



SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN

PREPARED BY:

The City of Albany Department
of Planning & Development with
Elan.3 Consulting; MRB Group

JANUARY 2023



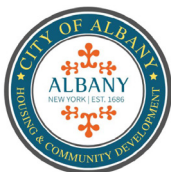


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FUNDED BY:



Albany Community Development Agency through the
Community Development Block Grant Program



1 INTRODUCTION

SECTION CONTENTS

1. Overview of the 2007 Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future
2. Recent Grassroots Revitalization
3. COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement
4. Development of the South End Strategic Plan Update



Photo Credit: Planning Department

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE 2007 CAPITAL SOUTH PLAN: SEGWAY TO THE FUTURE

The City of Albany’s South End is a diverse neighborhood roughly bounded by the South Mall Arterial Road to the north, the Hudson River to the east, Old South Pearl Street to the south, and Southern Boulevard to the west. The area is characterized by a number of assets including historic homes, Lincoln Park, community gardens, as well as committed not-for-profits, businesses and residents. Unfortunately, the South End has also been challenged by what a former neighborhood plan referred to as “a vast number of older vacant residential buildings and vacant lots, eroded commercial corridors, a declining population, and an increasing concentration of poverty.”¹ This cycle of disinvestment can be traced back, in part, to the “redlining” of neighborhoods such as the South End, a discriminatory practice in which banks and other financial lenders refused to back investments, loans or insurance in a neighborhood based on a community’s racial and ethnic demographics.

In 2007, the City of Albany developed and adopted the *Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future* (the Capital South Plan). Its goal was to re-establish the South End as a neighborhood where current residents would want to stay and one that new businesses and residents would find attractive.

The 2007 planning effort was guided by the city’s Department of Planning and Development in partnership with the South End Action Committee (SEAC), a diverse group of stakeholders representing government, neighborhood residents, not-for-profits, housing organizations, places of worship, banks and local businesses.

The *Capital South Plan* recognized that there were serious challenges to the revitalization of the South End and that the City of Albany would need to partner with SEAC to implement the Plan’s 95 recommendations. Unfortunately, over time, volunteer involvement in SEAC waned and the group ultimately dissolved.

¹ “2007 Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future.” City of Albany, 2007, ii.

1.2 RECENT GRASSROOTS REVITALIZATION

Despite the loss of SEAC, there has been a resurgence of grassroots revitalization efforts in the South End as neighborhood residents continue to partner with local not-for-profits and businesses to effect positive change in the community. Organizations such as the South End Neighborhood Association (SENA), AVillage, Trinity Alliance, The African American Cultural Center, Youth FX, along with The South End Children's Café, the South End Community Collaborative (SECC), and the South End Improvement Corporation (SEIC) are actively working to address quality of life issues and celebrate the community's culture. Recent grassroots revitalization efforts include housing rehabilitation, creation of community and children's gardens, and the establishment of a South End Night Market, which provides residents with access to locally grown fruits

and vegetables and provides minority- and women-Owned businesses with a platform to sell and promote their products.

1.3 SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: COVID-19 AND THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

Since completion of the *Capital South Plan*, Albany has implemented several significant planning projects, including:

- Adoption of the city's first comprehensive plan, Albany 2030 (2012)
- Creation of the Albany County Land Bank (2014)
- Adoption of the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance (USDO) (2017)



Photo Credit: Planning Department



In 2019, in light of these planning projects and the resurgence of grassroots efforts, the city's Department of Planning and Development recognized the need to examine the goals and recommendations of the Capital South Plan, inventory which ones had been implemented since the Plan's completion, and reframe strategies using current and relevant data.

The *South End Strategic Plan Update* (the Strategic Plan Update) was initiated in early 2020. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic struck and emergency actions were taken to curtail the spread of the virus. In May 2020, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which sparked nationwide protests, as the nation faced a larger call for a reckoning with systemically racist actions and policies throughout our nation's history, especially those that persist.

It became evident that the *Strategic Plan Update*, which aimed to provide a follow-up to the 2007 plan, would need to take a much deeper look at the condition of the South End, the historic reasons these conditions arose, and what actions could be taken to ameliorate them.

The Department of Planning and Development held conversations with community members and listened to their concerns, acknowledging the harm that racist urban policies have had on communities of color, including the South End. It became evident that to understand the limitations of the success of

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the 2007 *Capital South Plan*, it would be necessary to visit how racialized urban policies shaped a segregated Albany, and how such policies still in place perpetuate discrimination against people of color.

The Department has made recommendations based on the City of Albany's Equity Agenda, which was initiated and promoted by Mayor Sheehan and approved by the Albany Common Council. The Agenda focuses on "achieving equity across all communities and ending the injustices caused by institutional and systemic racism and discrimination."

Despite COVID limiting in-person meetings, a surge in community involvement occurred as a result of video conferencing, which improved attendance at meetings and reduced the time it took to collect community feedback. Each session was as illuminating as it was informative.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

In 2020, the city utilized a multi-phased approach to developing the *Strategic Plan Update*. This includes:

- A review of the Capital South Plan
- Identification of what recommendations have been implemented since the Plan's issuance
- An update of strategies to meet the goals of South End residents and stakeholders, informed by an analysis of neighborhood needs, demographic, socioeconomic, and market conditions

The sections of the Strategic Plan include:

- Section 2: Historical Context - examines the city's history and recognizes the legacy of redlining practices in the South End
- Section 3: Action Plan - an action strategy for goals, policies and redevelopment initiatives
- Section 4: Appendix
 - Market Study - profiles the demographic, economic and real estate trends for the South End, the 12202 zip code, the City of Albany, and the Capital Region (as defined as Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga, and Rensselaer Counties). Also included are maps that illustrate South End areas of disinvestment
 - Public Outreach Strategy - A listing of the community partners and variety of meetings that were held during the drafting of the plan
 - *2007 Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future*

-2023 Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application

The community engagement strategy for the *Strategic Plan Update* applied progressive planning principles and a collaborative democratic design. Great consideration was given to community feedback on prior plans and projects in the South End where residents voiced concerns over not being aware of the opportunity to engage in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans and capital improvement projects. This prior failure in the public engagement process strained relationships between residents and local government offices and furthered distrust.

Planning Department staff focused on building trust with community members by fostering a collaborative environment, thereby empowering residents during the planning process.

The area that was the focus of the Strategic Plan Update is shown in the following map.

Great consideration was given to community feedback on prior plans and projects in the South End where residents voiced concerns over not being aware of the opportunity to engage in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans and capital improvement projects.

SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN BOUNDARY



2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

SECTION CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. From Racialized Enslavement to Legalized Segregation (1700-1930)
3. Redlining and Urban Renewal (1930-1968)
4. The Legacy of Racism in the South End



Photo Credit: Planning Department

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Before drafting the *Strategic Plan Update*, the Department of Planning and Development felt it was important to discuss with the community the topics of systemic racism, including the ways that racial discrimination has manifested in Albany and the South End. These candid and nuanced conversations created a stronger partnership between Department staff and neighborhood residents and stakeholders, which in turn helped to develop the Plan's recommendations about how to best bring about meaningful change.

When developing this *Strategic Plan Update*, the city prioritized the need to:

- Acknowledge the history of inequitable

and discriminatory practices and policies that occurred in the South End, including redlining

- Recognize the South End's history as a neighborhood built by immigrants and celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity that has and continue to make this community unique, and
- Identify strategies to address the legacy of institutional racial discrimination on South End residents.

To meet these priorities, the city understood a need to make a connection between historical discriminatory practices in the City of Albany and the South End and the current socioeconomic landscape.

2.2 1700S – 1930S – FROM RACIALIZED ENSLAVEMENT TO LEGALIZED SEGREGATION

The Albany area was originally inhabited by the Schaghticoke, Mohican and Haudenosaunee peoples. When the first Europeans arrived here, they often brought enslaved peoples.

In Colonial America, and well beyond the founding of the United States, race relations in the City of Albany were not dissimilar from those in other sections of the country. Beginning in the early 1700s, Albany was among cities at the center of the international slave trade, as pointed out by David Levine, an Albany-based author:

“The British increased slave importation, and by the early 1700s New York State was the center of an international market dependent on slaves. ‘The two biggest slave markets in the country before the American Revolution were in New York City and Albany,’ Dr. A.J. Williams-Myers, a retired professor of Black Studies at SUNY New Paltz, says. By 1790, the first federal census counted more than 21,000 enslaved New Yorkers, nearly as many as documented in Georgia. ‘New York was not a society with slaves, it was a slave society, dependent on enslaved Africans,’ he says.

As New Yorkers, we like to think of ourselves as different from the South, but in fact, when it came to slavery, we really weren’t. Any history of African descendants in the Hudson Valley must first come to grips with this fact. From the earliest moments of European contact, African Americans have been part of the

Valley’s *dramatis personae*. ‘Africans have been portrayed as in the shadow of history, when actually they were center stage,’ Williams-Myers says. ‘Where European people went, Africans went with them, shoulder to shoulder with their enslavers.’¹

African Americans were often overlooked in historical records such as the census, which was launched in 1790. It would not be until well into the 1800s, when slavery was outlawed in New York and other states, that a more consistent record of Black residents in Albany would emerge.

In 1797, the City of Albany was established as New York’s capital, drawing people from around the state. Black residents were primarily employed in the labor and service industry, though some were artisans or employed in commercial industries, part of the city’s Black middle and upper classes. Of note are Benjamin Lattimore and Captain Samuel Schuyler, who transitioned into public and commercial service and became pioneers of social mobility within the Black community with their successful businesses.^{2,3,4}

In 1799, New York passed the first Gradual Emancipation Act that freed no existing slaves, instead liberating children born after July 4, 1799, to enslaved mothers, but indenturing these children into young adulthood. The Gradual Emancipation Act of 1817 went somewhat further, granting slaves born before July 4, 1799, freedom, but not until July 4, 1827, 10 years after the law was passed.^{5,6}

The Black population began to expand in Albany following emancipation in New York in 1827 and more after the Civil War in 1863, along with

¹ Levine, David. “African American History: A Past Rooted in the Hudson Valley.” *Hudson Valley Magazine*, April 25, 2022. <https://hvmag.com/life-style/history/african-american-past-hudson-valley/>.

² Bielinski, Stefan. “Benjamin Lattimore.” *New York State Museum: Exhibitions*, 2001. <https://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/l/blattimore8200.html>.

³ Bielinski, Stefan. “Afro Albanians.” *New York State Museum: Exhibitions*, 2014. <https://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/afroalbanians.html>.

⁴ Bielinski, Stefan. “Captain Samuel Schuyler.” *New York State Museum: Exhibitions*, 2016. <https://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/s/sschuyler8492.html>.

⁵ Henken, Ted. “Black New York: The Peopling of New York: Gradual Emancipation.” *Black New York*, n.d. <https://macaulay.cuny.edu/seminars/henken08/index.html>.

⁶ NYC Media. “When Did Slavery End in New York State? | New-York Historical Society.” Video, 2012. <https://www.nyhistory.org/community/slavery-end-new-york-state>.

European immigrants such as Irish, German and Jewish ones. Italian immigrants arrived in Albany in the early twentieth century, settling in and around the South End.

As the industrial and manufacturing sector in Albany grew, South End residents began to learn specialized trades and open shops along South Pearl Street. Retail and commercial start-ups were also established to meet the needs of the neighborhood's growing population. Many of the factory workers and business owners became prosperous enough to build or buy their own houses in the South End.⁷ As a result, the neighborhood continued to grow and prosper.

The number of Black residents in Albany would increase significantly after the Civil War and into the twentieth century, as emancipated slaves and later generations of Black Southerners came north in what was called The Great Migration (1910-1970), seeking relief from the system of oppression known as Jim Crow Laws and in search of employment opportunities.^{8,9}

2.3 THE NEW DEAL, THE ROOTS OF REDLINING, & THE HOME OWNERS' LOAN CORPORATION (HOLC)

Until the 1930s, the mortgage industry only gave short-term and high-risk mortgages, putting homeownership out of reach of most people, regardless of race. This contributed to the concentration of people in cities, where inexpensive housing was more readily available. While people would still self-segregate by social status and race, segregation was not codified into law in northern cities. Nonetheless, in the South End, like so many city neighborhoods, white residents generally lived on different streets and areas than did Black residents.

The onset of the Great Depression triggered a massive housing crisis. To stave off the massive wave of foreclosures and expand home-buying opportunities, the U.S. Congress created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), granting low-interest and long-term mortgages to one million Americans through 1936.¹⁰

In 1935, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the parent company of the HOLC, commissioned the City Survey Program to collect data on real estate risk levels across 239 cities and towns, including Albany, vetting properties, homeowners and entire neighborhoods that would qualify for these coveted mortgages.¹¹ Teams comprised of HOLC

⁷ National Archives Catalog. "South End-Groesbeckville: National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form," 1984. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75316338>.

⁸ Smithsonian American Art Museum. "The Second Great Migration," n.d. <https://americanexperience.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/The-Second-Great-Migration.pdf>.

⁹ In this document, the term "African American" is used to refer to people who originated from the continent of Africa and immigrated to America, typically against their will, or had ancestors who did so. The term "Black" in this report refers to not only the broader community of people categorized by racial signifiers, but more specifically, the cultural identity that has evolved around people of African American descent, and not necessarily having a connection to the period of slavery or the broader African diaspora. This would more readily describe post-first-generation African Americans who may have had decreasing connection to ancestral culture and identity because of systemic dehumanization and cultural erasures on the part of their enslavers.

¹⁰ Michney, Todd. "How the City Survey's Redlining Maps Were Made: A Closer Look at HOLC's Mortgagee Rehabilitation Division." *Journal of Planning History* 21, no. 4 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15385132211013361>.

¹¹ Kazmi, Rafay. "HOLC Historic Lending Guideline Maps On." PolicyMap, July 14, 2017. <https://www.policymap.com/blog/holc-historic-lending-guideline-maps-policymap>.

For decades, people who lived in these so-called “redlined” areas — including the South End — were denied access to these federally backed mortgages and other attractive credit, as well as insurance, fueling a cycle of disinvestment.

staff, local realtors, lenders, and developers met to evaluate neighborhoods based on real estate trends, economic conditions, and racial and ethnic residential composition.

This information was used to create maps for each municipality participating in the program—internal maps that were not made public by the federal government. The riskiness of investing in different neighborhoods was rated by grading them as “best,” “still desirable,” “declining” or “hazardous.” Race played a major role in these designations: Black as well as immigrant neighborhoods, no matter the general income level in the neighborhood or individual incomes, were routinely given a “hazardous” rating.¹² Neighborhoods designated as “hazardous” for lending institutions to make real estate investments were highlighted in red on these maps, and HOLC gave few mortgages to people in these areas who wanted to buy or improve the quality of their properties.

For decades, people who lived in these so-called “redlined” areas — including the South End — were denied access to these federally backed mortgages

and other attractive credit, as well as insurance, fueling a cycle of disinvestment.¹³ Unable to purchase homes, those who resided in redlined neighborhoods were denied the wealth accumulation and the upward social mobility that often accompanies homeownership and the appreciation of property values. White residents had far greater access to the wealth that accompanies homeownership and to the neighborhoods where wealth resided — whether in cities, suburbs or rural communities.

Redlining in Albany—and the South End

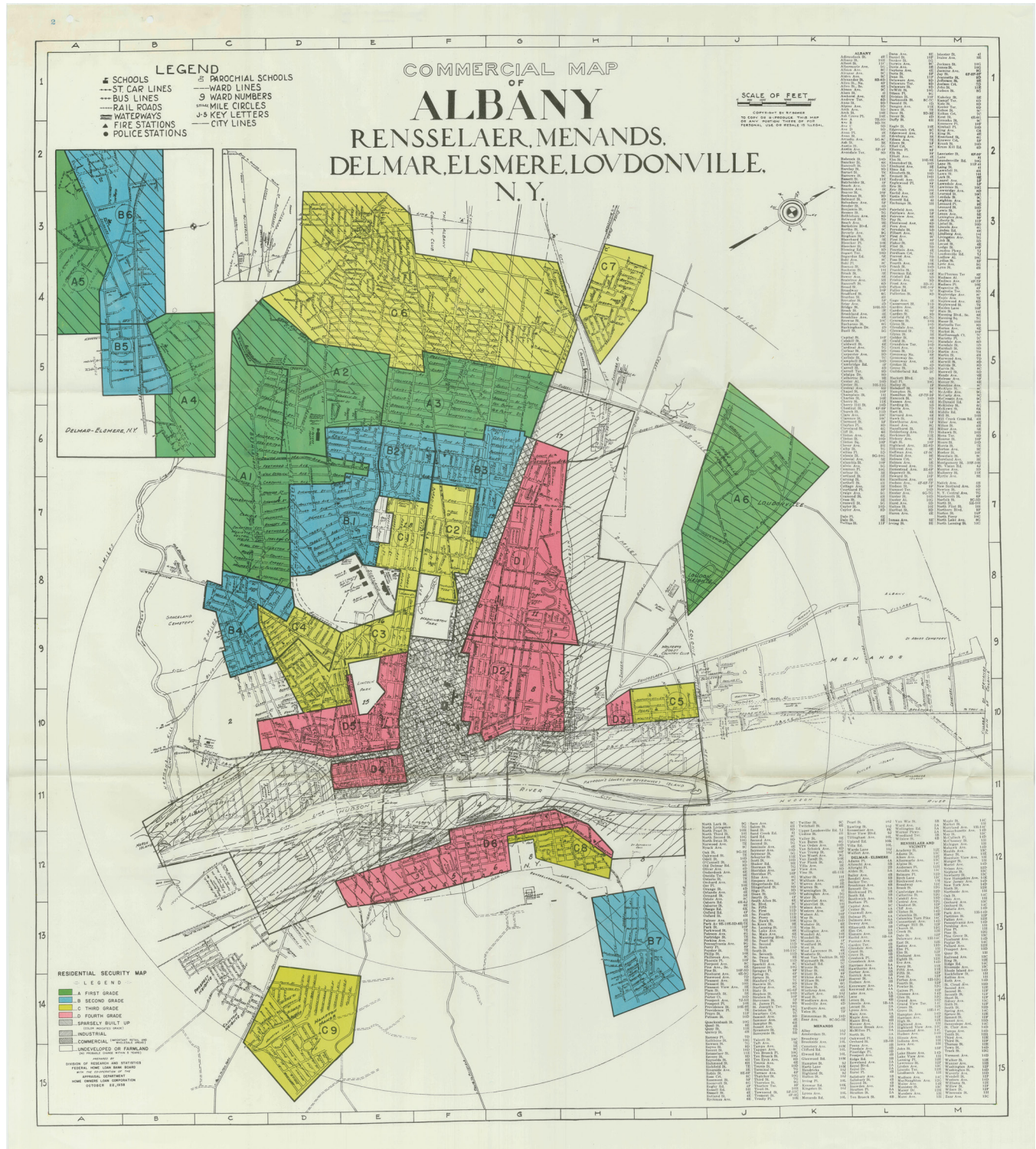
In 1935 and 1936, officials from HOLC interviewed prominent Albany realtors and bankers to assess mortgage risk in various neighborhoods of the city. Like in places across the country, HOLC officials created a map that broke the city into areas based on how risky they believed it was for lenders to give mortgages or other loans. In 1938, HOLC created the Residential Security Map (Figure 1), which divided Albany into 30 sections. They gave the South End neighborhood a “D” rating, redlining it — deeming mortgages there “hazardous.” (HOLC also gave Arbor Hill, West Hill and the West End the same “hazardous” designation.) South End residents found it extremely difficult to secure long-term, low-interest mortgages. The resulting low homeownership rates and lack of access to capital led to the deterioration of property that persists to this day.¹⁴

¹² Jackson, Candace. “What Is Redlining?” The New York Times, August 17, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html>.

¹³ Chapple, K., & Thomas, T., and Zuk, M. (2021). Urban Displacement Project website. Berkeley, CA: Urban Displacement Project. <https://urbandisplacement.org/redlining>

¹⁴ Fraser, Nancy. “Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson.” Critical Historical Studies 3, no. 1 (March 2016): 163–78. <https://doi.org/10.1086/685814>.

FIGURE 1



Updated Residential Security Map, 1938. Source: Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/holc/tiles/NY/Albany/1937/holc-scan.jpg>)

Urban Renewal

In the 1940s, the Black resident population in the City of Albany was about 2% of the city's population. Veterans returning home from World War II created a demand for housing, and the Albany Housing Authority (AHA) was created in February of 1946. The city's first housing projects were temporary barracks-style homes. By 1952, the AHA's first public housing buildings, the Robert E. Whalen Homes, were created in Arbor Hill. The project used funds from the Public Housing Administration (PHA), which would be replaced in 1965 with the current Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).¹⁵

The passage of the 1954 federal Housing Act launched what is now referred to as Urban Renewal, in which large-scale residential projects were built to replace deteriorated housing in neighborhoods following the mass exodus of middle-class white residents from the urban core. The South End project that became Lincoln Square Apartments was originally proposed as "towers in the park." The intention was to build vertically, as opposed to horizontally, creating a small footprint for the housing, leaving room for open space around the towers. However, these high rise apartment buildings usually destroyed historic buildings, displaced low-income families, destroyed locally owned small businesses, and generally undermined the neighborhood fabric.

TABLE 1

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	BLACK POPULATION	PERCENT OF POPULATION
1890	94,923	1,122	1.20%
1900	94,151	1,178	1.30%
1910	100,253	1,037	1.00%
1920	113,344	1,239	1.10%
1930	127,412	2,324	1.80%
1940	130,577	2,929	2.20%
1950	134,325	5,785	4.30%
1960	129,726	10,972	8.50%
1970	115,781	14,930	12.90%
1980*	101,727	16,365	16.10%
1990*	101,082	20,869	20.60%
2000*	95,658	28,638	29.93%
2010*	97,856	32,569	33.28%
2020**	99,224	32,699	32.95%

Reproduced version of "City of Albany Population by Race 1890-1970." Lemak, Jennifer A. (2008). Originally found in "Albany, New York and The Great Migration." Afro-Americans in New York Life and History (Vol. 32, Issue 1). Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. via Gale.com. Table amended to include current data trends.

* 1990-2010 data added via U.S. Decennial Census Survey data

** 2020 data added via U.S. Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data; 2020 Decennial Census Demographic Profile data anticipated release date is June 2023

¹⁵ Briggs, Robert. "Providing Housing to Building Communities: A Brief History of the Albany Housing Authority." Albany Housing Authority, 2013. <http://www.albanyhousing.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/A-Brief-History-Of-The-Albany-Housing-Authority.pdf>.

46%

U.S. percentage of Black people owning homes, roughly the same as it was in 1966.

74%

U.S. percentage of White homeownership.

\$48K

Amount lower a home owned by a Black person is worth compared to a similar-sized home in white neighborhoods.

Fair Housing Act of 1968

In 1968, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act to outlaw racial discrimination in housing and the use of inequitable loan practices, such as redlining. Today, the South End continues to be home to a population comprised predominantly of people of color. Approximately 61% of residents are Black and 16% are Hispanic.

The percentage of Black people owning homes in the U.S. is 46%, roughly the same as it was in 1966. White homeownership is at 74%. A home owned by a Black person, on average, is worth \$48,000 less than a similar-sized home in white neighborhoods.¹⁶

Despite the ban on housing discrimination based on race, many residents, including those in the South End today, argue that they still face discrimination when applying for home loans and appraisals. This perception is supported by growing evidence showing that properties in neighborhoods with

higher proportions of Black residents tend to be assigned values less than those with fewer Black residents. Often, the only difference between a fair appraisal and a significantly undervalued home is whether the home has a white or Black owner.^{17,18,19,20}

The following flowchart, excerpted from the 2021 Brookings report, “How Invidious Discrimination Works and Hurts: An Examination of Lending Discrimination and Its Long-Term Economic Impacts on Borrowers of Color,” shows how racial prejudice depresses the buying power of prospective Black homeowners — as well as the potential resale value of their homes.²¹

Since the 2007 Capital South Plan was published, racial segregation in the City of Albany persists.

Racial discrimination in housing continues to outlast modern efforts to remedy the inequality these racialized policies have created.

¹⁶ Perry, Andre. “How Invidious Discrimination Works and Hurts: An Examination of Lending Discrimination and Its Long-Term Economic Impacts on Borrowers of Color,” The Brookings Institution, February 24, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WrittenTestimony_APerry_2.24.21_Final.pdf.

¹⁷ Kamin, Debra. “Black Homeowners Face Discrimination in Appraisals.” The New York Times, August 27, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/25/realestate/blacks-minorities-appraisals-discrimination.html>.

¹⁸ www.nar.realtor. “NAR’s Virtual Appraisal Summit Examines Intersection of Fair Housing, Appraisal,” August 6, 2020. <https://www.nar.realtor/newsroom/nars-virtual-appraisal-summit-examines-intersection-of-fair-housing-appraisal-industry>.

¹⁹ Perry, Andre Jonathan M. Rothwell. “The Devaluation of Assets in Black Neighborhoods.” Brookings, March 9, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/devaluation-of-assets-in-black-neighborhoods/>.

²⁰ Mock, Brentin. “Freddie Mac Finds ‘Pervasive’ Bias in Home Appraisal Industry”: A New Study Augments a Body of Evidence That Homes in Black and Latino Neighborhoods Are Undervalued.” Bloomberg, September 28, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-28/study-finds-widespread-racial-disparities-in-appraisals>.

²¹ Perry, Andre. “How Invidious Discrimination Works and Hurts: An Examination of Lending Discrimination and Its Long-Term Economic Impacts on Borrowers of Color.”

FIGURE 2

The various points in the housing market distorted by racism

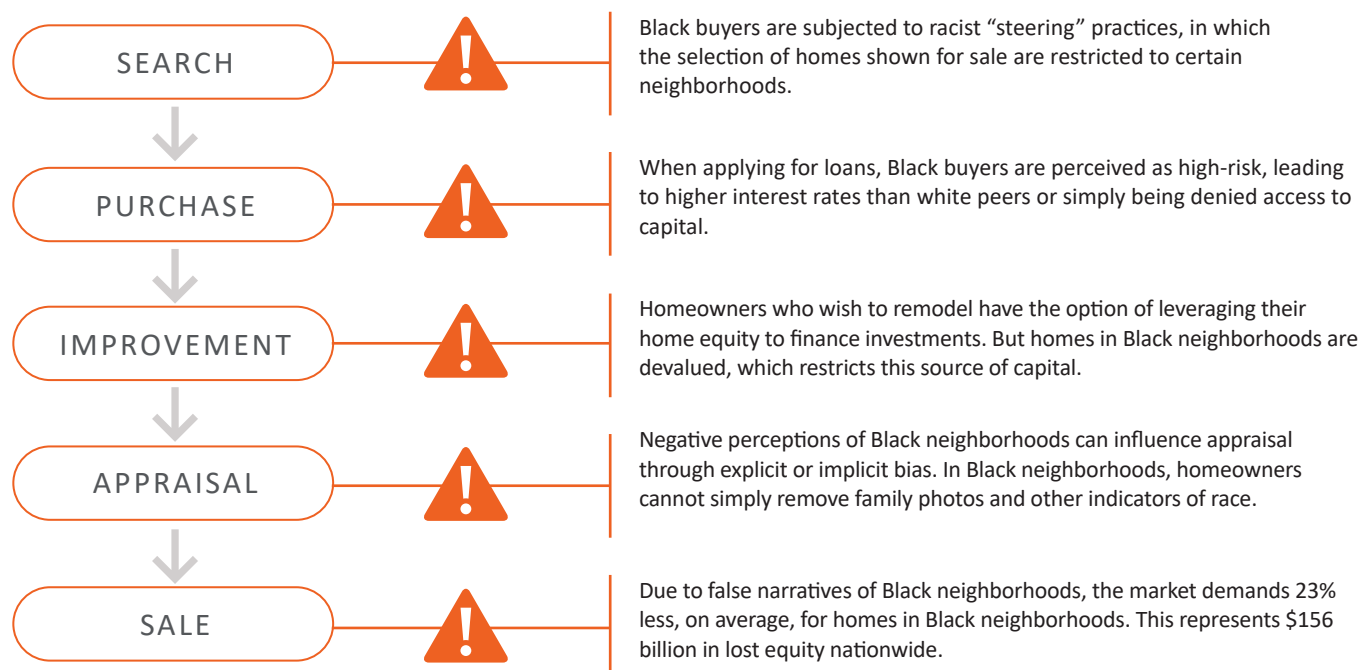
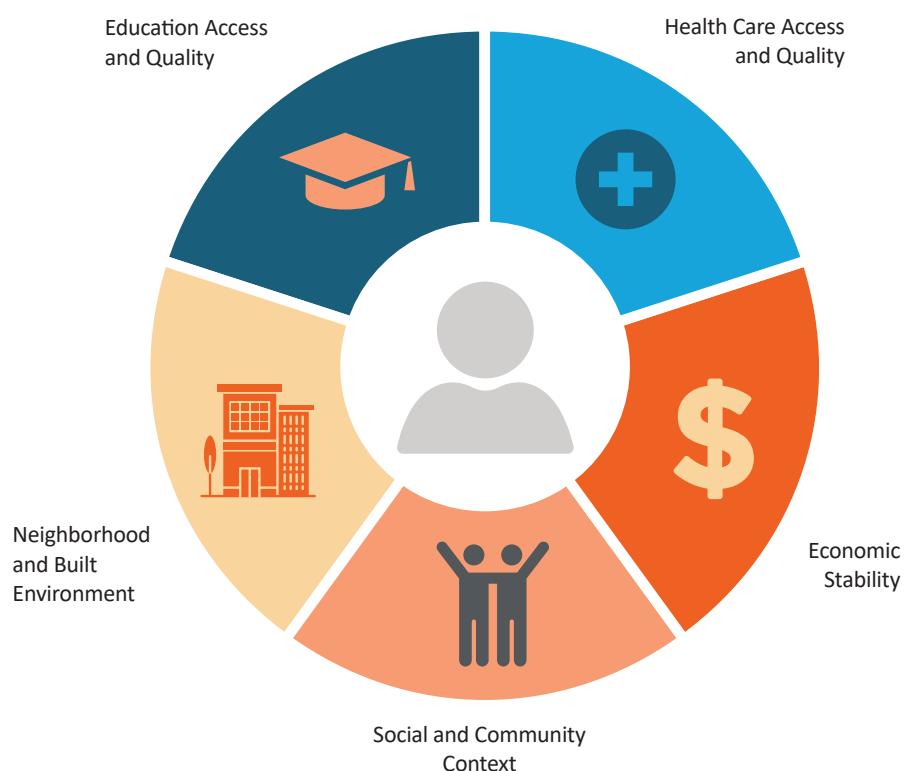


FIGURE 3

Social Determinants of Health

Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>



2.4 THE LEGACY OF RACISM IN THE SOUTH END

Race and Social Determinants of Health

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines social determinants of health as “the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.”²²

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services breaks down social determinants of health into five categories:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Health Care Access and Quality
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment
5. Social and Community Context

The social determinants of a health model, can provide an idea of what socioeconomic conditions should exist in an ideal environment so that a comparison can be made between segregated communities in the City of Albany. The intent is that by identifying disparate states of social determinants of health, a systematic approach to “Identify, Describe, and Dismantle” the barriers to health can be established.²³

The five categories that determine a neighborhood’s health, and the people who reside there, is analyzed in the following pages, with an eye on how these health factors apply to the South End and to Albany.

Economic Stability

The effect that the systematic denial of mortgages, insurance, loans and other financial services to residents living in “undesirable” neighborhoods widened and exacerbated a wealth gap in many communities, including the South End. As housing values in formerly “greenlined” neighborhoods (where the federal government encouraged lending) have risen significantly, properties in formerly redlined neighborhoods have stagnated or declined. This disparity in property values discourages investment in redlined neighborhoods and encourages further investment in other more profitable ones. This has negatively impacted the asset wealth for people of color, creating strong barriers against social mobility, and concentrating populations who lack financial assets.

In the map shown in Figure 4, you can see that most of the Albany neighborhoods that are predominantly white have household incomes over \$50,000 — and often well above that income level.

The mortgage industry overhaul of the 1930s encouraged many white residents to use the financially favorable mortgages and other loans to buy property, creating new wealth for them as they invested in their homes, which usually appreciated in value. The mortgages also created economic stability in the neighborhoods where they were given — again, primarily in white communities.

At the same time, many Black residents in historically redlined communities such as the South End faced multiple obstacles in achieving the

²² “Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030 | Health.Gov,” n.d. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>.

²³ Aspen Ideas Festival. “How to Be an Antiracist | Aspen Ideas,” n.d. <https://www.aspenideas.org/sessions/how-to-be-an-antiracist>.

same wealth accrual, as they were often denied mortgages and other loans altogether, reducing the financial advantages that are gained through home ownership. These policies not only hurt individuals, they curtailed capital investments in entire neighborhoods, limiting the percentage of home ownership and depressing property levels generally. The effects of this financial discrimination continued well after these racialized urban policies were repealed.

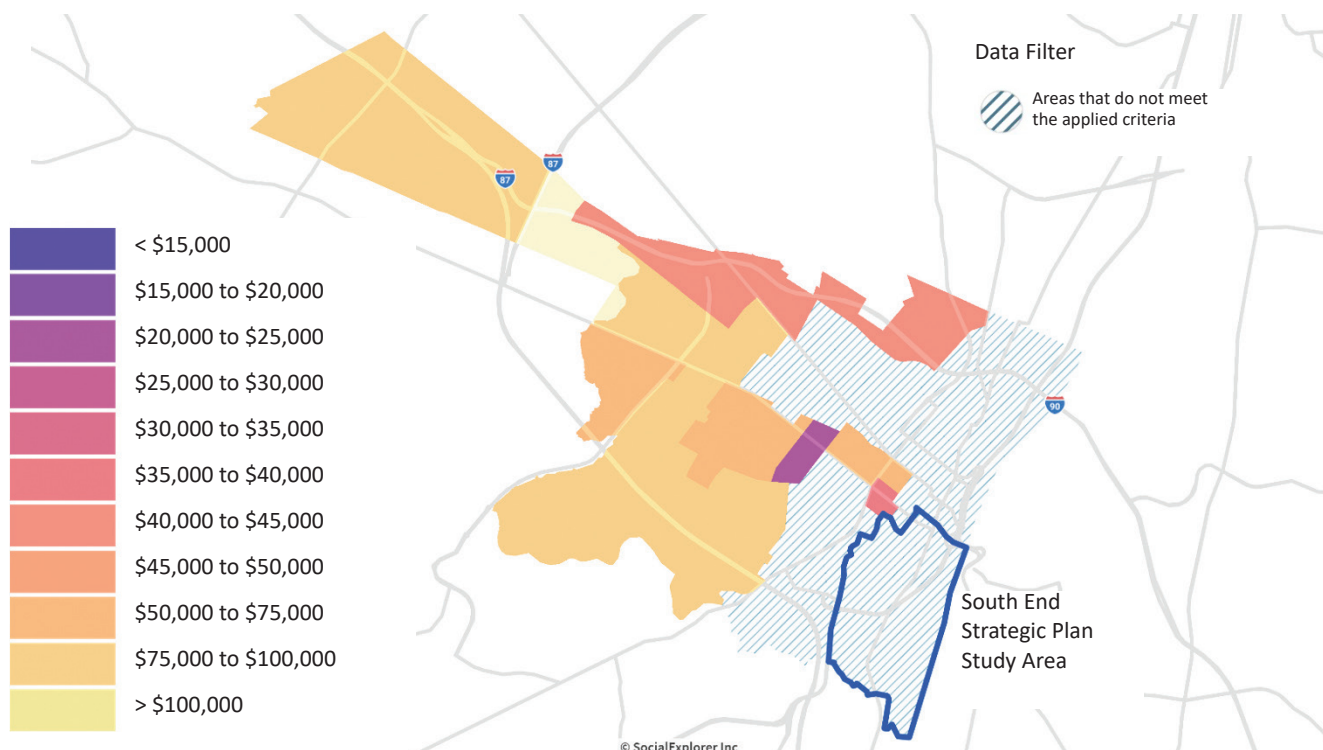
When comparing median family incomes, a pattern emerged geographically, but to better understand the disparate impacts to different racial groups, a deeper analysis was done to compare median family incomes broken down by population density.

What was found when a data criterion was applied that looked for a concentration of Black residents, incomes were concentrated in the lower extremes, even when the cutoff to lower population percentage points was adjusted.

When the same criteria filter was applied for white residents, it was found that incomes were generally concentrated at high levels, even if the threshold to consider population majority was raised to 60% of the population in that geographic area.

It was found that not only were low-income levels concentrated in areas with higher levels of Black residents, but that higher income levels were concentrated in areas that were predominantly white.

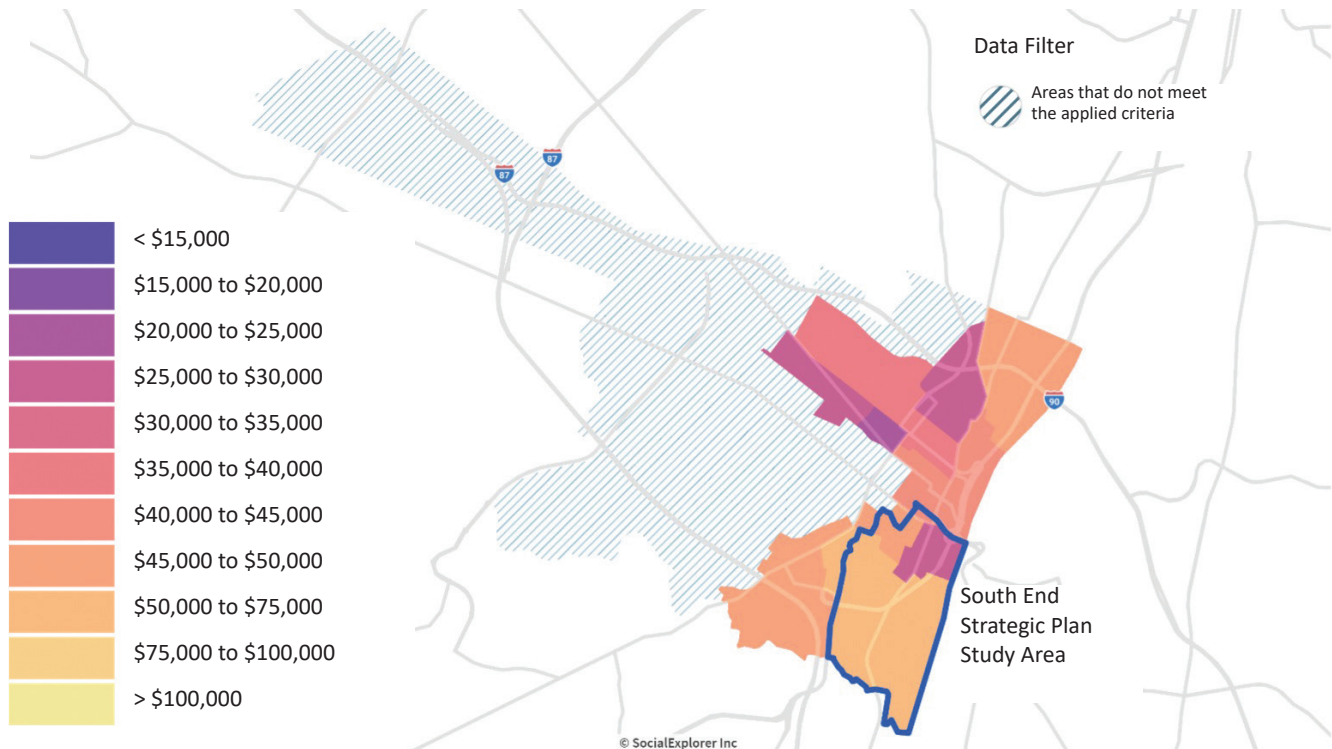
FIGURE 4
City of Albany Median Household Income Where White Residents Represent at Least 60% of the Population



Source Census American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates. Social Explorer Inc.

FIGURE 5

City of Albany Median Household Income Where Black Residents Represent at Least 25% of the Population



Source Census American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates Social Explorer Inc.

It was found that not only were low-income levels concentrated in areas with higher levels of Black residents, but that higher income levels were concentrated in areas that were predominantly white.

Education Access and Quality

Schools in the South End include Giffen Memorial Elementary School, Delaware Community School, Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) Community School, Green Tech Charter High School, The Harriet Tubman Free School, and KIPP Capital Region Public Charter Schools (Charter Elementary School at 65 Krank Street and Charter Middle School at 42 South Dove Street).

Funding for the local public school district is affected by the rate and proportion of taxes collected from properties within the district's catchment area. If communities of color are devalued, the proportion of funding available for the school district is also devalued. This creates further obstacles in addressing education needs for families who already face additional obstacles living in areas of the city with the lowest incomes.²⁴

As the largest public school in the South End and a place of interest in the 2007 Capital South Plan, the Planning Department reviewed the conditions at Giffen Elementary School. The student body at Giffen Elementary is the largest in the city school district, which has designated Giffen as a community school, which means that services are not only provided to the student, but to the entire family.

Community schools provide intersectional services meant to address educational obstacles to both child and family, such as helping a parent purchase a home. The City School District of Albany lists the five focus areas of community schools as Expanded Learning Opportunities, Family Partnerships, Comprehensive Supports, Targeted Student Supports and High Quality Teaching and Learning. These

If communities of color are devalued, the proportion of funding available for the school district is also devalued. This creates further obstacles in addressing education needs for families who already face additional obstacles living in areas of the city with the lowest incomes.

services are meant to address the increased needs of children and their families in lower income households. These wrap-around services can include additional meals, before and after care, and other services to ensure the child is able to have as many basic needs met to guarantee they have the best opportunity to learn. Approximately 80% of students live below the median income in the South End, which increases the chance that these wrap around services would be needed to overcome barriers to learning.

South End children score much lower than the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), used to measure the educational milestones and progress in children. It also provides a way to compare educational levels across a national standard.²⁵ Census tracts in the South End scored around 95 points out of 536 possible points for third grade reading proficiency and 87 points out of 505 points for math proficiency. This was about half as high as the national average.²⁶

²⁴ Engle, Patrice L., and Maureen M. Black. "The Effect of Poverty on Child Development and Educational Outcomes." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1136, no. 1 (July 25, 2008): 243–56. <https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1425.023>.

²⁵ National Assessment Governing Board. "The Intended Meaning of NAEP Results," March 7, 2020. <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/policies/Intended-Meaning-of-NAEP.pdf>.

²⁶ "State Aid to Schools – A Primer," 2005. https://www.oms.nysed.gov/faru/Primer/Primer05-06A_files/primer05-06.htm.

Health-Care Access and Quality

The Childhood Opportunity Index published by the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy at Brandeis University is an index of neighborhood features that help children develop in a healthy way. The Index combines data from 29 neighborhood-level indicators, split into three domains: education, health and environment, and social and economic conditions. This Index showed that the City of Albany held some of the nation's highest and lowest scores regarding access to childhood opportunities — and that they correlated to race. The highest level of opportunities for children was afforded to white families, and the lowest level of childhood opportunities were afforded to Black children.²⁷

When the Index is applied to the City of Albany, the South End has a very low Child Opportunity Score compared to the national average. The study found that 65% of South End households were without a car and more than half-a-mile from a supermarket, several orders of magnitude higher than the national average.^{28,29} The lack of healthy food options in neighborhoods such as the South End is often referred to as a food desert. But the term food

apartheid is also used to make clear that the scarcity of healthy and affordable food is largely a result of racialized urban governmental policies.³⁰

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a focus on the varying impact of the virus across racial and economic lines—and in redlined neighborhoods compared to those outside them. The 2020 study, “The Lasting Impact of Historic ‘Redlining’ on Neighborhood Health: Higher Prevalence of COVID-19 Risk Factors” conducted by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, studied the health outcomes for communities in redlined areas compared to those outside them, and included an analysis of Albany.

The study's author concluded: “This study extended upon other work that found a close relationship between government-sanctioned and promoted racial, cultural and class-based residential segregation with public health outcomes in neighborhoods today. In the 142 urban areas for which HOLC redlining maps are available, the neighborhoods considered hazardous or declining almost a century ago have higher prevalence of poor health indicators than areas without these designations.”³¹

This Index showed that the City of Albany held some of the nation's highest and lowest scores regarding access to childhood opportunities — and that they correlated to race.

²⁷ Fessler, Pam. “In Nearly Every U.S. Metro Area, New Data Show Opportunity Lags For Kids Of Color.” NPR.Org, December 18, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/18/788888302/in-nearly-every-u-s-metro-area-new-data-show-opportunity-for-kids-of-color-lags>.

²⁸ The Heller School at Brandeis University: Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy. “Child Opportunity Index,” 2015. <https://heller.brandeis.edu/icyfp/index.html>.

²⁹ Diversity Data Kids. “Child Opportunity Levels.” Map. <https://www.diversitydatakids.org/maps/>.

³⁰ Campus Environmental Center. “‘Food Apartheid’ (Not ‘Desert’),” August 19, 2020. <https://utenviroment.org/projects/microfarm/food-justice/glossary/food-apartheid-not-desert/>.

³¹ Jason Richards et al. “The Lasting Impact of Historic ‘Redlining’ on Neighborhood Health: Higher Prevalence of COVID-19 Risk Factors.” National Community Reinvestment Coalition, 2020. <https://ncrc.org/holc-health/>.

The study's executive summary includes these key findings:

1. The prevalence of historic redlining in a neighborhood is related to current neighborhood conditions, including increased minority presence, higher prevalence of poverty, and greater social vulnerability
2. There are statistically significant connection between redlined areas and pre-existing conditions that heighten the risk of morbidity in COVID-19 patients, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, kidney disease, obesity and stroke
3. There are statistically significant connections between greater redlining and general indicators of health, including mental health issues and a lower life expectancy for infants

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines social vulnerability as the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks.³² Low-income and minority communities, especially Black and Hispanic communities, which have experienced disinvestment for decades are recognized as having high social

vulnerability. These communities have a decreased capacity to withstand natural and human-created disasters due to more limited resources.³³ The CDC, to better plan for disasters and emergencies, created a social vulnerability index (SVI) to assess a community's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from human and natural disasters by combining several factors into a score. These factors are social and economic, housing and transportation, minority status and language, household composition, and disability. The score was applied to their respective census tracts.

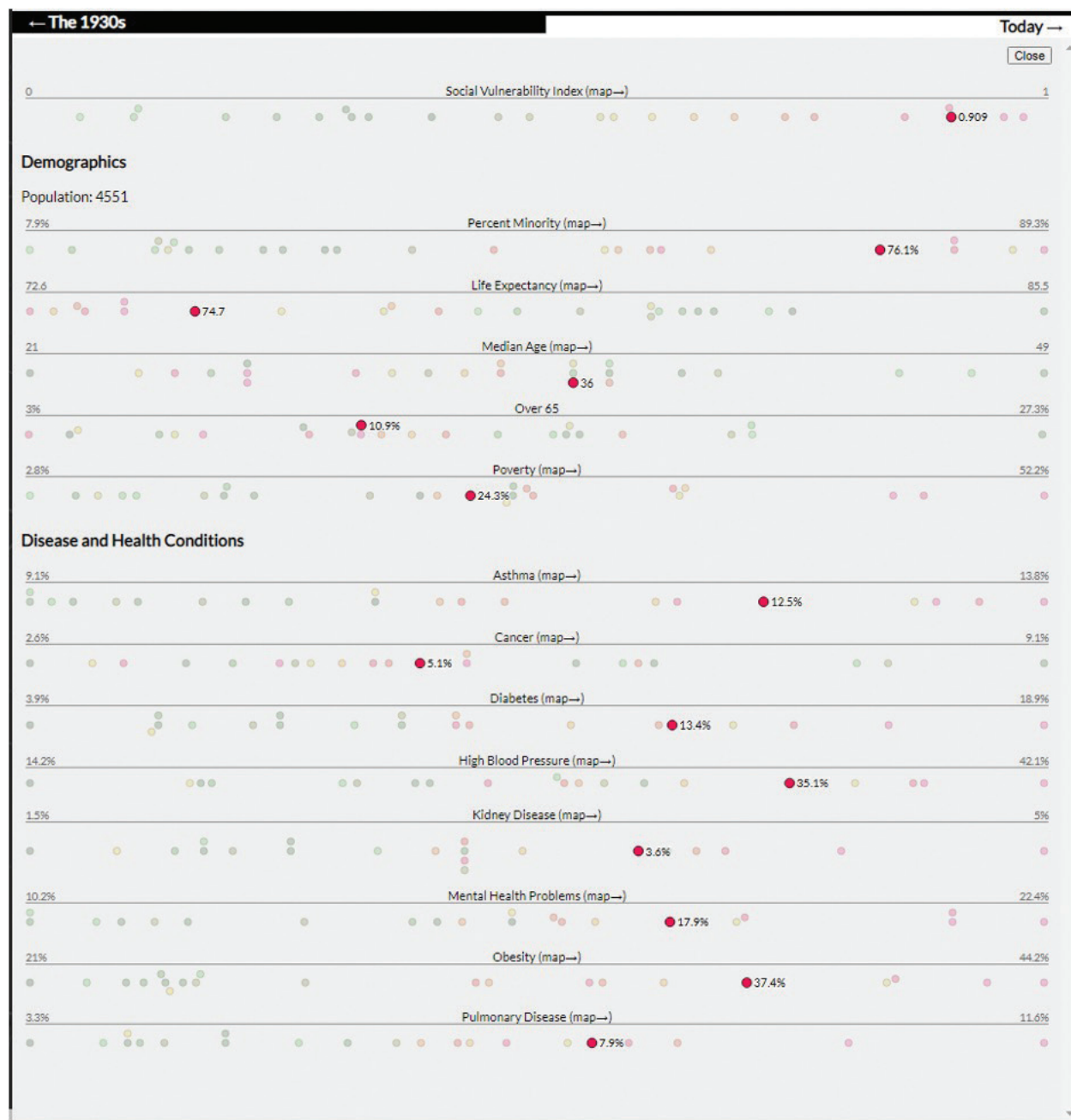
The University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab, in collaboration with the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, compared the redlining maps for 200 cities, including the City of Albany, and the correlation to the SVI, which measures a community's vulnerability to various social stressors, such as diseases and natural disasters. This comparison provided metrics to demonstrate the connection between a history of racial segregation in the South End and the disadvantages to those who currently live there. The following chart (Figure 6) compares the demographic, economic, and health data for the South End census tract to other tracts in the City of Albany. The South End scored high for social vulnerability compared to the city overall.³⁴

³² "At A Glance: CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index | Place and Health | ATSDR," n.d. https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/at-a-glance_svi.html.

³³ Jason Richards et al. "The Lasting Impact of Historic "Redlining" on Neighborhood Health."

³⁴ The Digital Scholarship Lab and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "Not Even Past: Social Vulnerability and the Legacy of Redlining," American Panorama, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/socialvulnerability>.

FIGURE 6
Social Vulnerability Index



Social Vulnerability Index, with the metrics used, for the Census Tracts that make up a large portion of the South End. “Not Even Past: Social Vulnerability and the Legacy of Redlining,” American Panorama, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/socialvulnerability>

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Homeownership has become a key method of building wealth in America. The opportunity to own a home was made readily available to white Americans during the early part of the twentieth century, but because of institutional discrimination based on race, owning a home was out of reach for most Black Americans. As a result, Black residents, including those now comprising a majority of residents in the South End, have not had the same opportunity to build and pass down generational wealth through real estate.

This disparity was exacerbated when white residents with resources moved from urban centers, especially neighborhoods that were redlined, to the suburbs. When they left, they took their wealth with them, diminishing the urban tax base and exacerbating the disinvestment in areas such as the South End.

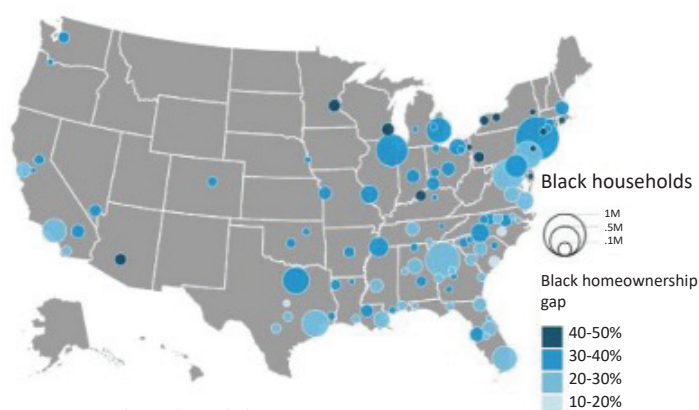
A 2018 study conducted by the Urban Institute examined racial disparities in homeownership rates in American cities (see Figure 7). According to American Community Survey data referenced

in the study, the white homeownership rate in Albany was 69%, over three times higher than the 20% homeownership rate for Black residents. That means that the City of Albany has a 49% gap in the ownership rate between Black and white residents, the second highest homeownership gap among the 100 cities studied. The study's authors noted that such examples of lower rates of home ownership among Black populations are "a major factor contributing to the racial wealth gap."³⁵

The values of homes that were purchased by residents in disinvested neighborhoods was further depressed by federally funded highways built in the 1950s and 1960s through cities—often through less politically powerful neighborhoods where people of color resided. The construction of Interstate 787 in the South End posed immediate noise and air-quality conditions for residents, particularly in the Steamboat Square housing project, and also cut the neighborhood off from potential benefits of having easy access to the Hudson River.

FIGURE 7

Lasting Legacy of Inequitable Practices and Policies



No city has closed the gap

An excerpt from an Urban Institute study on national homeownership gaps by city.
<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/mapping-black-homeownership-gap>

Widest and Smallest Homeownership Gaps

	White homeownership rate	Black homeownership rate	Homeownership gap
Widest gaps			
1. Minneapolis, MN	74.8%	24.8%	50%
2. Albany, NY	68.9%	20.1%	48.8%
3. Buffalo, NY	73.4%	28.9%	44.5%
4. Salisbury, MD	81.2%	38.0%	43.2%
5. Bridgeport, CT	76.5%	34.1%	42.3%
Smallest gaps			
1. Killeen, TX	63.0%	48.5%	14.5%
2. Fayetteville, NC	62.8%	45.4%	17.4%
3. Charleston, SC	71.6%	53.5%	18.1%
4. Austin, TX	64.2%	42.7%	21.5%
5. Augusta, GA	75.1%	53.4%	31.7%

Source: American Community Survey

³⁵ McCargo, Alanna, and Sarah Strochak. "Mapping the Black Homeownership Gap." Urban Institute, February 26, 2018.
<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/mapping-black-homeownership-gap>.

In the name of urban renewal, construction of the Empire State Plaza from 1965 to 1978 displaced 10,000 residents, many of whom were immigrants and people of color. By demolishing businesses, places of worship, schools and other community institutions, thousands of residents were displaced and the quality of life for residents who remained in areas adjacent to the Plaza, such as the South End, was severely undermined.

In the early 1970s, the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal and the Albany Housing Authority built the Ezra Prentice Homes to house some of the thousands of people displaced by the Plaza. Ezra Prentice Homes, which has housed primarily people of color, is located directly adjacent to the railroad line and rail yard that feeds the Port of Albany. The proximity of this public housing to these noxious uses — including heavy truck traffic directly in front of the Homes — was a “textbook example of environmental racism,” said Basil Seggos, the Commissioner of the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, in 2021.³⁶

Social and Community Context

In relation to social determinants of health, social and community context refers to people’s relationships and interactions with family, friends, co-workers, and community members. It is a measure of how well-connected the community

is — including the people in the community as well as institutions, such as social, religious, cultural and occupational ones. In neighborhoods that are historically redlined, social and community relations are typically negatively affected. Key issues in the social and community category of social determinants of health are:

1. Social Cohesion

2. Civic Participation

3. Discrimination

1. Social Cohesion is the measure of the sense of solidarity within a community. In a community with strong social cohesion, residents can identify and use shared resources to address challenges, such as using social networks to connect people to opportunities. They have a collective ability to positively create change and influence positive outcomes, such as pre-empting symptoms of poverty and overcoming poverty itself. Conversely, redlining and environmental racism hurt a community’s ability to build social cohesion.

2. Civic Participation has been linked to positive health outcomes.^{37,38} Simply being a part of a formal or informal group is linked to a decrease in anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as fewer risk factors for cardiovascular disease and cognitive impairment.^{39,40,41,42} Additionally, increasing civic participation can increase social cohesion and boost

³⁶ WMHT. “The Future of Ezra Prentice Homes | New York NOW.” Video. YouTube, May 10, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3M2jErLkkQ>.

³⁷ Marquez, Becky, Patricia Gonzalez, Linda Gallo, and Ming Ji. “Latino Civic Group Participation, Social Networks, and Physical Activity.” *American Journal of Health Behavior* 40, no. 4 (July 1, 2016): 437–45. <https://doi.org/10.5993/ajhb.40.4.5>.

³⁸ You, Myoungsoon, Chang-yup Kim, and Saerom Kim. “Civic Participation and Self-Rated Health: A Cross-National Multilevel Analysis Using World Value Survey.” *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, January 27, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.3961/jpmph.14.031>.

³⁹ Caroline E Jenkinson et al., “Is Volunteering a Public Health Intervention? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Health and Survival of Volunteers.” *BMC Public Health* 13, no. 1 (August 23, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-773>.

⁴⁰ Burr, Jeffrey A., Sae Hwang Han, and Jane L. Tavares. “Volunteering and Cardiovascular Disease Risk: Does Helping Others Get ‘Under the Skin?’” *The Gerontologist* 56, no. 5 (April 15, 2015): 937–47. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnv032>.

⁴¹ Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon Schuster, 2001.

⁴² Son, Julie, Careen Yarnal, and Deborah Kerstetter. “Engendering Social Capital through a Leisure Club for Middle-aged and Older Women: Implications for Individual and Community Health and Well-being.” *Leisure Studies* 29, no. 1 (January 2010): 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903242578>.

Major discriminatory events often lead to structural discrimination. Residential segregation, disparities in access to quality education, and disparities in incarceration rates are some specific forms of structural discrimination.

neighborhood revitalization efforts. The South End has a rich collection of organizations working to build social cohesion through civic participation, including the South End Community Collaborative, The South End Neighborhood Association, AVillage Inc., Trinity Alliance, The Radix Center, YouthFX, 518 S.N.U.G., The South End Children's Café, The African American Cultural Center, Grand Street Community Arts, Young Futures Inc., and Centro Civico.

3. Racial Discrimination can have a detrimental impact on efforts to build social cohesion. Everyday transgressions include discriminatory behavior that includes disrespectful treatment, disparate levels of service in retail establishments, or outright harassment or threats. Major discriminatory events include discriminatory hiring practices, housing policies, job dismissals, property valuations, and loan denials. The United States Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion evaluated the individual and community health implications of racialized urban policies.⁴³ In the United States,

31% of Black adults report at least one major discriminatory occurrence in their lifetime, and 63% report experiencing discrimination every day.⁴⁴

Major discriminatory events often lead to structural discrimination. Residential segregation, disparities in access to quality education, and disparities in incarceration rates are some specific forms of structural discrimination. Racial segregation by area can lead to poorer health outcomes for Black residents and their families, but also for entire communities. Residential segregation also exacerbates disparities in access to quality education because school districts generate their funds locally through property taxes, with poorer districts receiving less funding than wealthier ones. Children who enroll in schools with limited fiscal resources, increased safety concerns, and less quality teachers are more likely to have poorer outcomes.

⁴³ Healthy People 2020. "Social Determinants of Health, Interventions and Resources, Discrimination," 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/discrimination>.

⁴⁴ Luo, Ye, Jun Xu, Ellen Granberg, and William M. Wentworth. "A Longitudinal Study of Social Status, Perceived Discrimination, and Physical and Emotional Health Among Older Adults." *Research on Aging* 34, no. 3 (December 14, 2011): 275–301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027511426151>.

3

ACTION PLAN

SECTION CONTENTS

1. Overview
2. 2007 Capital South Plan - Organization
3. South End Improvements Taken to Date
4. Screening Process for Update
5. Strategic Plan Update - Organization
6. Goals and Strategies

3.1 OVERVIEW

Development of the 2007 *Capital South Plan* was guided by the South End Action Committee (SEAC). This diverse group of professionals and neighborhood advocates identified 95 recommendations designed to redevelop and revitalize the South End. The recommendations ranged from small-scale projects that could be implemented quickly to large-scale, multi-year projects that required coordination from multiple organizations.

For many recommendations, SEAC and other volunteer-based groups were identified as the “Lead Party” responsible for the implementation. After the adoption of the Capital South Plan, SEAC met regularly to discuss steps to advance the recommendations, but, as with many volunteer groups, membership waned and, ultimately, the group dissolved. Today, the South End is seeing a resurgence in community and neighborhood-based organizations. Groups like the South End Community Collaborative (SECC) and the South End Neighborhood Association (SENA) are active and

In recognition of a need for a holistic approach toward achieving equity, this plan includes recommendations that extend beyond the South End and into the larger city.

dedicated to making the South End a community of choice.

Inspired by the renewal of community capacity, the Department of Planning and Development revisited the Capital South Plan to inventory:

- Recommendations that have been realized
- Recommendations that have not been realized
- Recommendations for which the City of Albany can be responsible for coordinating implementation, with the support of neighborhood residents and stakeholders

It is understood that the *Strategic Plan Update* does not replace the *Capital South Plan*, but instead details specific actions and policies that the Planning Department should pursue to address current issues identified during the public engagement process. Likewise, the Department recognizes that recommended measures are not a remedy, but a commitment toward and a continued investment in equity, justice and a better quality of life.

In recognition of a need for a holistic approach toward achieving equity, this plan includes recommendations that extend beyond the South End and into the larger city. This is done because the South End shares similar challenges with other Albany neighborhoods that have suffered from racism and other forms of discrimination.

3.2 2007 CAPITAL SOUTH SEGWAY PLAN – ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY

SEAC organized the *Capital South Plan* into three phases they believed were necessary for comprehensive neighborhood revitalization; to Stabilize, Energize, and Grow the South End. SEAC then prepared a series of objectives and recommendations based on the following four focus areas:

1. Quality of life
2. Physical planning
3. Workforce and business development
4. Community capacity

The Plan has 95 recommendations. While the list was comprehensive, its implementation relied heavily on volunteers and lacked dedicated funding streams and, as a result, some of the recommendations were never realized.

3.3 SOUTH END IMPROVEMENTS TAKEN TO DATE

The 2007 *Capital South Plan* proposed many goals and initiatives for the South End, and while many of the recommendations have not come to fruition, a significant amount of public investment has been made in recent years. Since the completion of the 2007 *Capital South Plan*, the City of Albany has made the following significant investment in the South End:

Streetscape Improvements

- \$12 million to revitalize South End streets and sidewalks, including \$360,000 for the reconstruction of lower Madison Avenue in 2011 and \$2 million for the reconstruction of South Pearl Street in 2019
- \$1.7 million for South End Connector (2020), the City's first physically separated bicycle and pedestrian path, a recreational amenity

and a spark to economic development meant to draw more people to the South End. Phase 2 of the South End Connector will include fitness spaces and other amenities (2023)

Park Improvements

- A \$3.5 million upgrade of Lincoln Park, including
 - The construction of ADA accessible stairs and a ramp
 - New basketball courts and a playground
 - Lincoln Park Bowl flood prevention measures
 - Improved pedestrian safety infrastructure investments around the perimeter of the park
 - Funding earmarked for a new hillside amphitheater, new walking trails, and an outdoor classroom across from the Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology Community School (TOAST)
 - A reconstructed Lincoln Park Pool
- Five revitalized parks in the South End
 - Hoffman Park
 - Elizabeth Street Park
 - Philip Street Park
 - Mount Hope Park
 - Scheduled renovation of Krank Park
- \$50 million invested in the Beaver Creek Clean River Project, consisting of a new underground screening/disinfection facility and new sewer pipe connection that will result in the cleaning of 300 million gallons of water on an annual basis, resulting in dramatic improvements in the Hudson River's water quality (2016-2023)

Community-wide Improvements

- \$320,000 acquisition and renovation of the abandoned 25 Warren Street Dream Center to house Youth FX and the South End Children's Café (2017)
- \$355,000 for the acquisition of the Multi-Craft Apprenticeship Preparation Program (MAPP) Workforce Training Center at 29 Broad Street (2021)
- Advocated for the first-in-the-nation offshore wind manufacturing facility set to open at the Port of Albany in the future, which will create hundreds of new, well-paying jobs
- Housing Improvements \$680,000 in rehab funds provided to 83 homes in the South End; \$110,000 in down payment assistance for homes purchased there; and \$160,000 in emergency repair funds that allowed South End residents to safely stay in their homes
- City donated property in a four-block area between Broad and Elizabeth streets to the Albany County Land Bank for the creation of affordable homes and rental properties
- Designated the interior Port of Albany road as federal-aid-eligible, facilitating the creation of an alternative truck route to encourage the diversion of trucks from South Pearl Street at Ezra Prentice Homes

Community Development Block Grant Programs (2020-2021)

- \$173, 000 to South End Children's Cafe to serve 750 children/families
- \$165,756 to Trinity SNUG to support violence interruption activities
- \$157,781 to Radix to employ 17 youth and serve 400 families
- \$120,000 to the Boys and Girls Club Ezra Prentice Program to serve 200 young people
- \$80,000 to the Community Builders for the purchase of 100 Grand Street and rehab of 71 Grand Street
- \$50,000 to Capital Roots for the Morris Street Community Garden

Additional Investments in the South End

- \$40+ million in the Historic Pastures-creating 246 quality affordable housing units for Albany residents
- Nearly \$30 million to improve affordable housing managed by the Albany Housing Authority, including \$9.1 million for the rehabilitation of 51 Albany Housing Authority apartments at Steamboat Square and creation of an additional 37 homes in Albany's Capital South neighborhood. Fourteen apartments will be reserved for homeless adults who will have access to on-site supportive services.
- The opening of the 17,500 square foot, \$6.5 million Capital South Campus Center, which connects residents with workforce training, high school completion, English language classes, and Albany Can Code.
- Opening of the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences' Collaboratory to improve the health of residents of Albany's South End and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The construction and opening of a Family Dollar store located at 418 South Pearl Street- something for which residents had been advocating for, for years.
- Revitalization of the former Lombardo's site to become Hatties supported by Business for Good
- \$1 million investment led by African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region & Albany County in the former McDonald's site
- \$600,000 revitalization of Mokhiber's Liquor Store

3.4 SCREENING PROCESS FOR NEW PLAN

The goal of this *South End Strategic Plan* is to update the 2007 *Capital South Plan* based on today's neighborhood conditions and economy. The following screening process was applied to help focus specific actions or policies that the City of Albany can undertake to revitalize the South End.

1. A comprehensive public engagement process was undertaken to identify neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and determine the current relevance of the Capital South Plan's recommendations
2. A review of the 95 recommendations identified in the Capital South Plan was conducted to inventory what actions had been implemented since the plan's issuance
3. Unrealized recommendations were screened based on whether or not they could be implemented by the City of Albany
4. Finally, the remaining recommendations were reviewed considering these questions:
 - A. Is this recommendation still important to the revitalization of the South End?
 - B. If so, who are the potential municipal and/or community partners who could champion the recommendation?

Once this screening process was complete, strategies were listed in the Strategic Plan Update using current data and information gathered during the stakeholder interviews.

3.5 SOUTH END STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE - ORGANIZATION

The goals and strategies identified in this *Strategic Plan Update* are a streamlined list of actions that can be successfully pursued by the City of Albany, with the support and partnership of public agencies, not-for-profits, the private sector, and South End residents. The Strategic Plan's organization uses similar focus areas as those in the Capital South Plan, but have been regrouped into different categories.

The recommendations in this Strategic Plan Update are organized as follows:

- 1 **COMMUNITY CAPACITY**
Support existing organizations to build neighborhood capacity
- 2 **EQUITY PLANNING**
Root out systemic racism and injustice
- 3 **PHYSICAL PLANNING**
Analyze the administrative review process to ensure infill development respects the character of the neighborhood while allowing acceptable density that also spurs investment and ensures a commitment to environmental justice
- 4 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
Connect existing neighborhood organizations and services to economic development and workforce training partners

Great consideration was given to community feedback on prior plans and projects in the South End where residents voiced concerns over not being aware of the opportunity to engage in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans and capital improvement projects.

The *Strategic Plan Update* community engagement strategy applied progressive planning principles and a collaborative democratic design. Great consideration was given to community feedback on prior plans and projects in the South End where residents voiced concerns over not being aware of the opportunity to engage in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans and capital improvement projects. This prior failure in the public engagement process strained relationships between residents and local government offices and furthered distrust.

For the *Strategic Plan Update*, Planning Department staff focused on building trust with community members by fostering a collaborative environment, empowering residents during the planning process.

FIGURE 8



This “free food fridge albany” refrigerator at the free school in the south end is one of many sidewalk fridges stocked with free produce. Friday, June 25, 2021. (AP Photo/Hans Pennink)

3.6 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Successful implementation of the *Strategic Plan Update* will require strong leadership, government accountability, and cooperation among neighborhood non-profits and community organizations. The following goals and strategies incorporate best practices to enhance the effectiveness of the Neighborhood and Community Services Department, improve communications in the neighborhood, and ensure that the city can continue to provide high quality municipal services to South End residents.

POLICY AREA 1: COMMUNITY CAPACITY

As part of the public engagement process, stakeholders were asked, “What do you see as the greatest strengths of the South End?” A near-universal response was “community capacity.” The South End has the commitment

and dedication of a core group of residents and community organizations that make the South End a neighborhood of choice.

Every community has fundamental characteristics of community capacity, existing strengths that enable it to function well. These characteristics include:

- A sense of community - reflects the degree of connectedness among residents and groups, including collectively held values, norms and a vision
- A level of commitment among community members - describes the responsibility that individuals, group, and organizations take for what happens in their community
- The ability to solve problems - the ability to translate commitment into action, a key component of community capacity
- Access to resources - the economic, human, physical, and political capital accessible to neighborhood.^{1,2}

¹ Community Development Toolbox. “Community Capacity Building,” n.d. <https://communitydevelopmenttoolbox.weebly.com/community-capacity-building>.

² These four characteristics were developed by Dr. Robert Chaskin, a professor at the University of Chicago who is known for his research on local initiative support.

The following strategies include steps the City of Albany and the neighborhood can take together to support these important facets of community capacity.

POLICY AREA 1: COMMUNITY CAPACITY		
STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Support existing organizations to build neighborhood capacity		
CC.1	Collaborate with the South End Community Collaborative (SECC), ³ South End Neighborhood Association (SENA), and other community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A City of Albany representative should continue to attend SECC meetings to serve as a liaison to the South End• A city representative should work with SECC to identify and prioritize an action list of projects, issues, concerns and activities as they relate to this plan
CC.2	Support efforts that have the potential to revitalize the South End	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At SECC, SENA, and other community group meetings a city representative should inform residents of ongoing city projects and initiatives• A city representative should work with neighborhood groups to identify future initiatives and projects
CC.3	Develop and maintain a community asset map ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A city representative should work with neighborhood representatives and organizations to identify existing community assets in order to develop a community asset map• Host the community assets map on the city website or work with the SECC to identify another popular website• Include the locations of all existing social care organizations on the community asset map along with scope of services provided by each
CC.4	Create an extensive network of communication between social care providers within the South End	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social care providers should work together to update each organization on services they provide, the current needs of the organization, and updates on available funding opportunities• Where feasible, social care providers should work to facilitate the co-location of wrap-around programs and services

³ SECC is “a coalition of organizations and residents working together in the South End of Albany, NY, to align our goals to improve our community.” If the SECC is dissolved, the City should work with the neighborhood to identify a new entity to advance revitalization.

⁴ Asset mapping provides an easy way to plot improvements to community life and give communities the power to quickly mobilize to meet emerging needs with solutions. Residents can use the map to identify resources that caters to the community’s needs and providers can use the map to make program decisions and identify potential partnerships to increase community capacity.



Photo Credit: Planning Department

POLICY AREA 2: EQUITY PLANNING

During the creation of this plan, residents, community organizations and community leaders shared injustices they have experienced. The people of the South End were subject to discriminatory urban policies such as redlining. Consistently, community members asked that a concerted effort be made to redress these injustices. The Planning Department should analyze all aspects of city policies and practices, as well as its own departmental ones, to make sure that forms of systemic racism and other injustices, whether overt or covert, are ended.

The City of Albany has pursued similar equity-based initiatives under Mayor Sheehan. In 2014, a

city-wide working group was formed to advise the incoming administration of Mayor Kathy Sheehan on creating an equity agenda that would “focus on achieving equity across all communities and ending the injustices caused by institutional and systemic racism and discrimination.” In 2019, the Common Council of the City of Albany adopted Chapter 183 of the City Code, known as the Mayor’s Equity Agenda, which prescribes specific considerations to promote equity in city expenditures for built environment enhancements, violence prevention, workforce training, employment and education.

The following strategies can be implemented to ensure that future planning efforts promote a thorough and equitable change in social conditions.

POLICY AREA 2: EQUITY PLANNING (EP)

STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Goal 1: Root out systemic racism and injustice.

EP.1	Develop an Equity Index that identifies and describes the impact of racial injustices in the neighborhood and how to address these injustices through equitable change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A city representative will work with SECC and SENA to identify the appropriate data to use for the creation of an Equity Index • The Equity Index will use the identified dataset to categorize, visualize and analyze disparate impacts of existing policy and practice in the South End • SECC and SENA will advise the city on how to implement and use the Equity Index to drive equitable change in the South End
EP.2	Perform an Equity Audit Analysis of the city's current USDO zoning ordinance ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of the 2017 USDO to identify and address any racial and zoning biases and prejudices carried over from past codes that create a barrier to equitable and inclusive development • Provide the Common Council with a report documenting the findings of the Equity Audit

⁵ The City of Albany's original zoning ordinance was created 1924. The next major update to the zoning ordinance would not occur until 1968, just four years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended segregation in public spaces based on factors such as race.



Photo Credit: Planning Department

POLICY AREA 3: PHYSICAL PLANNING

In 2017, the City created the Unified Development Ordinance (USDO), the first update of the citywide zoning ordinance in nearly half a century. It is a modernized zoning ordinance that incentivizes quality development while balancing the interests of neighborhood residents, development, the natural environment, and sustainable building. The USDO also creates one readable and user-friendly document—making it easier for property owners and commercial developers to pursue development

and for the Planning Department to review them.

It is expected that the city will periodically review and revise the USDO to provide the best suited regulations for changing conditions, as they arise. This plan seeks to review current challenges in the South End and recommend policy changes that could help mitigate those challenges. Increased home ownership and more quality affordable apartments are two of the top priorities of South End residents. To increase the number of residents living in the South End, it is important to ensure that the zoning allows for a density of development that is both

acceptable to current residents and provides for a financial rate of return that incentivizes developers to build housing. More housing in the South End would mean more people, increasing demand for commercial development and storefront businesses, desired by South End residents. Without an increase in the number of residents, it is likely that businesses and developers will continue to be reluctant to settle and invest in the South End.

In September 2019, a Historic Preservation Plan was prepared for the city that outlines a vision, including goals, policies, and strategies for strengthening the local historic preservation program. The Plan's aim was to protect and manage historic resources that are key elements of Albany's built environment, including in the South End.

Local historic districts serve to protect a neighborhood's distinct character, design and authenticity; they are an essential reason why

such neighborhoods remain desirable places to live. The neighborhood could benefit from increased attention and the economic incentives that are available with local designation and listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The early architecture in the South End links the neighborhood to its social history, but these buildings are disappearing at an alarming rate. South End residents value their neighborhood's historic character and want to preserve it as a way of achieving quality housing and community sustainability.

The following strategies can encourage more housing and commercial development while also respecting the desires of residents to protect the South End's character.

POLICY AREA 3: PHYSICAL PLANNING (PP)

STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Goal 1: Ensure infill development respects the character of the neighborhood while still allowing enough density to spur various types of investments in development

PP.1 Review zoning in the South End

- Review the existing zoning map as applied to the South End for consistency with the Strategic Plan's objectives
- Produce a report based on the zoning review that summarizes existing and recommended actions for:
 - Uses and building types
 - Residential density
 - Dimensional and design requirements for infill construction
 - Zoning of strategic sites
- The South End zoning report, along with any proposed zoning changes, will be provided to the Common Council

POLICY AREA 3: PHYSICAL PLANNING (PP)

STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Goal 2: Preserve and reuse historic structures as an amenity in the South End

PP.2	Explore avenues to encourage further revitalization and investment in the South End neighborhood through the reuse of historic structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city will conduct a survey of the South End-Groesbeckville, Mansion and Pastures local historic districts and adjacent neighborhood to determine the extent of change to the historic fabric • Based on the findings and recommendations of the survey, the city will consider designating the survey area as a Neighborhood Conservation District • A city representative will work with SECC to identify portions of the South End neighborhood and existing Historic Resources-Overlay districts that should be designated as a Neighborhood Conservation District • A city representative will work with residents, SECC, and other neighborhood organizations to determine the level of design review and establish a set of customized design standards based on the needs of the neighborhood and existing property values
PP.3	Implement the goals and initiatives of the 2019 Historic Preservation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the 2019 Historic Preservation Plan to identify and implement South End specific goals and initiatives • Explore broadening the types of materials used in the South End/Groesbeckville historic district. • Work with South End residents and neighborhood organizations to identify buildings important to the neighborhood, such as the Public Bath House Number 2, Schuyler Mansion, St. John's Church, and the Howe Library and create a "Significant Property Inventory"⁷

⁶ The Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan proposes the adoption of a neighborhood conservation district program to encourage investments in neighborhood housing and commercial areas. A Neighborhood Conservation District helps to preserve and revitalize significant older residential neighborhoods and commercial areas where the historic building fabric is fragmented due to demolitions, where substantial alterations have impacted historic building integrity. These areas may contain important character-defining features that warrant some level of protection and conservation. A Neighborhood Conservation Districts may also be an area where new infill development is desired but managed in way that achieves compatibility in scale and design with the existing built fabric.

⁷ In addition to areas or neighborhoods that are historically and architecturally significant, Albany includes many individual buildings and properties that are significant and would be eligible for individual designation. Preparing an inventory of significant properties within the City will allow for consideration of those properties in future planning, preservation and code enforcement efforts.

POLICY AREA 3: PHYSICAL PLANNING (PP)

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 3: Commit to environmental justice in the South End		
PP.4	Consider applying for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility and benefits of applying for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant • Seek funding to complete Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental Assessment at various South End sites
Goal 4: Analyze Administrative Review Process		
PP.5	Proactively create a vision for strategic sites by gathering community input in order to prioritize development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strategic sites where redevelopment is encouraged and supported • Collect data on strategic sites from available sources to identify parameters and challenges to site redevelopment • Develop a working committee of the city's technical staff to ease the administrative process and facilitate complementary infrastructure investments • Use available data to help inform and generate a community vision for redevelopment of strategic sites that expedites the development process where the community vision is met

⁸ Brownfield Assessment Grants provide funding for developing inventories of brownfield sites, prioritizing sites, conducting community involvement activities, conducting planning, conducting site assessments, developing site-specific cleanup plans, and developing reuse plans related to brownfield sites.

POLICY AREA 4: BUSINESS / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (BWD)

With respect to business and workforce development, a constellation of agencies serve Albany. Instead of trying to act as a service provider, the Planning Department should act as an advocate and liaison between developers and these providers. The Department can work with the Department of Neighborhood and Community services to convey community concerns to other city departments seeking current conditions in the South End neighborhood.

POLICY AREA 4: BUSINESS / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (BWD)

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Advocate / connect existing organizations to residents or emerging concerns in the South End	
BWD.1 Establish connections between economic developers and workforce development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform local economic development organizations of emerging concerns and priorities in the South End • A city representative should attend the South End Community Collaborative Workforce Development Subcommittee meetings • Connect local organizations, community groups and education programs with local and regional workforce development organizations and agencies • Work with local financial institutions, chambers of commerce, and community organizations to establish a program that provides assistance to local start-up businesses looking to acquire commercial or office space in the South End • Work with local community organizations, workforce development agencies and education programs to promote local and regional trades and workforce training programs • Work with local schools, colleges, and universities, and local community organization to promote and expand the higher education and workforce development program at the Capital South Campus Center • Conduct a needs assessment to identify existing organizations that offer wrap around services and what additional services are needed in order to remove barriers for residents to enter the workforce

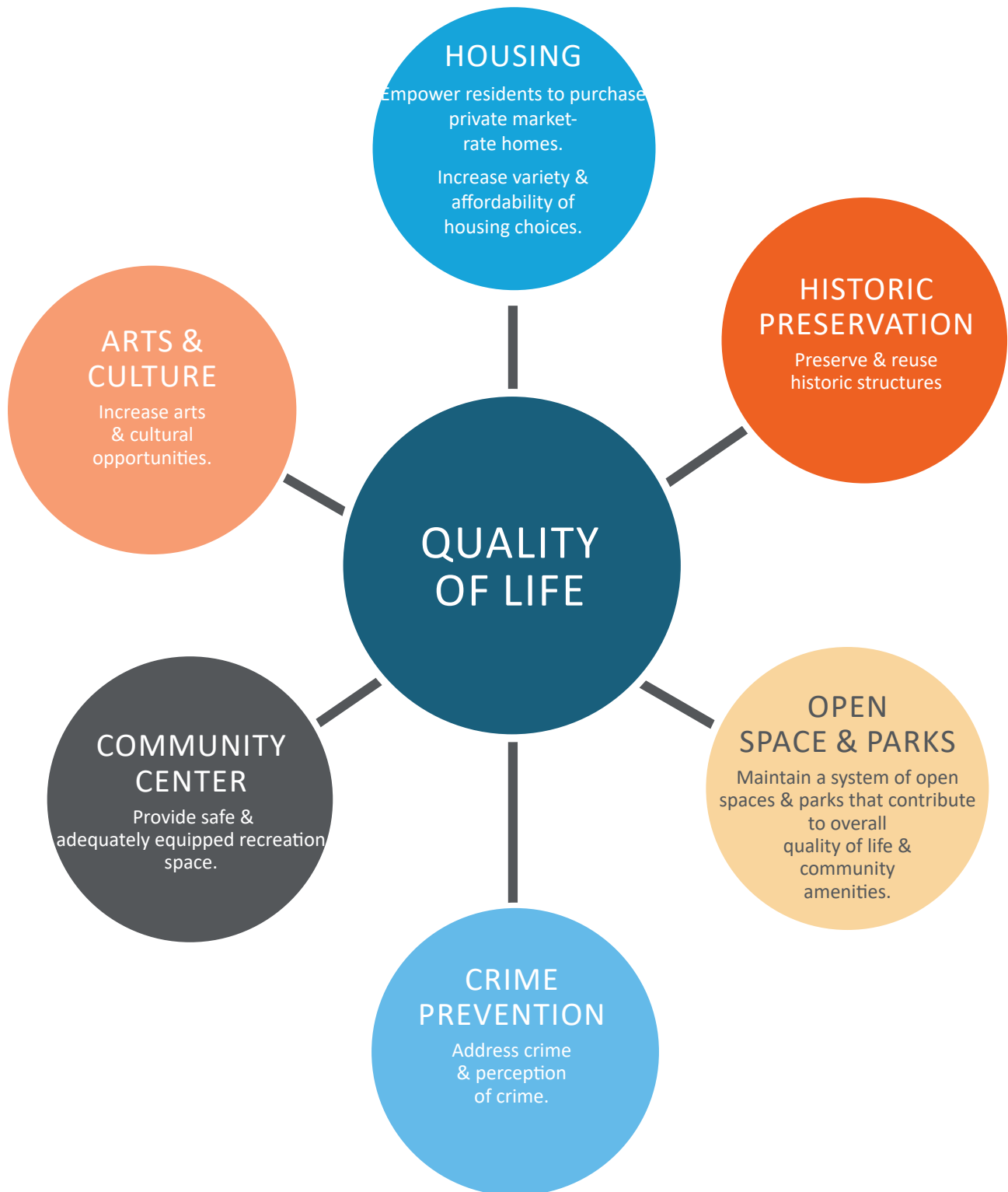


FIGURE 9



South End night market. Lori Van Buren/Times Union

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

The quality of life in any neighborhood improves with the quality of housing, education, the arts, the economy, public health, social networks, environmental quality, public and city services, transportation, park access and recreational opportunities.

A key aspect of the Plan's vision is that every neighborhood is safe and desirable because of its walkable streets, historic architecture, range of housing choices, mixed-use neighborhood centers, quality schools, parks and recreation facilities, and easy access to Downtown Albany and other job centers.

These are the features that keep people in a neighborhood, and draw new residents to it.

People ask: What does the neighborhood look and feel like? Are there sidewalks? Bike paths? Community gardens? Trees? Are there places to work within walking distance? Are there stores to meet my everyday needs? Are the parks inviting and the buildings attractive? The following Plan recommendations address a number of issues that will make the South End a more desirable place to live, work and play.

The five designated Quality of Life areas are:

1. Housing
2. Open Space and Parks
3. Crime Prevention
4. Community Center
5. Arts & Culture

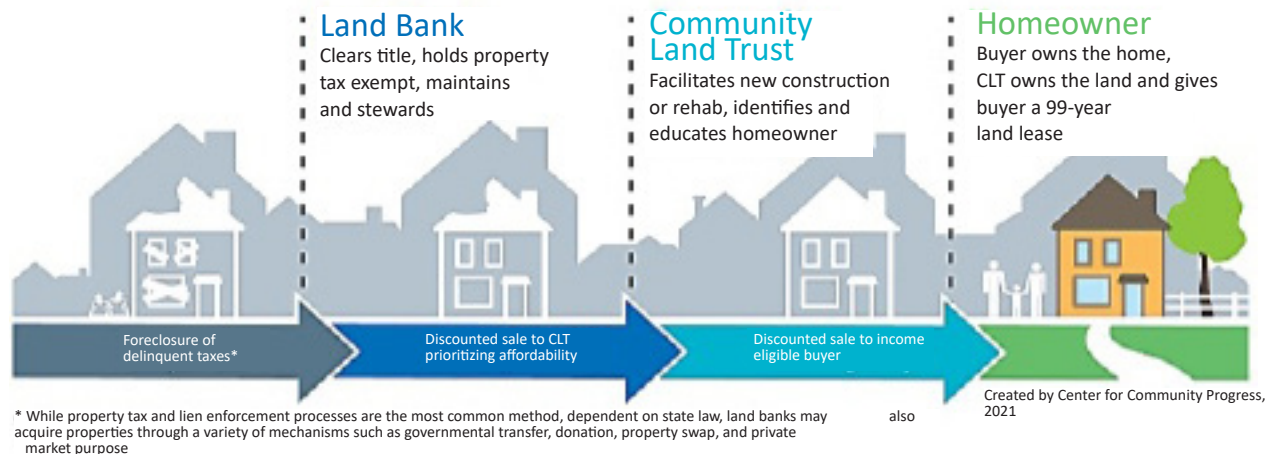
1. QUALITY OF LIFE: HOUSING (H)



ALBANY COUNTY
 LAND BANK CORPORATION



ALBANY COMMUNITY
LAND TRUST



During the public engagement process, the number one goal identified by neighborhood stakeholders and residents was to increase the level of home ownership. Several housing challenges were noted, including difficulty in securing mortgages, the cost of rehabbing a structure, and a cumbersome application process when applying to the city's or the Albany County Land Bank's (ACLB) home ownership programs. The following strategies address how the city can directly assist the increase of home ownership in the South End, or serve as an important liaison city departments, such as the Department of Housing and Community Development.

HOUSING

Empower residents to purchase private market-rate homes.

Increase variety & affordability of housing choices.

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Empower residents of the South End to purchase private market-rate homes		
H.1	Partner with organizations to improve public awareness of city housing policies, programs, and opportunities ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A city representative should make community members aware of city programs and local organizations that provide home buying assistance Work with Albany's Department of Housing and Community Development to create a public outreach program aimed at publicizing available housing programs and navigating the application process
H.2	Build the capacity of nonprofit organizations engaged in housing through investments targeted at increasing their financial or professional capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the South End Improvement Corporation to understand the organization's staffing and funding needs Work to understand and ensure local lending institutions and nonprofit organizations are advancing the goals of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), especially in low and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods
H.3	Create a pipeline of vacant, abandoned and deteriorated properties to supply the ACLB ¹⁰ and ACLT ¹¹ with building stock for the creation of quality, affordable housing that prioritizes community ownership programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A city representative should work with local organizations and stakeholder to establish a dedicated housing trust fund The city representative should work with the ACLB and ACLT to inform and educate residents and community organizations about the ACLB's "Inclusive Neighborhoods program"¹² Partner with the ACLB and ACLT to promote the "Inclusive Neighborhood Program" using leveraged funding from the dedicated housing trust fund

⁹ The City of Albany's Consolidated Plan includes an extensive list of HUD-funded programs available in Albany. These programs are designed to increase homeownership and provide home improvement resources for income-qualified residents.

¹⁰ The ACLB's mission is to make vacant, abandoned and blighted properties in the Albany County livable again

¹¹ The ACLT's mission is to build a permanent base of affordable housing for low-income families being left behind by Albany's real estate market

¹² ACLB has created the Inclusive Neighborhood Program to create a streamlined process to acquire a property and then sell the land at a discount to the ACLT. ACLT will then convey the property to an owner who can maintain ownership of the property, with ACLT maintaining ownership of the land

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

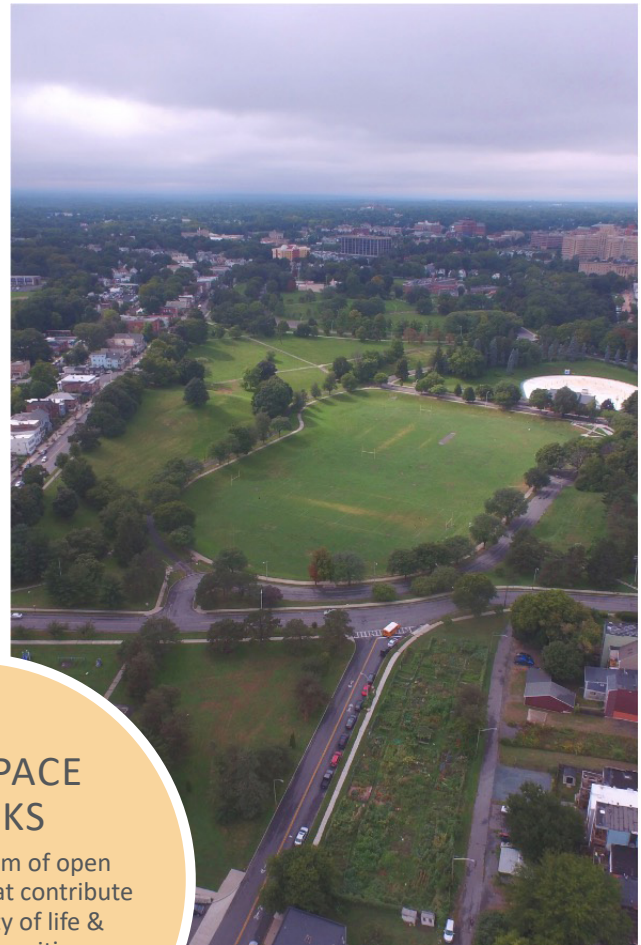
STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 2: Increase the variety and affordability of housing choices for all ages and incomes		
H.4	Partner with nonprofit organizations to establish a housing trust fund to bridge the financial gap between the cost of construction and the final assessed value of the property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and work with nonprofit organizations to establish a regional approach toward bridging the appraisal gaps¹³ A city representative should provide local community and housing groups with information about housing legislation and grant deadlines and where to access technical assistance for grant applications
H.5	Work with Albany County, the ACLB, and the ACLT to develop a coordinated strategy for adaptive reuse of abandoned properties by determining their disposition, demolition, and re-use possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A city representative, in partnership with the city's Neighborhood Stabilization Coordinator, should work to address the issues around triaging existing vacant buildings for future outcomes such as demolition and redevelopment City staff, in partnership with Albany County, the ACLB and the ACLT, should use the information gathered from triaging vacant buildings to guide a coordinated development strategy When completed, the Equity Index should address how the redevelopment strategy should be designed to advance the removal of disparities and encourage reinvestment in the South End
H.6	Explore zoning incentive accommodations for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing obstacles to the development of quality affordable housing in the South End Explore zoning and land use management tools that could be utilized to increase the construction and supply of affordable housing Identify financial tools to be used independently or when paired with land use incentives to facilitate the creation of affordable housing units Propose legislative or programmatic changes as necessary to implement recommendations
H.7	Inventory housing typologies prevalent within the neighborhood and set goals for population growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a housing inventory analysis to identify the housing typologies existing within the South End and those missing or in need Ensure that prospective property developers, land use review boards, and elected officials are made aware of the housing needs of the neighborhood Consider incentives that could be utilized for the purposes of generating the needed housing typologies where market realities make the creation of such units difficult or impossible Track progress toward achieving goals for housing creation and growth measures

¹³ Albany, along with Schenectady and Troy, have neighborhoods where housing values are suppressed, a hindrance to development because the cost of developing a property is higher than what it will be valued, leaving a gap that prohibits traditional financing. Depressed housing prices and deteriorated housing stock are some of the manifestations of racialized policies such as redlining.

2. QUALITY OF LIFE: OPEN SPACE & PARKS (OSP)

The Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan includes numerous recommendations related to open space and parks. The Comprehensive Plan promotes community health and recreational opportunities for everyone who lives, works and plays in Albany by calling for increased access to recreational opportunities, healthy food, and healthcare.

This Plan considered how these city-wide recommendations for open space and parks could be applied to the South End through various strategies.



OPEN SPACE & PARKS

Maintain a system of open spaces & parks that contribute to overall quality of life & community amenities.

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Maintain a system of open space and parks that contribute to the overall quality of life	
OSP.1 Implement the Lincoln Park Master Plan ¹⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city should continue to implement the goals and initiatives of the Lincoln Park Master Plan with assistance from city departments and community organizations

¹⁴ Lincoln Park is a 50+ acre municipal landmark located in the South End. The Park features a swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, and fields used for football, soccer, baseball, softball, cricket and other sports. In 2019, the City unveiled its Lincoln Park Master Plan, featuring an amphitheater, pavilion, fitness area, a rebuilt pool, improved drainage, and daylighting the Beaver Creek

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
OSP.2 Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the initiatives and goals of the city's 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan • The city will utilize the 2016 Complete Streets Policy and Manual to incorporate safe and complete street design¹⁵ when carrying out routine maintenance, reconstruction and new construction within the South End • Identify areas for future America Walks: Community Change demonstrations • Implement traffic calming measures such as medians, curb extensions, pavement treatments, and dedicated bike infrastructure to encourage safe walking and cycling
OSP.3 Increase access to healthy food options for residents of the South End.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory existing community gardens in the South End and assess the community's need for new community gardens • Produce a map of the existing open space within the South End • Using the community garden inventory and open space map, identify potential areas for new community gardens. • Map city owned vacant parcels in the South End and prioritize the disposition of land to local organizations and neighborhood residents seeking locations for community gardens • Prioritize Food Justice to meet local food needs, including ethnic and special dietary needs as well as support efforts to establish and maintain a neighborhood grocery store • Work with local grocery retailers to determine the neighborhoods needs and identify potential locations for a grocery store • Review the USDO to address and revise any zoning regulations that prohibit the development of a grocery store in any non-residential zoning districts

¹⁵ Complete streets design is defined as roadway design features that accommodate and facilitate convenient access and mobility by all users, including current and projected users, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and individuals of all ages and abilities. Complete streets may also play a role in making a community healthier, reducing environmental impact, and leading to private investment in a corridor.

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
OSP.4 Develop a comprehensive urban forestry program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an inventory of existing street trees and plantings and identify areas in parks, open spaces, and along streets for new street trees and plantings • Develop an equitable approach to street tree planting and maintenance for historically redlined and low-to-moderate income neighborhoods • Partner with community garden groups to establish an education program to inform and educate residents about the street tree planting program as a way to promote and increase community pride

FIGURE 10



518 S.N.U.G (Should Never Use Guns) Staff and Volunteers. Source: 518 S.N.U.G. Facebook Page

Public safety, particularly crime prevention or reducing the perception of crime, is not the sole responsibility of police departments. Public safety is a shared responsibility of governmental agencies, nonprofits, neighborhood organizations, and residents.

To make the South End a more desirable place to live, work and play, the City of Albany should work with residents to incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies into the built and natural environment. CPTED strategies “aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime.”¹⁶

The South End-based Trinity Alliance operates a

local chapter of the program, 518 S.N.U.G., (Should Never Use Guns), an evidence-based model that has been validated by the U.S. Department of Justice and is supported by the NY State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

The city should survey at-risk youth to determine if planning principles are perpetuating a risk cycle. This partnership has an added benefit of creating community capacity and civic engagement, conditions that are necessary in building coalitions toward self-determination against systems of oppression.

¹⁶ “The International CPTED Association (ICA) - Primer in CPTED - What Is CPTED?,” n.d. <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>.

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Address crime / perception of crime in the South End neighborhood		
CP.1	Partner with community-based violence intervention programs to incorporate the public health-based approach into planning efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a CPTED strategy, that incorporates perspectives from members of 518 S.N.U.G.¹⁷ to ensure the built and natural environment of the South End are working towards providing access and opportunities for violence intervention, in addition to reducing opportunities for crime
CP.2	Use public art to increase neighborhood vibrancy and pride, reduce crime and improve the perception of neighborhood safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local organizations to identify opportunities to incorporate public art into South End improvements and projects Consider murals to enliven buildings and streetscapes where infill development is deemed infeasible in the near term Develop a set of regulatory standards to facilitate the approval process for public art projects

¹⁷ 518 S.N.U.G. shares a powerful intersection of perspectives, including former gang members who are now employees, with deep ties and experience in interacting with the local community and built environment in order to stop the cycle of violence and crime.

¹⁸ Studies show that public art has the potential to improve neighborhoods by beautifying the urban landscape, increasing civic engagement and public safety, and by attracting economic development to an area.

4. QUALITY OF LIFE: COMMUNITY CENTER (CC)

Community centers can have a stabilizing effect on individuals, families and neighborhoods. They can provide a safe environment for children to learn and grow through participation in after-school programs, day camps, recreational activities, performing and creative arts, and educational instruction. Research has shown that youth engaged in these types of activities are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, less likely to drop out of high school, and less likely to commit crimes.



POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Provide a safe and adequately equipped recreation space for South End residents		
CC.1	Invest in the future Albany South Community Center at Hoffman Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the South End community during the design phase for the future community center. • As plans develop, work with South End community members to identify programming for the Albany South Community Center. • Work to identify potential community partners to provide recreation, education and arts programming in a community center



Photo Credit: Planning Department

ARTS & CULTURE

Increase arts & cultural opportunities.

5. QUALITY OF LIFE: ARTS & CULTURE (AC)

The South End is rich with arts and cultural assets. The neighborhood includes many creative professionals and residents, arts, cultural, and youth organizations as well as historical places, buildings and organizations. An opportunity exists to use creative place-making to develop a more unique, authentic and dynamic South End neighborhood that not only benefits residents, but becomes a more attractive destination for residents, visitors, and property and business investors.

POLICY AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION/POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Goal 1: Increase arts and cultural opportunities in the South End neighborhood		
AC.1	Expand cultural opportunities for neighborhood youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate quarterly meetings to encourage dialogue and create a platform among local arts and cultural organizations to better share information, collaborate and cross-promote events and activities Identify local organizations to develop and expand local arts and cultural programs
AC.2	Encourage the use of functional public art when making improvements in the South End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revive and staff the city's Community Arts Commission with a dedicated position for a South End community member. The city should partner with community-based arts and cultural groups to identify locations for the installation public art that celebrates the South End neighborhood and its diverse cultures
AC.3	Use "tactical urbanism" ¹⁹ to encourage low cost temporary changes to the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and connect local organizations and neighborhood groups to existing low-cost, low-risk tactical urbanism program guides to create short-term, community-driven efforts to imagine an invigorated South End The city should look at existing tactical urbanism guides and manuals such as Memphis, Tennessee's <u>MEMFix</u>²⁰ and Bloomberg Associates' <u>"Asphalt Art Guide: How to Reclaim City Roadways and Public Infrastructure with Art"</u>²¹ and identify projects and goals to implement in the South End Encourage collaborations for tactical urbanism projects and help find funding for implementation

¹⁹ Tactical urbanism is a low-cost, temporary change to the built environment, usually in cities, intended to improve local neighborhoods and city gathering places. Tactical urbanism is often citizen-led but can also be initiated by government entities. Community-led temporary installations are often intended to pressure government agencies into installing a more permanent or expensive version of the improvement.

²⁰ The intent of MEMFix is to catalyze energy and interest in a neighborhood so that more permanent actions may be taken. This manual intends to take best practices from each MEMFix project, walk you through the planning stages, and make suggestions for hosting your own initiative, <https://www.bldgmemphis.org/>

²¹ The Guide is a free resource for cities looking to transform their streets and public spaces with art. It features over two dozen case studies highlighting successful plaza and roadway art activations around the world, and a how-to section for cities interested in undertaking their own projects, <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>