# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY &amp; PROCESS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTREACH METHODS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST HILL AND WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, &amp; HUMAN SAFETY</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORTATION &amp; MOBILITY</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY LIFE</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTY IN THE PARK</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMIT</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT &amp; COMMUNITY LIFE</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORTATION &amp; MOBILITY</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEXT STEPS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Neighborhood Summit Flyer</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Organizations &amp; Representatives in Attendance at Roundtable Discussions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Roundtable Summary Fact Sheets</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Tabulation of Objective Prioritization</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Tour Map</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: West Hill / West End Neighborhood Summit Notes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G: Albany High School Workshop Mock RFP</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Albany is conducting a broad public engagement strategy as part of the West Hill West End Revitalization Plan. This report synthesizes the input received at several public and stakeholder meetings held primarily during the period between May 12th and 14th, 2016. Engagement activities included facilitation of an interactive planning exercise with Albany high school students, stakeholder roundtables, a party in Swinburne Park, and a neighborhood summit. In advance of these various meetings, the project team also attended a joint meeting of the West Hill and West End neighborhood associations. Meetings were facilitated by staff members of the City of Albany’s Department of Planning and Development as well as representatives from Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting LLC (“KDLLC”), the firm contracted by the City to oversee the initiative.

Stakeholder and summit participants were asked for feedback regarding five land use discussion topics:

- Neighborhood Economic Development
- Housing
- Environment, Health, and Human Safety
- Community Life
- Transportation and Mobility

Once the various engagement efforts concluded, staff compiled all recorded comments for review and analysis purposes. Staff examined these results to identify the participants’ most significant concerns and planning strategies. A few overall themes emerged from the public engagement process:

- Addressing the issue of public safety, both real and perceived, is of paramount importance if other strategies produced through the revitalization effort are to be successful.
- Improved education, workforce training, and career mentorship services are the preferred methods for indirectly addressing the prevalence of crime and illicit activities, while simultaneously improving employment and economic factors within the community.
- Housing issues within the community are varied and nuanced, and as such will require a comprehensive and collaborative approach amongst the various housing agencies and stakeholders at play.
- The pedestrian experience, including the existence of crosswalks, the quality of sidewalks, and the aesthetics of streetscape within the community are seen as achievable and high value improvements that can significantly enhance the mobility of residents and visitors within and around West Hill and West End, as well as, enrich overall community character.

The purpose of this Community Summit Report and the public engagement events observed within is trifold. First, the report will serve as a public record of the events held and comments received in order to memorialize the outreach process of the West Hill West End Revitalization Plan. Furthermore, the information and anecdotes collected throughout the engagement process will be instrumental in expanding and validating data presented within the project’s Existing Conditions Report. Above all, however, the public input memorialized within this report will guide the forthcoming strategy building process of the West Hill West End Revitalization Plan, thereby ensuring that the plan is community-based and addresses those issues identified as most pertinent by neighborhood residents and stakeholders.
INTRODUCTION

The West Hill and West End neighborhoods serve as a home for a diverse and vibrant group of Albany’s residents. Located a short distance from the city’s downtown, the West Hill and West End neighborhoods are anchored by a strong commercial corridor along Central Avenue, historic architecture, and large green spaces such as Tivoli Preserve and Swinburne Park. Despite these many assets, the two neighborhoods face a range of challenges that have been magnified by disinvestment over recent years. The City of Albany’s Department of Planning and Development has embarked upon a revitalization initiative with the aim of overcoming challenges faced by the community in order to promote a West Hill and West End that is economically vibrant, with safe and walkable streets, and a high quality of life. Community input and local buy-in play a foundational role in the revitalization process, and are considered essential to the initiative’s success.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

The City, along with KDLLC, held a series of neighborhood and stakeholder meetings to collect feedback from West Hill and West End residents. The primary purpose of these meeting was to identify priority issues, assets, challenges, and strategies with regard to the five topic areas. City staff and KDLLC solicited participation in the meetings using websites, flyers, postcards, mailings, social media, press releases, and electronic announcements. Following this outreach effort, KDLLC staff held two high school involvement sessions, five stakeholder roundtable sessions, a party in the park, a neighborhood summit, and a tailored neighborhood association presentation. Methodology for these outreach efforts and meetings is described below.

OUTREACH METHODS

The City and KDLLC advertised and solicited resident and stakeholder participation in the West Hill-West End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan in several ways. A website was created at https://reimaginewesthillwestend.com as a place for interested citizens to find out more regarding the planning initiative and future engagement efforts. Flyers were printed and distributed throughout the neighborhood; at local businesses; at the City’s Planning and Department offices; and by neighborhood association representatives. City staff emailed a collective group of interested organizations and religious organizations to ask for their assistance in reaching additional people. Further, the City distributed electronic announcements of this public engagement process to City staff and through placed announcements in the City’s local papers and news outlets. Appendix A presents the outreach flyer which was disseminated in posters, electronic announcements, and emails.

After informing the neighborhood community about this public engagement process, KDLLC staff held the following meetings in Albany to gather public input:
Below is a summary of each event.

WEST HILL AND WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING

Approximately 30 representatives from the West Hill and West Neighborhood associations attended a joint meeting on April 28th. The purpose of this meeting was to inform members of the association about the neighborhood planning process and invite their participation in the activities planned for the community summit. Kevin Dwarka, managing principal for KDLLC, led the meeting. In attendance was a senior planner from Albany’s Department of Planning and Development as well as three elected officials. During the meeting, residents voiced a number of key concerns that included code enforcement, animal control, and public safety. Residents also provided critical feedback on the marketing materials for the summit and made suggestions for improving the clarity of the text. Residents also volunteered to distribute flyers and posters about the summit in order to maximize participation.

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Working with the Albany High School principal, administrative staff, and innovation principals and teachers, KDLLC and City staff engaged students in an interactive planning exercise. Staff began the exercise by presenting the students with a brief overview of urban planning, staff background and job responsibilities within the West Hill / West End revitalization effort, and a brief description of existing opportunities and challenges that characterize the West Hill and West End neighborhoods. Students were then presented with a mock request for proposals (“RFP”) (see Appendix G) for a redevelopment project in the study area. Members of KDLLC drafted the RFP and asked students to form small groups and work as a “planning firm” to respond to the request with an outreach plan and various planning interventions.

City and KDLLC staff acted as facilitators to the student’s planning efforts encouraging them to explore both physical and programmatic interventions in order to respond to challenges faced by the community. Students were provided an 11x17 inch map of the neighborhood on which to draw their proposed plans, and then asked to present their proposals to the class as a mock “interview” to the selection committee. The students were encouraged to be creative and innovative, but also to ground their proposals in facts presented at the beginning of the exercise. While the more grandiose proposals included a zoo in Tivoli Preserve and Venice-like canals through resident’s back yards as a source of natural space and transportation by boat, many proposals included sound recommendations such as increased transportation connectivity via CDTA improvements and pedestrian...
walkways; the creation of a mixed housing stock through rehabilitation and housing development; and youth outreach and empowerment programs to engage young residents early and help them thrive.

STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

KDLLC and City staff held a series of five roundtable discussion at the Department of Planning & Development offices at 200 Henry Johnson Blvd. on Friday May 13th from 9:00am until 3:00pm. The five topic areas discussed throughout the day included:

- Neighborhood Economic Development
- Housing
- Transportation & Mobility
- Environment, Health, & Human Safety
- Community Life

Each roundtable session lasted approximately 45 minutes and was attended by representatives from various agencies and organizations from Albany and the greater Capital Region currently involved in the provision of programs and services within one of the five topic areas. Each roundtable began with introductions and quick summaries of the services and programs offered by each organization. Attendees were then asked to identify tasks within the consulting team’s purview that could be pursued in order to improve the effectiveness of their respective organization. A full list of the organizations and representatives in attendance at the roundtables is included in Appendix B and the summary fact sheets distributed to attendees at each roundtable are shown in Appendix C. The information gathered through roundtable discussions was both detailed and nuanced. The main themes of each discussion are summarized below.

NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The topic of neighborhood economic development encompasses all economic dimensions of the West Hill and West End neighborhoods including local businesses, employment opportunities, workforce development and skills training. For this reason, a range of local institutions, organizations, and agencies were invited to attend the roundtable, including Capitalize Albany Corporation, the Central Avenue Business Improvement District (“BID”), Schenectady County Community College, the Department of Youth & Workforce Development, and Albany Community Action Partnership amongst others. During the roundtable, the need to better support and engage local businesses within the community was touched upon briefly. However, the bulk of the conversation centered upon strategies for improving the education and employability of local residents. Within this conversation, the need for tailored workforce development programs specifically designed to engage youth and formerly incarcerated residents, two significant populations within the West Hill and West End community, was a common theme.

In regards to local businesses support, the roundtable discussion centered upon challenges and strategies for better supporting the entrepreneurial activities of residents and better connecting local businesses to the residents of West Hill and West End. Since its creation in 1998, the Central Avenue BID has made substantial
strides to improve business activity along the neighborhoods’ main commercial corridor. However, many roundtable attendees felt that further improvements could be made in regards to the way in which local businesses advertise and engage with West Hill and West End residents. One suggested strategy for this topic was to encourage increased patronage through marketing and discounts for local residents, and to encourage local employers to hire from within the community and provide a living-wage.

In addition to the more formalized local business community, the West Hill and West End neighborhoods also house a significant amount of informal or “creative” entrepreneurial activities such as car washing, automobile maintenance, and the selling of homemade goods. Due to the informality of these services, they are not always acknowledged or permitted as productive activity by the local police department and other formal organizations. Building relationships and understanding between all parties and providing a path for formalization of these activities were suggested as potential solutions. The Central Avenue BID’s current plans to establish a “business incubator” within the former St. Patrick’s Catholic School on Central Avenue was suggested as one means of validating these “cottage industry” activities by providing a space for local entrepreneurs to share knowledge and resources and seek guidance for building their business.

The conversation quickly shifted from local business support to workforce development as issues of education and skills training were brought up. While a number of workforce development, certification, and skills training programs are currently available to the community, roundtable participants discussed ways to better connect these services with resident and funding opportunities, and to build a stronger connection between training and job placement. Representatives from Albany Community Action Partnership (“ACAP”) highlighted an important issue they face in securing trainers or teachers to carry out the various training programs they provide. Additionally, it has proven difficult for ACAP to find businesses and employers willing to offer apprenticeships and internships so that trainees can gain real life work experience subsequent to their initial training. In fact, the issue has been such a challenge for ACAP and other organizations in the past that available wage subsidies have gone unused because the organization was unable to find employers willing to accept trainees and participate in the program.

In addition to securing trainers and employers for mentorship opportunities, roundtable attendees also voiced a need to cultivate better alignment between the training programs offered and skillsets currently in demand by top employers within the region. For example, an uptick in development in the region has born a significant demand for specialized welders within the construction industry. However, one attendee claimed that training programs for specific welding skills are not currently offered within the City, only general welding course. This was identified as an issue in need of attention since the generality of curriculum leaves students less than job ready when the time comes to enter the professional job market.

Funding was also identified as a significant challenge for soft-skills training programs and barrier reduction programs that aim to connect job-seeking residents with services such as transportation, daycare, and healthcare assistance. These “softer” services are often overlooked despite the crucial role they play in making sure that residents can not only get to their new jobs, but also maintain the health and assistance necessary to keep said
job. It was requested by the roundtable attendees that innovative financing mechanism for these types of services also be investigated within the West Hill / West End Neighborhood Plan.

HOUSING
A wide range of housing organizations and agencies were invited to the Housing Roundtable in the hopes of eliciting a comprehensive discussion of the current housing challenges and opportunities within West Hill and West End. Organizations such as the Albany County Land Bank, Albany Housing Authority, the City’s Code Enforcement Division, and Habitat for Humanity were invited in order to speak to issues of site control, housing rehabilitation and maintenance, and development. The needs of housing consumers, both renters and owners, were represented by non-profit organizations such as Albany Housing Coalition and United Tenants, as well as the Albany Community Development Agency. Additionally, expertise on housing financing was represented through organizations such as the Affordable Housing Partnership and Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region (CLFCR).

Although not directly within attendee’s purview, it was noted early on in the conversation that education and income play a significant role in housing affordability and unit maintenance from the consumer side of the market. Youth outreach, public education, and the championing of sustainable income were identified as indirect but crucial factors that many attendees believed would go far to improve housing in the community. Programs such as Albany Promise¹ and initiatives to improve perception of the community were identified as mechanisms to aid revitalization by inspiring social change and pride in the community, including its housing stock.

As is typical in a community with a significant proportion of vacant and abandoned units, absentee and disinvested landlords were identified as a significant issue within the neighborhood. New policies and stricter penalties by Code Enforcement were suggested as one way of addressing this issue. The two other topics that monopolized a large portion of the discussion were 1) the preference of homeownership vs. renter assistance and 2) the creation of an inter-agency task force to comprehensively address the nuanced and interrelated housing issues faced by the community.

Opposing perspectives as to whether homeownership or rental programs would best address the community’s needs were presented at the roundtable. It was suggested that better case management and counseling was needed in both areas in order to navigate residents through the necessary procedures and programs available to them. Representatives from the Affordable Housing Partnership stated that their interactions with clients in the past have highlighted a need and desire for homeownership in the community. One strategy suggested in order to improve homeownership rates within the neighborhood was the construction of co-operative residential buildings. Suggested strategies for renter assistance included improved outreach and education regarding section 8 housing assistance, and replacement of the existing “first come, first serve” policy with a needs-based policy as the procedure for dictating how affordable housing units are allocated. Additionally, the preservation of

¹ Albany Promise is a regional, cross-sector partnership where community leaders in Albany, New York come together to support a shared cradle to career education vision. Comprised of education, community, business, civic and philanthropic leaders, the organization has set out to ensure the success of Albany’s youth.

Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting | 8
affordable housing units and larger units for families was identified as a necessity in both the rental and for sale housing markets.

Finally, the need for a unified work plan promulgated through an inter-agency, block-by-block approach was discussed as a potential strategy to address the issue of abandoned and dilapidated housing throughout the community. The reasoning for such a strategy is that the issues of rent burden and dilapidated housing are not typically attributable to any one cause. Rather, a convoluted and interdependent web of factors typically play causal roles of varying degree. It was thus suggested that the sole means of effectively and comprehensively addressing the myriad of factors would be to assemble a task force of all housing related agencies within the community, and create a roadmap through which they can begin to systematically address the issue of abandoned and vacant buildings within West Hill and West End. In order to assist this task force, the roadmap should be paired with best practices research regarding housing policy and program outreach for both renter and ownership programs. Identification of creative funding options and potential partnerships to secure financing should also be investigated in order to assist the task force with the implementation of strategies.

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, & HUMAN SAFETY
The Environment, Health, & Human Safety (“EHHS”) Roundtable sought to discuss all aspects of the West Hill and West End community that have an ability to affect the physical and mental well-being of residents. This topic includes issues such as air pollution, litter, access to healthcare, and exposure to violence and crime. Representatives from the Albany Fire Department and City Code Enforcement Division were invited to weigh in on issues caused by dilapidated and hazardous buildings within the community. The Albany Police Department, represented by the Neighborhood Engagement Unit and Beat Patrol officers assigned to the West Hill and West end neighborhoods, were asked to attend in order to share their knowledge and on-the-ground experience with community engagement and street safety. Finally, representatives from the City Parks Department and the Sustainability Division were in attendance to speak to the safety and cleanliness of the community’s recreational and natural spaces.

The discussion centered considerably on public safety, specifically with regards to issues of drug abuse, crime, and the perception of safety within West Hill and West End. Two spatial areas of contention repeatedly identified by the group included corner stores and abandoned buildings. Although there have been reported improvements over recent years, groups gathering outside of corner stores have long since been associated with drug and gambling activities within the community. While the police department has increased relationships with residents and patrols in order to subdue violence and illegal activities around these areas and in the in the neighborhoods in general, the Department is also exploring the potential of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (“CEPTED”) interventions in the area as an alternative to increased police presences. It was suggested during the roundtable that this type of initiative could be aided through the identification of “hot spots” within West Hill and West End.

Abandoned and vacant properties within the neighborhood were identified by the group as another area of contention that seems to invite trespassing, squatters, and other undesirable activities. Hotspots for this issue include Quail Street between 1st and 3rd Street, Judson Street between 1st & 3rd Street, and 2nd Street. Similar to
the housing roundtable, the EHHS group identified the issue of abandoned structures as a complex matter that could potentially be addressed through a variety of initiatives. Since the City Code Enforcement Division is currently in the process of updating their records system, it was suggested that this process would benefit from collaboration with the Fire and Police Departments to identify specific “problem areas” within the community that experience the highest volume of negative activities. Another suggested strategy included the investigation of legal alternatives and resources that could be used by Code Enforcement in order to pursue buildings that are not yet collapsing, but are nonetheless detrimental to the community. Ownership of “zombie properties” and the identification of absentee land owners was another issue brought up during the roundtable discussion. From the perspective of safety and resources, it was voiced that a vacant lot may be preferable to an abandoned distressed building, and that demolition should thus be a priority. A counter point was made, however, that increased ownership and the reduction of vacant lots within the community leads to more “eyes on the street,” a fundamental component of safe streets philosophy. The argument was thus made that rehabilitation should be prioritized over demolition whenever possible.

In addition to identifying locations of illegal activity within the community, the group also discussed various strategies targeting the larger causes of illicit and unproductive activity amongst residents. As alternatives to reactionary police enforcement, initiatives for education, youth outreach, and diversion programs such as Project LEAD$^2$ were identified as efforts that should be prioritized as more sustainable solutions to public safety issues within the community. Information regarding the Youth Cadet program and the desirability of police and fire as career options was identified as a specific strategy for simultaneously increasing youth engagement and long-term strategies for discouraging illegal and harmful activities. Also, better relations and communication between police officers and creative entrepreneurs was suggested in order to ensure that non-dangerous productive activities by residents are not mistaken for, or treated as, criminal offenses.

Another safety issue discussed during the roundtable was illegal ATV usage in Tivoli Preserve, which disrupts that natural environment and discourage pedestrians from using the trails. Additionally, the lack of planned activity and overgrowth on trails has reinforced a perception within the community that Tivoli Preserve is unsafe. Increased programing and clearing of trails would make important advances in changing the perception of this unique and underutilized community asset. Corporate or resident sponsored park clean-ups, such as the Southwest Airlines partnership at Swinburne and Bleecker Parks, or the U Albany clean-up at Livingston Park, is one potential model that could be used to improve the real and perceived safety of Tivoli Preserve.

**TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY**

The roundtable for Transportation & Mobility was organized to discuss all the issues and challenges that currently affect how West Hill and West End residents move around their neighborhood, their City, and the Capital Region at large in order to reach a range of desired destinations. Attendees at the Transportation & Mobility Roundtable included the Capital District Transportation Authority (“CDTA”) to speak to the operations of the existing bus network, Albany Parking Authority and the City’s Traffic Engineering Division to highlight issues of vehicle

---

2 The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program is a community-based police diversion approach to addressing the population involved in the criminal justice system often because of addiction, mental illness, and poverty.

*Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting* | 10
movement and storage, and representatives from Capital Car Share and the Albany Complete Streets Initiative to represent topics such as pedestrian safety and alternative modes of transportation. A significant portion of the roundtable discussion centered on access and efficiency of CDTA bus routes within West Hill and West End, followed by a discussion of various issues and upgrades slated for roadways and parking lots within the study area.

A representative from CDTA began the roundtable with a discussion of all the various bus routes currently serving West Hill and West End, their peak hour frequencies, and the destinations they serve. Despite a common perception that the study area is underserved by public transportation, it was pointed out to the group that the study area is in fact one of the areas with the highest density of transit services within the CDTA system, and that many important destinations around the City are accessible via a “one-seat trip.” In fact, Central Avenue, serviced by 905 Bus Select Route and the local Route 1, has the highest ridership within the system and is often subject to overcrowding. While CDTA recognizes this as an issue, vehicular capacity and operating costs preclude CDTA from significant expansion along the line at this time. The affordability and efficiency of bus service was also discussed, as well as strategies for better connecting residents to unserved or underserved regional employment centers.

Increased utilization of Capital CarShare\(^{3}\) and the installation of an improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure through the Albany Complete Streets Initiative were suggested as interventions that could be promoted to supplement the bus network and improve first-last-mile connections for residents. The utilization and marketing of car share as an alternative to car ownership was specifically discussed as an alternative for budget constrained households. Capital CarShare currently records low ridership amongst West Hill and West End residents despite the location of two stations near the study area. Before creating specific strategies for improved membership, the Capital Car Share suggested that exploratory research would be useful in order to assess whether visibility, education, cost, or perhaps some other factor is acting as the main barrier for West Hill and West End residents. The Complete Streets Plan, slated to be released later this summer, was also mentioned as a tool, that if implemented, could significantly improve the reasonableness of walking and biking as alternative modes of moving around the study area safely.

The Parking Authority, who manages and maintains ten park-n-ride lots between Henry Johnson Boulevard and Quail Street near multiple bus routes along Central Avenue, is working with the Central Avenue BID to explore ways of beautifying the park-n-ride lots through urban art in order to create a safer and more attractive pedestrian environment. It was also identified that many lots west of Lake Avenue are relatively underutilized and are rarely more than fifty percent full throughout the day. In addition to lot beautification, the Authority is also working towards the installation of a unified parking systems with consistent meter types and cost. The Traffic Engineering Department is attempting to add more interactive and advanced pedestrian crosswalks as they move through scheduled signal replacements. However, the department typically only receives funding for 6-8 signal upgrades a year, and since the study area is not identified as a high traffic area, and Henry Johnson Boulevard received

---

\(^{3}\) Capital CarShare is new community network of vehicles that offers residents the use of a personal vehicle without the hassles of owning, insuring, maintaining, or parking said vehicle.
upgrades installed in 2006, the department is unsure if any improvements will be slotted for the study area in the upcoming year.

Other issues identified during the transportation and mobility discussion include the activities of private bus companies who provide service from Albany and high profile destinations such as New York and Boston parking illegally along Central Avenue. These bus services are seen as an affordable option for many residents, and thus provide a service to the community, but should be collaborated with in order to minimize adverse impacts. Vehicles illegally double parking was also identified as a city-wide issue, but one that is specifically common along Central Avenue. Anecdotal information regarding petty cabs outside of social service establishments threatening to discontinue service if harassed for double parking was also shared.

COMMUNITY LIFE
The topic of Community Life includes all social activities, cultural events, parks and recreational programs that have the ability to influence residents’ quality and enjoyment of life. Invites to the roundtable included a representative from the Arbor/West Hill Public Library, Parks Department, Neighborhood Associations, and religious institutions. Capital Roots, a regional organization that promotes community gardening and healthy food access, and Art Partners, a local non-profit performing arts studio, were also present at the roundtable. The majority of conversation and main conclusion of this discussion session centered upon the fact that various improvements in public safety are of the upmost priority within the community in order for social and cultural programs to thrive.

Overlapping with comments made during the Environment, Health, and Human Safety Roundtable, corner stores were identified as prime locations within the community that seem to attract congregations of people and often illicit activity. Although loitering in front of a convenient store is not inherently disruptive or to be discouraged, negative and illegal activities at a select number of shops within West Hill and West End are affecting the ability of certain establishments and programs to thrive. For example, one roundtable attendee explained that the intensity and frequency of illicit and violent activity in front their establishment on Ontario Street has significantly impacted their ability to offer a safe and positive space for youth within the community. Additionally, the Capital Roots program reported that their Healthy Stores Program has been discouraged from partnering with many corner store businesses within the study area due to suspected illegal or unfavorable activity. The City of Schenectady and City of Troy were identified as potential models of a municipalities that have begun to address the issue of an over-proliferation of convenient stores through use of building moratoriums and zoning ordinances.

Again, alternatives to police enforcement were suggested as preferred methods for dealing with issue of crime and drug use that seems to proliferate throughout the community. Suggestions included bank sponsored drug rehabilitation programs, co-operative markets where residents possess partial ownership and thus have a vested interest in the store’s success, boycotting of stores detrimental to the community, and using New York City’s Cure Violence program as a model for training former offenders to be youth mentors. Additionally, one attendee specifically identified the former AUMS Methodist Community Center at 340 1st Street as important provider of food, counseling, and assistance for struggling residents in the community. The Center is under threat of getting

Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting | 12
closed down, and attendees felt that it was imperative to explore funding mechanisms and strategies for saving this crucial community institution.

Due to an overlap of discussion between the Community Life Roundtable and the EHHS Roundtable, it was decided that the two topic areas would be best served if they were combined into one topic area - Environment & Community Life. Thus, during the Neighborhood Summit strategy sessions described below, the participants were asked to discuss issues and solutions for only four topic areas.

PARTY IN THE PARK

City staff, KDLLC, and the Central Improvement District organized a “Party in the Park,” to bring neighborhood residents together to socialize, prioritize objectives, and be together in one of the neighborhood’s unique assets, Swinburne Park. Free food, music, and children’s activities were provided. An art gallery was created by both young and old. Face painting was provided to children and a local food caterer provided corn dogs, fried oreos, French fries, and water. Although an official count was not taken, it is estimated that the event received approximately 100 attendees throughout the evening.

Amongst the socializing, participants took time to imagine the future of the West Hill-West Neighborhood by prioritizing objectives from the 2014 West Hill-West End Neighborhood Plan. Attendees were asked to place stickers next to the top four objectives that they felt were most relevant for improvement in the community. The results are summarized below and Appendix D shows the complete tabulation of “sticker votes.”

A total of 152 sticker votes were cast during the two-and-a-half-hour event. At four stickers per person this translates to approximately 38 participants. The four objectives that received the greatest number of votes in decreasing order were “Increase landlord involvement in property maintenance” (15), “Work with the Albany Police Department to improve neighborhood-police relations” (14), “Provide interview training to increase employment among local residents” (14), and “Improve the exterior appearance of housing and streets in West Hill and West End” (13). Three of these four objectives fall beneath the goal of creating a welcoming environment in West Hill and West End, the same goal area that received nearly half (48%) of all votes cast. Within the world class education and workforce goal, the objective to “Improve mentoring opportunities that connect school and neighborhoods” (12) received the largest number of votes.

NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMIT

Neighborhood residents, local officials, City staff, not-for-profits, religious leaders, business leaders, and others participated on Saturday May 14th for the reImagine West Hill-West End Neighborhood Summit. The Summit took place from 9am to 3pm at Philip Schuyler Academy at 676 Clinton Avenue. Participants were asked to sign in and were presented with an agenda of the day. Following a welcome by Mayor Kathy Sheehan and Planning Director Chris Spencer, consultant Kevin Dwarka walked the attendees through an existing conditions assessment of West Hill and West End. The group then headed outside for a tour around the neighborhood to observe real life
examples of various issues and opportunities related to four topic areas- Neighborhood Economic Development, Housing, Environment & Community Life⁴, and Transportation & Mobility. A member of the KDLLC staff led the group discussion and prompted participants to examine unique areas and issues during the tour. Participants had a tour map and observation questions associated with each of the four topic areas. Appendix E shows the route taken on the observation tour.

Following the tour, the group reconvened to brainstorm and prioritize strategies to address the issues observed and discussed. For each discussion topic, the facilitator asked the participants the following questions and recorded all responses using a large paper flip-chart, markers, and easel:

- What issues did you see along the tour? Are these issues reflected in the larger neighborhood area? Are there other issues?
- What are some strategies to overcome what is not working? (What new things can we do to make it better? What opportunities are there? Where can we make these opportunities happen?)

At the end of the day, participants voted for their top three favorite strategies through small dots provided to them. Appendix F are the notes recorded, along with the number of votes received. After participants discussed all four topics, the public meeting concluded, and the City staff thanked participants and announced how they could access meeting results and submit more comments. Below is a summarization of participant responses during both the summit tour and strategy session.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In regards to neighborhood economic development, issue identification during both the observation tour and the strategy session centered largely upon services and features missing from Central Avenue, the major commercial corridor within the study area, and a lack of provision and information regarding education opportunities and workforce training for West Hill and West End residents. A list of services and shops that summit participants feel are not sufficiently represented within the study area include a grocery store within easy walking distance, pharmacies, a movie theatre, a department store that offers shoes and clothing, and a stationary shop. Additionally, it was voiced that good marketing, branding, and beautification measures are features currently missing from the Central Avenue corridor. In general, a lack of job training, workforce development and education services was also identified as a concern for many summit participants.

Strategies for improving local businesses along Central Avenue and within the neighborhoods covered a range of ideas. In terms of increasing the patronage and success of local businesses, recommendations included providing more support programs for small local businesses, identifying additional funding opportunities for the Central Avenue BID, and the creation of a “shopping experience” along the avenue through the addition of coffee shops,

---

⁴ The topic areas of Community Life and Environment, Health, & Human Safety were combined to create one topic area, Environment & Community Life, following the identification of significant overlap between the two topics during the May 13th roundtable discussions.
outdoor seating, and facade improvements. It was then suggested that businesses could better market their establishments to the community through a community resource directory, ads and coupons in local newspapers, and special discounts for local residents. Additionally, the potential of site assembly and the presence of an existing parking garage near 470 Central Avenue was identified as an opportunity to be explored in order to examine the potential of new mixed-use development along the corridor. A site of this size was also suggested as potential draw for larger uses such as a department store or grocery store, which were previously identified as uses missing from the existing retail mix within the area.

Strategies for improving workforce development and job retention for community residents included the creation of and support for apprenticeships and mentorship programs. Specifically, a bike repair program was suggested where youth and adults in the neighborhood could learn the skill of bike assembly and maintenance, with the added incentive of keeping the bike at the end of the program. Another strategy included the empowerment of formerly incarcerated residents by helping them into entrepreneurship and re-integration programs.

**HOUSING**

In regards to housing, issue identification during both the observation tour and the strategy session touched upon a range of topics including, a lack of mixed-use development (residential uses on top of commercial and retail uses) within areas of the community other than Central Avenue, a lack of home ownership opportunities, and a lack of understanding regarding the Land Bank’s role within the neighborhood. The affordability of housing as a specific hardship of seniors within the community was also mentioned. Attendees identified a lack of affordable senior housing, including one level living, which would allow for elderly to age in place. Additionally, it was suggested that many senior homeowners in the area may find it hard to keep up with City maintenance requirements without assistance. Another issue mentioned was the negative perception of affordable housing such as Bleecker Terrace and Capital Green.

In order to encourage mixed-use development, it was suggested that property owners should receive more guidance and information regarding what they can and cannot legally do with their property. Information and assistance with navigating the zoning code and approval process may also prove beneficial for land owners. Additionally, the construction of condominiums, new affordable housing, and creation of co-ownership opportunities between extended families were suggested as strategies for increasing the diversity of housing stock and tenure options within the community. In terms of helping renters in the community, suggested strategies included preservation of large (3+ bedroom) units, creation of a profile of existing housing types with cost info, and deterrence of wrongful evictions and selective renting practices by landlords.

Similar to the housing roundtable discussion on May 13th, a block-by-block initiative facilitated through a partnership between the Albany Housing Authority, Land Bank, the City Codes Enforcement Division, and other housing agencies was suggested as a potential strategy for addressing the issues of vacant and dilapidated housing within the study area. It was also suggested that murals and painted window boards could be used as short term fixes to improve the aesthetic of vacant structures. Strategies to ensure that elderly residents of West Hill and West End are able to comfortably age in place included a “youth handyman” program to assist seniors in
maintaining their property, the development of naturally occurring retiring communities such as A Village, exploration of lifestyle housing that allows residents to transition to different units as their personal needs and preferences change, and better publicity of assistance available through the STAR program.

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY LIFE

In regards to the environment and community life, issues identified throughout the day included topics regarding recreational and social facilities, health services, and the safety of the physical environment within West Hill and West End. The underutilization of parks and recreational facilities such as Swinburne Skating Rink and Tivoli lake Preserve, and a lack of public spaces for both youth and elderly to gather were identified as two recreational concerns within the community. In terms of safety and the physical environment, the prominence of drug use and illegal activity on the streets, abandoned and over grown lots, police approachability, a lack of street lighting, poor quality sidewalks were identified as factors affecting the desirability and enjoyability of the neighborhoods. More specifically, the potential loss of the Methodist Community Center on 1st Street was voiced by a few participants as a significant issue facing the community due to the potential loss of the services provided by the center. Additionally, a long conversation took place on the observation tour regarding the lack access to and education of residents regarding healthy food options.

Strategies and suggestions for improving the environment and community life in West Hill and West End can be organized into three themes: recreation, health, and the physical environment. Recreational improvements included the creation of programming for all ages and activation of the community through public spaces and events. Specific strategies included the addition of a Senior Center or Community Center near Hope House on Livingston Avenue, more programs and festivals at Swinburne Park through the addition of a stage and summer programming such as movies in the park, improved access for baseball clinics and local children at Bleecker stadium.

In regards to health and access to healthy food, recommendation from summit participants included community gardens and an investigation into why the farmers market at WAMC was unsuccessful, more education programs regarding the importance of healthy eating, the encouragement of school field trips to gardens and farmer’s markets within the City, and a “Healthy Smoothie Mobile.” The South End Children’s Café was recommended as a specific model that could be extremely beneficial in West Hill and West End.

Beautification measures such as planting, trash removal, and sidewalk cleaning were suggested as ways that could improve the physical environment and reputation of the community, thus making it a more desirable place to live and visit. The Lexington Avenue Work Group was suggested as a model for these types of interventions. Strategies for addressing the significant issue of public safety included more street lighting, installation of security cameras at corner stores, and increased police enforcement. It was also recommended that vacant lots, such the one

AVillage Inc., is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to developing the South End of Albany, NY that champions projects to reclaim vacant lots, organize neighborhood clean-ups and Earth Day events, work with neighborhood youth, and engage in public issue advocacy.

Hope House Inc., founded in 1967, is an award-winning residential recovery program located in the Capital District of New York State. We offer an intensive, full-immersion therapy program caring for the special needs of adults, teens, and mothers, supported by an Outpatient Clinic and a compassionate Community Services staff.
observed on the tour between 704 Clinton and 704.5 Clinton, should be maintained and enhanced through lighting and beautification measures in order to provide safe paths and connections between blocks. Finally, youth empowerment and engagement were heralded as the best strategy for improving safety within the community by engaging the youth in supportive and productive activities.

**TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY**

Identified issues within the transportation and mobility topic area revolved largely around the pedestrian environment and public transportation connections within West Hill and West End. In general, many participants voiced the observation that pedestrian crossings are lacking throughout the study area. It was also noted that the few crosswalks that do exist are fading and in need of repainting. Specifically, it was pointed out on the observation tour that an on-going issue occurs on the sidewalks of Clinton Avenue southeast of Manning Blvd., where vehicles parked on the sidewalk force pedestrians to walk in the street. In regards to public transportation, the existing CDTA route markers were characterized by attendees as small and hard to see, and bus stops within the study area are often lacking amenities such as bus shelters or benches. A lack of consistency regarding parking meters and prices within the study area was also identified.

Summit participants suggested improving the pedestrian environment and convenience of the bus system, but also addressed opportunities to encourage the use of bikes and car share within the study area. Improving the quality and quantity of crosswalks and pedestrian signalization through the study area was a strategy voiced by many summit participants, but it was also noted that the identification of additional funding sources for such improvements should be located in order to ensure quick implementation. Additionally, traffic calming features on major roadways, such as medians and landscaping, and a sidewalk snow removal program that employs youth from the neighborhood were identified as two strategies for improving the pedestrian environment. Strategies for improving bus service included better coordination between bus schedules and resident work schedules, more bus shelters with benches and time displays, improved north-south connections, increased transportation options for after school programs, and partnerships between major employers and CDTA for reduced fare programs. Strategies for encouraging cycling as an alternative mode of transportation included the addition of more bike-friendly lanes within the neighborhoods, bike safety education programs for cyclists and motorists, bike repair programs, a bike share program and helmet donations. Finally, it was suggested that informational outreach should be done to increase awareness of the Capital CarShare program that is an available resource for residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants Signed-In at Each Event</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party in the Park</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Summit</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEXT STEPS
The outreach event memorialized here within represents only the initial phase of the West Hill West End Revitalization Plan public engagement effort. As the project team continues into the creation and building of strategies to implement the community’s identified goals and objectives, one-on-one interviews and additional stakeholder roundtable discussions will be conducted in order to identify and solidify actions, funding opportunities, regulatory changes, and responsible parties necessary to carry selected strategies through to implementation. Additionally, strategies and other project deliverables will continue to be vetted by the public, most notably at a Community Day and Service Expo event planned for end of summer 2016.
APPENDICES
Appendix A: Neighborhood Summit Flyer

Find out more at reimaginenorth AT westhillwestend.com

DREAM
PARTICIPATE
PROBLEM SOLVE
REIMAGINE
INSPIRE
CONCEPTUALIZE
LEADERSHIP
TEAMWORK
CREATE
THOUGHTS & IDEAS
PLAN
WHAT ARE YOUR
IDEAS FOR THE
WEST HILL &
WEST END
COMMUNITY?

Friday Party in the Park
When: May 13th 5pm-7:30pm
Where: Swinburne Park

Saturday Neighborhood Summit
When: May 14th, 9am-4pm
Where: Phillip Schuyler Academy*
676 Clinton Avenue

Come to the park on Friday for free food, music, and fun! Then, join us on Saturday ready to share your local knowledge and vote on the ideas that you think are most important for revitalizing the West Hill and West End neighborhoods.

*This is not a City of Albany School District sponsored event. The District is not liable for any injuries or damages from participation in this event.
Appendix B: Organizations & Representatives in Attendance at Roundtable Discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative Name &amp; Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize Albany Corporation</td>
<td>Sarah Reginelli, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Albany Small Enterprise Economic Development (SEED) Program</td>
<td>William Brigham, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbor/West Hill Public Library</td>
<td>John Edvalson, Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Brother’s &amp; Sister’s Keeper</td>
<td>Pedro Perez, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth &amp; Workforce Services</td>
<td>Jonathan Jones, Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth &amp; Workforce Services</td>
<td>Raphael Tucker, Deputy Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth &amp; Workforce Services</td>
<td>Amy Jones, Support &amp; Outreach Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth &amp; Workforce Services</td>
<td>Doug Lansing, Director of Enrollee Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Community Action Partnership</td>
<td>Neenah Bland, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Community Action Partnership</td>
<td>Jessica DeJesus, Assistant Director of Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schenectady County Community College, SUNY</td>
<td>Maria Kotary, Associate for Workforce Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schenectady County Community College, SUNY</td>
<td>Sarah Wilson-Sparrow, Coordinator of Workforce Development &amp; Community Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Avenue Business Improvement District</td>
<td>Anthony Capece, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways Mentorship Program</td>
<td>Reverend Mickey Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHWERP Steering Committee</td>
<td>Reverend Joyce Hartwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative Name &amp; Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Tenants of Albany</td>
<td>Tracey Casseus, Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Tenants of Albany</td>
<td>Erin Reale, Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Tenants of Albany</td>
<td>Roger Markovics, Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany County Land Bank</td>
<td>Adam Zaranko, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Community Development Agency</td>
<td>Faye Andrews, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Hill Development Corporation</td>
<td>Arlene Way, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity Capital District</td>
<td>Fred Dargust, Director of Construction Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Housing Coalition</td>
<td>Joeseph Sluszka, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings &amp; Regulatory Compliance</td>
<td>Robert Magee, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Housing Authority</td>
<td>Darren Scott, Director of Planning &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region (CLFCR)</td>
<td>Linda McFarland, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Partnership</td>
<td>Susan Cotner, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways Mentorship Program</td>
<td>Reverend Mickey Downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHWERP Steering Committee</td>
<td>Reverend Joyce Hartwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative Name &amp; Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital District Transportation Authority</td>
<td>Samuel Wells, Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Parking Authority</td>
<td>Matt Peter, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Parking Authority</td>
<td>Sean Palladino, Operations Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Engineering Services, Albany Police Department</td>
<td>William E. Trudeau, Traffic Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital District Transportation Committee</td>
<td>Michael Franchini, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Car Share</td>
<td>Kateri Turner, Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>Kate Lawrence, Sustainability Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHWERP Steering Committee</td>
<td>Reverend Joyce Hartwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, & HUMAN SAFETY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative Name &amp; Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings &amp; Regulatory Compliance</td>
<td>Robert Magee, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Recreation</td>
<td>Jonathan Jones, Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Police Department</td>
<td>Michael Tremblay, Lieutenant of Neighborhood Engagement Unit (NEU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Police Department</td>
<td>Edward O'Leary, Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Police Department</td>
<td>Chris Oades, Beat Patrol Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Police Department</td>
<td>Justin Wallace, Beat Patrol Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Fire Department</td>
<td>Joseph Toomey, Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHWERP Steering Committee</td>
<td>Reverend Joyce Hartwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COMMUNITY LIFE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative Name &amp; Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbor/West Hill Public Library</td>
<td>John Edvalson, Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Recreation</td>
<td>Taylor Dewitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Roots</td>
<td>Amy Klein, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Partners</td>
<td>Tsehaya Smith, Founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West End Neighborhood Association</td>
<td>John O'Grady, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church of Albany</td>
<td>Pastor Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHWERP Steering Committee</td>
<td>Reverend Joyce Hartwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Fire Department</td>
<td>Joseph Toomey, Chief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Roundtable Summary Fact Sheets

NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Summary of Existing Condition, Resources, Potential Strategies, and Areas for Future Research

DESCRIPTION OF OUTLINE
Neighborhood economic development encompasses all economic dimensions of the West Hill and West End neighborhoods including local businesses, employment, workforce development and skills training. Strategies within this topic area will aim to improve the economic well-being and quality of life within the West Hill and West End neighborhoods by supporting local business owners, providing residents with training and connections to jobs, and strengthening the local tax base.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Employment & Income Characteristics of Neighborhood Residents
- The study area has a resident labor force of approximately 3,976 in 2014 (one-third of the area’s total population).
  - Half of the study area’s residents work within the City of Albany
  - Only 205 working residents hold jobs located within the study area.
  - More than 4,500 persons that do not reside within WHWE commute into the area for work.
  - Low proportion of residents commuting to the nearby employment centers of Schenectady and Saratoga Springs
- The top employment sectors for the working population are Health Care and Social Assistance (14.5%), Retail Trade (11.0%) or Accommodation and Food Services (9.6%), Educational Services (8.9%) and Administration and Support (5.5%).
- The unemployment rate for individuals over 16 in the study area was 15.5%, which is high compared to the City of Albany’s unemployment rate of 9% over the same time period (2010-2014).
- The WHWE study area’s per capita income is significantly lower than that of both the City of Albany as a whole and the Capital Region (~$15,500 vs. $24,324 and $32,089 respectively).
  - Per capita income in the WHWE Study area (20%) has not increased at the same rate as the City of Albany (23%) since 2000
  - Between 2010 and 2014, the median household income for the WHWE Study area was $23,165 compared to $41,099 for the City of Albany and $61,841 for the Capital District
  - The WHWE Study area has a significantly larger percentage of families living in poverty (41.3%) than both the City of Albany (18.7%) and the Capital District (7.7%).

Job Opportunities
- Of the 4,706 jobs located within the study area (as of 2014), the majority of jobs (53.4%) exist within four sectors: Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Transportation & Warehousing.
- A significant proportion may be classified as low-skill, low-wage jobs.

Educational Attainment & Income Characteristics
- Nearly 60% of the population never attended college. Furthermore, within that portion of the population that has never attended college
  - 20.4% never received a high school diploma.

Retail & Commercial Districts
- Central Avenue is a dense commercial corridor whose eastern end is lined with ethnically diverse restaurants and local retail.
- There is a concentration of commercial and industrial uses in the West End (ShopRite, The Orchard Tavern, Ramada Plaza, Motel 6, Stanley Paper, Bimbo Bakeries, etc.)
- Additional retail is dispersed throughout the area.
- Vacant square footage along Central Avenue has decreased by nearly 75% from nearly 600,000 square feet in 1998 to under 150,000 square feet in 2015.
- The total assessed value of buildings and land on Central Avenue increased by roughly 40% between 1998 and 2015.
- The average purchasing price of retail space along the Central Avenue corridor is $74.30 per square foot (based on space currently on the market), with higher prices closer to Downtown.
NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES
- Central Avenue Business Improvement District
- City of Albany Youth & Workforce Services
- Workforce Investment Board
- My Brother’s and Sister’s Keeper
- Hudson Valley Community College
- West Hill Spirit
- Black Chamber of Commerce
- Albany Community Action Partnership
- Capitalize Albany Corporation
- SEICU

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
- Search for local professionals with vocational & trade skills to serve as instructors (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Organize locations that can be utilized for teaching sessions (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with local schools to organize after school workshops for youth on trade and vocational careers and training (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Organize local professionals that can train people actively looking for work on interview and resume building strategies (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Improve business accessibility through multi-modal transportation within West Hill and West end (see transportation & mobility strategies) (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with Central Avenue Business Improvement District to market local businesses and investment opportunities (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Inventory available adult education in the neighborhoods and city then create and distribute pamphlets that highlight available education opportunities (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with community groups to develop a matrix of desired adult education offerings for the neighborhoods (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with local colleges and universities to develop a course of action for implementing the offerings desired by the neighborhoods (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Meet with the school system and community leaders to develop a list of available after-school programs. Create and distribute a document that includes the information collected (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Identify transportation needs for after-school care (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Create a working group to communicate and collaborate with the neighborhood planning process with the school system (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with the school system to develop a mentoring program for willing teachers and students (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with senior organizations to develop a mentoring program that engages willing seniors with youth (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Work with small businesses in the neighborhood to advertise their West Hill or West End business on local media outlets (radio, television, print, etc.) (WHEWNP, 2014)
- Identify high-value, high probability sectors for targeted intervention (Albany 2030)
- Extend digital literacy programs (Albany 2030)

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
- What current partnerships exist between universities, anchor institutions, and local workforce development programs?
- What are the barriers to skilled trade training, vocational learning, small business entrepreneurship? What skill training programs are currently being provided, and what is their utilization and success rate? How can the latter be improved?
- What role does transportation have in job access? What are the commute times to major employers? How easy is it to use the public transit system?
- What retail businesses and services are lacking? What businesses could be incentivized to better meet resident needs?
HOMING
Summary of Existing Conditions, Resources, Potential Strategies, and Areas for Further Research

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AREA
This topic area addresses the supply, maintenance, and construction of housing within the West Hill and West End neighborhoods. Strategies within this topic area will aim to improve the existing housing stock within the neighborhoods as well as ensure that future housing development meets the needs of existing and future residents while also maintaining the existing character of the neighborhood as medium to low density residential community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
Housing Tenure & Size
- Within the WHWE study area, an estimated 21% or 913 households were owner-occupied and 79%, or 3,511 households were renter-occupied according to ACS five-year data between 2010 and 2014. This percentage of renters is higher than the City of Albany as a whole (62%) and double the Capital District (35%).
- The average household size in the WHWE Study area in 2010-2014 was 2.80 persons compared with 2.2 persons for the City of Albany as a whole and 2.42 persons for the Capital District.

Housing Stock
- Nearly half of the housing stock in the WHWE Study area is comprised of 2-unit town homes and duplexes.
  - Roughly 15% of the units in the area are part of multistory housing, largely contained within small apartment buildings of nine units or less.
  - The remaining 15% is comprised of single-family homes.
- The City of Albany’s vacancy rate has increased by 5% over that decade while the WHWE study area has increased by 12%.
  - Out of the 6,088 housing units in the study area (2010-2014 U.S. Census ACS) an estimated 27.3% of homes were vacant in the area, compared with 15.8% in Albany as a whole and 11.1% in the Capital District.
  - Nearly 40% of the rental units in the WHWE study area are three-bedroom plus apartment which is a much larger proportion of the rental stock than that of the City of Albany or the Capital District which each have less than 30% three-bedroom plus apartments.
  - The weighted median rent within the study area according to ACS 2010-2014 data is $854 per month compared with current rental rates advertised on private real estate sites (Average $903 for 1-bedroom and $1,101 for multi-bedroom).

Housing Affordability
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010-2014 ACS data, 2,053 households representing 71% of all renting households in the study area were cost burdened (i.e. paying more than 30% of gross income on rent).
  - Within that group, 1,339 households representing 46% of all renting households in the study area were severely cost burdened (spending more than 50% of their income on rent).
  - In comparison, 5% of renting households in the City of Albany were cost burdened and 92% were severely cost burdened.

RESOURCES
- Albany Community Development Agency
- Albany Housing Authority
- Albany County Land Bank
- Albany Housing Coalition
- Albany Community Action Partnership
- Affordable Housing Partnership/ Albany Community Land Trust
- Habitat for Humanity Capital District
- Housing For All
- Arbor Hill Neighborhood Development Corporation
- United Tenants of Albany
- Code Enforcement
- The Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region (CLFCR)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
- Establish a neighborhood beautification committee to plan and advertise neighborhood beautification events (WHWENP, 2014)
- Work with tenants to contact property owners for permission to beautify (make exterior changes to) properties (WHWENP, 2014)


- Identify vacant properties available for purchase and rehabilitation (WHWENP, 2014)
- Assist with housing opportunities to invest in vacant properties (WHWENP, 2014)
- Work with tenants to identify absent landlords (WHWENP, 2014)
- Coordinate with Albany Code Enforcement to review exterior housing conditions (WHWENP, 2014)
- Work with Albany Code Enforcement to contact absent landlords about bringing their properties up to code (WHWENP, 2014)
- Improve balance between rentals and owners (Albany 2030)
- Use zoning to incentivize diverse housing stock (Albany 2030)
- Provide and maintain intergenerational/life-cycle housing options (Albany 2030)
- Develop creative financing tools to encourage mixed-income housing (Albany 2030)
- Using zoning to incentivize the development and design of quality affordable housing (Albany 2030)
- Increase resilience of housing stock to impacts of climate change (Albany 2030)

**AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

- Code enforcement
- Foreclosure status
- Tax Delinquencies and Liens
- Densities
- Outcome of rehabilitation programs

---

Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting | 26
TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY
Summary of Existing Conditions, Resources, Potential Strategies, and Areas for Further Research

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AREA
Transportation addresses all mobility options for residents living within the West Hill and West End neighborhoods. This includes connectivity to destinations within the City of Albany as well as important locations within New York’s Capital District. Strategies within this topic area will aim to improve conditions and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, public transportation connectivity and frequency, and vehicle safety. The ultimate goal is to connect the West Hill and West End neighborhoods to a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system.

EXISTING CONDITIONS
Traffic Conditions

- Highest volumes of traffic occur during the afternoon peak period along Central Avenue (800-1000 vehicles/hour) and Henry Johnson Boulevard (800-900 vehicles/hour).
- Clinton Avenue and Livingston Avenue are still large roads but see substantially less traffic than either Central Avenue or Henry Johnson Boulevard.
  - These roads also have peak traffic levels during the PM rush hour, but Clinton Avenue sees only 400 to 500 vehicles per hour and Livingston Avenue sees only 200 to 300 vehicles per hour.

Public Transportation

- The West Hill and West End neighborhoods are served by several bus routes (1, 711, 125, 100, 138, and 737) and one bus rapid transit route (905) called Bus Plus.
  - These routes provide the neighborhood’s residents and workers with access to many areas of the greater Albany region, but offer room for improvement in terms of north-south connection and connectivity to surrounding employment centers.
- Regarding Bus Plus services, from the Quail St/Central Ave bus stop within the study area, the Albany Bus Terminal is a 7 minute commute and Schenectady is a 47 minute commute.
- The 905 Bus Plus Line also makes two additional stops along Central Avenue within the study area at North Manning Blvd and North Allen St., resulting in nearly all study area residents living within a half-mile of a Bus Plus stop.
  - According to the CDTA schedule, Bus Plus frequency along this corridor is 12 minutes during the weekday evening peak period.
- North-south access is provided via Route 100 (Mid-City Belt) and Route 138 (Allen/Livingston).
  - Frequency for both lines is 30-45 minutes according to schedule.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure

- The only bike lane that currently exists within the study area runs along one block of Clinton Avenue from Henry Johnson Boulevard to Lexington Avenue.
- The City of Albany Bicycle Master Plan proposes multiple bike routes within the study area, including a major route along Clinton Avenue, north-south routes along Quail Street and N. Manning Blvd., and a neighborhood route along Livingston Avenue.
Reimagine West Hill / West End

- With these proposed improvements, connections to other neighborhoods would be strong and accessing other adjacent locations such as downtown Albany would be easily possible by bicycle.
  - Sidewalk width and state of repair is highly inconsistent throughout the study area.

**RESOURCES**
- Sustainability Division
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Capital District Transportation Committee
- Police Department - Traffic Engineering Services
- Department of General Services
- Public Works, Albany County
- Capital District Car Share
- Parking Authority

**POTENTIAL STRATEGIES**
- Work with CDTA to address concerns about public transportation in the neighborhoods (WHWENP, 2014)
- Inventory infrastructure issues and needs within West Hill and West End (WHWENP, 2014)
- Provide findings on infrastructure needs to the City and suggest ideas for improving all modes of transportation (WHWENP, 2014)
- Develop neighborhood specific Complete Streets Plan (Albany 2030)
- Maintain and improve sidewalk conditions (Albany 2030)
- Implement Bicycle Master Plan (Albany 2030)
- Educate cyclists and drivers (Albany 2030)
- Connect to regional trails and greenways (Albany 2030)
- Increase transit connectivity (Albany 2030)
- Improve road infrastructure and reduce congestion (Albany 2030)
- Promote Transportation Demand Management to reduce vehicle miles traveled (Albany 2030)

**AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**
- Speed limits & traffic safety issues
- Number and location of vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian crashes in past years
- Are there new bike lanes that are not currently reflected on Google Earth?
- Availability of multi-lingual transportation information
- How well does the current transportation system connect residents to existing job centers?
- What is the impact of transportation costs on job access?
- Given high number of jobs in NYC, how can the neighborhood be better connected to regional transportation services (i.e. the train station).
- What is the extent of parking supply and current levels of utilization?
ENVIRONMENT HEALTH & HUMAN SAFETY
Summary of Existing Conditions, Resources, Potential Strategies, and Areas for Further Research

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AREA
Environment, Health, and Human Safety encompasses all features effecting residents’ pursuit and
tainment of physical health and well-being. This includes topics such as access to and quality of
healthcare, exposure to pollution, natural disasters and emergency planning, presence street crime and
drug abuse, and food access amongst many others.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION
- Location of healthcare facilities
- Access to preventative care, Emergency care, & health insurance
- Availability and access to substance abuse treatment programs
- Women’s health concerns
- HIV Prevention
- Air Pollution from automobile usage
- Water quality
- Flooding
- Habitability of buildings
- Public nuisances
- Perception and experience of crime
- Access to food
- Opportunities for urban agriculture
- Access to parks, community gardens, nature preserves, and open space
- Transportation safety

RESOURCES
- Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve, Inc.
- City of Albany Recreation Department
- Capital Roots Community Gardens
- Healthy Hearts on the Hill Coalition, U@A
- Fire Department
- Code Enforcement
- Koinonia Primary Health Care
- Hospitality House [Drug Addiction Treatment Center at 271 Central]
- Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Sustainability Division
- Mpower Albany [Albany Damien Center]

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
- Work with tenants to identify absent landlords
- Coordinate with Albany Code Enforcement to review exterior housing conditions
- Work with Albany Code Enforcement to contact absent landlords about bringing properties up to
code
- Develop a police relations committee to exclusively communicate with the Police Department on
this initiative
- Create an inventory of current police presence in the neighborhoods, such as sub-stations, cameras,
and neighborhood engagement officers
• Work with the Police Department to develop a list of changes that would make neighborhood residents feel safer
• Formalize a neighborhood watch committee to exclusively communicate with the Police Department on this initiative
• Create an inventory of neighborhood watch procedures in the neighborhood and work with the Police Department to develop a list of changes to the neighborhood watch procedures that would make the neighborhood residents feel safer
• Utilize vacant lots in the neighborhoods for community gardens
• Organize a park clean-up day for parks throughout the neighborhoods

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

• Data on healthcare access
• Environmental indicators
• Building code violation data
• Crime data
• Transportation accident data
COMMUNITY LIFE
Summary of Existing Conditions, Resources, Potential Strategies, and Areas for Further Research

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AREA
The Community Life topic areas is inclusive of all social and recreational programs within the community that strongly influence residents’ quality of life, including parks, recreation, culture, social activity, and formal and informal public space. Strategies within this topic area will aim to strengthen and support existing social networks and programs, connect complimentary services, and address issues regarding access and information of services and programs provided.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION
Population Shifts
- The overall population of the study area has been declining slightly over recent years.

Demographic Composition
- The West Hill West End neighborhood is a diverse community. More than 60% of the area residents are African American while almost 13% identify as Hispanic.
- High percentage of young people but lower percentage of seniors compared with city and capital district.

Neighborhood Leadership
- The West Hill and West End neighborhoods each have their own neighborhood association groups. Although the groups meet separately, they have partnered together on planning initiatives.
- In 2014, the groups came together and prepared a neighborhood plan with the support of the Arbor Hill Development Corporation.

Park Resources
- The neighborhood features two large parks, the 35 acre Swinburne Park and 80 acre Tivoli Preserve.
- Current projects at Tivoli include: Daylighting Patroon Creek, Patroon Creek Greenway, Park Cleanup (Friends of Tivoli)
- All residents in the neighborhoods living within ½ mile of a park or preserve, and the vast majority within ¼ mile.

Recreation Facilities
- Recreation facilities include an indoor skating rink, Bleecker stadium, and at least two basketball courts.

Houses of Worship
- There are more than 30 different houses of worship in the neighborhood.

Cultural Institutions
- Notable cultural institutions include the Linda WAMC Performing Arts Studio. Live music can be heard at the Lo Beat.
- Each neighborhood in the study area has a significant asset of open space, with Tivoli Park located at the northern extrem of West Hill and Swinburne Park near Central Avenue in West End.
RESOURCES
- West End Neighborhood Association
- West End Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve, Inc.
- City of Albany - Recreation Department
- Capital Roots - Community Gardens
- West Hill Neighborhood Association
- Christian Memorial
- Victory Church
- Arbor Hill Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Historic Albany Foundation
- Mobile Music
- The Linda
- The Low Beat
- YouthFX
- Albany Library Arbor/West Hill
- Artpartners-Tshaya & Co.
- Mpower Albany (Albany Damien Center)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
- Enhance the physical and aesthetic environment of the neighborhood through infrastructure upgrades, façade improvements, and street beautification programs
- Enhance, maintain, upgrade neighborhood parks
- Develop more recreational programming for all neighborhood residents, including youth and seniors
- Promote the neighborhood’s cultural and historic heritage through more special events
- Reutilized vacant lots for community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives
- Improve wayfinding especially between neighborhoods and parks
- Partner with schools to develop outdoor classrooms
- Create welcoming gateways along heavily-traveled corridors (Ex. Henry Johnson, Central Avenue). This could include banners hung on light posts or potted plants along the sidewalks (WHWENP, 2014)
- Organize a park clean-up day for parks throughout the neighborhoods (WHWENP, 2014)
- Utilize vacant lots in the neighborhoods for community gardens (WHWENP, 2014)

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
- What recreational programs are offered, and which are missing, within West Hill and West End?
- What cultural institutions and events exist within the study area?
## Appendix D: Tabulation of Objective Prioritization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcoming Environment</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1</strong> Improve the exterior appearance of housing and streets in West Hill and West End</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2</strong> Reinvest in vacant buildings within the West Hill and West End neighborhoods</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3</strong> Increase landlord involvement in property maintenance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 4</strong> Work with the Albany Police Department to improve neighborhood-police relations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 5</strong> Work with the Albany Police Department to improve neighborhood watch efforts</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 6</strong> Improve the outward appearance of the neighborhoods</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Votes for Welcoming Environment:</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thriving Economy</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 7</strong> Utilize professionals within the community to mentor and train residents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 8</strong> Partner with local schools to provide trade and vocational training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 9</strong> Provide interview training to increase employment among local residents</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 10</strong> Improve business accessibility through multi-modal transportation within West Hill and West End</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 11</strong> Market the neighborhood to attract long-term business investments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Votes for Thriving Economy:</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Class Education/World Class Workforce</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 12</strong> Communicate existing opportunities for adult education in the neighborhoods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 13</strong> Expand adult education opportunities within the neighborhoods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 14</strong> Inventory and distribute information on all after-school programs offered by the schools and within the communities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 15</strong> Ensure that families are able to find after-school program transportation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 16</strong> Engage the school system in the neighborhood plan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 17</strong> Improve mentoring opportunities that connect school and neighborhoods</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Votes for World Class Education &amp; Workforce:</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Tour Map
Appendix F: West Hill / West End Neighborhood Summit Notes

March 16, 2016

The following notes capture comments received during a group meeting with city staff, neighborhood residents, and involved representatives located in the West End-West Hill Neighborhood. KDLLC presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the opportunities and challenges presented in transforming the Neighborhood Study Area. Participants were then taken on a tour of a select area of the neighborhood. After the tour, participants were asked to comment and discuss various issues, opportunities, and strategies that could help in the revitalization of the neighborhood. Participants were also asked to put “dots” next to strategies that most appealed to them. The numbers below correspond to the number of dots put next to the strategy. All information will be incorporated into the final Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

Neighborhood Economics

Issues

- Corner shop over charges
- Need for a grocery store in close proximity
- There are no pharmacies
- Need for job training, workforce and education
- Need for publicity and outreach
- Businesses need to market better in the neighborhood

Strategies

- Creation of Apprenticeships
- Creation of mentorship programs
- Bike repair program with incentive of keeping the bike and the end of the program
- Department store on Central Ave. (shoes, clothing, card store)
- Create a “shopping experience” (coffee shops, outdoor seating)
- Movie theater
- Small/local business assistance (2)
- Link the Central Bid to funding (4)
- Empower former incarcerated people by moving them into entrepreneurship and reintegration (2)
- Businesses should provide local discount
- Business façade improvement program
- Form own community resource directory
- Put newspaper ads and coupons in local paper
The Environment & Community Life

Issues

- Overgrown Lots
- Corner Stores and drugs
- Sidewalks need improvement
- Closing of the Community Center on 1st street
- No place for seniors to gather
- No handicap accessible places
- Need for Youth Center
- Safety within the community
- Need for police approachability
- Health concerns for disability and incorporating them into activities
- No use for Field of Dreams
- Bleeker Stadium is underutilized
- Need for better sidewalk lighting
- Need for plan for Swinburne Park
- What are the health services in the neighborhood
- Need to connect youth to seniors

Strategies

- Beautification Days (3)
  - Plantings, housing painting, trash removal, snow removal, business along their front lots
- Sidewalk sweeper (2)
- Look to Lexington Avenue Work Group as a model
- Street lighting
- Increase the publicity of positive events
- Increase publicity and marketing of community and city services
- Education of landlords and tenants
- Enforcement of Quality of Life issues
- Corner Stores should have cameras
- Farmer’s Market at Swinburne Park
- Senior Center or Senior programs
- Create programming for all ages
- Reconnect the kids to services
  - Educational, Emotional, and Social Activities
- Youth Senior mentorship program
- Create programs/festivals at Bleecker/Swinburne
- Create a community center close to Hope House with Senior Living on Livingston
• Reimagine Field of Dreams (ie: ball park, baseball/softball leagues, community gardens) (1)
• Create better access for baseball clinics and local kids at Bleeker stadium (1)
• Lighting at Rawson (2)
• Lighting at Colony
• Swinburne Park Plan (4)
  o Music/Performance Space/youth engagement/art/services/summer use of roller skating/stage
• Create local health services for women and children
• Virtual graffiti room
• Present good PR from high school
• Involve labor/union groups for apprenticeships
• Train women in trades (ie: plumbers, electricians)
• One-Stop System (State and City partnership)

Housing

Issues

• Need for mixed neighborhood residential, commercial
• Rent control is too expensive
• Need for affordable senior housing, including one level living
• Lack of home ownership
• Too many legal barriers
• Need for elderly to be able to age in place (1)
• Too much city enforcement on seniors
• Need to create housing opportunities for extended families to be able to buy homes together (1)
• Housing bias
• Better understanding of Land bank’s role in the neighborhood
• Improve the image of Bleeker Terrace and Capital Green (1)

Strategies

• Education or programs for Landlords and 1st time homeowners
• Assistance for seniors in maintaining their property
• Handyman for seniors (5)
• Naturally Occurring Retiring Community (ex: Livingston Apt)
• Umbrella program
• DGS Summer Youth Program (3)
• Education on zoning and approval process for buildings
• Lifestyle housing
• Create housing for graduating SUNY students, artists
• Connect Department of Aging programs into neighborhood
• Painting vacant buildings with murals
• Create housing profiles and price point informational (1)
• Create a supply of affordable housing (2)
• Identify absent landlords (4)
• Use codes and penalties against absentee landlords (2)
• Preserve existing housing for families (3+ beds)
• Review the City’s regulations and standards for abandoned homes to move redevelopment forward faster (1)
• Create protection from bad work done by developers/contractors; homeowner protection
• Streamline or shorten the process to determine if a property is abandoned

Transportation

Issues

• Signage at bus stops
• Timing of bus schedules with work schedules
• Better awareness of car share program
• Parking management system improvements
• Signalization improvements for pedestrians
• Street crossings for pedestrians

Strategies

• Bus shelters, including benches, time display (2)
• Crosswalks
• Bike Friendly lanes (3)
• Education between cyclist and motorist
• Bike repair programs
• Traffic light improvements
• Traffic calming features (medians, better stripping)
• Link transportation to major employment, especially N/S (3)
• Transportation for after school programs (2)
• Bike share program
• Snow removal on sidewalks/vacant lots (1) – can be a youth program/jobs
• Partnership between employers/CeTA (1)
• Bus pass program for residents
• Bike helmet donation
• Bike safety course (2)
Appendix G: Albany High School Workshop Mock RFP

Request for Proposals
West Hill/West End Revitalization Plan

The City of Albany, NY is requesting proposals from a qualified urban planning consulting team to help guide the development of the West Hill/West End Revitalization Plan. All submissions must be received today by the end of class.

Introduction and Project Overview

Albany’s West Hill and West End neighborhoods are two distinct but adjacent neighborhoods located in the northern part of the City, just south of Interstate I-90. The two neighborhoods face similar challenges and share many demographic and economic characteristics. In many ways, these two neighborhoods display what are considered typical signs of community distress including high unemployment rates, high vacancy rates, low income obtainment, high rent burdens, and a record of violence and crime in the past. However, it is clear that the neighborhoods and their residents have a tremendous amount of potential given their cultural richness, proximity to downtown Albany, and physical assets in the form of parks, educational institutions, and a vibrant commercial and transportation corridor along Central Avenue.

In order to face these challenges, the City of Albany is examining opportunities for community revitalization in the West Hill and West End neighborhoods. The West End/West Hill Neighborhood Revitalization strategy aims to help the area become a more walkable, safe, and economically vibrant community where people can live, work, and play. The revitalization strategy will support the West Hill and West Hill Neighborhood Plan that was created by the two respective neighborhood associations in 2014, which included the following goals:

- Create a welcoming environment through housing, public safety, and neighborhood revitalization
- Build a thriving economy through business attraction, job creation, and transportation connections
- Support a world class education system and workforce through school & community collaborations, career education services, workforce development, placement, and advancement

Stakeholder Groups

- School District
- Housing Authority
- Religious Organizations
- Environmental Groups
- City Staff
- Neighborhood Associations
- Residents
- Chamber of Commerce
- Businesses
Scope of Work and Deliverables

You, the consultant, must discuss and respond to key issues and opportunities within the section of the neighborhood that you have been assigned. Please discuss with your team the following topics found below. Take notes on your answers to the questions posed.

Based on the answers to your questions, you must provide the City with a map which shows your team’s approach to the redevelopment of the West End/ West Hill Neighborhood. The map must show how your team has decided to accomplish the goals and objectives stated in the West End/West Hill Plan above and where best to include these types of uses. You may use boxes, arrows, text, drawings, etc. to illustrate your proposal. There are no right or wrong answers- the purpose of this assignment is be creative and back up your proposal with a sound argument. Your argument should be based on data provided in the existing conditions sheets but can also come from your own intuition and experience about living in the City of Albany.

Your consulting team, if selected, will be asked to present their Neighborhood Plan to the Selection Committee group.

Topics Areas for Consideration

**Neighborhood Economic Development:** Neighborhood economic development encompasses all economic dimensions of the West Hill and West End neighborhoods including local businesses, employment, workforce development and skills training. Strategies should aim to improve the economic well-being and quality of life within the West End/West Hill Neighborhoods by supporting local business owners, providing residents with training and connections to jobs, and support the tax base.

*Issues*

- Does the neighborhood provide jobs? If not, what can we do?
- Does the neighborhood have restaurants and services that are needed by a community? If not, what do we need?
- Can people get to the jobs that are in the neighborhood? If not, how can we help?
- What other strategies do we think can help improve the area?

**Housing:** This topic area addresses the supply, maintenance and construction of housing. Strategies within this topic area will aim to improve the existing housing stock within the neighborhoods as well as ensure that future housing development meets the needs of existing and future residence.

*Issues*

- Do we have an adequate supply of housing in the neighborhood?
- What type of housing do we need?
**Transportation:** Transportation address all mobility options for residents. This includes connectivity to destinations within the City of Albany. Strategies within this topic area will aim to improve conditions and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and public transportation methods.

*Issues*

- What are the major roads near our site?
- Do we have ways of getting into the City without relying on a car? What are the modes of transportation in the neighborhood?
- Is there a bus or train line in the neighborhood? If not, should there be and where?
- Are there sidewalks or bike lines? If not, do we want them and where?

**Community Life:** This topic area addresses all social and recreational programs within the community, including parks, recreation, culture, social activities, and public space. Strategies will aim to strengthen and support existing social networks and programs.

*Issues*

- What recreational programs are offered? What’s missing?
- What cultural events exist?
- What parks and recreational facilities are in the neighborhood?

**Public Engagement Plan**

Finally, the consultant team should look at the stakeholder list above and answer the following questions:

- How can we engage these organizations or people into the conversation regarding the neighborhood plan?
- Are there other people or organizations missing from our stakeholder list? Who are they?
- What ways will we reach out to the community to ensure their voice has been heard on these matters?
- How will we get them to come out to any public engagement event that we create?