AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE CITY OF ITHACA

A PROGRAM FOR ACTION

Prepared for the City of Ithaca by:

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Economic Development Plan
City of Ithaca, New York
Alan J. Cohen - Mayor

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SECTION 1.
INTRODUCTION—Part I

Work on a plan for economic development in the City of Ithaca began in early September 1996. At that time, an Economic Development Forum was convened to provide insight and guidance on the city's economy. Seventy-five people who lived or worked in the Ithaca area were asked to help with the formulation of goals and objectives for the city's economic future. (The list of the participants and the forum topic and conclusions can be found in Appendix H.) After several meetings of the Forum, it was recognized that a comprehensive effort on a larger scale was needed to improve the local economy and provide more and better job opportunities for all residents. Ithaca was but one part of a larger economic unit that included adjacent municipalities, all of Tompkins County and the nearby region.

To further its original economic development initiative, Common Council funded a study to develop specific city-oriented strategies that could be incorporated into a countywide plan. At the county level, the Board of Representatives commissioned the preparation of a strategic plan for economic development that addresses many of the issues identified in the economic forum, designating Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD) as the project leader and coordinator.

City and TCAD/County efforts have been closely coordinated. The city's plan, as set forth in this report, as well as a number of sector-specific plans addressing broad issues such as farmland preservation and work force development, will become building blocks of a countywide economic plan and development strategy.

An 11-member Economic Development Advisory Committee was appointed to assist in the preparation of the city's economic development plan by providing direction, reacting to material presented and making recommendations to the Mayor and Council, as appropriate. Members of the committee were selected to bring a diversity of thoughts and opinions to the table; they represented local business, industry, development, banking, public agencies and the community at large.

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As the older urban core and population center, the City of Ithaca faces many of the same economic concerns as other communities in Tompkins County. Unlike these other communities, however, the city must address a number of additional economic issues of great importance including:

- The need to maintain a wide range of community services,
- A large and growing municipal budget,
- An eroding property tax base that increasingly fails to keep pace with the cost of government,
- An enormous amount of tax-exempt property,
- An expensive and aging infrastructure, and
- Older commercial buildings that reflect the economy of an earlier era.
Clearly, the city has an urgent and growing need to be as competitive as other communities in the county and region for a share of new economic development.

Over time, Ithaca's economic condition has been significantly influenced by a number of intricately interconnected variables including national, state, regional and county economies, Cornell University and Ithaca College policies, infrastructure systems, demographic trends and public attitudes. These dynamics are all active today. While some are beyond local control, others can be shaped to be either positive or negative forces.

Information and recommendations on the following pages provide a basic component of the city's current response to the challenge of improving the local economy. As a plan, this study has several dimensions ranging from the establishment of overall policy to identification and analysis of development opportunities for specific sites. It is the culmination of 10 months of concentrated effort under the leadership of the Advisory Committee, broadened by outreach to groups and individuals that could bring insight and informed community opinion to the project.

Economic activity in the city is complex and widespread encompassing several distinct and unique development areas. By intent, the focus of this plan has been limited largely to one of these; an irregular area lying between Route 13 and the Flood Control Channel and stretching from Newman Golf Course on the north to the south city line on Elmira Road. There are roughly 630 acres in this study area, or approximately 20% of all the land in the city. It contains much of the city's existing commercial and industrial land use and most of the land that has good development potential.

In addition, several smaller isolated sites have been included in the study: "Gun-Shop" Hill, the former Wilcox Press building and the Morse Building, which is part of the Emerson complex on South Hill sometimes referred to as Building 24.

West State Street between The Commons and Meadow Street -- a subsection of the main study area -- was not investigated in detail as a part of this study because it is essentially built up and large-scale development opportunities are limited. Even so, construction of the County's Human Services Building on West State Street, combined with pending street improvements and landscaping, should stimulate additional private-sector improvements. While some new development is anticipated in the West State Street area, it is likely that most future changes will involve rehabilitation of existing structures, some rebuilding or infill on individual small lots and rear yard development.
Two other subsections within the overall study area have received a considerable amount of attention and study recently. For this reason, they were also not investigated as a part of this study. These subsections are:

**The Fulton/Meadow Corridor Area**
Because of major street improvements and traffic movement changes in the West End, the Fulton/Meadow corridors have assumed a high level of importance in future West End land use patterns. The seven blocks bounded by Fulton and Meadow Streets have been the subject of a recent intensive study by the city's Department of Planning and Development and a draft plan for expected new development in this area has been completed and presented to City Council for review and public comment. The *West End Urban Design Plan* is consistent with the conclusions and recommendations of this economic study.

**Inlet Island**
An *Inlet Island Urban Design Plan* for future land use and development in an area that lies between the Inlet and flood channel, north of West State Street, has also been completed recently and was adopted by the Common Council on November 4, 1998. Guidelines for achieving the desired physical character of this area, including detailed construction and landscaping proposals have been presented and now await official action by the city. Recommendations in both the *West End Urban Design Plan* and the *Inlet Island Urban Design Plan* are viewed as supporting components of this economic study.

It is fully recognized and understood that a plan for future economic activity in the city is not limited to the areas examined on the following pages of this report. Two vital components of the city's economy, which were not included in this study -- Collegetown and the Downtown/Commons -- are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Collegetown**
Collegetown has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years and is, in essence, a discreet economic entity with tremendous built-in vitality. At this time, and for the foreseeable future, the viability of Collegetown is believed to be solid. The city periodically looks for ways to improve the ambience and efficiency of Collegetown but substantive changes in policy for this area are not anticipated.
**Downtown and The Commons**

Ithaca's traditional Central Business District (CBD) has been a strong focus of city interest and concern for many years. This area, including The Commons and surrounding blocks, has been in a state of flux and is changing in character. At issue are questions of market niche, attracting new commercial ventures, renovation and use of upper floors, facade improvement and broad-based promotion and marketing. It is clear that the historic role of the CBD is undergoing significant change.

The Ithaca Downtown Partnership (IDP) was created specifically to address downtown revitalization. The city has been working closely with the IDP on a number of initiatives such as code regulations for upper-story development, potential funding sources for facade improvements and possible uses of the community development revolving loan fund. In addition, the current Mayor and Common Council adopted the *Downtown Design Plan* on April 2, 1997. This Plan provides a series of design strategies to 'proactively guide the development of (Ithaca's) downtown.' The Commons Design Review Committee, appointed by the Mayor, has been working since January 1998 on the task of making design recommendations for physical revitalization of The Commons. The committee's report, published in 1999, makes several recommendations regarding but not limited to lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and signage, as well as connectivity to The Commons from nearby downtown locations. These efforts are aimed at strengthening downtown's commercial viability and are considered an integral but independent part of this economic plan.

Sections 2 and 3 contain a brief summary of findings followed by a presentation of statistical information that illustrates and describes the city's current economic condition and concerns for the future. Most important to this report is Section 4 on Economic Development Policy. This section contains recommended city policy for the primary economic development issues of growth and intermunicipal relations. Specifications needed to implement each policy are set forth along with the identification of agency or department responsibilities for taking those actions and a suggested timetable for implementation.

Section 5 contains a summary of suggestions for the future use of 14 sites in the study area that appear to have good potential for a higher level of development. A number of possible uses for each site are identified and the use that seems most likely or appropriate is recommended. A full analysis of these sites is included in the appendix.
Extensive appendices supplement this report including:

- The detailed site analyses and evaluations mentioned above,
- A review of and recommendations for possible modifications to the city's development regulations (zoning, environmental review, site development plan review and subdivision regulations),
- A model for intermunicipal cooperation,
- Alternative policy statements considered by the Advisory Committee that led to the final policy recommendations, and
- Additional information considered as the study progressed.

Although the creation of new employment opportunities and the provision of training programs are an important component of a comprehensive economic development program, they are not included in this plan. Both of these issues are addressed in the recently published *Economic Development Strategy for Tompkins County*.

Completion of this economic development study for the City of Ithaca, as part of an overall plan for sustained economic growth in Tompkins County, signifies a renewed interest in the economic well being of the City. There are substantial opportunities to increase the tax base, create additional jobs, safeguard important environmental features and generally enhance the quality of life in Ithaca's local neighborhoods, a quality that is prized by local residents. There is also long range potential for creative partnerships that can preserve the autonomy of local governments, increase efficiency and enable the beneficial sharing of future economic growth that is possible throughout Tompkins County. The present economic development plan becomes a basic component of the city's overall comprehensive plan.

September 1998
Tom Niederkorn
Planning/Environmental Research Consultants (PERC)
Ithaca, New York
INTRODUCTION—Part II*

The City of Ithaca seeks growth that maintains the City’s character and preserves the quality of life of its residents. Along with conventional economic development strategies, creative and innovative development should be pursued -- where new ideas and alternative economic development strategies are encouraged through the initiatives of the City’s staff, elected officials, business communities, and concerned citizenry. This “culture of innovation” has allowed the City of Ithaca to serve as the birthplace of a variety of alternative economic endeavors. Enlivened by the reputation for bold and creative development, the City of Ithaca wishes to continue to encourage a climate in which new and innovative economic activities can flourish.

In an age and society when economic base is increasingly dependent upon the growth of electronic enterprise, the City of Ithaca recognizes the desirability of fostering and promoting cyber commerce throughout the area. The City encourages the growth of jobs in the high technology sector generally and in electronic commerce particularly. It promotes these businesses by maintaining a regulatory environment in which start-ups and small companies can find a home.

One means by which Ithaca can achieve this goal is through its zoning ordinance. Currently the ordinance allows home occupations as-of-right in most zones. The City should investigate whether the provisions for home occupations in the zoning ordinance could be expanded so as to encourage the establishment of electronic commerce and other related businesses while protecting the quality of life in its residential neighborhoods.

It is important to recognize that, as this plan was written at a specific point in time, its authors may not have anticipated and addressed questions that may arise with regard to development initiatives taking place at some time in the future. The intent of the Economic Development Plan for the City of Ithaca is to serve as a general framework for development. Although the Economic Development Plan focuses on the Route 13 corridor as the main location for new development to occur, this in no way diminishes the City’s continuing encouragement of economic growth in Ithaca’s Central Business District. The City’s commitment to its downtown is clearly expressed by the Common Council’s recent endorsement of the Downtown Ithaca Development Strategy, which outlines specific goals for economic development in the City of Ithaca’s downtown core and by its support of currently proposed downtown development projects (Ciminelli/Cornell Office Building, Cayuga Green, the Intermodal Transportation Center).

* Following completion of a first draft in 1998, the Economic Development Plan for the City of Ithaca was reviewed by city staff, appointed boards, elected officials and members of the public. In accordance with comments received, the draft was modified and reprinted in September of 1999. A public hearing on the plan was advertised and conducted in February of 2001. The introduction to this plan was revised in May of 2002, after circulation of the second draft. The revisions were made in response to further comments received from members of City boards (specifically the Conservation Advisory Council) and the general public, including those comments made at the 2001 public hearing.
The City of Ithaca will continue to work toward enhancing the City’s quality of life and improving economic opportunities for all its residents. This plan adheres to sound regional land-use planning, in that it encourages dense, mixed-use development in areas that are already build-up such as in the City of Ithaca, which will in turn preserve farmland and open space outside of the City. While encouraging this economic development, it is recognized that the preservation and strengthening of Ithaca’s residential neighborhoods will remain paramount to the City’s mission.

May 2002

The City of Ithaca recognizes the important role that public art can play in the quality of the built environment and its relationship to the economic vitality of the city. As such, public art should be incorporated into development projects in the city. The addition of a variety of art in public spaces will enrich the everyday experiences of residents and visitors, create a sense of place, and contribute to the visual vitality of the city's public environment. Studies have shown that public art can promote enhanced tourism and be important components in economic development, contributing to a region's livability and quality of life -- factors in attracting and retaining businesses and employees.

March 2003
SECTION 2. HIGHLIGHTS

This report examines issues affecting economic development potential over the next five to 10 years in a large, underused part of the City of Ithaca. It outlines a vigorous program to promote and encourage new economic growth.

Over the past eight months, extensive group discussion, research, interviews, and site investigations have led to a number of major conclusions and recommendations, summarized below. City policymakers ultimately must determine the extent to which they concur with, and wish to support, these conclusions and recommendations and the general "rational-growth" principles underlying this report.

Additional details and other recommended actions that the city should consider to further economic development can be found in Section 4, Section 5 and Appendices A, B and C.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ithaca is fiscally stable with good credit, manageable debt and a higher bond rating than most cities in the state. However, problems of a stagnant revenue stream and an annual increase in the cost of running government and providing quality services have made a balanced budget increasingly difficult to achieve. Budget projections suggest that current trends are not expected to change in the near future. It appears that substantial increases in property taxes from an eroding base will be in the picture unless significant new sources of revenue can be found. High property taxes can act as a disincentive to businesses looking to locate in the City of Ithaca. Higher taxes could also discourage the growth and physical expansion of existing businesses and/or result in relocation outside of the city.

2. Based on group discussion with property owners, developers, investors, realtors, business managers and other community leaders, Ithaca needs to change its public image to be solidly positive about future growth. City government should act decisively to establish a policy on growth that can capitalize on growth potential and clearly reflect current attitudes and concerns about the local economy.

3. Expanding the taxable property base and increasing revenues from sales taxes are the most critical challenges for the city's economy at present and for the foreseeable future. Job creation, another very important factor, would be a beneficial by-product of any significant increase in industrial and commercial development.

4. In the long run, strengthening large and small businesses and industries that are already in place will be the most effective way to create a consistent and reliable economy in Ithaca and Tompkins County.
5. There is open, undeveloped land in the city's Route 13/Inlet Valley corridor that is comparable in area to Cornell's Business and Technology Park on Brown Road but lacks infrastructure and has not been prepared for development. Other smaller parcels, some with exceptionally good locations, should have high development potential. Some of these parcels are vacant; some are currently being used for less than optimum development purposes. An aggressive marketing campaign could help identify prospective developers for this area.

6. The high cost of assembling land and making it suitable for use can sometimes be a handicap for development faced by many that might desire a city location. The use of incentives such as low interest revolving loan funds and existing programs for partial tax abatement to compensate for high development costs could be economically beneficial. Other factors that may lead to higher development costs in the city are the soil conditions in the valley and the city's higher site plan development standards, resulting in a more aesthetically pleasing community and environmentally responsible development.

7. Most communities in New York State take advantage of real property tax law to offer an incentive to development. As an additional tool for competitiveness, the City should consider the possible use of incentives such as real property tax abatements to encourage new development or expansion of existing businesses. Such incentives could be targeted to either particular kinds of projects or to specific areas of the city in which development and expansion are deemed desirable. It will be important to discuss this issue with other taxing jurisdictions in the local area, namely Tompkins County and the Ithaca City School District. Other possible economic development incentives, beyond tax abatements, should be investigated and explored.

8. Downtown Ithaca (The Commons area) is experiencing fundamental market changes. Strong public-private initiatives are in process to develop creative and comprehensive solutions to downtown problems. Efforts to assist with upper story rehabilitation, facade improvements and marketing vacant ground floor space should continue to be high priority items for city officials.

9. City regulations governing land use and development -- zoning, site plan review and City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) -- should be modified to promote rational land use patterns and minimize adversarial developer-versus-municipality situations. Development concerns should be clearly identified and criteria and standards established that reduce the need for subjective judgements by the reviewing agency. Techniques to simplify and expedite the project review and approval process should be considered and implemented.

10. Vacant and under-used land near Route 13 in the Inlet Valley has great potential for future economic development and should be marketed and used primarily for industrial and commercial purposes. (Note: Fourteen specific areas are evaluated in Appendix A.)
11. The city should continue as a strong participant in the activities of Tompkins County Area Development and take maximum advantage of this effective resource.

12. To increase its ability to compete for economic development, the city should pre-qualify the best potential sites, plan for infrastructure improvements as necessary, provide a single-contact person to expedite projects as they move through the regulatory process and institute an aggressive marketing program to identify and attract prospective developers and businesses.

13. Investments by the City in the environment and infrastructure reflect the City’s commitment to economic development. The City should consider developing a marketing plan so that prospective developers, investors, and other businesses can be made aware of the opportunities which exist in the City of Ithaca. The marketing plan should also promote the City as a place to live, work and do business, emphasizing the high quality of life the city and the surrounding communities offer.

14. Future economic stability for the city and other Tompkins County communities could be greatly enhanced by effective programs to integrate services and share the benefits of growth. Joint responsibility for the operation and administration of public water and sewer systems and for providing fire protection and public transit services are examples of existing programs that show that intermunicipal cooperation can be successful in the county. If political issues can be overcome, additional bold steps toward the long-range goal of intermunicipal sharing can be taken. This would increase efficiency and promote the reduction of intermunicipal competition for development. It would also help to make Tompkins County more competitive in a regional and global economy.

15. The basic need for sustained economic growth and job creation should be part of a broader vision for the city that also includes concerns for housing, neighborhood preservation, environmental safeguards, traffic control, education, recreation and cultural opportunity. Some of these considerations are regional in nature but others relate specifically to life in Ithaca and must be included in a balanced overall development equation for the city.

16. The city should take advantage of every opportunity to promote local public support for a "rational-growth" policy that increases local pay rolls and generates new tax revenue.

17. Investments by the City in the environment and infrastructure are important to any comprehensive economic development strategy. The City should continue to invest and reinvest in these areas as an affirmation of its commitment to economic development.
SECTION 3.
CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Traditional studies of an economy attempt to analyze in considerable detail the economic dynamics of the area under investigation. The objective of such studies is to understand the economy in a structural sense, to describe what it is, how it works and the positive and negative factors that influence it. This approach usually involves detailed quantitative analyses of conditions and trends related to population, labor force, employment by industry group, per capita and household income, commutation and local employee mobility. Other important considerations -- housing, job training, infrastructure, land use regulations, environmental constraints and quality of life -- go beyond statistical analysis and involve value judgments and public attitudes. Ultimately, the economy is a reflection of both statistical and social factors.

Typical economic studies are inevitably more realistic and meaningful when undertaken for larger geographic and population areas. Metropolitan centers, counties, regions and states provide a broad framework for obtaining more reliable data to measure and project economic activity. This is particularly true when data availability depends on the federal census or a department of New York State government. Even when data from these sources can be obtained for areas as small as the City of Ithaca, they are not necessarily appropriate or current indicators of conditions, trends and needs. Also, because data used to measure and describe traditional economic indicators are usually limited by municipal boundaries they often do not present a true picture of local problems and opportunities.

To the extent possible and meaningful, economic indicators and barometers for the City of Ithaca will be considered as part of the economic development strategy being prepared for Tompkins County. The city is a complex and multi-dimensional component of the County's economy and will be considered as such in the overall county strategy.

For purposes of this economic development plan, background data included on the following pages focuses on information that illustrates conditions that most directly impact economic activity in the city. Information is presented to emphasize the following specific points.

The city must increase annual revenue from traditional or other sources, or improve operational efficiency, preferably both, if an acceptable property tax rate and the current level of service provided by city government are to be maintained.

For at least the past five years, there has been a consistent decline in the taxable value of real property in the city while surrounding towns in the urban area have grown.

At present, city budget revenues from property and sales taxes are approximately equal in value. Together, they supply almost 60% of the annual revenue needed to run city government. Property tax is the only revenue source over which the city has direct control.

The City's budget includes large expenditures for some critical municipal functions and services such as roads, bridges, fire protection and recreation that benefit a much broader area and population than the city itself. In some cases, these services generate substantial revenue to offset some of the City's operating costs.
### TABLE 1: ASSESSED VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY AND FRANCHISES SUBJECT TO COUNTY GENERAL AND HIGHWAY TAXES, 1993 - 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tompkins County</th>
<th>City of Ithaca</th>
<th>% TC</th>
<th>Town of Ithaca*</th>
<th>Town of Lansing*</th>
<th>Town of Dryden*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3,502,034,941</td>
<td>808,912,259</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>738,922,384</td>
<td>674,946,793</td>
<td>496,122,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,530,312,370</td>
<td>833,257,215</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>741,657,310</td>
<td>662,882,292</td>
<td>496,119,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3,503,501,212</td>
<td>846,364,128</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>715,839,628</td>
<td>657,095,609</td>
<td>494,933,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3,501,968,302</td>
<td>866,148,064</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>710,805,217</td>
<td>650,080,929</td>
<td>494,595,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3,490,272,953</td>
<td>876,318,613</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>707,759,214</td>
<td>646,982,154</td>
<td>488,634,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change '93-'97</td>
<td>Plus 0.3%</td>
<td>Minus 7.7%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Plus 4.4%</td>
<td>Plus 4.3%</td>
<td>Plus 1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Town figures include villages

Source: Report of Committee on Footings of Assessment Rolls, Tompkins County Division of Assessment; PERC

Note: Figures for real property value subject to county general and highway taxes have been used to enable consistent comparison between municipalities.

Tompkins County's total taxable value increased by less than 1/2% from 1993 to 1997.

The percentage of the county's total taxable value that is located within the city has declined slowly since 1993 when it was just over 25%.

The real property and franchise tax base which provides tax revenue for the city has declined 7.7% since 1993, an average of roughly $16 million in valuation each year for the past four years. At the 1998 ad valorem tax rates (see Table 6), a decline of this magnitude represents a loss of revenue of approximately $504,000. The City's loss would be $146,000, the County's $80,000 and the School District's $278,000.

Taxable value in both the Towns of Ithaca and Lansing increased by more than 4% over the five-year period. The Town of Dryden grew by 1.5%.

The Town of Ithaca experienced a small decline in taxable value between 1996 and 1997. This may be a temporary condition or the beginning of a period of tax base erosion similar to that experienced by the city.

Combined, the Towns of Ithaca and Lansing, including their villages, have a taxable base that is 75% larger than the City's and a population that is 8% less.

Erosion of the city's tax base is due primarily to changes in the real estate market. Figures above reflect limited revaluation in some areas, reductions of assessed value for some properties as a result of formal grievances and the new construction activity that has occurred, minus demolitions. A countywide revaluation in the year 2000 is expected to show either that property values have stabilized or, more likely, that the current trend has continued.
TABLE 2: SALES TAX RECEIPTS, 1992 - 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Received</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>County Share</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>City Share</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>34,671,770</td>
<td>+5.8</td>
<td>19,504,993</td>
<td>+5.9</td>
<td>6,569,745</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>32,784,204</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
<td>18,426,363</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
<td>6,378,488</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>32,623,092</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>18,355,235</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6,349,619</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>32,623,696</td>
<td>+3.7</td>
<td>18,363,905</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
<td>6,446,172*</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>31,457,322*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>18,518,060*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>5,630,753</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tompkins County Office of the Director of Finance; PERC

* Reflects benefits from the increase in sales tax from 7% to 8%

In the 1997 and 1998 city budgets, the amount of revenue generated by non-property tax items (including sales and use taxes) was approximately equivalent to that generated by real property tax items (see Table 4). Trends clearly indicate that non-property taxes could easily become the City's dominant revenue source in the future. Conditions could change, however, if retail sales decline markedly (which means less sales tax revenue) or if there is new construction in the city or a significant increase in the tax rate on existing real property.

Preliminary figures for the first two quarters of 1998, show sales tax revenue that is 16% greater than the first two quarters of 1997 (see Table below). If this trend continues for the last two quarters of 1998, the City's revenue picture from this source would be greatly enhanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>Change 97 - 98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st quarter</td>
<td>1,340,547</td>
<td>1,766,483 actual</td>
<td>+3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quarter</td>
<td>1,765,964</td>
<td>1,827,910 actual</td>
<td>+3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quarter</td>
<td>1,741,352</td>
<td>1,793,593 est.*</td>
<td>+3.0% est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th quarter</td>
<td>1,721,881</td>
<td>1,773,538 est.*</td>
<td>+3.0% est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,569,745</td>
<td>7,161,524 est.*</td>
<td>+9.0% est.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tompkins County Office of the Director of Finance

* Estimates by PERC based on an assumption of a 3% increase per quarter from 1997 figures.

It can be seen that the sales tax is a very important source of the revenue needed to fund city budgets. It is unpredictable, however, and largely beyond the control of local government. Maintaining and improving the viability of commercial centers like the Commons, Collegetown, Elmira Road and the West End will maximize sales tax revenue potential and thereby help to stabilize property tax rates.
TABLE 3: AD VALOREM TAX RATES PER $1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE, 1998*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>City or Town</th>
<th>County &amp; Special District</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Total/$1,000 of Assessed Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>9.127</td>
<td>5.021</td>
<td>17.360 (Ith. Consolidated)</td>
<td>31.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Lansing (outside Village)</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td>5.792</td>
<td>17.500 (Lansing Central)</td>
<td>24.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Dryden (outside Village)</td>
<td>2.259</td>
<td>6.408</td>
<td>16.950 (Ith. Consolidated)</td>
<td>25.617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on 1997 Assessment Rolls
Source: Tompkins County Division of Assessment

Total property tax rates in the city are 21% higher than the town of Ithaca, 28% higher than the Town of Lansing and 23% higher than the Town of Dryden.

School District tax rates in the four comparison municipalities are comparable with only slight variation.

City taxes are substantially higher than the comparison municipalities. This is partly due to the fact that the city has a larger physical plant to maintain and provides a significantly higher level of services.

The Towns of Ithaca, Lansing and Dryden use their shares of sales tax revenue as a way to keep town property taxes relatively low.

Using the tax rates in Table 3, total property taxes on a $200,000 property in the comparison communities would be:

- City: $6,301
- Town of Ithaca: $5,227
- Town of Lansing: $4,922
- Town of Dryden: $5,123

Some potential businesses and land developers seeking a high level of municipal services and a centralized location would consider the City's higher tax rate a reasonable cost of doing business.
**TABLE 4: ITHACA GENERAL FUND REVENUES: 1993 - 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of revenue</th>
<th>1993 revenue (actual)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>1997 revenue (actual)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Change 93 - 97</th>
<th>1998 revenue (adopted budget)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Prop. Tax Items*</td>
<td>7,003,073</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7,449,361</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7,697,136</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-prop. Tax Items**</td>
<td>6,067,819</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7,690,217</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8,153,169</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Federal Aid</td>
<td>2,790,049</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,627,553</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>2,666,276</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Income</td>
<td>2,144,792</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,502,614</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2,584,607</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Charges</td>
<td>1,952,807</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,660,802</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>2,734,754</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfund Transfers</td>
<td>1,276,753</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,558,338</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1,666,971</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources***</td>
<td>1,951,460</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,178,206</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2,049,300</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>23,186,566</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>26,666,371</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27,552,213</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Basic data from City Comptroller; calculations by PERC.
* Includes property taxes, payment in-lieu of taxes, special assessments, etc.
** Includes sales and use taxes, gross receipt tax on utilities and franchise tax (see below).
*** Includes fines, property sales, interest on money and miscellaneous items.

Since the real property tax base is shrinking (see Table 1), revenue from this source can increase only if the tax rate per $1,000 is increased. Since the city already has a higher property tax rate than surrounding municipalities (see Table 3), continued large increases could be a serious deterrent to future economic development.

Over 60% of the revenue obtained from Intergovernmental Charges comes from Fire Protection Services; another 32% comes from Youth Services. These two revenue items account for most of the 36% increase in Intergovernmental Charges between 1993 and 1997.

The 1997 revenue from non-property tax items consisted of sales tax (85%), use tax (8%), gross utility receipts tax (5%) and franchise tax (2%). This revenue component could increase substantially in 1998 if strong growth in sales tax receipts continues for the last two quarters of the year (see Table 2). This increasingly important source of revenue is, of course, unpredictable and beyond the City's direct control.

State and federal aid was almost static between 1993 and 1997. Although the city has been extremely successful in obtaining state and federal funds, this money is earmarked for specific programs and is often awarded through the competitive grant-writing process. This revenue source is, therefore, very unpredictable and of limited value for operating budget purposes.
### TABLE 5: ITHACA GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES: 1993 - 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>1993 Expenditures (actual)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>1997 Expenditures (actual)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Change 93-97</th>
<th>1998 Expenditures (adopted budget)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>1,877,233</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,015,090</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2,009,564</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works Services</td>
<td>4,765,256</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5,208,983</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5,286,002</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Department</td>
<td>3,657,937</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4,834,842</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4,902,681</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Department</td>
<td>3,164,310</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3,764,127</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3,788,716</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Department</td>
<td>409,245</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>430,443</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>469,610</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Services</td>
<td>1,993,413</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,731,314</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>2,768,404</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>333,851</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>398,990</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>396,935</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Benefits</td>
<td>4,337,400</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4,044,460</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>4,743,327</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>2,614,032</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3,351,628</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3,723,598</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,152,677</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>26,779,877</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>16%</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,088,837</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Basic data from City Comptroller; calculations by PERC.

Between 1993 and 1997 the cost of government increased by 16%, an average of about 3.5% per year. The adopted budget for 1998 is 4.8% higher than actual expenditures in 1997.

Public Works services, at 19% of total budget, represents the largest single departmental cost for the city. Over 40% of public works costs are for cleaning and maintaining the 77 miles of streets, 22 bridges and numerous park facilities that are available to all county residents. Another 25% represents the City's contribution to operation of the consolidated transit system.

The total cost of public safety, combining police and fire departments, represents just under 1/3 of the City's total expense budget.

The city will receive almost $1,800,000 in revenue for fire protection provided to the Town of Ithaca in 1998. This will offset over 45% of the department's budget.

Youth services and police each increased by over 30% between 1993 and 1997 but the percent-of-total-budget represented by these departments has remained about the same since 1993. Youth services will receive over $800,000 in revenue from other municipalities in 1998.

Employee benefits declined by 7% between 1993 and 1997, then showed a 17% increase for the 1998 budget. Retirement, social security and health insurance are the benefits that have increased most since 1997.
Based on 1990 census figures, taxable property per capita would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Value of Real Property &amp; Franchise Subject to County General &amp; Highway Tax</th>
<th>% of Total Taxable Property in County</th>
<th>Value of Wholly Exempt Property</th>
<th>% of Total Wholly Exempt Property in County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Ithaca</td>
<td>808,912,259</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>1,143,918,800</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Ithaca</td>
<td>738,922,344</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>680,327,500</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>674,946,793</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>122,451,900</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryden</td>
<td>496,122,333</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>165,996,600</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulysses</td>
<td>218,528,539</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>44,659,500</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groton</td>
<td>134,902,212</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>54,816,000</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfield</td>
<td>128,587,620</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>22,067,500</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danby</td>
<td>117,116,434</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11,160,100</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>93,343,823</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>21,481,430</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>90,652,544</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9,678,900</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,502,034,941</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2,276,558,230</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of Committee on Footings of Assessment Rolls, Tompkins County Division of Assessment; PERC

Note: Figures for real property value subject to county general and highway taxes have been used to enable consistent comparisons between municipalities. Town figures include villages.

Half of all tax-exempt property in Tompkins County is located in the City of Ithaca; only 23% of the County's taxable property is located in the city.

Forty-one percent of all property located in the city is taxable; 59% is tax exempt.

Combined, the Towns of Ithaca and Lansing have $600 million more taxable valuation, $340 million less tax exempt property and 8% less population than the City of Ithaca.

Based on 1990 census figures, taxable property per capita would be:

- Town of Lansing $72,606
- Town of Ithaca $41,519
- Town of Dryden $37,440
- City of Ithaca $27,383
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>TAXABLE VALUE OF PROPERTY SUBJECT TO COUNTY GENERAL AND HIGHWAY TAXES*</th>
<th>% of TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TAXABLE PARCELS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>210 One-family Residential</td>
<td>229,539,000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220-280 Other Residential (excluding commercial living accommodations)</td>
<td>103,645,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-340 Vacant</td>
<td>13,763,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411 Commercial: Apartments &amp; Co-ops</td>
<td>180,625,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>415-426 Other Commercial Housing (motels, etc.) and Dining Establishments</td>
<td>47,478,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450-465 Retail Services, Banks, Offices</td>
<td>57,193,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480-485 Multiple Use Commercial Estab.**</td>
<td>96,282,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511-570 Recreation and Entertainment</td>
<td>4,382,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>612-691 Community Services</td>
<td>7,813,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>710 Manufacturing and Processing</td>
<td>9,618,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other classifications</td>
<td>36,362,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (1997 Assessment Rolls)</td>
<td>786,593,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Property Classification Summary, Tompkins County Division of Assessment, 12/17/97; calculations by PERC

NOTE: Property classifications are based on Property Type Classification and Ownership Codes as set forth in the Assessor's Manual published by the State Board of Real Property Services, 1996.

* Excludes Special Franchise, Public Service and Ceiling Railroad items.
** Includes downtown row-type structures (detached and attached), converted residences, one-story small structures.

One-, two- and three family residences (210, 220-280) account for 66% of the taxable parcels in the city and 42% of total taxable value.

Twenty-three percent of the City's total taxable value comes from commercial apartments and co-ops (411), a clear indication of the strong Cornell University and Ithaca College off-campus housing market.

Approximately 20% of the total taxable value is derived from retail services, banks, offices (450-465), multi-use commercial establishments (480-485) and manufacturing and processing (710). These activities occupy a total of only 8% of the 5,277 taxable land parcels in the city.
SECTION 4.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

While a benefit of, and justification for, additional economic development in the city will be an increase in net revenue from property and sales taxes and the creation of additional employment opportunities, the ultimate purpose of economic development is to make the City a better place to live. Therefore, a primary goal of economic development policy will be the protection and improvement of the local residential neighborhoods, with particular attention to those neighborhoods which will be impacted by economic development projects. This objective must be reflected in long-range planning for the City's economy. The City should develop and implement a set of action-based and comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Plans, which include a strategy for funding neighborhood improvement projects with revenue generated by economic development, including mitigation fees, sales taxes, property taxes, and grants. The Neighborhood Improvement Plans should be commenced in the year 2001, in consultation with City residents, and published as a companion document to the Economic Development Plan. These two objectives are linked in reality and must therefore be linked in the City's planning policy.

Clear statements of government policy on growth and development form the foundation of an effective economic development plan. It is on the strength and tenor of these policy statements that public and private development decisions can be made and investment risks can be evaluated. Once officially established and made known by the city, development policy provides strong justification for specific public-sector decisions on land use regulations and capital improvement expenditures. A clearly stated policy also defines a consistent direction for official agencies and boards; it can become a defensible rationale for many decisions on zoning and site plan review that must be made by local government officials.

As one of 16 municipalities in Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca will be affected by economic development plans made by other municipalities and at the county level. Broadly based policies related to economic issues and concerns are included in the countywide economic development plan. While the city must determine its own economic future it must also decide the extent to which policy used to guide city development can, and must, be integrated into the broader context of surrounding municipalities and the county.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A long-range picture of economic development and related land use in Ithaca can take a variety of forms depending, to a large extent, on the course of action -- the policy -- the city chooses to follow at any given time. For this plan several alternatives for basic economic policy have been considered; these are summarized in Appendix E.

To arrive at a specific recommendation from the Economic Development Advisory Committee, alternatives have been synthesized into two policy statements: one addressing future growth and one considering intermunicipal relations. Development objectives related to each policy are also stated and a number of specific actions that could be taken to achieve the objectives are set forth.
and prioritized. After appropriate review and public comment on this material, it will be the responsibility of the Mayor and Council to define and pursue the course of action that most nearly reflects current values and perceived needs.

Policies included in this plan relate specifically to economic development. They can subsequently be integrated with others related to other important issues such as housing, neighborhood development, recreation, traffic and transportation. Together, these policies become the primary component of a comprehensive plan for the City's future.
### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY (Goals)</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTION NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The city strongly supports growth and believes that long-term community stability will depend on a sustained increase in economic development activity at all levels. Accordingly, the city intends to: act decisively to strengthen and expand existing businesses throughout the city; initiate and support efforts to attract new industrial and commercial development; balance the need for additional development with the desire to maintain neighborhood quality and preserve natural resources. maintain and improve neighborhood quality.</td>
<td>Stabilize, then expand, the local property tax base. Increase the potential for sales tax revenue. Create job opportunities for a range of income levels and age groups. Expand development opportunities in the Central Business District. Reduce suburban sprawl by fully developing usable city sites. Promote opportunities for intensive use of remaining developable sites throughout the city. Foster a governmental attitude of enthusiastic but responsible cooperation in the land development process. Supplement county efforts to retain and attract business in the city. Encourage home ownership and occupancy.</td>
<td>a. Complete the process that will enable non-park development of city-owned land on Elmira Road. (See Footnote 1) b. Complete a pre-evaluation of the nature and significance of environmental impacts of potential new development along the Inlet and in the city's southwest quadrant. (See Footnote 2) c. Prepare broad but specific guidelines for site development and visual character for the area described in &quot;b&quot; above. (See Footnote 3.) d. Review options related to financing façade improvements and meeting code requirements for upper floor uses on The Commons. e. Review City Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQR) and amend as necessary to be consistent with economic policy. (See Footnote 4) f. Amend zoning and site plan review regulations to help achieve development objectives, restrict inappropriate land uses and simplify the review and approval process. (See Footnote 4) g. Prepare preliminary needs analysis, cost ranges and a financing strategy for providing basic infrastructure to undeveloped land in the southwest area. (See Footnote 5)</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Footnotes following policy tables.  
(Growth table continued on next page)
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: GROWTH (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY (Goals)</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTION NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>PRIORITY*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. Identify natural resources in the city that are important to preserve as growth occurs.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Find alternative sites for material that must be removed from Southwest Park. (See Footnote 6)</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. Collaborate with Tompkins County Area Development to fully promote city development opportunities. (See Footnote 7)</td>
<td>Mayor/Council</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Establish a single contact agency or person to guide complex projects through the permitting process and track project progress. (See Footnote 8)</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l. Review, revise and move forward on recommendations for action on other sites in the city with development potential. (See Appendix A.)</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Varies, depending on opportunity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m. Develop incentives and amend zoning where needed in order to encourage home ownership and occupancy.</td>
<td>Mayor/Council Planning</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n. Develop and implement a City traffic plan with traffic calming measures for City neighborhoods and develop and implement an action-based, comprehensive neighborhood improvement plans</td>
<td>Mayor/Council Planning Engineering Board of Public Works</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Priority Code:
  I. Initiate Action Immediately and/or Expedite Completion
  II. Initiate Action by July 1999

See Footnotes following policy tables.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: INTERMUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY (Goals)</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTION NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The city believes that long-term economic stability will require major initiatives aimed at fully supporting the concept of intermunicipal cooperation while working toward optimum development within the city. Accordingly, the city intends to:</td>
<td>Begin a high-level dialogue on the advantages and disadvantages of intermunicipal sharing of resources such as infrastructure, services and revenue.</td>
<td>a. Formally request other municipalities to participate in a discussion on the need for, value of and ways to achieve intermunicipal cooperation.</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>pursue development potential of city sites.</td>
<td>Develop a rational formula for sharing the services needed to stimulate development in the urban area and for sharing tax revenues generated by such development.</td>
<td>b. Consider which format for area-wide service delivery, including the transfer of responsibility to another level of government or to an independent agency, commission or board, would be most efficient and cost effective for all involved municipalities.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>II</td>
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<td>cooperate with officials at the county, town and village levels to achieve economic growth on a countywide basis.</td>
<td>Minimize intermunicipal competition for economic development.</td>
<td>c. Identify and examine models for intermunicipal cooperation and sharing in other municipalities. (See Appendix C)</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>II</td>
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<td>actively promote and participate in intermunicipal discussion that leads to a workable plan for the extension of services across municipal boundaries and for revenue sharing.</td>
<td>Increase the County's collective ability to compete more effectively for regional economic development.</td>
<td>d. Initiate a dialogue with other municipalities to examine mutual concerns and expectations related to the concept of cooperative agreements.</td>
<td>Mayor/Council</td>
<td>II</td>
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<td>Establish a workable format for future intermunicipal sharing or consolidation of a variety of services.</td>
<td>e. Consider and evaluate techniques and procedures for guiding and regulating development and land use on an area-wide basis. (See Footnote 9)</td>
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* Priority Code:
  I. Initiate Action Immediately and/or Expedite Completion
  II. Initiate Action by July 1999

See Footnotes following policy tables.
NOTES FOR POLICY TABLE

1. Southwest Park was purchased by the city in the 1960s. Its use was restricted to park use. Before this area can be developed for any non-recreation use, substitute land with similar area and value must be obtained and dedicated to park use. The process for making this substitution is called alienation. The city is doing the work necessary for completing the Southwest Park alienation process at the present time and expects to conclude this project within the year.

2. The purpose of this action is to complete a preliminary and general assessment of the potential impacts that could result from future development on large parcels of vacant land in the southwest area. This process identifies and evaluates general concerns related to the more intensive future uses permitted by zoning. The objective is to "pre-evaluate", in general terms, prospective development issues, to identify concerns and to consider a range of possible mitigation measures. (A Generic Environmental Impact Statement is currently in process.)

3. A May 1998 addendum to the Southwest Area Land Use Plan provided for the establishment of design guidelines and criteria for the Southwest Area.

4. Existing zoning, site plan review and CEQR regulations do not reflect current planning objectives in some respects including the uses permitted in some districts, site development requirements, environmental thresholds and approval procedures. A more detailed review of these regulations is included in Appendix B of this report.

5. Anything the city can do to improve the competitive appeal of available sites and reduce the development time line that is critical to most investors will help stimulate economic growth. Basic infrastructure (water, sewage disposal and access roads) must eventually be provided to development sites. Just as with environmental reviews, if some work on infrastructure can be done in advance, the City's ability to compete for development would be enhanced.

6. The city has used Southwest Park as a convenient storage area for construction and organic material and for a snow disposal site. If this area is to be developed in the future, alternative arrangements for current Department of Public Works (DPW) activities will be needed.

7. Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD) is an established and successful agency that promotes economic development throughout the county. The city should take full advantage of TCAD's presence and discuss ways that this agency might be of even greater assistance.
8. The city can demonstrate a desire to be helpful by guiding prospective developers through the complex and often discouraging process of getting necessary approvals and permits. A single contact point to explain the process, assist with scheduling, advise on presentations, return phone calls and track the progress of proposals would help to convey an attitude of enthusiasm and support that has not always been present.

9. Should there be a willingness to do so, two or more municipalities in Tompkins County could agree to the joint preparation of a comprehensive land use plan identifying the optimum location of future commercial and industrial areas. This procedure is authorized by Article 5-G of General Municipal Law, which permits municipalities to do jointly what each is empowered to do singly.

All municipalities in the urbanized area (City of Ithaca, Towns of Ithaca, Dryden and Lansing, Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Freeville and Lansing) have a comprehensive plan in one form or another but there has been little attempt to coordinate them. All these municipalities also have zoning ordinances, but again, there has been limited effort to look at zoning on a coordinated area-wide basis. Article 5-G permits an area-wide approach to both planning and zoning if there is the political will to do so.

Significant benefits can accrue from intermunicipal cooperation, whatever the enabling legislation. Successful examples of intermunicipal cooperation already in place locally include: a fire protection agreement between the City and Town of Ithaca, the Recreation Partnership between the county and its municipalities, the ownership and operation of the wastewater treatment plant by three municipalities, the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission (Bolton Point) covering five municipalities, and the recently established Intermunicipal Cooperative Purchasing Council which can effect savings on the purchase of equipment and material.
SECTION 5.
SITE ANALYSIS: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS †

A more detailed analysis and evaluation of 14 potential development areas is included in Appendix A of this report. Possible choices for the future use of these areas, and a recommendation for each, have been excerpted from the appendix and included on the following pages. (See Analysis Areas Map)

AREA A
(South city boundary -- previously proposed Wal-Mart location)

Plausible Choices
1. Individual privately owned lots to be developed for various commercial purposes in response to market demand.
2. Assemble all lots under one ownership, remove existing land uses and redevelop the Elmira Road frontage for commercial or light industrial purposes.

Recommendation
The city should promote private development as one, or several, large parcels. The petroleum storage site will require investigation and possible remediation prior to redevelopment.

AREA B
(Southwest Park)

Plausible Choices
1. Leave as is and continue present use.
2. Develop for park and recreation purposes.
3. Planned development area for housing or a mix of housing and commercial uses.
4. Planned development area for industrial/commercial uses.
5. Combine with adjacent vacant parcels to create an extensive fully serviced industrial/commercial development complex.

Recommendation
Open space or housing cannot be considered optimal future uses of a strategic parcel located in a heavily commercialized section of the city. Choices 4 and 5 will help achieve economic development objectives by producing maximum opportunity for job creation and increased tax revenue. In any case, a zoning change should be made to assure that desired future land uses can be encouraged and inappropriate uses avoided.

† These recommendations are made by PERC as consultant to the city and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Advisory Committee.
AREA C
(Weiner land—former city open dump area)

Plausible Choices
1. Retain existing zoning designation and promote additional mobile home residential development, or other affordable housing, after site clean up.
2. Amend zoning and encourage industrial/commercial development, ideally in combination with Southwest Park.

Recommendation
Housing should not be considered the optimal future use of this large area. Development in conjunction with Southwest Park for industrial or commercial purposes will most benefit the local economy by creating jobs and increasing tax revenues.

AREA D
(Weiner land south of Cherry Street Industrial Park)

Plausible Choices
1. Development determined by market, zoning and current ownership.
2. Property owner and city collaborate to extend infrastructure and promote parcel for light industrial or research uses.
3. City acquires parcel, extends infrastructure and markets the area as one or more partially pre-approved sites.

Recommendation
Land acquisition and infrastructure costs per square foot of developable land could be high on this parcel. Even so, it makes sense as a future development area and choices 2 or 3 would be appropriate. An important question for the city to review is whether or not the investment needed to make this site viable could produce more immediate results if invested in another area.

AREA E
(Narrow strip along the Inlet between Court Street and the I.C. Boathouse)

Plausible Choices
1. Development determined by market, zoning and current ownership.
2. Promote commercial/marina development with public access along the shoreline.
3. Promote relatively dense townhouse development or mixed housing and commercial.
4. Secure easement to assure public access through the site.
Recommendation
A strip of 2- or 3-story townhouses facing the inlet would provide an attractive housing option and minimize potential access and parking problems on this narrow parcel. This area provides an important link in the proposed shoreline trail system and a public walkway should be included in any future development.

AREA F
(NYS Department of Transportation [DOT]garage and storage facility)

Plausible Choices
1. Continue with current use and encourage DOT to improve shoreline access and landscaping.
2. Work with DOT to relocate its operation and transfer ownership to the county or city. Find more appropriate private and/or public use for this unique waterfront site.
3. Consider this site as part of a larger unified development area. Consider eventual relocation of petroleum business and review Carpenter Park development guidelines to promote future use compatibility for this entire area.

Recommendation
State Department of Transportation use of this waterside site is no longer necessary or appropriate. Relatively intensive commercial use, possibly related to tourism and conferences with boat access, would be most beneficial to the city and county economy. The county and city should, therefore, join forces to secure this site and establish guidelines for future development. Guidelines should include some opportunity for public access to the shoreline. In the long run, an overall plan for development of this entire area (Choice 3, above) would be highly beneficial but a major reuse program for the DOT site would be an important initial accomplishment.

AREA G
(Willow Avenue adjacent to city's Public Works facility)

Plausible Choices
1. Follow the city's consolidation plan including the relocation of the Water and Sewer Division's facility on First Street.
2. Rethink the city's plan; do not relocate the Water and Sewer Division, and try to make either the entire Willow Avenue site, or the western half, available for private industrial/commercial development.
**Recommendation**

Private development potential on this site is limited by its size. The city should complete its relocation plan for public works and make the First Street/Franklin Street parcels available for development. (See also Analysis Area H)

**AREA H**

(Franklin Street and First Street near the Sciencenter)

**Plausible Choices**

1. Pursue Department of Public Works (DPW) consolidation plan, move Water and Sewer Division to Willow Avenue and combine parcels by vacating Franklin Street right-of-way. (See also Analysis Area G)
2. Move Water and Sewer activities, retain Franklin Street and have two potential redevelopment parcels.
3. Keep water and sewer activities where they now are and make triangular piece available for redevelopment.

**Recommendation**

The city should either proceed with DPW consolidation or make the Willow Street site (Analysis Area G) available for development. If consolidation is pursued, the redevelopment potential along Franklin Street would be enhanced. In addition to a decision on consolidation, there should also be a traffic study to determine if part of Franklin Street can be vacated and how the Franklin Street, Third Street, Route 13 interchange can be improved.

**AREA I**

(Narrow strip along the Inlet between Buffalo and State Streets)

**Plausible Choices**

1. Let market forces and zoning determine future use and character.
2. Modify zoning to increase the potential for development compatibility with Inlet Island.
3. Concentrate development efforts on those areas with high reuse potential, i.e., between State and Seneca Streets.

**Recommendation**

The current use and condition of much of this area is not compatible with development objectives for Inlet Island and modification might be difficult. Efforts should be focused on zoning changes and on promoting the unified redevelopment of lots adjacent to the bus station and branch bank, possibly combining all lots in this block into one development parcel.
AREA J
(Carpenter Business Park)

Plausible Choices
1. Continue current policy and wait for the development climate in this part of the city to change.
2. Modify restrictions so that land can be used for commercial as well as industrial purposes.
3. Sell land and allow future use to be determined by zoning.

Recommendation
The city's desire to retain ownership of this parcel is probably less a limitation to development than the industrial use requirement. In addition to industry, office uses and some types of retail development would be appropriate. Present Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency (IURA) restrictions should be modified to permit these possibilities. The city could then lease or sell this land for the type of development that seems most suited to the desired future character of this entire area. (See also Analysis Area F)

AREA K
(Ithaca Gun buildings)

Plausible Choices
1. Stabilize buildings and search for a suitable light industrial use.
2. Remove all existing buildings that would be impractical to rehabilitate and convert remaining buildings into offices or non-student housing.
3. Clear site and build an office complex or new up-scale apartments.
4. Clear site and use for neighborhood open space.

Recommendation
This dramatic site would appear to have strong redevelopment potential but costs and other limitations might outweigh the opportunities. An engineering analysis would indicate what parts of the existing buildings could be effectively rehabilitated and what should be removed. Light industry or distinctive offices might be effective uses of existing floor space; new construction could include apartments, townhouses or office suites, all of which would fit into this historic environment if parking could be provided. The city's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.
AREA L
(Wilcox Press building on Six Mile Creek)

Plausible Choices
1. Public acquisition of the site and removal of most existing buildings to provide park space and exceptional access opportunities to the Six Mile Creek gorge.
2. Apply for a grant or loan to facilitate private-sector acquisition of this parcel and removal of all structures not suitable for reuse as upscale housing or specialized commercial reuse such as professional offices, boutiques, crafts, entertainment or a mix of such uses.
3. Convert existing buildings into some type of light industrial, fabrication, assembly or high technology operation.

Recommendation
This site is both highly appealing and highly problematic. It has great but very specialized reuse potential and seems a natural for private sector development that would complement and contribute to activities in the downtown. An innovative business, high-end housing or a mix of housing and business would be the best reuse. Most likely some form of subsidy for site cleanup will be needed to improve feasibility. Public pedestrian access into Six Mile Creek gorge should be secured. The city's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.

AREA M
(Emerson Building 24 - the Morse Building)

Plausible Choices
1. Continue cooperative and on-going efforts to market space for a variety of new uses.
2. Study in some detail the feasibility of subdividing the space, upgrading the sprinkler system if necessary and improving the external appearance and accessibility.
3. Help Emerson obtain an incentive grant or low interest loan to undertake the upgrades and improvements identified in the feasibility study.

Recommendation
All three choices are appropriate. The potential for turning Building 24 into a viable concentration of job-producing activities appears to be high and has been recognized by TCAD and company officials. Increased effort from the public sector to help Emerson obtain funding assistance for feasibility studies, rehabilitation, general upgrading and increased marketing would enhance feasibility and future use potential. The city's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.
AREA N
(Multi-use industrial area along West Clinton and Cherry Streets)

Plausible Choices
1. Allow market forces to determine future development activity in this area.
2. Develop an overall plan for landscaping, street, sidewalk, and lighting improvements and include this in the annual capital program as a multi-year improvement project, possibly funded by grants.
3. Request the IURA to purchase some of the parcels along West Clinton Street and work in conjunction with private owners in a private/public partnership to make site improvements and promote industrial development.

Recommendation
All three choices are appropriate. This area needs major upgrading to visually improve the setting for existing and future development including the Cherry Street Industrial Park. Consolidated public and private actions to improve general appearance and amenity could be a significant first step. The city should seek funds to consolidate curb cuts where possible, add street trees, decorative lighting and sidewalks where needed, cut weeds and work with property owners to otherwise improve the visual impact of their holdings. Tree planting programs along the inlet should be expanded to improve the appearance of this area.

The economic benefits of assembling vacant or under used parcels, especially on West Clinton Street, rehabilitating them and marketing them for industrial, warehouse or commercial purposes could be substantial.
APPENDICES
(In supplemental report)

APPENDIX A: SITE EVALUATION AREAS
This appendix contains an evaluation of 14 sites located in the study area. Included is a description of the nature of each site, its physical characteristics and its surroundings. Plausible uses or reuses of each site have been suggested and a recommendation by the consultant has been made. The evaluations were made in early 1998 and represent the apparent conditions at that time.

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS
Existing regulations that affect development in the city have been reviewed; suggestions for possible amendments to clarify, simplify and streamline have been made. Regulations reviewed include zoning, land subdivision, site plan review and environmental quality review.

APPENDIX C: INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION
One model illustrating an intermunicipal cooperation agreement in Chenango County is presented in this appendix. The primary features of this agreement are described and steps that would be necessary to affect a similar agreement between Tompkins County municipalities have been identified.

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
The economic development policies on growth and intermunicipal relations, as set forth in Section 4 of the Economic Development Plan, are recommendations of the Advisory Committee based on a discussion of alternatives. The alternative policy and action statements that were reviewed by the Committee are included in Appendix D.

APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Thirty-eight local and regional people were invited by Mayor Cohen to participate in small group discussions of Ithaca as a place to invest and do business. The intent was to draw on the experience of these individuals and capitalize on their advice. A summary of the group discussions is included in Appendix E.

APPENDIX F: ADVISORY COMMITTEE VALUE SCAN
At the beginning of the study Advisory Committee members were asked to express their personal opinions and values as they related to economic development in Ithaca and Tompkins County. The results of this exercise are presented in this appendix.
APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF MATERIAL REVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT
Previous studies and reports related to economic development and land use in Ithaca and Tompkins County are numerous and there is consistency in past recommendations that have been made. Many of these studies have been reviewed as background for this report and summarized in this appendix.

APPENDIX H: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM
In the fall of 1996 an Economic Development Forum was convened to provide insight and guidance on the city's economy. Seventy-five people who lived or worked in the Ithaca area were asked to help with the formulation of goals and objectives for the city's economic future. The list of the participants and the forum topic and conclusions can be found in this appendix.
APPENDIX A: SITE EVALUATION AREAS

Within the study area there are numerous parcels of land that are either undeveloped or do not appear to be used to their maximum economic potential. Each of these parcels has been examined and evaluated. In some cases contiguous individual parcels have been grouped together into a larger land area.

Fourteen areas with development or redevelopment potential have been evaluated. The location of each area is described and its location is shown on the Site Analysis Areas Map. The size and general shape of the site and its current owner of record are indicated. Vehicular access to the site, its current use and assessed value and the availability of utilities have been noted. Current zoning of the area, the uses of adjacent land, basic characteristics of the surrounding environment and recommended uses of the area from previous studies have been described.

Positive and negative characteristics that could affect future use potential are identified. Finally, some plausible choices for future use of the site are described (there could be others) and a recommendation from the consultant has been put forth for consideration.

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SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA A

Location: Immediately north of the city's southern boundary; west of Elmira Road and the flood control levee.

Area: Five separate tax parcels totaling approximately 47 acres. About half of this area is owned by the city and county. Elmira Road frontage is privately owned.

Shape: Irregular due to the curve of the railroad right-of-way and Cayuga Inlet but with substantial depth from Elmira Road.

Ownership: City owns about 20 acres located along the southern and western boundaries; County owns just over two acres (currently optioned to Havlik); Havlik owns two parcels, Weiner and Doney own one parcel each.

Access: Elmira Road provides direct access opportunities.

Current Use: Largely vacant. One parcel with narrow frontage on Elmira Road is occupied by a petroleum storage and distribution operation; there is a one family residence on another parcel.

Assessed Value: Total privately owned: $693,000. Total publicly owned: $38,400 plus an undetermined amount for small County parcel.

Utilities: All utilities available from Elmira Road.
Zoning: Mixed zoning; district boundary lines not necessarily related to parcel boundaries.
* Elmira Road frontage is B-5 Service Business permitting a variety of residential, commercial and vehicle related businesses.
* Backland is largely FW-1 Floodway Zone which does not allow structures but permits general farming, recreation and off-street parking.
* One small area set back from Elmira Road at the city boundary is zoned I-1 Industrial which prohibits dwellings but provides for the widest variety of industrial and commercial uses permitted by the zoning ordinance.

Adjacent Uses: * North: Wooded areas along Cayuga Inlet and Negundo Woods.
* East: Flood control levee and the mixed-use business strip characteristic of Elmira Road.
* South: Mixed residential and industrial uses; Buttermilk Falls State Park entrance.
* West: Former railroad right-of-way (city boundary) and wooded area along Cayuga Inlet.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat and undeveloped; center part used for farming; wooded scrub growth in southeast corner; drainage ways cross the backlands and there is good tree growth along the Inlet.
* Northern half to 2/3 of the area is a designated floodway which restricts the construction of buildings.
* High seasonal water table and limited soil bearing capacity.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Southwest Area Land Use Study/Plan (1994): Recommends that the area fronting on Elmira Road be used for commercial purposes and the floodway land be use as substitute park land for Southwest Park. The process necessary to secure this substitute parkland is again being pursued by the city.
* Overall Economic Development Program (1979): Proposed a commercial strip about 500 feet deep fronting on Elmira Road with the rest of the parcel being used for Southwest Park relocation.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Suggests auto-oriented commercial development and light industry along Elmira Road with undeveloped open land for the floodplain area.

Limitations for Future Use
* Multiple ownership could make land assembly difficult or expensive.
* Petroleum storage and distribution operation occupies a central location and establishes a visual ambiance that could negatively affect development potential of adjacent land.
* Petroleum area might have "Brownfield" pollution characteristics that would involve expensive environmental remediation.
* Floodway restrictions limit future development on much of the area even if the city's substitute park land initiative is not completed.
Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Several hundred feet of frontage along Elmira Road offers good access opportunities and visibility.
* Additional industrial/commercial development on this land would be compatible with existing neighborhood characteristics.
* City owns several acres in the developable portion of the area.
* If privately owned parcels could be assembled and cleared the area could be developed as a 12 to 15 acre industrial park or commercial complex.
* A strong commercial/industrial development presence would be a visually effective terminus of the Elmira Road commercial strip.
* The substitute parkland proposed for the backland could be used as an enhancement for development along Elmira Road.
* Parcels along Elmira Road are irregular in shape but are large enough to permit substantial development to occur on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Existing petroleum operation creates a strong aesthetic statement that might discourage development of adjacent land.
* Relocation of existing petroleum operation and site clean-up could become a large site development cost.
* Existing residence would have to be removed.
* Limited bearing capability of the soil requires light buildings or special construction techniques.
* Proximity to recognized natural resource areas (Buttermilk Falls, Negundo Woods) could provoke substantial public opposition to many land uses.

Plausible Choices:  
1. Individual privately owned lots to be developed for various commercial purposes in response to market demand.
2. Assemble all parcels under one ownership, remove existing land uses and redevelop the Elmira Road frontage for commercial or light industrial purposes.

Recommendation: The city should promote private development as one, or several, large parcels. The petroleum storage site will require investigation and possible remediation prior to redevelopment.
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA B

Location: Northwest of Elmira Road

Area: 54 acres+/- (Southwest Park) plus 7 acres+/- of adjacent City land.

Shape: Essentially rectangular with dimensions which are conducive to development.

Ownership: City of Ithaca

Access: Single point of access from Elmira Road at the southeast corner of the site.

Current Use: Abandoned farmland; northern half of the site has become the city's storage and disposal site for rubble, construction material and organic material.

Assessed Value: $410,400

Utilities: Water, sewers, gas and electricity located along Elmira Road and Meadow Street and at the Solid Waste facility; would have to be extended into site.

Zoning: P-1 (Public and Institutional) Uses limited to recreation, educational buildings and public functions.

Adjacent Uses: *
* North: Conrail switching area and vacant land owned by Weiner.
* East: Large area of vacant land and driving range (Weiner property).
* South: WICKS lumber and County Solid Waste facility.
* West: Conrail mainline track, vacant Weiner land at the end of Cherry Street and flood control channel.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat.
* High seasonal water table; soil has limited bearing capacity.
* Several small man-made wetland areas in southern half.
* Remnant old-growth flood plain forest along eastern boundary and at entrance road.
* Substantial bird, deer and small wildlife habitat.
* No rare or scarce plant species observed by Wesley.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Southwest Area Land Use Study (1994): Study Committee recommended that this area not be used as park; should be housing or mixed use. Special focus group suggested commercial as the highest and best use. North-south and east-west road corridors proposed.
* Overall Economic Development Plan (1979): Proposed that this site be made available for future industrial uses.

Limitations for Future Use:
* City's use as convenient spoil and storage site.
* High water table with attendant drainage problems.
* Single point of access from major street.
* Small wetland areas scattered in southern half of site.
* Previous recommendation for use as housing site.
* Future use could involve extended alienation process.

**Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:**
* City owned—no acquisition costs and city can determine future use.
* Large parcel is dividable into a variety of lot sizes.
* Suitable for a variety of nonresidential uses.
* Limited rail service could be provided.
* Mitigation of environmental concerns appears to be possible.
* Future nonresidential development compatible with adjacent land uses and surrounding neighborhood.
* Could be combined with other large undeveloped parcels on the east.
* Necessary zoning changes will probably trigger an EIS which can be considered as one way to partially pre-approve the site for future uses.

**Future Use Potential — Negative Characteristics:**
* Loss of open space, natural areas and wildlife habitat.
* Loss of city storage and disposal area.
* Loss of potential housing sites (assuming residential uses in this area are considered to be suitable and viable).
* Need to address existing wetland conditions and surface water drainage problems.
* Cost of cleaning up site.
* Limited bearing capability of the soil requires light buildings or special construction techniques.
* Possibility of public opposition depending on future use.
* Future use limited to recreation until alienation process is completed.

**Plausible Choices:**
1. Leave as is and continue present use.
2. Develop for park and recreation purposes.
3. Planned development area for housing or a mix of housing and commercial uses.
4. Planned development area for industrial/commercial uses.
5. Combine with adjacent vacant parcels to create an extensive fully serviced industrial/commercial development complex.

**Recommendation:** Open space or housing can not be considered optimal future uses of a strategic parcel located in a heavily commercialized section of the city. Choices 4 and 5 will help achieve economic development objectives by producing maximum opportunity for job creation and increased tax revenue. In any case, a zoning change should be made to assure that desired future land uses can be encouraged and inappropriate uses avoided.
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA C

Location: North of Elmira Road, between Southwest Park and the relief channel.

Area: Four separate tax parcels with a total area of approximately 57 acres.

Shape: Generally rectangular; dimensions are conducive to development.

Ownership: All parcels privately owned--one owner.

Access: Access from the south possible through miniature golf/driving range area fronting on Elmira Road. Access from Clinton Street on the north through Nate's Floral Estates mobile home park.

Current Use: Frontage on Elmira Road is used for recreation and as a site for an office trailer; backlands are vacant.

Assessed Value: $1,591,500.

Utilities: Full complement of utilities available on Elmira Road.

Zoning: Southern third of this area, with Elmira Road frontage, is zoned B-5 (Service Business) which permits a wide variety of commercial and residential land uses. Remainder of the area is MH-1 (Mobile Home) which permits only mobile home parks and sales areas. (Zoning amendment is currently under consideration by the city).

Adjacent Uses: * North: Nates Floral Estates mobile home park.
* East: Inlet relief channel and large commercial establishments including auto dealerships and the K-Mart and Tops plazas.
* South: Fast food and other auto-oriented commercial establishments fronting on Elmira Road.
* West: Southwest Park and other city-owned land.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat.
* Scrub and small tree cover through the center and along the Southwest Park boundary which contains a remnant area of old growth forest.
* Northern portion of this area formerly used as an open dump site.
* Electric transmission line passes from east to west through the center of the area.
* High seasonal water table; soils have limited bearing capacity.
* Habitat for some small bird and wildlife species; none known to be rare or endangered.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Southwest Area Land Use Study (1994): Recommends that this area be used for commercial purposes with a major new street (the Southwest A-6
Connector) passing from east to west through the area connecting Meadow Street with Floral Avenue.

* Overall Economic Development Plan (1979): Proposed commercial development of the southern half of this parcel and mobile home use for the rest of the parcel.

* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Suggests that land along Elmira Road remain commercial; backlands adjacent to Southwest Park are suggested as high density residential development. The area between this high density residential site and West Clinton Street (current location of Nate's Floral Estates) was recommended for warehousing and other industrial development. Also proposes a Southwest Parkway between Meadow Street and Floral Avenue.

Limitations for Future Use:

* Access from the existing street system (Meadow Street and Elmira Road) is poor or non-existent.

* Former city dump land would require remedial clean-up or neutralizing. This affects, at a minimum, the northern third to half of this area.

* Current zoning for much of this area restricts development to mobile home parks and related activities.

* High water table with attendant drainage problems.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:

* Has the appropriate size and shape to accommodate a variety of land uses including large scale industrial and commercial development.

* Could efficiently be subdivided into a variety of lot sizes.

* Could easily be combined with Southwest Park and other city-owned land to create a potential development area larger than K-Mart, Tops and Wegman's plazas combined.

* Has the potential for good vehicular access from both Elmira Road and Meadow Street. Could also be easily connected to Southwest Park's future road system.

* Future use for industrial and commercial purposes would fit well into the surrounding neighborhood.

* Site could be effectively buffered from adjacent mobile home park.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:

* Clean up of former dump site could add significantly to development costs for any future land uses except continued open space.

* Potential for gas emissions from former dump site.

* Area is remote for businesses that want high visibility.

* Limited bearing capacity of the soil requires light buildings or special construction techniques.

Plausible Choices:

1. Retain existing zoning designation and promote additional mobile home residential development after site clean up.

2. Amend zoning and encourage industrial/commercial development, ideally in combination with Southwest Park.

Recommendation: Housing should not be considered the optimal future use of this large area. Development in conjunction with Southwest Park for industrial or commercial purposes will most benefit the local economy by creating jobs and increasing
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA D

Location: East side of flood control channel and immediately south of the Cherry Street industrial park.

Area: Three parcels with a total area of approximately 8.3 acres.

Shape: Elongated quadrilateral approximately 1,200 feet from north to south; width of parcel varies from about 490 feet on the north to 250 feet on the south. This parcel is similar in size and shape to Carpenter Park and the Community Garden.

Ownership: Privately owned by one owner.

Access: No access at present. Future access possible by extending Cherry Street.

Current Use: Vacant

Assessed Value: $218,000

Utilities: Electric power lines adjacent to the parcel; other utilities now present in the Cherry Street industrial park.

Zoning: I-1 (Industrial) Permits a wide variety of commercial and industrial uses.

Adjacent Uses: * North: Cherry Street Industrial Park.
* East: Conrail mainline and marshalling yard.
* South: One small privately owned parcel, city boundary and State of New York (Finger Lakes Park) between city line and fish ladder.
* West: Flood control channel.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat with an undulating ground surface.
* Scrub and small tree cover especially on northern half.
* Two areas of standing water totaling about 1/2 acre on south end of parcel. Possibly created by settlement or top soil removal.
* Seasonally high water table; soil has limited bearing capacity.
* Evidence of deer and small wildlife and bird species.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Southwest Area Land Use Study (1994): Recommends that the "industrial development along Cherry Street should continue... served by an extended Cherry Street cul-de-sac." (pg. 45)
* Overall Economic Development Plan (1979): Proposed industrial
development for this parcel as an extension of the then-proposed Cherry Street industrial park.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): This parcel is part of a larger area recommended for industrial development, including the Cherry Street Industrial Park.

Limitations for Future Use:
* The elongated, progressively narrowing shape of this site will restrict the number and size of new lots that could be created.
* Parcel width is further reduced by a strip of future park land approximately 70 feet wide running full length along the Flood Control channel. An extended Cherry Street will require another 50 to 65 feet of right-of-way width.
* Small ponding areas will require filling if the southern third of the parcel is to be developed.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Easily accessible by extending Cherry Street.
* Full service infrastructure available from the north.
* Adjacent to an industrial park with established neighborhood character.
* Potential for limited rail service if required.
* Could provide two or three moderate sized sites for prospective developers.
* Recommended for industrial development in previous studies.
* Adjacent park strip has the potential of becoming a significant amenity for future users of this parcel.
* Locating Cherry Street extension adjacent to the park strip would further enhance the feeling of openness offered by this parcel.
* Potentially a very attractive setting for small to mid-sized industrial/research businesses near the water.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Limited or no development value unless Cherry Street is extended.
* Parcel's progressively narrowing shape limits the size and number of new development lots that could be created.
* Will require major capital expense for infrastructure to serve a relatively small number of lots.
* Limited bearing capability of the soil requires light buildings or special building techniques.
* Ponded water in two locations near parcel's southern boundary.
* Street connection to developable land east of the railroad is probably not an option as long as the railroad is in operation.

Plausible Choices:
1. Development to be determined by market, zoning and current ownership.
2. Property owner and city collaborate to extend infrastructure and promote parcel for light industrial or research uses.
3. City acquires parcel, extends infrastructure and markets the area as one or more partially pre-approved sites.
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA E

Recommendation: Land acquisition and infrastructure costs per sq.ft. of developable land could be high on this parcel. Even so, it makes sense as a future development area and choices 2 or 3 would be appropriate. An important question for the city to review is whether or not the investment needed to make this site viable could produce more immediate results if invested in another area.

SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA E

Location: Between the east bank of Cayuga Inlet and the Conrail track; from Court Street on the south to Ithaca College boathouse on the north.

Area: 4.5 acres +/-

Shape: Long (1,200 ft. +/-) and narrow (50 ft. to 140 ft. +/-); not conducive to many kinds of development.

Ownership: Northern half: Cornell University
Southern half: Cayuga Inlet Development Corporation

Access: Public access from an extension of West Court Street.

Current Use: Site is mainly undeveloped but informal picnic facilities are located on the southern half. A narrow board walk has been constructed in the inlet and boat docking occurs during boating season.


Utilities: Sewer line runs the length of the site; water, gas and electricity easily available.

Zoning: M-1 (Marine Commercial) Some commercial and manufacturing uses permitted as well as a variety of residential uses. Desired uses are those that would benefit from a waterside location.

Adjacent Uses: * North: Ithaca College and Cornell crew boathouses.
* East: Conrail mainline track; warehousing, fabrication and service businesses.
* South: Waterside restaurant, beer distributor.
* West: Cayuga Inlet; marina facilities.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat.
* Scattered tree growth; some large, fast growing species
* Southern portion of this area has been mowed and a dirt lane goes through it. Northern portion has dense scrub growth.
* Inlet shoreline is moderately eroded.
* Seasonally high water table; soils have limited bearing capacity.
Recommendations From Previous Studies:

* Tompkins County Waterfront Plan (1997): Suggests possibility of specialty retail shops, restaurants & outdoor cafes. Illustrations show dense development with a lighted boardwalk at water's edge as part of an Inlet Trail system.
* Cayuga Inlet and Island Redevelopment Project (1982): Suggests that the southern half of the parcel be used for rental townhouses with private docks and a small park. Northern half is open space or additional marina activities.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Suggests recreation and a green way along the water with warehousing on the rest of the site.

Limitations for Future Use:

* Narrow width greatly restricts development opportunities.
* Single point of public access. (Note: Additional access would be possible by extending Cascadilla Street.)
* Land sale conditions of current owners and existing docking facilities might become obstacles for potential developers.
* Seasonally high watertable; soils have limited bearing capacity.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:

* Waterside location would be appealing for some uses.
* Symbiotic relationship with Inlet Island. Attractiveness of this parcel will be enhanced if future development on the Island occurs as proposed.
* Adjacent waterside uses to north, south and west create a distinctive ambience and environment.
* Long sections of shoreline with only two owners provide good opportunities for public/private water access.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:

* Close proximity to Conrail track.
* Narrowness of parcel makes it difficult to accommodate new structures, related parking, vehicular access and a public trail.
* Commercial/warehouse character of adjacent areas might be considered incompatible with some types of land use.
* Current visual character of building facades on the west side of the inlet does not provide an attractive ambiance.

Plausible Choices:

1. Development to be determined by market, zoning and current ownership.
2. Promote commercial/marina development with public access along the shoreline.
3. Promote relatively dense townhouse development or mixed housing and commercial.
4. Secure easement to assure public access through the site.

Recommendation:

A strip of 2 or 3 story townhouses facing the inlet would provide an attractive housing option and minimize potential access and parking problems on this narrow parcel. This area provides an important link in the proposed shoreline trail system and a public walkway should be included in any future development.
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA F

Location: East side of Cayuga Inlet between Farmer's Market and Cornell boat house.

Area: 8.5 acres+

Shape: Roughly rectangular; approximately 520'x700'; conducive to development.

Ownership: State of New York

Access: Single point of access from Third Street.

Current Use: Location of State Department of Transportation office facility, vehicle garage and materials storage yard. Several large buildings and salt storage dome located on property. No longer functions as DOT regional office.

Assessed Value: Land $1,559,700 Total $4,198,500

Utilities: Full complement of utilities at the site.

Zoning: M-1 (Marine Commercial) Permits broad range of commercial, retail and residential uses as well as industrial uses related to marine activities and businesses. The objective of M-1 district is to provide a beneficial atmosphere for marine uses.

* South: Andree Petroleum, lagoon, Conrail, CU boat house.
* West: Cayuga Inlet, Cass Park.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Built up -- light industrial character.
* Strip of city-owned land along waterline on west and south sides.
* High power transmission line east of Conrail railroad line; petroleum storage tanks visible beyond Conrail line.
* Limited landscaping but good vegetative buffer to the north.
* Buildings appear to be in good structural condition.
* Former DOT activities and nearby fuel storage operation might have contaminated the soil in this general area.
Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Ithaca Waterway Study (1976): South end of parcel to remain a State DOT facility; high density housing proposed for the northern end; city DPW storage yard (now the location of the Farmer's Market) proposed as a boatel site.
* Tompkins County Waterfront Plan (1997): Recommends the relocation of the DoT facility and proposes waterfront commercial development.

Limitations for Future Use:
* Petroleum business, Conrail, power line, industrial park and sewer plant in the immediate area could affect marketability for resort, tourism or residential uses.
* Site's natural attractiveness for water-related uses is largely seasonal.
* High seasonal watertable; low soil bearing capability.
* Site might be polluted by current and adjacent land use.
* Potentially high site development costs.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Publicly owned.
* Site is bordered by a city-owned strip along the Inlet.
* Seasonally attractive location adjacent to Inlet, Farmer's Market and Cornell/Ithaca College boat houses.
* Potential for public walkway along water as well as more intensive nonpublic development on the remainder of the parcel.
* Direct access from Route 13 and, seasonally, from the Inlet.
* Currently zoned to permit water related uses.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Cost of site acquisition and DOT relocation.
* Adjacent incompatible land uses to the east.
  * Possibility of odors at times from waste water treatment plant.
* Relatively remote location does not offer high visibility.
* Noise and lights from Cass Park could deter some developers.
* Possible need for environmental clean-up.
* Limited bearing capacity of the soil requires light buildings or special construction techniques.
* Water side location could provoke public opposition to some future land uses.

Plausible Choices:
1. Continue with current use and encourage DOT to improve shore line access and landscaping.
2. Work with DOT to relocate its operation and transfer ownership to the county or city. Find more appropriate private and/or public uses for this unique waterfront site.
3. Consider this site as part of a larger unified development area. Consider eventual relocation of the petroleum business and review Carpenter Park development guidelines to promote future use compatibility for this entire area.

Recommendation: State DOT use of this water side site is no longer necessary or appropriate.
Relatively intensive commercial use, possibly related to tourism and conferences with boat access, would be most beneficial for the city and county economy. The county and city should, therefore, join forces to secure this site and establish guidelines for future development. Guidelines should include some opportunity for public access to the shoreline. In the long run, an overall plan for development of this entire area (Choice 3, above) would be highly beneficial but a major reuse program for the DOT site would be a major initial accomplishment.

SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA G

Location: East side of Willow Avenue immediately south of the city's public works facility.

Area: 2.5 acres+/-

Shape: Generally rectangular, roughly 500' x 200', well suited for development of a moderately sized business.

Ownership: City of Ithaca; existing structures currently leased to small construction businesses.

Access: From Route 13 via Willow Avenue.

Current Use: Small residential structure on the west end is used as office space. A large barn behind the house is used for storage and light fabrication. The western half of the parcel is also used for scattered storage of construction material, vehicles, boats, etc.; the eastern half is vacant.


Utilities: Full complement of utilities available on Willow Avenue.

Zoning: Parcel appears to be bisected by a district boundary with P-1 (Public and Institutional) on the north and I-1 (Industrial) on the south. If this is so, the less restrictive I-1 regulations would extend 30 feet into the P-1 zone.

Adjacent Uses: This parcel is located in small mixed use area that has been densely developed and has been in transition in recent years.
* North: City Public Works garage and storage yards, Public Transit offices and garage, Newman Golf Course. city has recently built a new off-season storage facility in this area.
* East: Conrail track and Route 13.
* South: Several small industrial or commercial facilities, a former Montessori School and a vacant nightclub.
* West: Boat storage and repair; marina.
Environmental Characteristics:
* Site is part of a flat, densely developed and intensively used area that is largely built up.
* Municipal transit and public works facilities, and marina storage and repair yards establish the dominant character of this area.
* The site of interest varies in character from older, somewhat deteriorated structures and random outside storage on the west end to open, unused land on the east.
* About half the site is currently vacant.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Consolidation and Site Analysis Plan for City's Department of Public Works (1995): Considers the feasibility of consolidating public works at the Willow Avenue/Pier Road location and includes a plan for this.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Parcel is part of a larger area recommended for a mixed recreational and commercial development.

Limitations for Future Use:
* City's consolidation plan, although informal at this time, largely precludes other development on this site.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* City ownership.
* Site has potential for more intensive development.
* Size, shape and accessibility would permit relatively easy development.
* Could possibly be subdivided to accommodate city needs as well as private development opportunity. Note: city has recently agreed to make a strip running along the eastern boundary of this site available for use by an adjacent industry.
* Relatively direct access to Route 13 via Willow Avenue.
* Potential for good visibility from Route 13 traffic.
* Industrial/commercial development would be compatible with existing neighborhood.
* More intensive commercial/industrial use could be accomplished relatively quickly.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Limited room to expand a growing private business especially if part of the lot is to continue to be used by the city DPW.
* Public works outdoor materials storage area might not be compatible with "image objectives" of some private businesses who might consider this site.

Plausible Choices:
1. Follow the city's consolidation plan including the relocation of the Water and Sewer Division's facility on First Street.
2. Rethink the city's plan, do not relocate the Water and Sewer Division, and try to make either the entire Willow Avenue site, or the western half, available for private industrial/commercial development.

Recommendation: Private development potential on this site is limited by its size. The city
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA H

Location: Southeast of Route 13 and west of First Street with frontage on Franklin and First Streets.

Area: Two parcels and 300 feet of Franklin Street right-of-way separating them have a combined area of approximately 3.5 acres.

Shape: Irregular boundary. One parcel triangular, the other roughly square. Combined, parcels are generally rectangular with dimensions of approximately 300' x 440'. Shape conducive to development.

Ownership: City of Ithaca

Access: From Route 13 via Third and Franklin Streets.

Current Use: The triangular Franklin Street parcel is used for equipment and materials storage; the First Street parcel is the DPW Water and Sewer Division's office and storage area. Both parcels contain buildings that were built for their public works functions. Water and Sewer site has large, open storage and truck maneuvering yard.

Assessed Value: Franklin Street: $1,032,300. First Street: $1,259,000.

Utilities: Full complement of utilities available to this area.

Zoning: Franklin Street: B-2a (General Business) Permits a variety of retail, personal services, food, entertainment and housing including motels. First Street: P-1 (Public & Institutional) Permitted uses limited to public recreation, educational institutional uses and municipal functions.

Adjacent Uses: These parcels are located in a small area of mixed uses on the edge of a residential neighborhood.
* North: Route 13, Aldi's Market, sewer plant.
* East: Sciencenter and recently completed Mutual Housing complex.
* South: Mixed uses including housing, day care center, and Hancock Plaza (commercial/office).
* West: Bowling alley, restaurant, retail and personal services.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Site is part of a flat area that has been established for many years as a mix of commercial, residential and municipal uses.
* Public works activities of 40 years ago were bisected by construction of public works activities and the development of the Water and Sewer site.
Route 13, creating disjointed city operation.
* Limited amount of vegetation.
* Area now in transition from public works activities to business and educational uses with a new housing component.
* Aesthetics of the area reflect the public works heritage and the industrial character this conveys; changes are occurring due to Sciencenter and Mutual Housing.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Northside Design Study (1990): Recently adopted by Council, this study recommends city-owned land in this area be used for commercial purposes.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Suggests continued municipal utility use for this general area.

Limitations for Future Use:
* Currently used for a major public works function which would have to be relocated.
* Existing structures would have limited reuse potential for many commercial uses.
* A portion of Franklin Street separates this area into two distinct parcels.
* Safe vehicular access from Route 13.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* If combined, parcels would be of appropriate size and shape to allow for significant commercial or industrial development.
* City already taking steps to vacate building on the triangular parcel.
* Excellent visibility from Route 13.
* Would be suitable for a variety of new uses that would be compatible with the mixed character of the adjoining neighborhood.
* Sciencenter, Mutual Housing, restaurant and shopping add amenity to a location in this area.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Development costs could be high due to city investment in public works facilities.
* Access problems from Route 13 are significant and should be solved.
* Triangular shape of Franklin Street parcel prevents efficient redevelopment possibilities, especially if the public street is continued and the parcels are not combined into one.

Plausible Choices:
1. Pursue DPW consolidation plan, move Water and Sewer Division to Willow Avenue and combine parcels by vacating Franklin Street right-of-way. (See Analysis Area G)
2. Move Water and Sewer activities, retain Franklin Street and have two potential redevelopment parcels.
3. Keep water and sewer activities where they now are and make triangular piece available for redevelopment.

Recommendation: The city should either proceed with DPW consolidation or make Willow Street site (Area G) available for development. If consolidation is pursued, the
redevelopment potential along Franklin Street would be enhanced. In addition to a decision on consolidation, there should also be a traffic study to determine if part of Franklin Street can be vacated and how the Franklin Street, Third Street, Route 13 interchange can be improved.

SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA I

Location: East side of Cayuga Inlet from the north side of State Street to the south side of Buffalo Street.

Area: Four small parcels ranging from 23,000 sq.ft. to 4,750 sq.ft. with a total area of 1.25 acres +/-

Shape: All parcels are rectangular and narrow; three are developed.

Ownership: Different owner for each parcel.

Access: From adjacent streets (W. State, W. Seneca and W. Buffalo)

Current Use: One parcel currently used for storage of old vehicles and miscellaneous discarded building material; others used for commercial purposes; storage on second floor of one building.

Assessed Value: Ranges from $50,000 to $450,000 with total value of $960,000.

Utilities: Full complement of utilities available in this area.

Zoning: M-1 (Marine Commercial) for area north of Buffalo Street. Desired uses are those that would benefit from a waterside location. B-4 (Service Business) for rest of parcel. Permits a variety of business and residential uses including gas station and motor vehicle storage, sales and service. Also permits service commercial uses including printing, welding and plumbing.

Adjacent Uses: * North: Restaurant and beverage distributor.
* East: Bus station, branch bank, food market, parking lots.
* South: Lumber yard, labor union office south of State Street.
* West: Cayuga Inlet and various commercial businesses.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Mostly built up with structures on three lots.
* Physical deterioration, dilapidation or sub-optimal land use in parts of this area.
* Sheet piling defines inlet and forms hard edge in places.
* Little or no relationship between existing uses and waterfront.
* Seasonally high water table; soils have limited bearing capacity.
Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Tompkins County Waterfront Plan (1997): Area north of Buffalo Street suggested as specialty retail and dining uses with a connecting boardwalk for public use as part of Inlet Trail.
* Cayuga Inlet and Island Redevelopment Project (1982): Suggested retail development for area north of Buffalo Street with orientation to water.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Recommended that the area north of Buffalo Street be developed to "exploit unique water-oriented character." Land south of Buffalo Street was included as part of the general West End commercial area.

Limitations for Future Use:
* Multiple private ownership.
* Three of four lots contain occupied structures at present.
* Lots are small and narrow even if combined.
* Seasonally high watertable; soils have limited bearing capability.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Symbiotic relationship with Inlet Island. Future use could be greatly enhanced if development proposed for the Island is realized.
* Area between State and Seneca Streets could become an attractive and functional component of a redeveloped bus station/bank/commercial complex.
* Area north of Buffalo Street could become a major contributor to the proposed waterfront development along the Inlet.
* Good vehicular access to all lots.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Individual lots are small and narrow with limited opportunity to expand.
* Assembling land by combining lots might be difficult.
* Limited space for off-street parking unless agreements with neighbors can be reached.
* Adjacent land uses to the east and west do not provide a visually attractive development character.
* Lot acquisition and assembly costs could be high.

Plausible Choices:
1. Let market forces and zoning determine future use and character.
2. Modify zoning to increase the potential for development compatibility with Inlet Island.
3. Concentrate development efforts on those areas with high reuse potential, i.e., between State and Seneca Streets.

Recommendation: The current use and condition of much of this area is not compatible with development objectives for Inlet Island but modification of the area might be difficult. Efforts should be focused on zoning changes and on promoting the unified redevelopment of lots adjacent to the bus station and branch bank, possibly combining all lots in this block into one development parcel.
SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA J (Carpenter Park)

Location: Northwest of Route 13 at Third Street Extension.

Area: Total area of approximately 8.5 acres including road, Community Gardens and power line right-of-way. Net developable area of about 4.5 acres. City has approved a hypothetical subdivision into several smaller lots to show how land might be divided.

Shape: Roughly rectangular.

Ownership: City of Ithaca and Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency.

Access: From Route 13 via Third Street Extension and Carpenter Circle (built specifically to serve this site).

Current Use: Approximately 1/4 of the gross area is used as a community garden; 2 additional acres used as power line right-of-way; rest is vacant.

Assessed Value: Total assessed value of useable portion is $561,600.

Utilities: All utilities available at this site.

Zoning: I-1 (Industrial) Permits a wide variety of commercial and industrial uses.

* East: Route 13; mixed commercial, industrial and service activities (no access to Elmira Road).
* South: Light industry and warehousing; commercial.
* West: Conrail track; petroleum storage; NYS highway facility; Cornell boathouse; Cayuga Inlet.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Essentially flat with very limited tree cover.
* Highly visible from Route 13.
* Tall high voltage transmission lines pass over Community Gardens and along the west side of this parcel.
* Character of surrounding neighborhood established by utility uses, light industry, warehousing and stand-alone retail commercial land uses.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971) suggests that this parcel would be developed for industrial purposes.

Limitations for Future Use:
* City restrictions on land use (industrial only) and ownership (lease only)
limit the potential for development.
* Usable portion of parcel is approximately 1/3 the size of Cherry Street Industrial Park and could accommodate only 2 or 3 small businesses.
* Site too small and isolated to create the feeling of an "industrial park."

**Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:**
* High visibility from highway would be appealing for some types of land use, especially retail commercial.
* Site fully improved and ready for development.
* No obstacles anticipated in previous environmental impact study.
* City investment in site improvements has created a physically attractive setting.
* Adjacent land use has established this area as suitable for a variety of industry, business and service uses.
* Located in an area that will most likely generate additional development interest in the future.

**Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:**
* Community Gardens could be seen as an incompatible neighbor by prospective industrial or commercial developers.
* Although access is relatively direct, the parcel appears to be isolated.
* Area may be seen as too visible and public for many small industries.
* Electric power lines create a negative visual statement and limit land use under them.
* Passing trains create ground vibrations that could interfere with some types of research or manufacturing activities.

**Plausible Choices:**
1. Continue current policy and wait for the development climate in this part of the city to change.
2. Modify city restrictions so that land can be used for commercial as well as industrial purposes.
3. Sell land and allow future use to be determined by zoning.

**Recommendation:**
The city's desire to retain ownership of this parcel is probably less a limitation to development than the industrial use requirement. In addition to industry, office uses and some types of retail development would be appropriate. Current IURA restrictions should be modified to permit these possibilities. The city could then lease or sell this land for the type of development that seems most suited to the desired future character of this entire area. (See also Analysis Area F)

**SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA K**

**Location:**
205 - 207 Lake Street (Gun Shop Hill) overlooking Ithaca Falls and Fall Creek.

**Area:**
Several separate lots totalling approximately 5 acres. Existing structure has an
area of approximately 100,000 sq.ft.

Shape: Roughly square

Ownership: State Street Associates (SSA and Cornell own one parcel; two additional parcels next to Fall Creek are owned by Cornell.

Access: Lake Street

Current Use: Formerly the Ithaca Gun factory, now vacant.

Assessed Value: $361,600; Cornell parcels, $64,300

Utilities: All utilities available at the site.


Adjacent Uses: * North: Fall Creek Gorge and Ithaca Falls.
* East: Housing
* South: Gun Hill apartments and other residences.
* West: Steep wooded bank down to Fall Creek neighborhood.

Environmental Characteristics:
* Relatively isolated parcel located near the top of a steep hillside.
* Imposing but old industrial structures dominate the visual environment.
* Central section terraced into parking lots for adjacent Gun Hill apartments.
* Although factory was built to capitalize on waterpower, current relationship between this parcel and Fall Creek is nonfunctional.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971). Indicated that the industrial use should be continued.

Limitations for Future Use:
* This rambling collection of older buildings was constructed and has evolved for manufacturing purposes and would be difficult and expensive to convert.
* Terms of the current agreement between owner and city, as part of Gun Hill apartment development, preclude use for student housing, hotel or retail commercial space, including restaurant.
* Providing additional parking on this site. Existing parking on this site is committed to Gun Hill apartments.
* Building in poor condition according to Building Department observations.
* Demolition of heavy industrial construction could be expensive.
* Potential "brownfield" pollution characteristics from many years of gun manufacturing.
Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Commanding site overlooking Fall Creek and the lake.
* Proximity to Cornell campus.
* Adjacent to attractive apartment complexes which establish the high-density character of this area.
* Smoke stack is an established landmark on the Ithaca skyline.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Existing industrial construction could be difficult and expensive to convert to other uses.
* The cost of demolishing heavy industrial construction and cleaning up the site could make reuse for most purposes infeasible.
* Spaces are large and not easily adaptable to other uses.
* Additional parking on this site could be difficult to provide.
* Existing structure needs attention to prevent further deterioration.
* Potential reuse could be affected if this structure is determined to have historic significance.

Plausible Choices:
1. Stabilize building and search for a suitable light industrial use.
2. Remove all existing buildings that would be impractical to rehabilitate and convert remaining buildings into offices or nonstudent housing.
3. Clear site and build an office complex or new up-scale apartments.
4. Clear site and use for neighborhood open space.

Recommendations:
This dramatic site would appear to have strong redevelopment potential but costs and other limitations might outweigh the opportunities. An engineering analysis would indicate what parts of the existing buildings could be effectively rehabilitated and what should be removed. Light industry or distinctive offices could be effective uses of existing floor space; for new construction, apartments, townhouses or office suites would also fit into this historic environment if suitable parking could be provided. The City's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.

SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA L (Wilcox Press Site)

Location: Bottom of East State Street hill, adjacent to Six-Mile Creek.

Area: One large parcel of approximately 2.3 acres; 2 smaller parcels along Six-Mile Creek totalling approximately 1/2 acre.

Shape: Long and narrow (roughly 870' x 150') with an apparent public easement or right-of-way running part way along the length; this shape restricts development opportunities.

Ownership: Wilcox Press, Inc.

Access: Very restricted; access is from State Street around the Dickinson warehouse building (Tompkins County Museum) at the parcel's westernmost end.
Current Use: Vacant building (60,000 sq.ft.+/-) formerly used as a printing plant.

Assessed Value: Large parcel: $325,000; smaller parcels: $132,400.

Utilities: All utilities available at the site.

Zoning: B-4 (Service Business). Permits a wide range of commercial, service, light industrial, office and residential activities including apartment, gas station, motor vehicle sales and service, printing, plumbing, heating and similar shop.

Adjacent Uses: * North: Large State Street hill retaining wall and several detached older houses used as apartments.
  * East: Steep bank of Six-Mile Creek; additional apartment house development.
  * South: Six-Mile Creek and its steep bank; the backs of houses fronting on Hudson Street.
  * West: Mixed use Dickinson Building and three small restaurants.

Environmental Characteristics: * Site is flat and occupied by rambling large and small structures that have an industrial character.
  * Totally confined by the creek, high State Street retaining wall, housing along State Street and a multi-story warehouse.
  * Previous industrial uses are not in character with the surroundings.
  * Area is physically and visually isolated from the urban activities around it.
  * Six-Mile Creek and its wooded banks provide a dramatic natural setting in complete contrast with the adjacent central business district.

Recommendations From Previous Studies: * Site specific studies from time to time have suggested housing as a suitable reuse for this site.
  * The Ithaca General Plan (1971): Indicated that the then-industrial uses be continued.

Limitations for Future Use: * Remote location and severe access and parking problems.
  * Narrow, elongated shape limits suitability for many uses.
  * Site almost totally occupied by an accumulation of buildings built to accommodate the needs of a large printing business.
  * Possible "brownfield" pollution characteristics from many years use as an industrial printing operation. Phase I Environmental Assessment found no problems, however.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics: * Located in a dramatic environmental setting.
  * Proximity to the downtown business district.
  * Although narrow, parcel is large enough for a significant redevelopment.
Some of the existing buildings might be rehabilitated for specific uses.
* Apparent easement or right-of-way across the site offers the potential for public pedestrian access from downtown to the Six-Mile Creek Wildflower Preserve.
* Potential for upper level access from higher up State Street hill might provide unique redevelopment opportunities.
* Might be combined with adjacent multi-story warehouse to provide a high density mixed-use development opportunity.

**Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:**
* Existing industrial construction would require demolition and removal for many new uses.
* Potentially expensive site demolition and clean-up costs could affect redevelopment feasibility.
* Access and parking problems will be difficult if not impossible to solve satisfactorily.

**Plausible Choices:**
1. Public ownership and use. Remove most existing buildings and provide park facility with exceptional access opportunities to the Six-Mile Creek gorge.
2. Apply for a grant or loan to facilitate private-sector acquisition of parcel and removal of all structures not suitable for reuse as upscale housing or specialized commercial reuse such as professional offices, boutiques, crafts, entertainment or a mix of such uses.
3. Convert existing buildings into some type of light industrial, fabrication, assembly or high technology operation.

**Recommendation:**
This site is both highly appealing and highly problematic. It has great but very specialized reuse potential and seems a natural for private sector development that would complement and contribute to activities in the downtown. An innovative business, high-end housing or a mix of housing and business would be the best reuse. Most likely some form of subsidy for site cleanup will be needed to improve feasibility. Public pedestrian movement into Six-Mile Creek gorge should be secured. The city's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.

**SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA M**

**Location:** South Aurora Street (Rt. 96B). Building 24 is part of the Emerson Power Transmission (EPT) facility.

**Area:** Four story structure with partial basement; total area about 110,000 sq.ft.

**Shape:** Building is rectangular; dimensions are approximately 370' x 70'.

**Ownership:** Emerson Power Transmission

**Access:** Two access driveways from South Aurora Street.
Current Use: Building is currently not part of EPT operation but is being used for storage and similar purposes on a rental basis.

Assessed Value: Not assessed as a separate parcel.
Utilities: All utilities available at the site.
Zoning: I-1 (Industrial). Permits industry, warehousing, wholesaling, and all commercial and service uses. Residences are not permitted.

Adjacent Uses:
- North: Parking lots and the beginning of Ithaca's South Hill neighborhood.
- East: Single row of detached houses fronting on South Aurora Street; South Hill elementary school playground east of South Aurora Street.
- South: Other land of Emerson Power Transmission.
- West: Main building of Emerson Power Transmission and a steep slope to the Inlet Valley.

Environmental Characteristics:
- The original building (Morse Chain) was cut into the side of South Hill and is somewhat isolated but dominates the escarpment in this area.
- Total length of EPT facility is over 1,200 feet; a location several hundred feet from the road and lower down the slope helps to reduce the visual impact of this large structure.
- Considerable peak hour employee traffic and some truck traffic is produced on South Aurora Street and Rt. 96B.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
- The Ithaca General Plan (1971) acknowledges the continuation of industrial land use activity in this area.

Limitations for Future Use:
- Narrow, heavily used South Aurora Street affects access and egress from this site particularly at peak hour traffic periods.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
- Basically sound noncombustible and fully sprinklered structure.
- Large enough to be subdivided if necessary into a number of large and small independent reuse activities.
- Part of an established and active industrial area.
- Parking, utilities and other support services available.
- Access to this structure, and its exterior appearance, could be improved relatively easily.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
- Sprinkler system for this building is connected to the system in the main EPT plant. An independent system would be desirable.
- Dividing the space into smaller segments, if necessary, and providing handicapped access could be expensive.
Plausible Choices:
1. Continue cooperative efforts to market space for a variety of new uses.
2. Study in some detail the feasibility of subdividing the space, upgrading the sprinkler system if necessary and improving the external appearance and accessibility.
3. Help EPT obtain an incentive grant or low interest loan to undertake upgrades and improvements identified in the feasibility study.

Recommendation: All three choices are appropriate. Although past attempts to promote reuse of Building 24 have not been successful, the potential for turning this building into a viable concentration of job-producing activities has been recognized by TCAD and the company. Increased effort from the public sector to help Emerson obtain funding assistance for feasibility studies, rehabilitation, general upgrading and increased marketing would enhance future use potential. The city's ability to affect the disposition of this site is limited at present.

SITE EVALUATION: ANALYSIS AREA N

Location: A large irregular area bordered by West Clinton Street, Six-Mile Creek and the flood control channel. Largely developed.

Area: Between 35 and 40 acres, bisected by the inlet relief channel and the railroad.

Shape: Roughly triangular.

Ownership: Multiple ownership. There are approximately 40 separate lots including four owned by the city and three by Conrail.

Access: Access to this area can be attained from Brindley Street, Taber Street, Cherry Street and West Clinton Street.

Current Use: A variety of uses including used car sales and repair, scrap metal processing, steel services, construction offices, construction storage yard, warehouse buildings, printing, a beverage distributor, a motel, a church, a health center, railroad, vacant buildings, vacant land and several small residences.

Assessed Value: Not applicable to this analysis.

Utilities: All utilities available in this area.

Zoning: I-1 (Industrial) and P-1 (Public and Institutional). Industrial zone permits all uses except residences; public zone permits recreation, educational institutions and municipal facilities.

Adjacent Uses: * North: The backs of structures and land uses located along the north bank of Six-Mile Creek.
* East: Same as above plus South Meadow Street.
* South: Wegman's Food Pharmacy, Nate's Floral Estates, Cherry Street Industrial Park.
* West: Flood control channel.

Environmental Characteristics:
* This is a clear demarcation zone between the "Inlet Island" area to the north and what is described in the city as the "Southwest Area" to the south, including large food markets, mobile home park and industrial areas south of Clinton Street.
* The closest thing in Ithaca to a typical "heavy" industrial neighborhood with the visual characteristics and impressions this land use conveys.
* Contains a conglomeration of land uses with a common developmental character related to heavy industry, automotive services, construction businesses, warehouse-type structures, and extensive areas of open land used for car and truck parking and materials and equipment storage.
* Conveys a visual and physical feeling of random and disjointed development from an earlier era, older structures and limited site improvement efforts in most locations.
* Large concrete block and metal storage buildings along Clinton Street (largest building in the area, with a dominant visual position) is vacant and currently has the appearance of being abandoned.
* Middle third of this area is undeveloped land with extensive tree cover and a narrow access point at Clinton Street.
* Existing development makes little or no attempt to use a potential waterfront amenity.

Recommendations From Previous Studies:
* Southwest Area Land Use Study (1994) recommended a north-south roadway through the center of this area to connect Taughannock Boulevard with Elmira Road. This new road was suggested to provide access to Southwest Park from the north and as a possible alternative to Meadow Street for some north-south traffic.
* Cayuga Inlet and Island Redevelopment Project (1982). The Taber Street portion of this parcel proposed for redevelopment for office and craft activities. Undeveloped lots through the center of the parcel are suggested as active and passive recreation areas.
* The Ithaca General Plan (1971) suggested that this area remain in industrial/warehousing uses. A proposed new Route 13 corridor, connecting to Fulton Street, crosses the eastern part of this area.

Limitations for Future Use:
* Most of the easily developable lots have buildings on them or are actively used as parking or vehicle storage areas.
* Some of the large, vacant warehouse or industrial buildings are not easily adaptable to a variety of new uses.
* Current vehicular access from the north (via Brindley and Taber Streets) is inadequate to serve a higher intensity of development.
* Most parcels along the flood channel have limited depth and would not be suitable for many new development opportunities.
* Configuration and width of city-owner land through the center of this parcel limits opportunity for future road construction.

Future Use Potential - Positive Characteristics:
* Several big parcels are for sale or are under used and could be likely targets for some types of large scale commercial or industrial
redevelopment.
* Land along the flood control channel and future Black Diamond Trail offers a potential amenity that could benefit some types of development.
* Continued public and private investment in beautification by landscaping and street improvements can have a big positive impact on the appearance and appeal of this area.
* Has the potential for good vehicular access from both West State Street and Meadow Street.
* Some new development in recent years, including Cherry Street Industrial Park, has greatly improve visual character and illustrates what could be possible in much of this area.

Future Use Potential - Negative Characteristics:
* Presently looks run down, disorganized and deteriorated in most locations.
* Not an especially attractive or effective entrance to the Cherry Street Industrial Park.
* Equipment needed to transport and process scrap steel, the largest activity in this area, has a strong impact on visual and environmental character.
* Large specialized structures on West Clinton Street are not suitable for many businesses and would be expensive to modify or remove.

Plausible Choices:
1. Allow market forces to determine future development activity in this area.
2. Develop an overall plan for landscaping, street, sidewalk and lighting improvements and include this in the annual capital program as a multi-year improvement project, possibly funded by grants.
3. Request the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency to purchase some of the parcels along West Clinton Street and work in conjunction with private owners in a private/public partnership to make site improvements and promote industrial development.

Recommendation:
All three choices are appropriate. This area needs major upgrading to visually improve the setting for existing and future development including the Cherry Street Industrial Park. Coordinated public and private actions to improve general appearance and amenity could be a significant first step. The city should seek funds to consolidate and define curb cuts where possible, add street trees, decorative lighting and sidewalks where needed, cut weeds and work with property owners to otherwise improve the visual impact of their holdings. Tree-planting programs along the inlet should be expanded to improve the appearance of this area.

The economic benefits of assembling vacant or under used parcels, especially on West Clinton Street, rehabilitating them and marketing them for industrial, warehouse or commercial purposes could be substantial.
APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF REGULATIONS

This appendix contains a review of four regulations that impact development in the city of Ithaca: zoning, site development plan review, city environmental quality review and land subdivision. The intent is to evaluate sections of those regulations that are relevant to the permitting process for development in the areas studied in this report and to make suggestions for future amendments to some of those sections. This is not intended to be a comprehensive review of each regulation although such a review would be appropriate at some time. Specific language for amendments suggested in this appendix would be drafted by the city when it is determined what amendments should be made.

1. REVIEW OF CHAPTER 325 OF THE CITY OF ITHACA CODE
   ZONING

Economic development, and the nature thereof, is directly tied to the way real estate can be used. In Ithaca, the use of land, the type of development that can occur and the conditions under which this can happen, are all determined by a zoning ordinance. Through the process of ordinance amendment over the years, the city has been divided into 24 land use control districts, including 16 sub-districts; the location and boundary of these districts are illustrated on the zoning map.

Available land that is appropriately zoned is a major inducement to development; the need to undergo the rezoning process before a proposed development can be considered is often viewed as a significant deterrent by those who must decide where to make their development investments. An effective zoning ordinance attempts to strike a balance between the need to have suitable land available for various types of development and the desire for reasonable control over the nature and quality of such development.

A Section 325-8. District Regulations.

This basic ordinance component lists all of the primary and accessory uses permitted in each district as well as the development regulations (lot size, yard requirements, building height, lot coverage, parking, etc.) for each district. Permitted uses are listed in the traditional but outdated "cumulative" format; i.e., uses permitted in a more restrictive (said another way, less permissive) district are also permitted in all other districts which are less restrictive (more permissive). To illustrate, residential districts are most restrictive, ranging from single family houses on large lots to multiple family dwellings on small lots. Single family homes are permitted in multiple family districts but the reverse is not permitted. Typically, business districts are more permissive than residential in terms of the uses permitted in such districts and industrial districts are the least restrictive of all.

Cumulative zoning does not facilitate fine-tuning of the uses permitted in various districts. For example, fast-food restaurants, gas stations and car dealerships might be suitable in some commercial districts but might not be the best use of industrially zoned
land. With the city's cumulative zoning ordinance, however, the whole range of permitted uses (excluding dwellings) is permitted in an industrial district. If the use to which developable land can be put is a concern, the cumulative zoning format should be revised. Alternatively, one or more special districts could be created to include only those land uses that are considered suitable.

B. Section 325-9. Special Permits

Special permit uses are considered to be permitted uses that are subject to specific conditions. Uses permitted by special permit in the zoning ordinance are also cumulative. However, most of the special permit uses listed in the code, including cemeteries, schools, day care, hospital and similar activities, are not likely to seek a location in business and industrial districts. The only use specifically listed as requiring a special permit in a commercial or industrial district is a redemption center in a B2 district.

Modifications and amendments over the years have made Section 325-9 of the code generally confusing and difficult to read and comprehend. A general review and simplification would be useful. Since provisions of the section on special permits are not particularly pertinent in areas with high economic development potential, such as the Inlet Valley, they are probably not a significant cause for building permit delay. It should be noted, however, that special permits are reviewed by the Board of Zoning Appeals but cannot be acted upon by the BZA until the Planning Board has submitted a report as to conformance of the proposal with long range planning objectives.

Since the Planning Board is appropriately concerned with planning matters, and since the biggest concern with special permit uses relates to potential planning and environmental impacts, it makes sense for special permit approvals to be vested in the Planning Board instead of the Board of Zoning Appeals. While this would mean additional work for a heavily burdened Planning Board, it would simplify the process and could also shorten the time needed to give the permit applicant an answer. The logic of reorganization is further supported by the site plan review requirements which would apply to most if not all special permit uses. If special permit approval is required (by the BZA) as well as site plan review and approval (by the Planning Board), a prospective developer runs the risk of being approved by one board and disapproved by another. In addition, the time required to run this gauntlet, to say nothing of the CEQR process, could be quite lengthy.

Section 325-9.C.(5) of the Code refers to any other uses in an I-1 District that are not already permitted in another district. These "unknown" uses are subject to issuance of a special permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals and concurrence by Common Council. Since Council can veto any decision of the BZA in such cases, they might as well retain to themselves the authority to approve or deny a special permit request. Alternatively, the "any other uses" provision could be deleted or Council could leave the decision to the Board of Appeals. Again, this is suggested as a small step to simplify the zoning compliance and approval challenge.

While standards for development, operation and maintenance are extremely useful, the problem arises with the practicality and consistency of enforcement. A prospective developer who finds Ithaca's current standards onerous or too demanding will probably ignore them or seek another location. A review of the standards as written in these sections, in terms of actual experience, might indicate how they could or should be modified to remain useful but not excessively burdensome.

D. Planned Development.

A planned development is a useful concept whereby an area of a minimum contiguous size is developed as a single entity in accordance with a pre-approved plan. Typically, a planned development would contain a mix of land uses including housing, business, maybe light industry and open space. The development could include land uses that might not otherwise be permitted in the district. Generally, the plan used to guide the project is arrived at through the joint effort of the developer and the Planning Board. Specific requirements, standards, conditions and general guidelines are reviewed, negotiated and incorporated into the approved plan which, after approval, supersedes zoning.

The 1994 Southwes t Area Plan recommended a planned development for Southwest Park. This technique can be an effective approach to the development of any large vacant area. Most likely, prospective developers would find it useful if not essential to know what requirements and standards would be applied by the city to the planned development area. Regulations needed to guide a planned development are not currently incorporated into the city's ordinance, however. If the concept of planned development is still considered to be a potentially useful tool, regulations to accomplish this end should be drafted and incorporated into the zoning ordinance. It should be noted that a May 1998 addendum to the Southwest Area Plan recommends that housing not be considered for this area. The addendum also provides for the establishment of design guidelines and criteria for the Southwest Area.

2. REVIEW OF CHAPTER 276 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ITHACA

The Ithaca Code states that the purpose of site development plan review is, among other things, "...to improve the design, function, aesthetics and safety of projects and site plans which are otherwise in conformance with zoning regulations." For a community concerned about the efficient and safe movement of vehicles and people, land use compatibility, environmental protection, and landscaping and construction aesthetics, the ability to influence site development is essential.

In terms of economic development, however, the downside of site plan review lies in the
potentially lengthy time span occasioned by the approval procedure. This, and the necessarily subjective interpretation of some design standards, can combine to adversely affect the city's competitive position as a location that will be attractive to prospective developers. This examination of Chapter 276 acknowledges the value of the site plan review concept, however, and will focus primarily on process and design standards in so far as these might be modified to minimize real or perceived development impediments.

In light of experience gained over the nine years these regulations have been in effect, it is recommended that Chapter 276 be reviewed in total. The objective would be to simplify and clarify the language, streamline the process whenever possible, establish a more definite time frame for action and create standards that rely less on reviewer discretion. In making a comprehensive review of Chapter 276, consideration should be given to the following modifications:

A. **Sec. 276-2. Applicability.** At present, the applicability of the site plan review requirement is determined largely by the exceptions which are listed specifically for the purpose of putting limits on the number of development activities that must be reviewed. It would be less confusing if the regulations could clearly state the land uses to which the site plan review requirements were applicable. This approach to the applicability of site plan review regulations could lead to a change in the way permitted uses are identified in the zoning ordinance. (See Review of Chapter 325)

B. **Sec. 276-5. Review procedures.** This section describes a three-step process for site plan review: the optional sketch plan conference and the mandatory preliminary approval, public hearing and final approval. Preliminary and final review and approval can be combined in some cases, but all development proposals that are subject to site plan approval must follow the same protracted process. The approval timeline is extended even farther by CEQR requirements which apply to all site plan review situations and must be completed before the site plan can be considered by the Planning and Development Board.

If the list of land uses to which site plan approval applies is examined, consideration should also be given to establishing different categories of projects with different review and approval procedures. In concept, this would be similar to the MAJOR and MINOR categories that are currently being considered for the subdivision approval process.

To illustrate, if a land use is identified as requiring site plan approval, it could also be identified as being either Category A or B. Category A projects would be projects that are likely to have a broad and significant impact on the physical, environmental, social or economic character of the surrounding neighborhood and the city. Review of, and decision on, any Category A site plan proposal would be made by the Planning and Development Board much as the process is now carried out. A public hearing and a long-form environmental assessment or a full impact statement would normally be required.

Category B, on the other hand, would define that group of projects that would be unlisted
for the purposes of CEQR. Such projects might impact adjacent properties but are expected to have limited effect on the physical, environmental, social or economic character of the surrounding neighborhood or the city. Review of, and decision on, any Category B site plans would be the responsibility of the Director of Planning and Development. No public hearing would be held and the Director, as surrogate lead agency, would make a determination on CEQR. However, either the Director or the applicant could request that the review and approval of any specific project be made by the Planning and Development Board. In such cases, which would probably be rare, Category A procedures would apply. The applicant would also be able to appeal a decision of the Planning Director to the Board.

C. Sec. 276-5. Review procedures.

Environmental review. This section contains language that could cause, or be used to produce, significant delays in project review, approval or disapproval. Sec. 276-5.C. states that an application for preliminary site plan approval must contain a complete environmental review before it can be considered by the Planning and Development Board. It also states that the Board must determine what the appropriate level of environmental review will be. The procedure and timetable for making this early determination are not spelled out, however.

An amendment to Chapter 276 should be considered to give the Planning and Development Board authority to authorize the Director of Planning to make an early determination of the appropriate level of environmental review. It is suggested that the sketch plan conference, should the applicant elect to use this option, would enable the Director to make such a determination in a relatively short time period. Any language revision should also state that the Director's determination could be appealed by the applicant and overturned by the Board.

Sec. 276-5.F. sets a 45-day time period within which a public hearing on a preliminary site plan must be held. Current State law has increased this to 62 days and further states that a decision on the application must be made within 62 days after the hearing. The city's regulation should be amended to include this provision. Specific time periods for action are helpful, of course, but are also very fluid in that the CEQR process must be completed before action can be taken on any application for site plan approval.
D. Sec. 276-6. Review criteria.

Twelve of the fourteen site plan review criteria listed in this section are qualitative measures involving considerable discretionary judgement by the reviewing board and staff. This discretionary determination of compliance is, perhaps, the most difficult hurdle to be faced by the site plan applicant. If site plan review is to be effective, however, some qualitative evaluations must be made. In considering amendments to the review criteria previous experience will be useful. Additional standards might be warranted. Any opportunity to replace the traditionally used word "adequate" with a less discretionary standard is worth exploring.

Also, standards related to site plan approval should be coordinated with standards included in other city regulations. Specifically Section 325-9 (standards for special permits) and Sections 325-23 and 24 (supplementary standards) in the zoning ordinance, and Chapter 272 (Signs), should be consistent with site plan review standards unless it is stated that site plan standards supercede all others.

3. REVIEW OF CHAPTER 176 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ITHACA
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW

The City's Environmental Quality Review Ordinance (CEQR) was adopted by Common Council in September 1990. These regulations were adopted in response to the provisions of Article 8 of the NY Environmental Conservation Law and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) which requires that "all agencies determine whether the actions they directly undertake, fund or approve may have a significant impact on the environment."

In formulating the regulatory framework to implement SEQR, it was the state Legislature's intention that a suitable balance of social, economic and environmental factors, including aesthetic considerations, be incorporated at the earliest possible time into land-use planning and the decision-making process. To this end, Part 617 was adopted to set forth specific regulations, thresholds and criteria related to implementation of SEQR. The provisions of Part 617 are applicable to all state and local agencies, departments, boards and commissions that are required by law to make discretionary decisions (as opposed to ministerial acts) to fund or approve an action that may affect the environment.

From one point of view, SEQR regulations can be very beneficial because they require taking a broad look at the possible adverse and beneficial impacts of a multiplicity of actions before decisions on such actions are made. Mitigating measures and alternative approaches must be considered in the review and approval process. On the other hand, the time needed to complete the process leading to a SEQR determination can be as much as a year or more and this can severely affect the economic feasibility of many projects. In many cases environmental review can produce an improved project. By employing unnecessarily lengthy reviews and excessive requirements, however, the same process can also be used to keep a project from happening or to discourage development all together.
Local communities have the option of either accepting the state's SEQR regulations or enacting their own. If local ordinances are enacted pursuant to SEQR they can be more restrictive, but cannot be less restrictive, than the state's regulatory framework, as set forth in Part 617. Like most cities, Ithaca has elected to enact its own environmental review regulations, contained in Section 176 of the City Code.

The objective of this part of the economic development report is to examine the city's CEQR regulations to see if, and to what extent, they are more restrictive than those of the State's SEQR law and might, therefore, be unnecessary impediments to economic development.

CEQR. By and large, city environmental review regulations track very closely with those of the State's Part 617. Both list certain so-called Type I actions which are considered as potential candidates for the preparation of an environmental impact statement. There is also a list of Type II actions which specifically do not require an environmental review because no discretionary judgement is involved. Actions not included as Type I or Type II are considered Unlisted actions, i.e., they are not listed and the need for an environmental impact statement depends on the circumstances and nature of the action being considered.

In summary:

- **Type I actions:** good chance that an EIS will be required.
- **Type II actions:** no EIS required.
- **Unlisted Actions:** the need for an EIS to be determined by the lead agency on a case by case basis.

As stated above, thresholds and criteria are established in both the state and city regulations to give guidance on whether or not an action that has not been designated as Type II will be considered to be Type I or will remain Unlisted. The opportunity for modification of CEQR, should it be desired to make the regulations less or more restrictive, lies primarily in the list of Type I actions and the thresholds used to establish those actions.

Thresholds related to Type I actions are addressed in Sections 176-12 of the City Code. They can be eased to the extent that they are more protective of the environment than thresholds in Part 617 of the state's SEQR regulations.

A review of the city's Type I actions suggests that at least 11 of the 36 thresholds listed in Section 176-12 of the Code could be amended, and several others deleted, with no, or very limited, loss of environmental protection. By making these changes, described below, the number of projects that could be subject to the time-consuming and often costly review that CEQR can entail would be significantly reduced.

Section 176-12.B. (1) says that Type I actions are those involving The construction of the following or the major alteration or conversion of fifty percent (50%) or more of the area, existing size, intensity or frequency of use of the following or, where noted, demolition of the following:
<table>
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<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Now says</th>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1)(d)</td>
<td>Parking facilities or other facilities with an associated parking for fifty (50) or more cars.</td>
<td>Increase threshold to at least 100 cars.</td>
<td>SEQR threshold is 1,000 vehicles. 100 cars would require an area of about one acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)(g)</td>
<td>Any...project which, when completed, would generate truck traffic (3-axle or more) of more than 10 vehicles per 8 hour period per day.</td>
<td>Increase threshold to at least 48 trucks per 8 hour period.</td>
<td>SEQR has no threshold. Amended threshold would only be 6 trucks per hour or one every 10 minutes, not excessive in a nonresidential area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)(l)</td>
<td>Any...project which is otherwise an unlisted action occurring wholly or partially within 100 feet of any of the following special resource areas: {3} ...the Cayuga Inlet along (its) course within city boundaries.</td>
<td>Reduce threshold to 25 feet or eliminate entirely for this particular resource.</td>
<td>Land adjacent to Cayuga Inlet already has enough other controls to guard against improper development. If the use of land is a concern, this should be addressed through zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)(o)</td>
<td>Any industrial facility (or demolition thereof)</td>
<td>Applies too broadly and should be deleted.</td>
<td>Other CEQR thresholds and other city regulations such as site plan review would offer adequate opportunity for review. If the type of industry might be a concern, this is a function of zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)(q)</td>
<td>A residential development or subdivision of ten or more dwelling units (or demolition thereof)</td>
<td>Increase threshold for multifamily dwellings to at least 25.</td>
<td>SEQR threshold is 250 dwelling units. Potential adverse impact of 10 units is not large and site plan review should provide adequate safeguards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)(r)</td>
<td>Any other type of residential or lodging facility...motel, hotel or boatel of 15 or more sleeping units.</td>
<td>Increase threshold to at least 30 sleeping units or create a separate threshold for motels, hotels and boatels.</td>
<td>Potential adverse environmental impact from small residential facilities is limited and does not justify the added expense/delay of a major CEQR review. Site plan review can address important concerns for small developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)(t)</td>
<td>Multiple-tenant commercial centers with an enclosed floor space of more than 20,000 sq. ft. or which, with associated</td>
<td>Delete.</td>
<td>Essentially the same threshold is set forth in (1)(x) of Section 176-12.B.</td>
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<td>Subsection</td>
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<td>premises, encompasses more than 20,000 sq. ft.</td>
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<td>(1)(w)</td>
<td>Any unlisted action which takes place wholly or partially within 100 feet of any critical environmental area.</td>
<td>Reduce threshold to 50 feet or exclude some categories of land uses such as one and two family residences, or do both.</td>
<td>SEQR uses &quot;substantially contiguous to...&quot; which usually means very close if not touching, but this might be too ambiguous. In an urban area 100 feet from a CEA has the potential of involving a number of uses that would not have an adverse effect on the CEA. (The city has no CEAs at this time).</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>Permanent removal of the topsoil from, or other physical alteration to, more than one half acre.</td>
<td>Add the words &quot;unless done as part of a construction project for which a building permit has been issued.&quot;</td>
<td>This qualification could exclude some actions which would not normally be considered Type I projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>The adoption of...zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, including any zoning ordinance or amendment thereto which permits a change of use of the land,....etc.</td>
<td>Divide this threshold into two separate considerations: those related to planning matters and those related to zoning. The threshold related to a zoning amendment should include the words &quot;affecting land use in 5 or more acres in the district.&quot;</td>
<td>Adopting a land use or management plan is different in nature than an amended zoning ordinance. The SEQR threshold on zoning says that a change must affect allowable uses in an area of at least 25 acres to be a Type I action. The city's tight threshold would seem to be unnecessarily burdensome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>The granting of any zoning change at the request of an applicant for an action that meets or exceeds 1 or more of the thresholds given in other sections of this list.</td>
<td>Track zoning changes to evaluate the actual effect of this threshold. Amend the section so that at least 2 thresholds would have to be met or exceeded.</td>
<td>Requests for zoning changes vary greatly in nature. Because most of the CEQR Type I thresholds are quite low, it can be expected that many such requests will exceed at least 1 of them and thereby unnecessarily burden and delay the already rigid process for getting a zoning change.</td>
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</table>

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS TO CEQR REGULATIONS
A. Sec. 176-5. Initial Review. This section considers the initial review of a proposed action. The city's language tracks State SEQR very closely throughout this section. In the interest of expediting the CEQR process, however, it would be possible to have staff make an initial preliminary classification of a proposed action as either Type I, Type II or Unlisted. This could happen relatively quickly and would not have to wait until the next regular meeting of the likely Lead Agency, whether it be the Planning Board, Common Council or another board.

The Lead Agency could modify a staff classification if necessary. Conversely, if staff felt uncomfortable or in doubt about making a classification for a particularly difficult action, it could defer to the Lead Agency for this decision. In most cases, however, it is likely that a staff classification could save some time early on and could alert the applicant as to whether a short or long environmental assessment, or a full environmental impact statement would be needed to enable the applicant to proceed along the CEQR review path.

B. Sec. 176-8. Environmental impact statement procedures. This section has the real potential of significantly delaying or stopping any project that could have a negative impact on the environment or that has substantial public opposition. There is little that can be done to change this situation, however, since city regulations closely follow those of the State and cannot be made less restrictive or time consuming.

One possibility would be to delete Sec. 176-8.B. (2) which provides for a 30-day extension of the Lead Agency's time period to accept as adequate a draft EIS. As currently stated in CEQR (176-8.B.(1)) the Lead Agency has 30 days to accept a draft EIS and, by written notice to the applicant, can extend this period by 30 days. State SEQR gives the Lead Agency 45 days to accept (617.9(a)(2). However, both SEQR and CEQR also provide for extending this (or any) time period, but only by mutual agreement between the Lead Agency and the applicant. In other words, time periods cannot be automatically extended unilaterally by the Lead Agency. Deleting subsection (2) would be a very minor improvement to the CEQR regulations but should be considered if other changes are contemplated.

4. REVIEW OF CHAPTER 290 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ITHACA
SUBDIVISION OF LAND

As used in this Chapter, Subdivision refers to "The division of a parcel of land into two or more lots or parcels for the purpose of sale or for building development..." The Planning and Development Board is charged with the responsibility of reviewing and approving proposed subdivisions within the city.

In most Tompkins County municipalities land subdivision usually takes place as a way to provide residential building lots. In the city, however, most of the residentially zoned land has already been subdivided. Except for West Hill, most large parcels of land that might be suitable for subdivision are located in commercial and industrial areas. Regulations that control subdivision activity, therefore, can have a direct bearing on economic development.

The general process for subdivision review and approval currently involves four steps:

1. Submission of a preliminary plat for review and conditional approval by the Planning Board. A CEQR determination must be made before the Planning Board acts. The Board of Public Works must also approve those matters over which it has control.

2. Within a specified time limit a final plat must be filed with the Planning Board for all or part of the proposed subdivision. A public hearing is held on the final plat and

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the Planning Board has a time period within which it must act. Final approval is conditional, however, until all required improvements that are the subdivider's responsibility have been made and approved.

3. After all improvements have been made, the final plat is certified as approved by the Chairperson and Secretary of the Planning Board.

4. Within a specified time period the subdivider must file the certified final plat with the County Clerk. Until this is done, the lots cannot be sold.

There are several changes in Chapter 290, described below, that should be considered to streamline, simplify and expedite the subdivision approval process and to comply with current enabling legislation related to this activity (General City Law Sections 32 - 37).

Recommended Changes

1. **Sketch Plan.** While not a requirement of State law, a preapplication Sketch Plan stage can be incorporated into local regulations. The idea is to give the subdivider an early indication of the likely reaction to the proposal and to indicate the level of environmental review that could be anticipated. At the subdivider's option, a sketch plan could be submitted to staff for informal review. Relatively little money would have to be spent by the subdivider at this point and the discussion would indicate what type of problems and concerns could be anticipated, including possible adverse public reaction. Addition of this step has the potential of being very helpful to the subdivider and is not time-consuming since the staff could respond quickly. This proposed provision corresponds closely with the first stage of Site Development Plan Review (Sec. 276-5.B.).

2. **Sec. 290-8.E.** This section states that subdivision approval by the Planning Board and the Board of Public Works is required. This could lead to lengthy delays in the approval process unless some form of consolidated review is practiced. Public works participation in the discussion of a Sketch Plan (see above) might be a way to expedite this requirement.

3. **Sec. 290-11. Minimum preliminary information.** The level of detail required at the preliminary plat stage should not require a large expenditure of money for engineering drawings and other information except as might be necessary to obtain boundary surveys and undertake appropriate CEQR studies. While Section 290-11 is generally successful at conveying this message, several subsections (B. (1), B. (6), B. (7), E.) are unclear as to the level of information needed and should be reviewed.

4. **Public hearing.** The required public hearing (Sec. 290-12.C.) for a proposed subdivision should be held on the preliminary plat rather than the final plat. The subdivider has invested relatively little in the project at the preliminary stage and comment from the public can accommodated more easily. Any CEQR hearing would be held at the preliminary plat stage; both CEQR and subdivision hearings could be combined. If the final plat is not essentially the same as the conditionally approved preliminary plat, a second public hearing could be held at the final plat stage.

5. **Sec. 290-14.A.** Consider other forms of guarantee as an alternative to a performance bond. Performance bonds are sometimes difficult to get and very expensive. Other forms, acceptable to the City Attorney, can be less onerous and would be adequate for the purpose.

6. **Sec. 290-19.B. (4).** It is suggested that the maximum length of a cul-de-sac street apply to residential subdivisions only. Alternatively, increase the maximum length for nonresidential subdivisions. Access for emergency vehicles is the primary reason for the maximum-length standard and the concern is less critical in business and industrial areas.
7. **Sec. 290-21.A. & Sec. 290-23.** These sections seem to be superseding zoning requirements which subdivision regulations can't do.

8. **Referral to County Planning.** Section 239-n of General Municipal Law requires that, in some cases related to municipal boundaries, drainage ways, highways, parks, etc., the proposed subdivision must be referred to the County planning agency for review. This may be happening at present but, if amendments are made, this provision should be included in the regulations.
APENDIX C: INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION

STATEMENT OF NEED

The City of Ithaca faces the difficult and perpetual task of finding adequate revenues to finance an expanding level of municipal services. Figures from the 1998 budget show that real property tax revenue is expected to provide 27% of the money needed to run the city; it is anticipated that sales and use taxes will provide approximately the same amount of revenue. In recent years, however, the assessed value of taxable real property has been in decline and sales tax revenue has been relatively static. Meanwhile, the overall cost of running government continues to go up (16% increase between 1993 and 1997).

Clearly, any increase in the two biggest sources of revenue -- property and sales tax -- will be important to the city's financial stability. To achieve this increase, some level of economic growth is essential. It is to be expected, of course, that other municipalities in Tompkins County will also seek additional tax base. Although some County municipalities do not currently favor growth, others are already competing for a share of new development as a way to strengthen their own economic base. Some of these municipalities have been constrained, however, by the absence of services -- primarily sewage disposal -- needed to support additional development.

At present, public sewage disposal services are available on a shared basis in the City and Town of Ithaca and part of the Town of Dryden through the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility (IAWTF). There is significant excess treatment capacity in this system but extensions to new service areas have historically been resisted to an extent by the city. The city's reluctance related to equitable sharing of infrastructure costs and to concerns that the extension of sewer service into suburban areas might reduce the city's ability to compete for new development. 1

In view of current economic challenges facing the city, the attitude on utility extension is understandable. However, to optimize potential for economic growth within the urbanized area, municipal water and sewer services need to be provided to the most appropriate sites regardless of the municipality in which such sites are located. For this to happen equitably, and to be politically acceptable, all municipalities involved in providing those services need to share in the benefits that accrue from having the services available.

Previous studies indicate that there are no technical reasons preventing the extension of sewage disposal services to areas of need adjacent to the current IAWTF service areas, i.e., into the Towns of Lansing and Dryden. What has been absent to date is the political will to shape an agreement whereby all municipalities would share in the benefits of having sewers available (see footnote). A similar condition applied to public water services until 1976 when the Bolton Point water system (Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission) began to provide water on a multi-municipal basis. The city and Cornell University both continue to maintain independent water systems (an arrangement that is currently under review) but all three systems are interconnected and water is shared with nit is expeditious to do so.

Both the IAWTF and Bolton Point were established under the provisions of state law that permit intermunicipal agreements between two or more governing bodies. Both agreements solve the problem of providing public services to a clearly defined area on a multi-municipal basis. Neither addresses the issue of how to share tax revenue generated by development, which comes about because the services are available. Finding a workable and acceptable answer to revenue sharing for municipal sewage disposal services is a big political challenge that, if successfully addressed, could be a major positive achievement for urban area municipalities seeking additional economic growth.

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1 It should be noted that, since this material was written, considerable progress appears to have been made toward an agreement on extension of sewer services into adjacent municipalities. A multi-municipal grant requesting funds for sewer extensions has been submitted and using a portion of hook-up fees to defray system-wide expenses is being considered. The possibility of sharing the benefits of development made possible by having sewers available, as discussed in this appendix, remains to be considered.
AUTHORITY

The authority, which enables New York State municipalities to enter into intermunicipal cooperation agreements, lies in Article 5-G of General Municipal Law. Section 1119-o of Article 5-G states:

...municipal corporations and districts shall have the power to enter into, amend, cancel and terminate agreements for the performance among themselves, or one for the other, of their respective functions, powers and duties on a cooperative or contract basis, or for the provision of a joint service or a joint water, sewage or drainage project.

Section 119-o goes on to say a cooperative agreement may contain provisions relating to:

A method or formula for equitably providing for an allocating revenues and for equitably allocating and financing the capital and operating costs, including payments to reserve funds authorized by law and payments of principal and interest on obligations.

Under this provision two or more municipalities may enter into one or more agreements to plan jointly, provide services and adopt mutual sharing programs. Each municipality must possess the power to do, act or perform the service or action before it can enter into an agreement to do the same thing on a joint basis with another community.

CASE STUDY

In Chenango County, New York, the City of Norwich and the Towns of Norwich and North Norwich have joined efforts as one of the State's Economic Development Zone projects. As part of this project these three communities have entered into a municipal cooperation agreement and mutual revenue-sharing plan using Article 5-G of General Municipal Law as the enabling authority.

The purpose for this joint venture was to work cooperatively and to financially interact to "...strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses for increased employment opportunities". To reach this goal the three municipalities agreed on a number of specific provisions, including:

1. Working cooperatively on all planning, economic development projects and service delivery with a predetermined zone.

2. Depositing into a special economic development zone tax increment fund any increases in real property taxes levied by the municipalities on specific properties in the zone. Taxable value in 1994 was established as the base figure for determining tax revenue increase.

3. Depositing any increases in sales tax revenues received from each municipality, over and above the tax yield in the base year of 1993, into the special tax increment fund.
4. Using a potion (55%) of the proceeds of the special tax increment fund for projects in the zone such as infrastructure, property acquisition, marketing and engineering costs, matching funds for grant assistance and other activities supplemental to existing services and approved by the Greater Norwich Local Development Corporation. The balance of the proceeds (45%) was divided among the three municipalities in accordance with a predetermined formula, to be used for discretionary expenditures.

5. Determining that the Greater Norwich Local Development Cooperation (LDC) would have full and complete authority with respect to distribution of the 55% allocated to the joint venture and making decision on projects to be funded.

6. Appointing members of the Greater Norwich LDC in accordance with a predetermined representation formula agreed to by the three municipalities.

7. The City of Norwich agrees to provide water and sewage disposal services in the zone (the city has the only municipal services at present) upon installation of necessary infrastructure by the towns.

8. Applying jointly for grant funds for projects within the zone.

9. Assigning to the Norwich Community Development Officer responsibility for ongoing economic development planning, marketing and promotion, assistance to companies looking for financial help and providing other technical assistance as needed to advance development in the zone.

10. The initial terms of the agreement are valid for a 30-year period and can be renewed if all parties consent. Amendments are subject to agreement by all parties.

In essence, this intermunicipal agreement states that the City of Norwich will extend municipal water and sewage treatment services into the two adjacent towns when the towns install the necessary distribution and collection mains. In exchange, a portion of any incremental real property and sales tax increases resulting from the provision of municipal services is placed in a special fund, which is used to promote economic development and pay for infrastructure expansion and replacement needs in the district.

There may be models other than that used in Chenango County to guide intermunicipal sharing in Tompkins County. Initially, it would make sense to limit the number of municipalities involved in any agreement and to focus on this issue would greatly ease any concerns about competition between the City of Ithaca and the Towns of Lansing, Dryden and Ithaca for future economic growth.

It would also assure the three towns that current and future development proposals needing public sewage disposal services could plan on getting those services with broader locational options than currently exist.

**COMPONENTS OF AN INTERMUNICIPAL AGREEMENT**

Based on the Norwich model outlined above, an intermunicipal agreement in Tompkins County would include at least the following components and considerations:
1. Preliminary expression of interest from participating municipalities. The County could, perhaps, use its good offices to facilitate initial meeting and provide research staff to gather any technical and legal information needed throughout the process. Cornell University might also be able to provide valuable background and research resources.

2. Description and delineation of the general area included in any sewer extension/revenue-sharing agreement.

3. Identification of specific sites or groups of sites that would be affected.

4. Define terms and funding arrangements for extending sewer services. This has been the sticking point to date but a revenue-sharing agreement should help to solve remaining issues.

5. Identification of the types of land use that would be included in the revenue-sharing agreement. Most likely this would be limited to commercial and industrial development of various types and would not include housing.

6. Establish a formula for revenue sharing and set a time period to be used as a baseline for determining the amount of "new" revenue that would be shared.

7. Establish a process for distribution and management of "new" revenue funds.

8. Describe purposes for which that portion of shared revenue to be distributed to the participating municipalities might be used.

9. Create a format for on-going policy review, decision-making and program oversight.

10. Establish procedures for amendment, extension or termination of the agreement.

There may be other issues and considerations that would come from negotiation of the sewer extension/revenue-sharing agreement. It can be anticipated that developing such an agreement would be a difficult and time-consuming process for the municipalities involved. It can also be anticipated that the reward for successful completion of the process would be a rational development environment that fully capitalizes on urban-area economic growth potential and equally rewards all participants.
APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Early in the information-gathering phase of this study 38 people were invited by Mayor Cohen to participate in several small-group discussion sessions. The purpose of these meetings was to give participants an opportunity express their opinions, in a dialogue format, on prospects and limitations for economic development in Ithaca and Tompkins County.

Participants in the discussion groups were selected from names recommended by the Advisory Committee, the Mayor, the chairman of Council's Planning Committee, the staff of the City Planning Department and the consultant. Five broad areas of local involvement were represented by group members: industry, retail and office, real estate development, finance and alternative economic programs. The intent was to assemble a representative cross-section of interests, opinions and personal experiences.

In his letter of invitation the Mayor said "We are looking for a no-holds-barred, tell-it-like-it-is discussion of the local development climate." Discussion groups were kept small. To stimulate response and provide a minimum amount of focus and structure for the discussion, several questions were asked at the beginning of each session related to participant's personal experience with, and concerns about, local conditions and the best advice to give a prospective investor from outside the community.

Individual responses varied and covered a range of topics. There was considerable consistency from group to group, however. There were also disagreements within and between groups. Responses have been grouped into categories, synthesized and summarized below.

**Development**

* Development in the city has had to deal with two negative issues: the permitting process and the political environment. Double trouble for someone who wants to get something done.

* City needs to be more disciplined and focused in the development process. Developers now subject to political whims and don't know what to expect next.

* One liability for the city: land is expensive especially when you have to assemble a larger parcel, take down buildings or do extensive environmental assessments and clean-up.

* Important to keep Ithaca an attractive place. Need to strike a balance between "excessive control" and "anything is acceptable."

* City needs to send out the message loud and clear: "Yes, we're interested in development." Pick a high-visibility project and get it done.

* City still has big problems that don't want to go away...too many of the same people get involved in every act. City needs to take big-time leadership to encourage prospective new development. Favorable treatment of a big project would do a lot to dispel the anti-development perception.

* There is a serious need to get development of Inlet Island under control. City needs to take the lead. Otherwise, the area will fall victim to random development and probably won't become an
effective anchor opposite the Commons. Some feeling that a solidly developed Inlet Island on the west and a revitalized Commons on the east will help the economy of the area in between (West State Street).

* Won't be able to keep growing businesses in Ithaca or Tompkins County if there is no place for them to expand when the need arises.

* Microenterprise programs, many of which are aimed at low-income people, are beginning to grow into a significant County-wide activity and should receive greater recognition as such.

* City should prioritize areas where retail activity can occur. Okay if areas develop spontaneously but public resources should be carefully focused.

* Development of Cherry Street is one of the city's success stories. Should try to expand on this approach when considering Southwest Park's future.

* A lack of accessible, visible sites is more of a hinderance to city development than regulations.

* The economic plan should state a clear set of strategies and objectives for future commercial and industrial development. Don't keep changing the rules.

* Industrial development needs an ambiance like Brown Road or Cherry Street rather than an isolated site.

* Bad strategy to try and mix lower value commercial buildings with higher value industrial/hi-tech buildings.

* Pre-approving sites can be a very useful technique for promoting development. Should include controlling the site (ownership), uses allowed, environmental assessment, incentives and financing.

* Development anywhere in Tompkins County "makes the pie bigger" and helps everyone.

**Review/Approval Process**

* Staff support and assistance now much better than previously. Still need someone to "grease the wheels" and make things happen. Staff/boards need to help developers be ready when they get to the public process.

* There is need for someone who can move things along on a County-wide basis—an ombudsman who can take the developer through the process. This person could be the link between the various involved departments, track the project and communicate regularly with the developer.

* City should state clearly what it needs for project approvals and how it might work with the developer get to expedite the process. Try to minimize surprises and unexpected sources of municipal and public opposition.

* Some prospective developers aren't bothered by local regulations as long as they're reasonable and
the rules don't change.

* In the past, the city has not given much encouragement to those wishing to participate in the development process. "If you make it through its an accident or you've just worn them down." It is an intimidating process but things have been much better recently.

* Sometimes seems that one municipal department doesn't communicate with others so they can all work toward the same objective. You never know when you will hit a roadblock in the process.

* If you have to move quickly to make a deal work, you probably should go to the town of Lansing and forget the city.

* Several reported a good experience working with city personnel and believed the process here was no different than in other communities that are desirable places to develop.

* Need to take some of the subjectivity out of the review process. Site plan review seems to be aimed at better landscaping and micro-controlling development. Regulation doesn't seem to make the product better in many cases.

* There has been some moderation in attitude at the review and approval level but there still needs to be a greater sense of reasonableness when this is possible. Need to get rid of the "gotcha" enforcement attitude.

* Building and Fire Departments now have a helpful attitude of "wanting to make it work." Things are much better now than they were previously.

* Site plan review process is too open ended. The developer never know when the city will want additional studies or want to look at some new aspect of a proposal. The process can be expensive and time consuming.

* There is an "irritation" factor about working with the city bureaucracy that gets talked about in the development business and that need to be corrected.

* Regulations aren't bad, per se, but should be reduced to the minimum level necessary to maintain the prized quality of life of this area.

**Labor Force, Housing, Cost of Living, Quality of Life**

* Can get hi-end and lo-end technical employees in this area but mid-level talent is difficult.

* Skilled labor market is a problem.

* Tax rates are critical for people living in this area. Taxes are high because a lot of services are demanded and provided.

* NYS is an expensive state in which to do business. Need to compensate for that at the local level by being a strongly business-friendly place and promoting quality of life.

E - 3
* This is a great place to live and raise a family but many employees can’t afford to live here. Limited amount of good, affordable housing close to the city. Bottom-end and top-end housing is available.

* Pay for mid-level skills is higher in bigger cities; cost of living here is too high for many blue-collar workers and people with mid-level skills. These people commute from rural towns and from other counties.

* Higher than average education; lower than average pay scale. Might have to make some concessions to get businesses that have higher paying jobs.

* The city is a great place to live and should do what it can to encourage people to live here. All we have to sell is quality-of-life but that is very important to many businesses.

* Companies come to, and stay in, this area often for very personal reasons. The living quality and natural environment that can be enjoyed in a small town atmosphere, with a high level of urban amenity because of the colleges, are great local strengths that few will deny.

Downtown

* City should take the lead in helping downtown property-owners find ways to use upper stories. Need one person to spearhead the revitalization process.

* Offices and housing should be the focus of downtown. Upper floors might be converted into condominium housing that people would buy and take pride in ownership. Would also add to the sense of activity in the downtown.

* Downtown has many more positives than negatives but it is not a "destination" shopping area. There are some destination stores, however.

* While it may be a chicken-and-egg situation, there have to be more people living in, or coming to, the downtown before it will begin to recover as a commercial center.

* Downtown needs to take on a distinctive character and then market itself.

* Offices wired for high speed internet connections would be very popular.

* Big boxes on Elmira Road would be tough on the Central Business District. (Another opinion): Commons does not compete with the big box retailer and the mall.

* Collegetown is pretty much self-contained. No real reason why students would have to, or want to, come downtown. City helped make Collegetown a successful development area.

Finances

* The ability to get financing is not considered to be a local resource by some.
Securing local financing for a local product is sometimes very difficult. It is often much more productive to go outside the area where there is more interest.

Some agreement that now is a very good time to try to get things built—good initial funding and good interest rates. However, there is a need to bridge the gap between venture funding and longer-term financing.

Tax abatement for several years is sometimes a critical factor between success and failure for a business. The city does not capitalize on this incentive.

Regional and local banks provide good competition so financing is possible. They're "open for business;" which is much different than 15 years ago. Local banks are seen as more conservative than regional banks but locals will make loans if there is a good business plan and the project is not too risky.

Once a company grows it is hard to keep it here. We don't have "mezzanine" (secondary) financing if, for example, you needed $5 - $10M to grow. Some venture funds now considering this need as well as start-ups.

Can usually get initial funding but it is much harder to get longer-term financing which involves more money and is often more risky.

Perceptions/General Comments

We are perceived as a community that discourages growth—one of several in Tompkins County.

Research and Development businesses will often lease first and that is believed to be relatively easy in this community. Such businesses want to be located in an area where they can have a nice building and convey the appearance of success. Clients of such businesses want to be near hotels, restaurants and interesting surroundings, not out in the country.

TCAD needs to expand its mission and provide services beyond its current focus. Should work with commercial and service clients. Lots of opportunities here but a coordinated effort is needed.

The general ambiance of the Cherry Street industrial area doesn't convey the image that some businesses want for their customers. Investors are interested in developing in areas where the ambiance is pleasant and there is a good chance that resale, if necessary, would be possible.

The city and other local communities often jump at the first proposal that comes along rather than thinking about the best long term development.

There is a strong feeling that more needs to be done to keep and grow businesses that are already here. Most agree that this is more important than getting new businesses to come to the area.

Being close to the airport is critical for some businesses, not important to others.

The city has a limited amount of new growth to counter-act the decline of assessments due to successful challenges to current assessed values.
* If fully serviced sites were available in the city, they could probably be successfully marketed.

* Too often political decisions are made in response to opposition, complaints or ideas that are far from an expression of the will of the majority.

* There might be interest in development from people who have graduated from CU and IC and want to return here to start a business and network with former professors or just because they like the place.

* Tompkins County has technology and people with skills that are usually found only in much bigger communities. We need to capitalize on this asset.

* The economic potential of the not-for-profit sector should be looked at more seriously.

* There are many businesses that don't need or want large or expensive space. Rather, they want a small, flexible space in which to start and grow and don't want to dicker about a 1, 3 or 5 year lease. They need to move quickly through the space-finding phase and often need help with the bureaucracy. Sometimes they also need technical and management help. BIC is a very good resource in this respect.

* Someone should assemble and keep current a centralized inventory of space availability in this area: what kind, how much, where located, zoning, what services available, etc.

* R&D businesses want to be in an area where they can have a nice building and can convey the appearance of "being successful."

* There was some interest expressed in exploring additional techniques for sharing resources in the County. What about a County Industrial Park?

* It is easier to develop in areas where land is less expensive. Falling real estate prices are beginning to make some development activity happen that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

* Ithaca has potential--depends on how it is marketed. Cornell and Ithaca College should be a big piece of the marketing effort.
APPENDIX F: ADVISORY COMMITTEE VALUE SCAN

At the beginning of this Economic Development Plan, an eleven-member Advisory Committee was appointed to guide the consultant, react to material presented and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council. Before in-depth work on the study began, a short exercise was conducted to determine, at least superficially, some of the individual values of Advisory Committee members. The intent of the value scan was to determine, to the extent possible, whether individual committee members held similar or divergent views on such things as the future of Ithaca's economy, the need to promote economic growth and the relative importance of economic considerations in the general interests of community residents.

A brief survey was completed by each committee member. A number of possible goals for economic planning were presented and committee members were asked to rate them as to relative importance from "3" (most important) to "0" (least important). Results of the survey are as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Relative Importance</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (most) 2 1 0 (least)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provide more jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provide better jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expand taxable property base</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expand sales tax revenues</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strengthen existing businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provide greater diversity and stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Increase sale of goods and services to areas outside County</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Minimize purchase of goods and services from outside the County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Improve local government efficiency (e.g. simplify land use approval process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Capitalize on natural amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Recruit new businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other (please describe) One response: &quot;Market city as great place to live&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A second value survey of committee members consisted of a number of statements related to economic issues. Each statement was rated as follows: 3=strongly agree; 2=mixed feelings; 1=strongly disagree; 0=no opinion. The results of this survey are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>3 (Strongly Agree)</th>
<th>2 (Mixed Feelings)</th>
<th>1 (Strongly Disagree)</th>
<th>0 (No Opinion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A realistic assessment will show that economic growth potential in Ithaca is limited.</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>6 (54.5%)</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Working toward a stable economy that will improve the standard of living for most people is the most important thing government can do.</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td>8 (72.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tompkins Co. must address its lack of direct connection to major transportation routes if the local economy is to prosper.</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tourism has the potential of growing in importance as a major component of the local economy.</td>
<td>9 (81.8%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The City is getting along alright as it is and no serious changes in emphasis or direction are needed.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
<td>8 (72.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The City should pursue its own business recruitment.</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>5 (45.5%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Effective municipal cooperation and coordination on many fronts will be essential if the economy of Tompkins Co. is to prosper in the 21st century.</td>
<td>10 (90.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Any economic development project that would diminish the open, accessible character of the waterfront should be resisted.*</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>4 (40.0%)</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In the long run, protecting the environment will do more for the economy, and be more beneficial to the people of Ithaca and Tompkins Co., than encouraging additional development.</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td>7 (63.3%)</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Local economic development is currently inhibited by too many governmental restrictions and roadblocks.</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>7 (63.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In the city, too much effort is being focused on economic development at the expense of equally</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td>8 (72.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>3 (Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>2 (Mixed Feelings)</td>
<td>1 (Strongly Disagree)</td>
<td>0 (No Opinion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 The city should evaluate its natural resources and determine specifically which are the most important to protect from development.</td>
<td>5 (45.5%)</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 From the viewpoint of the competitive world of economic development, Ithaca and Tompkins Co. are less than the unique, dynamic places many of us believe.*</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>4 (40.0%)</td>
<td>3 (30.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 The Ithaca economy will benefit more if efforts are focused on multiple small projects rather than on large concepts (new highways or commercial centers, etc.) that produce major changes in existing conditions.</td>
<td>6 (54.5%)</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 The greatest economic development potential lies in effective linkages to Cornell and Ithaca College.</td>
<td>3 (27.3%)</td>
<td>7 (63.6%)</td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Greater development density is an acceptable way to increase the city's tax base.</td>
<td>8 (72.2%)</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 A faster pace of economic development than presently exists is not in the best interest of Ithaca residents.*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (20.0%)</td>
<td>8 (80.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 When push comes to shove, sensitivity to environmental conditions should have priority over economic development initiatives.*</td>
<td>2 (20.0%)</td>
<td>5 (50.0%)</td>
<td>2 (20.0%)</td>
<td>1 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 I feel generally positive about the economic future of the city of Ithaca.</td>
<td>7 (63.3%)</td>
<td>4 (36.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were only 10 responses to this question
APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF MATERIALS REVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT

In past years the city of Ithaca has made, or commissioned, many reports, surveys, applications and agreements that are germane to economic development. A number of these previous studies contained recommendations that continue to be relevant today. Some of these earlier proposals are, in fact, included in this most current economic development report. In the past, however, prevailing community attitudes, political philosophies and financial constraints at any given time have affected project implementation and thereby restrained economic development. These conditions always exist to one degree or another but it is interesting to note, in passing, the ideas and concepts that have been around for many years.

Previous studies, and pertinent findings and recommendations contained in these studies, have been reviewed; most are summarized in this Appendix G.

Material reviewed for this report.

1. 1997:  
   Tompkins County Waterfront Plan; prepared for a multi-agency oversight committee by Trowbridge & Wolf Landscape Architects; study coordinated by the Tompkins County Planning Department.
   
   This report outlines a proposal for capitalizing on the development and use of Cayuga Lake waterfront land. Multiple proposals envision the waterfront as an area that will be..."more attractive to residents, visitors and potential investors and entrepreneurs." The waterfront, especially in the city, is viewed as a resource that has not been effectively developed to date. Future development on Inlet Island and elsewhere should focus on making Ithaca a destination attraction.

2. 1996-97:  
   
   The first two steps of a four-step process were completed: 1) Envisioning the future, and 2) Development of "candidate" vision statements. Five individual candidate vision statements were prepared by committee members and a draft committee vision statement was developed. At the appropriate time, the city will discuss this in more detail and draw conclusions.

3. 1996:  
   Ithaca Business Environment: A Public Opinion Survey; prepared for the Tompkins County Economic Development Task Force as a student project.
   
   This was a survey of local shoppers to "learn how citizens feel about Ithaca's retail and small business economy and to determine how city government might better serve the needs of the local consumers and small businesses." Surveys were conducted at Tops Supermarket, Woolworth's and on the Commons.
Multiple-choice questions were somewhat general in nature with limited opportunity to qualify or expand on answers. Of particular interest:

* 65% of all respondents think Ithaca is a good place to be in business
* 85% think Ithaca should be trying to attract new businesses
* Just over half think the city does a good job of attracting new businesses

Based on survey responses, it was concluded that business owners were more pessimistic about the business climate than non-business owners and that there was a general consumer dissatisfaction concerning price and the availability of certain goods and services.

4. 1996:  
* Meadow Street/Fulton Street Study; Department of Planning and Development (study recently released in draft form--not reviewed for this report)

5. 1994:  
* Southwest Area Land Use Study; Report of the Southwest Area Land Use Committee.

The Southwest Area Land Use Committee considered and area generally south of West Clinton Street and west of Meadow Street and Elmira Road. Highlights:

a. Industrial development along Cherry Street should continue in the remaining area between the railroad and flood channel.

b. There was committee consensus that areas other than Southwest Park were better suited for open space and recreation and that the 62 acres of Southwest Park should be developed.

c. The committee convened a focus group of realtors, developers and bankers to tour Southwest Park and evaluate its viability as a potential site for affordable housing. Response was less than enthusiastic; viability was thought to be dependent on a significant subsidy to reduce land costs and pay for infrastructure. The focus group also believed that a site with all permits pre-approved and environmental investigations completed would be essential.

d. The DPW requested that approximately 10 acres of Southwest Park be reserved for bulk storage of sand, gravel, bricks, etc.

e. Amend the zoning ordinance to allow for a mixed-use development of Southwest Park, with an emphasis on affordable housing, and to prevent further residential development in the adjacent mobile home district.

f. Automobile-oriented commercial development is appropriate for all land with frontage on South Meadow Street and Elmira Road.

g. Any future land use proposals should reserve a right-of-way for a future north-south street corridor as well as a new roadway connecting Meadow Street and Floral Avenue.

h. Due to considerations of economic feasibility, the City should periodically reconsider the committee recommendations for future use of Southwest Park.
NOTE: This report was formally amended by Common Council in May 1998. Among other changes, the Council wanted to de-emphasize the suitability of housing in Southwest Park. Council also determined that design guidelines and criteria should be established for Southwest Park.


The city requested that a wetland delineation be undertaken in accordance with Federal wetland identification standards. Three site investigations were made during the spring and summer of 1994.

a. Several wetlands were identified and plotted. These are located largely in the southeastern quadrant of the site. Field map measurements indicate a total area of roughly 8 acres of wetlands with the largest being about 3 acres in area.

b. The Army Corps would have to review the wetland map, visit the property and confirm in writing the findings of the 1994 wetland study before jurisdiction and actual boundaries can be determined. (Note: Boundaries have now been survey and wetland areas have been designated by the Corps)

7. 1994: Application for a New York State Economic Development Zone; Department of Planning and Development. (Not reviewed for this study.)


Considers how nine counties in the Southern Tier of New York State could adjust to cutbacks in the federal defense budget and corporate restructuring that began in the early years of the 1990s. An economic strategy for each of the nine counties was formulated as well as an overall strategy for the Southern Tier region. Tompkins County seen as an area with significant economic potential related to Cornell's presence. The report suggests the County consider 74 separate strategies grouped in 11 broad categories of activity. Priorities are not suggested.
9. 1992:  
*Report of the Inlet Island Land Use Committee*; prepared for Common Council by the *ad hoc* Inlet Island Land Use Committee. (This should not to be confused with the Inlet Island Development Plan completed early in 1998, which has not been reviewed for this study.)

The Land Use Committee made a comprehensive report on an area delineated by Buffalo Street, the Flood Control Channel and the Inlet. The report contains good information on historic development, current land use and property ownership patterns.

a. Proposals envision a combination of city-owned green space along the flood channel and mixed use private development (commercial, retail, housing) that is water-enhanced or water-dependent for most of the rest of the island. This is consistent with other studies of this area including the most recent.

b. As a major Inlet Island land owner, the city would be in an ideal position to become an active pro-development ally of the private sector.

c. A number of "amenity" recommendations related to traffic improvements in this area have been incorporated into the recent DOT construction.

10. 1991:  
*Report of the Downtown Vision Task Force*; report to the Mayor by the *ad hoc* Downtown Vision Task Force. This report was a compilation of the work of many community members divided into specific subjects of interest (land use, zoning, traffic and transportation, parking, urban design, etc.). Conclusions and recommendations have been used by the city in some of its downtown improvement efforts and in the current work of the Ithaca Downtown Partnership.

11. 1990:  
*Northside Design Study*; Trowbridge Associates

This is a plan for a nine-block area on the east side of Route 13 delineated by Lake Street, Hancock Street, Third Street and Route 13. The report proposes that 4 lots on Franklin Street, currently used by the City DPW, become commercial development sites. One of these is currently occupied by the Sciencenter and another is zoned for potential commercial use.

12. 1988:  
*Agreement* between State Street Associates and Neighbors for Construction of Gun Hill Residences.

The current owner of the vacant Ithaca Gun factory, and developer of the Gun Hill residential complex, agreed that land north of Lake Street, including the empty factory, would not be developed for student housing, for a motel or hotel or as a commercial retail space, including a restaurant.

Further, the 158 parking spaces serving the residents of Gun Hill Apartments will be reserved exclusively for those residents and none will be used to meet any of the parking requirements for the future development of the factory area on the north side of Lake Street.
13. 1982:  
_Cayuga Inlet and Island Project;_ Peter Trowbridge and Roger Trancik

This is a study of an area bounded by Fulton Street on the east, Clinton Street on the south, the flood control channel on the west and the Cornell boathouse on the north. It is the same general area, slightly expanded, as included in studies noted in item "8" above, and recommendations are similar, with an emphasis on the potential of waterfront land.

a. Public access to the waterfront along the inlet and flood channel are considered of particular importance.

b. Land uses such as heavy industry, automobile-oriented businesses, low density housing and retail uses which could be located elsewhere are not appropriate for this area.

c. Proposed land uses for the island include a 100-room hotel, 12,500 sq.ft. of new specialty retail space, rehabilitation of some old structures for office use, and up to 30 condominium housing units. Existing marina activities would be retained and expanded and a linear park would be created along the east bank of the flood channel.

d. Small parks for pedestrians only are proposed for both sides of the relief channel south of State Street.

14. 1979:  
_Overall Economic Development Program;_ prepared for submission to the Economic Development Administration, US Department of Commerce, by the Department of Planning and Development as required supporting material for subsequent city loan and grant applications. From this 19 year old report:

a. "Competition from suburban areas for new and existing employment opportunities is challenging the viability of the City's downtown area. The lack of easily developable land within the city has caused retail and manufacturing firms to locate in peripheral areas, where land and development costs are cheaper."

b. The tapping of economic development potentials "...requires a strong commitment on the part of a diverse group of individuals and organizations. The area has already demonstrated that such a commitment exists through the combined efforts of such groups as the City of Ithaca, the Chamber of Commerce and the Tompkins County Area Development, Inc."

d. Also identified was the need to acquire replacement park land to swap for Southwest Park. The same flood plain land being considered today was considered then. This swap was suggested to "...enable the opening up of substantial new acreage for future industrial use in the city, for retention and creation of manufacturing employment."
e. A southward extension of the Cherry Street Industrial Park was also suggested as was a future parkway connecting South Meadow Street with Floral Avenue.

f. Extensive discussion of the city's interest and investment in The Commons is included in the OEDP report. Significantly, the report was used to support a request for funding support for construction of the Ithaca Center on The Commons.

15. 1976: 

Ithaca Waterways Study; Department of Planning and Development

This was an early study made to identify and evaluate the potential inherent in the city's surface water resources and to make a comprehensive plan for future use of these resources. Four water corridors were examined, one of which was the Inlet Valley/Lake Front corridor. Proposals include:

a. That the city acquire up to 60 acres of land between the Inlet, the levee and the LVRR tracks (Conrail) and develop this area for park purposes as substitute land for Southwest Park. (see "5" and "14" above.)

b. The east side of the flood control channel was suitable for industrial development with major access from Clinton Street and a new Southwest Parkway.

c. Wooded areas on either side of the relief channel should become docking space for non-power boats with pedestrian-only access from West Clinton.

d. A waterfront park and promenade should be established on the west bank of the Island. Residential, recreational and marine-related development on the rest of the Island, and on the east bank of the inlet, should be encouraged.

e. DOT garage complex to be moved or landscaped; DPW gravel storage area should be moved; sewage treatment plant should be consolidated on the east side of Route 13. (see several other studies above.)

f. The area at the end of Third Street should be used for a boatel, a neighborhood commercial node and substantial townhouse/apartment house construction.

16. 1974: 

Cayuga Inlet Study; student project prepared for the Department of Planning and Development.

This was an early study of the Inlet Island area conducted by Cornell architectural students. The plan envisions a public square surrounded by shops with housing above. Shops have an emphasis on marine needs and there would be docking for visitors as well as residents. A public terrace, cafe and restaurant on "the point" take advantage of the panoramic view (a consideration today.)
This was a comprehensive plan for the entire city with land use projections for the year 1990.

a. North of Buffalo Street, the Island..."should be developed to exploit its unique water-oriented character and view. The area should be developed in marine-oriented commercial land uses."

b. Land in the Inlet Valley is shown as being used for commercial and industrial purposes; both the current Southwest Park and the substitute land for Southwest Park mentioned in "13" above are indicated as parks; interestingly, the Wegman/Tops area is suggested for high density residential development.

c. A new Route 13 limited access arterial is proposed using Fulton Street and paralleling the railroad line through the Inlet Valley. This was proposed to connect to a new Route 96/89 arterial at West Court Street.
APPENDIX H: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Economic Development Forum
October 1, 1996
Small Groups

Group 1
Regulatory Environment and Land Use: Taxes, Land Use, Zoning and Environmental Review
Facilitator: Ellen McCollister
Staff: Thys Van Cort

Tom Colbert
Joe Daley
Rick Eckstrom
Tracy Farrell
Guy Gerard
Paul Glover
John Johnson
David Kay

Bob Lama
Pam Mackesey
Ellen McCollister
Carolyn Peterson
Phil Proujansky
Katie Ross
Alan Warshawsky

Group 2
Physical Infrastructure: Roads, Utilities, Transportation, Communications
Facilitator: Tom Niederkorn
Staff: Doug Foster

David Boyd
Alan Cohen
Bill Gray
Rick Gray
Tom Hanna

Jim Hansen
Art Kuckus
Tom Niederkorn
Clarence Reed
Pat Vaughan
Group 3  
Job Development/Social and Educational Infrastructure.  
Facilitator: Joyce Walker  
Staff: Leslie Chatterton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Babbage</td>
<td>Fred Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Bonaparte-Krogh</td>
<td>Diann Sams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Cooksey</td>
<td>Ellen Schulman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marge Dill</td>
<td>Mike Stamm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Fort</td>
<td>Irene Stein -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Fuller</td>
<td>Roey Thorpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Miller</td>
<td>Jill Vanuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Mink</td>
<td>Joyce Walker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Pastel</td>
<td>Chuck Wynn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group 4
Financial Environment: Lending Practices, Financial Incentives, Capital
Facilitator: Art Pearce
Staff: Herman Sieverding
Dominic Cafferillo
Mike Cannon
Ezra Cornell
Susan Cummings
Steve Ehrhardt
Rich Farr
Jeff Furman
Christina Houseworth
Bill Myers
Art Pearce
Liz Rudan
Sara Shenk
Cynthia Yahn

Group 5
Marketing and Promotion/Quality of Life
Facilitator: Barbara Blanchard
Linda Daybell
Richard Driscoll
Carolyn Grigorov
John Gutenberger
Laurie Lynn
Jane Marcham
Angela Noble
Nancy Stage
Mary Trochim
Scott Whitham
# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM TOPICS

Opportunities/Constraints - Program Areas

1. Regulatory Environment: Taxes, Land Use, Zoning and Environmental Review
2. Physical Infrastructure
3. Job Development/Social, Educational Infrastructure
4. Financial Environment
5. Marketing and Promotion/Quality of Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>OPP.</th>
<th>CONS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation - Ithaca is “centrally isolated”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment: natural beauty of area, high quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment: steep topography, poor soils</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset rich: stable employment, quality of life, viable CBD, local</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underemployed population, active population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor marketing of unique assets</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of development</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of venture capital for other than high-tech businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of living, especially housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of water and sewer facilities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative, dynamic social service sector</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize on influx of new, transient population</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viable CBD</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective programs to bring cu/ic employees into CBD</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative arts community</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Transportation services
• Lack of ED goals and consistency of ED message
• Dealing with social problems in way that doesn’t discourage people from coming into CBD
• Capitalize on research efforts at cu/ic
• Multiple layers of government drives up cost of doing business
• “Exploit” local history
• High Cost of Energy
• Lack of marketing program that capitalizes on unique nature of area - Quality of life issues
• Local purchasing by major institutions
• Develop West State St./West End in way that compliments CBD
• No Real Gateway to the City
• Lack of Developable Land
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>OPP.</th>
<th>CONS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High rate of underemployment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry level training programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local hiring practices by local employers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of service jobs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient population</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a diversified economy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited high-tech transfers by Cornell University</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative view of school district</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much emphasis on negative attributes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reputation as a difficult place to do business</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Different versions of Ithaca</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural shift in economy - underemployment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible out migration of young people</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State aid - Rural county</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low paying jobs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs too high for working people</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need affordable day care</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly educated workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good infrastructure: water, transit, solid waste</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent pool of activists</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development at Cornell University</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong academic community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy is recession proof</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality of life; culture and sports</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Service agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic beauty - Tourism</td>
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<td>Opportunity to develop &quot;can do&quot; attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidation of human services</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consolidated approach to economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possibilities to lower cost of housing</td>
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H-6
- Airport
- Public Transit
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Growing manufacturing sector
- Active local financial institutions
- Low cost area for high-tech business
- Effectively used financial incentives
- Location with respect to dealing with State agencies
- Image of NYS as tax hell
- High housing cost
- More regulations in City
- Construction cost higher in City
- Land cost higher in City
- Poor highway connections

<p>| Item                                                      | Location with respect to dealing with State agencies&lt;br&gt;X | Image of NYS as tax hell&lt;br&gt;X | High housing cost&lt;br&gt;X | More regulations in City&lt;br&gt;X | Construction cost higher in City&lt;br&gt;X | Land cost higher in City&lt;br&gt;X | Poor highway connections&lt;br&gt;X |</p>
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<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<th>CONS.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Limited freight trucking</td>
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<td>Air service limited and costly</td>
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<td>Environmentally sensitive areas</td>
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<td>Limited space for development</td>
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<tr>
<td>High trash disposal costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived parking and traffic problems</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Perception of City not being favorable to business</td>
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<td>&quot;Endless&quot; approval process</td>
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<td>Duplication of bureaucracy and services</td>
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<td>Transient population</td>
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<td>High percentage of tax exempt property</td>
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<td>Absentee land/property owners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donut effect - migration of pop./business to other areas in county</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Litter in City</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outmigration of potential contributors to economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drugs, crime and public safety</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing economic and financial polarity</td>
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<td>Deteriorating housing stock</td>
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<td>Weather</td>
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<td>Limited access to capital</td>
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<td>Scarcity of appropriately trained workforce</td>
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<td>Underemployment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell University/Ithaca College has reached limit on job growth</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downsizing</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutbacks on research dollars</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Tax supported agencies</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>High school taxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism - competition with better prepared areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underutilized waterfront</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High cost of parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commons - limited access</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of merchant/business organization and agreement</td>
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</table>

H-8
• Competition from mall and mail order business
• Too much attention on retail
• Competition from Elmira for manufacturing workers/companies
• Cannot attract larger manufacturing firms to City
• Dying out of successful local businesses and move of same
• Traffic
• Ithaca as geographic center of County
• City center
• Arts and Culture - Quality of life
• Visitors and tourist to build on
• Beauty of area
• Cayuga Lake
• Talented labor pool
• Stable employment

X
X
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X
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<th>TOPIC</th>
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<td>School system</td>
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<td>Strong residential neighborhoods</td>
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<td>Civic minded people</td>
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<td>Land use enables development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Department record in attracting funding</td>
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<td>Three diverse marketing areas in City: Commons, Elmira Road., Collegetown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong human service support system</td>
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<td>Infrastructure is expandable</td>
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<td>Airport - good service</td>
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<td>Growing intermunicipal cooperation</td>
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<td>Technical Resources (for economic development)</td>
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<td>Growing tolerance for economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for excellent telecommunications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for reaching external markets for locally created products</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic properties</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Great potential for waterfront development</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of improved industrial land</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Regulatory Environment: Taxes, Land Use, Zoning and Environmental Review

Opportunities
- Consolidated approach to economic development
- Land use enables development
- Growing intermunicipal cooperation
- Obvious opportunities such as waterfront development—lip service and studies, but limited action
- The review/approval/permitting obstacle course. Need an effective clearing house/customer-friendly ombudsman to help those who might want to develop here.

Constraints
- Multiple layers of government drives up cost of doing business
- State aid - Rural county
- Image of NYS as tax hell
- More regulations in City
- Construction cost higher in City
- Land cost higher in City
- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Limited space for development
- High trash disposal costs
- “Endless” approval process
- Duplication of bureaucracy and services
- High percentage of tax exempt property
- Absentee land/property owners
- Donut effect - migration of pop./business to other areas in county
- Litter in City
- Increasing economic and financial polarity
- Tax supported agencies
- High school taxes
- Underutilized waterfront
- High cost of parking
- Too much attention on retail
- Dying out of successful local businesses and move of same
- General economic climate in NY state does not help local economies compete for development. Problems include taxes, high energy costs and Workman's Comp.
- Need more mixed-use neighborhoods. Allowed, however, that this might be wishful thinking as the market tends to influence such things
- Zoning is too reactive, inflexible and preventive
- Serious lack of effective intergovernmental cooperation
- Local government (Ithaca) not exactly on cutting edge in terms of aggressive pursuit of economic development
- The review/approval/permitting obstacle course. Need an effective clearing house and customer-friendly ombudsman to help those who might want to develop here.

2. Physical Infrastructure: Roads, Utilities, Transportation, Communications
Opportunities
- Develop West State St./West End in way that compliments CBD
- Good infrastructure: water, transit, solid waste
- Computer infrastructure
- Airport
- Public Transit
- Ithaca as geographic center of County
- City center
- Beauty of area
- Cayuga Lake
- Strong residential neighborhoods
- Infrastructure is expandable
- Airport - good service
- Potential for excellent telecommunications
- Historic properties
- Great potential for waterfront development
- Availability of improved industrial land
- Striking geographic setting

Constraints
- Transportation - Ithaca is "centrally isolated"
- Physical environment: steep topography, poor soils
- Distribution of water and sewer facilities
- Transportation services
- High Cost of Energy
- No Real Gateway to the City
- Lack of Developable Land
- Location with respect to dealing with State agencies
- Poor highway connections
- Limited freight trucking
- Air service limited and costly
- Deteriorating housing stock
- Commons - limited access
- Traffic
- Isolation from major urban centers—not conveniently located in the regional and national transportation network
- Downtown nighttime activity is reduced by the absence of residential development
- More attention to short-term impacts of improvements that are made such as Meadow Street. Need to better identify potential negative impacts and move to stabilize the situation.

3. Social/Educational Infrastructure

Opportunities
- Creative, dynamic social service sector
· Capitalize on influx of new transient population
· Creative arts community
· Highly educated workforce
· Talent pool of activists
· Research and Development at CU
· Strong academic community
· Human Service agencies
· Opportunity to develop "can do" attitude
· Strong entrepreneurial spirit
· Arts and Culture - Quality of life
· Talented labor pool
· School system

Constraints
· High rate of underemployment
· Entry level training programs
· Local hiring practices by local employers
· Transient population
· Limited high-tech transfers by Cornell Univ.
· Negative view of school district
· Possible out migration of young people
· Low paying jobs
· Need affordable day care
· Drugs, crime and public safety
· Scarcity of appropriately trained workforce
· Underemployment
· CU/IC has reached limit on job growth
· Downsizing
· Suffering the impacts of a declining student enrollment (is true?)

Opportunities
· Economy is recession proof
· Active local financial institutions
· Low cost area for high-tech business
· Effectively used financial incentives
· Stable employment
· Planning Dept. record in attracting funding
· Growing manufacturing sector

Constraints
· High cost of development
· Lack of venture capital for other than high-tech businesses
· Limited access to capital
· Development of service jobs
· Not a diversified economy
· Limited high tech transfers by Cornell Univ.
· CUIC has reached limit on job growth
· Downsizing
5. Marketing and Promotion/Quality of Life

Opportunities

- Physical environment: natural beauty of area, high quality
- Viable CBD
- More effective programs to bring cu/ic employees into CBD
- Capitalize on research efforts at CUIIC
- “Exploit” local history
- High quality of life; culture and sports
- Chamber of Commerce
- Scenic beauty - Tourism
- Possibilities to lower cost of housing
- Visitors and tourist to build on
- Three diverse marketing areas in City: Commons, Elmira Rd., Collegetown
- Growing tolerance for economic development
- Potential for reaching external markets for locally created products
- A high level of sophistication, culture and education make this area a magnet for many people seeking this living environment. a "University Town".
- Isolation from major urban centers—not conveniently located in the regional and national transportation network
- Above average opportunity to exploit ex-urban/technological movement. Might compensate somewhat for the physical connections deficiency
- More aggressive pursuit of the tourist dollar
- Not effectively “selling” the services and opportunities that are available in this community.

Constraints

- Poor marketing of unique assets
- High cost of living, especially housing
- Lack of ED goals and consistency of ED message
- Lack of marketing program that capitalizes on unique nature of area - Quality of life issues
- Reputation as a difficult place to do business
- Different versions of Ithaca
- Housing costs too high for working people
- High housing cost
- Perceived parking and traffic problems
- Perception of City not being favorable to business
- Outmigration of potential contributors to economic development
- Weather
- Tourism - competition with better prepared areas
- Lack of merchant/business organization and agreement
- Competition from mall and mail order business
- Competition from Elmira for manufacturing workers/companies
- Cannot attract larger manufacturing firms to City
• High cost of living in this area affects the employment base and leads to high level of in-commutation
• Downtown suffers from a perception v. reality problem. Examples: there is no place to park; it's not safe; stores are never open
• Reluctance to change the "image" of a bucolic small town
• Absence of common vision of what we want to or could become
TOPIC - OPPORTUNITIES
1. Consolidated approach to economic development
1. Land use enables development
1. Growing intermunicipal cooperation
1. Obvious opportunities such as waterfront development—lip service and studies, but limited action
1. The review/approval/permitting obstacle course. Need an effective clearing house & customer-friendly ombudsman to help those wanting to develop here
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2. Infrastructure is expandable
2. Airport - good service
2. Potential for excellent telecommunications
2. Historic properties
2. Great potential for waterfront development
2. Availability of improved industrial land
2. Striking geographic setting
2. Asset rich: stable employment, quality of life, viable CBD, local underemployed population, active population
3. Creative, dynamic social service sector
3. Capitalize on influx of new, transient population
3. Creative arts community
3. Local purchasing by major institutions
3. Highly educated workforce
3. Talent pool of activists
3. Research and Development at CU
3. Strong academic community
3. Human Service agencies
3. Opportunity to develop “can do” attitude
3. Consolidation of human services
3. Strong entrepreneurial spirit
3. Growing manufacturing sector
3. Arts and Culture - Quality of life
3. Talented labor pool
3. School system
3. Civic minded people
3. Strong human service support system
3. Technical Resources (for economic development)
3. Impacts of a large transient population
3. Absence of a strong infrastructure that would attract professionals. Need for a downtown incubator and improved telecommunications network
3. Strong and effective school system, both Ithaca and County
3. Economy is recession proof
4. Active local financial institutions
4. Low cost area for high-tech business
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4. Stable employment
4. Planning Dept. record in attracting funding
4. Physical environment: natural beauty of area, high quality
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5. Capitalize on research efforts at CU/IC
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5. Not effectively "selling" the services and opportunities that are available in this community.

**TOPIC: CONSTRAINTS**

1. Multiple layers of government drives up cost of doing business
1. State aid - Rural county
1. Image of NYS as tax hell
1. More regulations in City
1. Construction cost higher in City
1. Land cost higher in City
1. Environmentally sensitive areas
1. Limited space for development
1. High trash disposal costs
1. "Endless" approval process
1. Duplication of bureaucracy and services
1. High percentage of tax exempt property
2. Absentee land/property owners
3. Donut effect - migration of pop./business to other areas in county
4. Litter in City
5. Increasing economic and financial polarity
6. Tax supported agencies
7. High school taxes
8. Underutilized waterfront
9. High cost of parking
10. Too much attention on retail
11. Dying out of successful local businesses and move of same
12. General economic climate in NY state does not help local economies compete for development. Problems include taxes, high energy costs and workers comp.
13. Need more mixed-use neighborhoods. Allowed, however, that this might be wishful thinking as the market tends to influence such things
14. Zoning is too reactive, inflexible and preventive
15. Serious lack of effective intergovernmental cooperation
16. Local government (Ithaca) not exactly on cutting edge in terms of aggressive pursuit of economic development
17. The review/approval/permitting obstacle course. Need an effective clearing house and customer-friendly ombudsman to help those who might want to develop here.
18. Transportation - Ithaca is "centrally isolated"
19. Physical environment: steep topography, poor soils
20. Distribution of water and sewer facilities
21. Transportation services
22. High Cost of Energy
23. No Real Gateway to the City
24. Lack of Developable Land
25. Location with respect to dealing with State agencies
26. Poor highway connections
27. Limited freight trucking
28. Air service limited and costly
29. Deteriorating housing stock
30. Commons - limited access
31. Traffic
32. Isolation from major urban centers--not conveniently located in the regional and national transportation network
33. Downtown nighttime activity is reduced by the absence of residential development
34. More attention to short-term impacts of improvements that are made such as Meadow Street. Need to better identify potential negative impacts and move to stabilize the situation.
35. Dealing with social problems in way that doesn’t discourage people from coming into CBD
36. High rate of underemployment
37. Entry level training programs
38. Local hiring practices by local employers
39. Development of service jobs
3. Transient population
3. Not a diversified economy
3. Limited high-tech transfers by CU
3. Negative view of school district
3. Too much emphasis on negative attributes
3. Structural shift in economy - underemployment
3. Possible out migration of young people
3. Low paying jobs
3. Need affordable day care
3. Transient population
3. Drugs, crime and public safety
3. Scarcity of appropriately trained workforce
3. Underemployment
3. CU/IC has reached limit on job growth
3. Downsizing
3. Cutbacks on research dollars
3. Suffering the impacts of a declining student enrollment (is true?)
3. Student influence, through the ballot, on the makeup of local government
3. Impacts of a large transient population
3. Decline of research dollars felt in the local economy
3. Low unemployment rate, but extensive underemployment are conditions in Tompkins County. People come here to find work, but don't earn enough to live here or stimulate the local economy. We have a cheap but educated work force.
3. Absence of a strong infrastructure that would attract professionals. Need for a downtown incubator and improved telecommunications network
3. High cost of development
4. Lack of venture capital for other than high-tech businesses
4. Limited access to capital
4. Poor marketing of unique assets
5. High cost of living, especially housing
5. Lack of ED goals and consistency of ED message
5. Lack of marketing program that capitalizes on unique nature of area - Quality of life issues
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