

## Section VI. General Land Use Plan

### A. Future Land Uses

Future land use and zoning recommendations for the Study Area are based upon analytical findings, and in particular:

- Existing land use patterns and characteristics;
- Pedestrian and vehicular circulation;
- Utility availability;
- Strategic brownfield site locations; and
- Market opportunities.

Considering the Study Area's existing form and the redevelopment opportunities identified, a general Land Use Plan was created to identify the recommended development patterns and usage throughout the entire Study Area in the future. Figure VI-1 provides a General Land Use Plan for the Study Area, including proposed general land uses. The general land use designations recommended for the Study Area are described below.

#### 1. Hospital District Uses

The Hospital District includes the area covered by Wilson Hospital and associated uses, between Hudson Street and Arch Street in the western part of the Study Area. This area is currently zoned Multi-Family Residential (RM), and the hospital is allowed by special use permit. Various medical and commercial uses have purchased residential properties to the east of Wilson Hospital in the recent past, intending to introduce new commercial uses to this area. However, the Study Area offers an abundance of space potentially suited for these uses. In order to preserve the existing neighborhood to the west and to promote improvement of the Study Area, it is recommended that future hospital expansions and other medical-related or commercial uses occur in an eastward direction from the existing complex.

#### 2. Main Street Commercial Uses

Mixed-use development with first-floor specialty retail and upper-floor apartment or office space is recommended as a primary use along the Main Street Corridor. Churches, civic uses, public parks, and medical/professional offices are recommended as secondary uses. Much of Main Street is lined with traditional urban structures, and the recommended uses would help to retain the corridor's historic charm and walkability.

The Main Street Corridor is currently zoned General Commercial (CG). Establishment of a Main Street Overlay District is recommended in order to preserve the area's character, in keeping with the vision expressed for this local historic district through the Susquehanna Heritage Area program. The overlay designation would require that buildings maintain the corridor's historic setback, and that off-street parking is located to the rear of buildings. Design guidelines provide a mechanism to help maintain the character of buildings along the corridor. The overlay district may apply to the entire corridor, or alternatively to only the Downtown area between Lester Avenue and Hudson Street.

### **3. Residential Uses**

Three pockets of multi-family residential use are recommended in the western portion of the Study Area. Urban-style housing for seniors, students or young professionals is in demand, and may be suitable for the area north of Main Street. Hospital employees represent a large pool of prospective Study Area residents, the vast majority of whom currently commute from beyond the direct area. Housing development and/or rehabilitation should cater to these target populations. Live/work housing arrangements would complement the fine arts emphasis in the area surrounding the Goodwill Theatre Complex. In the southernmost part of the Study Area, a private developer has proposed apartment-style housing at 135-139 Baldwin Street; the housing complex would potentially cater to students and/or young professionals.

The two northern residential land use areas as identified on the Study Area General Land Use Plan are currently zoned General Commercial (CG), and the southern residential area is zoned Industrial (IN). The northern areas should be designated for Multi-Family Residential (RM) uses, as should the southern area – contingent upon the environmental suitability of sites and structures for residential uses.

### **4. Government Center (Municipal Service Uses)**

Municipal service uses including the Village of Johnson City administrative offices and the Johnson City Police Department are concentrated in the area designated as the Government Center. The Government Center should remain a hub of not only government activity but also of civic involvement. For instance, the Village of Johnson City may wish to introduce a public square for community events and gatherings. By improving its connections to Main Street and the surrounding area, the Government Center can strengthen its place as a community fixture. This area is currently zoned General Commercial (CG), and Government Center uses align with this designation.

### **5. General Commercial Uses**

Commercial uses are recommended throughout much of the central portion of the Study Area surrounding Lester Avenue. The proposed Walmart Supercenter will provide momentum for

expanded community-scale retail development north of the rail lines in the future, as retailers are attracted by increased consumer traffic. Incoming commercial uses should feature design consistency throughout the area, and site layouts should promote internal circulation. South of the rail lines, several commercial and distribution properties are located east of Lester Avenue, and circulation improvements could help to shape this area's identity as a functional business district.

The *Lester Avenue Commercial Site* at 59 Lester Avenue is well suited for commercial development that could include retail, service commercial, and/or office uses. This key property has good redevelopment potential due to its prime location and visibility from Route 17. Its improvement is likely to stimulate further investment in the Study Area. Concept plans for future development of the Lester Avenue Commercial Site are presented below.

This area is currently zoned General Commercial (CG), and the recommended uses align with this designation.

## **6. Service Commercial Uses**

The Service Commercial area is located north of Main Street in the eastern portion of the Study Area, on either side of the rail lines. Contractors and warehouse/distribution operations could benefit from the area's accessibility and industrial character, and are among the recommended Service Commercial uses.

This area is currently zoned Light and Medium Industrial (I-2), and the recommended uses align with this designation.

## **7. Willow Street Business District**

Establishment of the *Willow Street Business District* is proposed on properties along and to the south of Corliss Avenue. Five high-priority brownfield sites (42/44, 46, 48, and 96 Corliss Avenue, and 18 Park Street/25 Ozalid Road) are concentrated in this area, providing a unique opportunity to create an urban business/light industrial park setting in the heart of the Study Area. This business district would respond to opportunities identified in the market analysis, and would feed from and support neighboring development while helping to redefine the area's image.

Building on momentum provided by recent investment and introduction of a high-tech manufacturing operation in the 18 Park Street/25 Ozalid Road building, recommended uses include light manufacturing, research and development, and medical and medical-related services that would benefit from proximity to Wilson Hospital and collaboration with hospital resources. Concept plans and specific recommendations for the reuse of the brownfield sites located within the Willow Street Business District are presented below.

This area is currently zoned Industrial (IN), and a wide range of commercial and industrial uses are permitted. A Willow Street Business District overlay is recommended for this area to allow cohesive development of the brownfield sites while restricting permitted uses to those appropriate in an urban business/light industrial park setting.

## **B. Public and Private Measures to Stimulate Investment & Promote Revitalization**

Revitalization of the Study Area and redevelopment of selected priority sites is largely dependent upon commitment from the community and dedication of all property owners. The extensive research, analysis and community input conducted during the planning process provides a solid basis for the development of the Land Use for the BOA illustrated in Figure VI-I that depicts the proposed land uses for the area as well as the public and private measures needed to stimulate investment and promote revitalization.

The Land Use Plan presents a vision for the future of the EJ Industrial Spine. The vision includes the fact that Wilson Hospital and associated businesses will continue to relocate into this area bringing with them additional income and employees that will shop and dine in the area. The redevelopment initiatives prescribed for the selected priority sites; 59 Lester Avenue and those proposed within the Willow Street Business District will turn the depilated, vacant industrial buildings into thriving businesses. The Super Walmart, soon to be constructed along Lester Avenue, the promotion of the Goodwill Theatre and expansion of other cultural activities in the area will bring new life to this post industrial area. It is also envisioned that the residential area of the BOA will experience a rebirth. The apartment style housing proposed for 135-139 Baldwin Street will bring an influx of students or young professionals to the area. Hospital employees who commute to the area will look for a place to live close to work and live/work housing arrangements will compliment the fine arts emphasis in the area surrounding the Goodwill Theatre Complex.

In order to capitalize on the opportunities available to the BOA, additional public and private investments to the area are required. Section B of this chapter, provides recommendations for rezoning certain areas of the BOA to allow new land uses to flourish. That is one step in setting the stage for the vision of the area described above to be realized. Physical improvements to the area's infrastructure, pedestrian circulation and signage are also necessary to upgrade the visual and functional aspects of the BOA to create a more inviting place to work and live. The recommended infrastructure improvements and additional studies that are required are described below and depicted in Figure VI-1.

## 1. Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements similar to those depicted in the photographs to the right are recommended throughout much of the Study Area. This is particularly the case along the Main Street Corridor and connecting roads in the vicinity of Wilson Hospital and the Goodwill Theatre complex, as well as the Lester Avenue corridor.



South of Main Street, streetscape improvements should be focused on Hudson Street, Harrison Street, Baldwin Street, Arch Street, Broad Street, Willow Street and Corliss Avenue. Improved curbs and sidewalks, street trees and landscaping, as well as decorative lighting could be used to enhance the area's appeal as a highly walkable urban district. These improvements will complement the traditional mixed-use development and niche retail along Main Street, They will also provide visual and physical continuity as uses transition between the Main Street corridor and employment centers in the heart of the Study Area.

## 2. Commercial Areas

The areas identified on the Study Area Master Plan as "General Commercial" located along Lester Avenue and the rail lines is set to experience an influx of private investment as developers take advantage of prime locations in the northern portion of the Study Area.



West of Lester Avenue and north of the rail lines, the properties located at 99 and 101 Lester Avenue provide an ideal location for retail development that would benefit from customer traffic generated by the Walmart Supercenter. Conceptual plans should be created for these properties to allow their coordinated development, design and landscaping consistency, and to ensure proper circulation.



Likewise, measures should be taken to improve the design consistency and internal circulation among commercial properties south of the rail lines and east of Lester Avenue labeled on the Study Area Master Plan as “General Commercial.” This portion of the Study Area provides an ideal setting for wholesale/distribution and contracting uses, and improvements providing a business park setting would enhance its visibility and standing as an employment center.

Rehabilitation of the 59 Lester Avenue property is recommended; site improvements and future uses should be consistent with ongoing development throughout the “General Commercial” area.

Service commercial and light industrial uses are recommended in the eastern portion of the Study Area, on either side of the rail lines as identified on the Study Area Master Plan as “Service Commercial.” Properties in this area could potentially take advantage rail transportation. However, the rail corridor lacks crossings, thereby limiting automobile circulation. A plan should be created for this area, in order to provide better connections and improve its character.

### **3. Residential Improvements**

Three pockets of residential land use are recommended in the western portion of the Study Area. Multi-unit housing is recommended based on the results of the market analysis which identified college students and young professionals, “empty nesters” and senior citizens as target groups likely to be interested in these housing locations and formats. Streetscape improvements can be used to soften the urban setting and connect residential areas with employment centers and the Main Street corridor. Studio or live/work space may appeal to future residents of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Goodwill Theatre Complex. The photograph to the right is an example of urban style housing that would fit architecturally into the setting envisioned for the study area. It is a similar type structure built to the street line with parking underground or located in a shared lot or behind the building.



#### 4. Willow Street Business District

Rehabilitation of existing structures is recommended throughout the proposed Willow Street Business District. Exterior improvements will improve the general appearance of buildings throughout the area while retaining its historic sense of place. Shared parking will provide the capacity needed to accommodate events at the Goodwill Theatre Complex, and should be located in the rear of buildings to the degree possible. Thematic signage should be used to build identity, and signage located at the intersection of Main Street and Willow Avenue would promote the area as a business destination. Landscaping and building façade improvements should provide consistency, with paved walkways providing linkages throughout the Business District.



The photographs above and to the right are examples of the type of building rehabilitation recommended for the buildings currently located within the proposed Willow Street Business District. These photographs are of building located in Franklin Square in Syracuse, NY. The building in the top photograph is a refurbished building similar in scale and type to industrial buildings currently located along Corliss Avenue. The park with the fountain located in front of the building is used regularly by the employees who work in the area.



The large building in the lower photograph is a new building that was added when the original building was considered beyond repair. The zoning regulations written for Franklin Square by the City of Syracuse require that new buildings must be on similar type, size and materials as those that had been rehabbed.

The Willow Street Business Park and the Goodwill Theatre Complex and its surroundings could use Franklin Square as an example of how the transformation of this area is possible.

### **5. Signage and Banners**

Signage plays an important role in bringing attention to an area and specific attractions. It is recommended that themed signage and associated banners be designed for the Village of Johnson City that exemplifies the history of the area. This signage could be used to direct visitors to attractions in the area including the Central Business District, Goodwill Theatre, Willow Street Business District, Wilson Hospital, the Spool Art Gallery and CFJ Park. These elements should be used along Main Street and at the gateways to the area. An example of how signage and banners can enliven an area is presented in the photo to the right.



### **6. Main Street Corridor Development Patterns**

As properties within the Main Street Corridor are redeveloped, business owners are constructing new buildings back from the road and adding parking lots within the front setback. The Village of Johnson City and the City of Binghamton should amend their zoning ordinance to restrict this type of development. “Build-to” lines should be established with parking placed in the back of the building. The only exceptions to this rule should be for the creation of courtyards for restaurants to provide outdoor seating. This type of amenity brings activity and color to a street as shown in the photo to the right. In addition, property access points should be limited and shared where appropriate. These entrances should be well signed and landscaped appropriately.





## 7. CFJ Park

CFJ Park is virtually surrounded by commercial development and abuts the Route 17 corridor. As the scale of commercial development will expand in the near future, it is important to provide improved pedestrian access to and from nearby residential neighborhoods. Enhanced signage promoting the park's amenities and historical significance may help attract new users.

## 8. Goodwill Theatre Complex

The Goodwill Theatre presents a unique opportunity to bring an infusion of investment to the area with its ongoing events and spinoff activities planned for the future. The theatre is considered to be a local heritage and cultural attraction that should be celebrated. Its associated buildings and properties should continue to be upgraded. Its surrounding uses should be rehabilitated to support the character of the theatre complex.

Goodwill Theatre Inc. and the Village of Johnson City have received approval for funds through the New York State Quality Communities Program. These funds are to be used for the preparation of a Conceptual Master Plan for the creation of a *Health and Cultural District*. The purpose of this plan will be to integrate two major not-for-profit development projects with the existing historic retail, industrial, and residential cores of the area. It will develop recommendations for traffic and pedestrian circulation, *District-wide* incentives, and proposals for parks, public space, and a public art program.

## 9. Parking Lots

The study area is encumbered by numerous, large parking lots with no vegetation to soften the view of massive areas of uninterrupted asphalt pavement. As commercial and light industrial properties are redeveloped, owners should be required to provide landscaped islands sporadically located throughout their parking lots to soften their view as depicted in the photograph to the right.

