen-story Titus Tower was built on a 12 acre parcel in the area south of the Six Mile Creek and contained 165 units of senior-focused housing. The continued demand for senior housing in Ithaca encouraged IHA to construct a six-story building on the same parcel in 1984. With a similar focus on affordable senior housing, McGraw House on South Geneva Street was constructed by the Ladies Union Benevolent Society to replace The Home, a residence for senior women established by Jane and John McGraw, in 1971.

Few significant physical changes have occurred in the Southside neighborhood since the mid-20th century and the area remained relatively affordable with a predominately African American population through the end of the century. However, the demographics of the area have changed
considerably within the last fifteen to twenty years. Citywide property values have increased an average of 178% during this time and the average sale price of a single-family home in the Southside has increased 265%. This has created housing affordability issues for the area’s current residents and caused major changes to the neighborhood’s historic populations. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of African Americans living in the neighborhood has decreased by approximately 50%, and homeownership in the area has also decreased as more residential buildings have become rental properties. As the Southside changes, the City must find ways to support the neighborhood’s long-term residents and preserve the area’s affordability, vibrancy, and diversity.

1.2 Plan Ithaca Vision
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.

This vision outlines our community’s goals for the future and will help guide the City as it implements the Comprehensive Plan. Three key themes convey this vision: Preserve & Enhance; Create & Promote; and Engage & Embrace.

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.
2. LAND USE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The greater Southside is a unique neighborhood that many Ithacans are happy to call home. Characterized by a rich history, traditional homes, walkable streets, and beautiful green spaces, the neighborhood has a distinct sense of place that makes it special and inviting. Surrounded by busy commercial districts, the area offers convenient access to nearby shopping and services but still feels far from the hustle and bustle of city life.

As we plan for the future, it is important to preserve the qualities that make the Southside such a distinctive place. Many of these are related to the land uses of the neighborhood – the residential character, the “look and feel” along the street, and open spaces along Six Mile Creek and throughout the area. These qualities should serve as the foundation for future decisions.

Plan Ithaca categorized the future land use of most of the greater Southside as Medium-Density Residential, with some areas of Urban Mixed Use along the edge of the neighborhood. The land use categories of Plan Ithaca have been further refined as part of this plan to identify distinctions within the neighborhood. The study area has been divided into four future land uses categories – Traditional Residential, Residential Transition, Medium-Density Mixed Use, and Urban Mixed Use – that are described in greater detail in this chapter.

Housing is and will remain the predominant land use. While much of the Southside is already built out and few vacant lots exist, there are opportunities to provide additional housing units on underutilized parcels and surface parking lots. In addition, existing homes could incorporate more accessory housing units. These added units will offer more opportunities for people to live within the city while also making home ownership more affordable. These are significant benefits for the community, but it will be important to ensure that this new construction is architecturally compatible with existing buildings to maintain the desired neighborhood character. New development in mixed use areas could transform underutilized sites and parking lots into well-designed higher density housing and new businesses that offer shopping, services, and employment to residents.

While most of the neighborhood is residential, there are commercial and community uses in the area as well. Small businesses are found on W. Green Street, W. Clinton Street, and other individual locations throughout the neighborhood. This mix of uses is a characteristic of the Southside that many residents value. While a significant increase in commercial uses is not desirable, the addition of some new neighborhood-scale businesses that serve area residents could be appropriate. In the Traditional Residential and Residential Transition areas, it will be essential that any new commercial development reflects the existing architectural styles of those areas. Meadow Street and S. Cayuga Street are home to many businesses, several of which are larger-scale and serve customers from the Southside and beyond. These areas will remain ideal locations for new businesses that serve both neighborhood residents and visitors.

Open spaces are another feature that help make the neighborhood a great place to live. Street trees, parks, private yards, and Six Mile Creek and the green spaces along it all provide opportunities to
interact with the natural environment. These opportunities are becoming harder to find in cities, and as new development is considered, the protection of green spaces must be a priority.

**LAND USE GOALS**

The following are the Land Use goals outlined in Phase I of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, *Plan Ithaca*. While all of *Plan Ithaca*’s goals apply to the entire city, there are several goals that are particularly critical to the greater Southside neighborhood and require special attention to ensure their implementation within this area.

1. Additional housing will provide opportunities for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities to live in the city.
2. Neighborhood character will be preserved and enhanced.
3. As the city continues to develop, green spaces will be enhanced and located to best serve residents and visitors.
4. Transportation and housing options will reduce commuter traffic.
5. Housing will be located so that jobs and services are easily accessible.
6. An increased tax base will reduce the tax burden for residents.

**Other key city-wide land use goals from Plan Ithaca:**

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.
2. Green space surrounding the city will be preserved to minimize sprawl and protect open space and agricultural lands.
3. Permitted land uses will promote business expansion and job growth within the city.
4. The community will be economically vibrant and offer a high quality of life.
5. New development will be consistent with the City’s land use goals and map and will be of high-quality design.
6. Land use planning decisions and investments will be coordinated with the goals of the Mobility & Transportation chapter.
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Encourage additional housing throughout the study area.
B. Allow architecturally compatible INFILL development within the Traditional Residential, Residential Transition, and Medium-Density Mixed Use areas.
C. Support the redevelopment of underutilized parcels and parking lots within the Urban Mixed Use areas to provide commercials uses and higher density housing.
D. Revise existing ZONING to reflect the desired future land uses of the Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, as shown on page 3.
E. Ensure that zoning requirements are consistent with the historic character of the Henry St. John Historic District.
F. Adopt a form-based code to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood.
G. Implement a minimum green space requirement.
H. Revise existing zoning requirements for accessory apartments to encourage more legal housing units.
2.2 GREATER SOUTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Southside Future Land Use

Legend

- Traditional Residential
- Residential Transition
- Medium-Density Mixed Use
- Urban Mixed Use
- Green Space

Southside Planning Area
Roads
Historic Districts
City Boundary
Waterway

0 0.05 0.1 Miles

December 5, 2018
2.3 FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

(1) TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL

LOCATION
Traditional Residential encompasses the majority of the planning area and includes the most of the Henry St. John Historic District.

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS
Traditional Residential areas consist of primarily housing and include a mix of single-, two-, and multi-family residences. Many of the buildings are traditional-style residential buildings constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Several newer buildings, including infill two- and multi-family residences, have been constructed throughout the area. These areas were classified as Medium-Density Residential in Plan Ithaca and have an existing residential density of approximately 9-14 dwelling units per acre.

Traditional Residential areas are generally located on local streets with a relatively low traffic volume. Residences are within reasonable walking and biking distance to shopping and services in the downtown, Southwest, and West End, but transportation improvements would enhance the convenience and safety of these modes of travel.

PLANNED CHARACTERISTICS
- Existing neighborhood character will be preserved and enhanced.
- New housing units will be allowed as accessory apartments, within large existing homes, as smaller secondary buildings on larger properties, and as new construction on vacant lots.
- New buildings should be of an architecture form that is compatible with surrounding structures and of similar scale.
- Multi-family residential buildings are appropriate throughout the area but must be of a traditional residential building style.

(2) RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

LOCATION
Residential Transition is located between higher density Urban Mixed-Use and lower density Traditional Residential areas.

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS
Residential Transition areas are predominately housing with a few businesses. All of the areas are located adjacent to commercial properties, many with large single-use footprints. The existing housing varies greatly in both density, scale, and architectural form and includes both single-family homes, smaller multi-family dwellings, and apartment complexes. The majority of the Residential Transition areas were classified as Medium-Density Residential in Plan Ithaca and have an existing residential density of approximately 0-28 dwelling units per acre.
All of the Residential Transition areas are located on or near key transportation corridors, and services, shopping, and public transportation routes are within convenient walking distance for most residents. While Residential Transition areas are ideal locations for additional housing, improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian networks, particularly along and adjacent to Meadow Street, would make car-free living more feasible.

**PLANNED CHARACTERISTICS**

- These areas will serve as a transition in terms of density and scale between Urban Mixed Use and Traditional Residential areas.
- Higher density housing (15-25 dwelling units per acre), including single-family, two-family, and multi-family housing, is appropriate in these areas.
- Row houses and condominiums are encouraged. Large-scale apartment buildings are considered inappropriate for Residential Transition areas.
- New construction should be designed to activate the street and create a welcoming pedestrian environment.
- New buildings should be of an architecture form that is compatible with surrounding structures.
- Seek opportunities to provide open space.

**(3) MEDIUM-DENSITY MIXED USE**

**LOCATION**

Medium-Density Mixed Use areas include properties on the south side of West Green Street as well as the current CVS Pharmacy, Clinton West Plaza, and several adjacent parcels.

**EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS**

Medium-Density Mixed Use currently consists of a range of commercial, office, and residential uses. The CVS Pharmacy and Clinton West Plaza are large footprint commercial buildings with significant amounts of surface parking. Other businesses are located in smaller structures or as the ground-floor use of a MIXED-USE building. Residential units are interspersed among the commercial establishments as apartment buildings, upper story housing units, and single-family homes. Medium-Density Mixed Use areas have an existing residential density of 8-15 dwelling units per acre. Most of these areas were categorized as Medium-Density Residential in Plan Ithaca. However, closer study of these areas at the neighborhood level showed an existing mix of uses that contributes to the neighborhood’s character and identity while creating a connection between nearby commercial areas.

The majority of the Medium-Density Mixed Use area is located on W. Green Street/NYS Route 79 with one other area located at the busy intersection of Meadow Street/NYS Route 13 and W. Clinton Street. All of these roads carry a significant traffic volume with higher speeds than other streets in the neighborhood. Recent intersection improvements on W. Green Street have lowered motor vehicle speeds and improved pedestrian crossings at a few locations, and continuing similar improvements throughout the corridor would improve safety for all modes of travel.
PLANNED CHARACTERISTICS

- A mix of higher-density housing (15-25 dwelling units per acre) and small-scale commercial uses, including offices and small businesses, will be allowed. Large-scale commercial uses are considered inappropriate for this area.
- These areas will serve as a transition in terms of scale and massing between Urban Mixed Use and Traditional Residential areas.
- New buildings will be designed to be sensitive to adjacent Traditional Residential areas and the Henry St. John Historic District. While potentially of higher density, building design will be compatible with the architectural forms of surrounding buildings.
- Parking should be limited on any portion of a lot that is adjacent to a Traditional Residential area.

(4) URBAN MIXED USE

LOCATION
Urban Mixed-Use is located along Meadow Street on the western edge of the study area as well as on S. Cayuga Street near Downtown.

EXISTING CHARACTERISTICS
The Urban Mixed Use areas within the study area currently include a variety of commercial uses but offer little housing. With the exception of Hotel Ithaca on South Cayuga Street, the commercial buildings are one to two stories in height and provide significant amounts of surface parking. Many of these parcels could be redeveloped to include housing or offices in addition to commercial or could provide sites for infill development. All of the Urban Mixed Use areas were identified as Urban Mixed Use in Plan Ithaca.

The Urban Mixed Use areas are located on key transportation corridors and within close proximity to retail, employment, and services. However, these transportation routes were designed to accommodate motor vehicles and while sidewalks exist, the corridors are not friendly to pedestrians or bicyclists. High traffic volumes, high traffic speeds, narrow sidewalks, and a lack of bike lanes are barriers to non-motorized modes of transportation for many. Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, as well as transit stops, will be necessary to truly connect these areas to adjacent commercial districts and residential neighborhoods.

PLANNED CHARACTERISTICS
- A mix of uses, including high-density housing, office, retail, restaurants, and hotels, is encouraged.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections between Southside residences and shopping and services located in these areas must be created.
- The design of new development takes into account the close proximity of the residential neighborhood.
3. ECONOMIC VITALITY

3.1 Economic Development

The greater Southside is primarily a residential neighborhood bounded by commercial areas on most sides. Residential uses will remain the predominant land use within much of the neighborhood; however, the surrounding corridors are intended to accommodate both commercial and residential uses. Currently, these areas are characterized by underutilized buildings and an overabundance of surface parking. These properties provide an ideal redevelopment opportunity to create higher density, mixed-use buildings that include housing and commercial uses. New and existing spaces have the potential to provide locations for business start-ups or expansions of existing enterprises, resulting in additional employment opportunities as well as shopping, restaurants, and services.

All of these commercial areas are located on key transportation corridors – Meadow Street/Route 13; West Green Street/Route 79; and South Cayuga Street. A significant amount of traffic passes by businesses, making it difficult in some cases to access these sites. This can have a negative impact on commercial activity. We must improve access to these commercial areas for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles in order to strengthen the economic viability of businesses that locate along these corridors. In addition, the greater Southside neighborhood is uniquely situated in the midst of several of the city’s commercial districts, but access to these districts remains challenging and often unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. We must strengthen our transportation connections to Downtown and the Southwest commercial areas, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists. Such connections, particularly trail connections along Six Mile Creek, are also an essential component of the city’s tourism infrastructure and will link the Downtown to the Waterfront area.

Within the residential areas, there are some opportunities for economic activities that enhance the livelihood of residents without negatively impacting the character of the neighborhood. Home occupations are a growing sector of the national and local economy and should be permitted throughout the neighborhood. Other live-work arrangements, beyond the traditionally defined home occupation, should also be allowed.

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. Tourism will remain a vital component of the city and regional economy.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Work with private property owners to redevelop underutilized properties along the commercial corridors, in coordination with the goals of the Land Use chapter.
B. Encourage a variety of businesses, retail establishments, and services to locate in the commercial areas adjacent to the greater Southside neighborhood to both serve the needs of residents and provide additional employment opportunities.
C. Work with private property owners to help identify appropriate potential tenants for vacant commercial spaces.
D. In conjunction with business owners and property owners, identify obstacles to business growth along the commercial corridors and possible ways to address those obstacles.
E. Allow home occupations and other live-work arrangements that are in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.
F. FORMALIZE the trail along Six Mile Creek to connect to Downtown, the city’s sidewalk network, and the Cayuga Waterfront Trail.

3.2 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & JOB TRAINING

As the city experiences business expansion, there will be additional employment opportunities for residents, and we must ensure that our local workforce is prepared for these new positions. The Southside is unique in that it is home to two organizations, Historic Ithaca and the Southside Community Center, that are dedicating efforts to JOB READINESS and skill development programs. The City must support these organizations and this vital programming. In addition, we must continue to seek ways to connect Southside residents, particularly low-income residents and young adults, with these and other job training programs to help prepare them to successfully enter the workforce.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & JOB TRAINING GOALS

1. A strong and diverse local workforce will have skills and training that align with the needs of local employers.
2. Job readiness and skill development programs will be available to community members, particularly to low-income residents and young adults.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & JOB TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Continue to work with the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency to support Historic Ithaca’s Work Preserve program.
B. Collaborate with the Southside Community Center to support job training and skill building programs.
C. Encourage businesses in the neighborhood, particularly large employers, to work with local job training programs for city residents.
4. COMMUNITY LIVABILITY

4.1 HOUSING

The Southside has been primarily a residential neighborhood since its establishment, offering modest homes for the working class as well as larger houses for wealthier families. Over time, the housing stock expanded from mostly single-family homes to include more duplexes and apartments. With a variety of housing options and convenient location, the Southside has historically been an affordable place to live and home to a vibrant and diverse community.

Housing costs in Ithaca began to rise in the 1990s and have now increased to the point that the city is no longer an affordable place for many people to live. Unfortunately, the Southside was unable to escape this trend and has been one of the most impacted neighborhoods. Gentrification became a concern of many residents in the early 2000s and remains a concern of long-term residents today. Sale prices for single-family homes in the neighborhood have risen by more than 265% in the past twenty years. For rental units, fair market rents for two-bedroom apartments in the city have increased by 71% since 2000. In contrast, the median family income has increased by 64% over the same period. Many individuals and families who have lived in the neighborhood are being forced to seek housing elsewhere, often outside of the city.

One of the greatest driving forces behind this cost escalation is a city-wide housing shortage, and there is a need to construct additional housing units throughout the city. In addition to stabilizing housing costs, the construction of more housing will provide more people with the opportunity to live within the city, near jobs and services. Housing units of all types and all price points are needed, but there is a particular need for workforce housing.

It is not anticipated that there will be significant development in much of the Southside neighborhood but there are some areas that offer ideal redevelopment sites that could accommodate additional housing units. These sites are located around the perimeter of the study area in the Residential Transition, Medium-Density Mixed Use, and Urban Mixed Use areas. Higher density housing (15+ dwelling units per acre) is encouraged in each of these areas. Townhouses, row houses, small apartment buildings, and condominiums are encouraged in the Residential Transition and Medium-Density Mixed Use areas, while condominiums and apartments in larger buildings are appropriate in the Urban Mixed Use area along Meadow Street.

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2 Source: Tompkins County Department of Assessment
3 Source: huduser.gov/datasets
In the Traditional Residential areas, there are a few opportunities for infill on vacant parcels or on large parcels with an existing building. These sites provide an opportunity for new residential structures that reflect the existing architectural character of the neighborhood. However, the majority of these areas are already developed so most additional housing units will likely be accommodated as accessory apartments on existing properties. Accessory apartments are a creative way to offer more housing while providing home owners with some additional income, particularly in some of the neighborhood’s large homes and underutilized carriage houses and garages. However, residents report that the process for getting a permit for an accessory apartment can be daunting and confusing. To truly encourage accessory apartments in the Southside, the requirements and approval process must be simplified and clarified.

While providing additional housing is essential to addressing the city's housing shortage and helping to reduce housing costs, maintaining the neighborhood’s existing stock of affordable housing is another key objective. The Southside is home to many affordable housing units, including both small buildings and large apartment complexes. Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS), Ithaca Housing Authority, and McGraw House provide these units and have done so for years. All of these organizations are dependent on outside funding to help support their missions and this funding is never guaranteed. The City must work with these organizations to support their work, advocate for future funding to preserve existing affordable housing and create additional units.

**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.
5. The existing stock of affordable housing will be preserved and well-maintained.

**HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS**

A. Allow and encourage infill and accessory apartments throughout the study area.
B. Revise the City’s Zoning Ordinance to simplify the approval process for accessory apartments.
C. Encourage and possibly incentivize townhomes and row houses in the Residential Transition and Medium Density Mixed Use areas.
D. Work with private property owners to maintain affordability of existing units within the study area.
E. Work with Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Ithaca Housing Authority, and McGraw House to advocate for ongoing State and Federal funding for affordable housing.

4.2 Historic Preservation

Southside’s rich and diverse history is uniquely represented in its built environment. From the neighborhood’s first African-American residents to the prominent 19th and early-20th century business owners and village presidents who called it home to members of the early-20th century industrial workforce, the neighborhood’s historic homes reflect the characteristics of the inhabitants that built them and create a strong sense of place for residents today. These resources are the most accessible form of local history to residents and visitors and contribute significantly to the sense of place, identity, and vibrancy of the neighborhood. Preservation is a way to celebrate these contributions and protect their value to the community.

There are two locally designated historic resources in the Southside neighborhood. Originally constructed in 1836, the St. James AME Zion Church at 114-16 Cleveland Avenue is the city’s oldest religious structure and one of the oldest in the AME Zion system. The church is historically significant for the central role it played in Ithaca’s African-American community, especially during the years of intense anti-slavery activity in the mid-19th century. It was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 1973 and designated an individual local landmark in 1974. The locally designated Henry St. John Historic District takes its name from the local elementary school on West Clinton Street, built in 1925 and named for the City’s first Superintendent of Public Works, third mayor, and longtime school board member, Henry Ancel St. John. The district is significant for its association with several prominent businessmen and politicians in the Village and early City of Ithaca, and as a collection of intact 19th and early 20th century houses representing a mix of high-style and modest iterations of popular architectural styles of the era. This approximately four-block historic district is located in the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood and was locally designated in 2013.

In addition to the designated historic resources, there are several undesignated properties and areas within the Southside neighborhood that have historic value:

- The Southside Community Center on South Plain Street was constructed as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project and has played a central role in the lives of neighborhood residents since its dedication by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1938.
• Cleveland Avenue (historically known as Wheat Street) is recognized as the historic center of the city’s African-American community and its modest-sized vernacular homes speak to the lives of its earliest African-American residents.

• During the early-20th century, the city’s first tract housing developments were constructed in the neighborhood. Concentrated in the area south of the creek, these architecturally similar homes create a cohesive streetscape and reflect the growth of the city’s major industries and the resulting need for affordable work force housing.

These resources contribute significantly to the neighborhood’s identity and sense of place and 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 Southside continues to grow as new information about the neighborhood is discovered and interpreted. In response, we must continually work to identify resources that represent newly-discovered aspects of the neighborhoods heritage.

**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 City of Ithaca’s 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 that denotes the boundaries of the Henry St. John Historic District, identifies the St. James AME Zion Church and explains the historic context and significance of these resources.

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

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 neighborhood, particularly those noted as Southside 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.

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<th>Southside Historic Resources Worthy of Further Research:</th>
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<td>- Southside Community Center</td>
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<td>- Cleveland Avenue</td>
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<td>- South of the Creek</td>
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<td>- Pumping Station (Wood St. &amp; Meadow St.)</td>
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F. Conduct intensive-level surveys of identified historic resources in the Southside neighborhood, particularly those included as Southside 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 neighborhood to ensure new buildings are compatible with the architectural character of the Henry St. John Historic District and broader Southside neighborhood.

4.3 PUBLIC SAFETY

The character of a neighborhood and the quality of life of its residents is in large part related to how safe one feels and whether threats are real or perceived. Residents are more likely to interact with their neighbors, resulting in a cohesive community, when they feel safe, both at home and in their neighborhood. Issues related to public safety have been long-standing concerns in the greater Southside neighborhood. While some note that the neighborhood seems safer now than in the past, there are still problems that need to be addressed. Residents have noted drug activity, loitering, and the physical condition of streets and sidewalks to be among their top concerns.

Physical improvements would help address some of these concerns. Sidewalk and street upgrades would improve traveling conditions and additional street lighting would improve visibility and feelings of security, particularly for those walking or bicycling. New lighting in Wood Street Park has decreased criminal activity in that location. Appropriate lighting in Titus Triangle and Baker Park could have the same positive result, improving the safety of those public spaces as well.

Additional policing of the neighborhood would help deter criminal activity and would place officers in the immediate area should an emergency arise. The Southside is an ideal location for community policing, with officers walking or biking through the neighborhood and interacting with residents. This would allow the community and the police department to get to know one another and build stronger relationships to improve public safety for all. However, additional City resources must be dedicated to this effort.

This will be particularly important as new development is added to the neighborhood. While significant change is not anticipated throughout most of the Southside, there are areas along the edges of the neighborhood that are ideal locations for residential and mixed-use redevelopment. As this growth occurs, the City must provide appropriate resources for emergency response to serve new residents and businesses.

An integral part of the Southside neighborhood is Six Mile Creek, a tremendous asset offering scenic views and recreational opportunities in the heart of the city. Residents and visitors are encouraged to enjoy the creek and all in the community should have access to the
city’s waterways. However, this also poses some unique safety risks, and it is important to interact with the water safely. Water levels are higher and currents are stronger at certain times of the year, and extra precautions should be taken. Education on water safety must be a priority as recreational use of the creek and other waterways throughout the city increases. Life-saving equipment should be installed at regular intervals along Six Mile Creek to aid in rescue efforts should an emergency occur.

Flooding is a major concern of residents, particularly those who live south of the creek. The neighborhood lies close to lake level, and during large storm events, rainwater occasionally overflows the storm drains, flooding streets and surrounding properties. In recent years, sediments have filled in some areas in the creek, decreasing the capacity and increasing the likelihood of flooding. While infrequent, it is important for residents to be prepared for this type of emergency situation. Home preparations, such as stocking emergency supplies and helping to keep storm drains clear, as well as familiarity with evacuation procedures are essential to ensuring the safety of those living in the neighborhood.

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. Allocate additional funding to emergency response to ensure that personnel have all tools – including staff, equipment, and training – necessary to meet community needs and recommended staffing levels for the population.
B. Create a Community Action Team to focus on community policing and outreach in the Southside and other residential neighborhoods.
C. Encourage property owners, particularly those of apartment buildings and complexes, to install security equipment.
D. Install additional pedestrian-scale lighting to improve visibility and security at night. Priority locations include Titus Triangle Park, North and South Titus Avenues, and South Albany Street.
E. Trim street trees to allow for more visibility along sidewalks and trails.
F. Establish formal, safe walking trails along Six Mile Creek throughout the neighborhood.
G. Secure the benches along Six Mile Creek within Titus Triangle Park.
H. Identify locations along Six Mile Creek where safety ladders, life preservers, or other water safety equipment should be installed.
I. Consider installing emergency communication devices, such as blue light phones, in the neighborhood parks and other key locations throughout the area.
J. Work with Tompkins County and other community partners to educate neighborhood residents on flood preparedness and emergency evacuation procedures.
4.4 PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the City’s greatest responsibilities is providing high-quality infrastructure to serve residents and visitors. Much of this infrastructure is not visible but is essential to the livability of the community. The City provides water, sewer, and stormwater services and maintains streets, sidewalks, bridges, creeks and parks.

The Southside neighborhood is well-served by existing infrastructure, and the capacity of most underground utilities is sufficient to serve the current population and anticipated future growth. In terms of physical infrastructure, the greatest challenge facing the neighborhood is the need for routine maintenance and replacement of existing underground utilities. Most streets have original water and sewer lines that are now over 100 years old and have already surpassed their projected lifespan. Unfortunately, the cost of maintaining infrastructure is high and continues to rise. Due to these costs, regular maintenance, such as routine replacement of water and sewer lines, has been deferred during times of budget constraints, and now the costs to address all of the aging infrastructure are even greater. However, physical infrastructure is essential to maintaining a vibrant and livable neighborhood, and additional resources must be dedicated to address this increasing need.

While it is an amazing asset to the neighborhood, Six Mile Creek poses additional challenges. There are four bridges over the creek within the neighborhood, and several are in need of repair or replacement within the next 10 years. The creek itself has maintenance needs. Six Mile Creek carries a significant amount of sediment, which is filling in the creek as well as the Cayuga Inlet. Regular maintenance dredging is needed to protect the waterways, and channelization will redirect the flow of water away from the creek walls to prevent further erosion. These efforts will help preserve and protect Six Mile Creek as well as the Inlet and the lake.

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

A. Allocate additional funding for increased staffing and resources to allow for the routine maintenance and systematic upgrades of City streets and underground utilities throughout the neighborhood.
B. Construct a second sanitary sewer crossing over Six Mile Creek to accommodate recent growth and anticipated future increased capacity.
C. Coordinate with the New York State Department of Transportation on the upcoming reconstruction of Meadow Street to implement improvements for the street, sidewalks, and bridge, as identified in the Mobility & Transportation chapter.
D. Work with New York State Department of Transportation to minimize neighborhood traffic impacts resulting from construction on major arterials.

E. Work with New York State Electric & Gas and telecommunications providers to locate utilities underground, particularly in the historic district.

F. Coordinate with utility providers to notify residents in advance of upcoming work.

G. Install backflow preventers for stormwater discharge south of Six Mile Creek to reduce flooding from storm events.

H. Work with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to establish an approved regular dredging program for Six Mile Creek.

I. Create a deeper channel in the center of Six Mile Creek to protect the creek walls from additional erosion and damage.

4.5 HEALTH, WELLNESS, & SUPPORT

Health and wellness are increasingly important issues as we plan for the future, and there are many steps that can be taken within the Southside neighborhood to improve individual health, promote active lifestyles, and foster a community support network. Increasing access to open spaces, trails, and recreational facilities will provide tremendous health and recreational benefits to all ages. There are several parks and green spaces already located in the greater Southside area. Improving amenities, such as playgrounds and walking trails, and offering additional programming within the parks will provide more opportunities to be actively engaged in the natural environment. In addition to these outdoor spaces, the Southside Community Center and the Henry St. John building have gymnasiums that are frequently used for indoor recreation and provide a place for the community to gather.

Like physical health, strong social connections are important to overall wellness and quality of life. The neighborhood can serve as an important building block for these connections, and a cohesive community offers a higher quality of life for residents. In past years, the greater Southside has undertaken initiatives to strengthen the sense of community among residents, and many feel strong ties to their neighborhood. Residents have also expressed a desire to build upon these efforts through improved neighborhood communication, community events, and a permanent civic association.

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. Work with the Southside Community Center and other community organizations to offer programming in the neighborhood parks.
B. **FORMALIZE** the paths along Six Mile Creek and make them safe and accessible to all users, if possible.
C. Encourage neighborhood participation in the City’s Adopt-a-Park Program as a way to assist with desired park improvements and provide an ongoing community initiative.
D. Install a paved, intergenerational walking trail around Wood Street Park.
E. Evaluate the neighborhood parks to identify improvements needed to make those public spaces accessible to all members of the community.
F. Encourage upgrades to homes and other private properties to improve accessibility and visitability.
G. Continue to support the Southside Community Center and investigate new ways for the City to partner with the SSCC to offer services and recreational opportunities to the community.
H. Work with neighborhood residents to establish a Southside Neighborhood Association.
5. MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION

As we look to the future, we must aim to create a transportation network with a range of safe and accessible options for all users, to increase connectivity, and to enhance neighborhood livability. After decades of focusing solely on automobile travel, our focus must shift to providing real alternatives to private car use for transportation needs. The greater Southside neighborhood is in an ideal location for residents to use alternative modes of transportation for their daily needs. The area is surrounded by commercial districts that offer shopping, services, and restaurants, and much of the basic infrastructure for MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION is already in place. However, these alternative modes must be safe and convenient for people to regularly use them in place of their own vehicles.

The City has made significant changes in recent years to improve the safety and convenience of bicycle and pedestrian travel within and through the greater Southside neighborhood. Improvements to Old Elmira Road, which runs along the southern edge of the study area, created a COMPLETE STREET with dedicated bike lanes, sidewalks, and mid-block pedestrian crossings. The Bike Boulevard network extends through the Southside on South Plain Street until it connects to the new bike lanes on Old Elmira Road. The network also turns off of South Plain Street onto Wood Street for those traveling to shopping destinations in that area. While still open to vehicular traffic, conditions are more favorable to bicyclists on these routes. Much of the area has sidewalks, and the City continues to replace and improve sidewalks each year. Curb bump outs were recently added at intersections on West Green Street that provide safer crossings of that street for pedestrians while slowing down vehicular traffic on the busy road.

While many changes have been made and more residents are biking and walking as part of their daily routines, more remains to be done to complete a safe and convenient multi-modal network. Many intersections within the neighborhood, particularly those at major arterials, can be dangerous and difficult for pedestrians to cross. Additional curb bump outs, improved pedestrian signalization, and raised crossings would slow traffic and improve safety at key intersections. The neighborhood sidewalk network is nearly complete, and the City’s sidewalk program could complete the missing sections within the next few years.

Public awareness of the Bike Boulevard network needs to be increased, particularly south of the creek, and additional infrastructure changes may be necessary to further improve safety for cyclists. This is particularly critical because there is limited space to improve bicycling conditions on South Meadow Street, and South Plain Street will be the primary north-south route for
cyclists. Every effort must be made to make this a safe and easy route for cyclists of all levels and to create safe east-west connections to destinations in the Southwest and Downtown areas. Bicycling should still remain safe on other neighborhood streets, and the needs of bicyclists should be considered in street redesigns and reconstruction.

Expanding and connecting the trail network will also be essential to both pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Informal trails have already developed along the banks of Six Mile Creek for both recreational and travel purposes. These trails should be formalized and connected to the sidewalk network. Once these connections are made at South Meadow Street and sidewalks are installed along Cecil A. Malone Drive, the neighborhood will be directly connected to the Black Diamond Trail, the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, the Six Mile Creek Walk, and the rest of the regional trail network.

While biking and walking must be priorities as we plan for future transportation demands, we must continue to address the needs of both personal vehicles and buses as well as their impacts on the neighborhood. The Southside's location offers many advantages but a downside to being surrounded by busy commercial districts is a heavy volume of traffic that is constantly driving around, and often through, the neighborhood. Much of this traffic is carried by higher-speed arterials at the borders of the neighborhood, making the adjacent sidewalks feel unsafe and the intersections dangerous to cross. In addition, the traffic that turns off of those busier streets into the neighborhood often does not slow down to speeds that are appropriate for a residential area. Traffic-calming infrastructure, reduced speed limits, signage, and other mechanisms to lower vehicular speeds and deter cut-through traffic back to primary roads are needed to improve the safety of neighborhood streets and enhance quality of life.

**TRANSPORTATION GOALS**

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.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The City has an ongoing traffic calming program that allows residents to request physical changes to the road infrastructure that are intended to reduce vehicle speeds on neighborhood streets. For more information or to submit a request for consideration, visit [http://www.cityofithaca.org/220/Traffic-Transportation](http://www.cityofithaca.org/220/Traffic-Transportation).
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 City’s transportation infrastructure will be designed with sensitivity to the surrounding
land use contexts to strengthen and enhance the livability of city neighborhoods.
10. Streets, trails, intersections, and sidewalks will be designed and maintained as attractive
public spaces using sustainable design principles.
11. The construction quality and design of transportation infrastructure will reflect community
goals as expressed throughout Plan Ithaca.

**Transportation Recommendations**

A. Continue to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at intersections with Clinton
   Street. Consider raised intersections and/or bump outs and improving crosswalks and
   pedestrian signalization.
B. Request that the New York State Department of Transportation perform a safety audit for
   bicycle and pedestrian concerns at all intersections with (1) South Meadow Street and (2)
   West Green Street.
C. Work with the New York State Department of Transportation to provide wider sidewalks
   and tree lawns along South Meadow Street to enhance the pedestrian experience and
   provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.
D. Complete the neighborhood sidewalk network south of Six Mile Creek by installing
   sidewalks on South Plain Street (east side), Wood Street (south side), Hyers Street (north
   side) and Fair Street (east side).
E. Continue to replace and improve sidewalks and curb ramps to ensure accessibility by
   individuals of all abilities.
F. Consider installing traffic-calming infrastructure and/or eliminating parking on the east
   side of South Plain Street south of the creek to improve bicycle awareness safety.
G. Work with Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) to improve the frequency and
   number of bus routes in the neighborhood.
H. Encourage TCAT to use appropriately scaled buses on the neighborhood’s compact
   residential streets.
I. Consider the installation of traffic-calming infrastructure on South Geneva Street (north of
   Six Mile Creek), South Street, Wood Street, and South Plain Street to slow vehicular traffic
   and encourage through traffic to use arterial streets.
J. Improve vehicular and pedestrian visibility at all intersections by providing a minimum of
   20’ between intersections and on-street parking spaces. Evaluate the 2018 improvements
at the intersection of West Clinton and South Plain Streets to determine if the additional distance provided has improved safety and visibility.

K. Explore opportunities to improve intersection safety on the elevated bridges that cross Six Mile Creek at South Plain and South Albany Streets. Special consideration should be given to improving the visibility and awareness of the four-way stop signs.

L. Increase traffic enforcement in the neighborhood. Targeted locations could include West Green Street (for speed) and the South Plain Street and South Albany Street bridges (for stop sign adherence).

M. Work with the property owner of Tops Plaza to install a sidewalk that aligns with the existing sidewalk on the south side of Wood Street to create a safer pedestrian crossing.

N. Work with the New York State Department of Transportation to widen the sidewalks on the Meadow Street bridge over Six Mile Creek.

O. FORMALIZE the trails along the north and south banks of Six Mile Creek and connect the new trails to the sidewalk network.

P. Use permeable paving materials on pathways and trails and in all neighborhood parks.

Q. Construct a pedestrian bridge over Six Mile Creek near Meadow Street.
6. NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

6.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

The Southside neighborhood has several natural areas and parks. These amenities add beauty to the neighborhood, provide opportunities for social interactions and recreational activities, and allow residents and guests to enjoy the natural environment in a uniquely urban setting. As the density of the neighborhood increases modestly through the addition of more housing units, these amenities will become increasingly important to the quality of life of neighborhood residents. We must ensure that these important resources are well maintained and accessible to all community members.

The City owns and operates three parks in the area south of Six Mile Creek. Located at the southeast corner of Wood and Meadow Streets, Wood Street Park, also known to locals as Titus Flats, provides many opportunities for active recreation, including sports fields, a handball court, a rollersports park, and a playground. This park, and the rollersports park in particular, is well used by Ithacans and draws users from throughout the region. In contrast, Baker Park, located at the intersection of Old Elmira Road and Park Street, and Titus Triangle Park, also known as Fair Street Park, located at the northeast corner of Fair and South Titus Streets, are characterized by their open green spaces, which allow for passive enjoyment or less formal sporting activities and are primarily used by neighborhood residents.

North of Six Mile Creek, two parks serve the neighborhood. The former Henry St. John School on South Geneva Street, now a mixed-use building containing mostly apartments, provides a playground and small green space. While this is privately owned and operated, it is generally accessible to neighborhood residents. The Southside Community Center on South Plain Street is owned by the City, and the adjacent park offers a playground, a small basketball court, and open green space to the community. These two resources serve as the only parks in this part of the neighborhood, and should the approach to the management of these facilities and green spaces change, residents in the area north of Six Mile Creek would not have convenient, walkable access to a park or playground.

In addition to the formal parks and recreational spaces, Six Mile Creek winds through the Southside neighborhood, providing neighborhood residents, community members, and visitors unique access to this semi-natural feature. Informal paths along both sides of the creek and a boat launch at Titus Triangle Park connect and engage users with the creek and other natural resources within the City, including the Cayuga Inlet and Cayuga Lake and Six Mile Creek trails.

The parks are an important resource within the neighborhood, but they also present many challenges to the City. The expense of maintaining and improving the parks, at least those in the area south of Six Mile Creek, falls on the City, and in times of budgetary constraint, routine maintenance and improvements are often deferred. While some improvements have been made to Wood Street Park in recent years, including a new basketball court (funded by NYSEG), the redesign and rebuild of the
rollersports park, and the recent installation of lighting, the parks have old equipment and receive only minimal landscape maintenance. In some cases, the responsibility of maintaining and improving the neighborhood parks and their equipment has been assumed by local residents. As funding and staff resources remain limited, we must find innovative ways of maintaining the existing parks and equipment and incrementally improve these amenities.

In addition, we must ensure that the Southside parks are accessible and safe for all community members, regardless of age or physical ability. Enhanced lighting and pathways within the parks would improve their security and accessibility, allowing individuals of all ages and abilities to enjoy these spaces.

**Natural Resources Goals**

1. The City will provide and adequately fund well-maintained and safe parks, trails, and natural areas.
2. The City will maintain and enhance its existing recreational facilities.
3. Facilities within City parks will be accessible so they may be equally enjoyed by all members of the community.
4. City parks, trails, and natural areas will form a well-established network of interconnected green space.
5. All members of the community will have access to the waterfront.
6. Existing green space in the city will be preserved and opportunities for additional green space will be strategically considered.

**Natural Resources Recommendations**

A. Maintain and enhance existing park amenities, particularly benches, pavilions, play equipment, and recreational facilities.
B. Seek grants and other outside funding to maintain, enhance, and expand parks and paths along Six Mile Creek.
C. Install trash receptacles in Wood Street and Titus Triangle Parks to address litter.
D. Introduce lighting to Titus Triangle and Baker Parks to extend evening use of these parks and improve security within them at night.
E. Formalize the paths along Six Mile Creek and make them safe and accessible to all users, if possible.
F. Create connections between the paths along Six Mile Creek and the Cayuga Waterfront and Black Diamond Trails.
G. Designate the green space along Six Mile Creek as a linear park.
H. Preserve access to Six Mile Creek at Titus Triangle Park and enhance the safety of the ramp for recreational use while maintaining functional access for equipment.
I. Create more spaces for people to sit along Six Mile Creek.
J. Seek ways to create a publicly-held green space north of Six Mile Creek.
K. Update the playground equipment at Wood Street Park and consider adding more natural play elements.
L. Provide restrooms and drinking water at Wood Street Park.
M. Construct a pavilion at Baker Park to provide a shaded gathering area for park users.
N. Consider closing or modifying South Titus Avenue between Fair Street and South Meadow Street to provide additional green space and possibly community gardens.

O. Implement a minimum green space requirement.

P. Protect the riparian zone adjacent to Six Mile Creek. Consider the impacts of future projects and creek maintenance on native species and, where appropriate, provide plantings to serve as both erosion control and wildlife habitats.

Q. Encourage and possibly incentivize the preservation of mature trees on private properties.

R. Explore locations for a boat launch and a boat storage rack along North Titus Avenue.
6.2 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the collective evidence of the past activities and accomplishment of people and may include any traditional resource that is important for maintaining the cultural traditions of a group. Some examples of cultural resources include cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, historical records, social institutions, expressive cultures, old buildings, religious beliefs and practices, spiritual places, industrial heritage, fold life, and artifacts.

The Southside’s rich history is represented in the cultural resources that give the neighborhood a distinct identity. From the St. James AME Zion Church and the Southside Community Center to the Henry St. John Historic District and the special neighborhood quality of Cleveland Avenue, these resources reflect the culture and heritage of the area and allow residents and visitors to explore the diversity that characterizes the Southside neighborhood.

Since its founding in 1836, the St. James AME Zion Church has played a central role in the spiritual, social, and political lives of the neighborhood’s African American community. Located on Cleveland Avenue in the heart of the city’s oldest predominately African-American neighborhood, the church is the city’s oldest religious structure and has hosted weekly religious services since its construction. Today, the building provides important meeting space for neighborhood organizations and groups and hosts small performances and special events that benefit the entire community. It has, however, struggled in recent years with a shrinking and aging congregation, accessibility issues, and the physical deterioration of the building. Recognizing the cultural significance of this important resource, the City must find ways to support improvements that make the building accessible to all members of the community and preserve this historic resource.

Incorporated in 1934, the Southside Community Center is located on South Plain Street. Established as a non-sectarian and non-political, social, educational, cultural, and recreational resource for African Americans in the Southside neighborhood, this valuable community resource continues to offer important services, programs, and amenities that benefit the greater Southside community. These include an afterschool program for elementary students; a computer lab; a small production and recording facility; organized health and recreational programs; and bi-monthly pet clinics. The Center also hosts the Southside’s Community Unity Music Education Program, a well-attended summer dance, arts, journaling, and singing program for low-income youth established in 2003. Seeing the benefit of the Southside Community Center, the City supports the organization through its ownership and maintenance of the Center facility. Additionally, the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, a City-affiliated economic and community development entity, has in the past provided grant funding for the Center’s programs as well as for infrastructural improvements within the building.

Southside Cultural Resources
- St. James AME Zion Church
- MLK Freedom Walkway
- Southside Community Center
- Henry St. John Historic District
- Late-19th and Early-20th Century Small-Scale Residential Character
- Juneteenth Celebration
- Streets Alive and other community events
As demographics within the neighborhood have changed in recent years, the Southside Community Center’s geographic focus has expanded to include the greater Ithaca community. Gentrification and an erosion of a sense of community among the neighborhood’s historic African-American population continue to challenge the organization.

In addition to the cultural institutions within the neighborhood, the small-scale residential character of the neighborhood and its unique ability to visually represent the physical development and heritage of this area is also an important cultural resource. The architecturally simple, small-scale houses along Cleveland Avenue reflect the settlement of this area by African Americans during the early and mid-19th century. In contrast, the large-scale residences built in popular 19th-century architectural styles along South Albany and Geneva Streets north of Six Mile Creek denote the area as a desirable residential area for influential Ithacans during this period. Many of these homes are located in the locally-designated Henry St. John Historic District. The small, architecturally similar houses on relatively small lots south of Six Mile Creek reflect that area’s development as an affordable working-class neighborhood around the turn of the 20th century. The urban characteristics, including the size, scale, and rhythm of the homes along the streets and streetscape features, that define the sense of place in this neighborhood and connect residents and visitors to its dynamic heritage must be protected and preserved.

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. Continue to financially support the maintenance of the Southside Community Center facility.
B. Encourage and support organizational improvements at the Southside Community Center that foster its longer-term success and sustainability.
C. Complete the Southside Loop of the MLK Freedom Walkway.
D. Highlight the area’s significant African American history through landscape features, markers and interpretive signage, specifically along Cleveland Avenue.
E. Encourage and support infrastructural improvements at St. James AME Zion Church to make the building accessible to all members of the community.
F. Install interpretive signage and other visually-informative displays in the Henry St. John Historic District to highlight the cultural significance of the area.
G. Continue to support community events in conjunction with the Southside Community Center, Historic Ithaca, and neighborhood groups.
7. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY, WATER, & FOOD SYSTEMS

7.1 Energy

The City has established a goal to reduce community-wide emissions to 80% below 2010 levels by 2050. In the greater Southside area, both the City and residents play a key role in reducing emissions and non-renewable energy consumption. The City is currently upgrading its facilities to increase the energy efficiency of its buildings and install renewable energy infrastructure. The Southside Community Center is an important facility that serves thousands of residents each year, but according to preliminary energy benchmarking, uses far more energy than many other City facilities. There is potential to reduce the building's operating costs, decrease energy consumption, and set an example for similar facilities, particularly historic structures, through energy efficiency improvements.

In addition to improvements at its own buildings, the City can focus on land use policies and infrastructure upgrades that facilitate lower energy use by its residents and visitors. Zoning for the Southwest will continue to support walkable medium-density and, in some areas, higher density housing that allow people to live near services and shopping. Enhanced access to public transportation and improved bicycle and pedestrian environments will make it easier for Southside residents and visitors to use alternate modes of transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

At the individual level, there are many steps that residents, businesses, and property owners can take to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Many have already made changes in their daily lives to reduce energy demand – such as biking and walking for errands and recycling more – and it is important to be mindful of other steps that can be taken. Along with these smaller changes, residents can have a big impact by making energy efficiency upgrades to their homes and incorporating renewable energy sources, when possible.

**Energy Incentives**

Property Assisted Clean Energy (PACE) Financing provides long-term financing for energy efficiency projects in existing buildings and renewable energy projects in all buildings. PACE Financing is available for all buildings owned commercially (e.g. businesses or residential rentals) or by a non-profit. The financing is repaid through an annual charge on the property tax bill.

In addition, New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) regularly offer incentives for energy efficiency upgrades to private properties.

**Energy Goals**

1. Ithaca will be a leading model, facilitator, and educator for small-city transitions to higher energy efficiency, energy conservation, waste reduction, and reuse.
2. The city's energy supplies will meet the highest standards of security and reliability.
ENERGY RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conduct an energy assessment of the Southside Community Center to determine potential energy improvements, in accordance with the City’s Energy Action Plan.
B. Collaborate with the Southside Community Center, Historic Ithaca, Finger Lakes ReUse, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other community partners on educational programs about energy-related issues and resources.
C. Promote PACE Financing as a way for property owners to obtain long-term financing for renewable energy infrastructure and energy upgrades to buildings owned commercially or by nonprofits.
D. Seek grants and other funding for energy efficiency upgrades in the Southside Community Center as identified in an energy assessment.
E. Promote innovative shared community access to products and services, through renting, lending, swapping, and bartering. Consider collaborating with the nearby Finger Lakes ReUse Center to advance these efforts.

7.2 WATER RESOURCES & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Ithaca area is fortunate to be home to many natural waterways, and the greater Southside neighborhood has direct access to the water at Six Mile Creek. The creek offers recreation for those who like to paddle, fish, and enjoy the water’s edge. It also provides scenic views in the middle of the urban environment. Protection of the creek is essential to ensure its continued enjoyment.

While Six Mile Creek provides tremendous benefit to the community, flooding remains a major concern for area residents. In recent years, flood waters from both the creek and the stormwater system have had impacts on residential properties, particularly south of the creek. Ongoing maintenance of the creek channel and creek walls is needed to help minimize flood threats while also preserving the waterway for its recreational uses.

WATER RESOURCES & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT GOALS

1. Cayuga Lake, its tributaries, and the local watershed will be protected from pollution, sedimentation, erosions, flooding, invasive species, and other threats to drinking water supplies, wildlife, recreation, and economic development.
2. Community water consumption will be reduced through more efficient water use.
3. Stormwater run-off will be significantly reduced.

WATER RESOURCES & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Protect the riparian zone adjacent to Six Mile Creek. Consider the impacts of future projects and creek maintenance on native species, and where appropriate, provide plantings to serve as both erosion control and wildlife habitats.
B. Work with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to establish an approved regular dredging program for Six Mile Creek.
C. Create a deeper channel in the center of Six Mile Creek to protect the creek walls from additional erosion and damage.
D. Upgrade and heighten the berm on the south side of Six Mile Creek to the west of S. Plain Street.
E. Improve storm sewer drainage south of the creek to prevent street flooding during storm events.
F. Collaborate with the Southside Community Center, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other community partners on educational programs about watershed protection.
G. Seek ways to reduce water use at the Southside Community Center such as the installation of low-flow fixtures and educational outreach.

7.3 FOOD SYSTEMS
Like the broader Ithaca community, Southside residents should have a sustainable, locally-based FOOD SYSTEM that makes nutritious food affordable and accessible to all. The Ithaca area has a strong local food network and interest in organic foods, local agriculture, and community gardens. However, more work must be done to ensure equitable access to healthy foods and a truly sustainable food system.

For the Southside neighborhood, steps must be taken to improve access to foods – including foods that are purchased and those that are homegrown – to guarantee food security for all residents. The neighborhood is conveniently located near several major grocery stores; however, travel to these locations can be difficult and dangerous if one is not driving to the destination. Transportation improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians must be implemented to allow easier access to grocers for residents of all ages and abilities.

Opportunities to grow food are also an important component of the food system. Many Southside residents have their own gardens and already grow some of their own produce. Other residents, particularly those in multi-unit buildings or those with small lots, do not have the space for a garden, and currently, there are no community gardens within easy walking distance of the neighborhood. Creating a community garden space would allow families and individuals the opportunity to produce their own food while also increasing a sense of community and neighborhood stewardship.

FOOD SYSTEMS GOALS
1. All city residents will enjoy food security.
2. Residents will have opportunities to grow their own food locally through private or community gardens.
3. Ithaca’s community food network will improve food accessibility by connecting food entrepreneurs with policymakers, permitting agencies, and community members.
4. 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.

FOOD SYSTEMS RECOMMENDATIONS
A. Allow and encourage a farmers’ market to operate within the neighborhood.
B. Improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at intersections with Meadow Street/Route 13 to create better access to grocery stores and other services.
C. Work with the property owner of Tops Plaza to install a sidewalk that aligns with the existing sidewalk on the south side of Wood Street to create a safer crossing.
F. Explore locations for a neighborhood community garden. Consider closing or modifying South Titus Avenue between Fair Street and South Meadow Street to provide additional green space and possibly community gardens.

D. Encourage owners of multi-unit housing to provide garden space for tenants.
8. APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION: Human-powered transportation that includes walking, cycling, wheeling, in-line skating, skateboarding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and kayaking.

ADAPTIVE REUSE: The renovation of a building for the purpose of changing its use.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: The official Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission approval of an application to make alterations to a locally-designated historic property.

CHARACTER: The identity and sense of place associated with an area. Community bonds, built form (architecture and size and scale of buildings), streetscape, and public amenities are all components of character and influence how residents and visitors perceive an area.

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

COMMUNITY LIVABILITY: The combination of ease of access to daily living needs, perceptions of public safety, availability of affordable housing and economic opportunities, and individual levels of comfort (aesthetics, noise levels, etc.) that contribute to quality of life for residents.

COMPATIBLE: The design of a building or site relates to its surroundings and does not deviate substantially from an established build environment.

COMPLETE STREET: A street that is designed to provide safe, convenient access and mobility for all users regardless of age or disabilities. Complete streets are designed to make it easy and pleasant to cross the street, walk to shops, bicycle to work and use transit. There is no single design prescription for a complete street; each one is unique, incorporating features responding to its traffic volume and community context.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT: Similar to historic district, conservation districts are designated areas of a city where neighborhood character is protected through design review. Regulations within conservation district tend to be more lenient than those in historic districts, focusing on building and neighborhood design continuity and not on historic architectural integrity.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The collective evidence of the past activities and accomplishments of people and may include any traditional resource that is important for maintaining the cultural traditions of a group. Some examples of cultural resources include cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, historical records, social institutions, expressive cultures, old buildings, religious beliefs and practices, spiritual places, industrial heritage, folk life, and artifacts.

ENERGY BENCHMARKING: An energy benchmark is essentially a snapshot of a building’s energy use; it usually includes utility bill data for the timeframe covered (often a year) as well as operational
characteristics (such as square footage and operating hours) that help frame the data. Benchmarking helps to track building performance over time and allows building-to-building comparisons.

**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.

**FOOD SYSTEM:** All processes and infrastructure involved in food production, processing, distribution, and consumption.

**FORMALIZE:** To create established and maintained trails and pathways, preferably through the use of permeable surfacing materials

**GREEN BUSINESSES:** Organizations or companies whose operations have no or minimal negative impact on the local or global environment, the community, or the economy.

**GREENHOUSE GAS:** Greenhouse gases are natural or manmade gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to the greenhouse effect. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, water vapor, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. Changes in the concentration of certain greenhouse gases, due to human activity such as fossil fuel burning, increase the risk of global climate change.

**HISTORIC RESOURCE:** A site, building, structure, or object (or a grouping of these resources) that has cultural value based on its association with historic events or the lives of historically significant individuals, aesthetic qualities or architectural form, or potential to yield information about the past. Historic resources also include artifacts, records and material remains related to these properties or resources.

**INFILL:** Development of vacant or underutilized properties within a predominantly built-up neighborhood or commercial area.

**JOB READINESS:** Training that individuals receive to prepare them to seek or obtain employment and to keep their jobs once they are hired.

**LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT OR LANDMARKS:** Individual properties or groupings of historic resources that have been designated by a municipality as being significant to the community's history, architecture, archeology, engineering or culture. These districts and landmarks are often protected, and alterations regulated by, a local preservation ordinance. Local historic districts and landmarks can be simultaneously listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
**MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT:** Development projects that provide for more than one use or purpose within a shared building or development area. Mixed-use development may allow the integration of commercial, retail, office, medium to high-density housing, and in some cases light industrial uses. These uses can be integrated either horizontally or vertically in a single building or structure.

**MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:** Transportation system that uses a variety of modes to transport people and goods. Components of the system may include vehicular roadways, transit (bus, rail), bikeways, pedestrian ways (sidewalks, trails), freight railways, and airplanes.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT OR LANDMARK:** Individual properties or groupings of historic resources that are recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, the Federal list of historically significant properties, as being significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering or culture. While alterations to properties listed on the National Register are not regulated at the local level, certified rehabilitations of listed properties are eligible for funding incentives.

**PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT:** A subsidy provided by a taxing authority that lowers the cost of owning, operating, or improving a property by reducing or eliminating the taxes paid by the owner of the property for a set period of time.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY:** Energy and electricity supplied from continually replenished energy sources, such as wind and solar power, geothermal, hydropower, and various forms of biomass. In general, energy produced from renewable resources results in lower greenhouse gas emissions than the same amount of energy produced from fossil fuels.

**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.

**WATERSHED:** The entire land area that drains into a creek, river, lake, or other body of water.

**WELLNESS:** Physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being.

**ZONING:** A regulatory mechanism through which the City regulates the location, size, and use of properties and buildings. Zoning regulations are intended to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community, and to lessen congestion, prevent overcrowding, and facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewer, parks, and other public services.
9. APPENDIX B: RESOLUTIONS
[TO BE UPDATE FOLLOWING APPROVAL PROCESS]