Overall Contents

**PART ONE**  
(prepared by City of Ithaca, February-August 2009)  
Part One appears on pages with a tinted background.

**PART TWO**  
(November 24, 2008 version of the Collegetown Urban Plan & Design Guidelines provided to City by consultant Goody Clancy)  
Part Two appears on pages with a white background.

**PART ONE** supersedes and replaces all portions of **PART TWO** in any and all places where the latter differs from the former.
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Introduction

The 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines was endorsed by the City of Ithaca Common Council on August 5, 2009, after an earlier but similar version had been recommended to Common Council by the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board on May 12, 2009.

The endorsed document consists of two parts: this Part One (which was prepared by the City of Ithaca from February through August 2009) and Part Two: the November 24, 2008 version of the Collegetown Urban Plan & Design Guidelines provided to the City by consultant Goody Clancy. For brevity, the latter is referred to throughout this Part One as the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. Part One appears on a tinted background in both electronic and hard copy versions of this document, and Part Two appears on a white background.

Part One supersedes and replaces all portions of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines (i.e., Part Two) in any and all places where the latter differs from the former.

Part One was informed by extensive, years-long input and discussions involving both members of the public and City Hall officials.

Extensive oral comments from members of the public concerning Collegetown planning were heard at various meetings of Common Council, its Planning and Economic Development Committee and the Planning and Development Board over many months, including eight official public hearings. In addition, a substantial number of written comments from members of the public on this topic were received and reviewed.

See box on following page, titled “Opportunities for Public Input on Collegetown Planning,” which details the numerous public comment opportunities made available throughout the planning process.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT ON COLLEGETOWN PLANNING

SCHEDULED COLLEGETOWN PUBLIC COMMENT AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

This section includes comment periods specifically advertised for Collegetown, public meetings held by Goody Clancy and staff and official public hearings.

- February 18, 2008: Public meeting with Goody Clancy team
- March 7-9, 2008: Educational workshop / design charrette / open house
- May 20, 2008: Public meeting with Goody Clancy team
- May 21, 2008: Goody Clancy team presents at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting
- June 30, 2008: Public meeting with Planning Department staff
- August 26, 2008: Public hearing at Planning and Development Board meeting
- December 16, 2008: Public hearing at Planning and Development Board meeting
- February 18, 2009: Public hearing at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting
- March 18, 2009: Public comment at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting
- April 1, 2009: Public hearing at Common Council meeting
- April 15, 2009: Public hearing at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting
- April 28, 2009: Public hearing at Planning and Development Board meeting
- May 20, 2009: Public hearing at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting
- June 17, 2009: Public hearing at Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting

ADDITIONAL COLLEGETOWN PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Collegetown Urban Plan & Design Guidelines (eventually renamed the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines) was also an agenda item at the following meetings where a public comment period was held (though not specifically designated for the plan):

At Planning and Economic Development Committee:
- February 20, 2008
- March 19, 2008
- August 20, 2008
- October 15, 2008
- December 17, 2008
- July 15, 2009
- June 18, 2008
- July 16, 2008
- September 17, 2008
- November 19, 2008
- January 21, 2009

At Planning and Development Board:
- January 27, 2009
- February 24, 2009
- March 24, 2009

At Common Council:
- July 1, 2009
- August 5, 2009

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS FOCUSED ON COLLEGETOWN

Planning and Development Board:
- June 10, 2008
- February 3, 2009
- March 10, 2009
- May 12, 2009

Joint Meeting of Planning and Economic Development Committee and Planning and Development Board:
- April 7, 2009

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Common Council, its Planning and Economic Development Committee and the Planning and Development Board have also welcomed written comments throughout the planning process.
In addition, presentations and debate concerning Collegetown planning took place at many meetings of the Collegetown Neighborhood Council.

Discussions within City Hall occurred at meetings of Common Council, its Planning and Economic Development Committee and the Planning and Development Board and at meetings of two subcommittees specifically established to deal with Collegetown issues: a Collegetown Transportation Working Group and a Collegetown Zoning Working Group. Each of these subcommittees consisted of two Common Council members and two Planning Board members along with City staff, and each made important direct contributions to Part One. (An Incentive Zoning Ad Hoc Group also met one time to formulate a specific incentive zoning proposal.)

For clarity, Part One is structured into five overall sections, each corresponding to a particular chapter of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. These five overall sections are:

- MODIFICATIONS TO “2. EXISTING CONDITIONS”
- SUBSTITUTION FOR “4. A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM”
- MODIFICATIONS TO “5. THE URBAN PLAN AND OPPORTUNITY SCENARIOS”
- MODIFICATIONS TO “6. COLLEGETOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES”
- MODIFICATIONS TO “7. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN, MANAGING OPPORTUNITIES AND MANAGING ENFORCEMENT”

These headings indicate the Goody Clancy chapters principally associated with the material being modified by Part One. However, to be perfectly clear, Part One supersedes and replaces all portions of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines where contrary information and recommendations are found, regardless of chapter numbers or headings.
2.A. The economic analysis of parking and redevelopment contained in the subsections “b. Parking, Transit & Circulation” and “c. Market and Economic Overview” of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines is useful for illustrating general principles but should not be relied upon as an accurate representation of the economics governing redevelopment in Collegetown, or of specific City of Ithaca policies regarding redevelopment in Collegetown.

Subsection “b. Parking, Transit & Circulation,” contains an economic comparison of various parking configurations in “Table 2b–2 Estimated Parking Cost Pro Formas in Collegetown” on Page 2.18. The conclusion is that a below-grade garage requires less of a subsidy than a surface parking lot. However, this result stems from the strange assumption that “Land Costs” should be included in the economic calculations for a surface-level parking lot, but not in those for an above-grade or below-grade parking garage. Were this analysis correct, one would expect to see far fewer surface parking lots and far more below-grade parking garages in Collegetown.

Subsection “c. Market and Economic Overview,” contains numerous assumptions and analyses, drawing the conclusion on Page 2.24 that “The cost of land and parking are so high in Collegetown that conventional development is nearly impossible without subsidy.” Yet this has not been the experience in Collegetown during the last few decades; in fact, Collegetown has seen some of the most dramatic redevelopment in the city, without subsidies.

This subsection points to required returns of 7 to 8.5 percent as being necessary to induce development. While perhaps true for conventional development in other cities, it is likely that smaller returns are adequate for inducing development
in Collegetown, as evidenced by the redevelopment that has occurred in recent years.

According to the analyses included in this subsection, reducing development parking costs seems to have a much bigger impact on project productivity than increasing building height, yet this chapter concludes that both are needed. It seems reasonable, therefore, to place primary emphasis first on encouraging redevelopment by reducing the parking costs (for example, by allowing a developer to pay a fee to the City, used to support “green” transportation modes, in lieu of actual construction of a parking space, as one means of meeting existing parking requirements in the zoning ordinance). See the discussion of the proposed parking in-lieu fee under the heading “Study and Implement a Parking In-Lieu Fee” on Pages Fourteen through Sixteen below, and under a similar subheading in the blue-tinted box on Page Twenty-Nine, also below.

Contrary to language in Chapter 2 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, no changes to the zoning ordinance parking requirements for uses in the Collegetown area are being recommended, although alternative options for meeting those parking requirements are being suggested.
substitution for
“4. A Sustainable Transportation System”

4.A. The entire Chapter Four (“4. A Sustainable Transportation System”) of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines is replaced in its entirety by the following, which is titled the “Collegetown Transportation Plan” to distinguish it clearly from the Goody Clancy chapter it supersedes. This new text also replaces and supersedes any other portions of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines where contrary information is found.

COLLEGETOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Chapter Four that appears as part of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines contains numerous insightful and reasonable recommendations that would certainly contribute in a positive way to future transportation decisions regarding Collegetown. However, City staff and elected officials have decided to amend or eliminate other recommendations by the consultant based on a number of factors, including potential legal barriers, community controversy and cost constraints.

For a complete review of the Goody Clancy recommendations, a Collegetown Transportation Working Group was formed to ensure that transportation recommendations for Collegetown were appropriate, relevant and responsive to concerns already expressed by residents, merchants, property owners and other stakeholders. This group included Alderpersons Svante Myrick (Ward 4, Planning and Economic Development Committee, Collegetown Vision Implementation Committee vice-chair) and Jennifer Dotson (Ward 1, Planning and Economic Development
Committee chair), Planning and Development Board members David Kay and Tessa Rudan, Planning and Development Department staff Leslie Chatterton and Megan Gilbert and Engineering staff Tim Logue and Kent Johnson, and was chaired by Dotson.

The following material was prepared by this working group and is intended as a substitute for Chapter Four of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. In several instances, recommendations that appear in that draft are also included here, and this is noted in the appropriate locations in this text.

**BACKGROUND**

In many ways, the transportation conditions in Collegetown are very good for a dense urban environment. The area is well served by transit (including inter-city connections). There is lively and vibrant pedestrian activity. The Dryden Road Parking Garage is the only parking garage in the City with a positive cash flow. The compact nature of the area promotes walking and bicycling and makes car-free living viable for many area residents. To further support car-free (and car-lite) lifestyles, several Ithaca Carshare vehicles are located in and around Collegetown.

From a transportation mode-share perspective, the distributions are quite good. The 2000 Census\(^1\) indicates that pedestrian trips account for around three-quarters of all trips and that single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips account for only about one-eighth of all trips, although carpooling, transit use and bicycling seem to be significantly under-utilized (in total, accounting for only around one-tenth of all trips).

However, numerous undesirable conditions exist as well, and some of the positive transportation aspects may even be declining simply due to neglect and inadequate maintenance. For example, in many locations the sidewalk conditions and widths are significantly substandard given the very high pedestrian volumes. These problems are especially acute in

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\(^1\) The Census only considers trips classified as “commuting” trips. These commuting trips include travel to/from work and travel to/from school (if school is someone’s primary occupation). Therefore, shopping trips and trips for social or recreational purposes are not included—even though these trips may constitute a high percentage of all trips.
the core areas along College Avenue and Dryden Road, but also exist in other areas throughout Collegetown. In the core areas, congested sidewalks produce a low quality pedestrian experience, often force people to walk in the streets and reduce the convenience and attractiveness of walking. The narrow sidewalks also preclude the possibility of outdoor dining for many of the restaurants in Collegetown.

Inconvenient parking conditions in Collegetown are often cited as key concerns. Perceptions about public parking may be limiting the degree to which businesses can expand, and private parking challenges may be limiting increased development. Furthermore, increased development may bring conditions in the Collegetown area to a point at which the existing parking system does not meet the expectations of residents and visitors (of course, individual expectations vary considerably).

Another undesirable condition that has been repeatedly mentioned is the perception by residents, merchants, property owners and City staff and policy-makers that inadequate attention and resources have been allocated to the Collegetown community. This has been linked to many of the current challenges facing the Collegetown transportation system — most notably, the unevenly and often inefficiently utilized on-street parking, the poorly maintained pedestrian infrastructure and the generally derelict appearance of public areas. However, just as there is a shared interest in seeing improvements, there is also a shared community responsibility to provide the needed attention and resources. This replacement chapter discusses possible ways to meet those needs.

This replacement chapter builds on the strengths currently present in Chapter Four of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines and suggests ways to address the weaknesses. Many recommendations from the consultant are retained, and additional recommendations have been added by the Collegetown Transportation Working Group. Much of the new material and many of the changes presented here were included in response to comments received throughout the Collegetown planning process.

The working group began with a goal-setting process and then proceeded to the creation of possible measures toward the goals. Some of the goals / measures can be realized in the short-term and others are intended to help steer longer-term transportation-related decisions. Though most of the goals / measures are primarily intended to improve the transportation conditions in Collegetown, it is anticipated that some of the measures will have positive impacts on areas beyond transportation, and could be used as models for other areas of the City (or beyond).
GOALS

One of the key activities of the Collegetown Transportation Working Group was to better define goals relating to transportation issues in Collegetown.

The working group established the following goals (listed here in no particular order):

a. Protect all neighborhoods in the Collegetown Impact Area (App. 4, Map #2 in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines) from negative transportation impacts.
b. Improve pedestrian and bicycling facilities in Collegetown, especially in the core area.
c. Increase support for car-free living in Collegetown.
d. Make it easier to get into and out of Collegetown (using any travel mode).
e. Improve management of existing public on-street and off-street parking for both usability and City revenue.
f. Ensure that transportation goals/actions support other goals/actions in the Collegetown plan (transportation & land-use coordination).

POSSIBLE MEASURES

The above goals could be accomplished using a wide variety of measures, as shown in the grid on the following page. The measures are described in fuller detail below.

The list below illustrates the types of measures that merit further investigation. While the measures are grouped into categories, no comprehensive effort has been made to list them in priority order, and several measures could fall into more than one category, so their placement should not be construed as lending more meaning or nuance than is noted in the measure’s description.

Policy and Program Measures

- STUDY AND IMPLEMENT A PARKING IN-LIEU FEE

The City and the Collegetown area would benefit if property owners and developers had options for fulfilling zoning parking requirements, and were able to combine such options to meet the requirements specified by zoning. (No
changes to the parking requirements for uses in the Collegetown area are being recommended.)

It is suggested, therefore, that the City allow property owners to meet existing parking requirements in three ways: (1) paying a fee to the City in lieu of constructing parking spaces; (2) providing facilities that support use of transportation modes that do not require use of parking spaces; or (3) actually constructing the parking spaces.

An analysis of the legal and other issues the City would face in modifying the zoning code to allow developers to pay a fee in lieu of constructing all or some of the motor vehicle parking otherwise required by zoning is necessary to move

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Goal a: Protect neighborhoods</th>
<th>Goal b: Improve pedestrian/bike facilities</th>
<th>Goal c: Support car-free living</th>
<th>Goal d: Easy movement into/out of area</th>
<th>Goal e: Parking management</th>
<th>Goal f: Land use coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study and implement a parking in-lieu fee</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Increase the impact of carsharing</td>
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<td>Encourage pricing of private parking separately from rents</td>
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<td>Provide transit passes universally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide other transportation demand management (TDM) services</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve enforcement of loading zones and transit stops</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Continue residential parking permit system (RPPS)</td>
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<td>Study on-street parking supply and utilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide remote parking for long-term vehicle storage</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a funding and management strategy for implementation and ongoing management of the Collegetown Transportation Plan measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve management of on-street parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve streetscapes</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop off-street pedestrian ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve transit stops</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve bicycle facilities within Collegetown</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Improve bicycle access from other areas</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve sidewalk and street furniture maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replace traffic signal at College Avenue and Dryden Road</td>
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</tbody>
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forward with this measure. (Funds raised by this method could be one-time or annual payments, and should be used by the City to support “green” transportation modes, per its existing goals, or to address other identified Collegetown transportation needs.)

Another related measure suggested is to change the zoning code to allow credits toward motor vehicle parking requirements where other “green” transportation facilities are provided (for instance an indoor bicycle storage room and shower area according to an established City standard) or if the developer provides a viable remote parking facility, or other substantial, useful transportation improvements that will significantly benefit the Collegetown area, subject to City approval. (N.B.: The latter is not intended to apply to minor aesthetic improvements to sidewalks or streetscapes.)

If study shows that a workable system of payments or other measures in lieu of constructing actual parking spaces could be incorporated into the City zoning code, implementation should be pursued. (See related discussion in item 2.A. and in blue-tinted box on Page Twenty-Nine.)

This is essentially the same as the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ element 6.
Goals addressed: b, c, f

- INCREASE THE IMPACT OF CARSHARING

Ithaca Carshare launched service in June 2008 and currently (March 2009) serves over 600 individuals with a fleet of nine hatchbacks and one pickup truck. One of its most utilized vehicles is located in Collegetown (on College Avenue at Dryden Road), with several others (one on Stewart Avenue at Campus Road, three downtown and three on the Cornell campus) nearby. Membership among Collegetown residents (mainly students) is strong, due partially to Cornell support of student memberships and City-provided favorable parking, but could be supported further by increased incentives. The existing successful collaboration among Cornell University, the City of Ithaca, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council and others should be considered a model for other initiatives, where appropriate. An important impact of carsharing is the reduction of pressure on existing parking resources because of the high numbers of individuals (6-15) served per carsharing vehicle, as contrasted with private vehicles. (This range is based on national carsharing research. With over 600 members and ten vehicles, plus data that show members report avoiding ownership of at least 250 vehicles, the impact of each Ithaca Carshare vehicle is clearly higher.)
This is similar to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ “establish a carsharing program” (element 7) but recognizes the current existence and vehicle locations of Ithaca Carshare.

Goals addressed: c, d, e

ENCOURAGE PRICING OF PRIVATE PARKING SEPARATELY FROM RENTS

Separating parking charges from the cost of residential or commercial space allows tenants more flexibility to reduce costs by not keeping a car in Collegetown, or choosing the cost and attributes of their parking separately from their living or working space. In this way it can support remote parking, car-free living, transit commuting and many other measures mentioned in this plan. Many landlords in Collegetown already rent residential and commercial space separately from parking spaces, and this should be encouraged, possibly using incentives, until it is a universal practice. However, measures to encourage this should be considered carefully so that they do not also encourage unintended consequences, such as the construction of parking in the surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods that replaces much-needed green space or otherwise detracts from the desired focus on pedestrian activity in Collegetown.

This is similar to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ recommendation to require parking charges to be “unbundled” (element 5).

Goals addressed: c, e

PROVIDE TRANSIT PASSES UNIVERSALLY

There may be ways to increase the percentage of Collegetown residents and workers who have access to free or reduced price TCAT passes. Access to a transit pass has been shown to increase the likelihood of using transit. TCAT currently serves Collegetown seven days a week (6 a.m. to 2 a.m.) with routes providing direct service to various locations (primarily the Cornell campus, downtown and East Hill area). During much of this time (weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and other times), frequency of service is at least every ten minutes. Nevertheless, it is possible that daily (and especially Sunday) service could be improved, particularly in the evening (after 6 p.m.) to downtown. Since Collegetown has such good transit service, access to passes is likely to increase usage even further. This measure is separated from pursuing other transportation demand management (TDM) strategies because it has a significantly higher cost associated with it, although it is certainly a measure that is part of a standard set of TDM practices.
PROVIDE OTHER TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) SERVICES

Collaboration with Cornell University, in particular, may be an effective way to provide additional measures that can increase the likelihood of car-free living among Collegetown residents and “green” commuting among Collegetown workers and business owners. (“Green” commuting modes are generally understood to include walking, bicycling, transit, ridesharing, etc., which use less energy and contribute less to greenhouse gas emissions than single-occupant vehicle travel.) For instance, “guaranteed ride,” transit and rideshare information, and other services may be efficiently provided in conjunction with the Cornell transportation department, and these options should be explored and implemented if feasible. Employers and others should also be encouraged to offer and promote other policies (e.g., telecommuting, flextime, flexspace, job sharing and “parking cash-out”) that can reduce the impacts of commuting. A dedicated staff person as TDM coordinator, at least part time, is likely a requirement for a successful TDM program; however, such a person could also coordinate TDM services for downtown or other employment centers in the City. While “parking cash-out,” which is explained in detail on Pages 4.22 through 4.24 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, is also a useful tool for “leveling the playing field” among workers who commute using various modes, it does not appear to be within the City’s power to require this of employers.

On-Street Parking Policy and Enforcement and Related Measures

CONTINUE RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT SYSTEM (RPPS)

The Residential Parking Permit System (RPPS), which required state legislation to establish, has been successful in reducing parking encroachment into the single-family neighborhoods surrounding the Collegetown core. A map of the area now eligible to participate in this system is shown in Figure 1; however, only streets in R-1 and R-2 zones are
eligible. Blocks must individually choose to participate, and not all eligible blocks currently do. Residents on blocks that have opted into the RPPS feel strongly that the current system is successful and not in need of improvement or replacement.

This measure addresses similar goals as the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ recommended residential parking benefit district (element 9), but better reflects local history and context in Ithaca and in New York State. Goals addressed: a, d, e, f

- STUDY ON-STREET PARKING SUPPLY, UTILIZATION, REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Two studies (Grieg 2000 and Desman 2003) currently exist and

Figure 1. The red outline and gold shaded area on the map at the right indicates the overall City of Ithaca area in which the Residential Parking Permit System is authorized by New York State. However, only streets in R-1 and R-2 zones are eligible.
should inform the development of any parking policy changes in Collegetown. A limited update to them should be conducted as soon as practical, and should provide necessary information prior to consideration of any changes in parking policy (including implementation of a fee-in-lieu-of-parking system) or pricing (including upgrades to equipment). Following that, a more extensive study may be warranted. Parking utilization levels at various times of the day and days of the week and existing (and recent historical) pricing, policy and enforcement regimes are important to include in any studies.

The 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines chapter mentions this as the first step in its implementation schedule.

Goals addressed: a, d, e, f

### PROVIDE REMOTE PARKING FOR LONG-TERM VEHICLE STORAGE

Based on previous parking studies, multi-hour and multi-day storage parking is interfering with convenient on-street short-term parking in the Collegetown core. Abuse of parking regulations and inadequate enforcement contribute to this situation. One strategy to encourage and enable car-free and car-lite living in Collegetown is to provide a location for long term (two weeks to two months) storage of residents’ vehicles.

Locations outside of the Collegetown core should be considered for long-term parking, such as downtown garages that are not fully utilized currently. In the case of the use of existing resources, long-term parking policies should be responsive on a timescale appropriate to the demands of their other users (for instance, annual review of long-term parking policies in downtown garages may be adequate to respond to the changing level of demand from downtown parkers).

Other options for future consideration may include sites in other locations that could be developed in partnership with Cornell University or other entities. A second benefit of allowing long-term parking is the likelihood of reducing parking impacts on all Collegetown neighborhoods. A third benefit is that some on-street spaces would be made available for short-term parking. A slight incentive, such as a reduced rate for advance payment for a semester’s parking, may be useful.

Provision of remote parking is included in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ element 6 (which is otherwise focused on payments in lieu of required parking). The working group found it important enough to merit inclusion as a separate measure.

Goals addressed: a, c, e, f
IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF ON-STREET PARKING

Even though a high percentage of employees and visitors already find ways other than driving to get to Collegetown, the density of uses, limited parking supply and current pricing results in a shortage of short-term parking at certain times (particularly during evenings and on weekends). Improved management could increase availability of short-term parking spaces. A number of management strategies are listed below (some could be beneficially coordinated with changes to equipment, pricing, or policies in City garages or parking meter equipment elsewhere in the City) and could be pursued singly or as a phased package.

- Refine the parking rate structure so that users pay more during times of peak demand (and consider increasing fines).
- Vary rates by location.
- Extend metered parking hours into the evenings and on weekends.
- Eliminate time limits for some or all metered parking.
- Install meters in currently unmetered areas (respecting the existing Residential Parking Permit System).

PARKING PAYSTATIONS VERSUS STANDARD PARKING METERS

Parking “Paystations” (also called “Pay-and-Display” and “Pay-by-Space” systems) differ from standard parking meters in five key areas:

- Fee rates are variable in paystations, rising during times of greatest parking demand to ensure that some vacancies remain.
- Paystations do not allow one motorist to use time remaining from a previous motorist’s use. A significant amount of potential revenue can be lost in these cases. With paystations, each motorist arrives at an “expired” parking space.
- One paystation machine can serve 10-20 parking spaces (unlike standard single-space parking meters), thus significantly reducing barriers and clutter along sidewalks.
- Paystations offer a variety of payment methods such as credit cards and remote payment options (such as payment using a cellular phone).
- The initial purchase price of paystations is significantly higher than standard meters. However, because of their potential to capture additional revenue, they may pay for themselves in just a few years.

In the core of Collegetown, where parking demand varies considerably throughout the day and where higher parking turnover is desired, paystations may work well. Paystations may also be appropriate in other locations.

Figure 2. This illustration from Page 4.16 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines depicts one variety of multi-space parking paystation.
• Review and adjust enforcement to best reach goals of maximizing usability (as defined by a vacancy rate of approximately 15%) and City revenue from meter payments.
• Reconfigure metered parking, loading zones and transit stops, perhaps designating some metered parking as “Loading Zone Only” during certain periods of the day.
• Investigate whether to adopt a paystation system to replace current meters, which take only coins and only allow one pricing level. (See box on previous page with details concerning “Parking Paystations Versus Standard Parking Meters”).
• Improve the management of the parking system as a whole.

Many of the current parking challenges are exacerbated by organizational responsibilities split among several City departments, leading to inadequate coordination of resources and other issues. Two recent parking studies (Grieg 2000, Desman 2003) recommend improvements, which should be evaluated, modified if necessary and implemented.

*This addresses many of the same goals as the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ commercial parking benefit district (element 2), but reflects a more feasible approach in light of the current legal and financial context in Ithaca and in New York State. Goals addressed: a, d, e, f*

**ESTABLISH A FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF THE COLLEGETOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN MEASURES**

Support for effective management of these measures (and others that may be identified and implemented in the future), particularly as regards funding, management and staffing, are an important part of effective implementation. Currently identified options — such as dedicating City staff time to this area (possibly combined with responsibilities for managing parking and related transportation issues in other areas of the City) or creating a Collegetown Business Improvement District — need further study. Collaborative efforts may prove useful in this area. Identifying and dedicating resources to continued management of transportation in Collegetown is key to a transportation system that is successful over the long term.

*This is similar to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ structural recommendations to establish residential and commercial parking benefit districts, but recognizes the organizational, legal and financial challenges of the Ithaca and New York State context. Goals addressed: a, b, c, d, e, f*
Facility Improvement Measures

**IMPROVE STREETSCAPES**

Most sidewalks in the Collegetown core are far from adequate for existing pedestrian volumes, which are higher than motor vehicle volumes. The streetscape should reflect the high priority the City places on pedestrian traffic, and therefore must be significantly improved in a variety of ways. Clearly, the level of service provided for pedestrians is quite low, considering the volume of pedestrians and the width of walkways. Currently, many sidewalks in this area are damaged or deteriorated in addition to being cluttered and narrower than the City’s standard five foot width (though five feet is generally a standard sidewalk width, significantly wider sidewalks are warranted in locations with high pedestrian traffic). Furthermore, transforming College Avenue into the “great street” called for in the 2007 Collegetown Vision Statement (*App. 13 and App. 17*) will require wider sidewalks along much of its length, especially on its 400 block. Streetscape improvements to support pedestrian traffic in the Collegetown core would involve improvements to sidewalk space and conditions, as well as associated improvements to transit stops, bicycle parking facilities and more street trees. All of these measures support walkability and can enhance commercial uses such as outdoor dining. There is growing consensus that existing public space devoted primarily or exclusively to automobile parking will have to be reduced. Loading zones in the core of Collegetown are also likely to be affected. Coordination with TCAT and Cornell will be important, as well as efforts to identify and secure additional funding sources. Such improvements should be planned and implemented in the core of Collegetown as soon as possible. (*See related discussion in blue-tinted box on Page Twenty-Nine and in items 5.I, 5.J, 5.K and 5.L.*)

- The 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ recommendation to eliminate the traffic circle at Oak and College Avenues needs further study. While the turnaround the circle provides contributes to the efficiency of general circulation and bus routing, it is also true that removing the circle could improve pedestrian safety and provide additional space for a public plaza. Improvements that retain the turnaround functionality but prioritize pedestrian space may be possible and would fit with the goals articulated in the beginning of this chapter.

Figure 3. Up to 10,000 pedestrians per day navigate the current congested, uncomfortably narrow sidewalk conditions on the 400 block of College Avenue.
As noted in the “Off-Street Pedestrian Ways” measure, enhancing the pedestrian connection between Eddy Gate and the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts is an important part of improving streetscapes in the core of Collegetown.

This is similar to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ element 10.
Goals addressed: a, b, c, d, f

DEVELOP OFF-STREET PEDESTRIAN WAYS

As noted by Goody Clancy, the topography and street layout in Collegetown mean that many desired pedestrian routes do not coincide with streets. Small blocks have been recognized for some time in the transportation planning field as conducive to walkability; the long block faces that are prevalent in Collegetown have the opposite effect (pedestrians must frequently walk far out of the way to reach destinations). Particularly, the “superblock” bounded by College Avenue, Dryden Road, Eddy Street and Catherine Street acts as a significant impediment to efficient walking routes, and pedestrians would benefit from more permeability in this block. (An informal east–west path already exists through this block, and could be developed further to eliminate unpaved sections and deep slopes.) Developers on this block and on other long or wide blocks should be encouraged to plan sites to maximize within-block pedestrian connections, possibly with incentives. An existing example of a successful off-street pedestrian way is “Frosh Alley,” which connects Eddy Street and Quarry Street between Seneca and State Streets.

Goody Clancy’s recommendation to enhance and improve the pedestrian connection between the Eddy Gate and the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts (which is part of Cornell Plantations’ Goldwin Smith Walk), as well as the suggestion to create a pedestrian plaza near the Eddy Gate that highlights this historic feature, are excellent ideas that should be included in a streetscape improvement project for Collegetown. (See related discussion in blue-tinted box on Page Twenty-Nine and in item 5.G.)

Goals addressed: b, c, d, f

IMPROVE TRANSIT STOPS

The northbound TCAT bus stop on College Avenue just north of Dryden Road begs for improvements. Perhaps it should be moved to a different location. The southbound transit stop at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts is
better, but both physical and signage improvements are still necessary. TCAT’s Seneca Street station is a useful local model, including the rider information system planned for that location. There is little, if any, provision for stops for intercity and other non-TCAT transit in Collegetown (yet these stops are frequent, and ridership is high). Intercity buses often are larger than TCAT buses, and remain at a stop for a longer period, which means that they have different needs than TCAT buses. All transit needs should be addressed in a coordinated way. Some improvements could likely be made in conjunction with the above streetscape improvements.

*This is essentially the same as the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines' transit facility recommendations in its element 10. Goals addressed: a, b, c, d, f*

- **IMPROVE BICYCLE FACILITIES WITHIN COLLEGETOWN**

  Identify places to install inverted-U racks on or near the sidewalks in the core of Collegetown, and, if possible, in a convenient covered area of the Dryden Road parking garage, as part of the City’s ongoing project to install bicycle racks in public areas throughout the City. Currently proposed zoning and site plan review changes would also require indoor and outdoor bicycle parking on private property when redevelopment occurs, analogous to the current motor vehicle parking requirements; if these changes are adopted, they will also lead to more bicycle parking spaces in Collegetown.

*Improved bicycle facilities are discussed as part of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines' element 10. Goals addressed: b, c, d*

- **IMPROVE BICYCLE ACCESS FROM OTHER AREAS**

  - Improve on-street bicycle facilities.

  Connect the (as of March 2009, nearly implemented) uphill bicycle lane on State Street with Collegetown and/or the Cornell campus. Measures to consider could include a continued uphill bicycle lane on Mitchell, and/or Ithaca Road, and sharrows (i.e., standard symbols indicating a shared motor vehicle and bicycle lane) or an uphill bicycle lane on Eddy Street.

*Goals addressed: b, c, d*
- Develop a bicycle trailer service (or similar, to take bicycles and riders uphill).

Many people want to have access to their bicycles both downtown and in Collegetown or on the Cornell campus, but don't want to ride up the steep hill. Facilitating this with some kind of transit service that handles both riders and bicycles is an effective way to support increased use of bicycling in and around Collegetown. TCAT currently offers space on all of its buses for two bicycles (held on a rack on the front of the bus), but in warmer weather the racks are often full on uphill sections of routes, and bicyclists frequently must wait for two or more buses to pass before there is room for their bicycle on the bus. More bicycles could be accommodated by a dedicated van with a trailer to hold bicycles, traveling between the Commons and Collegetown, a service which TCAT and/or Cornell University could participate in providing.

Other ways to accommodate this include racks with larger capacity on TCAT buses, TCAT policy changes to allow bicycles to be carried inside buses, or a bicycle lift (similar to a ski lift, installed in-pavement, usually along a curb) as in Trondheim, Norway (where the bicycle lift is also a major tourist attraction).

Many of these individual measures are included in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines chapter as part of element 10. Goals addressed: b, c, d

**IMPROVE SIDEWALK AND STREET FURNITURE MAINTENANCE**

Many sidewalks in Collegetown, where pedestrian volumes are higher than motor vehicle volumes, are damaged or deteriorated, in addition to being narrow and cluttered. The City should ensure timely maintenance of public sidewalks and street furniture, including benches,
bicycle racks, signage, trash cans and landscaping / street trees (See Figure 4, which depicts the deteriorated condition of the current benches along College Avenue.) The City should work with abutting property owners, as appropriate, as well as undertaking maintenance projects itself, as possible. Including this area as a priority in the sidewalk inspection and improvement program could also create significant improvement, with costs for bringing sidewalks up to established City standards (as per City-wide policy) borne significantly by abutting property owners. A maintenance schedule should be required and enforced for any built items in the public realm in Collegetown (if not city-wide); this may require additional staffing and / or funding. (See related discussion in item 7.B.)

This measure is related to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines' pedestrian improvements (element 10).
Goals addressed: a, b, c, d, f

■ REPLACE TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT COLLEGE AVENUE AND DRYDEN ROAD

Most design work is complete for this project, and staff members expect signal equipment to be replaced in 2009. The primary benefit of the project will be the addition of pedestrian indicators and an advance walk phase, as well as installation of a slight curb bumpout and movement of some utilities to reduce poles and clutter on the tight northwest corner of the intersection, increasing pedestrian space. The new signal apparatus will have the added benefit of requiring about 80 percent less energy to operate than the previous signal, thereby supporting the City’s goal of reducing energy use and therefore greenhouse gas emissions to 20 percent below 2001 levels by 2016.

This measure is related to the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines’ pedestrian improvements (element 10).
Goals addressed: a, b, d

■ ADDITIONAL NOTES

Where the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines elements were retained, they are noted in the description of the individual measures above. (Some measures were defined differently, so there is not always a one-to-one correlation between the measures outlined here and the elements in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines chapter.) Several elements suggested by Goody Clancy are not being recommended by the working group; they include the “park once” strategy, the specific recommendations to create commercial or residential parking benefit districts (vs. other ways to
pursue the goal of well-managed parking in those areas). This chapter supersedes the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines in any and all cases where the two conflict.

The grid below outlines the likely timeframe for implementation of the above measures. Some measures are continuations of existing policies or programs, and others may be phased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Short term (1-3 years)</th>
<th>Medium term (3-6 years)</th>
<th>Long term (6-10 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study and implement a parking in-lieu fee</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the impact of carsharing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage pricing of private parking separately from rents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide transit passes universally</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide other transportation demand management (TDM) services</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue residential parking permit system (RPPS)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study on-street parking supply and utilization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide remote parking for long-term vehicle storage</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a funding and management strategy for implementation and ongoing management of the Collegetown Transportation Plan measures</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve management of on-street parking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve streetscapes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop off-street pedestrian ways</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve transit stops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve bicycle facilities within Collegetown</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve bicycle access from other areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve sidewalk and street furniture maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace traffic signal at College Avenue and Dryden Road</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION: A Future Vision of Collegetown Transportation

Though many of the transportation system elements in Collegetown support the goals stated in this chapter, much could, and should, be done to address the myriad of current deficiencies. In addition, many enhancements are recommended to better realize the goals of the College-town transportation system. Though key goals and possible measures to achieve those goals have been outlined in this plan, much work still remains to refine the specifics of various measures and

MAKING THE LAND-USE & TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION

One of the most fundamental concepts in urban planning is the understanding that land-use and transportation factors are inexorably linked. For example, development in one area will create traffic traveling to and from that development, which may encourage more development, and so on. The degree to which land-use and transportation favorably support each other will, in large part, govern the character of the area.

In the case of Collegetown, many of the recommendations contained within the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan and Conceptual Design Guidelines necessitate balanced coordination between land-use decisions and transportation decisions. A few notable examples:

EDDY GATE PLAZA AND GORGE WALKWAY – Chapter 5 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines recommends that the north end of Eddy Street be converted into a pedestrian plaza, and that the connecting walkway along the gorge be improved. (Pages 5.24 - 5.25) These recommendations involve land-use issues such as outdoor dining and park space, and transportation issues such as restricting non-emergency motor vehicle access and improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians.

STUDY AND IMPLEMENT A PARKING IN-LIEU FEE – In this Collegetown Transportation Plan, the proposed “parking in-lieu fee” would affect land-use and transportation conditions if implemented. For example, the costs of redeveloping properties would be reduced since less on-site parking would have to be constructed, provided that the developer met the zoning parking requirement by paying a fee in lieu of actually constructing parking spaces; this fee would be less than the cost of providing on-site parking. An in-lieu fee should be coordinated with other related measures, particularly the provision of remote parking for cars that otherwise would be stored in on-site parking provided by developers, and promotion of the range of transportation services that support car-free living in Collegetown (promotion of the costs and / or inconvenience of car storage in Collegetown would also be helpful). This fee in lieu of constructing on-site parking could then be used to fund measures such as pedestrian, bicycling and transit improvements.

IMPROVE STREETSCAPES – The desire to improve the aesthetics and function of the streetscapes in the core of Collegetown is a key theme repeatedly mentioned throughout this entire document. Proposed improvements to sidewalks, plazas and green spaces, outdoor dining and building use, size and architectural design need to be carefully coordinated so that the improvements support (rather than conflict with) one another.

A potential obstacle to coordinating land-use and transportation decisions is a fractured and decentralized decision-making process. This plan strives to inform decision-makers about a full range of integrated land-use and transportation goals for Collegetown so that specific decisions are not made in isolation and do not conflict with broader goals. This type of coordination would be supported if one entity or City department oversaw the diverse measures suggested for implementation of the transportation aspects of this plan.
develop an implementation scheme. Staff in various departments and the Board of Public Works will play important roles in this implementation.

This plan contains a comprehensive array of transportation-related recommendations intended to improve the vitality, livability and economic viability of Collegetown. This plan, in combination with other sections of the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines, paints an exciting vision of what Collegetown could become:

Wide sidewalks in the core of Collegetown invite pedestrians to linger and enjoy many outdoor dining possibilities. Most visitors easily and conveniently travel to Collegetown using transit, walking and bicycling. Visitors driving to Collegetown find convenient (if more expensive) parking, including on evenings and weekends. Business owners and City officials work together to address ongoing issues such as sidewalk maintenance and parking management. Residents living outside of the core of Collegetown continue to be shielded from overwhelming overflow parking impacts. An adequate funding system is in place and allows the City to consistently maintain safe and beautiful streets that positively contribute to the surrounding urban design and character.

To achieve this, continuing and concerted focus, as well as a feasible funding plan, will be necessary. This continuing focus will rely not just upon City officials, but also upon a sizable constituency of involved residents and merchants who have firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing Collegetown. The strong community interest in this plan suggests that such collaboration is possible.
modifications to
“5. The Urban Plan and Opportunity Scenarios”

WITH RESPECT TO THE MIXED-USE CORE (AND MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT IN GENERAL):

5.A. The maximum as-of-right building height for those areas of the mixed-use core described in the text and shown on maps as being increased to 90 feet in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines shall instead remain at 60 feet, for the following reasons:

CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE 400 BLOCK OF COLLEGE AVENUE

The exemplary row of buildings currently defining the east side of College Avenue between Oak Avenue and Dryden Road is praised in the Collegetown Vision Statement as being “a striking example of excellence in architectural design within an existing urban context,” and this opinion is broadly shared by the Ithaca community. (App. 6) Even the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines states, “Several valuable lessons can be learned from the east side of the 400 block of College Avenue and should be included in the design or the renovation of buildings in the mixed-use core.” (Page 6.12) See Figure 5 for a photographic collage depicting this entire row of facades.

The aesthetic harmony of this facade row is even more striking because two component structures are roughly a century old while the other three were built more recently. Each of these buildings has a well-designed facade in its own right, but here — unlike other areas of Collegetown — the interplay of old and new creates a unified streetscape whose aesthetic power is much greater than the sum of its (already attractive) parts.

Numerous design elements visually relate the individual buildings in this row to each other and to the streetscape as a whole: (1) All five buildings present roughly the same height when viewed from College Avenue; (2) the four northern-
most buildings are linked by a ground-floor horizontal “base” of consistent height and red-brick color, which is then carried up vertically by the red-brick Ciaschi Building at the Dryden Road corner; (3) the upper-story portion of each of the four northernmost buildings has a harmonious light earthtone color, and is separated from the other three (above the linked ground-floor “base”) by narrow slots which provide a visual rhythm to the series of facades; (4) the newer buildings, while contemporary in expression, display deliberate design references to the older buildings, so that horizontal elements (though varying in detail) are carried across all five buildings at the same height, basic rhythms of facade organization are found on all five buildings, and even decorative features of the older buildings are echoed by design elements of the newer buildings.

The east side of the 400 block of College Avenue is a major urban planning success, notable not only within its College-town context, but within the context of the City as a whole, and no incentive (such as substantially increasing the maximum permitted building height) should be enacted that would provide an economic incentive to demolish any of the buildings, old or new, that together create this exceptional urban ensemble.

**Figure 5.** This photo collage shows the ensemble of old and new building facades lining the east side of the 400 block of College Avenue, cited in the Collegetown Vision Statement as being “a striking example of excellence in architectural design within an existing urban context.”
On the west side of the 400 block of College Avenue, Sheldon Court serves an important gateway function at the northern entrance to Collegetown. Its effectiveness as a gateway building derives not only from its location, architectural quality and attractive design details, but also from its basic form, which features an angled wall facing the pedestrian trail leading into Collegetown at the northeast corner of the College and Oak Avenues intersection (see illustration of Sheldon Court as viewed from this corner in Figure 11; from this vantage point, the angled wall becomes the structure’s principal facade.) In addition, Sheldon Court is one of Collegetown most important historic resources. No economic incentive (such as increased maximum building height) should be provided that would encourage the demolition of Sheldon Court.

With the recent reconstruction of 402 College Avenue (at the northwest corner of the Dryden Road intersection), the west side of the 400 block of College Avenue extending from Sheldon Court to Dryden Road is now only one redevelopment project away from having a row of building facades consistent in design quality and height not only with each other, but with the buildings across the street. (The one anomalous building that should be demolished and rebuilt to a height consistent with its neighbors is the current two-story building between Sheldon Court and 402 College Avenue.)

In short, the 400 block of College Avenue (with the exception of the single lot mentioned above) has already achieved the Collegetown Vision Statement’s goal of “notable urban design” and “high quality architecture.” (App. 5) Therefore, encouragement of redevelopment projects consistent with the Collegetown Vision Statement and the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines is more appropriate elsewhere in central Collegetown, especially on the 300 block of College Avenue and the upper portion of Linden Avenue, where the quality of the urban design and architecture is, in general, much lower than on the 400 block.

**CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE 100 BLOCK OF DRYDEN ROAD**

Topping the list of “Weaknesses” identified by the Collegetown Vision Statement is that “insufficient attention has been given to the design and quality of the Collegetown environment,” and the first example provided is: “Tall buildings and steep slopes have created a canyon-like quality along Dryden Road and impinge on historic views of downtown, the valley to the south and over Cayuga Lake.” (App. 6) Likewise, the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines refers to the “canyon effect along Dryden Road west of College Avenue.” (Caption on Page 2.7)
This canyon effect derives not only from the existing 60-foot maximum building height, but also from specific characteristics of Dryden Road’s 100 block, which is the block west of College Avenue. While Dryden Road east of College has two moving lanes and two parking lanes, it has two moving lanes and only one parking lane west of College. Furthermore, the curb-to-curb width of Dryden Road west of College Avenue is about four to five feet narrower than the curb-to-curb width of Dryden east of College — a significant differential on a street that is relatively narrow on both blocks. Another major factor is the pronounced curvature of the 100 block of Dryden Road; this geometry causes nearby building facades to close off views up or down the street from many vantage points. Therefore, negative visual impacts of increased maximum building height would be exacerbated on the 100 block by a reinforcing combination of the narrowness and curvature of the road.

Even with the 12-foot setback proposed for stories above the 60-foot level in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, new 90-foot buildings would still be very visible to Dryden Road pedestrians, and would still block additional light and air and intensify the canyon-effect that is already commonly identified as an undesirable existing quality of this block. Therefore, raising the maximum building height to 90 feet west along Dryden Road would worsen urban design problems that were expressly identified at the very beginning of the Collegetown planning process.

OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

The goals of the Collegetown Vision Statement and the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines can be achieved without raising the maximum allowed building height to 90 feet in the mixed-use core. With a 60-foot as-of-right maximum building height maintained in the mixed-use core, substantial development opportunities would still exist there, especially on the 300 block of College Avenue — and with the maximum building height raised to 50 feet on College Avenue’s 200 block and along much of upper Linden Avenue, and with an incentive zoning area, offering additional height up to a maximum 75-foot height if previously-identified community benefits were provided, added to the 300 block of College Avenue (see item 5.B. on following page), substantial new redevelopment opportunities would be created that could provide an increase in density and a greater mix of housing types within central Collegetown. It is best to focus redevelopment opportunities on those blocks of Collegetown, such as those mentioned in this paragraph, where demolition of existing buildings and their replacement with taller, well-designed buildings (consistent with the design standards which will be developed and implemented) will most improve the appearance and livability of Collegetown as a whole.
5.B. An incentive zoning area — which would allow additional building height up to a maximum 75-foot height if specific easily-verifiable community benefits, according to an overall list identified by Common Council in advance, were provided as part of, or in conjunction with, the proposed development — should be established on both sides of the upper portion of the 300 block of College Avenue, a block which would benefit from redevelopment due to its current generally poor urban design characteristics, including the existence of a surface-level parking lot fronting the street and its combination of an inconsistent mix of existing building heights with generally indifferent architecture. The portion of any new building that exceeds 60 feet in height would be required to be set back from the street edges of the building by no less than 12 feet, consistent with a similar provision in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines.

According to the Collegetown Vision Statement, its primary goal was “to set the course for the creation of an outstanding urban environment,” an environment described as “a diverse, commercially viable, dense, mixed-use community characterized by notable urban design, a predominantly student population, high quality architecture, vibrant public spaces, and pedestrian amenities.” It envisioned strong residential areas to the east and west with a mix of owner-occupants and students, and “a convenient public transportation system.” (App. 5)

Some aspects of this urban environment, such as “a predominantly student population” and a “dense, mixed-use community,” already exist. Most modern construction in the core of Collegetown, for example, has followed a familiar pattern of multistory apartments above ground-floor commercial space, with the residential units intended for and almost exclusively occupied by students. Census data confirm that this is by far the most densely populated neighborhood in the City. Other aspects of the vision are addressed in the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines with proposed initiatives such as the adoption of a new, form-based code and binding design standards, the enhancement of open space resources, the recognition of historic resources, and the enactment of various transportation measures.

However, still further components of the vision seem more difficult to realize. Among these is the goal to “diversify further the population to include a greater number of employees and residents whose presence is not dependent on the university’s academic schedule and who could support Collegetown business when students are gone,” thereby helping
to ensure a thriving Collegetown business district. (App. 7) The Collegetown Vision Statement goes on to state, “A population that mixes other age groups or family households also could create demand and support for a greater variety of retail offerings.” (App. 7) Another challenge lies in providing “enhanced public transit facilities” on College Avenue, given the congestion of the street, particularly in the heart of Collegetown. (App. 13)

It is with the intent of addressing these desirable, but difficult to achieve, aspects of the vision that the addition of an incentive zoning area is proposed. According to New York State General City Law, incentive zoning is “a system by which specific incentives or bonuses are granted . . . on condition that specific physical, social, or cultural benefits or amenities would inure to the community.” (Section 81-d. 1. [c]) Per this Section 81–d, Common Council would need to enact the system of zoning incentives, specifying the incentives which may be granted and the specific lands to which they would apply. Given the existence of identifiable needs for “the creation of an outstanding urban environment” as projected in the Collegetown Vision Statement, and in consideration of the limited City resources for extended or complicated monitoring of the benefits provided, both the benefits and the incentives would have to be carefully identified and defined.

An Incentive Zoning Ad Hoc Group was formed to consider a proposed incentive zoning area. This group included alderpersons Jennifer Dotson (Ward 1, Planning and Economic Development Committee chair) and Mary Tomlan (Ward 3, Planning and Economic Development Committee), Planning and Development Board member David Kay and chair John Schroeder, Planning and Development Department staff members JoAnn Cornish, Leslie Chatterton and Megan Gilbert and Nels Bohn, Director of Community Development for the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency. The following specific recommendations derive from this ad hoc group’s discussion.

The community benefits for the proposed Collegetown incentive zoning area should (1) directly benefit the Collegetown Study Area; (2) help to realize goals identified during the Collegetown planning process and summarized above; (3) be substantial, long–lasting, clearly-defined and easily-verified; and (4) not require extensive or difficult monitoring over time by City staff members. While determination of the precise list and descriptions of the community benefits that would qualify a development project for additional building height within the incentive zoning area will require careful future deliberation and enactment by Common Council, the following represent the general types of substantial and easily verifiable community benefits suitable for inclusion on the future list. Please note that these are only illustrative examples, and are not intended to be definitive in either language or substance.
The development project includes a new Collegetown hotel.

The developer provides improvements within the Collegetown Study Area, but off the development site, such as life-safety improvements to buildings, historic restoration of properties, or returning multi-family housing in peripheral neighborhoods back to single-family, owner-occupied use.

The development project incorporates a high-quality transit hub within its building footprint (see, for example, the TCAT bus shelter on Seneca Street).

The development project includes Class A office space, or non-academic research and development space, above the ground floor, with this space occupying, at a minimum, a number of stories equal to the number of additional stories allowed by the incentive.

If identified benefits, as defined and enacted by future action of Common Council, were provided, the incentive zoning area would allow additional building height up to a maximum 75-foot height, with the portion of any new building exceeding 60 feet in height being required to be set back from the street edges of the building by no less than 12 feet, consistent with a similar provision in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines.

The area proposed for the incentive zoning appears on Figure 6 as the diagonally hatched area centered on the upper portion of the 300 block of College Avenue. This area of the mixed-use core was selected for the incentive zoning area because, quite unlike the 400 block of College Avenue, the 300 block is currently characterized by generally poor urban design, including the existence of surface-level parking along the street, generally indifferent architecture and a very inconsistent mix of existing building heights. Therefore this block stands to benefit from redevelopment in ways that the 400 block would not. Due to the concerns expressed in point 5.A. above, the incentive zoning area is inset from the 100 block of Dryden Road, except for a limited area at the southwest corner of the College Avenue and Dryden Road intersection.

A special transition provision, similar to one suggested in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, would apply in the two midblock areas where the incentive zoning area (allowing additional building height up to a maximum 75-foot height) directly adjoins zones where the proposed as-of-right maximum building height differs from 75 feet by more
Figure 6. The proposed incentive zoning area — which would allow additional building height up to a maximum 75-foot height if specific easily verifiable community benefits, according to an overall list identified by Common Council in advance, were provided as part of, or in conjunction with, the proposed development — corresponds to the diagonally-hatched area shown on this map; this area is centered on the upper portion of the 300 block of College Avenue.
than 15 feet. There are two such instances. North of Catherine Street, a corner of the incentive zoning area would directly abut an area with a 40-foot maximum building height, and west of Linden Avenue, it would directly abut an area with a 50-foot maximum building height. At the midblock edges of the incentive zoning area in these two specific locations, the incentive zone additional stories above the as-of-right 60-foot maximum height must fall within an envelope defined by a line leading upwards and inward at a 45-degree angle from the outer edge of incentive zoning area. (See illustration on Page 6.9 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines; however, this Goody Clancy illustration deals with a street edge transition, rather than a midblock transition as above, so the 12-foot setback pertaining to street edges shown in this Goody Clancy illustration would not apply here.) The goal, as with the original Goody Clancy provision, is to provide “graceful transitions” between zones. (Page 6.9)

5.C. Consistent with the Collegetown Vision Statement’s recommendation to “protect and enhance the East Hill neighborhoods located south, east and west of Collegetown,” and with the full range of issues that led to establishment of the Collegetown building moratorium (which included concern that the current permitted zoning envelope in some neighborhoods peripheral to central Collegetown was inappropriately large), the maximum building height for the residential areas along upper Dryden Road, near the Bryant Park neighborhood and near the East Hill Historic District should not exceed 35 feet.

The relevant recommendation from the Collegetown Vision Statement reads, “Protect and enhance the East Hill neighborhoods located south, east, and west of Collegetown. There is a shared interest on the part of residents, the city and the university to protect and preserve the residential fabric and quality of life that attracts long-term, owner-occupant residents, many of them university faculty and staff, to neighborhoods near the campus. The [Collegetown Vision] task force supports work recently initiated by the Planning & Development Board to establish zones that transition from higher to lower, both in scale and density, thereby mitigating some of the adverse impacts of concentrated commercial uses and high-density student residential development nearby.” (App. 11-12)

The Planning and Development Board initiative referred to above is its 2007 proposal for establishment of a new R-3c zone, which would be a multiple residence use zone like R-3, but with area requirements (including maximum building height) more similar to those in R-2 districts.
As the Planning Board stated in a memo to Common Council’s Planning and Economic Development Committee on March 6, 2007, “Recent site plan review activity has made it clear to the Planning Board that the current R-3a area regulations, where they exist in areas of the City dominated by traditional two- or three-story wood-frame houses, allow new structures that are dramatically non-contextual with the existing urban fabric in terms of height, lot coverage and placement on the lot. Such development threatens not only to damage the visual coherence and aesthetic character of the directly-affected individual neighborhoods, but also to reduce the livability of surrounding lower-density neighborhoods, all to the detriment of quality of life within the City as a whole.”

Of particular concern are zoning provisions allowing the construction of 40-foot-tall, four-story buildings within attractive, character-giving neighborhoods, valued by City residents, that consist of two or two-and-one-half story traditional wood-frame houses. Construction in such neighborhoods of 40-foot-tall or four-story buildings — even if equipped with gables and porches — would be glaringly out of scale and out of character with the existing streetscape and urban context.

The language in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines also repeatedly mentions respecting or preserving the existing built urban context in its three identified preservation character areas, which are mapped on neighborhoods now consisting overwhelmingly of two-story and two-and-one-half-story traditional wood-frame buildings.

For example, while the “Preservation A” character area encourages in-fill development toward Oak Avenue behind the existing buildings lining upper Dryden Road, the goal stated on Page 6.20 is to do so “without changing the fundamental character of the streetscape.”

Likewise, the description of the “Preservation B” character area on Page 5.2 begins with this observation: “Community members identified streets and specific buildings as significant and worthy of preservation. These occur throughout the area and typically provide a transition from mixed-use or higher density residential areas to neighborhoods of single-family, detached and owner-occupied homes.” Correspondingly, the goal of this character area, as stated on Page 6.23, is to “maintain the historic character of traditional neighborhoods through protection of existing buildings and design controls on the architecture and massing of any future renovations or new construction.” Page 6.24 adds, “Roof lines, overall height, and composition of volumes shall relate to existing houses along the same street within 250’ of the property.”
Finally, the “Preservation C” character area corresponds to those portions of the East Hill Historic District that are within the Collegetown Planning Area. Here, the goal is to “protect and enhance the qualities of the historic district through design controls and supporting uses, which encourage stewardship of existing properties.” (Page 6.26)

5.D. Consistent with points 5.A. and 5.C. above, and the recommendations of the Collegetown Zoning Working Group, the maximum building heights shown on maps and descriptions in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines are replaced with the maximum as-of-right building heights shown in Figure 7A (which includes an aerial photograph of current conditions) and Figure 7B (which is identical, except that the aerial photograph is omitted). See also Figure 6 for the proposed incentive zoning area, which is not shown on Figures 7A and 7B.

The maximum as-of-right building height distribution shown in Figures 7A and 7B reflects the recommendations of the Collegetown Zoning Working Group, which includes Alderpersons Mary Tomlan (Ward 3, Planning and Economic Development Committee) and Jennifer Dotson (Ward 1, Planning and Economic Development Committee chair), Planning and Development Board member Jane Marcham and chair John Schroeder, Planning and Development Department staff members JoAnn Cornish, Leslie Chatterton and Megan Gilbert, Nels Bohn, Director of Community Development for the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency and New Urban News editor Rob Steuteville. The working group’s goal in creating this map was to respect the essential spirit of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, and encourage development opportunities within central Collegetown, while also reflecting items 5.A. and 5.C above and providing the “gradual height transitions from the mixed-use core to surrounding neighborhoods” as described on Page 5.4 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. The working group attempted, wherever feasible, to place the same maximum height on both sides of each street, so as to promote coherent and pleasing streetscapes; necessary exceptions to this have been kept to a minimum. Compared with existing zoning, maximum as-of-right building heights are raised along the middle portion of College Avenue and on upper Linden Avenue, as was also proposed in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. This will encourage substantial new development in these areas.

Note: The areas labeled “35 (2.5 Stories)” are intended to correspond, in the to-be-developed form-based zoning amendments, to traditional streetscapes of two-and-one-half-story residential buildings, in which the top floor is tucked under a pitched roof, either gabled or hipped, and often featuring one or more dormers. The top floor in such a
Figure 7A. Recommended maximum as-of-right building heights for the Collegetown Planning Area (including background aerial photograph). See also Figure 6 for proposed incentive zoning area, not shown on Figures 7A and 7B, centered on the 300 block of College Avenue. Note: All areas below Eddy Street, except for the one area shown, retain their existing maximum building heights.

* meaning up to three habitable stories would be permitted, but any third story must be located within a pitched roof volume. This is the traditional residential building type found all over Collegetown, wherein the roof eaves are located atop the second story, but the windows of a habitable third story are located above the level of the eaves on gable ends or on dormers projecting from the roof volume.

§ meaning up to three habitable stories would be permitted, but with a flat roof allowed atop the third story. (The third story could also be located within a pitched roof volume, as described above.)
Figure 7B. Recommended maximum as-of-right building heights for the Collegetown Planning Area (same as Figure 7A, except without background aerial photograph).
building (though fully habitable, like the two floors below) is called a “one-half” story because, being tucked under the roof, this top floor isn't architecturally expressed, on the building's exterior, like a full story.

The area labeled “35 (3 Stories),” on the other hand, would allow townhouse-type residences that are three stories in height with a flat roof atop the third story.

5.E. **Collegetown’s mixed-use core should have a minimum building height, in addition to a maximum building height, since buildings which are too short for their context are as disruptive to an attractive and coherent streetscape as buildings which are too tall for their context. The recommended minimum building height for the mixed-use core is 45 feet or four stories.**

Any new building lower than 45 feet or four stories in height will appear out-of-place within Collegetown's mixed-use core.

5.F. **Any new buildings at the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road should be required to have chamfered corners. In other words, instead of 90-degree corners (in plan view) at these intersections, each building would have, for its full height, two 45-degree corners, resulting in an angled corner facade facing the intersection.**

Such chamfered or beveled corners along the entire 60-foot height of buildings are discussed as one of the proposed design guidelines on Page 6.8 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, but should be required by either zoning or design standards at the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road. This intersection serves unusually large numbers of pedestrians, and also serves the narrow and congested 100 and 200 blocks of Dryden Road. The southeast and southwest corners are two prime development opportunities. Chamfered corners in new development would provide a number of advantages:

- The views for both pedestrians and drivers coming up College Avenue from the south, or coming up or down Dryden Road, would “open up” at the intersection, reducing any sense of constriction and allowing for more generous light, space and views.
Pedestrian movements around these “tight” corners would be fluid, easy and comfortable. (This benefit to pedestrians should not, however, be compromised by providing a larger corner turning radius for vehicles, which would have the contradictory result of encouraging vehicles to speed around the corner, resulting in reduced pedestrian safety.)

Expanded sight-lines at these corners would improve safety for pedestrians and drivers alike.

The symmetrical 45-degree building angles at the southeast and southwest corners of this intersection would allow these two buildings, however much they might otherwise differ in their architecture, to have some elements of massing and expression in common. Such architectural coordination between two buildings on opposite sides of the street has great potential to provide the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road with a special sense of place, and perhaps even to allow this pair of buildings to be perceived, when approached from the north, as a signature gateway element leading to lower College Avenue.

Figure 8 — which is a detail of an illustration on Page 5.15 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines — depicts a conceptual building with a chamfered corner at the southwest corner of the intersection. Goody Clancy suggests that the extent of the bevel be “based on connecting two points that are set back 10’ from the intersection of the two wall planes.” (Page 6.8, including left-hand drawing on that page). This proposed arrangement would provide the numerous public benefits described above with only a minimal loss of building square footage.

5.G. In conjunction with any proposed redevelopment of the “superblock” bounded by College Avenue to the east, Catherine Street to the south, Eddy Street to the west and Dryden Road to the north, opportunities should be explored, whenever possible, to
establish the mid-block “pedestrian through connections” illustrated conceptually in the “early concept / framework plan” on Page 3.2 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines.

At the March 8, 2008 design workshop, the Collegetown planning consultants emphasized how the addition of pedestrian passages (or pedestrian and bike passages) within extra-long or extra-large Collegetown blocks could help transform Collegetown into a much more pedestrian-friendly place. One key idea suggested by the consultants, and depicted on a map they distributed at that meeting, was to introduce pedestrian passages through what they called the “superblock,” bounded as described above.

A detail of this “early concept / framework plan” map is shown in Figure 9; the conceptual “pedestrian through connections” are the dashed double-headed arrows drawn on the block in question.

Such passages would not only benefit pedestrians and bicyclists, but potentially also open up, or preserve, valuable view corridors (such as to distant South Hill). They could also provide locations for certain commercial uses along the route, as in the current use of the alleyway off of the south side of the 100 block of Dryden Road.

The idea of providing such passages in conjunction with new development between Linden and College Avenues is explored in some detail in Chapter 5 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines, but the concept of establishing “pedestrian through connections” in the above superblock is not even mentioned there. Such through connections have substantial potential benefits, and should be considered whenever proposed development projects on the “superblock” make the establishment of such connections (or portions of such connections) feasible. (See related discussion under “Develop Off-Street Pedestrian Ways” transportation measure.)
5.H. All utilities within the mixed-use core of Collegetown should be located underground. This has already been accomplished on some blocks, but not on others. The existing above-ground poles, wires, transformers, etc., on the 200 block of Dryden Road (east of the College Avenue intersection) are a particular eyesore.

Locating utilities underground will not only improve aesthetics, but also improve fire department access to the upper stories of mixed-use core buildings which typically stand in a row right along the street right-of-way line.

WITH RESPECT TO COLLEGE AVENUE:

5.I. Continuous rows of street trees should be planted on both sides of College Avenue along its entire length, all the way from Oak Avenue to Mitchell Street, rather than the discontinuous, very widely-spaced street trees depicted in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines.

Even ordinary City streets feature continuous rows of street trees along both sides. But the Collegetown Vision Statement aspires even higher, with a call for “redesigning College Avenue as the ‘great street.’” *(App. 13 and App. 17)*

But the “Illustrative Plan” found on Page 5.8 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan and Guidelines, and the more detailed plan found on Page 5.11, show College Avenue trees only in widely-spaced curb bumpouts that are spaced about 125 feet apart.

This spacing is way too far apart to provide any sense of continuous rows of street trees, nor does it suffice to provide the beauty, summer shade and cooling such continuous rows would provide to Collegetown residents and visitors. See Figure 10, which compares the spacing of street trees shown on Eddy Street (below) versus those shown on College Avenue (top) in the above “Illustrative Plan.”

*Figure 10. These details from the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines “Illustrative Plan” show the wide gaps between street trees proposed for College Avenue (top) versus the more normal tree spacing proposed for Eddy Street.*
While it is acknowledged that the available streetscape width on portions of lower College Avenue is limited, it is also true that the current situation — with inadequate sidewalk widths and a streetscape unusual within the City for its lack of street trees — is unacceptable. Despite the difficulties, continuous rows of street trees along the entire length of College Avenue should be the City’s goal. (See related discussion under “Improve Streetscapes” transportation measure.)

5.J. It is imperative that the sidewalks on both sides of the 400 block of College Avenue be widened substantially, as an essential improvement toward the goal of making Collegetown more pedestrian-friendly. Sidewalks on this block have a very heavy pedestrian volume, but at their current width, these sidewalks are far too constricted and crowded for pedestrian comfort. It appears that it will not be possible to provide the essential substantial additional unobstructed sidewalk width, plus strips to accommodate continuous rows of street trees as well as street lights and other street furniture, without removing on-street parking from the 400 block.

The 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines accurately describes the problem. The section on “Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation” on Page 2.17 states, “The most heavily walked sidewalks — the 400 block of College — are only 8 feet wide with obstructions that reduce effective width to 5 feet, completely inadequate in an area that may see up to 10,000 pedestrians per day.” Likewise, the text on Page 2.16 notes that “portions of College Avenue see nearly twice as many pedestrians as automobiles, even though no more than 30% of all public rights-of-way is dedicated to pedestrians.” And additional development within the Collegetown core would, of course, only increase pedestrian volumes. This situation would be a problem anywhere, but is even more so within the City of Ithaca, which officially seeks to encourage pedestrian and alternative modes of transportation.

But having identified and described the problem, the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines fails to recommend an adequate solution.

According to recent measurement, the building-to-building width of the 400 block of College Avenue, at the narrowest point, is about 56 feet. This measurement was taken from the piers of the Student Agencies building on the east side of the street to the series of extensions (glassed-in bays, stairs, planters and a retaining wall) that project all along Sheldon Court on the west side of the street.
So if one were to apply the diagrammatic section of a mixed-use core street shown on Page 5.10 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines to the 400 block of College Avenue, one has 14 feet for the sidewalk on the left-hand side of the diagram (including, however, only about 10 feet usable for pedestrians after providing space for lightpoles and street furniture), then 39 feet devoted to two parking lanes (with occasional bumpouts for trees) and two moving lanes. That is already a total of 53 feet, which would allow only 3 feet available for both the “curb zone” (for street lights and street furniture) and usable sidewalk on the right-hand side of the diagram. This arrangement also fails to provide continuous rows of street trees. In short, on the basis of simple mathematics, this diagram will not work on the 400 block of College Avenue.

This means that the close-up plan for the redesign of College Avenue on the facing page of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines also will not work. This close-up plan makes the same assumptions as the above diagrammatic section: unobstructed sidewalk, presumably wider than exists now, on both sides of the street; strips on both sides of the street for street furniture (which is symbolically depicted on the plan); two parking lanes (with bumpouts providing a total of only four street trees for the entire block) and two moving lanes. Like the Goody Clancy diagrammatic section, the plan looks fine in theory, but fails to reflect the hard reality of available street width.

Of course, any proposed final design of the streetscape of the 400 block of College Avenue will require careful study, and will have to consider provisions for loading zones and transit stops. But it appears that one cannot both substantially increase the unobstructed sidewalk width for pedestrians and retain two parking lanes on the 400 block of College Avenue, especially if one wants to provide continuous rows of street trees on both sides of the street. And in this location, providing substantial additional unobstructed space for pedestrians on both sides of the street is essential, simply for everyday pedestrian needs.

This additional sidewalk width, and the continuous rows of street trees, is also indispensable if College Avenue is truly to become the impressive gateway to the University — the “great street” — called for by the Collegetown Vision Statement. (App. 13 and App. 17) (See related discussion under “Improve Streetscapes” transportation measure.)

Related Note: The statement on Page 2.15 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines that, “For Collegetown, the primary means of access is driving,” is contradicted by the chart on the same page that shows 73 percent of Collegetown residents walking or biking, versus only 14 percent driving, as their “Journey to Work” transportation mode. Collegetown student residents, in particular, overwhelmingly walk to and from campus.
WITH RESPECT TO DRYDEN ROAD:

5.K. Given heavy existing Dryden Road pedestrian traffic and the major development potential on the south side of Dryden Road between College and Linden Avenues, which could substantially boost this pedestrian traffic, it is also imperative that the sidewalks on both sides of the 200 block of Dryden Road be widened substantially. These sidewalks are already too constricted and crowded for pedestrian comfort. It appears that it will not be possible to provide the essential substantial additional unobstructed sidewalk width, plus strips to accommodate street trees as well as street lights and other street furniture, without removing at least one lane of on-street parking from this block.

Note that the close-up plan for the redesign of College Avenue on Page 5.11 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines shows a portion of the 200 block of Dryden Road redesigned to include only one parking lane plus two moving lanes (versus the current two parking lanes and two moving lanes). In this drawing, the extra space gained by the elimination of one parking lane is devoted to expanded sidewalk width.

However, it should be noted that the diagrammatic section of a mixed-use core street shown on Page 5.10 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines fails to reflect the mathematical realities of available street width on the 200 block of Dryden Road, just as it fails to do so on the 400 block of College Avenue. So, a careful study, taking into consideration such issues as loading zones, etc., needs to be conducted to determine the best way to substantially increase the unobstructed sidewalk width for pedestrians on both sides of the street here.

Placing all utilities underground on this block would also help to free up sidewalk width currently blocked by obstructive above-ground utility poles as discussed in item 5.H. above. (See related discussion under “Improve Streetscapes” transportation measure.)

WITH RESPECT TO ALL COLLEGETOWN STREETSCAPES:

5.L. A streetscape plan applicable to the entire Collegetown Planning Area should be developed to guide future street and sidewalk reconstruction projects. This overall plan
should deal with issues such as lane width, curb lawn width, sidewalk width, crosswalk design, curb bumpouts, loading areas, provisions for adding or preserving street trees, etc. This plan should call for all sidewalks in Collegetown to meet or exceed City standards (which require a minimum width of five feet), and for sidewalks to be constructed where none currently exist. (For example, some sidewalks on the middle portion of College Avenue are as narrow as three feet, and much of Oak Avenue has no sidewalks at all. Such conditions are unacceptable.) In addition to addressing transportation needs, a key goal of the plan would be to improve the aesthetics, livability and sustainability of neighborhoods throughout Collegetown.

The call for this plan is placed under the heading for Chapter 5, concerning the urban plan, in addition to under the “Improve Streetscapes” measure under the heading for Chapter 4, concerning transportation, because it will deal not only with transportation issues but also with broader urban planning concerns, such as aesthetics and neighborhood livability and vitality.

![Cascadilla Hall](image1)
![Sheldon Court](image2)
![Grand View House](image3)

Figure 11. Details of drawings found respectively on Pages 5.25, 5.26 and 5.19 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. Though drawn to illustrate other ideas, they serve well here to depict three historically significant Collegetown buildings that contribute substantially to Collegetown’s character, but currently lack the protections of landmark designation as described in “Chapter 228: Landmarks Preservation” of the City of Ithaca Municipal Code.
WITH RESPECT TO HISTORIC AND VISUAL RESOURCES:

5.M. Historically significant resources within the entire Collegetown Planning Area which merit designation as local historic landmarks, but which currently have no such protection, should be identified by the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission and designated by Common Council. Ideally, this process would take place concurrently with consideration and adoption of the proposed form-based Collegetown zoning amendments.

While the East Hill Historic District and the 1896 Eddy Gate monument already have historic designation, other historically significant resources within the Collegetown Planning Area remain undesignated and unprotected. Cascadilla Hall, Sheldon Court and Grand View House (the exceptional tall wooden residential building with central tower and mansard roof at 209 College Avenue), for example, would probably be near the top of any more complete list of currently unprotected Collegetown historic resources. (See Figure 11 for drawings of these three buildings.)

With the exception of a specific reference to the “handsome and historic character” of Sheldon Court on Page 7.3, there are only very general references to currently undesignated historic resources in the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines. For example, the section on “Character Area 2: Village Residential,” calls for identifying “architecturally significant detached homes to be considered for preservation in this area.” (Page 6.15) Likewise, the stated goal of “Character Area 4: Preservation B” is to “maintain the historic character of traditional neighborhoods through protection of existing buildings and design controls on the architecture and massing of any future renovations or new construction.” (Page 6.23)

But the May 31, 2007 Collegetown Vision Statement had recommended (on App. 14) that “Identification, rehabilitation, and interpretation of historic, architectural, and natural resources should be included in the scope of the urban plan,” and the June 10, 2008 Planning Board comments on the then-draft plan also called for the final plan to contain a list “indicating which Collegetown buildings and structures merit permanent preservation because of their historic significance.”

Since it has not yet been accomplished, the work of identifying and designating the specific Collegetown historic resources that merit, but do not yet have, permanent protection remains to be done, and should be done expeditiously, to
provide all the community benefits stated in §228-2 of the “Landmarks Preservation” chapter of the City of Ithaca Municipal Code.

This summer (2009) an intern, working under the direction of City historic preservation planner Leslie Chatterton, will be conducting research on Collegetown historic resources, using as a guide a list of “Collegetown Historic Resources Worthy of Detailed Research” prepared by Alderperson Mary Tomlan and John Schroeder, chair of the Planning and Development Board. As indicated by the title, the latter is a study list, not a list of proposed designations.

5.N. **Collegetown’s cultural, architectural and natural history should be highlighted and interpreted for both residents and visitors through such elements as markers, signs or decorative sidewalk panels, in accordance with a thematically and aesthetically coordinated program.**

This is consistent with the recommendation from the Collegetown Vision Statement quoted in item 5.M. above, and also with the following additional language from that same recommendation:

“In addition to the designated historic resources, there are other properties and areas that punctuate the story of Collegetown’s historical development. Interpretation of this story, possibly with markers, signs, literature, or other means, will add interest and depth to the Collegetown experience for students, other residents and visitors.” (App. 15)

Such interpretative signage could, for example, explain where the Ithaca trolley line formerly ran (and hence why the pedestrian bridge to the Engineering Quad stands where it does); why Andrew Dickson White built his magnificent architectural gateway to Cornell on Eddy Street instead of College Avenue; where the old mill stream flowed and how it became a gorge path; where in Collegetown Vladimir Nabokov once lived; etc.

5.O. **In conjunction with the proposal (illustrated on Page 5.25 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines) to create a suitably impressive setting for the Eddy Gate by providing a pocket park behind it and a raised plaza in front of it (providing additional pedestrian or outdoor seating space in areas that are currently part of the street), the 1896 Eddy Gate**
monument itself should be carefully restored and cleaned according to a careful preservation plan.

Removal of the ivy currently enveloping the Eddy Gate and subsequent cleaning, using proper conservation techniques, would, among other obvious benefits, reveal the Eddy Gate's original pink (hinting at the color carnelian or cornelian) and white stone colors, intended to symbolize Cornell's two founders, Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White. (See related discussion under "Develop Off-Street Pedestrian Ways" transportation measure and in blue-tinted box on Page Twenty-Nine.)

5.P. Consistent with the Collegetown Vision Statement, significant Collegetown views and vistas that merit attention when development projects are considered should be identified when legislation is prepared to follow this urban plan.

According to the Collegetown Vision Statement, among its “more prominent components ... that should serve as points of reference for Collegetown's urban plan” is one that emphasizes “highlighting the area's dramatic geographical and topographical environment.” (App. 15) While the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines gives due recognition to the picturesque Cascadilla Gorge, it does not address another recommendation in the vision statement that “sweeping views and vistas to the south, west, and north merit attention when considering siting of proposed development projects.” (App. 14) When legislation is prepared to follow this urban plan, it is important that it identify at least a minimum of such significant views and vistas, characteristics of the Collegetown landscape that positively distinguish it from the environs of many college and university campuses.
modifications to
“6. Collegetown Design Guidelines”

6.A. The entire Chapter 6 (“6. Collegetown Design Guidelines”) consists of only conceptual design guidelines that should serve as the basis for the creation of codified design standards in the future. These eventual design standards should be developed and enacted by Common Council concurrently with its development and enactment of new form-based Collegetown zoning amendments. The new design standards are to be administered through a legally-binding design review process.

Numerous details about exactly how these design standards will be worded and exactly how they will be incorporated into the City’s project review procedures remain to be determined. However, these standards will be consistent with the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines, and will be administered through a legally-binding design review process.

The new design standards, and the legally binding review process of which they are part, should be in place before any zoning amendment allowing greater density (i.e., height or lot coverage) in Collegetown takes effect.

As a resource to be used when applying the new design standards, exemplary existing Collegetown buildings, both new and historic, should be identified which can serve as sources of inspiration for designers. Suitable newer buildings might include 401, 407 and 409 College Avenue, and suitable older buildings might include not only those structures selected for historic designation (see item 5.M. above), but other non-designated older structures displaying attractive proportions or physical design elements that could spark ideas suitable for inclusion in projects under design.
modifications to
“7. Implementing the Plan, Managing Opportunities, and Managing Enforcement”

WITH RESPECT TO CODE ENFORCEMENT:

7.A. In addition to improved enforcement, consideration should be given to tightening or strengthening City code provisions related to exterior property appearance and maintenance.

The section titled “Managing Enforcement” on Pages 7.4 and 7.5 of the 2008 Goody Clancy Plan & Guidelines appropriately emphasizes the need for better enforcement of the existing City Municipal Code as an important component of improving the appearance and quality of life within central Collegetown and its adjacent neighborhoods, to deal with issues such as front-yard parking, cars blocking sidewalks, overflowing trash bins and apartment occupancies that exceed the zoning limit.

Several strategies for improving enforcement are identified on these pages, and should be explored.

However, the City should also examine whether the existing code provisions, especially with respect to exterior property maintenance, should be tightened or strengthened, so that when regular Certificate of Compliance property inspections occur, any negative aspects of the appearance or the upkeep of buildings, yards and parking areas can be corrected and brought up to standards consistent with healthy, thriving residential neighborhoods.
WITH RESPECT TO CITY INVESTMENT IN COLLEGETOWN:

7.B. Appropriate City investment in Collegetown, and appropriate ongoing annual maintenance of those investments, will benefit the City as a whole. Past City investments in physical improvements to Collegetown have frequently not been matched with the ongoing maintenance necessary to keep those improvements attractive, functional and optimally beneficial to Collegetown and the City. Although particularly noticeable in the case of streetscape and street furniture investments, lack of maintenance has negatively affected other Collegetown infrastructure, as well.

Each municipal physical improvement constructed or installed in Collegetown should be accompanied by a maintenance schedule that sets out, in advance, the periodic maintenance actions required to keep that improvement in good condition. Some maintenance actions might be monthly, some annual and some occurring over longer intervals, as appropriate. Responsibility should be assigned to ensure that these maintenance actions do, in fact, occur as scheduled.

In all cases, the goal here is to maximize the benefits of the improvements by keeping them attractive and functional over time, in an area of the City where any such improvements are likely to receive very heavy use. (See related discussion under “Improve Sidewalk and Street Furniture Maintenance” transportation measure.)

WITH RESPECT TO COORDINATION:

7.C. In order to realize the benefits of the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines during the planning and review of new construction and rehabilitation projects, it is necessary to have in place and ready to be implemented not only the form-based zoning code but also the design standards and the binding design review process for their application, and certain components of the Collegetown Transportation Plan. Essential components of the transportation plan at this stage are: (1) establishment of an in-lieu-of-parking fee system; (2) designation of northbound and southbound transit stop locations along the College Avenue corridor; (3) development of a schematic design plan.
that prioritizes pedestrians for the public right-of-way (streetscape) in the 300 and 400 blocks of College Avenue and the 100 and 200 blocks of Dryden Road, in relation to expected pedestrian volumes and current and potential development buildout in the Collegetown Planning Area; (4) implementation of a remote parking system; and (5) development of a set of alternatives for managing on-street and other public parking in the core of Collegetown.

The goal here is to have the new form-based zoning, the new binding design review process and certain essential initial components of the Collegetown Transportation Plan in place concurrently.

WITH RESPECT TO STUDIES NECESSARY FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

7.D. Following is a narrative list of studies necessary to move forward on implementation of essential components of the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines. This list was approved by Common Council on October 7, 2009 in compliance with the second resolved clause of the August 5, 2009 resolution by which Common Council endorsed the 2009 Collegetown Urban Plan & Conceptual Design Guidelines.

The depth and type of each study listed below will vary with the nature of the relevant action (from a narrative general overview of existing knowledge from easily available sources to comprehensive data gathered and compiled into an official report). Some “studies” may take the form of trial period implementation of actions.

Similarly, the area covered by the studies listed below will and should vary according to the type of study and topic area. Specific needs that have been identified so far are noted below with the individual studies.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Population Density and General Attributes of Collegetown Area

- Cornell University population figures (existing and projected):
  — Student (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, and staff.
Housing distribution associated with the university population (existing and projected):
  — Students living in university-owned housing (dorms, townhouses, society and program houses).
  — Students living off campus in non-university owned housing.
  — Staff.
  — Faculty.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION RELEVANT TO VARIOUS ACTIONS

Existing and projected transportation programs (including if possible, current usage levels):
  — TCAT service and pass programs (including coordination with Cornell and other employers).
  — Carsharing.
  — Taxi, charter bus, and other miscellaneous transportation services.
  — Educational and informational programs available in the community.

Parking availability and utilization (Grieg 2000, Desman 2003, plus the following where possible; include public and private; on and off street; metered, permitted & free; various zoning districts; include identified trends where possible):
  — Current and projected pricing.
  — Current usage rate.
  — Types of users (retail, commuter, night only, 24-hour, special uses like church or events).
  — If parking is associated with a residential building, what portion of parking is rented to tenants.
  — “Trouble spots” (however identified).

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO STREETSCAPE CHANGES

Vehicular access needs (for three situations: with current uses and densities, with potential maximum buildout under current zoning, and with potential maximum buildout under proposed zoning):
  — Traffic (car, truck, bus, bike, pedestrian, etc.).
  — Transit (both TCAT and intercity) mobile and when stopped for passengers.
  — Emergency services.
• Loading and unloading including the following:
  — Both commercial and residential needs.
  — Trash and recycling collection.
  — Peak move-in and move-out times.
  — Carshare reserved parking.

• Character of public spaces (current and desired; particularly near Eddy Gate and nearby along Cascadilla Gorge and on the four blocks nearest to the College / Dryden intersection):
  — Sidewalk widths for desired “pedestrian LOS” (Level of Service).
  — “Street furniture” (seating, trash receptacles, bicycle parking, benches, etc.).
  — Street trees and other plantings.
  — Parking meter equipment.
  — Snow storage.
  — Views from public places.

INFORMATION FOR VARIOUS PARTICULAR TRANSPORTATION MEASURES

• Overview of “best practices” for fee in lieu of parking:
  — Review of programs in other areas and their impacts and implications (on parking supply / demand, legality, revenue, need for ongoing management of policy and pricing, etc.).

• Overview of “best practices” for using pay stations for paid public on-street parking:
  — Review of programs in other areas and their impacts and implications (on parking supply / demand, legality, revenue, expense and financing, need for ongoing management of policy and pricing, public vs. private management, etc.).

• Overview of possibilities for remote parking system / program:
  — Review potential program and impacts and implications (on parking supply / demand, legality, revenue, expense and financing, need for ongoing management of policy and pricing, public vs. private management, potential partnerships / collaborations, etc.).
INFORMATION RELEVANT SPECIFICALLY TO ZONING CHANGES

- Overview of existing conditions:
  - Population density.
  - Current build-out (gross square feet under existing zoning).
  - Maximum possible build-out (gross square feet under existing zoning).

- Overview of potential conditions under proposed zoning:
  - Maximum potential buildout (gross square feet).

OTHER INFORMATION

- Other studies and information will undoubtedly be needed, and its gathering and dissemination should be coordinated by the appropriate City staff in support of a decision by the appropriate City body.

(Note: The 7.D. text above has been slightly reorganized and corrected to clarify its intent.)
Acknowledgements

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Appendix: The Collegetown Vision Statement, May 2007  App.1
1. Executive Summary

The following pages set forth the major components of Collegetown’s urban plan and the design guidelines that will shape the plan’s realization. In addition to a careful delineation of Collegetown’s future as seen through a series of physical and urban design recommendations, the plan analyzes the economic and investment challenges that must be addressed as Collegetown develops.
The plan outlines the components of a multi-layered “sustainable transportation system” aimed at addressing head-on the problem—perceived and otherwise—of inadequate parking and congested circulation while showing how a fully-integrated system, including changes in required parking ratios made feasible by the implementation of this system, can positively influence the economics of development in Collegetown.

The planning process itself was notable for the range and intensity of public participation and for the deep-seated, and repeatedly expressed, desire to maintain Collegetown’s unique positive characteristics. The process aimed at ensuring that proposed changes reflect those characteristics and strengthen the opportunities for different populations to reside, if not in totally harmony, then in a willingness to acknowledge differences.

Collegetown’s singular mix of undergraduate and graduate students, families, long-time business proprietors, property owners, along with its proximity to the campus and many of the physical and intellectual assets of one of the premier universities in the country, presented its own set of challenges as the process moved forward. Meetings with the Collegetown Vision Implementation Committee, representing a cross section of stakeholders, ensured that the multiple voices and communities in Collegetown would be heard. These and other conversations between the consulting team and City, resident, and university representatives underscored the imperative to find ways by which to do honor to the seemingly competing needs of each group while finding the fulcrum at which those needs are in balance.

This report illustrates how the major themes articulated in the Vision Statement became the collective core of the Collegetown Plan and Design Guidelines, and laid the groundwork for the zoning amendment that will give regulatory strength to both the plan and the guidelines. Strengthening the concept and reality of a vibrant, multi-faceted neighborhood was the ultimate goal of all who participated in the planning process. This goal was a constant, explicit presence during the planning process; it will continue to be reflected in practice as the plan and guidelines move forward through implementation and as additional opportunities arise to enrich the quality of life of Collegetown.
2. Existing Conditions

A. urban design and architecture

Throughout the development of the Collegetown Urban Plan and Design Guidelines, every effort has been made to allow recommendations to emerge from the current context by identifying existing elements that work well and those that need modification. This chapter provides a brief assessment of interrelated issues, including existing zoning, land use, open space, land value, special characteristics of various parts of the study area, and the physical relationship between Collegetown and Cornell University. It also offers a discussion of the parking, transit, and circulation issues and an economic assessment.
The study area includes a wide array of building types, uses, sizes, and characters. Conditions range from a dense, urban, mixed-use core, to tree-lined streets with stately historic homes, to narrow streets with modest homes, to a heavily wooded trail along one of Ithaca's beautiful gorges. This range of physical characteristics and the diversity of the people who live, work, and go to school in the planning area are described in detail throughout the existing conditions assessment.

Existing land uses correspond very well to the desire to concentrate commercial and retail activity at the primary node of College Avenue and Dryden Road, while also supporting secondary nodes at Eddy Street and Dryden Road and along the blocks of Stewart Avenue north of East Buffalo. The balance of the area is residential, with institutional uses including Cornell's Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts and Cascadilla Hall.
The existing zoning has generally served Collegetown well by concentrating mixed-use development at the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road, protecting the Belle Sherman neighborhood by encouraging owner-occupancy, and allowing a concentration of rooming and boarding houses along College Avenue, Linden Avenue, Bool Street, and Catherine Street.

The existing zoning ordinance does not, however, sufficiently regulate physical transitions between zones or directly support the creation of pedestrian-friendly streets.
The large area west of Collegetown represents the East Hill Historic District, the largest such district in Ithaca. It is known for architecturally important residential, commercial, and institutional buildings dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Portions of Eddy Street fall within the district’s boundary. Although not officially designated as historic, the Belle Sherman area, including Bryant Park, is an important neighborhood with a distinctive character. These areas were identified early in the planning process as needing special consideration to preserve and enhance their many positive attributes.
Open Space Resources

Cascadilla Gorge and its trails constitute Collegetown’s most important open space. The gorge provides an experience that is unique and dramatic; it is, however, virtually the only green space in the entire study area. One small patch of grass sits west of the municipal garage on Dryden Road, but it is awkwardly located, furnished with only four benches, is sloped, and offers no pedestrian-oriented activity at its perimeter. Outside the study area lie Bryant Park and Maplewood Park, which primarily serve the residents of Belle Sherman.
Land Values

One of the greatest challenges to redevelopment in Collegetown is the high cost of land. Prices at the corner of College Avenue and Dryden Road are by far the highest in the county, even rivaling those in expensive cities such as San Diego and Los Angeles. These values at the center of Collegetown support the strategy of allowing the greatest redevelopment density at or near this intersection. By contrast, it may be possible to acquire land for appreciably less money further south on College Avenue and in other parts of the study area. If this is true, that may allow for profitable redevelopment at lower densities in those areas.

At the same time, potential redevelopment of individual parcels is constrained by relatively small parcel sizes. For redevelopment to occur, parcels would in all probability have to be aggregated, which may result in per-square-foot asking prices approaching those of the College Avenue-Dryden Road intersection.
Areas
College Avenue and Dryden Road Intersection

As the location of the largest collection of tall buildings and of the highest concentration of residential units, the area immediately surrounding this intersection provides the most urban experience in Collegetown. The concentration of retail and commercial activity makes it a crossroads for pedestrian traffic and serves as a natural destination for students as they flow south from the Cornell campus. Amid many tall structures, this primary intersection contains two buildings, at the southeast and southwest corners, that remain at a single story. There is very little in the way of street trees or landscaping. The architecture is a mixture of traditionally detailed four- and five-story brick buildings, six-story concrete-block apartments, and new brick buildings with little ornamentation. Some of the new buildings have well-detailed modern facades and demonstrate an effort to relate to existing buildings. Most buildings have nonresidential ground-floor uses, both retail and commercial.

Well-scaled brick buildings with active ground-floor uses line the east side of the 400 block of College Avenue.

Tall, modern apartment buildings create a canyon effect along Dryden Road west of College Avenue.

Narrow sidewalks limit the amount of outdoor seating and cause crowding during the academic year.
College Avenue
The character of College Avenue changes toward Mitchell Street. Beginning with tall buildings, active sidewalks, and minimal setbacks in the 300 and 400 blocks, the character, uses, and building types shift dramatically approaching Catherine Street. These sometimes-jarring transitions are magnified by design decisions that have placed solid blank walls along the sidewalk at the ground floor, or located garage entries facing the street. The lower end of College Avenue turns into an exclusively residential area, with college students filling the traditionally detailed and wood-clad housing stock. Deeper setbacks and more trees and landscaping also help this portion make a transition to the owner-occupied residential areas along Mitchell Street.

A small outdoor space north of Collegetown Bagels is a center of activity in warmer months.

Collegetown
URBAN PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Lower College Avenue is home to many college students, living primarily in older rooming houses.

Boarded-up windows, garage entrances, and dramatic shifts in scale and character detract from the quality of the pedestrian experience.
Collegetown
URBAN PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Dryden Road (East)
Heading east from the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road, the streetscape quickly shifts from mixed-use to residential. The street is lined with traditional 2½-story detached houses from the early 20th century that present a wide variety of colors, architectural details, roof shapes, and window types. Common to most houses is a main entrance that faces the street and is reached by a walkway that passes through a small front-yard setback to a one-story porch or overhang. At the east end of the street a three-story brick apartment building sits comfortably among the residential vernacular housing thanks to its detailing, massing and modest scale.

Tree-lined sidewalks, porches, and fine residential buildings are typical along Dryden Road east.

Houses are composed of a variety of traditional materials and interesting details, and generally have one-story transitional elements between the sidewalk and main building volume.

A new residential building along the north side of Dryden Road stands in stark contrast to the neighboring structures.
Eddy Street
Eddy Street is similar to College Avenue in that it contains both a higher-density, mixed-use area at its northern end and shifts to a residential area with older housing stock to the south. The mixed-use area is concentrated to the south of Dryden Road and serves as a secondary commercial node. Most buildings are either five-story concrete block with active ground-floor uses or traditional three-story brick. The residential areas below East Seneca Street are filled with large traditional homes on larger lots that are part of the East Hill Historic District. The many mature trees and dense landscaping in deep setbacks give the street a feeling of spaciousness unique in the study area.

The northern end of Eddy Street is defined by modern mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses, minimal setbacks, and no landscaping. Large lots, old trees, and grand houses are common along Eddy Street. Wider streets and deeper setbacks allow for long views to the south.
Collegetown
URBAN PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Linden Avenue
The entire length of Linden Avenue is dominated by residential uses, but they vary greatly in character and overall condition. At the northern end of the street, near the active mixed-use core of Collegetown, old houses are occupied by students and show serious signs of physical deterioration, possibly due to the lack of owner occupancy. The area midway between Dryden Road and Mitchell Street abuts the open service and parking areas that support the uses located along College Avenue. Large parking lots and retaining walls, which open large holes in the continuity of the building fabric, allow for long views to the west.

Setbacks and owner occupancy increase toward the lower section of the street.

Large parking and service areas open views to College Avenue from the mid-section of Linden Avenue.

Creative details give houses special character and charm.
Collegetown
URBAN PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Cascadilla Gorge
One of the most exciting and important amenities in Collegetown is Cascadilla Gorge, which runs across the study area’s northern boundary. Lying between the center of activity at College Avenue and Dryden Road and Cornell, the Gorge plays a powerful symbolic role as a transitional element between the two areas. It also enables pedestrians to enjoy a wooded, natural experience while remaining close to the most urban part of Collegetown.

At the same time, many areas are vastly underutilized, particularly given their proximity to such a wonderful resource. The areas north of the Eddy Gate, Cascadilla Hall, and the Schwartz Center hold promise to become a greater part of the open space network along the gorge.

Beautiful wooded trails lead from the heart of Collegetown toward the east and west.

The area behind Cascadilla Hall and the Schwartz Center is unattractive and lacks pedestrian amenities, despite its function as an important connection along the gorge between Eddy Street, College Avenue, and the Cornell campus.

The footbridge from Oak Avenue to Cornell’s Engineering Quad is heavily used and affords a dramatic view of the rushing water below.
Other Streets

While not highlighted individually, the surrounding streets of Catherine, Cook, Bool, Blair, Mitchell, Orchard, Oak, Buffalo, Summit, Oneida, Williams, and Stewart Avenue each boasts a unique character relating to its topography, street width, and building stock. All of these streets are residential, with the notable exception of Stewart Avenue between Williams and Buffalo, which contains a small number of commercial and mixed-use buildings.

Beautiful, well-maintained homes line Mitchell Street, the southern boundary of the study area.

A small number of mixed-use buildings occupy the northern end of Stewart Avenue, including the popular Chapter House and Carriage House Cafe.

Tight and narrow Catherine Street is lined with the porches of old houses now occupied by students. A mixed-use building along College Avenue terminates the view.
Cornell University’s campus runs along the entire northern edge of the planning area and connects to the study area across Cascadilla Gorge at four points: Stewart Avenue (the western boundary of this study), Ithaca Road (the study’s eastern boundary), and two access points that converge at the intersection of College Avenue and Oak Avenue. The confluence of the major vehicular and pedestrian connections at Oak Avenue places special significance on this crossroads, which should be carefully considered during the planning process.
B. parking, transit & circulation

Parking is the single most frequently cited transportation problem in Collegetown. Whether from the perspective of a student, a long-time resident, a merchant, or even the City of Ithaca, parking is perceived as a significant part of what doesn't work right in the district. While data support the view that there are many problems with Collegetown's parking system, parking challenges are symptoms of much greater transportation problems.

Any transportation system can be broken into four discrete parts: access, connectivity, circulation, and parking.

- **Access** describes the means by which people travel to and from a place. For Collegetown, the primary means of access is driving. While a remarkably strong transit system exists for an urban area the size of Ithaca, it is not heavily utilized by Collegetown residents and employees (see Table 2b-1).

This access profile for Collegetown stands in contrast to the modes of transportation used by commuters to Cornell, a short walk across bridges from Collegetown. Cornell launched an incentive program in the early 1990s to encourage use of public transit and other alternatives to the private vehicle. The university campus includes an extensive and well-maintained walking, biking, and transit infrastructure that has led to the mode shares shown in Table 2b-1.

- **Connectivity** describes the degree to which a place is connected to adjacent places. General...
ally, connectivity is illustrated by the number of street or path connections between neighborhoods. It is an essential component of increasing access to a neighborhood by all modes of transportation. Limited connectivity makes neighborhoods less convenient for travelers to move into and out of, and therefore less viable. Furthermore, the limited points of access serve as funnels for traffic, becoming congested and creating barriers to access. As illustrated in Fig. 2b-1, Collegetown is poorly connected to adjacent neighborhoods, with two effective barriers created by discontinuous street connections to the east and west and the limited number of crossings of the gorge to the north. The result is an island effect that forces most travelers to use the same congested means of access.

- **Circulation** describes how people move within a place. The quality of the built environment and the public rights-of-way determine how people circulate. Where infrastructure is focused mostly on vehicular transportation, overall circulation suffers, greatly affecting the ability of residents to carry out daily tasks and of businesses to receive and see customers. While automobile circulation has been the primary focus in U.S. downtowns, truly successful places recognize the greater carrying capacity that pedestrian, bicycling, and transit systems add. Circulation in Collegetown is heavily biased toward automobiles. Nonetheless, portions of College Avenue see nearly twice as many pedestrians as automobiles, even though no more than 30% of all public rights-of-way is dedicated to pedestrians.

- **Parking** is the storage system for all modes of transportation, not just automobiles. Just as ships dock at piers and airplanes arrive at terminals, cars, bicycles, buses, and pedestrians need to be “parked” at the beginning and end of a trip. The perceived parking problems in Collegetown involve cars, but this restricted focus has helped create many other problems by overlooking the lack of good parking for bicycles and pedestrians, as well as interim parking for buses at bus stops—forcing many residents and customers to decide to drive. Very little bicycle parking exists in the district, few benches exist for pedestrians, and bus stops are poorly defined.

- **Transit Access**
  Transit service in Collegetown is excellent for a community the size of Ithaca. Fourteen routes serve Collegetown, day and night, along College Avenue, Oak Avenue, Dryden Road, Stewart Avenue, and Mitchell Street. Two stops in each direction are conveniently located along the area’s spine, College Avenue. Service frequency between Cornell and downtown Ithaca through Collegetown runs as high as every 10 minutes. Nonetheless, bus ridership is limited, with fewer than 10% of people utilizing transit for work trips.

  No transit route or schedule information is posted at any stop in Collegetown, only bus stop signs with route numbers. This lack of readily-available transit information erects a large barrier to increasing ridership, as many area residents and employees find the system confusing. Furthermore, with the possible exception of the stop at the Schwartz Center, no shelters exist at any Collegetown bus stop, undermining the appeal of transit in an area subject to weather extremes.

- **Pedestrian Connectivity**
  As described above, connectivity between Collegetown and surrounding neighborhoods is limited by disconnected street grids to the east, west, and north. This directly affects pedestrian connections to an even greater degree. Pedestrians try to follow straight paths as much as possible when traveling to destinations, since shorter distances are preferable when traveling at a walking pace. The disconnected street grid, however, forces pedestrians entering and leaving Collegetown to...
make repeated 90-degree turns from their “desire lines,” increasing walk times and reducing the appeal of walking. Further, the lack of clear visual destinations at the end of streets adds to the perception of longer walking times.

The lack of connectivity continues within Collegetown itself. The size of several blocks forces pedestrians traveling on sidewalks to take long routes around the blocks to reach some destinations. The blocks containing Dryden Court as well as the Dryden Road garage are particularly large. Pedestrians have made inroads through these and other blocks, as evidenced by walking routes that involve backyards, access stairs, parking lots, driveways, and alleys. However, buildings, fences, and chains cut off many key desire lines.

The combined lack of internal and external pedestrian connectivity degrades the pedestrian experience in Collegetown by limiting the number of easy connections to residences, businesses, and merchants. This serves to encourage more driving, even though trips by foot—if better connections were available—would be much shorter.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Circulation within Collegetown on foot or by bicycle is compromised in a number of ways. For bicyclists, there are no dedicated or shared bicycle facilities, leaving riders to contend with cars on streets, or pedestrians on sidewalks. This contrasts dramatically with the welcoming bicycling environment on Cornell's campus. Further, a complete lack of adequate short-term bike parking anywhere in Collegetown leaves the adventurous bicyclist no choice but to lock his or her bike to anything available—poles, trees, or signs. Finally, pavement conditions throughout Collegetown—especially on the shoulders of streets, where bicyclists often ride—are poor, with frequent seams, divots, and debris.

Sidewalk widths are narrow in most places in Collegetown, with the exception of Dryden Road between College and Eddy. Most sidewalks are only 5 feet wide, barely sufficient for pedestrians to pass oncoming pedestrians comfortably and not enough if a signpost, meter, or other obstruction is present. The most heavily walked sidewalks—the 400 block of College—are only 8 feet wide with obstructions that reduce effective width to 5 feet, completely inadequate in an area that may see up to 10,000 pedestrians per day. Several key pedestrian street crossings are encumbered by excessive pavement cross-sections, including Oak at College, Eddy at Dryden, Mitchell at College, and Eddy at State. Meanwhile, the primary intersection in Collegetown—Dryden and College—is signalized but has no pedestrian indications present, leaving pedestrians to coordinate concurrent walks based on vehicle indications.

### Parking

A parking report for Collegetown, completed in 2000, revealed a number of on-street use characteristics that suggested the parking system needed improvements, including:

- excessive overtime meter violations without enforcement action;
- high utilization of the Dryden Road garage at all hours except overnight;
- on-street parking at capacity all day long at unregulated spaces;
- only 60% average utilization of on-street meters
- complaints about lack of parking from Collegetown employees;
- complaints about spill-over parking from nearby residents;
- heavy utilization of off-street supply; and
- average parking rates district-wide of $50/month.
These results stand in contrast to downtown Ithaca, where parking is easier to find and often free for short stays or within a short walk. The report also identified repeated complaints about loading operations conflicting with parking in the district.

The average public on-street space was producing about $2/day in revenue and the Dryden Road garage was producing about $5/day per space. Collegetown residents and employees reported an average cost to park of about $2.25/day ($50 divided by 21.72 days per month). These numbers stand in stark contrast to the estimated cost of providing off-street in the district or the estimated on-street space values in the district, as illustrated in Table 2b-2.

Table 2b-2 Estimated Parking Cost Pro Formas in Collegetown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Input Value</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>expected useful life of the parking lot:</td>
<td>35 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>long-term interest rate (i.e., discount rate):</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workdays per month:</td>
<td>21.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEFINITIONS**

“Construction Costs” (aka “Hard Costs”) are the brick-and-mortar expenses. Hard costs include all the costs for visible improvements, such as grading the site, pouring concrete, steel and steel workers, electrical work, carpentry, and plumbing.

“Soft Costs” are costs that you cannot see, such as architectural and engineering fees, environmental reports, and any government fees, such as building permits. In the chart below, soft costs are entered as a percentage of construction costs. A typical rule of thumb is that soft costs will equal 27% of construction costs.

“Project Costs” equal Land Costs plus Construction Costs plus Soft Costs.

“Inflation Factor” is defined as the cumulative rise in the building cost index since the year the structure was built, using the Engineering News Record Building Costs Index for the region, as reported at http://enr.construction.com

“Original” refers to the cost at the time that the parking facility was built.

“Project Cost in Current Dollars” means the cost in today’s dollars. This cost is arrived at by adjusting the original construction cost for inflation. In the chart below, “Project Cost in Current Dollars” is equal to the Original Project Cost multiplied by the Inflation Factor.

**CAPITAL COSTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On-Street Parking</th>
<th>Parking Lot</th>
<th>Above Grade Garage</th>
<th>Below Grade Garage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Spacious Built</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Number of Parking Spaces Per Acre</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Acres of Land Required (c=a/b)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Land Value, Per Acre*</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$8,000,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Land Costs (e=c*d)</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$64,516</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Original Construction Costs (industry average)</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Original Soft Costs</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Original Project Costs (h=e+f+g)</td>
<td>$6,350</td>
<td>$68,326</td>
<td>$27,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Year Completed</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Inflation Factor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Project Cost in Current Dollars (i=F*h)</td>
<td>$6,350</td>
<td>$68,326</td>
<td>$27,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Cost Per Space Gained in Current Dollars (k=i/c)</td>
<td>$6,350</td>
<td>$68,326</td>
<td>$27,940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULTING COSTS PER SPACE PER YEAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On-Street Parking</th>
<th>Parking Lot</th>
<th>Above Grade Garage</th>
<th>Below Grade Garage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Debt Service, per Space (at 5%)</td>
<td>$438</td>
<td>$4,713</td>
<td>$1,927</td>
<td>$3,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations &amp; Maintenance, per Space (US avg.)</td>
<td>$327</td>
<td>$327</td>
<td>$327</td>
<td>$327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Cost per Space per Year</td>
<td>$765</td>
<td>$5,040</td>
<td>$2,254</td>
<td>$3,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Cost per Space per Month</td>
<td>$64</td>
<td>$420</td>
<td>$188</td>
<td>$286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Cost per Space per Workday</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
<td>$19.34</td>
<td>$8.65</td>
<td>$13.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Parking Revenues</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Subsidy</td>
<td>$0.94</td>
<td>$17.9</td>
<td>$3.65</td>
<td>$8.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Annual Parking Revenue</td>
<td>($244)</td>
<td>($4,450)</td>
<td>($951)</td>
<td>($2,133)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Land value only factored for land with higher use potential.
Economic Framework

Ithaca’s Economy Is Driven by the Presence of Cornell and Ithaca College

Ithaca is the home of Cornell University and Ithaca College. Cornell has approximately 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students and employs over 13,000 people. Ithaca College enrolls approximately 6,500 full-time students with approximately 1,500 faculty and staff members. Accounting for over 40% of the jobs in Tompkins County, education is the largest industry in Ithaca and in the county.

With a population of roughly 30,000, Ithaca is unusual in that permanent residents are a minority in the city. In 2000, college students represented just less then 60% of Ithaca’s population.

Ithaca’s median income is low due to its significant student population. The income data are based on U.S. Census information. It is important to note that measurements of student income do not take into consideration the income or wealth of a student’s parents.
Collegetown Is a Distinct Place with Highly Unusual Demographics

Census Tract 2 in Tompkins County incorporates Collegetown (shown at right). For analytic purposes, we have used the census tract data as a proxy for Collegetown.

Census Tract 1 in Tompkins County incorporates Ithaca's downtown. For analytic purposes, we have used Census Tract 1 data as a proxy for downtown.
Claritas, Inc., a nationally recognized source of consumer information, estimates that 4,695 people lived in Collegetown in 2007. Downtown had 1,280 residents. The population density of Collegetown is four times that of downtown.

Over 90% of householders residing in downtown and Collegetown are renters. Less than half of the county's households rent.

With a median age of 23, Ithaca is among the 100 youngest cities in the United States. The median age among Collegetown residents is even younger, at 22. Interestingly, the downtown resident is older than the average resident in the county and city.
Almost two thirds (63%) of the households in Collegetown are headed by a person between the ages of 15 and 24. The Collegetown market is distinct from the downtown market, where less than 20% of the households are headed by persons under the age of 24.

As might be expected with such young households, household income, as tracked by the U.S. Census, is low in Collegetown. When assessing household incomes, however, it is important to note that many student households in Collegetown likely have income from outside sources like parents.

The distinct demographics of Collegetown make it unique in Ithaca and not easily replicated in the downtown, East Hill, and/or other neighborhoods. The data demonstrate that Collegetown comprises mostly students, with relatively few other types of households.
Collegetown Is a One-Of-A-Kind Place and Its Economics Reflect This Fact

Though not on Cornell's campus, Collegetown nevertheless functions as the University's urban, mixed-use center. It is within easy walking distance for Cornell's 20,000 students and the University workforce. Set atop a hill, Collegetown is physically separated from other areas of Ithaca. The hill acts as a natural market barrier; it is not convenient for students to walk up and down the hill. This natural barrier prevents Collegetown from spreading geographically. Because the competitive supply of land cannot be expanded, land and the land uses in Collegetown command premium prices.

Land values are estimated to be $4 million to $10 million per acre in Collegetown. This amounts to approximately $50 per developable square foot. Property is extremely expensive in Collegetown.

Collegetown's land values on a buildable-square-foot basis are comparable to the price of a buildable square foot in downtown Los Angeles or downtown San Diego, where average rent for a new office building ranges from $40 to $50 per square foot.

The chart below compares asking rents in Collegetown and downtown for a variety of land uses. On average, Collegetown is more expensive than downtown for residential and, to a lesser extent, retail space. There is currently no office space for rent in Collegetown.

As will be discussed in the following section, economics greatly influence the pace of development in Collegetown and the type of land uses developed. Economics also influence the actors involved in Collegetown development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Comparison</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
<th>Collegetown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office/SF/Yr</td>
<td>$16-$22</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/SF/Yr</td>
<td>$21-$22</td>
<td>$21-$50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Studio/Mo</td>
<td>$660-$710</td>
<td>$890-$1,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Apartments.com; Ithacarenting.com; Property Management Interviews; W-ZHA

1 Assumes five-story building on an acre of land. A developable foot is the same as a floor area ratio (FAR) foot. A developable foot is the number of square feet that can be developed on the site, given zoning.
Challenges Facing Collegetown’s Future

Current Economics Suggest that Revitalization will be the Product of Local Investment

Many students who live in Collegetown rent a room in what was once a single-family home. Many of these properties have been under the same ownership for a long time. For this reason, these properties likely carry no debt. Rents vary on the basis of location and building condition, but generally they range from $650 to $750 per bed per month in these houses.

According to property owners, operating costs absorb approximately 45% of lease revenue. Therefore, at a lease rate of $650 per bed per month, a property owner clears approximately $358 per bed per month after operating expenses or $4,290 per bed per year. Therefore, a seven-bedroom single-family house can generate approximately $30,000 in income per year to its owner, net of all expenses. In Collegetown, this house is likely to sit on a 2,500-square-foot parcel of land.

The rational property owner would only sell the asset if offered a price that could generate a comparable yield with less risk and/or effort. We have assumed that the capital markets can generate a 6% return on investment over a 10-year period. This means that an owner should be willing to sell the property at a 6% capitalization rate or $500,500. If the parcel is 2,500 square feet, this price equates to $8.5 million per acre! As will be illustrated, applying standard investment practices, the Collegetown market cannot support such high land costs.

In sum, regional and/or national developer investors cannot afford to enter the Collegetown marketplace without a local partner. Therefore, to realize new development will require that existing property owners be engaged in redevelopment. Collegetown’s revitalization will depend on local entrepreneurship, whether originating with Cornell or with existing property owners.

For the Conventional Investor, the Market May Not Support the Cost of Redevelopment

The cost of land and parking are so high in Collegetown that conventional development is nearly impossible without subsidy. “Conventional” development means that the developer pursues normal, industry-standard returns for their investment. The conventional investor will often test the viability of a prospective project by applying the basic return-on-cost methodology.

The return-on-cost method to test a prospective investment divides a development’s projected net operating income into its development cost. (Net operating income is defined as revenue less operating costs and does not include debt service.) In the predevelopment or feasibility stage of development, an acceptable ratio between net operating income and development cost for office space is between 7.5% and 8.5%. Rental residential tends to be lower at 7% to 8%.

Table 2c-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMICS OF A 7-BEDROOM HOUSE</th>
<th>Collegetown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed Rent /Month</td>
<td>$650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Rent</td>
<td>$7,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td>45% ($3,510)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Income</td>
<td>$4,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Bedrooms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Operating Income (NOI)</td>
<td>$30,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalization Rate (Cap Rate)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale Price (NOI/Cap Rate)</td>
<td>$500,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Area</td>
<td>2,500 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE PER ACRE</td>
<td>$8,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Collegetown Property Owners; W-ZHA
If a project’s economics cannot achieve these “return on cost” thresholds the investor will either a) not pursue the project or b) seek public subsidy to reduce development costs.

W-ZHA tested the feasibility of developing an office project on the southeast corner of College Avenue and Dryden Road in Collegetown. Current zoning limits height to 60 feet and requires four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space. To maximize the program on the site required a mix of underground and structured parking spaces. Given existing land-use regulations, a site can accommodate 20,000 square feet of office and 5,000 square feet of retail with 80 parking spaces.

For the economic analysis land was assumed to cost $8 million per acre and the site was assumed to measure approximately .33 acres. Applying industry standards and information from interviews with local developers, a development cost of $225 per gross square foot for office and retail space was assumed. The yielded a total cost to develop an office building with ground-floor retail at this location at approximately $11 million.

To achieve a return on cost of 8.5% would require a $48 rent per square foot. This rental rate is significantly higher than office market rents; premier downtown office is currently marketed in the mid to low $20s per square foot. With the possible exception of Cornell, it is unlikely that office tenants would be willing to pay such a premium to locate in Collegetown.

Project economics improve if the site is developed as housing; new construction, however, still requires rents above the current market. The market has already exhibited a willingness to pay a premium for housing in Collegetown, and residential uses carry a lower parking requirement. The top rental rate for a studio apartment in Collegetown is currently about $1,300 per month. The cost of new development would require that residential units command rents of $1,950 per month to achieve an 8% return on cost.

### Table 2c-5

| College Avenue and Dryden Road Site, As-Of-Right Zoning |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Acre            | Site Size       | Cost            |
| **Land Cost**   | $8,000,000      | 0.33 acres      | $2,640,000 |
| **Building Cost** | $225          | 25,000          | $5,625,000 |
| **Parking Cost** | 54             | 26              | $2,682,000 |
| **Total Cost**  |                |                 | $10,947,000 |

Source: W-ZHA

### Table 2c-6

| College Avenue and Dryden Road Site, As-Of-Right Zoning |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Development Cost | $10,947,000    |
| Required Net Operating Income @ 8.5% | $330,500 |
| Less: Parking Income @ $100 /space /month | ($96,000) |
| Net Operating Income Required From Office Space | $334,500 |
| Rentable Space | 23,000          |
| Required Net Operating Income /Rentable Square Foot | $36 |
| Gross Rent /Square Foot | $48 |

Source: W-ZHA
These rental rates are well above what is affordable to the average household earning just over $40,000 per year. Increasing affordability and enhancing feasibility will require creative approaches to reducing the cost of development in Collegetown. One approach is to encourage existing property owners to redevelop their properties (thereby removing the land cost from the development equation). Another is to reduce the cost of parking—a strategy that is further explored in Chapter 4.

A Lack Of New Retail Space and Dependence on the University Market Challenges Collegetown’s Retail Economy

Retail space in Collegetown is occupied for the most part, with relatively little vacancy, and retailers pay premium rents. With 90% of Collegetown households renters and likely students, the retail mix is targeted to the student population.

Cornell drives the Collegetown retail economy. Unfortunately, the university calendar fills only nine months of a year, and students generally leave during the Christmas holiday season—typically the season that generates a significant share of a retailer’s annual sales. During the summer and vacation periods retail activity languishes.

The cyclical nature of the Collegetown economy is challenging for retailers. One approach to mitigating the cycle is to draw nonstudent households to Collegetown. This approach is problematic, given the area’s housing costs; the average non-student household cannot afford to buy or rent housing in Collegetown proper. Development of non-undergraduate housing will require Cornell’s intervention. Cornell may be one of the few stakeholders in the marketplace willing to pay the premium for a Collegetown location to develop faculty and/or undergraduate housing.

Another approach would introduce additional office space into Collegetown. The employees occupying the office space can help to support retail throughout the year. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, in 2003 the average white-collar employee spent be-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Avenue and Dryden Road Site, As-Of-Right Zoning</th>
<th>Acre</th>
<th>Site Size</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Cost</td>
<td>$8,000,000</td>
<td>0.33 acres</td>
<td>$2,640,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Gross Square Foot</td>
<td>$210–$225</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>$5,325,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Cost</td>
<td>$210–$225</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>$5,325,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Of Spaces Required</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>$8,777,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Net Operating Income @ 8%</td>
<td>$702,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: Parking Income @ $100/ space/month</td>
<td>($34,800)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Income Required From Residential Space</td>
<td>$667,400</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rentable Space (in Square Feet)</td>
<td>23,000</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Rent/Studio/Month</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: W-ZHA
tween $2,630 and $2,860 per year on retail near his/her place of work, generally splitting expendi-
tures among eating and drinking and shopping. Office-worker spending would not significantly
change the retail mix or retail economics in Collegetown, but it would create street activity
during the summer and vacation periods.

As important as office-worker spending is the
provision of state-of-the-art leaseable retail space
at the base of new office buildings in Collegetown. Leasable retail spaces with standard storefront and
depth dimensions are scarce in Collegetown due
to the age of the building stock. Given the magni-
tude of the Cornell market and the limited retail supply, standard retail spaces should be attrac-
tive to credit tenants (for example FedEx/Kinkos,
Noodles & Company) and lease quickly. Additional quality retail would benefit Cornell students and
the surrounding neighborhood.

Given the cost to develop in Collegetown, it is
highly unlikely that multitenant, for-lease office
space would be successful in Collegetown. The
prices required for a Collegetown address (rough-
ly $50 per square foot) will be too high for most
office tenants. Cornell would have to develop or
cause the development of office space in Col-
legetown. Cornell may be one of the few tenants
in the marketplace willing to pay the premium
associated with a Collegetown location.

The Economic Implications of
Regulatory Changes

Introduction

W-ZHA examined the economic implications of
reducing the parking requirement and increasing
the height limit on two conceptual projects. The
economic scenarios presented exclude land cost.
One project concept is a mixed-use office project
at College Avenue/Dryden Road. The second
concept is a mixed-use residential project incor-
porating the existing fire station at 309 College
Avenue, the vacant drug store at 307 College, and
abutting parcels that face Linden Avenue.

College Avenue and Dryden Road
Redevelopment Concept

For purposes of this illustrative economic analy-
sis we have assumed that full-service office space
can be rented at $35 per square foot at College
Avenue and Dryden Road. Retail is assumed to
rent at $30 per square foot, triple net. Parking is
assumed to lease at $100 per month.

Currently, Ithaca land use regulations limit the
height of a building at this location to 60 feet.
Four parking spaces are required per 1,000
square feet of office space. The City’s existing
land use regulations are applied in the “Base
Scenario.”

Even without land costs, the economics of devel-
opment fail to satisfy normal investment thresh-
olds; the return on cost should be at least 7.5%.

Scenario 1 tests the economic implications of a
regulation that reduces the number of parking
spaces required on-site and uses an annual in-
lieu-of-parking payment to compensate the City
for off-site parking demand generated. The sec-
ond scenario assumes no parking requirement
on-site, but an annual in-lieu parking payment.
The third scenario assumes a height bonus and
no parking requirements on-site, with an in-lieu
parking payment.

For all in-lieu parking scenarios, the parking
requirement of four spaces per 1,000 square feet
of office space changes to three spaces. If the
on-site parking requirement drops to 1.5 spaces
per thousand, the developer must pay the annual
in-lieu parking fee associated with 1.5 off-site
parking spaces.

The illustrative annual in-lieu fee is equal to
$1,200 per space. This equates to the debt service
on a $15,000 in-lieu parking fee, assuming a 20-
year term and a 5% tax-exempt interest rate.
Table 2c-8

ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: MIXED-USE OFFICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Avenue and Dryden Road Development Concept: Base Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COSTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$225/GSF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost (Building and Parking)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35/RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30/RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100.00/Space/Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12/GSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.50/RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500/Space/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net Operating Income $588,500

Return On Cost 7.1%

Property Value @ 8% Capitalization Rate $7,356,000

As the scenarios demonstrate, when the on-site parking requirement decreases, the amount of developable square feet on the site increases and the project becomes more attractive from an investor’s perspective. This occurs either because more of the site can be developed and/or less of the project’s height is devoted to structured parking.
Scenario 1

In this scenario, the on-site parking requirement drops from four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet to 1.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. Spaces that are not developed on-site are subject to the annual in-lieu parking fee of approximately $1,200 per space per year for up to three spaces per 1,000 square feet. With 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet developed on-site, an in-lieu fee will be charged on 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet.

The project becomes more valuable under this scenario and the investment return is enhanced. The building size increases from 25,000 square feet under the Base Scenario to 50,500 square feet. Net operating income is more than 72% higher than it is in the Base Scenario.

Capitalizing net operating income is a method for determining value. At a capitalization rate of 8%, the value of the project under the Base Scenario is $7,356 million. Reducing on-site parking requirements and instituting an in-lieu fee program increases the project’s value to $12,7 million.

The relationship between net operating income and development cost also improves. Reducing the on-site parking requirement increases the productivity of this valuable Collegetown land.

Table 2c-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: MIXED-USE OFFICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Avenue and Dryden Road Development Concept; Reduced On-Site Parking Requirement and In-Lieu Payment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COSTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASE CASE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 SPACES / 1,000 SQUARE FEET</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Cost (Building and Parking) | $8,307,000 | $13,332,500 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office Expense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual In-Lieu Parking Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Net Operating Income | $588,500 | $1,015,250 |
| Return On Cost | 7.1% | 7.6% |
| Property Value @ 8% Capitalization Rate | $7,356,000 | $12,691,000 |

Source: Goody, Clancy & Associates; W-ZHA
Scenario 2
In this scenario, there is no on-site parking requirement. The 35 spaces of structured parking in Scenario 1 can be converted into office space. At an average area of 350 square feet per space, the conversion of these spaces adds 12,250 gross square feet or approximately 11,000 leaseable square feet. The gross building area is 69,400 square feet.

Current zoning requires four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. The annual in-lieu parking fee proposed for Scenarios 2 and 3 (Tables 2c-10 and 2c-11), however, is based on three spaces per 1,000 square feet. Those spaces are subject to the annual in-lieu parking fee of $1,200 per space per year. As in the previous scenario, more productive space and higher net operating income enhance the project’s value. Under this scenario the project’s value increases to $14.9 million, double the value under existing regulations and almost 20% higher than the value in Scenario 1. The investor’s return on cost is 7.6% under this scenario.

Table 2c-10
ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: MIXED-USE OFFICE
College Avenue and Dryden Road Development Concept; No On-Site Parking Requirement and Annual In-Lieu Payment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASE CASE 4 SPACES /1,000 SQUARE FEET</th>
<th>NO ON-SITE PARKING REQUIREMENT &amp; ANNUAL IN-LIEU FEE (BASED ON REDUCED PARKING RATIO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Cost</strong></td>
<td>Cost /SF</td>
<td>Building Sq Ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Cost</strong></td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parking Cost</strong></td>
<td>Cost/Space</td>
<td>Spaces On-Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Underground</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>$2,682,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost (Building and Parking)</strong></td>
<td>$8,307,000</td>
<td>$15,615,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Income**           | **/SF**                                | **/Yr**                            | **/Yr**                               | **/SF**                            | **/Yr**                            |
| Office Rent          | $35 /RSF     | 18,000                             | $630,000                              | $35 /RSF     | 18,000                             | $630,000                              | $56,160 RSF | $1,965,600 |
| Retail Rent          | $30 /RSF     | 5,000                              | $150,000                              | $30 /RSF     | 7,000                              | $210,000                              | $7,000 RSF | $210,000 |
| Parking Rent         | $100 /Space/Mo | 80 Spaces                             | $96,000                               | $100 /Space/Mo | 0 Spaces                             | $0                                 |
| Total                | $876,000                                  | $876,000                             | $2,175,600                             | $2,175,600 |

| **Expenses**         | **/SF**                                | **/Yr**                            | **/Yr**                               | **/SF**                            | **/Yr**                            |
| Office Expense       | $12 /GSF         | 20,000                             | $240,000                              | $12 /GSF         | 20,000                             | $240,000                              | $62,400 GSF | $748,800 |
| Retail Expense       | $1.50 /RSF     | 5,000                              | $7,500                                | $1.50 /RSF     | 7,000                              | $10,500                               | $7,000 RSF | $10,500 |
| Parking Expense      | $500 /Space/Yr | 80 Spaces                             | $40,000                               | $500 /Space/Yr | 0 Spaces                             | $0                                 |
| Annual In-Lieu Parking Fee | $1,200 /Space/Yr | 0 Spaces                             | $0                                  | $1,200 /Space/Yr | 187 Spaces                             | $224,400                              |
| Total                | $287,500                                  | $287,500                             | $983,700                               | $983,700 |

**Net Operating Income**: $588,500
**Return On Cost**: 7.1%
**Property Value @ 8% Capitalization Rate**: $7,356,000

Source: Goody, Clancy & Associates; W-ZHA
Scenario 3
In this scenario, the 60-foot height limitation is increased to allow an additional 30 feet. To make the height increase less noticeable, this scenario assumes that for every additional foot of height the building is set back a foot. This scenario results in two additional floors of only 8,500 square feet each. This scenario assumes no on-site parking spaces.

The increase in height raises the value of the project to $18.3 million. More money can be made under this scenario than any other.

In this preliminary analysis the return on cost does not increase, since we have kept development costs and operating costs per square foot constant regardless of building size. In reality, it is likely that the return on cost would slightly increase, given that both capital and operating costs comprise both fixed and variable costs.

Table 2c-11
ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: MIXED-USE OFFICE
College Avenue and Dryden Road Development Concept: Two Additional Stories, No On-Site Spaces, and Annual In-Lieu Payment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COSTS</th>
<th>BASE CASE 4 SPACES/1,000 SQUARE FEET</th>
<th>TWO ADDITIONAL STORIES, NO ON SITE SPACES, AND ANNUAL IN-LIEU PAYMENT (BASED ON REDUCED PARKING RATIO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Cost</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Cost</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost (Building and Parking)</td>
<td>$8,307,000</td>
<td>$18,307,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Rentable SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Rent</td>
<td>$35/ RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Rent</td>
<td>$30/ RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Rent</td>
<td>$100/ Space/Mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$876,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Rentable SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Expense</td>
<td>$12/ GSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Expense</td>
<td>$1.50/ RSF/Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Expense</td>
<td>$500/ Space/ Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual In-Lieu Parking Fee</td>
<td>$1,200/ Space/ Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$287,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net Operating Income | $588,500 |

Return On Cost | 7.1% | 7.5% |
College Avenue To Linden Avenue Development Concept

This development concept assumes mixed-use development on approximately an acre of land fronting both College and Linden avenues. We have assumed that new residential space can be rented at $1,100 per bed. Retail is assumed to rent at $30 per square foot, triple net. Parking is assumed to lease at $100 per month. Once again, the calculations in the scenarios exclude land cost.

Currently, the City’s land use regulations have a maximum lot coverage of 40% for properties on Linden Avenue. The base case assumes that the lot coverage is increased to 65% on Linden Avenue properties. Existing regulations require one parking space for every two bedrooms. A bedroom is assumed to be 400 square feet, according to local developers. The City’s existing land use regulations are applied in the “Base Scenario.”

Table 2c-12 demonstrates the impact if the on-site parking requirement of one space for every two beds is removed in exchange for an annual in-lieu parking fee of $1,200 per off-site space. The elimination of the on-site parking requirement allows for a larger building (80,000 square feet to 104,000 square feet).

The value of the project increases by more than 30% from $19.4 million to $26.1 million. Finally, the project’s return-on-cost improves with the annual in-lieu parking fee.

Table 2c-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS</th>
<th>College Avenue to Linden Avenue Development Concept: As-Of-Right Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BASE CASE: 1 SPACE/ 2 BEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COSTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Cost</td>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Cost</td>
<td>$220/ SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>$28,000/ Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Underground</td>
<td>$33,000 /Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>$45,000 /Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost (Building and Parking)</td>
<td>$19,840,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERATIONS</td>
<td>OPERATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Residential Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$3,067,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>Residential Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual In-Lieu Parking Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,107,243</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Operating Income</td>
<td>$1,457,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,959,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return On Cost</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Goody, Clancy & Associates; W-ZHA
Summary: The Economic Implications of Regulatory Changes

The high cost of development poses a challenge to Collegetown’s future economic development. Creative approaches will be required to enhance the economics of redevelopment in the area. The redevelopment scenarios demonstrate that reducing on-site parking requirements in exchange for in-lieu payment and raising allowable height increases the productivity of Collegetown land and raises investment yield.

Conclusion

New development can introduce new markets and additional goods and services into a marketplace. New projects refresh urban environments and stimulate additional investment—critical to economic development.

Capturing new investment in Collegetown will present a challenge, given current development economics and Collegetown’s specialized character. To support land and development costs, private investors are forced to develop premium products targeted to the University population (in particular, undergraduates). Left to market forces alone, land uses will be generally limited to residential and retail.

Applying normal investment principles, it will be next to impossible to develop housing affordable to households earning less than $65,000 per year in Collegetown; land costs are simply too high. Similarly, the rents required to support new office space in Collegetown are too high for the average tenant. Collegetown’s unique market position makes it a very expensive place to develop.

Changing the regulatory requirements for on-site parking and building heights can improve the economics of new development. The City must take a creative and pre-emptive approach to land use regulation in Collegetown. The numbers demonstrate, however, that on-site parking reductions and increases in building height, while improving project economics, will not fully solve the economic issues. This makes planning all the more important; regulations must reflect the community’s vision for Collegetown.

Just as Collegetown’s current economy is inexorably linked to Cornell, so, too, is its future revitalization. The University can be instrumental in helping to create a 365-day economy in Collegetown. It should take the lead in causing the development of faculty and graduate student housing, which, given the campus’s proximity, should be highly successful. New office development with Cornell as a tenant could create a captive employee market to benefit retailers throughout the year and provide much-needed ground-floor retail space.

Cornell’s involvement in Collegetown revitalization should not create additional tax-exempt property. Cornell can be a tenant in a privately financed and managed office building. In terms of residential property, Cornell can work with private developers to acquire and write down the cost of land for privately developed graduate and faculty housing. Cornell’s involvement is necessary to unlock Collegetown’s development potential.
3. Public Process

As the consulting team for the Collegetown project—led by Goody Clancy and including transportation consultants Nelson|Nygaard and economic analysts W-ZHA—continued its exploration of existing conditions, it expanded on the themes of the Vision Statement. Creating a public process proved to be central to the development of both the urban plan and design guidelines.
Setting the stage

Working throughout the process with senior staff from the City of Ithaca’s Department of Planning and Development, as well as with the Collegetown Vision Implementation Committee (CVIC), the team identified the major Vision Statement themes that would shape both the planning process and the outcomes of that process:

- Strengthening and sustaining Collegetown’s residential and commercial diversity and activity.
- Identifying opportunities and appropriate locations for increased density while ensuring sensitive transitions from high- to low-density areas.
- Improving pedestrian amenities and connections.
- Rationalizing Collegetown’s parking options and opportunities.
- Focusing on new development options that can generate revenue.

Continuing the Process: Moving from Vision to Reality

As the team prepared for a series of orientation meetings with stakeholders groups in early February 2008, it developed an early-stage sketch of the Vision Statement’s themes and main ideas. Among the items included were opportunity sites (near Cascadilla Gorge) for non-student housing and pocket parks; an improved public realm at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts, along with a possible reconfiguration of the nearby roadway and round-about; opportunity sites for higher-density housing; and improved streetscapes.

An early concept/framework plan was offered to participants at the February meetings for their reactions.
The meetings, convened by the City’s Department of Planning and Development, provided the consulting team with an opportunity to engage all major stakeholder groups in discussions about their perspectives on these themes and the concept plan. In addition to meeting with the CVIC, the team also discussed the project with members of the Bryant Park Civic Association and other Collegetown and neighborhood residents; Mayor Peterson and members of the Common Council; Cornell senior staff; undergraduate and graduate students; and property owners, private developers, and other leaders within the business community. While elaborating on the major themes and core issues from their respective points of view, process participants agreed on the need for an upgrade of much of the local student housing; significantly greater attention to issues of regulatory enforcement in connection with building codes, cleanliness, and safety throughout the area; and for sustainability in all aspects.

The groups were also provided with a series of photographs of sites around the country entitled “Looking at Possibilities.” These showed examples of higher-density housing, mixed-use development, and enhanced streetscapes. As the Collegetown plan and design guidelines moved forward, these—and other—images served as food for further thought and ideas.

Throughout the planning process the team continued to meet with representatives from various City agencies—public works, police, fire—both to gain additional insights into existing enforcement conditions and to engage them early on in helping to shape the plan and its implementation.

The Weekend of Workshops

Education Briefings

The next major phase of the public process occurred the weekend of March 7–9, 2008, with a series of education and design workshops. The evening of March 7 provided the public with a set of briefings on the economics of development, transportation, urban design, and zoning. The
consultant team discussed the cost of land in Collegetown and the impact of those costs on the neighborhood’s redevelopment and property-improvement opportunities. The team also provided a preliminary analysis of Collegetown’s transportation, circulation, and parking challenges, setting out a series of preliminary—and interrelated—ideas for improvements, including pricing and policy changes; increased TCAT signage; and changes in zoning that would include changes in required parking ratios. (Chapter 4 elaborates on these and other components, including timing and phasing, of an integrated transportation strategy.)

During the weekend, participants were asked to mark their responses to photographs showing different approaches to housing, to mixed-use development, and to streetscape enhancements.

A major goal of the design workshop was to provide an opportunity for the Collegetown community to introduce as many ideas as possible and enter into a broader discussion about the area’s future.

In the area of urban design, the team again offered additional examples of—and asked for feedback on—different approaches to housing, mixed-use development, and streetscape improvements; the objective was to incorporate, where appropriate, aspects of the most desirable of these models into the plan’s design guidelines.

The final briefing outlined the ways in which new zoning emerging from this process will ensure enforcement of the approved plan and design guidelines.

Marking the Maps and Designing the Future

Saturday’s design charrette provided opportunities for community members—working in four small groups and using large-scale base maps—to show where preservation or renovation should happen; where Collegetown could benefit from new pedestrian connections; and where higher densities might occur that would provide new housing opportunities while maintaining and strengthening the area’s overall physical character.

All four groups, first and foremost, emphasized the importance of Collegetown’s human scale and, on a related note, the need to protect the integrity of existing stable residential neighborhoods—such as the areas east of Linden Avenue and along the southern edge of Mitchell Street—while continuing to offer housing opportunities to Cornell’s undergraduate and graduate student populations. In that light, participants identified “opportunity sites” for redevelopment along the northern portion of Linden Avenue. They also identified infill-development opportunities along both Dryden Road east of College Avenue and Eddy Street, while emphasizing the need to be sensitive to historically significant buildings along the latter and the residential neighborhood south of the former.
The four groups discussed different approaches to enhancing Collegetown’s walkability, whether by increasing pedestrian connections to College Avenue from Linden Avenue, for example, or by widening sidewalks, particularly along College Avenue’s 400 block. Further recommendations included possibly reducing parking in the 400 block and adding a new bus stop at Catherine Street. Both Eddy Street and College Avenue were recognized as highly significant corridors (in line with the Vision Statement’s identification of College Avenue as a possible future “great street”), with an emphasis on enhancing their roles as gateways to the campus.

The beautification of the area around Eddy Gate, Cornell’s historic entry, was seen as a major opportunity for new public space that would be linked more explicitly with Cascadilla Park and, ultimately, the Goldwin Smith Walk, underscoring this area’s role as one of Collegetown’s most significant natural assets and amenities.

Again building on the Vision Statement, participants reiterated the need for an overall expansion of retail and entertainment offerings, including a possible hotel or B&B and a greengrocer. Finally, charrette attendees called for increased enforcement of existing regulations, and for a set of strategies by which to implement basic street and sidewalk improvements.

Bringing it All Together
On the last day of the workshop weekend, the consulting team took up residence in the former
Krafft’s storefront on Dryden Road and proceeded to compile the results of Saturday’s workshop as a major step toward development of a single land use plan for Collegetown. The public was invited in during the afternoon for further discussions, while the team continued to integrate the previous day’s work and further refine the kinds of uses—and their location—that were at the heart of the Saturday workshop.

The major goals of preservation and protection, as well as renovation and revitalization, shaped the emerging plan and served as the basis for a presentation back to the public toward the end of the afternoon. For the first time, the presentation discussed Collegetown in terms of a series of related “character areas” that would help to determine development and preservation scenarios appropriate to each area and the design guidelines to shape those scenarios.

Presenting the Plan and Design Guidelines

On May 20 the complete draft plan and design guidelines were presented first to the CVIC and then, in an open-house at the St. Luke Lutheran Church, to the public. With the major elements of the character areas and the guidelines displayed on a series of poster-sized boards, attendees were able to engage in informal conversations with team members and City staff about the plan and its components and to have the team respond to their concerns and questions. Similar discussions were held the following day with the City’s Planning Department, the Common Council’s Planning and Development Committee, and the Board of Public Works. At subsequent meetings of the CVIC, members continued to debate several of the major plan recommendations, including proposed heights for the area near Collegetown’s commercial center and elements of the transportation strategy. Comments from the CVIC, the public, and Committee and Board members were incorporated into the final draft, presented to the City in autumn 2008.

The City Planning Department reviewed all major components of the plan and design guidelines.

The May public meeting provided additional opportunities for community feedback.
4. A Sustainable Transportation System

Central to preserving and improving the prosperity of Collegetown will be the successful management of its transportation systems, which today severely limit walking, biking, and transit opportunities as described in Chapter 2. This chapter sets out recommendations for a new transportation management system for Collegetown.
Collegetown

BACKGROUND

The current heavy subsidy for driving in the district promotes excessive vehicle trips. When combined with the resulting disinvestment in alternatives to driving, Collegetown has become the victim of unsustainable transportation policies that rely too much on the private automobile and not enough on more cost-effective, high-capacity—and sustainable—modes.

In addition to a solid set of neighborhood design guidelines and zoning changes, a new set of transportation management programs needs to be put in place to help create the lively and walkable environment current residents seek and future residents and employees will need to break the over-reliance on private vehicles. This section lays out the elements of a “sustainable transportation system” or “STS” for Collegetown.

SUMMARY

Summary of Program

The STS program would include the following steps:

Pursue a “Park Once” Strategy.

Make efficient use of the existing parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces. Parking supply for all Collegetown retail, office, and residential users should be shared, with the exception of residents and employees who are willing to pay a premium for exclusive, assigned spaces. A “Park Once” strategy also includes clear parking signage and is complemented by parking management and pricing policies that encourage maximizing the number of destinations accessible by one parker from one parking space. Improvements in the walking environment are a necessary complement.

Create a Commercial Parking-Benefit District.

To create vacancies and turnover of the most convenient “front door” curb parking spaces for merchants’ customers, install multispace parking meters with prices set at rates that create a 15% vacancy rate on each block and do not institute time limits. Dedicate all resulting new parking revenue to public improvements in Collegetown.

Provide Universal Transit Passes.

A universal transit pass program would provide all residents and employees of Collegetown with a fully-subsidized transit pass for unlimited rides on TCAT buses at no cost to the rider. Universal transit pass programs allow annual passes to be purchased at a deeply discounted bulk rate for all members of a specified group, such as all of a firm’s employees or all of the residents of an apartment complex. Negotiating a similar program for Collegetown with TCAT will benefit both employees and residents, and it will cost-effectively reduce parking demand. TCAT already receives a subsidy from Cornell for its successful universal transit pass program.
Omnipass, which provides transit services to Cornell employees at no cost to the employee. With Cornell’s assistance, this program could be easily expanded and administered for Collegetown.

**Require “Parking Cash-Out.”**

Many employers in Collegetown are likely to wish to provide free parking for their employees as a fringe benefit. Employers should be allowed to do so, provided that they also offer the cash value of the parking subsidy (i.e., $290 per month) to any employee who does not drive to work. Such “Parking Cash Out” programs provide an equal transportation subsidy to employees who ride transit, carpool, walk, or bicycle to work. A primary benefit of parking cash of such programs is their proven reduction of auto congestion and parking demand.

**Charge for parking separately from the cost of residential or commercial space.**

For all residential units, the full cost of providing parking should be “unbundled” from the cost of the housing itself by creating a separate parking charge. It is estimated that the construction cost for each underground parking space in Collegetown will reach approximately $45,000. This translates to an annualized cost of almost $290 per space per month. Unbundling this large cost will change parking in Collegetown from a required purchase to an optional amenity, so that residents can freely choose how many spaces they wish to lease. For lower-income residents, many of whom have no car or only one car, the policy will yield substantial savings. Charging separately for parking is also the single most effective strategy for encouraging households to own fewer cars. Designated parking spaces should be leased at a rate that covers the full cost of building and operating the space (i.e., $290 per month); shared parking spaces should be leased to residents at a discount.

As with parking for residential units, the full cost of providing employee spaces should be unbundled from the cost of leasing commercial space, providing employers with a strong financial incentive to participate in transportation demand-management programs that will reduce employee
parking demand. As with residential, designated parking spaces should be leased at a rate which covers the full cost to build and operate the space (i.e., $290 per month), whereas shared parking spaces should be leased to businesses at a discount. A key strategy to complement unbundling is the use of a parking in-lieu payment.

**Implement a “parking in-lieu” payment.**
Where zoning requires a minimum numbers of parking spaces, a “Parking In-Lieu” fee or payment has proven successful at reducing parking supply for dense mixed-use areas that have lower parking demand or high potential for sharing. The in-lieu value is intentionally set lower than the cost of building parking structures, providing an incentive to reduce supplies. In jurisdictions such as Collegetown that have zoning minimums far in excess of the actual demand (the office requirement of four spaces per 1,000 square foot building area is nearly twice the national observed average in areas with little transit access), the in-lieu amount may be lowered substantially below the construction cost to encourage sharing of existing supplies of parking. While one-time payments are common, a recurring annual payment that is specifically dedicated to promoting and developing shared-parking facilities and programs or improving alternate transportation modes is best for creating a sustainable transportation system. This strategy must be complemented by zoning flexibility in such issues as proximity of accessory parking, sharing of parking, and third-party ownership of required supplies. In the event fears arise of reducing supplies too much, a lower minimum may still be enforced for participating developments.

**Establish a car-sharing program.**
Contract with the new local car-sharing provider, Ithaca Car Share, to provide one or more car-sharing vehicles in Collegetown. Car sharing makes a common fleet of vehicles available to members for rental by the hour or by the day, and can be an important tool for reducing parking demand. Combined with a parking cash-out, user fees can be heavily subsidized.
Institute additional transportation-demand management measures.
Provide and actively market additional measures to support alternative transportation, such as a Guaranteed Ride Home program, and a transportation information package for new employees and residents. Many successful programs for Cornell faculty and staff could easily and cost-effectively expand to cover Collegetown employees with Cornell’s assistance.

Establish a residential parking benefit district.
To prevent unwanted spillover parking into the neighborhoods adjacent to Collegetown, implement a residential parking benefit District for these neighborhoods. Many cities implement residential permit districts (also known as preferential parking districts) by reserving on-street spaces for residents only, usually issuing permits for free or a nominal fee. Residential parking benefit districts are similar, but also allow a limited number of commuters to pay to use any surplus on-street parking spaces in the neighborhood. The resulting revenue is returned to the neighborhood to fund public improvements.

Investigate alternative infrastructure improvements.
Provide bicycle parking.
Provide both bicycle racks for short-term parking throughout Collegetown—especially near popular retail destinations—and secure, fully-enclosed long-term bicycle parking for residents and employees in all new buildings. All parking should adhere to the latest design standards advocated by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (www.apbp.org). Cornell may be able to function as an initial provider based on its success with abundant bike parking on the campus immediately across the gorge from Collegetown.

Install improvements to the pedestrian realm.
High numbers of pedestrians walking in Collegetown today occur despite many narrow sidewalks with frequent obstructions. The potential to greatly increase walk shares—particularly
for nonstudent residents, employees, and visitors—is high in Collegetown given a program that enhances transit access and a “Park Once” policyz.

**Improve transit facilities.**
Basic improvements that increase the visibility, convenience, and amenity of riding transit can be made in Collegetown, including installation of bus shelters, installation of schedule holders or route kiosks, branding of key routes to remote parking and other key destinations, development of Collegetown-specific transit guides, etc.

When implemented as a package, the measures described above reinforce each other. For example, unbundling the cost of parking from the cost of renting an apartment allows low-income residents to save several hundred dollars a month by giving up a car. Providing a car-sharing service makes it easier for residents to make that choice, since it gives them access to a vehicle when they need one. For the car-sharing provider, unbundling parking costs increases the financial viability of their operation, since residents have a powerful financial incentive to reduce their vehicle ownership.

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**Understanding the Imbalance of Modal Priorities**

Central to understanding the need for the proposed Sustainable Transportation System is understanding the role that parking plays in the development and daily life of Collegetown—or of any semi-urban district in the U.S. Planners, developers, and drivers alike have largely overlooked parking’s unique role in American life. Unique among forms of transportation, the cost of parking is disassociated from the mode of transportation, the car. All transportation modes have vehicles and terminals that provide access to them. Airplanes land and take off at expensive airports shared by multiple airlines that pass on the cost of their high terminal fees passed to travelers. Ships require enormous ports with vast longshore resources, each serving entire regions; terminal and shipping costs make up part of passenger tickets and bills of lading. Trains operate between stations, each with valuable land connections serving multiple purposes—of which a large part of the cost is passed on to riders.

Automobiles must have a terminal at each and every destination, but 99% of all terminal arrivals are free to drivers in the U.S. The user rarely pays the real cost of parking. Even in Collegetown, where drivers usually pay to park, fees do not begin to cover the real cost of providing terminal space: The most expensive garage in Collegetown charges $225 per month but carries an estimated actual cost of $330 per month (see Chapter 2). As a result, drivers parking there receive a monthly subsidy of over $100 to drive and park their cars. If land value is factored in, an undeveloped surface parking space in Collegetown is estimated to have a value of at least $420 per month, but the average surface parking charge is only $50 per month—a subsidy of $370 per month to anyone who wants to drive.

This economic reality has been a way of life for Americans since the automobile began to proliferate as a means of transportation. Federal subsidies, local land use regulations, and development costs have largely hidden the cost of parking from the user, forcing it to be absorbed by other facets of the economy, such as housing and insurance costs, taxes, and the cost of goods and services. One source places the annual national subsidy for parking
The following program suggestions are derived from a review of best parking and transportation-demand management practices instituted in communities throughout the United States.

STS Program Elements
Detailed parking management and transportation demand management measures for the proposed sustainable system follow. These elements are designed to meet several goals:

- Provide shoppers, employees, and residents with sufficient parking, in a manner that is convenient and cost-effective.
- Provide additional transportation choices, including transit, carpool, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and services.
- Advance the broader goals of the Collegetown vision statement by creating a neighborhood that is genuinely oriented toward transit, walking, and bicycling.

The STS program emerges from an understanding that parking and transportation policies have powerful effects not merely on parking demand, but on development feasibility, housing affordability, the amount of traffic produced by new developments, the quality of a development's urban design, and many other fundamental aspects that make Collegetown a place.

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1 Mark Delucchi, University of California at Davis, 1997.
2 For example, see Boulder's Central Area General Improvement District, where downtown parking construction decisions are managed by business members who directed investment in alternative modes of transportation when presented with the true cost of building new parking.

Infrastructure in America at over $300 billion in 2002 dollars. In 2002, the budget for national defense was $349 billion. The hidden cost of motor vehicle transportation has recently become very clear as spiking gas prices have increased many other costs in our daily lives.

Many communities have recently begun to rationalize the subsidy given to driving through the hidden cost of parking. Communities such as Pasadena, California; Boulder, Colorado; Austin, Texas; and Arlington County, Virginia, have recognized that their transit, walking, and biking infrastructure received far less subsidy—if it received any—than driving. These communities, along with businesses of all sizes throughout America, also began to recognize that the cost of building superior transit, walking, and biking facilities was much cheaper than building more parking, especially in places like Collegetown with high land values and high construction costs. Often driven by the accountants as their private partners, these communities quickly recognized that the massive amount of money directed at parking could instead be directed at broader community improvements that simultaneously reduced the demand for parking. Today, these communities have extensive and attractive multimodal transportation systems that are financed almost entirely from the cost savings of not building parking structures.

Collegetown stands to learn a great amount from the experiences of these communities and businesses. By recognizing the growing modal inequity propagated by huge parking subsidies, Collegetown can redirect this enormous parking cost into community improvements that can achieve the goals of the Collegetown Vision Statement while preserving a vital mixed-use neighborhood for years to come.
Goals
Make efficient use of the parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces. Share existing parking resources efficiently as a flexible pool, rather than as many small, inefficient private parking areas. Complement with clear signage and pedestrian-oriented strategies.

Fundamentals
Creation of a “Park Once” environment is fundamental to Collegetown’s goal of creating a walkable district. The typical pattern of individual buildings, each with its own parking supply, requires two vehicular movements and a parking space to be dedicated for each visit to a shop, office, or residence. To accomplish three errands in this type of environment requires six movements in three parking spaces for three tasks. With virtually all parking in private hands, spaces are not efficiently shared among uses, and each building’s private parking is typically sized to handle a worst-case parking load. Most significantly, when new buildings are required to provide such worst-case parking ratios, the result is often pedestrian-hostile buildings that hover above parking decks.

When the practice of building individual private lots or garages for each building is adopted, the result is also a lack of welcome for customers: at each parking lot, the visitor is informed that his vehicle will be towed if he or she visits any place besides the adjacent building. When this occurs, nearby shopping malls gain a distinct advantage over a district with fragmented parking. Mall owners understand that they should not divide their mall’s parking supply into small fiefdoms: they operate their supply as a single pool for all of the shops, so that customers are welcomed wherever they park.

The compactness and mixed-use nature of Collegetown lends itself to this kind of “Park Once” strategy. Operating the downtown parking supply as a single shared pool results in significant savings in daily vehicle trips and required parking spaces, for three reasons, explained below.

1. Most minimum zoning requirements for parking supplies assume a conservative margin above the estimates produced by sources such as Parking Generation, Third Edition, published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. For instance, in Ithaca the standard of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space is used, while ITE’s average rate for offices is 2.5 spaces. This manual provides parking occupancy data observed at various individual land uses throughout the United States, and is the most widely used reference for parking studies. It should be noted, however, that the parking occupancy rates in Parking Generation were measured at stand-alone, single-use suburban sites with little or no transit and ample free parking. Using these rates without any adjustment would be likely to overstated the parking demand in a pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use place like Collegetown.
1. Park once.
Those arriving by car can easily follow a “park once” pattern: they park their car just once and complete multiple daily tasks on foot before returning to their car (see Fig. 4-1).

2. Uses with differing peak times share the supply.
Spaces can be efficiently shared between uses with differing peak hours, peak days, and peak seasons of parking demand (such as office, restaurant, retail, and the performing arts center).

3. Spread peak loads.
The parking supply can be sized to meet average parking loads (instead of the worst-case parking ratios needed for individual buildings), since the common supply allows shops and offices with below-average demand or temporarily vacancies to balance shops and offices with above-average demand.

To implement a “Park Once” strategy, parking in Collegetown must be managed as a public utility, just like streets and sewers, with public parking provided in strategically placed lots and garages. In the future, development should be prohibited (or strongly discouraged) from providing private parking spaces. In cases where certain tenants, such as new offices, require a guarantee of a certain number of spaces at particular hours (e.g., Monday through
Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), those tenants should have the opportunity to lease the needed spaces in a public lot or garage, with the exclusive right to their use during the hours required. As described above, such arrangements leave the parking available during evening and weekend hours for other users (e.g., patrons of restaurants), resulting in an efficient sharing of the parking supply and lower costs for all.

Implementation of simple signage improvements helps motorists easily find shared parking facilities when they chose not to seek on-street parking. Current signage for and visibility of the Dryden Road garage, for example, is very poor, and the pedestrian experience entering and exiting it is threatening. This highly valuable asset should be made significantly more inviting and secure for all users.

Overall, the benefits of fully implementing a “Park Once” strategy for the entire district include:

- A more welcoming environment for customers and visitors (with fewer “Thou Shalt Not Park Here” signs);
- The need for fewer, strategically placed lots and garages, resulting in better urban design and greater development opportunities; and
- Construction of larger, more space-efficient (and therefore more cost-effective) lots and garages.

Finally, and perhaps most important, by transforming motorists into pedestrians who walk instead of drive to different nearby destinations, a “Park Once” strategy immediately generates pedestrian life, creating crowds of people who animate public life on the streets and generate the patrons of street-friendly retail businesses.

**Program Details**

Make efficient use of the parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces. This “Park Once” strategy should be implemented by a transportation manager hired by the City through the following policies. The manager would have the responsibility of running the district’s parking programs, including monitoring occupancy rates, issuing permits, and adjusting parking rates.

1. **Incentives to encourage participation by existing parking-facility owners and operators need to be in place. These can take the following forms:**
   a. Increased regulatory flexibility to encourage sharing, including elimination of distance requirements for accessory parking, elimination of any stipulation on shared parking, elimination of any code-based requirements that discourage public access, etc.
   b. Pooled liability protection whereby multiple parking facility owners can purchase a replacement joint policy to allow public access for lower rates than existing policies.
   c. Creation of a parking authority or other public-private entity that manages the shared off-street (and on-street) parking supply. This entity can offer greater economies of scale than individual parking operators can afford, greatly reducing labor, security, insurance, maintenance, and other related costs, while also allowing greater purchasing power. When combined with revenues from a parking benefit district (see Element 2, page 4.12), this entity has the ability to afford regular maintenance, improve parking amenities (lighting, signing, driver services), and offer guaranteed lease rates to private operators in return for the ability to operate those lots in the shared pool.

2. The parking supply for the retail, office and residential users in Collegetown should be shared among all users. Residents and employees who prefer to park closer to their front door or in a “privatized” area should be afforded this option through certain premium fields of parking that are available to those
willing to pay a premium rate. (Residents of market rate units are most likely to take advantage of this option.) To implement this policy, parking leases can be structured in the following manner:

a. Under the *standard lease rate*, the parking permit holder is guaranteed that a parking space will be available within the shared pool of spaces for him or her to use, but the more highly-desired spaces may be reserved for premium users.

b. Under the *premium rate* for exclusive spaces, the parking permit holder can park in a designated field of spaces that are considered more valuable (namely those close to entrances or exits, those at ground level, those with greater weather protection, or other criteria as determined by the City or entity with authority over parking management – this is similar to charging higher rates for a premium downtown garage versus a neighborhood lot). Two types of premium spaces should be made available. The most expensive option is a space within this field that is guaranteed to be available 24 hours per day, seven days a week for the permit holder. The location of the space within the field may vary, but its availability is guaranteed. The less expensive premium alternative is reserved for the permit holder only during the hours when the space is typically needed. For example, a typical retail tenant may wish to choose a permit that guarantees there will be a space for his or her firm’s use only when the business is open – say, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday, in the case of a realtor’s office. (With this latter alternative, the retail tenant saves money by having the space guaranteed for their use only part-time, and the space becomes available for other users – such as restaurant patrons – on evenings and weekends). In general, tenants should be encouraged to lease premium permits only for the hours and days of the week when they most require a guaranteed space.

3. As future properties are developed, their parking supplies should become part of the Park Once district. This may be accomplished either by creating additional new joint or remote public parking facilities as part of development agreements for each site or through conditions of approval that require that the privately-owned parking be made available for public use.

4. As the area becomes fully developed and demand for parking increases, instituting valet parking services (particularly for restaurant patrons, if a strong restaurant trade develops) should be considered, since this will allow the most effective use of out-of-the-way parking spaces and can increase the effective parking supply by allowing for parking of additional vehicles in parking aisles and in tandem parking arrangements.

5. Accompany the off-street “park-once” pool with a consistent signage and management plan, to be developed separately, that clearly guides participants and new visitors to appropriate fields, preferably in advance of entering a parking facility.
Goals
To efficiently manage demand for parking while accommodating customer, employee, and resident parking needs, and to put customers needs first: assure vacancies and turnover of the most convenient “front door” curb spaces to ensure availability for customers and visitors.

Fundamentals
Many downtown districts suffer from a common problem: The most visible and most convenient parking spaces are frequently entirely full, while parking spaces just behind or just under a building—or a block away—sit largely vacant. The result is a perceived parking shortage, where none exists on a district-wide level. In many downtowns, employees occupy the best spaces, even when time limits are instituted to try to reserve these spots for customers. As one downtown merchant describes the situation in his town, “Parking is a problem for businesses because employees park on Main St. and side streets and prevent customers from parking….We need parking management and enforcement strategies to prevent employees from doing the ‘two-hour shuffle’ downtown.”

Always-available, convenient on-street customer parking is of primary importance for Collegetown retail to succeed. To create vacancies and rapid turnover in the best, most convenient parking spaces, it is crucial to establish price incentives that persuade some drivers—especially employees—to park in less convenient spaces (in garages or on the street a block or two away); higher prices for the best spots and cheap or free prices for less convenient, often underused spaces.

Motorists generally fall into two categories: bargain hunters and convenience seekers. Convenience seekers are more willing to pay for an available front-door spot. Many shoppers and diners are convenience seekers: they are typically less sensitive to parking charges because they stay for relatively short periods of time, meaning that they will run up a lower fee fee than an employee or other all-day visitor. By contrast, many long-stay parkers, such as employees, find it worthwhile to walk a block to save on eight hours worth of parking fees. With proper pricing, the bargain hunters will choose currently underutilized lots, leaving the prime spots free for convenience seekers willing to spend a bit more. For Collegetown merchants, it will be important to make prime spots available for these people: those who are willing to pay a small fee to park are also those who are willing to spend money in stores and restaurants.

What are the alternatives to charging for parking?
The primary alternative that cities can use to create vacancies in prime parking spaces is to set time limits and give tickets to violators. Time limits, however, bring several disadvantages: enforcement of time limits is labor-intensive and difficult, and employees quickly become familiar with enforcement patterns and adept at the “two-hour shuffle,” moving their cars regularly or swapping spaces with a coworker several times during the workday. Even with strictly enforced time limits, if there is no price incentive to
persuade employees to seek out less convenient but bargain-priced spots, employees will probably still park in prime spaces.

For customers, strict enforcement can bring “ticket anxiety,” the fear of getting a ticket if one lingers a minute too long (for example, in order to have dessert after lunch). As Dan Zack, Downtown Development Manager for Redwood City, CA, puts it, “Even if a visitor is quick enough to avoid a ticket, they don’t want to spend the evening watching the clock and moving their car around. If a customer is having a good time in a restaurant, and they are happy to pay the market price for their parking spot, do we want them to wrap up their evening early because their time limit wasn’t long enough? Do we want them to skip dessert or that last cappuccino in order to avoid a ticket?”

A recent Redwood City staff report summarized the results found in downtown Burlingame, California:

In a recent “intercept” survey, shoppers in downtown Burlingame were asked which factor made their parking experience less pleasant recently... The number one response was “difficulty in finding a space” followed by “chance of getting a ticket.” “Need to carry change” was third, and the factor that least concerned the respondents was “cost of parking.” It is interesting to note that Burlingame has the most expensive on-street parking on the [San Francisco] Peninsula ($.75 per hour) and yet cost was the least troubling factor for most people.

This is not an isolated result. Surveys of downtown shoppers have repeatedly shown that the availability of parking, rather than its price, is a prime consideration.

What is the right price for on-street parking?

If prices are used to create vacancies and turnover in the prime parking spots, then what is the right price? An ideal occupancy rate (on every block) is approximately 85% at even the busiest hour, a rate that leaves about one out of every seven spaces available. This provides enough vacancies that visitors can easily find a spot near their destination when they first arrive. For each block and each parking lot in Collegetown, the right price is the price that will achieve this goal. This means that pricing should not be uniform: the most desirable spaces need higher prices, while less convenient spots are cheap or may even be free. Prices should also vary by time of day and day of week: for example, higher at noon and lower at midnight.

Ideally, parking occupancy for each block of on-street spaces and each garage should be monitored carefully, and prices adjusted regularly to keep enough spaces available. In short, prices should be set at market rate, according to demand, so that just enough spaces are always available. Professor Donald Shoup of UCLA advocates setting prices for parking according to the “Goldilocks Principle”:

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2 This rate is a widely-accepted industry standard that provides a high level of convenience for parkers and largely eliminates the circling for parking which contributes to increased driver frustration, traffic congestion, and collisions.
The price is too high if many spaces are vacant, and too low if no spaces are vacant. Children learn that porridge shouldn’t be too hot or too cold, and that beds shouldn’t be too soft or too firm. Likewise, the price of curb parking shouldn’t be too high or too low. When about 15 percent of curb spaces are vacant, the price is just right. What alternative price could be better?³

If this principle is followed, then there need be no fear that pricing parking will drive customers away. After all, when the front-door parking spots at the curb are entirely full, under-pricing parking cannot create more curb parking spaces for customers, because it cannot create more spaces. If the initial parking meter rate on a block is accidentally set too high—so that there are too many vacancies—then a policy goal of achieving an 85% occupancy rate will result in lowering the parking rate until the parking is once again well used (including making parking free, if need be).

Do not institute time limits
Once a policy of market rate pricing is adopted, with the goal of achieving an 85% occupancy rate on each block, even at the busiest hours, then time limits need not be instituted. With no time limits, much of the worry and “ticket anxiety” for downtown customers disappears. In Redwood City, where this policy was recently adopted, Dan Zack describes the thinking behind the City’s decision in this way:

Market-rate prices are the only known way to consistently create available parking spaces in popular areas. If we institute market-rate prices, and adequate spaces are made available, then what purpose do time limits serve? None, other than to inconvenience customers. If there is a space or two available on all blocks, then who cares how long each individual car is there? The reality is that it doesn’t matter.

Initial meter rates and hours of operations for paid parking in the Commercial Parking Benefit District⁴
To create vacancies and turnover of the most convenient “front door” curb parking spaces, install multispace parking meters in all time-limited areas of Collegetown. The transportation manager will set parking prices at rates that create a 15% vacancy rate on each block, and do not institute time limits. (Note that in some areas, rates that provide the first hour or 90 minutes free of charge may be sufficient to create a 15% vacancy rate.) Dedicate all resulting new meter revenue after expenses to public improvements for Collegetown.

Ideal hourly parking rates vary according to the time of day. The first 20 minutes may be free but every additional hour is priced according to the best value at that period of time in the day. Morning hours are generally cheaper, lunch hours demand a higher fee, afternoon hours reduce in price, and evening hours—especially on weekends—are likely to demand the highest rates. This rate structure makes parking free or cheap for short-stay visitors (such as retail customers), makes all-day parking much more expensive,


⁴ See Fig. 4-3 (p.4.36) showing approximate boundaries of, respectively, Commercial Parking Benefit District and Residential Parking Benefit District.
and creates availability during high-demand dining and entertainment hours. Employees and residents are discouraged from parking at meter spaces intended for customers, and are encouraged to purchase a monthly permit. Because of the variable rates, monthly permits (intended for residents and employees) are less expensive than parking all day at the meters. However, any monthly fee would ideally cover the actual full cost of providing parking.

The following rates illustrate the principles described above. A more detailed assessment of current revenues and utilization will be necessary to finalize rates.

### For prime, front door, curb spaces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mon-Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am-12pm</td>
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<td>$.50</td>
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<td>2pm-6pm</td>
<td>$1/hr</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6pm-12am</td>
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<td>$1/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12am-10am</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### For Dryden Road Garage Spaces:

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</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm-2pm</td>
<td>$1.50/hr</td>
<td>$.75/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pm-6pm</td>
<td>$.75/hr</td>
<td>$.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6pm-12am</td>
<td>$1.50/hr</td>
<td>$.75/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12am-10am</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Curb Parking On Edges of District:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Mon-Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am-12pm</td>
<td>$.75/hr</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12am-10am</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Monthly permit rates

Monthly permits should be sold for garage spaces and some more remote portions of the district.

- Preferred garage space, 24 hours per day: $250 per month
- Standard monthly garage permit, 24 hours per day: $200 per month
- Preferred garage space, eight hours per day: $90 per month
- Standard monthly garage permit, eight hours per day: $60 per month
- Monthly on-street permit or hang-tags (remote locations), 24 hours per day: $60 per month

As discussed earlier, a premium monthly permit guarantees that the resident or employee holding the permit will be able to find a space somewhere within an exclusive field of parking, but it does not mark a particular space as exclusively reserved for the permit holder’s vehicle. A standard monthly permit guarantees a space within a designated “preferred” facility, unless that facility is full – in which case the permit allows the holder to park at any one of a number of shared facilities in the district.

Adjust meter rates and hours of operation

After an initial trial period, review occupancy rates for each block and each parking facility, and then adjust down or up to achieve the 85% occupancy goal, as described earlier. To ensure that this happens on a regular schedule, promptly, and with clear assurance to policymakers, citizens and other stakeholders—especially retail tenants—that the goal of parking prices is to achieve the desired vacancy rate, the following procedure for adjusting parking meter rates and hours is recommended:

1. **Set Policy:** By ordinance, Common Council should establish that the primary goal in setting parking meter rates and hours for each block and each lot is to achieve an 85% occupancy rate. Additionally, the ordinance should both require and authorize City staff to raise or lower parking prices to meet this goal, without requiring further action by the Board of Public Works or Common Council. The transportation manager, hired by the City, would be responsible for setting pricing and monitoring occupancy.

2. **Monitor occupancy:** Modern, wirelessly-networked multispace parking meters (as described below) are capable of instantly transmitting current information on the number of spaces in use on each block where the meters are installed, giving the transportation manager the ability to monitor parking usage in the system constantly. Reports can also be generated to track occupancy by the hour over the course of a day, weeks, or months.

3. **Adjust rates:** Armed with good information on recent parking occupancy rates, the transportation manager should adjust the rates (and hours of operation) up or down on each block, to achieve the policy goal (an 85% occupancy rate) set by the Council. Typically, rates should be adjusted quarterly (four times per year), but in the case of major changes, such as the opening of a new building or a major new use, it may be advisable to adjust rates in response. In later years, it is likely that the initial free period for parking will need to be phased out, in order to maintain sufficient vacancies (and to make more money).

**Recommended payment system and metering technology**

Collegetown could use any of several meter technologies and payment systems. Best approaches include:

- Multi-space meters (not single-space meters) that:
  > Can control 10-20 parking spaces, resulting in just one or two meters per block face.
Accept multiple forms of payment (coins, credit cards) and allow the user to extend time from any other meter, or by cell phone, to provide ease of use.

Are solar-powered and centrally networked with wireless technology, to reduce operations costs and improve parking management and pricing decisions.

- A “pay-by-space” system that allows motorists to park, pay, and go (not pay-and-display, which requires a customer to return to his or her vehicle to display a receipt and can contribute to litter problems)

Establish a Commercial Parking Benefit District: Dedicate all or a significant percentage of new parking revenues to public improvements and services that benefit the Collegetown Area.

Net revenues from paid parking in the Commercial Parking Benefit District should fund public improvements that benefit Collegetown. (“Net revenues” means total parking revenues from the area, less existing base costs, such as revenue collection, purchase and operation of the meters, enforcement, and the administration of the district.) If Collegetown parking revenues seem to disappear into the General Fund, where they may appear to produce no direct benefit for Collegetown, there will be little support for installing parking meters, or for raising rates when needed to maintain useful vacancy rates. When Collegetown merchants and residents can clearly see that the monies collected are being spent for the benefit of their district, on projects that they have helped to choose, they will become willing to support market-rate pricing—and if experience from other cities is any guide, many will become active advocates for the concept.\(^5\)

To ensure such continuing support for a Parking Benefit District, and for continuing to charge fair market rates for parking, it is crucial to give local stakeholders a strong voice in setting policies for the district, deciding how Collegetown parking revenues should be spent, and overseeing the operation of district to ensure that the monies collected from their customers are spent wisely.

Potential uses of meter revenue from Parking Benefit District

Potential uses for Parking Benefit District revenues include:

- landscaping and streetscape greening;
- increased frequency of trash collection;
- street cleaning, power-washing of sidewalks, and graffiti removal;
- parking, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure and amenities;
- additional police patrols or “Collegetown Ambassadors” to provide additional security;
- additional parking enforcement;
- marketing and promotion of Collegetown merchants;
- purchase and installation costs of meters (e.g., through revenue bonds or a “build-operate-transfer” financing agreement with a vendor); and
- additional programs and projects as recommended by Collegetown stakeholders and approved by Common Council.

Organizational Structure For the Parking Benefit District

A number of different organizational structures can be used to establish a Parking Benefit District.
in Collegetown. The district can be a quasi-public entity, similar to a business improvement district. Alternatively, the district can be established as simply a financial entity (somewhat akin to an assessment district), which would require by ordinance that meter revenues raised within the district be spent to benefit the district. In this case, establishing the district would serve primarily to reassure Collegetown stakeholders that the revenues will remain within the district. Under this arrangement, the district would be managed and housed within an existing City agency such as the Department of Public Works.

Regardless of the ultimate organizational structure chosen, a focused effort, with well-trained staff, will be needed to refine and implement the recommendations made within this document and then to manage the ongoing operation of the system. The most important actions include:

- **Establishing the Commercial Parking Benefit District and managing it thereafter.** This includes responsibility for installing and operating the parking meter system, selling monthly permits, monitoring parking occupancy and proposing rate adjustments, overseeing collection and expenditure of parking revenues, and in general, operating the parking system in a customer-friendly way.

- **Establishing and managing the “Park Once” strategy for the district,** working to ensure that both new and existing parking is managed and operated as a common pool. This would encompass everyday operations, such keeping parking areas clean, properly signed, and well lit. It would also mean the administration of lease-back programs for private parking supplies that are managed by the district.

- **Establishing and managing alternative transportation programs for the district,** to ensure that the district invests in the most cost-effective mix of parking, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements, including those recommended in Element 10 (page 4.37).

- **Explain and assist in enforcing the transportation demand management requirements** (such as “unbundling” parking costs from office leases and residential rents) as recommended in Elements 3 through 7.

Some of the responsibilities could be managed by the property manager or the building manager for each new development. If responsibilities are divided, however, it is essential that the different pieces of the parking and transportation program (especially the setting of parking prices) continue to be operated as a single coherent system.

**Additional recommendations for implementing a commercial Parking Benefit District**

The City should pursue the following additional strategies when implementing the Commercial Parking Benefit District:

- Conduct community outreach and education prior to launching a new pricing regime.
- Install user-friendly signage to explain meter operation, rates, and hours/days of operation.
- Use “Mobility Ambassadors” to assist with meters during the first few weeks of implementation and during peak visitor-demand periods.
- Create mechanisms such as regular advisory meetings and surveys for soliciting ongoing input from businesses, visitors, and other key stakeholders and for resolving customer-service issues and stakeholder concerns.
element 3 provide universal transit passes

**Goal**
Increase transit ridership and provide incentives to reduce vehicle ownership by providing free transit passes to all Collegetown residents and employees.

**Fundamentals**
In recent years, growing numbers of transit agencies have teamed with universities, employers, operators of multifamily residential complexes, and even with entire residential neighborhoods to provide universal transit passes. Universal transit pass programs, such as the Eco Pass program created by Santa Clara County’s Valley Transportation Authority in California, allow annual passes to be purchased at a deeply discounted bulk rate for all members of a specified group, such as a firm’s employees, or the residents of an apartment complex. Negotiating a similar program for Collegetown will benefit both employees and residents while cost-effectively reducing parking demand.

TCAT already has years of experience with a universal transit pass program. Cornell’s existing Omnipass has been highly successful in reducing parking demand at Cornell for over 15 years. However, the program is limited to faculty and staff. As Collegetown seeks to take advantage of the benefits of this program, the high proportion of Cornell students among Collegetown residents may necessitate expanding the Omnipass to the student body. Cornell should be encouraged to evaluate how this could occur, especially since the exclusion of students from Omnipass essentially preserves higher parking demand among students—and that parking demand directly affects land values, aesthetics, and development potential in Collegetown. The notable cost savings benefit that Cornell has experienced for years with Omnipass by not having to build hundred of extra faculty and staff parking spaces should be shared by Collegetown with an expansion of the program to students.

A typical example of an ideal universal transit pass is the Eco Pass program in downtown Boulder, Colorado, which provides free transit on Denver’s Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail and buses to more than 7,500 employees, employed by 700 different businesses in downtown Boulder. To fund this program, Boulder’s downtown parking benefit district pays a flat fee for each employee who is enrolled in the program, regardless of whether the employee actually rides transit. Because every single employee in the downtown is enrolled in the program, the RTD in turn provides the transit passes at a deep bulk discount.

A review of existing universal transit pass programs found that the annual per-employee fees are between 1% and 17% of the retail price for an equivalent annual transit pass. The principle of employee or residential transit passes is similar to that of group insurance plans—transit agencies can offer deep bulk discounts when selling passes to a large group with universal enrollment on the assumption that not all those offered the pass will actually use them regularly.

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Residential Transit Pass Programs
Universal Transit Pass programs have also been successfully created for a wide range of residential developments. In Santa Clara County, CA, and Portland, OR, property managers can bulk-purchase transit passes for their residents at deeply discounted rates. An affordable housing provider in San Jose, CA, First Community Housing, provides all tenants of its developments (ten in all) with a VTA Eco Pass, giving them unlimited rides on VTA bus and light rail lines in Santa Clara County. First Community Housing pays $30 per year for each pass issued, and is required to purchase a pass for every resident. Residents receive their Eco Passes for free, saving each resident the $700 cost of an annual bus pass. In a survey of First Community Housing residents, 22% of the respondents indicated that having an Eco Pass has allowed them to reduce the number of cars in their household, resulting in less traffic, lower parking demand, and reduced parking costs. Jeff Oberdorfer, executive director of First Community Housing, reports that, “Saving the construction cost of two parking spaces pays for our entire Eco Pass program.” [1]

Benefits from a universal transit pass program
Universal transit passes provide multiple benefits.

For transit riders
• free access to transit;
• rewards existing riders, attracts new ones; and
• for employees who drive, making existing transit free can effectively create convenient park-and-ride shuttles to any existing under-used remote parking areas.

For transit operators
• provides a stable source of income;
• increases transit ridership, helping to meet agency ridership goals; and
• can help improve cost recovery, reduce agency subsidy, and/or fund service improvements.

For downtown districts
• reduces traffic congestion and increases transit ridership;
• reduces existing parking demand: Santa Clara County’s (CA) Eco Pass program resulted in a 19% reduction in parking demand; and
• reduces future growth in parking demand: The University of Washington’s U-Pass program helped avoid construction of 3,600 new spaces, saving $100 million (since 1983, the university population increased by 8,000 even

Table 4-1 Effects of Universal Transit Pass Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Drive to work</th>
<th>Transit to work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipalities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara (VTA), California</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue, Washington</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor, Michigan</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Boulder, Colorado</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA (faculty and staff)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Washington, Seattle</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of British Colombia</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Colorado Boulder (students)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as the university actually reduced the number of parking spaces).

For developers
- Universal transit pass programs can benefit developers if implemented concurrently with reduced parking requirements, by lowering construction costs.
- Providing free transit passes for large developments offers an amenity that can help attract renters or home buyers as part of marketing campaign appealing to those seeking a “down-town lifestyle.”

For employees/employers
- reduces demand for parking on-site, and
- provides a tax-advantaged transportation benefit that can help recruit and retain employees.

Free transit passes are often an extremely effective means of reducing the number of car trips in an area. The removal of cost barriers to using transit, including the need to search for spare change for each trip, makes people much more likely to take transit to work or for non-work trips.

A cost-effective transportation investment
Many cities and institutions have found that trying to provide additional parking spaces costs much more than reducing parking demand by simply providing everyone with a free transit pass. For example, a study of UCLA’s universal transit pass program found that a new parking space costs more than three times as much as a free transit pass ($223/month versus $71/month).8

Program Details
Purchase of a universal transit pass program for all downtown employees and existing residents should be managed by the Parking Benefit District’s transportation manager (as described in Element 2).

Funding sources
The transit pass program should be paid for through some combination of the following sources:
- parking revenues;
- a portion of commercial lease revenues, rents (for rental units), or a portion of condominum association dues (for market-rate condominium units), if funding is needed in addition to that provided by parking revenues; and
- grants from environmental, public health, and traffic-mitigation sources (grants usually funds pilot projects).

Implementation priorities
In implementing a universal transit pass program, Collegetown’s program should emphasize:
- universal coverage for all residents, which allows lower per rider costs and a deeper discount to be offered;
- automatic opt-in, which lowers sign-up barriers and encourages greater participation and ridership gains; and
- planning for targeted transit service improvements to further encourage use of the universal transit pass and/or to respond to increased ridership after the program is launched.

Goal
Subsidize all employee commute modes equally and create incentives for commuters to carpool, take transit, and bike or walk to work.

Fundamentals
Many employers in Collegetown may wish to provide free or reduced-price parking for their employees as a fringe benefit. Under a parking cash-out requirement, employers will be able to do this on the condition that they offer the cash value of the parking subsidy to any employee who does not drive to work.

Employees who opt to cash out their parking subsidies would not be eligible to receive free parking from the employer and would be responsible for their parking charges on any days when they do drive to work.

Benefits of Parking Cash Out
The benefits of parking cash out are numerous:

- provides an equal transportation subsidy to employees who ride transit, carpool, vanpool, walk, or bicycle to work. The benefit is particularly valuable to low-income employees, who are less likely to drive to work alone;
- provides a low-cost fringe benefit that can help individual businesses recruit and retain employees; and
- employers report that parking cash-out requirements are simple to administer and enforce, typically requiring just one to two minutes per employee per month to administer.

To encourage participation, the transportation manager and the City can work cooperatively with developers to reveal through simple cost pro formas the true cost of structured parking and the amount of cost savings achieved with cash-out. New developments that are considering the program also could be given a discount in their annual parking in-lieu fee equivalent to their cash-out payments to employees. Existing businesses should also be extended assistance to start a cash-out program to reduce their current parking lease payments. For existing landowners, the City can offer higher guaranteed lease payments for operating their parking in the “park once” pool if they maintain a cash-out program.

In addition to these benefits, the primary benefit of parking cash-out programs is their proven effect on reducing auto congestion and parking demand. Table 4-2 illustrates the effect of parking cash-out at seven different employers located in and around Los Angeles. It should be noted that most of the case study employers are located in areas that do not have good access to transit service, so that a large part of the reduced parking demand that occurred with these parking cash-out programs resulted when former solo drivers began carpooling.
Table 4-2 Effects of parking cash-out on parking demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Scope of Study</th>
<th>Parking Fee in $/Month (2006 $)</th>
<th>Decrease in Parking Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A: Areas with little public transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century City, CA¹</td>
<td>3,500 employees at 100+ firms</td>
<td>$107</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University, NY²</td>
<td>9,000 faculty and staff</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warner Center, CA¹</td>
<td>large employer (850 employees)</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue, WA¹</td>
<td>medium-size firm (430 employees)</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Mesa, CA¹</td>
<td>State Farm Insurance employees</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$64</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group B: Areas with fair public transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Civic Center¹</td>
<td>10,000+ employees, several firms</td>
<td>$166</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Wilshire Blvd, LA¹</td>
<td>mid-sized firm</td>
<td>$119</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC, suburbs²</td>
<td>5,500 employees at 3 worksites</td>
<td>$90</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Los Angeles⁶</td>
<td>5,000 employees at 118 firms</td>
<td>$167</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group C: Areas with good public transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Washington⁷</td>
<td>50,000 faculty, staff, and students</td>
<td>$24</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Ottawa¹</td>
<td>3,500+ government staff</td>
<td>$95</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$59</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$89</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**
Program Details
The cash value of the parking subsidy should be offered in one of two forms:

- A cash subsidy for carpoolers, walkers, bicyclists, and transit commuters equal to the value of the parking subsidy given to those who drive alone. For example, if employees who drive alone are given a free assigned space, reserved for them 24 hours per day (a $290-per-month permit price, at the recommended rates), then an employee who does not drive would receive up to $290 per month in cash.

- Under federal law, for transit and vanpool commuters, up to $105 per month of the subsidy may be given tax-free (for both employer and employee) as a subsidy for transit pass purchases and vanpool expenses.9

- The cash subsidy for carpoolers, walkers, bicyclists, and transit commuters can be equal to the federal tax-free limit of $105, and participating employers would pay a portion of their $185 remaining cost savings from not constructing parking ($290 minus $105) to the Parking Benefit District.9

As described in Element 5 (page 4.25), this program recommends that the cost of leasing employee parking be separated from the cost of leasing commercial space. This means that the parking cash-out requirement will have relatively little cost for employers: when employees respond to the cash offer by giving up their parking permit, the employer will be able to recover the cost by leasing fewer employee parking spaces.10

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10 Of course, an employer can also choose to let employees pay for their own parking: in this case, the employer will not have to provide a parking cash-out program, since there will be no parking subsidies to cash out.
**element 5** require “unbundled” parking costs

**Goal**
To (1) increase housing affordability and housing choice, and (2) reveal the true cost of parking to employers and their employees.

**Fundamentals**
Parking costs are generally subsumed in the sale or rental price of housing for the sake of simplicity and because it is a traditional practice in real estate. But although the cost of parking is often hidden in this way, parking is never free. The expected cost for each space in a Collegetown underground parking garage is $45,000 per space. Given land values in the area, surface spaces will be at least as valuable (which accounts for the decision to create underground parking).

Looking at parking as a tool to achieve the Collegetown Vision Statement’s goals for more affordable housing and less traffic requires some changes in status-quo practices, since providing it for free or at highly subsidized rates encourages use and means that more parking spaces have to be provided to yield the same rate of availability.

For both below-market rental units and market-rate condominiums, the full cost of parking should be unbundled from the cost of the housing itself by creating a separate parking charge. This provides a financial reward to households that decide to dispense with one of their cars and helps attract that niche market of households that wish to live in a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood where it is possible to live well with only one car (or even none) per household. Unbundling parking costs changes parking from a required purchase to an optional amenity, so that households can freely choose how many spaces they wish to lease. Among households with below-average vehicle ownership rates (e.g., low-income people, singles, single parents, seniors on fixed incomes, and college students), allowing this choice can provide a substantial financial benefit. For example, more than 24% of Ithaca’s households do not have a car, while in Collegetown, 38% of households have no car. Unbundling parking costs means that these households no longer have to pay for parking spaces that they may not use or be able afford.

It is important to note that construction costs for residential parking spaces can substantially increase the sale/rental price of housing. This is because the space needs of residential parking spaces can restrict how many housing units can be built within allowable zoning and building envelope. For example, a study of Oakland’s 1961 decision to require one parking space per apartment (where none had been required before) found that construction cost increased 18% per unit, units per acre decreased by 30% and land values fell 33%.

As a result, bundled residential parking can significantly increase “per-unit housing costs” for individual renters or buyers. Two studies of San Francisco housing found that units with off-street parking bundled with the unit sell for 11% to 12% more than comparable units without included

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parking. One study of San Francisco housing found the increased affordability of units without off-street parking on-site can raise their absorption rate and make home ownership a reality for more people. In that study, units without off-street parking:

- sold on average 41 days faster than comparable units with off-street parking;
- allowed 20% more San Francisco households to afford a condominium (compared to units with bundled off-street parking); and
- allowed 24 more San Francisco households to afford a single-family house (compared to units with bundled off-street parking).

Charging separately for parking is also the single most effective strategy for encouraging households to own fewer cars and rely more on walking, cycling, and transit. According to one study, unbundling residential parking can significantly reduce household vehicle ownership and parking demand. These effects are presented in Fig. 4-2.

**Program Details**

Instituting a parking-unbundling program is a simple matter of requiring that any approved parking within Collegetown have a lease or deed, separating its rental or purchase from the cost of housing.

For rental units, unbundling parking costs is straightforward: the fees charged for the parking spaces will cover the full cost of providing the parking spaces. As described earlier, the proposed fees would be $290 per month (the full cost to build a space) for an assigned space that is reserved 24 hours per day for the resident, with a discount for a permit for spaces that are shared during the day with retail customers. Then, rents for the housing can be reduced up to an amount equal to the amount of parking revenue collected.

When residential spaces are shared with daytime users, other users—such as lunchtime restaurant customers—are allowed to use the residential spaces during the day when residents have driven to work; if a resident chooses not to drive somewhere during the day, there is no penalty, and that space is simply not available for sharing on that day.

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13 Ibid.

In the case of for-sale condominium units, the title to the property should give the owner the right to lease at least one parking space (and these owners will have first priority for leasing parking spaces in a garage). However, as with renters, owners would not be required to lease any parking spaces and could rent as many or as few as they choose. The resulting parking revenue should be used to reduce the amount of the condominium owners’ association dues that the owners would otherwise have to pay.

It is critical that residents and tenants be made aware that rents, sale prices, and lease fees are reduced because parking is charged for separately. Rather than paying “extra” for parking, the cost is simply separated out allowing residents and businesses to choose how much they wish to purchase. No tenant, resident, employer, or employee should be required to lease any minimum amount of parking.
element 6 offer parking in-lieu fees

Goal
Create a financial incentive for new developments to participate directly in the STS at initial conceptual design while creating a revenue stream to support the STS’s elements.

Fundamentals
Parking in-lieu fees have been in place in dozens of communities throughout America for years. By making a payment to the municipality, new developments waive their minimum parking requirements. The fee is usually utilized for transportation improvements, particularly shared public parking facilities. An in-lieu fee has a number of advantages, as summarized by Donald Shoup:

1) It enables developers on constrained sites to build less parking.
2) It encourages development of shared parking facilities financed by in-lieu fees. A public parking facility shared by many users requires fewer total spaces than multiple individual developments due to the inherent overlap of peak demand times.
3) Shared public parking facilities financed by in-lieu fees can be placed strategically to serve many users while reducing the potential impact on pedestrian and bicycle movements. This also frees up development parcels to create appropriate urban streetscapes without curb cuts and garage entrances.
4) It eliminates the need for zoning variances, adding fairness by leveling the playing field for all developers and allowing planning boards to focus on design features as opposed to parking quantities.
5) It supports historic preservation by enabling redevelopment of buildings without requiring the addition of new parking.

In-lieu fees can be an effective method for cost-effectively providing parking in remote locations not controlled by individual land owners. By using fees to subsidize remote parking at locations with cheaper construction or leasing costs, communities can facilitate development financing while encouraging improved development standards for participating developers. Appropriately set fees encourage more efficient and higher-quality designs while allowing off-site provision of appropriate parking.

The success of in-lieu fees has evolved into lower minimum-parking requirements in many communities. Dozens of U.S. municipalities have completely removed minimum residential and commercial parking requirements in downtown districts, including Eugene, OR; Fort Myers, FL; Fort Pierce, FL; Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Olympia, WA; Portland, OR; San Diego, CA; Seattle, WA; Spokane, WA; and Stuart, FL.

Program Details
The majority of communities in America that employ in-lieu fees employ a consistent standard for all new projects. However, the motivation for specifying a rate varies considerably. Many communities with excessive parking supplies set a low fee in an effort to reduce the growth of parking. Other communities establish a moderate rate with the express goal of contributing to

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16 “In Lieu of Required Parking,” Donald Shoup.
a shared parking facility. Several communities use arbitrarily high fees as a way of permitting yet discouraging the practice. In Collegetown, the primary goals of an in-lieu fee would be to: 1) remove the cost and design complexity of building parking from the development equation while 2) enabling development of cheaper remote-parking or alternative-transportation systems through payments to the STS. Therefore, it is important to return a cost savings to developers while maintaining a high enough fee high to support a robust STS. Based on estimated garage construction prices of at least $30,000 per space, it is recommended that an average fee of $15,000 per space be implemented—annualized as a payment to the Parking Benefit District of approximately $1,200 per year for 35 years (the industry-standard lifespan of a parking structure). This value is sufficient to cover the cost of building and maintaining a public surface or above-grade parking space in a remote location plus a contribution to STS elements.

If the City prefers to retain some on-site parking, it may set a limit on the amount of parking that can be removed from a project through in-lieu payments—typically expressed as a revised parking minimum. For instance, required parking of 4.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of building can be reduced through in-lieu payments to a limit of 1.5 spaces per 1,000. While this approach may satisfy a public policy concern, it has notable drawbacks. It likely will fail to produce the desired effect of reducing curb cuts and their impact on the streetscape. It also may continue to discourage historic preservation or development of infill sites that simply don't have room to provide parking cost-effectively. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that in-lieu payments be allowed to remove entirely the burden of providing on-site parking at most locations in Collegetown.

Remote parking
An important part of the success of the in-lieu fee program will be developing remote parking to replace supplies not constructed on-site. While it may be desirable in the long term to use fee revenue to construct a new Collegetown parking facility, the STS can take advantage of the significantly lower cost of remote parking and retain fee revenue for other infrastructure enhancements, such as those identified in Element 10 on page 4.37. The City already possesses likely remote parking facilities downtown within easy reach of Collegetown through frequent TCAT service. Estimates suggest that at least 400 municipal garage spaces are vacant during peak demand downtown, allowing Collegetown to use some of them for remote student parking. Cornell may be able to further leverage STS programs by allowing some remote parking—especially for student housing—to occur in underutilized campus parking facilities served by direct TCAT connections.
element 7  establish a car-sharing program

Goal
To (1) enable Collegetown commuters to carpool, take transit, bike, or walk to work by ensuring that a shared car will be available for work trips when needed, and (2) enable Collegetown residents to reduce the number of private vehicles they own by ensuring that a shared car will be available for household trips when needed.

Fundamentals
Car-sharing operators, such as Ithaca Car Share and ZipCar, use telephone and Internet-based reservation systems, which allow their members a hassle-free way to rent cars by the hour, with members receiving a single bill at the end of the month for all their usage. The shared cars are stored at convenient neighborhood “pods.” ZipCar is a national, for-profit company. Ithaca Car Share is an Ithaca-based nonprofit.

Car sharing has proven successful in reducing both household vehicle ownership and the percentage of employees who drive alone because of the need to have a car for errands during the workday. As a result, car sharing can be an important tool for reducing parking demand.

For residents, car sharing reduces the need to own a vehicle, particularly a second or third car. Recent surveys have shown that more than half of car-share users have sold at least one vehicle since joining the program in the San Francisco Bay Area. Car sharing allows employees to take transit to work, since they will have a vehicle available for errands during the day.

With the vision of building improved mixed-use housing in Collegetown and the implementation of the other strategies recommended in this plan (such as requiring that parking costs be unbundled from housing costs and that employers offer employees the option of cashing out parking), car sharing will become much more viable than in conventional suburban locations. Keeping parking costs bundled with housing costs and preserving free employee parking with no cash-out option will considerably diminish the prospects for a successful car-sharing program.

Several cities, including Berkeley, CA, and Philadelphia, PA, have helped establish car-sharing programs and reduced their own fleet costs by replacing some portion of their vehicle fleet with a contract for a car-sharing provider. In this arrangement, the municipality serves as an “anchor subscriber,” which increases the financial feasibility for the car-sharing operator of the location(s) for which a contract is issued, allowing it to make more vehicles available to the public—especially during evening and weekends when usage by city employees is low. The City of Ithaca should explore this model of contracting out part of its existing vehicle fleet.

Implementation of a free universal transit pass will also increase demand for car sharing among residents and employees, who begin taking

17 April 2002 survey by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates for City CarShare.
transit but occasionally need a car. This plan therefore recommends that the City begin negotiations with an existing car-sharing operator, sooner rather than later, in order to establish a car-sharing program concurrent with the opening of any new buildings constructed in Collegetown after adoption of this plan and implementing ordinances.

Program Details
Collegetown should establish a car-sharing service in Collegetown by working with Ithaca Car Share to locate at least one shared-vehicle “pod” in the district. To establish a car-sharing service in Collegetown, the City should negotiate a contract with Ithaca Car Share and consider the following strategies as part of the STS:

1) Offer convenient and visible parking spaces in Collegetown to the car-sharing provider for its vehicle at no charge. A pod can be based in the Dryden Road garage.

2) Partially or fully subsidize operation costs.

3) Replace some existing city-owned fleet vehicles with car-sharing cars, and locate an additional car-sharing pod at City Hall.

4) Require future developers throughout Ithaca who don’t pay an in-lieu fee to pay into a car-sharing start-up fund.

5) Coordinate with Cornell to serve as an “anchor tenant” for an Ithaca Car Share pod. University utilization of shared cars is very high.

6) Provide other incentives as appropriate, such as:

   a. offering convenient and visible spaces in other public facilities to car-sharing providers for locating car-sharing “pods,” including downtown garages and the Collegetown garage;

   b. requiring developers of large projects to offer car-sharing operators the right of first refusal for a limited number of parking spaces in their developments; and

   c. Offering Collegetown residents and employees discounted annual car-sharing memberships.
invest in transportation-demand management programs

Goal
Invest in the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access to Collegetown, including both parking and transportation demand management strategies.

Fundamentals
The cost of constructing underground parking garages in Collegetown can be expected to be approximately $45,000 per space, resulting in a total cost to build, operate and maintain new spaces of approximately $290 per month per space, every month over the expected 35-year lifetime of the typical garage. These dismal economics for parking garages lead to a simple principle: it can often be cheaper to reduce parking demand than to build new parking. Therefore, Collegetown should invest in the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access, including both parking and transportation-demand management (TDM) strategies.

By investing in a package of demand-reduction strategies, Collegetown can expect to reduce parking demand (and the resulting traffic loads) in a cost-effective way. The Parking Benefit District should invest a portion of parking revenues (and other fees, grants, and/or transportation funds, when available) in a full menu of transportation programs for the benefit of all residents and employers. If necessary, a portion of residential and commercial lease income and/or common area maintenance fees could also be used to provide funding. The transportation demand-management programs should include:

- **Carpool and vanpool incentives.** Provide ride-sharing services, such as a carpool and vanpool incentives, customized ridematching, a transportation information package for new employees and residents, a guaranteed ride home (GRH) program that offers a limited number of emergency taxi rides home per employee, and an active marketing program to advertise the services to employees and residents. To achieve greatest cost efficiencies, coordinate this program with Cornell.
  - **Guaranteed rides home.** A major reason why employees hesitate to try new ways of commuting is the fear of being stranded at work. For instance, they might have to stay at work beyond transit service hours or their carpool partner might need to leave early for an emergency. GRH programs address these fears by offering emergency taxi rides to employees when they are unable to reach home using their standard arrangements. GRH provide a level of certainty that allows people to comfortably try alternative ways of getting to and from work.\(^1^8\)

  \[^{18}\] One study determined that 15 to 25% of program enrollees would otherwise drive to work if the GRH program did not exist (Emergency Ride Home: A Survey of Current Programs and Issues, Ian L. Todreas, ERG Inc, 2002.)

- **Transportation resource center.** A storefront office that provides personalized information on transit routes and schedules, carpool and vanpool programs, bicycle routes and facili-
ties, and other transportation options could be established either on a citywide level or specifically for Collegetown and surrounding neighborhoods. The center would take responsibility for administering and actively marketing all demand-management programs. Parking operations and administration could be housed here as well. Cornell may have a key role in opening this center and should be encouraged to work with the City to identify the best location and program for the center.

As described in Chapter 2, Ithaca residents already have lower drive-alone rates than the national average, with 48% commuting to work by transit, carpool, bicycle, or on foot. With a focused effort, and genuine financial incentives, the share can be increased further.

To some extent, parking demand at Collegetown will depend on how new development is marketed and presented to the public. A marketing message that stresses the availability of transit, the TDM programs, the “unbundling” of parking costs from housing costs, the mix of uses within walking distance of each other, good bicycle
element 9 create a residential parking benefit district

amenities, and the availability of car sharing is likely to attract households that want the option of owning just one vehicle—or none at all.

Goal
Prevent “spillover” parking in neighborhoods adjacent to Collegetown’s commercial core.

Fundamentals
In order to prevent spillover parking in residential neighborhoods, many cities implement residential permit districts (also known as preferential parking districts) by issuing a certain number of parking permits to residents, usually at no charge or for a nominal fee. These permits allow a resident to park a car within the district but prohibits other drivers from parking there for more than a few hours, if at all. More than 130 cities and counties in the U.S. and Canada have residential parking permit districts.19

Residential parking permit districts are typically implemented in residential districts near large traffic generators such as central business districts, educational, medical, and recreational facilities, but they have several limitations.

Most notably, conventional residential permit districts often issue an unlimited number of permits to residents without regard to the actual number of curb parking spaces available. This leads to situations in which on-street parking is seriously congested and the permit functions solely as a “hunting license”—simply giving residents the right to hunt for a space with no guarantee of actually finding one. (In Boston, for example, the city’s Department of Transportation has issued 3,933 permits for 983 curb spaces in the Beacon Hill neighborhood-permit district, a 4-to-1 ratio.)20 Ithaca’s existing system limits permits per household, but does not constrain the total number of permits according to on-street capacity.

Conventional residential permit districts create a mirror-image problem in cases where surplus parking spaces exist (especially during the day, when many residents leave for work), but the permit district prevents commuters from using these spaces—even if demand is high and many motorists would willingly pay to park in one of the surplus slots. Ithaca has some designated zones where employees can park, but they are not allowed in resident zones.

In both cases, conventional residential parking permit districts prevent curb parking spaces from being used efficiently, promoting overuse in the former instance and underuse in the latter.

To avoid these problems, Ithaca should implement a residential parking benefit district (RPBD) in residential areas adjacent to Collegetown at the same time that parking meters are put into effect for curb parking. This will prevent excessive spillover parking from Collegetown residents, employees, and visitors trying to avoid

parking charges, and ensure that nearby residents get the benefit of the Collegetown businesses next door without the problem of excessive spillover parking.

Benefits of Residential Parking Benefit Districts
Residential parking benefit districts have been described as “a compromise between free curb parking that leads to overcrowding and [conventional residential] permit districts that lead to underuse. . . . [Parking] benefit districts are better for both residents and nonresidents: residents get public services paid for by nonresidents, and nonresidents get to park at a fair-market price rather than not at all.”

Implementing a residential parking benefit district around Collegetown can yield multiple benefits:
• Excessive parking spillover into adjacent neighborhoods will be prevented.
• The most powerful measures for reducing traffic from new developments—such as unbundling parking costs and implementing parking cash-out programs—can be implemented.
• Scarce curb parking spaces will be used as efficiently as possible.
• The need for additional costly parking garage capacity at Collegetown (and other future developments) will be reduced.
• Residents will be guaranteed a parking space at the curb.

Examples of Residential Parking Benefit Districts
Ithaca’s existing residential permit system allows a majority of residents on a given street to request the issuance of $45 annual permits (two per household) and supporting City enforcement. If requested by the neighborhood, this program could be expanded into an RPBD. Several are being implemented in various forms in the following jurisdictions:
• Aspen, CO (nonresident permits: $5/day)
• Boulder, CO (resident permits $17/year; nonresident permits $312/year)
• Santa Cruz, CA (resident permits $20/year; nonresident permits $240/year)
• Tucson, AZ (resident permits $2.50/year; nonresident permits $200-$400/year, declining with increased distance from University of Arizona campus)
• West Hollywood, CA (resident permits $9/year; nonresident permits $360/year)
• Isla Vista, CA (in progress)
• San Francisco, CA (in progress)

Program Details
Introduce a residential parking benefit district in the residential area at the same time that meters begin operation for curb parking in Collegetown. The RPBD would resemble Ithaca’s residential parking permit program, but it would allow a limited number of commuters to pay to park in surplus on-street spaces in residential areas—provided that surplus spaces are available for them during the day, when many residents are typically at work—and return the resulting revenues to the neighborhood to fund public improvements.

Implementation of an RPBD in Collegetown would differ from the existing parking permit program in four key ways:
1) Participation should be mandatory within a 10-minute walk of the College/Dryden intersection to ensure that the district works in harmony with the Commercial Parking Benefit District. All current residents would receive permits initially. Limit the number of permits issued to future residents to a number that results in a peak-hour occupancy rate of 85% or less, as determined by an initial city survey supplemented by periodic surveys thereafter (at least biannually).
2) Rather than entirely prohibiting nonresident parking, as many conventional residential
parking permit districts do, the City should sell permits for any surplus parking capacity to nonresident parkers at fair market rates, selling up to 90% of available parking supply. Most likely, these permits will be good only during the day, when a surplus usually exists because many residents have driven to work.

3) Phase in the use of in-vehicle meters for nonresident parkers (who will primarily be Collegetown employees) in place of adhesive permits or mirror hang tags. In-vehicle meters (see image below) allow user and geographic transferability, multiple payment methods, variable pricing options, and networking capabilities.

4) Set prices for nonresidents’ parking permits at fair market rates as determined by periodic city surveys. Dedicate net revenues above and beyond the cost of administering the program to paying for public improvements in the neighborhood where the revenue was generated. For example, revenues from commuters’ parking fees could be used to pay for landscaping, tree planting, or sidewalk improvements.

Community participation & local control
Residential parking benefit districts are likely to be needed for all curb parking spaces within a convenient walk of areas with parking charges. Typically, this distance is about a five-minute walk, or a quarter mile (about 1,350 feet: see Fig. 4-3). In Collegetown, an RPBD should include areas within a five-minute walk of Cornell buildings as well. Implement the residential parking benefit district only if a simple majority (50% +1) of property owners on a block supports its formation.

Once implemented, residents, property owners, and business owners in the district should continue to have a voice in advising Common Council how they want new parking revenue spent in their neighborhood. This could occur via existing City advisory committees, mail-in surveys, or public workshops and hearings. Another option is to appoint advisory committees in the parking benefit district, charged with advising the City on how the surplus revenue should be spent in their neighborhood.
The ultimate goal of the STS will be to improve the built environment in Collegetown by making streetscape and other infrastructure improvements that help the district become more vibrant at street level. Central to this change will be reducing dependence on the private automobile. While all of the elements described above work toward that goal by developing incentives to use alternative means of transportation, it will be essential for the district to implement many needed improvements to the walking, biking, and transit systems in Collegetown.

Goal
Build a better environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in Collegetown.

Program Details
Pedestrians
Walking is the most critical mode of transportation in Collegetown. At some point, everyone traveling by any other mode becomes a pedestrian, whether they get out of a car, dismount a bike, or step off a bus. The current walking environment in Collegetown is compromised in multiple ways as discussed in the existing conditions section of this report. The City, in coordination with Collegetown stakeholders and Cornell, should develop a ranked list of pedestrian improvements to be tackled immediately and in the near future. If managed correctly, parking district revenues can be used to make payments on an infrastructure bond that covers the cost of a portion of this program.

The following improvements are recommended in descending order of importance:

1) College/Dryden crossing improvements. This intersection is the centerpiece of Collegetown’s pedestrian circulation system and the location with the highest number of conflicts with vehicles.

   Short-term: International standard crosswalk markings (zebra bars) should be installed on all four crosswalks in reflective thermoplastic. Recommended signal improvements include installation of LED countdown pedestrian indicators operating concurrently at all times, activation of a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) for each crossing phase, and reduction of total signal cycle length to under one minute.

   Long-term: Install curb extensions (aka “bulb-outs”) on each corner. Curb extensions move the sidewalk further toward the vehicle travel lane, resulting in increased visibility of pedestrians by motorists, reduced crossing distances, and increased sidewalk waiting area.

2) College Avenue sidewalk widening. This street is the spine of pedestrian activity in the district.

   Short-term: Between Oak and Dryden, replace or relocate all meters, light posts, signposts, and trees to the existing curb extensions or other locations to increase the effective width of both sidewalks—replacing meters with pay stations as necessary.

   Long-term: Between Oak and Dryden, install a raised “woonerf” street section whereby all curbs are removed, the street elevation is brought up to the sidewalk elevation, all paving materials are the same, and on-street
parking is defined only by bollards. With daily volumes on College Avenue under 4,000 cars per day, this treatment would be highly effective.

3) Oak/College crossing improvements. This critical crossroads between Cornell, Collegetown, and the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts is severely compromised by an excessive dedication of space to underutilized street pavement. There is no need to retain the space-consuming circle, which only serves as a convenience for drivers to turn-around (Evening TCAT buses use the turn-around, but they have sufficient layover time to allow easy re-routing at a number of locations along their runs or even extended into downtown, thereby eliminating the need to turn TCAT buses at this location.)

Short-term: Re-route TCAT buses and block-off the southeast portion of the circle to vehicle traffic with bollards and landscaping, installing new international standard crosswalks across Oak and College that reflect the direct desire-lines along College and Oak.

Long-term: Convert the blocked-off area to a raised plaza and convert the Oak crosswalk and the College crosswalk between Collegetown Bagels and Sheldon Court to raised crossings.

4) Dryden Road Garage entrance. The primary public off-street parking facility in Collegetown presents a hazard to pedestrians crossing its entrance.

Short-term: Install clear signing and lighting to make the garage entrance clearly visible to pedestrians and motorists.

Long-term: Install sidewalk pavers across garage mouth and along sidewalk to emphasize pedestrian priority over vehicles.

5) Eddy/Dryden improvements. At the base of Eddy Gate, this intersection represents a large amount of underutilized roadway and many potential conflicts from a variety of confusing desire-lines.

Short-term: Install bollards to channelize vehicular movements from Williams Street and into Eddy Gate, possibly removing on-street parking from Eddy between Dryden and Williams.

Long-term: Convert the end of Eddy Street north of Dryden into a “woonerf” plaza with bollards demarking on-street parking and movements from Williams Street. Include outdoor restaurant seating on west side of plaza.

6) Buffalo/Eddy safety improvements. As a key pedestrian and vehicular gateway to Collegetown, the current intersection operation is dangerous due to approach grades and sightlines from eastbound Buffalo. Install three-way stop control at this intersection and international standard crosswalks on each leg.

Bicycles

While Cornell sees heavy bicycle use on campus, bicycling is poorly accommodated across the gorge in Collegetown. This mode of access and circulation is critical to removing vehicle trips, especially by students. However, no bicycle facilities exist; only a few bicycle racks are present, and none were identified as meeting current standards.

The following improvements are recommended in descending order of importance:

1) Short-term bicycle racks. Install inverted-U or post-and-ring short-term bicycle racks throughout Collegetown, especially close to retail and other student destinations. Discard existing racks, such as those in front of the Schwartz Center. If racks are observed to be regularly occupied, install additional racks.

2) College Avenue bike facility. Introduce shared-lane chevron markings the entire length of College Avenue to warn drivers to leave room for bicycles.

3) State Street bike facility. Install a full class-one bicycle facility on State Street between downtown Ithaca and Mitchell. Install an international standard crosswalk on State to the east.
side of Eddy to facilitate bicyclists heading up State to Eddy who cannot take the lane when turning left.

4) Eddy Street bike facility. Introduce shared-lane chevrons the entire length of Eddy Street.

5) Cascadilla Gorge. Install a mixed-use path, built to AASHTO standards and serving bicyclists and pedestrians, to connect Eddy Gate with College at Oak.

**Bicycle Rack Design Standards**

The majority of bicycle rack styles available for purchase in the United States do not meet current standards for bicycles. Most traditional bike rack designs have a high potential to cause expensive repairs to bikes, especially to wheel spokes, gears, and chains. Traditional racks either put damaging pressure on these critical components or do not adequately support the entire bicycle, resulting in falls and damage upon impact or during retrieval when components become tangled with the components of an adjacent bicycle. Existing racks in Collegetown exhibit both of these characteristics. The City should immediately adopt a modern standard. Suggested design language follows:

A bicycle rack should:

1. have a stable structure and permanent foundation that is securely anchored in the ground;
2. support an upright bicycle by its frame in two places on a horizontal plane;
3. be designed to prevent the front wheel of the bicycle from tipping over;
4. support a variety of bicycle sizes and frame shapes; and
5. allow the rider to secure the frame and one or both wheels to the rack.

The bicycle rack should NOT:

1. only support the bicycle at one point;
2. allow the bicycle to fall, which can damage the bike and block pedestrian right-of-way;
3. have sharp edges that can be hazardous to the visually impaired; or
4. support the bicycle by one wheel.

Mount racks in a row no closer than 36 inches apart from each other for easy accessibility. In the case of a rack area or bicycle parking lot, 60-inch aisles should separate the racks. To accommodate the average bicycle, maintain at least 72 inches of depth for each row of parked bicycles. Allow at least 36 inches between each rack and any adjacent wall or vehicle parking space (see Fig. 4-4).
Shared Bicycle Pool

Upon installation of a significant number of bike racks as well as on- and off-street bicycle facilities, Collegetown should implement a bike-sharing program in which all participants have free access to a pool of bicycles. Stored at strategic, secure locations throughout Collegetown and on Cornell’s campus, the bicycles can be signed out with a member ID. Similar programs have been in place for several years at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and Michigan Technological University among others. Washington, DC, is now launching a similar commercial program open to the general public, following the lead of several European cities, including Vienna, Paris, and Barcelona.

To address theft concerns, RFID chips are embedded in bicycles to aid with location and identification after a theft is reported. While financing the initial purchase costs and providing continued maintenance can exceed $1,000 per year per bicycle, this cost is significantly lower than the annual cost of financing and maintaining new parking in Collegetown.

Phasing in this program should carefully consider the quality and quantity of key bicycle infrastructure and facilities before broadening bicycling to inexperienced riders. However, the program should be publicized early as a near-term goal in order to help stimulate the necessary infrastructure improvements. As bicycling infrastructure improves, initiate interim pilot programs, such as weekend-only bike loans.

Bicycle Purchase Loan Program

Several universities in North America now offer zero-percent-interest loan programs for the purchase of a bicycle in order to encourage bike commuting. The University of California-Santa Cruz has run such a program for several years. Cornell could sponsor this program in order to help students clear the initial hurdle of bicycle purchase price, which can exceed $1,000. Flexible pay-back terms are preferable.

Transit

While TCAT runs excellent and frequent service through Collegetown, few residents or employees understand or use the system. Several inexpensive improvements could improve the appeal of transit to new riders:

1) Install shelters. Every stop on College Avenue should have modern shelters that shield riders from inclement weather and provide night-time lighting. All shelters should post current and legible schedules and system routes on clear information panels.

2) Create a Collegetown Transit Map. Create a Collegetown-specific map—using a simple subset of the TCAT system map—and distribute it throughout the neighborhood. Targeting the specific routes that serve Collegetown, and the destinations they reach, would eliminate much of the confusion created by use of the current systemwide map, which offers far more information than most Collegetown riders need.

3) Establish a next-bus notification system. Similar to the vehicle-location systems already in use at several U.S. transit agencies, a pilot GPS-based automated vehicle location system can be installed on every bus serving key Collegetown routes (such as Route 10) to provide real-time bus arrival information.

The schedule on pages 4.41–4.42 suggests the preferred order for implementing most of the elements described above. Possible dates are included to suggest the shortest timeframes given the study team’s understanding of each element and the implementation steps required for the City of Ithaca.
Conclusions
The Sustainable Transportation System (STS) plan for Collegetown described here includes a series of measures by which the City of Ithaca can reduce vehicle travel to and from the site and promote transit, walking, and cycling. The plan capitalizes on the mix of uses, walkability, and future transit accessibility of the district, giving existing and future residents and employees more transportation choices.

These strategies will also ensure that the parking system is cost-effective, works well, and makes spaces readily available for all users at all times in Collegetown. The recommendations are designed to meet several goals:
• Provide shoppers, employees, and residents with sufficient parking, in a way that is convenient and cost-effective.
• Provide additional transportation choices, including transit, carpool, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and services.
• Advance the broader vision of the Collegetown Vision Statement by creating a development

Table 4-3 Implementation Schedule

| Implementation Activity | Short-term
---|---
| Conduct parking utilization study. In order to set up the appropriate pricing structure and enforcement mechanisms for a parking benefit district, a detailed parking utilization study should be conducted for Collegetown and surrounding neighborhoods, preferably by a specialized professional consultant. | Short term
| Purchase and Install Phase 1 Parking Equipment. Authorize an initial capital project to pay for initial installation of trial pay stations. Install pay stations on selected block faces that were previously free to capture parking revenues (beginning with upper Oak, lower College, lower Linden, and lower Eddy), effectively extending the for-charge on-street parking areas (some metered and some pay stations). | Short term
| Activate sustainable transportation district. In parallel with the implementation of new proposed zoning changes—especially as they relate to parking—an on-street parking-management program must be in place, TDM measures must be ready to launch, and key staff to manage program launch must be identified and trained. • Seek Board of Public Works approval to: 1) convert free on-street parking areas to metered parking to be regulated by pay stations, 2) establish revised hourly parking rates and times intended to leave 15% of spaces open, 3) authorize the superintendent to revise parking rates as necessary to achieve 85% occupancy, and 4) establish monthly parking rates for remote parking at top levels of Cayuga Garage in downtown. • Ask City management to decide how to staff, manage, and fund the mobility coordinator position—in-house, fee consultant, authority, private incentives, or other model. • Coordinate staffing/enforcement of expanded parking-enforcement areas and hours with the community service officers who enforce parking regulations (Police Department), and build expenses and revenues into the 2009 City budget. • Based on utilization study results, seek Common Council, Board of Public Works, and neighborhood approval to allow limited purchase of monthly daytime on-street parking in residential parking districts with surplus capacity for commuter/merchant permits. | Short term
the Collegetown Vision Statement establishes a clear vision for the district. These recommendations have been designed to fulfill that vision, keeping in mind that parking and transportation policies have powerful effects not merely on parking demand, but also on development feasibility, housing affordability, the amount of traffic produced, the quality of urban design, and many other areas. At the same time, these measures will provide a practical, implementable parking-management plan for a constrained neighborhood where active parking management is essential.

| Float a general obligation/revenue bond. Once a reliable revenue stream from parking and in-lieu fees is established, application for a bond mechanism may be initiated to finance streetscape improvements. |
| Initial streetscape project. Building upon the plan described in this report, begin initial streetscape projects. |
| Purchase and install Phase 2 parking equipment. Depending on utilization results, all meters should be replaced with pay stations to improve revenues, customer options, and ease of enforcement. Authorize Phase 2 capital project—purchase and install pay stations for the full extent of the Commercial Parking Benefit District, including replacement of existing meters. |
| Supplement the Collegetown parking-control officer’s salary or directly hire an ambassador. Based on revenues, the Parking Benefit District should be able to begin paying salaries or stipends to the transportation manager and any mobility ambassadors. |
| Offer off-street lease buy-backs. Based on program success, the Parking Benefit District may begin offering long-term leases, maintenance, and liability protection to private parking facilities. |
| Develop a multifaceted remote-parking strategy. Working with Cornell to identify mutual gains, the City should aim for designation of currently underutilized Cornell parking facilities as sites for free storage of vehicles owned by Cornell affiliates. |
| Supplement TCAT budget. As TCAT ridership increases, the STS will have to evaluate purchases of Universal Transit Passes or direct service improvements. |
5. The Urban Plan and Opportunity Scenarios

This urban plan is intended to provide a foundation for the Collegetown design guidelines. It serves as a bridge between the vision established by the Task Force and the design guidelines and zoning that will guide future development.
Character Areas

1. Mixed-Use Core
The area surrounding the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road is the heart of Collegetown. It has seen the most development and includes the district’s largest buildings and most intense concentration of businesses and services, which support the many students and residents in the area. New development should be concentrated here, but it should be designed in ways that help improve the quality of the streetscape and the overall image of the city. This area should be a destination for many people throughout the day and evening.

2. Village Residential
To enhance vitality and activity along College Avenue and the upper portion of Linden Avenue, new housing should be built that can increase the number of people living directly on these streets. The architectural character of new buildings should complement the surrounding residential vernacular while still allowing for densities that can accommodate more rental housing than existing zoning supports. Adding housing along College Avenue can also help support retail and commercial activity in the mixed-use core.

3. Preservation A
Locating additional housing units along the eastern section of Dryden Road, between the mixed-use core and Ithaca Road, will increase growth capacity in Collegetown in a way that also protects historic owner-occupied neighborhoods from further rental property conversions. This growth can be accommodated without altering the existing streetscape character, through infill development along the street that respects the rhythm of existing buildings and significant infill additions behind existing buildings.

4. Preservation B
Community members identified streets and specific buildings as significant and worthy of preservation. These occur throughout the area and typically provide a transition from mixed-use or higher-density residential areas to neighborhoods of single-family, detached and owner-occupied houses. While distinct from each other in architectural detailing, building scale, street character, and landscape elements, the many sub-areas within this zone are similar in that each requires careful analysis when existing buildings are renovated or if new construction needs to occur.

5. Preservation C
The area along Eddy Street from East Buffalo Street to East State Street is seen as historically and architecturally significant and has been included in the East Hill Historic District. The goals for this area are similar to those for Preservation B, but they demand special categorization due to the historic designation and unique character of the street. Additionally, the larger homes and lots along Eddy Street provide an opportunity to enhance amenities geared
toward families, young professionals, and university faculty and staff, helping to diversify the mix of Collegetown residents. As a historic district, in fact, most physical change will be limited to the streetscape and landscape only.

6. Open Space Network
Little open space exists in Collegetown. Additional open spaces should be developed for passive recreation and to enable residents and visitors to enjoy the area’s natural beauty. This can be achieved by capitalizing on the tremendous resource of Cascadilla Gorge though enhancement of existing spaces with more pedestrian-friendly designs, particularly the area north of the Eddy Gate behind Cascadilla Hall and the area at the south end of the bridge from the Engineering Quad on Cornell’s campus.
Urban Form and Allowable Heights

The Allowable Heights diagram on the facing page summarizes the strategy for creating gradual height transitions from the mixed-use core to surrounding neighborhoods. As-of-right heights under the current zoning are indicated with light blue numbers on a pale-yellow background. The numbers for areas where the urban plan recommends different heights appear as darker-blue figures on a light-blue background. The greatest heights (90’ maximum) occur around the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road and are intended to create new commercial and residential development opportunities. Other areas that could support additional height (50’ maximum along College Avenue south of Catherine Street and the upper section of Linden Street) could accommodate new multi-unit housing types that would introduce a more graceful transitions in building scale, massing, and materials.
Existing Conditions (see key on facing page)
Existing Conditions

1. Massing and materials of many newer buildings do not relate well to Collegetown's historic rhythm and character.

2. Buildings meet the sidewalk in ways that detract significantly from the pedestrian experience, including massive blank walls, recessed ground floors, and large garage entrances.

3. Sudden transitions in building use, scale, and character create a disjointed urban form, particularly when they occur between mixed-use and residential areas.

4. Sidewalks are narrow and lack human-scale elements such as trees and lighting that can create a more pleasant experience.

5. Retail and commercial activity is located primarily in the area surrounding the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road.

6. Collegetown is surrounded by established, historic neighborhoods of owner-occupied houses, including the East Hill Historic District, Bryant Park, and Belle Sherman.

7. Cascadilla Gorge is underutilized as an integral part of an open space network.
Illustrative Plan

1. Focus high-density mixed-use projects at the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road. Permit heights up to 90’ at this location, provided that higher buildings follow regulations governing dimensions and massing included in the design guidelines.

2. Explore opportunities for redevelopment that can provide landscaped connections between College Avenue and Linden Avenue; accommodate larger, denser housing models; and support use of lot interiors for open spaces instead of surface parking.

3. Investigate the use of new multi-unit housing types to allow a significant expansion of housing options. Design of such units should respect the area’s existing architectural vocabulary, as defined in the design guidelines.

4. Regularize curb extensions to allow for street-tree planting and to coordinate with enhanced sidewalk crossings.

5. Develop plazas, parks, and attractive pathways along Cascadilla Gorge.

6. Pursue infill development along Dryden Road that accommodates more residents but leaves existing character along the street fundamentally unchanged.
The area around the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road is the most dynamic commercial and residential zone in Collegetown and its physical and symbolic heart. Opportunities for change in this area need to pay particular attention to the quality of the streetscape and the impacts that growth will have on the pedestrian experience. The three sections that follow examine various methods for addressing urban design in these areas.

**Mixed-Use Core: 400 Block**

By supporting and expanding the best elements of the existing buildings and streetscape, the 400 block can remain the centerpiece of Collegetown. Proposals include setbacks above 60' to minimize the canyon effect of tall buildings; new street trees and awnings that preserve a sense of the human scale; active and transparent ground floors; outdoor spaces for people to enjoy the natural beauty of the gorge; and sidewalks and crosswalks that provide safe and pleasant places to walk.
Curb extensions can provide greatly needed area at intersections for pedestrians to gather while waiting to cross the street. A paving material that runs continuously from the face of building to the curb will help make the sidewalk more usable and increase its perceived size.

Reconfigure the College Avenue/Oak Avenue roundabout to simplify traffic flow and allow for additional public open space on surrounding properties. Combined with a redesign of the Schwartz Center plaza, this change can create a series of dynamic civic spaces near Cascadilla Gorge.

Take advantage of a small building setback on the southeast corner of College Avenue and Dryden Road to create a plaza with outdoor seating that provides a contrast to the prevailing street wall.

In addition to locating them at corners, introduce curb extensions intermittently along the street to provide areas for accommodating trees, parking pay-stations, and other street furnishings.

Reconfiguration of the College Avenue/Oak Avenue intersection allows expansion of the existing outdoor space at the end of the block.
Mixed-Use Core: Allowable Heights
From the beginning, this urban plan took the work of the Collegetown Vision Task Force as the basis for understanding and evaluating an approach to physical improvements in Collegetown’s urban form. The Task Force’s vision statement (page 6) identified one significant weakness of Collegetown as inattention to design and quality of the built environment created in the 1980s and 1990s. Notable design failings identified during the public process included increased heights without mitigating setbacks or changes in material, and their canyon effects; severe and abrupt transitions from high-density areas to established lower-density neighborhoods of owner-occupied houses; and lack of pedestrian-oriented features.

The Allowable Heights diagram on the facing page addresses these concerns through a strategy that allows more density (and the economic benefits derived from it) while still providing graceful transitions from high- to low-density built form.

The plan achieves this goal by creating areas with 50’ and 90’ height limits to supplement the 40’ and 60’ maximums currently allowed within the existing R3 and B2B zoning districts. The increase to 90’ occurs at the area around the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road; the 50’ area occurs along College Avenue midway between Dryden Road and Mitchell Street.

Assuring that this gradual 90–60–50–40 stepping creates the desired visual impact requires sufficient building length measured along the street edge. The design guidelines detail these transitional dimensions on pages 6.9 and 6.10.
The Allowable Heights map grows out of a careful analysis of the dimensions required to create graceful transitions from areas of increased height down to surrounding neighborhoods.
Residential and commercial uses should continue to be concentrated in the core of Collegetown, with taller buildings using appropriate measures such as setbacks, materials, and façade details to break up the scale of the elevations along public streets.

- **Site:** 23,000 sf
- **Existing:** 6 residential and commercial buildings
- **Potential:**
  - 5 to 6 story (90’ max.)
  - 7,000 gsf retail
  - 60,000 gsf office
  - 80 parking spaces (1.5 spaces/1,000 gsf)
  - 2,000 sf plaza space

- **Site:** 12,750 sf
- **Existing:** parking and 1 commercial building
- **Potential:**
  - 6 story (55’–65’)
  - 3,500 gsf retail
  - 38 one- and two-bedroom apartments/condos
  - 57 beds
  - No parking provided
Additional heights near the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road can use setbacks and architectural details such as cornice lines to relate to the surrounding existing context.

Setbacks and changes in material on the upper levels help buildings relate well to the street. Curb extensions at corners also provide space for bike racks and additional seating, and improve pedestrian safety at crossings.

A small plaza at the southeast corner of College Avenue and Dryden Road could create a unique experience that can greatly enliven this Collegetown focal point and create space for special landscape elements.
Opportunities to develop the block all the way through from College Avenue to Linden Avenue could help enhance pedestrian connections between the two streets and also allow for the block’s interior to be an open green space instead of parking.

- **Site:** 38,700 sf
- **Existing:** 5 residential and 1 office building and a fire station
- **Potential:**
  - 4 to 8 story (50´–90´)
  - 5,000 gsf retail
  - 75 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments/condos
  - 160 beds
  - no parking provided; if below-grade parking is built, it could accommodate 32 parking spaces (0.5 space/unit)
Typical Section at College Avenue

Within the prescribed building profile, a range of residential or commercial uses could be accommodated. Regardless of use, buildings should maintain setbacks and include appropriately scaled elements such as signage, awnings, lighting, and landscape to support a welcoming pedestrian experience.

- **Ground-floor height**: 15’ min.; 20’ max. floor-to-floor; 12’. min. clear
- **Typical upper floor**: 10’ min. floor-to-floor; 8’ min. clear
- **Building height**: 60’; 90’ max. (see map on p. 5.13); or 8 stories (max.)
- **Awnings and signage scaled to pedestrians**
- **Sidewalk extension**
With the opportunity to increase overall building heights to 50´, the area north of Bool Street can accommodate a multi-unit residential structure comprising various massing heights to smooth the transition between the commercial and residential areas.

- **Site**: 37,000 sf
- **Existing**: 6 residential buildings
- **Potential**:
  - 4 to 5 story (40´-50´)
  - 3,500 gsf retail
  - 44 two- and three-bedroom apartments/condos
  - 110 beds
  - 44 parking spaces (1 space/unit)
  - no parking provided; if below-grade parking is built, it could accommodate 44 parking spaces (1 space/unit)
New multi-unit housing in the Village Residential area can provide a transition in height and massing from the mixed-use area to the lower-scale residential districts.

Elements such as sloped roofs, dormers, and entry porches will help the new housing types blend with existing residential buildings along the lower section of College Avenue.
Village Residential: Townhouses

Multi-unit residential buildings can relate well to adjacent detached homes by sensitive use of materials, massing, rooflines, and architectural details.

- **Site:** 24,000 sf
- **Existing:** 6 residential buildings
- **Potential:**
  - 4 story (40')
  - 36 three-bedroom apartments/condos
  - 108 beds
  - no parking provided; if below-grade parking is built, it could accommodate 36 parking spaces (1 space/unit)

- **Site:** 20,600 sf
- **Existing:** 3 residential buildings
- **Potential:**
  - 4 story (40')
  - 24 two- and three-bedroom apts/condos
  - 60 beds
  - no parking provided; if below-grade parking is built, it could accommodate 24 parking spaces (1 space/unit)
This illustration depicts a potential scenario which would aggregate several individual lots and develop a new multi-unit townhouse structure. The size of the building would be mitigated by breaking down the street façade into several volumes which pick up on the rhythm of the gable ends facing College Avenue. Several entrances accessed via pathways from the street to one-story entry elements will also help a project of this type within the existing residential fabric.

For projects which would cover an area which was subject to significant changes in grade, the architecture should step with the slope of the land. This section view describes the opportunity to develop a series of townhouse apartments clustered around an internal courtyard which would split the difference in grade between the Blair Street and College Avenue apartments.
While limited in number, opportunities exist to fill in existing lots with entirely new construction. The standards outlined in the design guidelines would control elements of the housing such as roof form, porches, pathways, and materials. They would also be applied if a home on an existing lot were destroyed and needed to be replaced.

The deep lots along the north side of Dryden Road could allow for significant additions at the rear of the property. This strategy would allow an increase in units without altering the existing massing and rhythm of facades along the street.

If opportunities arise for development of a larger building on several combined lots, the design guidelines will control its massing, materials, and architectural details so that the building would be compatible with the streetscape. Highlights would include one-story entrance elements to help make a transition to the sidewalk; designing gable-ends that face the street to repeat the pitch and materials of surrounding roofs; and connecting street-facing entrances to the sidewalk with simple pathways.
Along the north side of Dryden Road, the existing rhythm of gable-ends, front porches, and pathways to the sidewalk should be replicated in all renovation, infill, or new construction.
Open Space

- Eddy Street Gate area improvements
- Walk/bikeway along gorge
- New sitting area at base of pedestrian bridge
- Enhanced plaza at College Avenue and Oak Avenue
- Bus stop kiosk in front of Schwartz Center
- Plaza at Eddy/Dryden corner
Improvements at the area around Eddy Gate could help transform it into a true gateway to the Cornell University campus and Cascadilla Gorge. Restriction on vehicular access to the area could allow a new plaza where stores and restaurants spill out into the open space, a small pocket park built along the Gorge, and a new, well-lit walking path to connect Eddy Gate to the Schwartz Center and beyond.
Removal of the roundabout at College and Oak avenues and reconfiguration of the roadway would allow for construction of a larger, more welcoming plaza in front of the Schwartz Center, possibly including a new bus shelter and kiosk that could improve and encourage transit use.

Eddy Street Pocket Park
At the corner of Eddy and Cook streets, a small child-friendly park would provide welcome open space for residents and an attractive amenity for families living in or considering a move to the area.
Discussions about Collegetown’s urban design and the quality and vitality of the area were initiated by the Collegetown Vision Task Force and revisited through the work of the Collegetown Vision Implementation Committee. The resulting urban design guidelines presented in this chapter provide residents, property owners, business owners, developers, and City agencies with the tools to understand, strengthen and enhance the physical form and visual character of the Collegetown Planning Area (see map on
The Collegetown Design Guidelines described in this chapter grown from the 2007 Collegetown Vision Statement and were expanded upon during the public charrette conducted during the planning process. They:

- set the course for the creation of an outstanding urban environment that builds on its proximity to the adjacent campus of Cornell;
- promote the creation of a diverse, commercially viable, dense, mixed-use community characterized by notable urban design, a predominantly student population, high-quality architecture, vibrant public spaces, and pedestrian amenities;
- protect the high quality of life in the residential neighborhoods east of Collegetown through the provision of transition areas between high density of the mixed-use core and the low-density neighborhoods of Bryant Park and Belle Sherman;
- strengthen the visual appearance and the residential mix of owner-occupants and student renters in the residential historic district between Collegetown and downtown and build on the benefits of an advantageous location between two active commercial areas;
- reduce automobile traffic and parking in Collegetown by enhancing facilities for multimodal alternatives such as public transit, walking, and biking; and
- enhance open space resources in Collegetown with focus on the Cascadilla Gorge.

**How the Design Guidelines Will Be Used**

Broadly speaking, the guidelines are intended to provide developers, property owners, architects, and other design professionals with a clear sense of direction on building form, architectural design, pedestrian and multimodal amenities, treatment of the public realm, and other considerations as they proceed through regulatory review. More specifically, if adopted, the Collegetown Design Guidelines will immediately serve as the basis for development of new zoning regulations that would set forth requirements for both new development and alterations to existing buildings. The new zoning will incorporate “form–based” standards drawn from the guidelines presented in this chapter and elsewhere in the plan.

The codified design guidelines will be incorporated into the review processes conducted by the City’s various review boards and staff and will in this way benefit the broader Collegetown community. Under existing ordinances, these review processes can involve the Design Review Board whose jurisdiction currently includes the center of Collegetown; the Landmarks Preservation Commission, with purview over the East Hill Historic District; and the Planning and Development Board, whose involvement may be triggered by a variety of project characteristics. The new zoning legislation will more fully lay out the coordination of the review process and responsibilities of different review bodies.

Paralleling the organization of Chapter 5, this chapter contains design guidelines for each of the six character areas. In the area with the greatest potential for change, the Mixed-Use Core (character area 1) the guidelines are intended to ensure future development will support a variety of uses, create a more pedestrian public realm, and become more visually attractive. The Village Residential (character area 2) aims to expand the number and variety of housing opportunities in Collegetown and become a transitional area between the mixed-use core and the surrounding neighborhoods. Because these two areas are likely to experience the greatest change they have the most detailed guidelines.

Preservation Areas A—C (character areas 3–5) each respond to the visual qualities of their locations. Preservation Area A allows for in-fill construction to increase the number of housing units in the area without changing the funda-
mental character of the streetscape. Area B seeks to maintain the character of the existing neighborhoods through the protection of existing buildings and design controls on future renovations and new construction. Area C aims to protect and enhance the historic district through design controls and support of uses that encourage stewardship of existing properties.

The Open Space Network (character area 6) presents guidelines for strengthening the character of Collegetown’s open space and highlighting its greatest natural resource, Cascadilla Gorge. It also suggests ways to connect various open spaces into a system and program them with activities to ensure their success.
Goal of Mixed-use core:
To ensure that future development in Collegetown will support a diversity of uses, create a more pedestrian-friendly public realm, and become more visually attractive.
Preferred Use
Existing zoning for the mixed-use core area currently allows many uses, including retail, office, and housing. The primary residents are undergraduate students from Cornell. Keeping the area active and vibrant throughout the day and evening can be supported by maintaining and expanding a wide range of uses that will appeal to students, faculty, and staff, as well as non-university-affiliated residents and tourists.

• Wherever possible, incorporate retail, cultural facilities, entertainment, or other uses on the ground floor in order to enliven the pedestrian experience.

• In areas where these uses are not possible, attempt to locate office uses that do not require screening from public view (architects, graphic designers, caterers, and other small businesses often welcome storefront locations).

• Upper levels of buildings should include housing geared toward undergraduate students or commercial office space.

• Restaurants, drug stores, grocery and convenience store, clothiers, and other services that will serve both the student and non-student population should be encouraged.
Site Design
Making buildings the primary elements along sidewalks encourages an active street. Locate parking, service, and access to the rear of a site.
• Place buildings near the front lot line so that they meet the sidewalk and help support a continuous active edge.
• In select areas, allow a 5’–8’ setback in order to provide visual interest to the streetscape and accommodate outdoor dining uses or limited outdoor merchandise display.
• Assure that entries to ground-floor uses follow changes in elevation along a façade’s length to allow continuous access from the sidewalk.
• The guidelines strongly discourage large openings in the ground floor of buildings along major streets for garage access or service.

Parking
Carefully consider the pedestrian experience when designing building facades or parking lots in the core of Collegetown.
• Ensure that surface parking lots are shielded from view from the sidewalk.
• Access to parking lots and parking structures should not create large openings in the ground floor of buildings. The garage openings should be well integrated into the exterior design of the building and site elements.

Access to parking should be integrated into the scale, composition, and rhythm of the building façade.
Height
In light of pronounced topographical variations, give careful consideration to the height of structures when seen from a variety of vantage points. The heights of buildings must balance the need to create a streetscape environment that does not overwhelm the pedestrian yet still supports a critical mass of people and diversity of uses that will enable Collegetown to maintain and expand its vibrancy and commercial success. Careful consideration has been given to creating a system that will allow graceful transitions from high-height areas to low-height areas as well as to the manner in which buildings meet the ground plane.

• The ground floors of all new buildings with street frontage shall have a floor-to-floor height of at least 15´ and no more than 20´ to ensure the potential for quality retail space.
• A select area of the mixed-use zone can support heights up to a maximum of 90´. The area for this increase in height was determined after a careful survey of the existing properties from all directions, including areas east of Linden Avenue. The 90´ limit would allow for ground-level retail and either seven stories of residential space (based on 10´ floor-to-floor heights) or five stories of commercial space (based on 13´ floor-to-floor heights) to be located above.

Development of buildings to a maximum height of 90´ is permitted in select areas within the mixed-use core. For a precise location of boundaries, see the city’s official zoning maps.
Typical Setbacks
- Any portion of a building, along any elevation, that exceeds a height of 60´ shall be set back from the edge of the building by no less than 12´ in order to diminish the impact of the height on street level or areas located on the downhill side of the street.
- Corners shall be beveled, based on connecting two points that are set back 10´ from the intersection of the two wall planes. Treatment of corners in this way is intended to provide additional space for pedestrian circulation or entries to ground-floor spaces at corners.

College Avenue and Oak Avenue
- Given its special prominence as the terminus of College Avenue, location along Cascadilla Gorge, and symbolic role as the bridge to Cornell University, the site currently occupied by Collegetown Bagels and Student Agencies should be able to accommodate additional height in a way which reflects its many unique aspects.
- The corner shall be permitted to allow heights of 90´ without the typical setback at 60´ as defined in all other locations within the mixed-use zone, provided that this height does not extend more than 30´ along either wall plane projected back from the corner. The intention is to create a slender form whose proportions and scale do not overwhelm pedestrians, while serving as a beacon for Collegetown throughout the city and region. In order to emphasize this form, the maximum height for the remainder of the building shall be 80´. The wall planes along College Avenue and Oak Avenue shall be set back 5´ in order to emphasize this form at the ground level.
Transitions to adjacent areas

- In order to provide graceful transitions between the mixed-use areas with 90° and 50'-60° maximum heights, additional setback requirements shall be placed upon those areas of a building that are in excess of 60°. From a point set back 12’ from the edge of the 60° portion of the building, additional stories must fall within an envelope defined by a line leading upwards at a 45-degree angle. This transition would occur wherever the 90° area meets a 60° zone or a 50° zone.
Overall urban form

The elevation below shows the way in which the setback and height strategies for the mixed-use core will allow a graceful transition to the surrounding village residential character area. As a view of the east side of College Avenue from Oak Avenue to just south of Catherine Street, the elevation shows how the street wall will be perceived at 60´ tall, with a special element that marks the northernmost edge at the Gorge, and stepped massing as the boundary line for the 60´ zone is approached.
Collegetown
URBAN PLAN & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Materials
In general, dense mixed-use areas benefit greatly from a range of exterior materials and styles that help suggest the diversity of activities and uses within the buildings. This diversity already exists in Collegetown and should be strengthened through the use of a range of materials.

- Place special emphasis on attractive materials that convey a sense of quality, beauty, and permanence, such as brick, limestone, granite, and cast stone.
- Discourage additional use of concrete block or precast concrete, except as minor façade elements or in those areas not readily visible from the public realm.
- Materials on the lowest levels of buildings and near sidewalks and entries shall be of the finest quality and highest level of durability.
- Avoid the use of opaque panels, such as mirrored glass or painted metal.

The use of a variety of quality materials can be an attractive way to break down the scale of a building.
Architectural and Façade Design

Innovation and contemporary design should be encouraged in Collegetown, provided that the result is not discordant with the overall character and image of the area. Several valuable lessons can be learned from the east side of the 400 block of College Avenue and should be included in the design or the renovation of buildings in the mixed-use core.

• Through the use of materials, window sizes and configuration, and other architectural details, buildings shall have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top.
• If the area of a façade plane facing a public street exceeds 6,000 square feet, 50% of the area that exceeds the limit must be set back from the facade by at least 10’.
• Design architectural elements to provide a sense of scale, visual richness, and safety to a person along the street; this includes a varied rhythm of window and door openings, and awnings.
• Façades shall include horizontal lines of expression, such as string courses and cornices, that correspond to the height of adjacent context buildings.
• Large windows at the ground floor that allow a high degree of visual connection between the sidewalk and the interior are encouraged. Make a minimum of 75 percent of the ground floor façade transparent glass to enliven the pedestrian experience.
• Ground-level retail storefronts are encouraged to have exterior awnings that coordinate with the design of the storefront and overall building.
• Entrances to stores, offices, and other active ground-floor uses shall be provided at least every 100 feet along the sidewalk where possible. If located along a significant slope, entries to retail shall step with the grade.
Streetscape

Improvements in the mixed-use core area should help create an attractive and comfortable public realm around which redevelopment can occur. Improvements such as wider sidewalks, regular street trees, ornamental vegetation, street furniture, human-scaled lighting, and safe crosswalks create a pleasant and safe environment for people who shop, eat, socialize, or simply sit and observe street activity.

- In the 300 and 400 blocks of College Avenue, reconfigure the sidewalks by centralizing parking meters at a single location, widening the sidewalks at the College/Dryden intersection, and reconstructing the sidewalk with a single material (ideally brick) from the face of buildings to the back of the granite curb.
- Explore opportunities to widen sidewalks in places logically aligned with major building entries or uses that can spill out from the interior to enliven the street.
- Plant continuous rows of street trees on both sides of Dryden Road, paying particular attention to the section between College Avenue and Eddy Street.
Goal of Village Residential:
To expand the number and variety of housing opportunities in Collegetown, enhance College Avenue’s role as a vital part of the community and as a transitional zone between the dense core and historic neighborhoods.
Preferred Use
The current uses along lower College Avenue and Linden Avenue are residential, and this shall remain the primary use in these areas. Future additional housing types should be able to accommodate multiple unrelated occupants, but shall not allow retail, services, or other nonresidential uses.
- Along College Avenue, the primary use should be multi-unit structures that can serve as housing primarily for undergraduate students.
- Identify architecturally significant detached homes to be considered for preservation in this area.
- The housing site on Stewart Street can serve as a graduate student residential area.

Height
The Village Residential zone serves as the transitional area between the dense mixed-use core and the traditional neighborhood areas.
- The current height maximum under residential zoning should be maintained, except as noted on the map on page 5.5.
- Within 100’ of the mixed-use character area, new buildings shall be permitted to develop heights of up to 50’. This will allow a more graceful transition to the dense core of Collegetown.

New multi-unit housing in the Village Residential area can provide a transition in height and massing from the mixed-use area to the lower-scale residential districts.
Site design
Site elements, orientation, and setbacks should enable new, higher-density housing types to relate to the existing vernacular architecture and become an active part of the streetscape.

- Assure primary access to the residential buildings from the street.
- To provide a proper transition from the public to private realm, buildings shall have a compact “green edge” zone between residential buildings and the public sidewalk. Raised entrances and single story porches or entry elements are also encouraged to enable proper transitions.
- Setbacks should be at least 6’ and increase in width as lots approach the outer boundaries of the Village Residential area, particularly at the southern portion of College Avenue.
- In order to accommodate an increase in housing density, more land area will need to be used on parts of sites currently occupied by cars or driveways. These areas could become either developed as part of a new building or become green open space as an amenity for the residents.
Materials

While the ideal housing type for the village residential area is larger in scale than the single-family homes or rooming houses that currently sit on the street, every effort should be made to assure that new housing relates directly to the vernacular housing that gives such a wonderful character to the neighborhoods surrounding the area.

- Primary exterior materials shall be wood, either painted or stained; cementitious siding products (such as Hardi-plank), brick, and stucco are also acceptable.
- Clapboards, shingles, shakes, and trim should be used in creative ways to create a pleasing and varied composition.
- Multiple cladding materials should be used to help emphasize changes in the building massing.

Although they are large, multi-unit dwellings, these projects feel more residential and well-scaled due to the use of traditional materials such as clapboards and shingles.
Architectural design

New housing in this area should try to mitigate the impact of its larger size by incorporating a series of design elements which will help it relate better to pedestrians and the surrounding historic neighborhoods.

- Organize façades to create the impression of a number of individual units and not a single, monolithic structure
- Provide many entries into units or groups of units along major streets; emphasize these entries with small overhangs or other massing arrangements.
- Encourage open porches along the public way.
- Break down the massing of buildings with projecting bays, dormers, overhangs, and other architectural treatments.
- Place a variety of window sizes and shapes along the street facades to provide more visual interest to the exterior and provide a safe, welcoming pedestrian experience.
- Use building massing and composition to enable new buildings to provide transitional heights between the mixed-use core and the traditional neighborhood.

Features that add richness and variety to the building facade—such as balconies, materials, colors, and architectural forms—are thoughtfully organized and augmented by landscape elements along the sidewalk.
Streetscape
With an increased number of residents living along College Avenue and Linden Avenue, an attractive, well-maintained sidewalk and public realm will encourage pedestrians to use these streets as major thoroughfares as they make their way to the stores, restaurants, and other services located in the mixed-use core or to the Cornell campus.

- Remove parking meters from the length of the blocks and consolidate them at parking stations in order to allow a greater variety of potential sidewalk uses.
- Improve the overall quality of the walking surface by installing special pavers and curbs; a variety of patterns and textures will also help to highlight the special nature of these streets; paving should maintain smooth surfaces; level changes should not exceed ¼-inch.
- Accommodate new street trees by locating them in curb extensions set intermittently along the street.
- Construct sidewalks at a minimum of 6´ wide; ideally using brick edged with a stone band. The distinct color and material will help give special prominence to these crossings and encourage vehicles to stop when pedestrians enter these highly visible and well-defined zones.
- Provide accessible curb cuts linking crosswalks to sidewalks.
character area 3 preservation A

Goal of Preservation A
To allow the development of additional housing through infill of existing lots without changing the fundamental character of the streetscape.
Massing

- The pitch of principal gables shall be between 9:12 and 12:12, ideally facing the street.
- Eave lines should be near the top of the second level, with usable third floor space enabled through the use of dormers.
- Buildings should be a collection of volumes, with one-story elements, such as porches, serving as transitions from the street.
**Materials**
- Wall materials shall be clapboard, shingle, and trim; wood is preferred, but cementitious material is acceptable.
- Metal and vinyl are strongly discouraged as siding materials.

**Site and Landscape**
- Buildings should face a front yard, which provides for trees, shrubs, and lawn areas to help partially screen the houses from the sidewalk.
- A paved pathway should lead directly from the sidewalk to the entry porch or overhang.

**Architectural Details**
- A mixture of clapboards and shingles is encouraged in many areas; first-floor volumes are defined by horizontal clapboards, while second story and third story gable end are shingles.
- A variety of window opening sizes within a building is encouraged to provide visual interest.
character area 4 preservation B

Goal of Preservation B
To maintain the historic character of traditional neighborhoods through protection of existing buildings and design controls on the architecture and massing of any future renovations or new construction.
Massing

- Roof lines, overall height, and composition of volumes shall relate to existing houses along the same street within 250´ of the property.
- Eave lines should be near the top of the second level, with usable third floor space enabled through the use of dormers.
**Materials**
- Wall materials shall be clapboard, shingle, and trim; wood is preferred, but cementitious material is acceptable.
- Metal and vinyl are strongly discouraged as siding materials.

**Site and Landscape**
- Building entries shall be oriented toward the sidewalk.
- A paved pathway should lead directly from the sidewalk to a one-story entry porch or overhang.

**Architectural Details**
- A simple pattern of regular window opening sizes is encouraged on smaller houses in order to relate to less complex massing.
- Smaller homes can be given more prominence through the inclusion of carefully selected details along rooflines, doorways, and porches.
- Specialty windows should be placed on the gable ends facing the street.
Goal of Preservation C
To protect and enhance the qualities of the historic district through design controls and supporting uses, which encourage stewardship of existing properties.
The overall form and design of the houses in the Character Area 5 zone is currently controlled by the regulations for the East Hill Historic District. The urban plan acknowledges those regulations and supports their goals for maintaining and enhancing the architectural and historic significance of the area.
Potential Use

• In keeping with East Hill's long history of housing the social, economic, and educational leaders of Ithaca, the properties along Stewart Avenue and Eddy Street could become opportunities for redevelopment as condominiums, co-ops, or other types of Cornell-sponsored housing. The larger homes with larger lots could appeal to graduate students, faculty, staff, or young professionals with children. A long-term commitment to taking stewardship of the houses and landscapes in this area can greatly improve the overall image and attractiveness of Collegetown.
Goal of Open Space Network
To expand the number of spaces available for passive recreation and enjoyment of Ithaca’s natural beauty, tie those spaces together, and allow for an increase in programmed activities.
Preferred Use
Collegetown should become an integral point along an interconnected public open space system that includes the Goldwin-Smith Walk and Cascadilla Park. This could enhance the pedestrian experience for those travelling from both east and west along Cascadilla Gorge and across the bridge to the Cornell University campus.

Materials
For both hardscape and plant materials, every effort should be made to specify durable items that will need a minimum of maintenance and replacement over time.
• For park areas, hardscape surfaces should be made of unit masonry or stone materials. Due to the fact that service or emergency vehicles will need occasional access to the rear of Cascadilla Hall and the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts, the selected material and construction must be either durable enough to withstand these uses or easily repaired as necessary.
• Select native tree, shrub, and plant species based on their ability to withstand the harsh Ithaca environment and to thrive with minimal watering and treatment.
Site design
In addition to establishing links to the existing trail system at the base of the gorge, the new open space system should include two pocket parks at the top of the gorge: one in the area immediately behind the Eddy Gate and one along Oak Street near the pedestrian bridge that crosses over to Cornell.

- **Eddy Park**
  > Vehicular access through Eddy Gate shall be minimized so that the area along the gorge functions primarily as a pedestrian way.
  > Hardscape areas should enable the occasional small delivery vehicle to reach Cascadilla Hall, but every effort should be made to relocate service to the Dryden Road side of the building.
  > Provide areas for seating; in addition to benches, site walls and other landscape features should enable informal seating to happen around the site.

- **Oak Park**
  > Design a small area with pavers, benches, and informal sitting areas at the Collegetown end of the pedestrian bridge from the Cornell campus.
  > Assure the least possible disturbance of existing topography and mature trees.

- **Cascadilla Way**
  > Connect Oak Park and Eddy Park by a pedestrian walkway with new walking surfaces, signage, and lighting.
  > Provide additional benches and seating options along the path to encourage people to pause along the way and enjoy the beauty of the gorge.
Site Furnishings, Lighting, and Furniture

- Provide site lighting that is scaled to the pedestrian and can accommodate specialty signage and seasonal banners and flags.
- Provide iron and wood benches along paths and in small plazas; bench seats should be yellow cedar and metal frames should have a standard black, powdercoat finish.
- Place bike racks at convenient, well-lit, paved areas in each of the park areas.
- Place trash receptacles throughout the park areas.
7. Implementing the Plan, Managing Opportunities, and Managing Enforcement

Introduction

Two essential initiatives will drive implementation of the Collegetown Plan and Design Guidelines: 1) the Sustainable Transportation System (STS) and 2) a new Collegetown zoning ordinance derived from the plan and the guidelines. Together, they create the operational and regulatory underpinnings for aligning Collegetown with the goals and ambitions of the original Vision Statement.
As the City moves through the approval process for both the STS and the new ordinance, it needs concurrently to identify and apply sufficient resources to ensure successful roll-out and management of the former and enforcement of the latter.

This chapter briefly reviews the STS and the design guidelines—presented in detail earlier in this report—and their components. It then identifies several potential development and partnership opportunities that emerged during the planning process and that offer promise for helping to implement the plan and the Vision Statement. It recommends initiatives that the City can undertake in the public realm, both on its own and in collaboration with Cornell.

The chapter also highlights Cornell's potential role as a lever to promote new retail, new commercial development, and new housing in Collegetown. It concludes by re-emphasizing the degree to which code enforcement must play a central role in sustaining the health and vibrancy of the neighborhood.

Key implementation tools

Sustainable Transportation System

As detailed in Chapter 4, the initiatives that constitute the STS include a parking-utilization study; changes in the pricing of on-street parking; creation of commercial and possibly residential parking revenue districts; and further collaboration with Cornell and with TCAT on parking and transit issues. Successful implementation of the system's components will require that they be (1) coordinated with implementation of the zoning ordinance; (2) compliant with applicable local, state, and federal laws; and (3) adjusted when necessary to changing conditions. Finally, the City—working with Collegetown stakeholders—must ensure the equitable disposition of incremental revenues from new pricing of parking and other sources.

While acknowledging constraints on City resources, the report finds it essential that a full-time City or agency staffer take charge of managing implementation of the STS. Integrating the system's multiple components by itself precludes an individual's devoting only part of his or her time to this project. Some portion of Collegetown's additional parking revenues will eventually cover the costs of such a position.

Zoning

Following approval of the Collegetown plan and design guidelines, an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance will be drafted. The amendment will serve as the plan's major implementation tool and, ultimately, the major vehicle by which the City can achieve the goals set forth in the May 2007 Collegetown Vision Statement. The amended ordinance will list permitted land uses and densities (as the existing zoning does). In addition, it will detail the allowable form and appearance of buildings, prescriptions that the current ordinance does not include. Similar form-based ordinances adopted in cities across the United States have proved an effective way to regulate appearance. The Collegetown regulations will apply equally to private, public, and not-for-profit developers. The package of amendments is scheduled for adoption before Collegetown's development moratorium expires.

Public realm

While the new zoning language will regulate future development in Collegetown, the plan and design guidelines also make recommendations for improving Collegetown's public realm. Most of this will require implementation by the City. The improvements include streetscape enhancements, new tree plantings, street and curb repairs, and possible creation of a new pocket park.
midway along Eddy Street. The City should also require sidewalk repair or replacement by adjoining owners as needed. Initially, public improvements will need to secure funding through the City’s capital budget as approved by the Mayor and Common Council. With this in mind, the City should consider identifying and funding, in the short term, an initiative such as sidewalk repairs that would show evidence of positive change and begin to contribute to Collegetown’s overall renewal. Similarly, projected incremental revenues generated by the STS can be applied to the replacement of parking meters by parking pay stations, particularly along the 400 block of College Avenue, creating an immediate widening of the usable sidewalk, especially along the eastern side. (As noted in Chapter 4, STS-generated revenues can be a major source of funding for a broad of streetscape improvements in Collegetown.)

**Cornell’s role**

The plan also identifies improvements in the public realm proposed for sites owned by Cornell. Examples include the area around Eddy Gate; the proposed expanded plaza in front of the Schwartz Center and Sheldon Court; and improvements in the Cascadilla Walk and the pedestrian bridge across the Gorge between Oak Avenue and the Engineering Quad. These sites serve Collegetown and the university as “common ground” and are among the most important links between neighborhood and campus. Their improvement will strengthen the vibrancy of the former and further underscore the significance of the latter; they should number among the first initiatives undertaken as a joint effort between the City and Cornell.

Sheldon Court itself offers a significant opportunity to enhance the all-important 400 block of College Avenue: The plan for that block includes an expansion of the plaza in front of the Schwartz Center, removal of the wall parallel to the street, and the design of a pedestrian space similar in activity and interest to the eating and gathering area next to Collegetown Bagels. Even before determining the final uses for Sheldon Court, Cornell can strengthen the building’s presence on the street as a major amenity through new exterior lighting, the addition of multicolored banners that call attention to the building’s handsome and historic character, a clean-up of the bottom-floor bay windows, and the addition of plantings or public art along the façade.

Finally, Cornell should be urged to participate significantly in the revitalization of Collegetown through investment in the development of new mixed-use office/retail space, with the university itself providing upper-floor office tenants. In Chapter 2, the report underscores the central importance of Cornell’s ability to undertake this kind of investment. As a catalyst project, such a development would not only alter perceptions of Collegetown significantly, but help cultivate the much-desired year-round workforce that could strengthen the retail health of the area.

**Managing opportunities**

In addition to coordinating and applying the major implementation tools mentioned above, the City should actively pursue a series of potential new development initiatives that began to emerge during the planning process, and that involve entities ranging from federal, county, and municipal agencies to local nonprofits to Cornell itself.

Though the following examples are by no means exhaustive—and their positive outcomes by no means guaranteed—they illustrate ways in which the City could harness additional financial and other resources in support of the plan’s goals and objectives. By leading off with potential housing initiatives, this list reflects the expressed need for better and more diverse housing opportunities as a key attractor for new long-term residents.
Housing

- Working with Cornell and a local housing nonprofit such as Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS), the City should explore the extent to which employer-assisted housing (EAH) could strengthen Collegetown’s residential, non-undergraduate market sector. As the area’s largest employer, the University could provide grants and forgivable and/or low-interest loans to employees relocating to Ithaca and wishing to live close to campus. At the same time, INHS could provide homebuyer education and additional subsidies to low-income households.

- Similarly, Tompkins County’s Industrial Development Agency (IDA), through its Density Incentive tax-abatement program, offers another potential vehicle for improving Collegetown’s residential mix. Despite the program’s tradition of focusing solely on the central business district and underdeveloped land west of the CBD, early conversations with senior IDA staff suggest a willingness to consider expansion of the density zone to include Collegetown, assuming the City formally approves the plan and new zoning. This would represent a shift for the IDA, both expanding its geographical boundaries and including affordable housing as an area of interest.

Mixed-use residential-commercial

- Income data from the 2000 census indicate that Collegetown could be eligible for New Market Tax Credits, a federal investment incentive aimed at bringing new development to income-qualified communities. The uses to which these credits can be applied include commercial, office, hotel, entertainment, and mixed-use residential/commercial development. For a rental housing project to be eligible it must derive at least 20% of anticipated gross revenues from a nonresidential use—for example, ground-floor retail with four floors of housing above.

Retail

- Several of Cornell’s academic units can potentially serve as generators of or partners in new Collegetown retail. Part of the City’s agenda in moving the Collegetown plan forward should include an examination of the feasibility of these opportunities. Each would be unique to Collegetown and would serve the local community while adding destinations for the wider market.

> The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS): Applied Economics and Management program. With Collegetown in need of a fresh produce market, the CALS program—perhaps in partnership with a chain such as Wegman’s, the Ithaca Farmer’s Market, and/or area organic farms—could help establish a combined market/prepared-foods business. Such an establishment would serve Collegetown and other East Hill residents while providing training for students within the Economics and Management program.

> Johnson School of Management: Entrepreneurship@Johnson program. Working in conjunction with Student Agencies and other private-sector providers, the entrepreneurship program should investigate the feasibility of new kinds of retail in Collegetown, including a gym open to the general community.

> Johnson Museum of Art/Schwartz Center for Performing Arts. Given Cornell’s strengths in the performing and visual arts, and the Schwartz Center’s key location in Collegetown, the university should explore ways in which the arts—possibly in the form of a combined gallery/cafe/small performance venue—can play a more prominent role in the life of the neighborhood.

Managing enforcement

Critical to the successful implementation of Collegetown’s new plan, design guidelines, and zoning will be the degree to which new and exist-
ing regulations are enforced. Throughout the planning process, Collegetown residents identified lackluster code enforcement as a major hindrance to maintaining a desirable quality of life within the community. Issues include ensuring that cars are not parked in front yards and do not block sidewalks or access for emergency vehicles; lack of resources to pay for needed parking enforcement; overflowing trash bins in front of both multi-unit houses and businesses; and apartment occupancies that exceed the maximum permitted by zoning.

Elected officials and City departments should work with other branches of government—most prominently the courts—to determine the reasons for current gaps in enforcement and to create strategies for filling those gaps. The City should review the Collegetown Plan with the City Court and incorporate the court’s recommendations into an overall enforcement-implementation strategy. In addition, the court could help to ensure enforcement of trash-related regulations, particularly in front of businesses where the responsibility for monitoring trash receptacles rests with the proprietors.

The City could also work with Cornell to identify ways in which the university might play a more active role in reinforcing compliance in the residential properties in which its students live. For example, the City could inform Cornell when a residential property fails to receive a certificate of compliance.

Finally, revenues derived from implementation of the Sustainable Transportation System will provide resources for stricter enforcement of parking regulations, as detailed in Chapter 4. Revenues from the STS could also be allocated to help manage enforcement of other regulations, such as the use of trash bins in front of businesses.

Managing Collegetown’s future
Implementation of the new plan, guidelines, and zoning as a foundation represent an opportunity to convene a cross-section of representatives from Collegetown’s varied populations—students, nonstudents, families, businesspeople, property owners, municipal agencies, safety and enforcement officers, and Cornell—to identify collective steps all members of the community could take to tighten code enforcement and, in general, to provide a community voice as the plan takes root. Working in conjunction with the Collegetown Neighborhood Council, this next generation of the Collegetown Vision Implementation Committee would continue to monitor all aspects of plan implementation while institutionalizing the coalition that created the vision itself.

For the City, a possible model for revisiting the enforcement issue, though scaled down for Ithaca, would be Baltimore’s CityStat program. Participating agencies in Baltimore range from Public Works to Health to Housing to Policy to Recreation and Parks to Transportation.¹

As described in a report issued by the IBM Center for the Business of Government,

1. A city is employing a CityStat performance strategy if it holds an ongoing series of regular, periodic meetings during which the mayor and/or the principal members of the mayor’s leadership team plus the individual director (and the top managers) of different city agencies use data to analyze the agencies’ past performance, to establish its next performance objectives, and to examine its overall performance strategies....This ongoing discussion of performance involves much persistent follow-up on past performance deficits and previous commitments to fix specific problems, as well as follow-up on decisions, commitments, and established expectations for future performance improvements.²

http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/citistat/
http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/BehnRe
portCiti.pdf
Whether adopting the CityStat model or launching a more Ithaca-specific initiative, the point would be to use the Collegetown Plan to improve cooperation and collaboration among the City, its residents, businesses, and major employer, recognizing that the spirit that produced the Collegetown Vision Statement can be carried forward to ensure the full realization of that vision.
Appendix: The Collegetown Vision Statement

May 31, 2007
As endorsed by the City of Ithaca Common Council on June 6, 2007

Prepared by the Collegetown Vision Task Force & The City of Ithaca Department of Planning & Development
Members of the Collegetown Vision Task Force

Sarah Boxer, Student Assembly representative
Herman Sieverding, Integrated Acquisition and Development Corp.
Mimi Mehaffey, business owner, Collegetown Bagels
Robert Cohen, business owner, Stella’s Cafe
Dan Kathan, Chief Executive Officer for Student Agencies, Inc.
Stephen Golding, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, Cornell University
Mary Tomlan, Common Council representative, Third Ward; Bryant Park resident
David Gelinas, Common Council representative, Fourth Ward; Cornell student
Nancy Schuler, East Hill resident
Jennifer Wilkins, East Hill resident
Raymond Joseph, employee, Jason’s Grocery & Deli

Other Collegetown community members and city staff contributed comments at meetings or submitted written comments. Some of this group included:

Susan Blumenthal, Bryant Park resident
Leslie Chatterton, City Planner and staff to the Committee
Kyle Couchman, Po Family Realty
Milton Curry, Director, Cornell Council for the Arts
Phyllisa DeSarno, Director for Economic Development, City of Ithaca
Gary Ferguson, Executive Director, Ithaca Downtown Partnership
John Gutenberger, Director, Community Relations, Cornell University
Jennifer Kusznir, City Planner
Sharon Marx, Ithaca Renting Company
Susan Murphy, Vice-President, Student & Academic Services, Cornell University
Lisa Nicholas, City Planner
Ching (Betsy) Po, Po Family Realty
John Ryan, Manager, Kraftees
Gary Stewart, Assistant Director, Community Relations, Cornell University
Joanne Trutko, Bryant Park Civic Association
H. Matthys Van Cort, Director of Planning & Development
Frances Weissman, Bryant Park resident

With review and comment from the City of Ithaca Planning & Development Board and the Planning & Economic Development Committee of the Common Council
Rapid growth spurred by zoning changes and other city-initiated incentives that were put in place in the mid-1980s has had a generally positive impact on the character of Collegetown, but also has created some less desirable consequences. By the mid-1990s, parties both inside and outside of City Hall, including Common Council representatives, concluded that there was a need to take a new look at Collegetown and its future growth and improvement.

In February 2006, with Mayor Carolyn Peterson's support, the Common Council adopted a resolution authorizing the preparation of a vision statement for Collegetown and the establishment of a task force. In April, the Mayor appointed 12 task force members representing city, business, landlord, student, neighborhood, and Cornell University interest groups. The task force selected Fourth-Ward Common Council representative David Gelinas to chair the newly formed Collegetown Vision Task Force.

For purposes of the vision statement, the area considered as Collegetown is roughly bounded on the south by Mitchell Street and East State Street (Rte. 79), on the north by Cascadilla Creek, on the west by Eddy Street but including both east and west sides of the 400 block, and on the east by the rear property lines of the east side of Linden Avenue and by Summit Avenue. (See Map #1: Collegetown Study Area, p. 2.) This boundary encompasses the commercial core of Collegetown and the full lengths of College Avenue and Eddy Street, which have historically been two main thoroughfares leading through Collegetown to the university. The area west of this boundary (along with a number of Eddy Street properties within the study area) is within the East Hill Historic District, while the area to the south and east is within the boundaries of the Bryant Park Civic Association neighborhood. Because land use and its physical manifestation in the Collegetown Study Area affect these neighborhoods and also the downtown commercial district, a broader Collegetown Impact Area has been drawn. (See Map #2: Collegetown Impact Area, p. 3.) Finally, while a more concentrated area has been defined in conjunction with the recommendations for an Urban Plan and Design Guidelines (see Map #3: Collegetown Urban Plan Focus Area, p. 17), it is likely that its boundaries will be reevaluated as work on those recommendations proceeds.

The work of the task force took place over a ten-month period between May 2006 and March 2007. Meetings were held every three weeks at the St. Luke Lutheran Church meeting room in Collegetown. Meeting notices and materials were sent to task force members and to Collegetown merchants, landlords, residents, and other community members who had expressed interest in the project. This list of invitees continued to grow as the work proceeded. The Collegetown Neighborhood Council (CNC) received regular updates throughout the process and sponsored a public forum in September. The CNC's February
2007 meeting consisted of a public presentation of the vision statement. During the course of the task force’s work, the Bryant Park Civic Association was reconstituted. In November, that group hosted task force members for a presentation and feedback session in the Belle Sherman School. The task force has benefited from comments expressed by individuals and members of civic groups.

The basis for the Collegetown Vision Statement is an early assessment by task force members of Collegetown’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), a SWOT exercise. In the course of two meetings, the group achieved agreement on a consolidated SWOT document and in the process identified five categories that
shape the current draft statement, Business, Housing & Residential Neighborhoods, Circulation & Parking, Cultural Experience, and Urban Design, which has since been broadened as Urban Plan & Design Guidelines. In addition to the overall vision presented in the following section of the report, a vision is articulated for each of the five categories, along with recommendations for achieving the vision. It is acknowledged that many of the recommendations will require further study and that one of the first steps in implementation should be the establishment of priorities and timelines.

The Collegetown Vision Statement

Goals & Objectives
The primary goal of the Collegetown Vision Statement is to set the course for the creation of an outstanding urban environment that builds on its proximity to the adjacent campus of Cornell University, an institution of importance to the city for its educational and cultural contributions and for its positive impact on the local economy. As such, there is a unique opportunity to create a diverse, commercially viable, dense, mixed-use community characterized by notable urban design, a predominantly student population, high quality architecture, vibrant public spaces, and pedestrian amenities. The vision for residential neighborhoods east of Collegetown includes a population mix of students, long-term residents, families, and owner-occupants that enables all to enjoy a high quality of life. The neighborhood between Collegetown and downtown is a primarily residential historic district that enjoys a unique status as a result of its location between two active commercial areas. This area merits attention in the form of programs or incentives to strengthen both its visual appearance and the resident mix of owner-occupants and student renters. A convenient public transportation system connecting Collegetown and the surrounding neighborhoods to the larger Ithaca community is one of several strategies aimed at reducing car traffic in Collegetown and enhancing the environment for pedestrians.

Collegetown Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths:
(1) The youth and diversity of student residents imparts an exciting, vibrant, urban quality that uniquely characterizes Collegetown. Collegetown’s high-density population includes a racial, ethnic, and cultural mix that is unique in Tompkins County.
(2) Collegetown supports a number of successful long-standing businesses and continues to stimulate new business development.

The high demand for commercial space in Collegetown results in rents that are twice as high as those for comparable downtown space. Strong demand also drives up the price of real estate, which is by far the highest in the area. As is typical of such real estate markets, the anticipation of high demand and the perceived prospects for such is another factor inflating the price of rent and real estate.

(3) Collegetown supports a strong food and beverage sector that provides customers wide choices in terms of ethnic cuisines and dining styles. Collegetown restaurants draw customers not only from the student population but also from the surrounding neighborhoods, the citywide population, Cornell faculty and employees, parents, and other visitors to Ithaca.

(4) Demand for student housing in Collegetown has been consistently strong. The student housing that was developed beginning in the mid-1980s has created a dense, urban character on the lower blocks of Dryden Road and the northern section of College Avenue. Most of the market-driven housing developed in Collegetown over the past 15 years has been targeted to undergraduate students. Overall, this concentration of student housing in the Collegetown core has been good
for student renters who have demonstrated a preference for living in the midst of a student community in close proximity to the university campus.

(5) The surrounding residential neighborhoods of Bryant Park, Belle Sherman, and East Hill include a mix of student renters and owner-occupants. While existing zoning accommodates student renters, the neighborhoods are valued for the opportunity provided to homeowners and families:

• to make a relatively secure investment in property
• to enable Cornell faculty and employees to walk from home to work
• to live in long-established and safe neighborhoods with a high quality of life.

The stability of these neighborhoods and their ability to attract long-term residents is important to Collegetown, the city, and the university.

(6) Recent new development on the east side of College Avenue’s 400 block is a striking example of excellence in architectural design within an existing urban context.

(7) The Collegetown Vision Task Force recognizes that Collegetown’s greatest strength is its proximity to and interrelationship with the university. Engaging the university in a shared revitalization effort brings opportunities and resources to improve Collegetown’s physical context; to promote greater cultural, artistic, academic, and social connections between the campus and Collegetown; to strengthen the business district; to accommodate the pedestrian experience; and to protect and enhance the quality of life in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Weaknesses:

(1) Insufficient attention has been given to the design and quality of the Collegetown environment during the redevelopment of the later 1980s and 1990s. Tall buildings and steep slopes have created a canyon-like quality along Dryden Road and impinge on historic views of downtown, the valley to the south and over Cayuga Lake. In other cases, architectural design is lackluster, and buildings that do not relate well to the sidewalk or street hamper pedestrian mobility.

(2) Collegetown is not especially pedestrian or bicycle friendly. In spite of the enormous amount of foot traffic, sidewalks are narrow, uneven, and often in deteriorated condition. Cyclists are discouraged by poor road conditions and lack of amenities such as bicycle racks. Limited capacity for motor vehicle traffic and transit also compromises the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

(3) Spaces for public gathering are limited. Existing space, such as the area in front of the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts (aka PAC) and the area between the PAC and Sheldon Court could be improved to encourage greater public use. As is, the PAC presents an unwelcoming façade that drains energy and interest from the street. In contrast, the plaza adjacent to Collegetown Bagels is a popular meeting spot and an asset to the neighborhood. In addition, there is very little green space in Collegetown.

(4) The Collegetown business district does not fulfill its potential. Task force members identified the following deficiencies:

• the retail mix is limited
• a major segment of the potential customer base is tied to the university’s academic schedule
• cohesive marketing and retail strategies are lacking
• attention to the physical environment is inadequate
• there is little to attract non-student neighborhood residents.

(5) The Collegetown parking shortage, both the perception and the reality has been a long-
standing problem for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors alike. As stated in the Collegetown Parking Study, prepared in 2000 by the City of Ithaca Department of Planning and Development, car-ownership rates in Collegetown are high when compared with other areas of the city and produce a correspondingly high demand for parking spaces. On the other hand, metered parking just outside the commercial core is underutilized. Still, the general impression that it’s very difficult to park in Collegetown is a deterrent to businesses and visitors. Other negative effects of the parking shortage include blocked access due to illegal parking and the excessive paving of available green space and rear yards in the residential neighborhoods.

Business
The Vision
Integral to the Collegetown vision is a thriving business district, supported by and benefiting students, neighborhoods, Cornell employees, the City of Ithaca, area tourism, and Cornell University. Collegetown has the greatest undergraduate population density and racial, cultural, and ethnic mix of any area in Tompkins County. An objective of the vision is to diversify further the population to include a greater number of employees and residents whose presence is not dependent on the university’s academic schedule and who could support Collegetown business when students are gone. A population that mixes other age groups or family households also could create demand and support for a greater variety of retail offerings.

Challenges:
(1) Collegetown businesses are largely dependent on the patronage of the Cornell community and principally the student population. Many businesses struggle during sustained breaks in the academic year, especially over the winter and summer. The challenge for Collegetown is to diversify its customer base to promote year-round business activity.
(2) The variety of retail offerings is limited. Long-term residents in neighborhoods adjacent to Collegetown want to see retail businesses that serve neighborhood needs, for example a grocery store or drug store.
(3) Although high rents for many Collegetown retail locations can be viewed as an indicator of strong demand, there are currently a number of empty street level retail spaces. Perhaps more significantly, the vacancies are in key locations such as the intersection of College Avenue and Dryden Road. There could be a variety of reasons for the vacancies, such as inflated rents, square footage, location, or other inadequacies of the vacant space or potential development projects “in play”. Successful business recruitment will require a better understanding of the reasons for vacancies in Collegetown.
(4) There is currently little coordination or consistency among Collegetown business owners regarding business planning, recruitment, marketing, or the maintenance of public infrastructure in the business district.
Without focused and sustained attention it is unlikely that business owners, already fully occupied with management of their own enterprises, could provide all the energy needed to renew the greater Collegetown business district.

Recommendations:

(1) Support the organization of a merchant group. Working under the direction of Collegetown business owners, the City of Ithaca’s Department of Planning and Development should seek funding to engage a professional consultant familiar with off-campus college retail to conduct a market study. The study would assess what type of retail or commercial activity makes sense for Collegetown and related issues such as the reasons for vacant retail space.

The market study could inform merchants and property owners about the benefits and drawbacks of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID), similar to and possibly connected with the city’s existing BID, the Ithaca Downtown Partnership. A merchant organization could provide vision, coordination, and oversight of a cohesive strategy for strengthening the Collegetown business sector. Supported by the city and business owners, and working solely for them, the BID could be an effective mechanism for taking on the challenges confronting Collegetown businesses.

The following information would be useful to the efforts of merchants formulating a business development policy for this area of the city:

- A list of businesses and business owners currently operating in Collegetown. How many own the building housing their business? What, if any, is the correlation between property ownership and business success?
- Precise information on retail vacancy rates. What are the factors affecting vacancy: high taxes? high rents? seasonal population? insufficient parking? difficulty of deliveries? challenges of small businesses to gain purchasing power?
- A survey and/or focus group with students to learn about what does or does not draw them to Collegetown. Identify student impact on retail and restaurant business. What, for example, are the impacts of internet shopping, on campus businesses, etc?

(2) Recruit additional office uses. Additional office and administrative uses would broaden the retail customer base with people who work in Collegetown whether or not Cornell is in session. The non-student population has the potential to sustain Collegetown during breaks in the academic calendar. Increasing office uses in Collegetown would not only add to the number of people but also generate a greater mix of ages and lifestyles—in other words, a diverse population to support greater variety of retail business.

In 1982, The Collegetown Development Program, prepared by The American City Corporation, showed that Collegetown could support an increase from 60,000 to 80,000 square feet of new office space. This amount of new office space was never realized and the earlier estimate has almost certainly increased in 24 years. The most desirable service businesses or office uses would be those that in some way relate to the university, such as academic support uses, administrative offices and student or faculty-developed “spin-off” businesses. The Collegetown location is naturally advantageous for these types of businesses and focused recruitment of uses associated with the university would reduce competition with The Commons.

(3) Future business expansion, including office uses, should be contained in the area of the Collegetown business district, the B-2b zone,
until the city has adopted an urban plan for the area and established urban design guidelines. Residents of neighborhoods east of the Collegetown business district view expansion along Dryden Road as a neighborhood intrusion. Analyzing the appropriate density of commercial redevelopment south of the commercial core with reference to possible expansion of the B-2b zone could be included within the scope to be considered by an urban plan team but only with consideration of impacts on livability in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

(4) Recruitment of a strong retail anchor. Like other commercial centers, the Collegetown business district would benefit from the addition of a strong retail anchor, one that caters to students but also markets to a broader segment of the population. In many college towns, the “college” bookstore is located in a commercial area adjacent to the campus and serves the broader community.

(5) Address the Collegetown parking situation. There are multiple issues to be considered in addressing both real and perceived problems with Collegetown parking. Within this mix are the different types of parking, such as on-street, off-street, storage, long term, and short term; the variety of users including students, residents, employees, visitors, and customers; and distances from the user’s destination. Efforts to solve parking problems will require an understanding of the complexities and ideally the involvement of the university administration (more about which is discussed in the Circulation & Parking section of this report), but these issues must be addressed if efforts to strengthen the Collegetown business district are to be successful. Office uses, targeted for recruitment in the vision statement, for example, may be especially parking intensive.  

(6) Promote Collegetown businesses by taking advantage of existing annual events that occur during the Cornell academic calendar and the Ithaca Downtown Partnership’s calendar. Although year-round business would be an extraordinary benefit to Collegetown, the business community could take steps now to increase the current seasonal business and to cushion the financial burden of the off-season months. There is opportunity for the business community to promote special weekends and events related to the academic calendar as well as to link up with planned community events such as:

**Fall**
- New student orientation/welcome weekend
- Homecoming/home football games

**Winter**
- First-year family weekend
- Hockey opening weekend/home games
- Apple Harvest Weekend
- December holiday season

**Spring**
- Student arrival in January
- Greek Rush Week
- Senior Week
- Graduation weekend

**Summer**
- Ithaca Festival
- Alumni Weekend
- Cornell Summer Camps

**Other**
- Outdoor musical/dramatic performances
- Art shows and installations
- Placement of kiosks in Collegetown dedicated to announcements of Collegetown events and the erection of banners would provide notice, heighten anticipation, and promote a festive environment. Kiosks located in proximity to bus shelters could also include information about the public transit and the shuttle bus routes.

(7) Collegetown Pamphlet/Map. Collegetown businesses would benefit from a pamphlet or brochure that includes a map and list of
Further Considerations:

1. New development must generate revenue for the city. The city cannot afford to allow additional property to be removed from the property tax rolls without compensating revenue, especially given the high value of property in Collegetown.

2. Zoning regulations, specifically the Collegetown Parking Overlay Zone (CPOZ) and building height restrictions set at 60 feet, have been cited as factors limiting quality mixed-use development attractive to most office tenants.
   a. Providing on-site parking in the densely developed areas of Collegetown is not often physically possible and in most cases is cost prohibitive for developers. As a result, much recent new development has been permitted only with a variance from the CPOZ regulation.
   b. The present day standard for height per floor is approximately 15 feet, the optimum for accommodating an open floor plan that maximizes penetration of natural light into the central part of the building, necessary for the direct/indirect pendant lighting systems favored by most office tenants and required to support the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in the ceiling cavity.

3. Office space is not an appropriate first floor use in the commercial core. Uses that draw people and generate activity on the street, such as retail or food and beverage establishments should be encouraged or even required by regulation.

Housing & Residential Neighborhoods

The Vision

Collegetown should include a variety of housing choices targeted for household types in addi-
tion to single, undergraduate students, such as graduate student families, Cornell workforce, young professionals, and senior residents. Housing options could include townhouses, co-ops, and condominiums. These additional populations could help sustain the business district at times when the student population decreases thereby encouraging a greater variety of retail options. Redevelopment of some of Collegetown’s marginal rental properties to diversify housing choices could have the added benefit of strengthening the visual character of Collegetown.

Challenges:
1. Since the mid-1980s, most development in Collegetown has been targeted for the undergraduate student market. While this environment is very attractive to most undergrads, the high-density undergraduate student “monoculture” creates a strain on Collegetown businesses when students are gone. In addition, this narrow demographic is unable to support diversification of retail offerings.

2. There is ongoing tension between the lifestyles of the student population and the quality of life that many long-term residents expect to enjoy in neighborhoods surrounding the Collegetown business district. In recent years Cornell and the city have worked together to reduce heightened conflict at key times, such as the arrival of students in the fall and ‘Senior Week’ just before graduation. Cornell also supports the Collegetown Neighborhood Council, which helps build student awareness of the existing residential neighborhoods and municipal regulations.

3. Collegetown supports an extremely dense population that is 95% student in the core area. The density of this small area presents a challenge to the city’s ability to provide services such as street cleaning and enforcement of property maintenance regulations to create a clean and attractive environment, much to the frustration of long-term residents.

Recommendations:
1. Identify sites for development of housing for a population other than undergraduate students. Identify pockets of deteriorated housing in Collegetown for possible redevelopment of housing for the Cornell or Collegetown workforce, graduate student families, faculty, and young professionals.

2. Research mixed-housing trends in other college towns. In the course of its work, individual task force members have obtained articles on efforts of other college towns to develop housing that would appeal to non-student residents. Research on comparable efforts to diversify college town populations in other areas would be useful in planning strategies to diversify Collegetown.

3. Work with Cornell University to evaluate the viability of instituting an employer-assisted housing program in Collegetown and in the nearby East Hill Historic District. Many universities offer mortgage assistance programs as a means of competing in the recruitment of highly qualified faculty. Mortgage assistance for another spectrum of the Cornell workforce could help those who cannot afford to live near the university. The high price of Collegetown real estate and existing regulations governing building height and parking make it difficult to provide affordable workforce housing without some form of subsidy. Assistance programs would benefit the university and the city by increasing the numbers of long-term residents, thereby stabilizing neighborhoods surrounding Collegetown. A mortgage-assistance program could be an incentive for reinvestment in housing stock and would build a workforce that is within walking distance of the university.

4. Protect and enhance the East Hill neighborhoods located south, east, and west of Collegetown. There is a shared interest on the
part of residents, the city and the university to protect and preserve the residential fabric and quality of life that attracts long-term, owner-occupant residents, many of them university faculty and staff, to neighborhoods near the campus. The task force supports work recently initiated by the Planning & Development Board to establish zones that transition from higher to lower, both in scale and density, thereby mitigating some of the adverse impacts of concentrated commercial uses and high-density student residential development nearby. Residents in the Bryant Park and Belle Sherman neighborhoods have cited “walkability” as a key quality-of-life indicator and have called for neighborhood infrastructure improvements that would facilitate connections to and through Collegetown. Lack of attention to maintenance of sidewalks, insufficient number of and poor condition of curb ramps and poor road surface conditions hinders non-motorized transportation modes like walking and biking, and thus makes the neighborhoods less attractive to owner-occupant families. Some of these residents, concerned about cut-through traffic and traffic speeds, want the city to consider a traffic calming program in their neighborhoods.

**Circulation & Parking**

**The Vision**

Collegetown traffic should be pedestrian, bicycle, and transit focused. Both physical and programmatic changes should be undertaken to enhance the pedestrian and cyclist’s experience and increase the use of public transit. Improvements that encourage use of these transportation modes is a strategy central to reducing the high rates of car-ownership in Collegetown and the ever increasing demand for parking. College Avenue could be remade as ‘the great street,’ with a more significant portion of its width devoted to pedestrians and cyclists. The demand for cars in Collegetown could be reduced by high-functioning public transit that is convenient, fun, and linked to places students want to go. A car-sharing program also could reduce student demand for cars. Establishment of storage parking located outside the core and serviced by shuttle and late night service “on demand” could meet the short-term parking needs of Collegetown employees as well as the long-term needs of students who don’t use their cars on a daily basis.

**Challenges:**

1. A multi-pronged strategy is needed to assess the real and perceived parking problems, manage the current demand, and achieve reduction of future demand.

2. The Dryden Road - College Avenue intersection is one of the busiest in the city. The confluence of the high volume of pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic, coupled with a heavily used transit stop, produces congestion and sometimes dangerous conditions. There are similar problems with the intersections of College and Oak Avenues and of Dryden Road and Eddy Street.

3. Due to the combination of narrow streets, challenging topography, volume of pedestrians, and a variety of transportation modes, emergency vehicle access is already a problem in Collegetown. Redesign of the street and sidewalk to accommodate pedestrians could also adversely impact access for emergency service vehicles.

4. There are concerns for the safety of students who return to Collegetown from the campus or who walk to storage parking at late night hours. Programs in place such as Cornell’s “blue-light” program do not meet the needs of all students and anecdotal evidence indicates that students are not inclined to pre-schedule their transportation needs, so late night transit or escort service must be flexible.
Recommendations:

(1) Conduct a transportation study with a focus on accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit and reducing the demand for cars. The existing high-volume pedestrian traffic justifies an effort by the city to explore design and infrastructure improvements that would provide an optimum pedestrian experience, encourage bicycle use and enhance public transit service. Consistent with the vision statement the study would look at the general service levels of existing transportation systems and mitigation of negative impacts of all transportation modes. Examples of specific areas of interest are the establishment of an Ithaca Carshare pod in Collegetown, safety at the intersection of Dryden Road and College Avenue, and traffic calming treatments in nearby neighborhoods.

(2) Update the Collegetown Parking Study (July 2000), prepared by Jessica Greig for the City’s Department of Planning and Development, either as a component of the transportation study or as a companion document. It has been noted elsewhere in this vision statement that there is general perception of a serious shortage of parking in Collegetown that is a deterrent to visitors, customers and business owners and developers. However, this is a blanket impression that doesn’t differentiate among on-street, off-street, long term, short term or storage parking or the variety of users and user needs. One can typically find daytime metered parking in increasing amounts as one travels south along College Avenue, yet these metered spaces don’t meet the needs of employees who park for 4-8 hours a day, don’t meet the needs of students for long-term storage and are not conveniently located for customers who want to complete their retail business quickly. In addition, Greig’s report presents a number of ideas for reducing high rates of car ownership in Collegetown, some of which have been implemented and others that merit fresh consideration.

The updated report should include an assessment of the quality and quantity of all types of parking, different user needs, location of parking and impacts of parking on the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, as well as reducing the high rates of car ownership in Collegetown. A basic concept of the vision statement is that the university and the city will share the benefit of a healthy Collegetown environment, one that is currently constrained by real and perceived parking deficiencies. Task force members recog-

(3) Redesign College Avenue as the “great street.” College Avenue is an historic gateway to the university campus and remains an important access route today. Collegetown is unique in that it’s the only urban interface with the campus. The significance of these attributes in combination with the pedestrian focus of the vision provides a rationale for the concept of redesigning College Avenue as the “great street.” Ideas for the “great street” include:
• removal of on-street parking on the 400 block allowing greater sidewalk width, greater opportunities for outdoor seating,
• closure of the 400 block to traffic for special events and celebrations
• signing the street as a neighborhood destination and Cornell gateway, placement of street banners in the commercial area
• streetscape improvements and enhanced public transit facilities
• kiosks for posting public notices.

(4) Evaluate feasibility of creating additional parking in Collegetown and storage parking outside the Collegetown core area. Possibilities for additional parking could include
adding to the existing Dryden Road garage or constructing a new garage. A benefit improvement district could help support development of additional public parking.

Provision of storage parking allows existing on-street parking to be limited to short-term use for deliveries and public transit. Storage parking would have to be conveniently located and with regular transit service.

(5) Re-evaluate the residential parking permit system. Assess the viability of program expansion to take stress off the surrounding neighborhoods.

Further Considerations:
Proposals for physical changes to streets or sidewalks would require the following considerations:
- How would this affect the needs of emergency service providers such as the Ithaca Fire Department and Bangs Ambulance?
- What would be the visual impacts of such change?
- What are the cost/funding implications and opportunities?
- What would be the effect on the business community?

Cultural Experience
The Vision
There is opportunity in Collegetown to enhance the urban environment by merging the abundant art and cultural programs on the campus and in the community with the street life in Collegetown’s business district. An example is the recent sculpture installation, sponsored by the Cornell Council for the Arts, which has received much attention. In an area with so much foot traffic, public spaces, new or reclaimed, are of special value in providing venues for public art, performance and public gathering.

There is opportunity to raise awareness and appreciation of Collegetown’s history by highlighting older buildings, structures, and other remnants that recall its development. The Cascadilla Creek Gorge is a dramatic natural feature that with better integration can impart a unique and picturesque quality to the overall Collegetown landscape. Similarly, sweeping views and vistas to the south, west, and north merit attention when considering siting of proposed development projects.

Performance, art, interpretation of natural and cultural resources, and the opportunity for public gathering would enhance the Collegetown community. It would draw people to the street, benefit local retail business, strengthen the character of Collegetown, and by extension, the city and the university.

Recommendations:
(1) The Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts (PAC) should be leveraged as a major cultural institution that, with proper planning and promotion, can attract a great number of students and non-students to Collegetown and its businesses. As a premier venue for Cornell performing arts, it should be showcased within the context of a revitalized Collegetown. Despite the attention to its architectural design, its unwelcoming and uninviting expression at the street level limits its contribution to the vitality of the Collegetown streetscape. Any future establishment of a merchant group should include representation from the PAC.

(2) Identification, rehabilitation, and interpretation of historic, architectural, and natural resources should be included in the scope of the urban plan. The East Hill Historic District, including the Eddy Gate, is a designated historic resource. Deferred maintenance of the Eddy Gate and immediate surroundings diminishes its considerable symbolic
value as a historic and urban entrance to Cornell. Similarly, the Cascadilla “walk,” extending from Eddy Gate east along the edge of the Cascadilla Gorge to the College Avenue bridge, and giving access to the Cascadilla Glen Trail, is an outstanding feature that highlights the dramatic, picturesque quality of the Collegetown landscape. In its current neglected condition its contribution to the visual character of Collegetown and its desirability as a route of pedestrian travel is limited.

In addition to the designated historic resources, there are other properties and areas that punctuate the story of Collegetown’s historical development. Interpretation of this story, possibly with markers, signs, literature, or other means, will add interest and depth to the Collegetown experience for students, other residents, and visitors.

A Cornell campus information center located in Collegetown would accommodate a great need not only for visitors but also for local residents unfamiliar with the campus and what it offers to the Ithaca community. Whether the center takes the form of a kiosk with maps and information or is a branch of a central visitor’s center located elsewhere, such a facility would be an attraction in line with other recommendations of the vision statement.

Urban Plan & Design Guidelines
The Vision
The urban plan knits together the various roles attached to Collegetown, such as a densely populated, multicultural, high-energy student environment; a destination for prospective students, their families, prospective faculty and visiting scholars from around the world; an historic gateway to Cornell, symbolized by the historic Eddy Gate; and a vibrant, 24/7, year-round, and mixed-use district.

Some of the more prominent components of the vision statement that should serve as points of reference for Collegetown’s urban plan include:

Business
- architectural form that accommodates desirable mixed-uses, including upper story office use
- first floor retail uses to promote street activity
- strengthening the relationship and linkage between Collegetown, Cornell University and the downtown business community

Housing & Residential Neighborhoods
- protection of East Hill neighborhoods located south, east, and west of Collegetown from the adverse impacts of the commercial and high-density student residential development with areas that transition in both scale and density.
- provision of new housing for a greater mix of household types

Circulation & Parking
- recognition that the pedestrian is the primary user of Collegetown so that private and public redevelopment routinely includes pedestrian accommodations in street design, sidewalk design, and paths of travel
- recognition of the important role played by public transit

Cultural Experience
- well-designed public spaces that provide needed venues for social and cultural experience
- highlighting the area’s dramatic geographical and topographical environment and Collegetown’s rich and distinct development history

Recommendations:
The City of Ithaca Department of Planning and Development shall oversee a two-step approach to realizing the physical embodiment of the
vision statement: implementing an ideas competition and preparing an urban plan with corresponding urban design guidelines. As an active participant in the visioning process, the planning department and members of the Collegetown Vision Task Force have a full understanding of the vision statement recommendations. The task force recommends that its charge be extended, or a new group with crossover membership be appointed to guide the processes of the ideas competition and the preparation of the urban plan and design guidelines. In order to ensure that the methods to be employed in achieving the vision accurately reflect the task force’s work, the city must remain in control of the process. However, because Collegetown is the most prominent entrance to Cornell University and a substantial portion of the Cornell undergraduate population resides in Collegetown, the university and the city have a mutual interest in its urban plan. Thus, the city should actively seek to engage the university during the entire urban planning process and both entities should participate in exploring funding and cost-sharing measures.

1. Implement an ideas competition for Collegetown
   As presented to the task force by the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA), an ideas competition would engage artists and designers across the country in a much-needed dialogue about how to revitalize the Collegetown sector of Ithaca. The concepts outlined in the vision statement will serve as the guiding principles for the competition and for the criteria upon which the competition entries will be judged.

   As demonstrated by other competitions, an ideas competition for Collegetown would have the potential to generate innovative concepts for the improvement to and the treatment of Collegetown that may be outside the scope of a typical urban plan. By leveraging the international name recognition
of Cornell University, a well-publicized and efficiently executed ideas competition has the potential to bring greater attention to Collegetown as an attractive destination and investment opportunity for developers and future business owners. By choosing to conduct an ideas competition prior to embarking on an urban plan and design guidelines, the task force recognizes the advantages gained by addressing the vision statement from a contemporary and artistic vantage point that could then contribute to the outcome of an urban plan. In furthering the level of collaboration between the city and the university, the CCA should be an active participant because of the expertise, leadership, and experience it could bring to the task of organizing and conducting the ideas competition.

The boundaries of the focus area are not intended to limit the area for study nor to dictate or imply future zoning district boundaries.

2. Creation of an urban plan and design guidelines
Following on the ideas competition, the development of an urban plan and guidelines employs a more traditional approach to the development of built form, both public and private, with a well-defined scope and a more or less standard set of tools. The urban plan, directed by the vision statement and taking into account the competition’s final ideas, could result in an innovative and comprehensive approach to shaping the future of Collegetown.

The area that has been outlined as the focus of the urban plan and design guidelines is bounded on the east by rear lot lines of properties on the east side of Linden Avenue and by Summit Avenue, on the north by Cascadilla Creek, on the west in a southerly direction from Cascadilla Creek along the rear lot lines of properties on the west side of Eddy Street between Williams and Buffalo Street, then southerly along Eddy Street to Catherine Street, then easterly on Catherine Street to the rear lot lines of properties on the west side of College Avenue south to Mitchell Street, and on the south by Mitchell Street. In developing the plan and guidelines, however, it is anticipated that these boundaries will be reevaluated, and that consideration will also be given to surrounding neighborhoods and downtown. A review of existing zoning should be included within the scope of the urban plan to insure that zoning is consistent with the plan and, if not, to recommend changes prior to the preparation of design guidelines.

The design guidelines would be binding, incorporated into the municipal code and coordinated with anticipated design guidelines for other areas of the city. The guidelines would include but not be limited to items such as:
- gateway treatments
- building height, massing, form, fenestration, exterior materials, color, and orientation
- design and layout of College Avenue as the “great street”
- pedestrian amenities
- traffic calming devices
- protection of long-term residential neighborhoods with transition areas to mitigate effects of high density development in the Collegetown core
- strengthen the visual and thematic links between Collegetown and downtown.