

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

## SECTION 6-2-1

### NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

This section describes neighborhoods and land uses within and near the Project limits, including aspects of community cohesion, local plans and zoning, community facilities, and planned development; presents an assessment of the Project alternatives' consistency with existing and future development patterns associated with neighborhood character; and provides a context for the analyses/evaluations presented in subsequent sections of this FDR/FEIS. **Section 6-2-2, Social Groups Benefited or Harmed**, describes the demographic profile of the Project Area and the potential effects of the project on elderly, disabled, and transit-dependent populations. **Section 6-2-3, Environmental Justice**, identifies the minority and low-income populations in the Project Area and the potential for the I-81 Viaduct Project to result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on these populations in accordance with Executive Order 12898.

The assessment considers the four study areas described in **Section 6-1, Introduction** (the Central Study Area, I-481 South Study Area, I-481 East Study Area, and I-481 North Study Area). For the assessment of social considerations in this section, each of the study areas generally extends one-quarter mile from the Project limits (see **Figure 6-1-1**). The one-quarter-mile area includes the land in which the proposed changes to the I-81 and/or I-481 right-of-way are most likely to affect land uses. This includes land directly abutting the right-of-way and land along streets connecting to the right-of-way.

#### 6-2-1.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

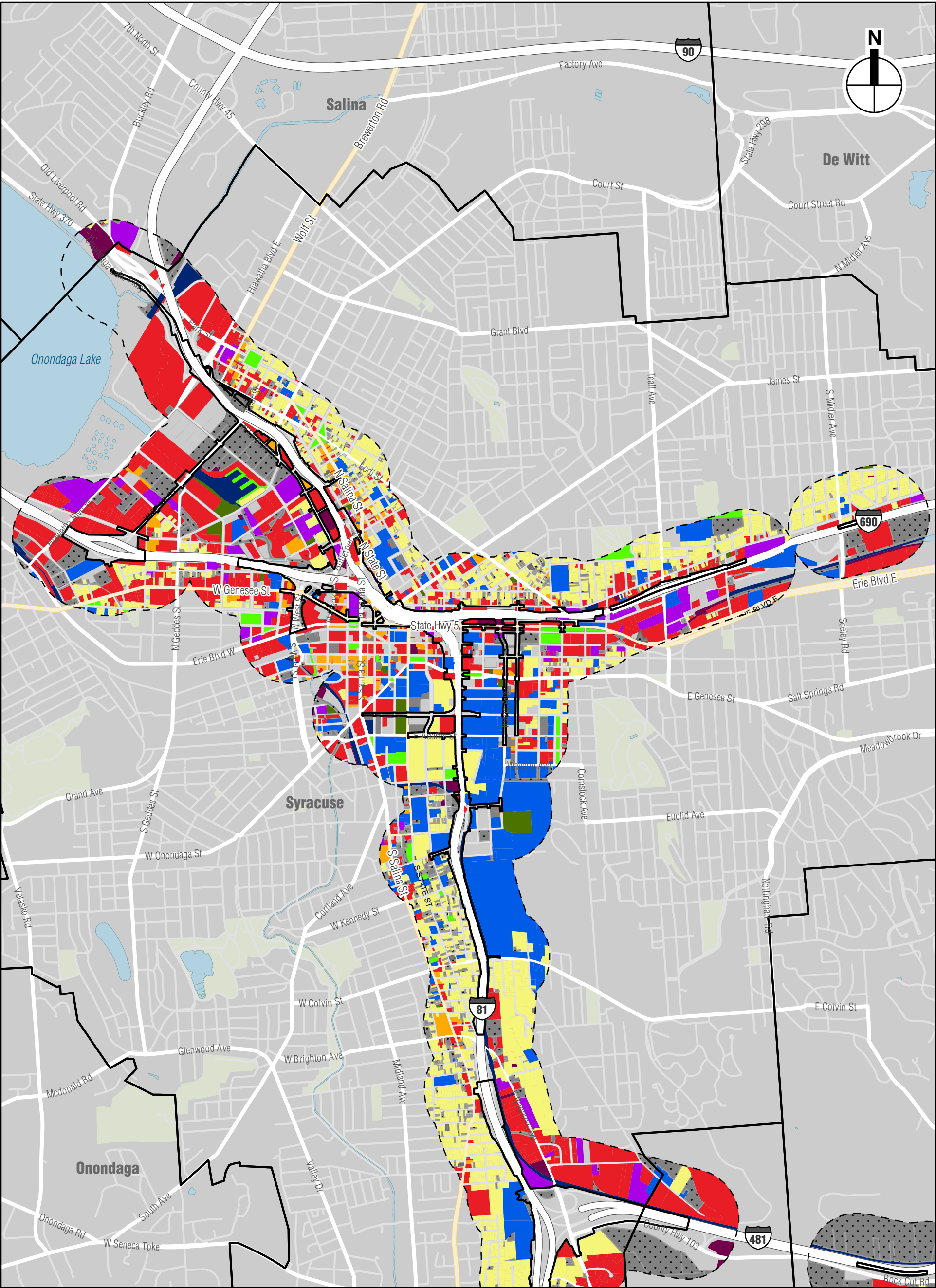
##### 6-2-1.1.1 NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

The neighborhoods within each of the study areas are outlined below.

- **Central Study Area.** The Central Study Area is located mostly within the City of Syracuse, with a small area in the Town of Salina. The “Central Study Area” refers to the section of I-81 between approximately East Brighton Avenue and 0.7 miles north of Hiawatha Boulevard, and the portions of I-690 between approximately Hiawatha Boulevard West and Bear Street and Leavenworth Street and Beech Street. The Central Study Area also includes some local roads in proximity to I-81 and I-690 in Syracuse.

This area includes neighborhoods south and west of I-690 and I-81, respectively, including Downtown, the Southside, Near West Side, and Brighton; neighborhoods south and east of I-690 and I-81, respectively, including the Near Eastside and University Hill; and neighborhoods north of I-690 including Franklin Square and Lakefront to the west of I-81, and Northside neighborhoods including Washington Square, Prospect Hill/Little Italy, Hawley-Green, and Lincoln Hill. For descriptions of each neighborhood's land uses and general characteristics, see **Section 6-2-1.1.2**.

- **I-481 South Study Area.** The majority of the I-481 South Study Area is located in the Valley, Brighton, and Outer Comstock neighborhoods of the City of Syracuse; however, the easternmost portion is in the Town of Onondaga.



- |  |                                |  |                                       |  |                  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
|  | Project Limits                 |  | Mixed Use Residential/Commercial      |  | Transportation   |
|  | Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary) |  | Industrial                            |  | Public Utilities |
|  | City/Town Boundary             |  | Institutional/Government/Quasi Public |  | Parking/Surface  |
|  | Residential                    |  | Public Parks/Open Space               |  | Parking/Garage   |
|  | Commercial                     |  | Private Recreation/Private Open Space |  | Vacant Land      |

Central Study Area - Land Use  
Figure 6-2-1-1

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- **I-481 East Study Area.** The I-481 East Study Area is in the Town of DeWitt.
- **I-481 North Study Area.** The I-481 North Study Area is in the Town of Cicero and the Village of North Syracuse.

### 6-2-1.1.2 LAND USE

#### Central Study Area

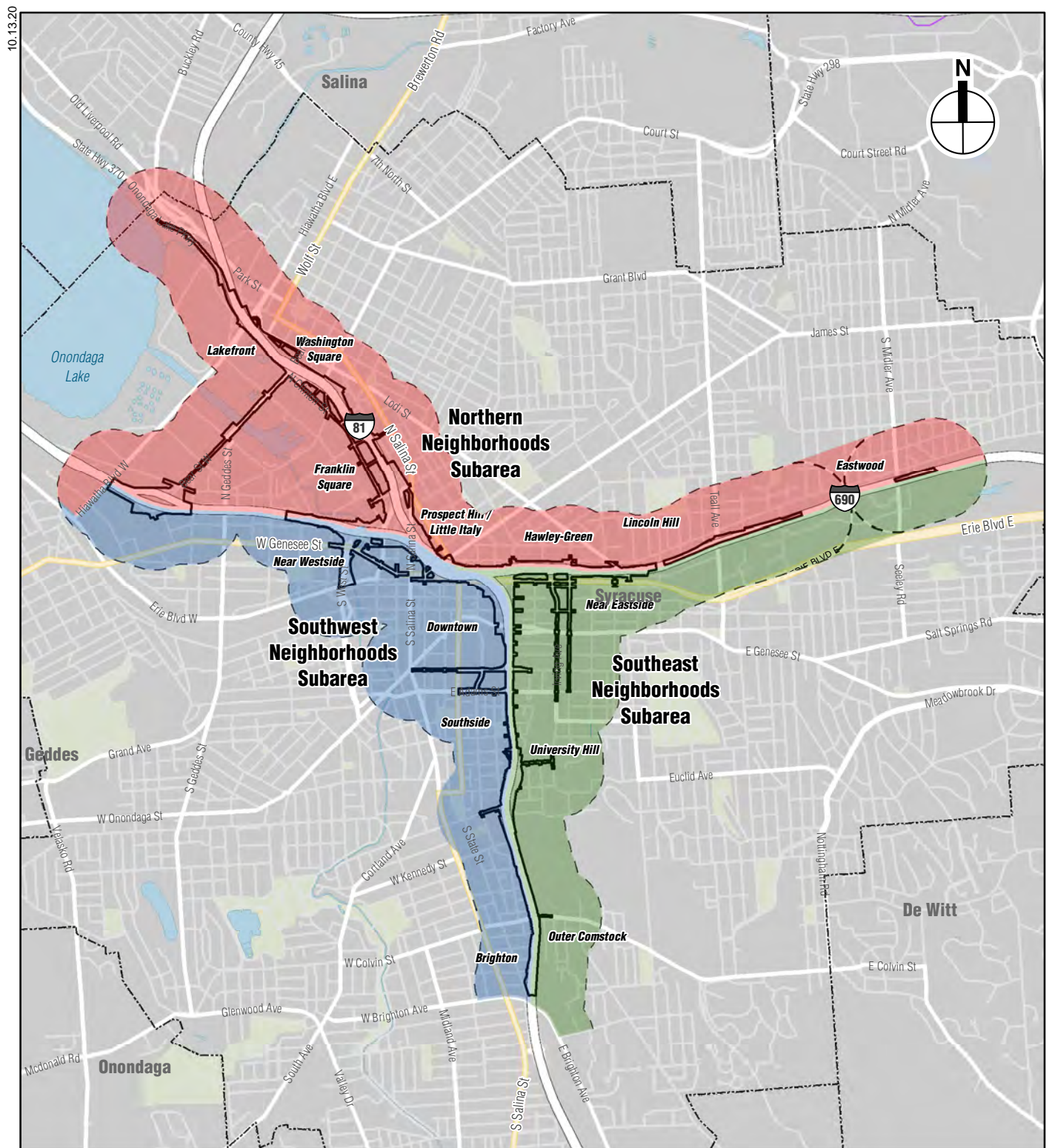
The Central Study Area is characterized by its diverse mix of land uses, including large areas of institutional uses, commercial office and retail space, residential uses, large areas of surface parking and vacant land, and transportation uses (see **Figure 6-2-1-1**). Land uses within the Central Study Area differ by neighborhood. For purposes of discussion, land uses are described by the following subareas (see **Figure 6-2-1-2**):

- The I-81 Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea (neighborhoods west of I-81 and south of I-690) comprises Downtown, the Near Westside, Southside, and Brighton;
- The I-81 Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea (neighborhoods east of I-81 and south of I-690) comprises University Hill and the Near Eastside; and
- The I-81 Northern Neighborhoods Subarea (neighborhoods north of I-690) comprises Franklin Square and Lakefront to the west of I-81 and the Northside neighborhoods to the east of I-81.

Transportation land uses are a defining characteristic of this study area, with I-81 and I-690 running through and, in many sections, above it. I-81 and I-690 act as the limits of Syracuse's subareas and neighborhoods. For example, the I-81 viaduct is the eastern limit of the Downtown and Southside neighborhoods and the western limit of the University Hill and Near Eastside neighborhoods. I-690 is the limit between the Northern Neighborhoods Subarea and the two southern subareas. The viaduct and ramp connections at the I-81/I-690 interchange further separate Downtown from neighborhoods to the north, including Franklin Square/Lakefront and the Washington Square, Prospect Hill, Hawley-Green, and Lincoln Hill neighborhoods (see **Figure 6-2-1-2**). Elevated ramps at West Street connecting to I-690 also serve as a boundary—physically and visually—between Downtown and the Near Westside.

Transportation land uses within the I-81/I-690 right-of-way include both at-grade and elevated roadway segments. I-81 segments south of Renwick Avenue and north of East Willow Street are at grade, whereas elevated segments of I-81 with local roads underneath (i.e., Almond Street) occur from Van Buren Street north to I-690. Numerous cross streets intersect with Almond Street below the viaduct and include, from south to north, Burt Street, East Taylor Street, Jackson Street, East Adams Street, Harrison Street, East Genesee Street, East Fayette Street, East Washington Street, East Water Street, and Erie Boulevard. Other roadways under I-81 and/or I-690 that connect Downtown with the Northern neighborhoods include McBride Street, Townsend Street, State Street, James Street, East Willow Street, and North Salina Street. Roadways connecting Downtown to Franklin Square and Lakefront neighborhoods under I-690 include Clinton and Franklin Streets. To the east of I-81, Crouse Avenue, Lodi Street, and Beech Street connect the Near Eastside and University Hill to Northside neighborhoods.





- Project Limits
- Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
- City/Town Boundary

- North
- Southeast
- Southwest

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*Note: The neighborhoods north of I-690 and east of I-81 (i.e., Washington Square, Prospect Hill/Little Italy, Hawley-Green, and Lincoln Hill) are collectively referred to as the Northside neighborhoods*

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### *Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea*

Downtown serves as the commercial center of the City of Syracuse and the greater Central New York region. Downtown is generally identified as the area with I-690 to the north, I-81 to the east, East Adams Street to the south, and West Street to the west. Downtown includes a mix of land uses such as commercial (office and retail), residential, and mixed-use formats (e.g., residential over ground-floor retail); institutional (government, medical, and educational uses); and recreation (public parks and entertainment uses). In recent years, vacant and/or underutilized office and industrial buildings have been converted into residential uses. Armory Square, in the westernmost portion of Downtown, has become a destination for its live-work-play environment,<sup>1</sup> with upper floor residential uses, restaurants, entertainment, and cultural destinations, including the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST). Armory Square also contains the southern entry to the Onondaga Creekwalk (“Creekwalk”), a walking and cycling path along Onondaga Creek generally used for recreational purposes. Institutional and cultural uses include State and local government offices, such as Syracuse City Hall on East Washington Street and courthouses; the Erie Canal Museum on Erie Boulevard; the Oncenter/Nicholas J. Pirro Convention Center/War Memorial Arena between Madison and East Adams Streets; and Upstate Medical University uses along Harrison Avenue, such as Upstate Health Care Center and Upstate Specialty Services at Harrison Center. Downtown parks and open spaces include Clinton Square, Hanover Square, Firefighter’s Memorial Park, and Columbus Circle.

Abutting Downtown and west of I-81, the Southside neighborhood extends from East Adams Street south to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. East (MLK, Jr. East). An elevated freight railroad runs through the center of the neighborhood, and the predominant land use is residential. The majority of land north of the railroad is occupied by Syracuse Housing Authority (SHA) properties, including a 75-unit townhouse-style building, McKinney Manor, and 612-unit Pioneer Homes, one of the first Federally funded housing projects in New York State.<sup>2</sup> When built in the 1960s, I-81 bisected Pioneer Homes and local streets, disconnecting residents east of I-81 from the majority of their Southside neighbors. South of the railway is SHA’s 183-unit Central Village and 188-unit Almus Olver Towers. Other uses include single- and small, multi-family homes and many vacant lots. Commercial uses are limited to a few locations along South Salina Street and include gas stations, fast food establishments, and small office buildings. A review of land uses showed that the area has limited food resources, such as grocery stores and similar local retail uses. Based on the Food Access Research Atlas found on the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDA ERS) website,<sup>3</sup> approximately 23 percent of the residents in the Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea are located in areas that are more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket. As further described in **Section 6-2-3, Environmental Justice**, demographically this area is a minority and low-income community (see **Figure 6-2-3-2**).

Institutional uses concentrated along Salina Street and East Adams Street include Syracuse City School District’s Institute of Technology at Central, Syracuse Community Health Center, Salvation Army Child Care and Early Childhood Educational Services, SUNY Upstate Child Care Center, and SUNY EOC (Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center). The Dr. King Elementary School occupies the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.most.org/visit/about-armory-square>. Accessed October 22, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> National Park Service (NPS). 2004. Multiple Property Documentation Form: Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>. Accessed November 30, 2017.

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block immediately west of I-81 between MLK, Jr. East, Oakwood Avenue, South McBride Street, and East Raynor Avenue. Other uses immediately adjacent to I-81 include Pioneer Homes, Syracuse University's Physical Plant at East Taylor Street, the SHA office at Burt Street and Almond Street, single-family homes south of the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway, and Wilson Park. Other public recreational spaces include Roesler Park, which is located behind the Institute of Technology, and Billings Park between South Salina, South Warren, and East Adams Streets.

The Near Westside is located west of Downtown and south of I-690 between Onondaga Creek/West Street and South Geddes Street. Land uses along West Belden Avenue just south of I-690 vary, often lot to lot, and include residential uses abutting automotive, commercial, and industrial uses. West Genesee Street is lined with warehouse and automotive uses, including car dealerships as well as auto repair uses and a car rental company. Other uses in the area include commercial and industrial. Transportation uses include a railroad right-of-way just north of West Fayette Street, local streets, and West Street's elevated ramps, which provide primary access to and from I-690 for neighborhood and Downtown users. The West Street ramps and sunken roadway act as a physical and visual barrier between the Near Westside and Downtown. Commercial and industrial uses line lower portions of West Street as well as cross streets Erie Boulevard and West Fayette Street.

### *Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea*

University Hill is located on one of Syracuse's largest hills immediately east of I-81 between Genesee Street and East Colvin Street. As the City's educational and medical district, the area's defining land uses are institutional and include Syracuse University, the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF), SUNY Upstate Medical University and Hospital, Crouse Hospital, Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and Richard H. Hutchings Psychiatric Center. The majority of non-institutional commercial and residential uses either support or are affiliated with the institutions and cater primarily to university and medical staff, students, and visitors. Residential uses are primarily large multi-family structures and dormitories. Commercial uses include several hotels (Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel, the Genesee Grande, and Hotel Skylar), and retail primarily along Marshall Street and South Crouse Avenue. Uses closest to I-81 include Upstate Medical University and Hospital, hospital-affiliated surface parking and structures, multi-family residences including SHA's Toomey Abbott Towers and eastern portions of Pioneer Homes, Syracuse University dormitories, and new private apartment buildings marketed toward students. Uses abutting and around Crouse and Irving Avenues include Syracuse University academic, residential, administration, and parking uses, the three hotels previously stated, private student and resident housing, commercial uses, and vacant parcels. There are some food resources in this area, including a grocery store, convenience stores, and drug stores that carry some food items. However, the USDA ERS Food Access Research Atlas reveals that approximately 47 percent of the residents in the Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea are located more than one-half mile from the nearest supermarket.

The Near Eastside is located north of University Hill to the east of I-81 and south of I-690. Land uses closest to I-81 and I-690 are primarily a mix of institutional, medical, commercial, and industrial uses. Portions of East Genesee Street have many large homes, some of which have been converted to offices or apartments.

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Land uses east of I-81 just south of Syracuse University and north of East Colvin Street are primarily residential. There are also two very large cemeteries—Oakwood and Morningside Cemeteries—in this area.

### *Northern Neighborhoods Subarea*

The I-81 Northern Neighborhoods Subarea includes Franklin Square and the Lakefront neighborhoods to the north and west of I-690 and I-81; and Northside neighborhoods including Washington Square, Prospect Hill, Hawley-Green, and Lincoln Hill to the north and east.

Franklin Square is located northwest of the I-690 and I-81 interchange just north of Downtown. Elevated entrance and exit ramps on North Franklin Street and Butternut Street provide access to the two interstates from the neighborhood. The former industrial area—a nineteenth-century production center for salt—has seen considerable reinvestment and is now a mixed-use neighborhood with retail stores, residential lofts, office space, and industrial uses. The Creekwalk’s northern entry is within the neighborhood.

To the north of Franklin Square is the Lakefront neighborhood. Retail uses are a defining characteristic of the neighborhood. The six-story Destiny USA is a 2.4 million-square-foot shopping center and is accessible from I-81 and Hiawatha Boulevard. The shopping center is surrounded by surface parking lots. To the south of Destiny USA, the Inner Harbor area surrounds a port on the Onondaga Creek. A former industrial site, Inner Harbor now includes marinas, hotels, offices, and retail. There remain large areas of vacant land where former industrial and warehouse uses have been demolished.

The Northside encompasses the neighborhoods of Washington Square, Prospect Hill, Hawley-Green, and Lincoln Hill. Washington Square, the oldest neighborhood in Syracuse, is located east of I-81 and provides access to and from I-81 from Sunset Avenue. Notable land uses include the Central New York Regional Market, a regional farmers’ market operated by the CNY Regional Market Authority that has been in operation since 1942, and railroad infrastructure around the Intermodal Transportation Center, which includes Syracuse’s Amtrak station. Other uses include recently renovated, three-acre Washington Square Park; single- and multi-family residential uses; and mixed-use properties along North Salina Street. Approximately half of the neighborhood’s mixed-use buildings have historic designation, with the 500 to 900 blocks of North Salina Street comprising the North Salina Street Historic District.

Bordered by Butternut Street to the northwest, Lodi Street to the northeast, and I-81 to the south is Prospect Hill. The area includes medical uses such as St. Joseph’s Hospital as well as affiliated uses and surface parking. North Salina Street, Syracuse’s “Little Italy,” includes a mix of residential, retail, restaurant, and automotive uses. Many buildings in this area are mixed-use. The perimeter of the one-quarter-mile study area becomes increasingly residential.

Lodi Street, James Street, and Burnet Avenue roughly bound the Hawley-Green Historic District. This National Register Historic District, named for its two main streets, Hawley Avenue and Green Street, is just north of I-690 and several blocks east of I-81. Predominant land uses are residential throughout much of the neighborhood; however, James Street includes a mix of retail, office, and other commercial uses. Burnet Avenue, which runs parallel to I-690, has a diverse mix of industrial, automotive, restaurants, retail, and other uses. Recent revitalization efforts have benefited from the neighborhood’s walkability to both Downtown Syracuse and Syracuse University.

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East of Hawley-Green is Lincoln Hill. A largely residential neighborhood, it also includes the Dr. Weeks Elementary School, the Northeast Center Community Library, and industrial and automotive uses along Burnet Avenue adjacent to I-690. Lincoln Park, a 19-acre park with baseball, basketball, and tennis facilities, a pool, and wooded patches, is just outside the Central Study Area.

This subarea has more retail and restaurant use than other subareas. According to the USDA ERS Food Access Research Atlas, approximately 38 percent of the residents in the Northern Neighborhoods Subarea are located more than one-half mile from the nearest supermarket.

Transportation land uses occur in many parts of the Northside. Exit and entrance ramps via Teall Avenue service I-690 on the east side of the neighborhood, while entrance and exit ramps to I-81 line its southern and western extremities.

### **I-481 South Study Area**

The I-481 South Study Area contains the one-quarter-mile buffer surrounding the interchange of I-481 and I-81. The majority of the area is located within the City of Syracuse, with a small section in the Town of Onondaga (see **Figure 6-2-1-3**). Land uses include residential, commercial, and institutional. Directly west of I-81 are several residential and long-term care facilities for the elderly. Other uses west of I-81 include single-family neighborhoods and a commercial retail concentration along South Salina Street south of Ballantyne Road. The retail cluster includes fast food establishments and small retail uses.

To the north and east of the I-481 and I-81 interchange is a mix of commercial, automotive, and industrial uses, many along East Brighton Avenue and Ainsley Drive. In addition to numerous auto body and repair establishments, uses include the Syracuse University Physical Plant, student housing, several wholesalers, a kitchen and bath warehouse, a brewing company, automobile and machinery rentals, and commercial offices.

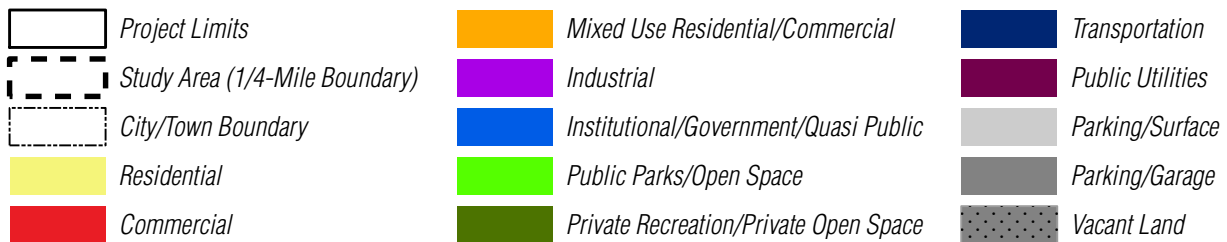
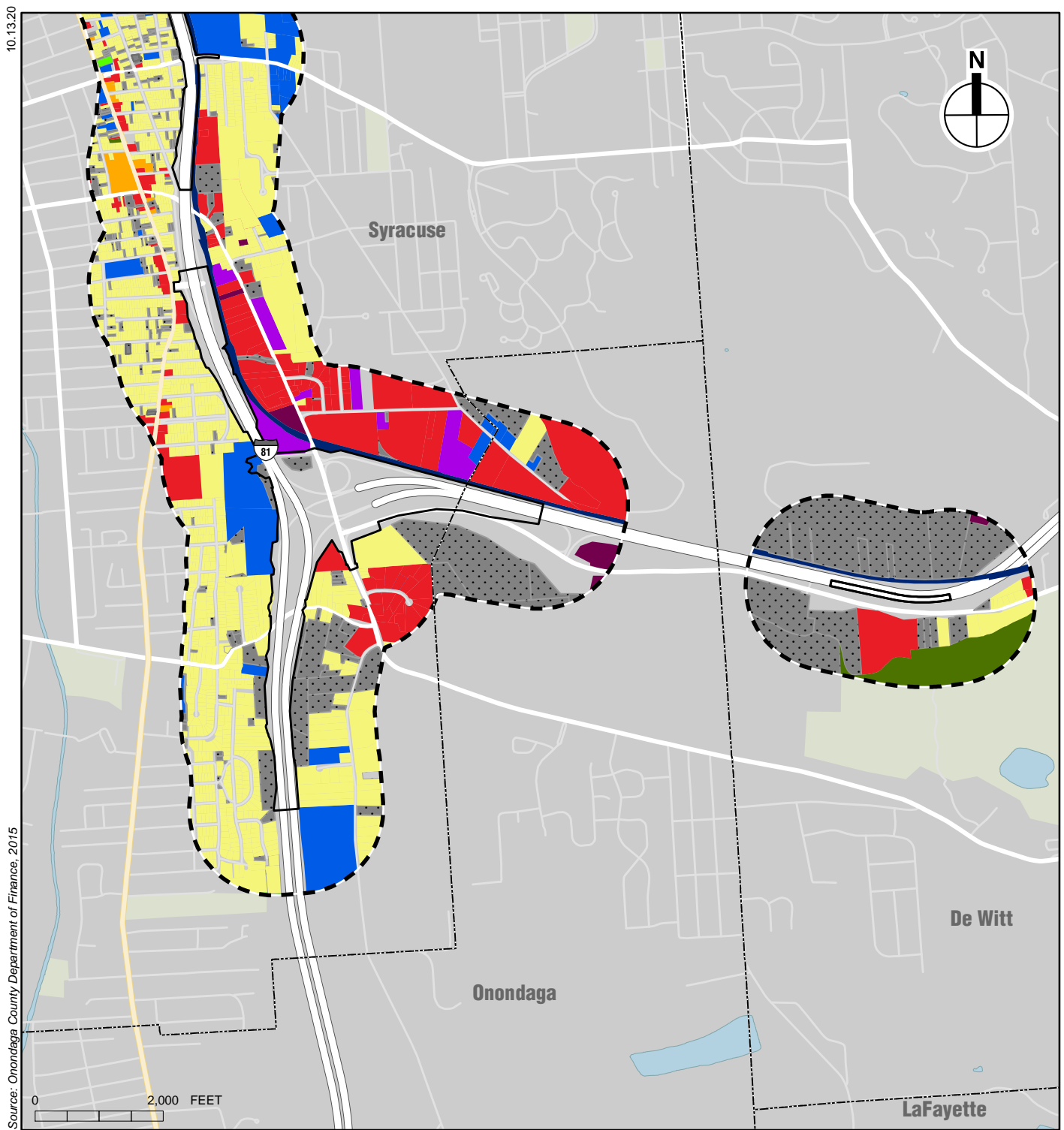
South and east of I-481 and I-81, land uses include large apartment towers and complexes as well as commercial uses. Brighton Towers, which is just south of I-481, is a 591-unit twin high-rise apartment complex for persons 55 and older. Nob Hill Apartments is located along Lafayette Road, as are single-family homes. Commercial uses include small office and retail as well as several medical practices. The Lafayette Road Experiment Station, which hosts SUNY ESF's arboreta, occupies a large parcel of land in the southeast corner of the study area.

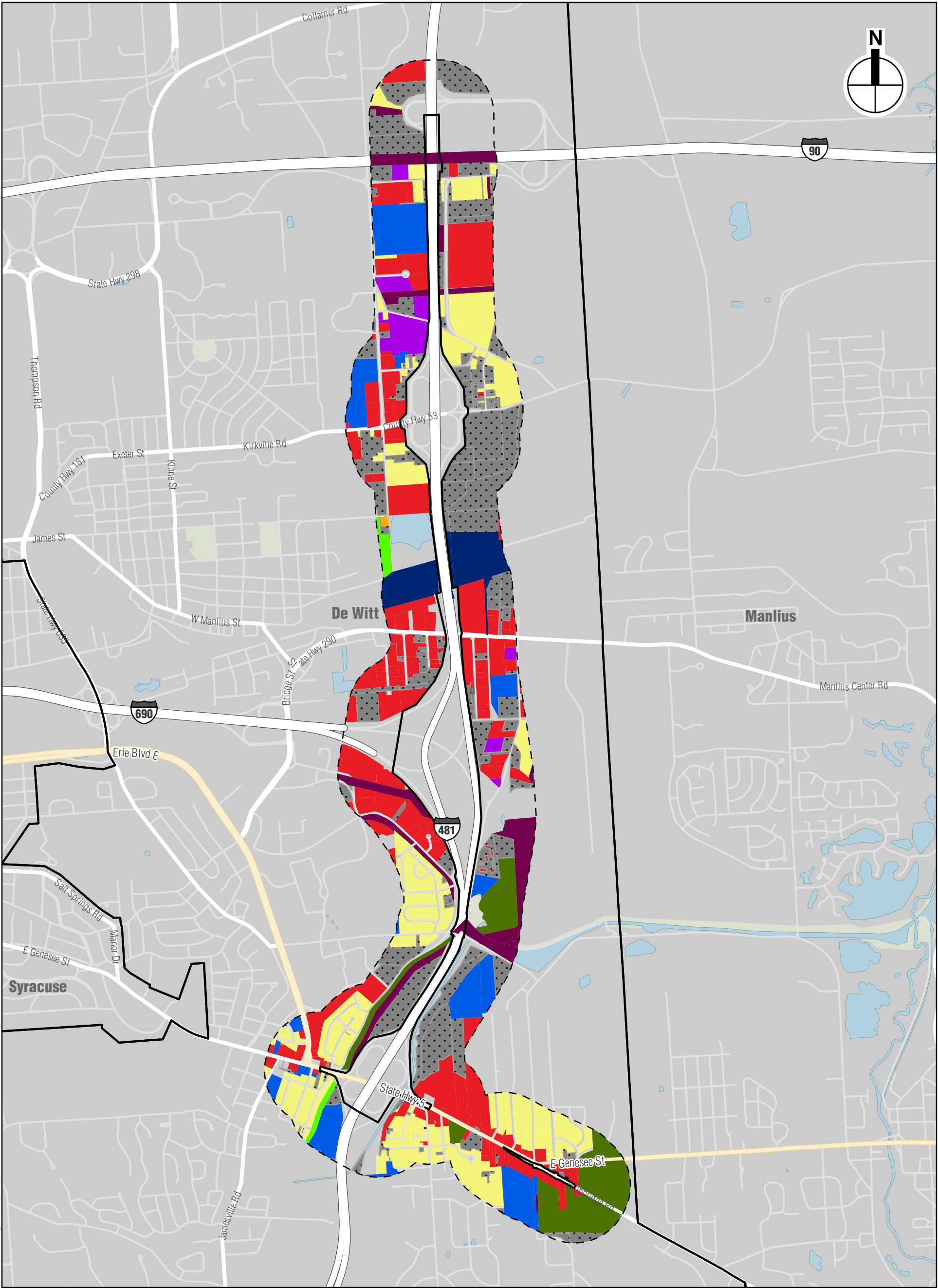
### **I-481 East Study Area**

The I-481 East Study Area includes areas of the incorporated Village of East Syracuse and the Town of DeWitt within a one-quarter mile of I-481 from approximately I-90 to New York State Routes 5/92, and then along Route 5 for about one mile eastward of I-481 (see **Figure 6-2-1-4**).

In the northern section of the I-481 East Study Area and to the east of I-481, land is primarily vacant with small pockets of residential use along Pheasant Road immediately south of I-90 and north of Kirkland Road. To the west is a commercial park with medical, office, and industrial uses, and other office uses. Further south, vacant land lies along the I-481 alignment while along New York State Route 5, several large shopping centers mix with smaller commercial uses and residential neighborhoods.







- |                                |                                       |                  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Project Limits                 | Mixed Use Residential/Commercial      | Transportation   |
| Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary) | Industrial                            | Public Utilities |
| City/Town Boundary             | Institutional/Government/Quasi Public | Parking/Surface  |
| Residential                    | Public Parks/Open Space               | Parking/Garage   |
| Commercial                     | Private Recreation/Private Open Space | Vacant Land      |

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The I-481 East Study Area includes a large freight rail yard. Land north and east of the rail infrastructure is primarily vacant and includes a wooded patch around Butternut Creek. Residential uses line Fly Road to the north and west. South of the rail infrastructure, land use along Manlius Center Road is primarily commercial and industrial. Other uses include auto services, a freight trucking company, and a building supply company.

### I-481 North Study Area

The I-481 North Study Area is located in the Town of Cicero and the Village of North Syracuse near and around the interchange of I-481 and I-81 (see **Figure 6-2-1-5**). More than half of the study area is single-family residences along suburban streets north and south of I-481 between I-81 and Totman Road, and east of I-81. Commercial uses are located near interchanges that provide auto access to and from I-81 and I-481. The commercial concentration west of I-81 at the South Bay Road interchange includes multiple automotive uses. Around the I-481 and Northern Boulevard interchange to the west are industrial uses, warehouses, and vacant land.

### 6-2-1.1.3 LOCAL PLANS AND ZONING

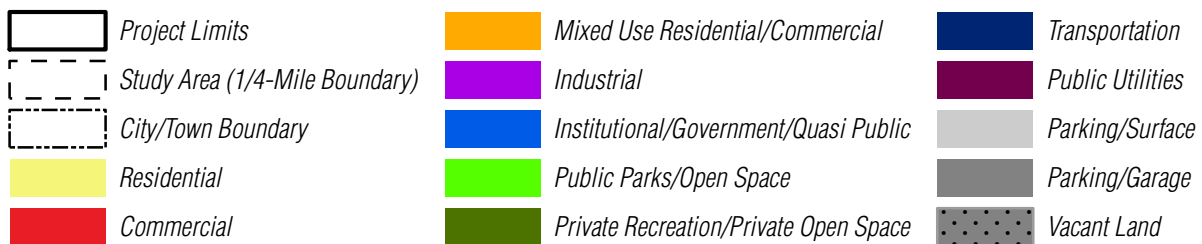
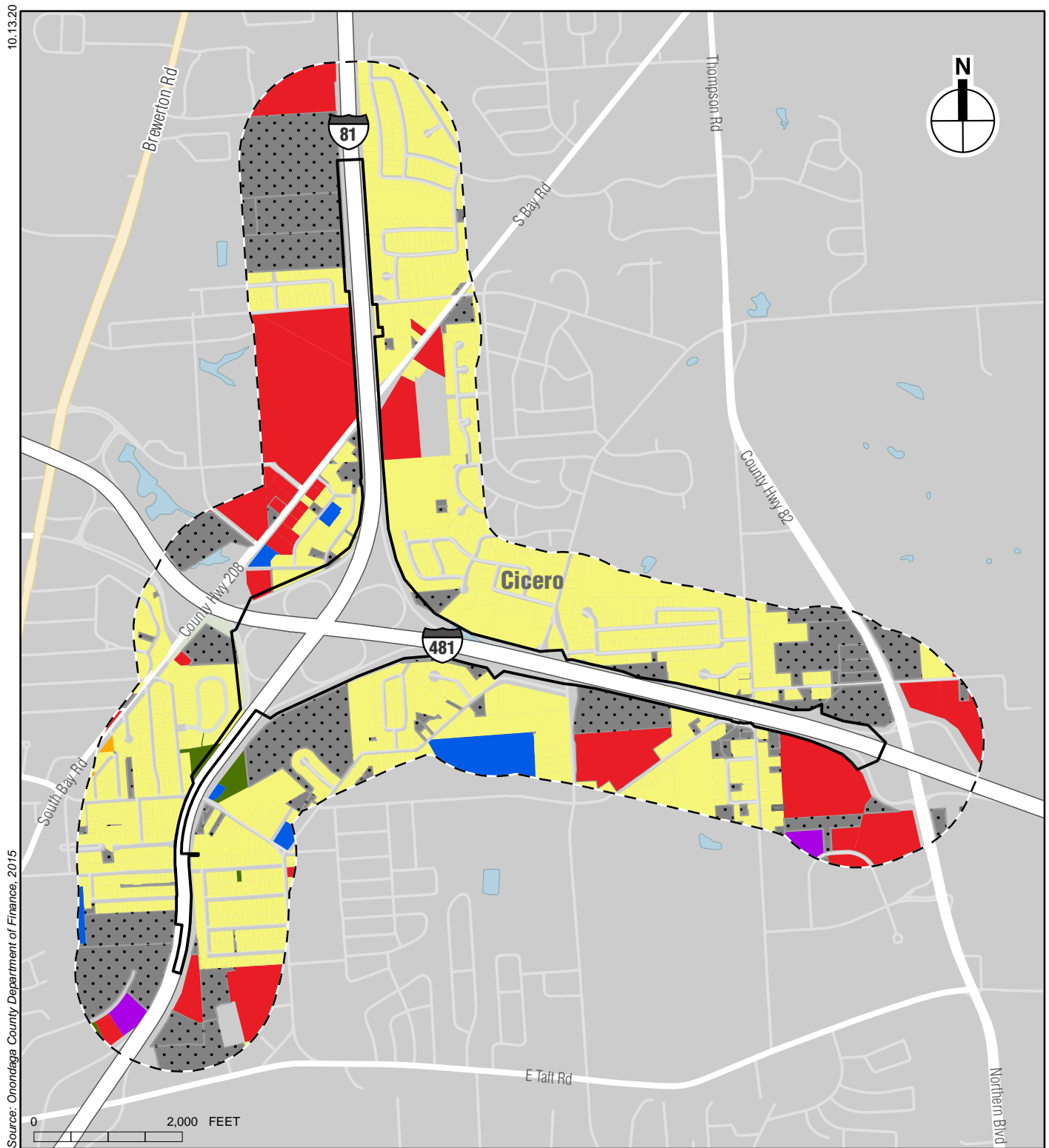
#### Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development Plans

Local and regional long-range plans have established goals for land use, economic development, and regional transportation networks and/or have identified I-81, particularly the I-81 viaduct, as an influential feature within Downtown Syracuse and adjacent neighborhoods. The I-81 viaduct and I-81/I-690 interchange are prominent elevated features that can affect adjacent land uses and connectivity between land uses, thereby influencing the livability, sustainability, and economic vitality of the city.

- **I-81 Corridor Study.** The I-81 Corridor Study—a three-year planning study and public involvement effort prepared by NYSDOT in cooperation with the region’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC)—evaluated the 12-mile section of I-81 through greater Syracuse between its interchanges with I-481. The plan identified the I-81 viaduct priority area (encompassed in the Central Study Area) as an area with substantial structural and geometric deficiencies, thereby prompting the I-81 Viaduct Project. The engineering studies, along with the extensive public input, provided the initial basis for developing potential alternatives for the I-81 Viaduct Project to address these deficiencies (see **Chapter 3, Alternatives**).

The I-81 Corridor Study established goals and objectives grouped into four broad categories:

- Transportation: Enhance the Transportation Network, Enhance Region-wide Mobility, and Improve Public Safety;
- Economic Competitiveness: Maintain or Improve Economic Opportunities and Exercise Fiscal Responsibility;
- Social Equity/Quality of Life: Support Community Quality of Life and Share Burdens and Benefits; and
- Environmental Stewardship: Preserve or Enhance Environmental Health.



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- **SMTC Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).** SMTC is responsible for transportation planning in the Syracuse metropolitan area and develops a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to guide development and evolution of the region's transportation system. The current 2050 LRTP (last updated and approved in September 2020) identifies goals for the region's transportation system, including:
  - To support smart growth development patterns while supporting economic development and minimizing effects to historic resources and community landmarks;
  - To provide convenient connections to intercity transportation facilities;
  - To maintain adequate infrastructure on primary freight corridors and to maintain existing pavement and bridges;
  - To reduce serious injuries and fatalities from vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian crashes;
  - To improve the reliability of the transportation system, with an emphasis on primary commuter routes;
  - To enhance the existing transit system and expand the regional trail network; and
  - To advance a solution that addresses the transportation needs within the priority area identified in the I-81 Corridor Study (July 2013) that supports the goals of the LRTP.
- **City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2040.** The City of Syracuse adopted its Comprehensive Plan 2040, which includes the Land Use and Development Plan 2040, to establish policies to meet its vision for the future with regard to transportation and land use. Key priorities include:
  - Establishing future land uses and zoning that expand Syracuse's Urban Core beyond Downtown to the Near Eastside, portions of University Hill east of I-81, and to the Southside.
  - Smoothing transitions and improving connectivity between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods by removing, minimizing, or mitigating visual barriers and barriers to circulation, such as highways, major arterials, and large expanses of surface parking;
  - Reinforcing and prioritizing University Hill and Downtown for economic growth as the core of regional employment and business;
  - Facilitating revitalization of Syracuse's neighborhood business corridors;
  - Ensuring that transportation options Downtown are compatible with its function as the regional urban core; and
  - Providing predictability and clarity for new and expanding business ventures.

The Comprehensive Plan also includes the Syracuse Bicycle Plan, which indicates continued efforts to promote non-motorized modes of transportation in the City of Syracuse. This plan identifies improvements to enhance bicycle travel on streets that pass under I-81 and connectivity to areas of Downtown, including schools and medical facilities.

- **ReZone Syracuse.** The City of Syracuse is updating its zoning ordinance and map to reflect the goals of its Comprehensive Plan 2040. The citywide zoning update, "ReZone Syracuse," includes objectives that relate to transportation, such as incorporating form-based codes, smart growth,



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Transit Oriented Development, and other best practices. The update process is nearly complete. The final drafts of the zoning ordinance and zoning map were released in December 2019.<sup>4</sup> The draft is currently undergoing review with Common Council and has not yet been adopted.<sup>5</sup>

- **The City of Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan (2020).** The City of Syracuse’s Forestry Division maintains the street and park trees throughout the City. The Master Plan outlines the conditions of existing trees and strategies for maintaining and improving their health, increasing tree canopy throughout the City, and enhancing connectivity of the community with the City’s urban forest.
- **Vision CNY Regional Sustainability Plan.** Led by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB), the Central New York Regional Sustainability Plan (VisionCNY, June 2013) was developed to serve as a foundation for investments to advance a sustainable future in the Central New York region. The plan promotes expansion of the region’s pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and implementation of green infrastructure for stormwater management. Other initiatives call for improved connectivity between parks and other public spaces; a decrease in the number of roads and bridges that are rated “deficient” or “poor”; infrastructure that revitalizes existing communities and improves the quality of life; and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to support the State’s long-term goals.
- **Fast Forward Syracuse Campus Framework.** Syracuse University released its 20-year campus plan overview in June of 2016. The purpose of the plan is to reinvigorate the University with “a more robust, connected academic core campus offering many different experiences.” The plan identifies the following to create a higher density, more connected, urban campus: adding more student housing, investing in academic buildings, creating a new center for student and residential life, and improving connections between the main campus, west campus, and Downtown.
- **Syracuse Housing Authority Master Plan.** The Syracuse Housing Authority released a master plan in September 2016 for its facilities, including approximately 20 city blocks that abut either side of I-81. The plan identifies a program of housing development over the next several years as well as new administrative spaces, retail and medical space, community facilities, and parkland and recreational buildings for residents. Freedom Commons, a new affordable housing development with 54 units, is currently under construction at 450 Burt Street. The plan also seeks to establish a street grid where one does not currently exist and improve vehicular and non-vehicular (bicycle and pedestrian) circulation and mobility in adjacent parts of the City of Syracuse.
- **University Hill Transportation Plan.** The University Hill Corporation, a consortium of businesses and institutions aimed at guiding growth and development in University Hill, released final recommendations of the University Hill Transportation Study in September 2007. The study was the first to recommend replacing the viaduct with a surface boulevard. The plan specifically calls for integration of land use planning with transportation decision making and investments and recommends mixed-use development to improve mobility and connections.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.syr.gov.net/rezonesyracuse.aspx>. Accessed February 2, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> As of February 2022, this project is still in progress and has not yet been adopted.

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- **Onondaga County Settlement Plan.** The Onondaga County Settlement Plan (2001) was developed by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) and stresses the importance of improving quality of life within the 35 municipalities of Onondaga County through an emphasis on neighborhoods. To achieve a higher quality of life, the Settlement Plan describes several transportation policies with an emphasis on transportation infrastructure that supports healthy neighborhoods through the encouragement of pedestrian life.
- **Onondaga County Sustainable Development Plan.** Onondaga County is currently developing a new Sustainable Development Plan focused on nine areas of interest. These areas include transportation and land use, where the plan points towards Complete Streets policy and practice to incorporate multi-modal design and function for social, economic, and environmental community benefits.

A number of municipalities and community planning organizations have established visions for neighborhoods and communities near the I-81, I-690, and I-481 corridors. These include the Town of DeWitt, the Northside Urban Partnership (Northside UP), and the Downtown Committee of Syracuse. Aspects of these organizations or their plans include:

- **Town of DeWitt:** The Town of DeWitt 2014 Sustainability Plan identifies concerns with respect to the I-81 Viaduct Project. Specifically, it states that motorists could potentially be diverted along I-481 and I-690 through DeWitt if I-81 were removed from Downtown.
- **Northside Urban Partnership (Northside UP):** A collaboration of businesses and community organizations, Northside UP's mission is to improve the quality of life for residents of Syracuse, particularly those within the Near Northside neighborhoods. The Northside Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT) Five-Year Plan (2010-2015) mentions the I-81 redesign in its transportation goals, which states "redesign I-81 to incorporate Northside into the urban fabric."
- **Downtown Committee:** The Downtown Committee of Syracuse represents property owners and tenants in the Downtown area. It promotes growth and economic development through planning and local programs. Its 2019 Annual Report lists goals for the future of I-81, which include restoring connections between neighborhoods by eliminating physical and visual barriers, dispersing traffic onto multiple routes and eliminating a one-road solution, and creating a vibrant downtown that improves the quality of life for those that work, live, and visit.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Planning

While pedestrian and bicycle facilities are common considerations in the long-range vision plans noted above, more near-term efforts have also focused on identifying the existing conditions of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in and near the I-81 corridor and improvements to those facilities.

SMTC has conducted pedestrian and bicycle-related studies to identify existing conditions and to look for solutions to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

- As part of its work on the **University Hill Transportation Study (2006/2007)**, SMTC studied connectivity between University Hill and Downtown. SMTC identified I-81 as a barrier to pedestrian and bicyclist mobility, noting the width of Almond Street, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, and multiple vehicular turning movements on the street.

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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- **SMTC's Almond Street Corridor Pedestrian Study (2010)** addressed expected increased pedestrian activity crossing Almond Street between East Genesee Street and Adams Street (under I-81). The study identified constraints, such as incomplete or inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, uninviting pedestrian environment, and dangerous pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. In addition, the study noted that there are no designated bike lanes along Almond Street, requiring bicyclists to use general travel lanes.

Several initiatives have been underway in the City of Syracuse to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity (see **Figure 1-5**). Designated bicycle infrastructure has been established, or is planned, throughout the City. Some of these routes are part of local bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, such as the City/SMTC Bikeway and Creekwalk, while others are part of larger regional routes, such as the New York State Bicycle Route 11 and the Empire State Trail.

Syracuse University worked to enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure by developing the Connective Corridor between University Hill and Downtown with designated bike lanes on local streets, including Genesee Street, which passes under the I-81 viaduct.

With respect to enhanced connectivity and safety, NYSDOT has identified the need to address the following:

- Incomplete routes, missing or inadequate sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals under and near the I-81 viaduct, and compliance with the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG);
- A lack of connectivity between pedestrian and bicycle generators and their destinations; and
- Inadequate lighting and pedestrian refuge locations under and near the I-81 viaduct.

### Zoning Ordinances

Zoning ordinances are the principal tool for implementing a municipality's adopted comprehensive plan and defining the site plan and subdivision requirements for each land use. Zoning ordinances establish districts that classify, regulate, and restrict uses, as well as combine uses and encourage the location of compatible land uses close to one another. District regulations provide development standards pertaining to the intensity of land uses and development, height and bulk of buildings and structures, and area of yards and other open areas between buildings and structures.

Jurisdictions within the Central Study Area and the I-481 South, East, and North Study Areas have zoning ordinances that regulate land use. While each community uses the similar general district categories (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial), the specific designations of these districts differ in each ordinance.

- **City of Syracuse Zoning:** Zoning varies within the Central Study Area. The Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea includes nine Central Business District (CBD) zoning districts in Downtown. Land adjacent to I-81 is largely zoned for mixed-use business with the exception of the area just north of Harrison Street where residential use is allowed (e.g., Madison Towers). Other residential uses Downtown are allowed several blocks from existing highway infrastructure. The Southside is primarily zoned for residential adjacent to I-81, with local business zoning along South Salina Street.

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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Zoning in the Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea allows for industrial uses on blocks south of I-690, business uses north of East Genesee Street, and moderate density residential and neighborhood businesses south of East Genesee Street. Syracuse University and surrounding blocks are zoned as a Planned Institutional District.

The Northern Neighborhoods Subarea includes Lakefront Zoning Districts that allow for dense, mixed-use development in Franklin Square and the Inner Harbor Area, and industrial and retail uses in areas closest to Onondaga Lake. Zoning in Northside neighborhoods east of I-81 allows primarily for commercial and/or industrial uses adjacent to I-81 and I-690, neighborhood business uses a few blocks from the highways, and lower density residential four to five blocks from the highway.

The City of Syracuse governs zoning in the I-481 South Study Area. The zoning allows for industrial and commercial uses in most areas abutting I-81, with low density residential the primary allowed use west of I-81, and higher density residential allowed south and east of the I-81 and I-481 interchange.

As related to future land use patterns within the Central Study Area, the zoning ordinance update is intended to implement the City's Land Use and Development Plan 2040, which calls for an expanded Urban Core that would include Downtown, the Near Eastside, and Southside, which includes land abutting I-81 on either side. The City of Syracuse is undergoing a city-wide zoning text and map update called ReZone Syracuse. The Final Draft Zoning Ordinance, dated December 2019, proposes to rezone much of the area adjacent to the existing I-81 within the Central Study Area as "MX-5 Central Business District." The proposed zoning would implement the Downtown Overlay character area, increase maximum heights and densities with minimal parking, prohibit first floor residential, and would have the greatest range of uses including retail, service, commercial, entertainment, and small-scale manufacturing. Zoning districts would be updated to modernize land uses and remove restrictions to reduce the need for variances, waivers, and special use permits. This would allow a greater variety and density of uses, including office, retail, residential, and mixed uses, with the intent of creating a better-connected and walkable mixed-use environment, encouraging development in the Urban Core.

- **Town of Cicero Zoning:** Zoning in the I-481 North Study Area allows for industrial and commercial uses around I-481 Exit 8, residential and agricultural uses in many areas north or south of I-481 and east of I-81, and regional retail and commercial uses north of I-481 and west of I-81.
- **Town of DeWitt Zoning:** Zoning in the northern portion of the I-481 East Study Area is for Hi-Tech, which allows for many different uses including office, industrial (manufacturing and distribution), hotels, nursing and senior care facilities, and retail. In the southern portion of that area, a mix of zoning districts allows for residential uses of various densities, as well as office and professional uses, industrial, and retail.

### Smart Growth

The Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, signed into law in August 2010, requires that infrastructure agencies, such as NYSDOT, ensure that public infrastructure projects undergo a consistency evaluation using 11 smart growth criteria. Guidance associated with the act includes a

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Smart Growth Screening Tool, which is to be used to evaluate projects. The results of this analysis are described later in this section and are presented in **Appendix D-3**.

### 6-2-1.1.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities include public and private education facilities, libraries, community centers and religious institutions, places of worship, government facilities, and emergency and health care facilities and services. No community facilities were identified in the I-481 North Study Area. **Table 6-2-1-1** identifies community facilities within the Central, I-481 South, and I-481 East Study Areas. The facilities are mapped in **Figures 6-2-1-6 and 6-2-1-7**. **Section 6-4-2, Parklands and Recreational Resources**, provides an evaluation of parks within the study areas.

**Table 6-2-1-1**  
**Community Facilities in the I-81 Project Study Area**

Map #	Community Facility	Location	Description	Type
1	Syracuse Northeast Community Center	716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Community Center offering youth, teen, and senior programs, and a basic needs pantry.	Community Center
2	P.E.A.C.E., Inc. – Dunbar Head Start	1453 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Youth center with programs for all ages.	Education/ Early Education
3	P.E.A.C.E., Inc. – UUMC – Early Head Start	324 University Avenue Syracuse, NY	Youth programs. Early childhood education program.	Education/ Early Education
4	P.E.A.C.E., Inc. – Head Start / Early Head Start	217 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY	Early childhood education program.	Education/ Early Education
5	P.E.A.C.E., Inc. – Westside – Early Head Start	200 Wyoming Street Syracuse, NY	Early childhood education program.	Education/ Early Education
6	Hawley Youth Center	716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Catholic youth center that includes pre-kindergarten education and after-school programs.	Education/ Early Education
7	Hillside Children's Center	215 Wyoming Street Syracuse, NY	Provides comprehensive health, education, and human services for children and families.	Non-Profit family and youth services organization
8	Salvation Army Cab Horse Commons	677 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY	Child care center on South Salina Street, west of the I-81 Viaduct.	Education/ Early Education
9	Dr. Edwin E Weeks Elementary School	710 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Northside elementary school – reopened in 2013 after large renovation project.	Education/ Public Elementary
10	Dr. King Magnet Elementary School	416 E. Raynor Avenue Syracuse, NY	Southside elementary school.	Education/ Public Elementary
11	The Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central	258 E. Adams Street Syracuse, NY	Technical high school. Part of the Syracuse City School District	Education/ Public High School
12	Syracuse Special Education	725 Harrison Street Syracuse, NY	Syracuse City School District center for students with disabilities.	Education/ Public Special Ed
13	Education Opportunity Center	100 New Street Syracuse, NY	Statewide network of centers providing academic programs in higher education and vocational training.	Education/ Vocational
14	Johnson Vocational Center	573 E. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY	Provides students with vocational skills to support them and gain employment. Offers GED preparation programs/resources.	Education/ Vocational
15	Saint Vincent DePaul Day Care	1103 Burnet Avenue Syracuse, NY	Day care and K-12 private school that largely serves Northside residents.	Education/ Private
16	Syracuse School Superintendent	725 Harrison Street Syracuse, NY	Office of the superintendent.	Education/ Public Administrative
17	Syracuse City School District	725 Harrison Street Syracuse, NY	School district headquarters.	Education/ Public Administrative
18	Catholic School Office	240 E. Onondaga Street Syracuse, NY	Administrative and educational resource hub for Catholic Diocese of Syracuse.	Education/ Administrative-Private



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Table 6-2-1-1 (cont'd)  
Community Facilities in the I-81 Project Study Area

Map #	Community Facility	Location	Description	Type
19	Catholic Charities Academy at Pompei	923 N. McBride Street Syracuse NY	Private school.	Education/ Non-profit
20	St. Vincent DePaul Religious Education	342 Vine Street Syracuse, NY	Religious Sunday school education for students in pre-k through ninth grade.	Education/ Faith-based
21	Dr. King Elementary School-Based Health Center	416 E. Raynor Avenue Syracuse, NY	Provides primary medical and mental health services to students.	Health Care
22	Syracuse Community Health Center, Salina	819 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY	Provides health care to those that may not be covered by insurance or cannot access health care.	Health Care
23	Veteran's Administration Medical Center	800 Irving Center Syracuse, NY	General hospital with more than 160 beds, rehabilitation facility, and surgical center.	Health Care
24	Crouse Hospital	736 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY	Private non-profit hospital that holds 506 beds and serves more than 23,000 inpatients annually.	Health Care
25	University Hospital	750 E. Adams Street Syracuse, NY	Large SUNY medical school and hospital that includes a Level-I trauma center and region's only children's hospital.	Health Care
26	Hutchings Psychiatric Center	620 Madison Street Syracuse, NY	Community-based mental health facility on a 12-building campus on University Hill. Includes 105 inpatient beds for adult services. Also includes 30 inpatient beds for children under 18.	Health Care
27	Rescue Mission Health Care Center	155 Gifford Street Syracuse, NY	The Alice C. Barber Day Center and Kiewit Emergency Shelter at the Rescue Mission offers health services to those in need.	Health Care
28	St. Joseph's Hospital	301 Prospect Avenue Syracuse, NY	Non-profit regional hospital; employs more than 5,000; and, in 2014, discharged more than 27,500 inpatient visits.	Health Care
29	Ross Towers Health Care Center	712 Lodi Street Syracuse, NY	Satellite health care center of the Syracuse Community Health Center, Inc. system providing routine health care services.	Health Care
30	Dr. Weeks Elementary School-Based Health Center	710 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Provides primary medical and mental health services to students.	Health Care
31	Assumption Church	812 N. Salina Street Syracuse, NY	Located in Northern Neighborhoods Subarea.	Place of Worship
32	Christian Life Assembly UPC	1025 N. Townsend Street Syracuse, NY	Multicultural Christian worship center.	Place of Worship
33	Our Lady of Pompei Church	301 Ash Street Syracuse, NY	Located near both Assumption Church and Christian Life Assembly UPC north of viaduct.	Place of Worship
34	Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse	731 James Street Syracuse, NY	Located in Northern Neighborhoods Subarea.	Place of Worship
35	River of Life Church	750 James Street Syracuse, NY	Church and inner-city outreach center.	Place of Worship
36	First English Lutheran Church	501 James Street Syracuse, NY	Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, founded in 1879.	Place of Worship
37	Rangrig Yeshe	313 E. Willow Street Syracuse, NY	Tibetan Buddhist practice group.	Place of Worship
38	Church of the Savior	437 James Street Syracuse, NY	Chapel with notable architecture, designed in Gothic Revival style. Part of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York.	Place of Worship
39	Immanuel Baptist Church	329 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Church on the Northside.	Place of Worship

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-1 (cont'd)  
Community Facilities in the I-81 Project Study Area

Map #	Community Facility	Location	Description	Type
40	St. Vincent DePaul Church	342 Vine Street Syracuse, NY	Church on the Northside.	Place of Worship
41	University United Methodist Church	1085 E. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY	Church located in the Near Eastside.	Place of Worship
42	Grace Episcopal Church	819 Madison Street Syracuse, NY	Built in 1876, the church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.	Place of Worship
43	Temple Society of Concord	910 Madison Street Syracuse, NY	One of the oldest Jewish congregations in the county, founded in 1839.	Place of Worship
44	New Beth Israel	601 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY	Messianic Jewish Synagogue located just north of Syracuse University.	Place of Worship
45	Alibrandi Catholic Center	110 Walnut Place Syracuse, NY	Catholic Center on Syracuse University.	Place of Worship
46	Hendricks Chapel and Syracuse University	Syracuse University Syracuse, NY	Worship center on Syracuse University.	Place of Worship
47	Heavenly Vision Apostolic Church	121 Rose Avenue Syracuse, NY	Medium-sized church associated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.	Place of Worship
48	Church House of Levites	215 Oakwood Avenue Syracuse, NY	Study center for Levites.	Place of Worship
49	Hopps Memorial CME Church	1100 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Church located along South State Street.	Place of Worship
50	Park Central Presbyterian Church	504 E. Fayette Street Syracuse, NY	Downtown Syracuse church located between I-81 and Firefighter's Memorial Park.	Place of Worship
51	Saint Paul's Episcopal Church	310 Montgomery Street Syracuse, NY	Church is on the National Register of Historic Places.	Place of Worship
52	Prince of Peace Missionary	317 E. Jefferson Street Syracuse, NY	Church	Place of Worship
53	Syracuse Ephphatha Parish	401 Montgomery Street Syracuse, NY	Parish for the deaf in Downtown Syracuse.	Place of Worship
54	Plymouth Congregational Church	232 E. Onondaga Street Syracuse, NY	National Register of Historic Places church built in 1858.	Place of Worship
55	Gethsemane Holiness Church	201 Gifford Street Syracuse, NY	Church	Place of Worship
56	Syracuse City Hall	233 E. Washington Street Syracuse, NY	Hosts a variety of government offices as well as the mayor in a historic 19th century building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Located Downtown near the I-81 viaduct.	Government
57	Onondaga County Courts	401 Montgomery Street Syracuse, NY	Judicial center for Onondaga County, located Downtown next to other government buildings across from Columbus Circle.	Government
58	Syracuse City Court	505 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	City court with, among others, criminal, traffic, civil, and small claims divisions located Downtown near Columbus Circle.	Government
59	Onondaga County Sheriff's Office	407 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Home of the Onondaga County Sheriff, located Downtown across from the Syracuse City Court, near other government facilities.	Government
60	New York State Office Building	301 E. Washington Street Syracuse, NY	Office building for various state departments located across from City Hall.	Government
61	Central Library, Onondaga County Public Library	441 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY	Main library branch of Onondaga County system. Located Downtown.	Library
62	Northeast Community Center Library, OCPL	716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Public library branch in Hawley-Green neighborhood.	Library

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-1 (cont'd)  
Community Facilities in the I-81 Project Study Area

Map #	Community Facility	Location	Description	Type
63	Syracuse City Police Department	511 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Offices and headquarters for the Syracuse Police Department.	Public Safety/ Emergency
64	East Genesee Street Community Police Center	800 E. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY	Provides public safety through the Eastside community-policing center.	Public Safety/ Emergency
65	Northside Community Police Center	255 Wolf Street Syracuse, NY	Provides public safety services to the residents and businesses in Washington Square and Northside neighborhoods.	Public Safety/ Emergency
66	University Hill Public Safety Association	736 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY	UHPSA includes representatives of law enforcement, security, and public safety agencies with a mission to maintain and improve public safety on University Hill.	Public Safety/ Emergency
67	Syracuse Fire Department	511 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Main office for Syracuse Fire Department.	Public Safety/ Emergency
68	Station 1, Syracuse Fire Department	900 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Fire station in Northside neighborhood.	Public Safety/ Emergency
69	Station 2, Syracuse Fire Department	2300 Lodi Street Syracuse, NY	Fire station in Washington Square neighborhood.	Public Safety/ Emergency
70	SUNY Upstate Medical University	725 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY	A SUNY health sciences university with degree programs within the College of Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Health Professionals, and the College of Graduate Studies.	Health Care/ Education/ Medical School
71	Tucker Missionary Baptist Church	515 Oakwood Avenue Syracuse, NY	Church	Place of Worship
72	Gospel Temple Church of God	571 Oakwood Avenue Syracuse, NY	Church	Place of Worship
73	Syracuse Dunbar Center	1453 S. State Street Syracuse, NY	Community center providing family and youth services.	Community Center
74	Northeast Community Center	716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse NY	Community center providing family and youth services.	Community Center
75	Northeast Community Center Library	716 Hawley Avenue Syracuse, NY	Onondaga County public library.	Library
76	Beauchamp Branch Library	2111 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY 13205	City of Syracuse library serving Southside community.	Library
77	South Side Communication Center	2331 S. Salina Street Syracuse, NY 13205	Operates as a nonprofit with Southside Community Coalition and Syracuse University's Office of Community Engagement; hosts youth program and community meetings.	Community Center
78	Syracuse Academy of Science Charter School	1409 W. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13204	Syracuse Academy District Office	Public/Private charter school office
79	City of Syracuse Department of Public Works	1200 Canal Street Syracuse, NY 13210	City government office	Government Facility
80	McKinley-Brighton Elementary School	141 W. Newell Street Syracuse, NY 13205	Pre-K to 5th grade elementary school located in Syracuse's Southside.	Education/ Public Elementary
81	Moses DeWitt Elementary School	201 Jamesville Road Syracuse, NY 13214	Pre-K to 5th grade elementary school located in the Dewittshire neighborhood.	Education/ Public Elementary
82	St David's Episcopal Church	14 Jamar Drive Fayetteville, NY 13066	Episcopal church serving the town of DeWitt.	Place of Worship
83	DeWitt Community Church	3600 Erie Blvd East Syracuse, NY 13214	Church located in DeWitt near I-481 Interchange 3.	Place of Worship
84	Shaarei Torah	4313 E. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13214	Orthodox synagogue near I-481 Interchange 3.	Place of Worship
85	DeWitt Town Hall	5400 Butternut Drive East Syracuse, NY 13057	DeWitt town offices, located adjacent to I-481 in Ryder Park.	Government

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-1 (cont'd)  
Community Facilities in the I-81 Project Study Area

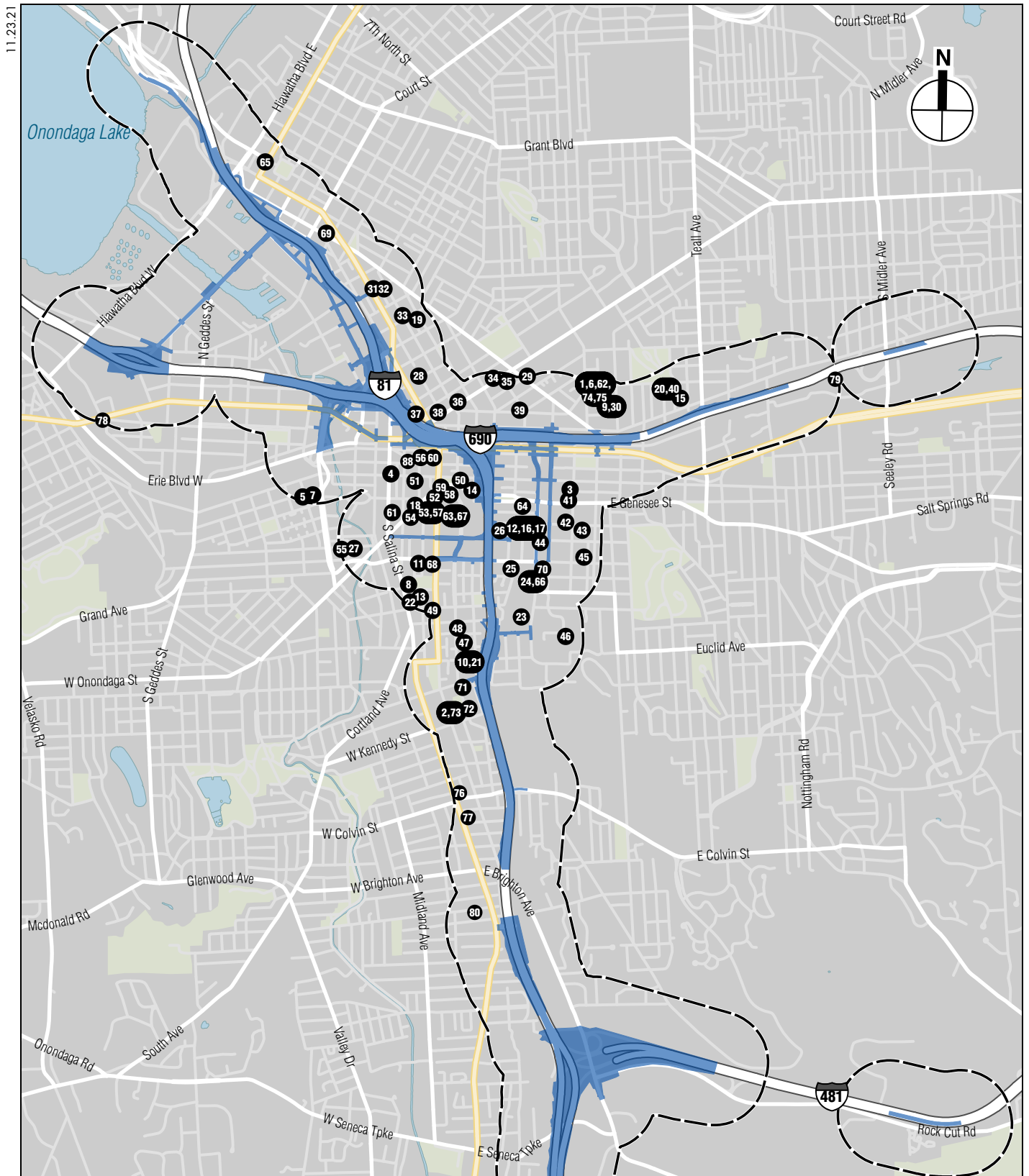
Map #	Community Facility	Location	Description	Type
86	DeWitt Police Department	5400 Butternut Drive East Syracuse, NY 13057	Offices and headquarters for the DeWitt Police Department, co-located with DeWitt Town Hall.	Public Safety/ Emergency
87	DeWitt Fire Department	4500 E. Genesee Street DeWitt, NY 13214	Offices and headquarters for the DeWitt Fire Department, located near I-481 Interchange 3.	Public Safety/ Emergency
88	City Hall Commons	201 E Washington St, Syracuse, NY 13202	Flatiron style building that hosts government employees.	Government
Not Mapped	Roxboro Road Middle School	300 Bernard St Syracuse, NY 13211	Part of the North Syracuse Central School District; back portion of school property abuts transportation ROW along I-81	Public School
Not Mapped	Roxboro Road Elementary School	200 Bernard Street Mattydale, NY 13211	Part of the North Syracuse Central School District; back portion of school property abuts transportation ROW along I-81	Public School
<b>Sources:</b> City of Syracuse Police Department, City of Syracuse Fire Department, Syracuse City School District, University Hill Corporation.				

### Public and Private Education

#### *Public Schools*

The Central Study Area and part of the I-481 South Study Area are in the Syracuse City School District. Three schools are located within the Central Study Area as well as the district headquarters and office of the Superintendent; one of the district's schools is located in the I-481 South Study Area. The I-481 East Study area contains one school, located within the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District, and two schools are in the I-481 North Study Area near potential Noise Barrier 16A&B.

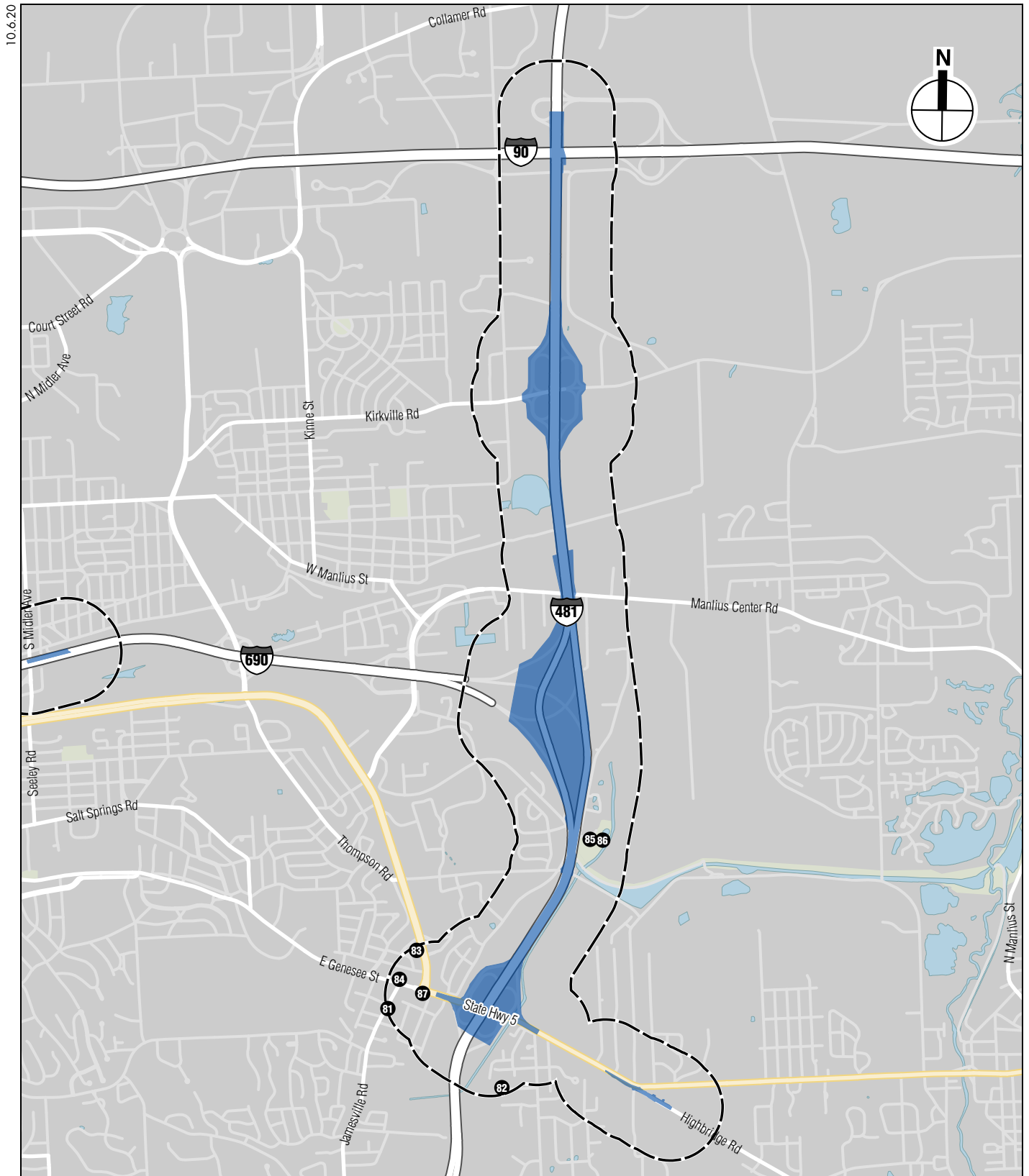
- **The Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central (Map #11).** The Institute of Technology at Central, a public high school operated by the Syracuse City School District, is located at 258 Adams Street to the east of I-81 in the Southside. The school year is from early September through mid-June, and school hours are 8AM to 2:30PM. In 2019, student enrollment was 551.
- **Dr. King Elementary School (Map #10).** Dr. King Elementary School is a public pre-kindergarten to fifth grade elementary school operated by the Syracuse City School District. Located at 416 East Raynor Street, the school is adjacent to I-81 in the Southside. The school year is from early September through mid-June, and school hours are from 8AM to 2PM. Enrollment in 2019 was 630 students.
- **Dr. Weeks Elementary School (Map #9).** Dr. Weeks Elementary School is a public pre-kindergarten to fifth grade elementary school operated by the Syracuse City School District. Located at 710 Hawley Avenue, the school is north of I-690 in the Lincoln Hill neighborhood. The school year is from early September through mid-June, and school hours are listed are from 8AM to 2PM. In 2019, the school's total enrollment was approximately 727 students.
- **McKinley-Brighton Elementary School (Map #80).** McKinley-Brighton Elementary School is a public pre-kindergarten to fifth grade elementary school operated by the Syracuse City School District. Located at 141 W. Newell Street, the school is west of I-81 in the Southside



- Project Limits
- Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
- 11 Community Facility Location

Community Facilities in the Central Study Area  
and the I-481 South Study Area  
**Figure 6-2-1-6**





- Project Limits
- Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
- 81 Community Facility Location

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neighborhood. The school year is from early September through mid-June, and school hours are from 9AM to 3PM. In 2019, the school's total enrollment was approximately 551 students.

- **Moses DeWitt Elementary School (Map #81).** Moses DeWitt Elementary School is a public kindergarten to fourth grade elementary school operated by the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District. Located at 201 Jamesville Road in DeWitt, the school is just west of I-481 and south of New York State Route 5. The school year is from early September through mid-June, and school hours are 8:45AM to 3:15PM. In 2019, the school's total enrollment was approximately 273 students.

Enrollment at these schools varied between 2010 and 2019. Dr. King Elementary School experienced an increase in enrollment of 121 students (approximately 24 percent). Dr. Weeks Elementary School experienced a decrease of 30 students (approximately 4 percent). McKinley-Brighton Elementary School experienced an increase of 96 students (approximately 21 percent). Moses DeWitt Elementary School experienced a decrease of 10 students (approximately 4 percent). These are all neighborhood schools.<sup>6</sup> The Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central is not a neighborhood school and accepts students from throughout the City; it experienced an increase in enrollment of 278 students between 2010 and 2019 (approximately 102 percent). Overall enrollment throughout the Syracuse City School District remained steady for this time period, with less than one percent decrease from 2010.

Two public schools, the Roxboro Road Elementary and Middle Schools, are located within 1/4-miles of potential Noise Barrier 16A&B. Both schools are part of the North Syracuse Central School District. Roxboro Road Elementary School is a public school with approximately 500 students in grades K-4. Roxboro Road Middle School reports approximately 800 students in grades 5-7.<sup>7</sup>

### *Private Schools*

A private school and a charter school are located within the Central Study Area. No private or charter schools were identified in the I-481 South, East, and North Study Areas.

- **Syracuse Academy of Science Charter School District Office** is the office associated with the school system, which includes an elementary, middle, and high school. The other school buildings are not located within the study areas.
- **The Central Academy at Pompei** is a private pre-kindergarten to sixth grade Catholic elementary school with approximately 120 students. The school is located east of I-81 and north of I-690 at 923 North McBride Street in the Northside neighborhood.

### *Colleges and Universities*

Several colleges and universities are located within the Central Study Area, but none were identified in the I-481 South, East, and North Study Areas.

- **Syracuse University** is a private university comprising 14 schools and colleges, including the Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. Total enrollment as of fall 2019 was 22,850, which

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<sup>6</sup> New York State Department of Education, December 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Public School Review. <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/roxboro-road-elementary-school-profile>. <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/roxboro-road-middle-school-profile>. Accessed May 17, 2021.

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included 15,275 undergraduate, 6,919 graduate, and 656 law school students. The University employs 1,757 faculty and 3,524 staff.<sup>8</sup> The main campus, portions of which fall within the Central Study Area, has 18 residence halls with approximately 6,000 beds, 1,900 of which are located within the Central Study Area.

- **State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF)** is located immediately south of the Carrier Dome and north of Oakwood Cemetery. ESF has academic departments in the fields of chemistry; environmental and forest biology; environmental resources engineering; environmental studies; sustainable resources management; landscape architecture; and chemical engineering. Environmental science programs offer students integrative degrees across the natural sciences. About 1,800 undergraduate students and 400 graduate students attend SUNY ESF.<sup>9</sup>
- **State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University (Upstate)** includes four colleges—Medicine, Nursing, Health Professions, and Graduate Studies (biomedical sciences)—and had a total enrollment of 1,595 in 2018, including 1,340 full-time and 252 part-time students, an increase of 30 percent since 2006.<sup>10</sup> The medical center is also the Region’s largest employer with nearly 9,500 employees, the majority of whom work within the Central Study Area.

Upstate’s campus abuts I-81 with facilities located on both the east and west sides of the interstate. To the east of I-81 and abutting Almond Street and I-81 is Upstate Medical University Hospital and Upstate Cancer Center at 750 East Adams Street and a large parking garage. Other facilities include Upstate Golisano Children’s Hospital at One Children’s Circle (corner of East Adams Street and Irving Avenue) and Upstate School of Nursing at 545 Cedar Street. The Richard H. Hutchings Psychiatric Center at 620 Madison Avenue, one block north of Upstate’s parking structure, is also a site for the adult residency program of Upstate’s Department of Psychiatry. To the west of I-81 are Upstate Specialty Services Center at 550 Harrison Avenue and Upstate Health Care Center at 90 Presidential Plaza. According to discussions with local stakeholders, many students reside in apartment buildings close to Upstate to the west and east of I-81.

There are also several early childhood education, youth programs, and vocational centers within the study areas.

### Libraries and Community Centers

Three library branches of the Onondaga library system, one City library, and four community centers are located within the Central Study Area. Community centers provide children and family services in their respective neighborhoods.

### Places of Worship

Thirty places of worship were identified within the Central Study Area and the I-481 East Study Area, including many denominations of Christian faith, a number of synagogues, and other religious affiliations (see **Table 6-2-1-1**). Many of these religious facilities include parking and most are in

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.syracuse.edu/about/facts-figures-rankings/#s:syracuse-people>. Accessed February 14, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.esf.edu/welcome/>. Accessed February 2, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.upstate.edu/about>. Accessed November 10, 2019.

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neighborhoods with sidewalks offering pedestrian access. No places of worship were identified in the I-481 South and North Study Areas.

### **Government Facilities**

Government facilities include offices and courts for the City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, and the State of New York. The Syracuse City Hall and Onondaga County Sheriff's Office are both located in the Central Study Area; the DeWitt Town Hall is located in the I-481 East Study Area.

### **Public Safety, Emergency, and Health Care Facilities**

There are 10 health care and nine public safety/emergency facilities in the study areas. Health care facilities include hospitals and health and medical centers. Public safety facilities include police centers and the Syracuse City Police Department, a public safety association facility, and the Syracuse Fire Department, all located in the Central Study Area. The Town of DeWitt police and fire departments are located within the I-481 East Study Area.

### **6-2-1.1.5 PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS**

Several development projects have been recently constructed or are planned in the Project Area. The larger development projects, which are in various stages of review, are listed in **Table 6-2-1-2** and shown in **Figures 6-2-1-8 through 6-2-1-11**. Some projects listed below are located outside the Project Area for this assessment, but they are included because they are incorporated into the traffic analysis for the Project (see **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations**).

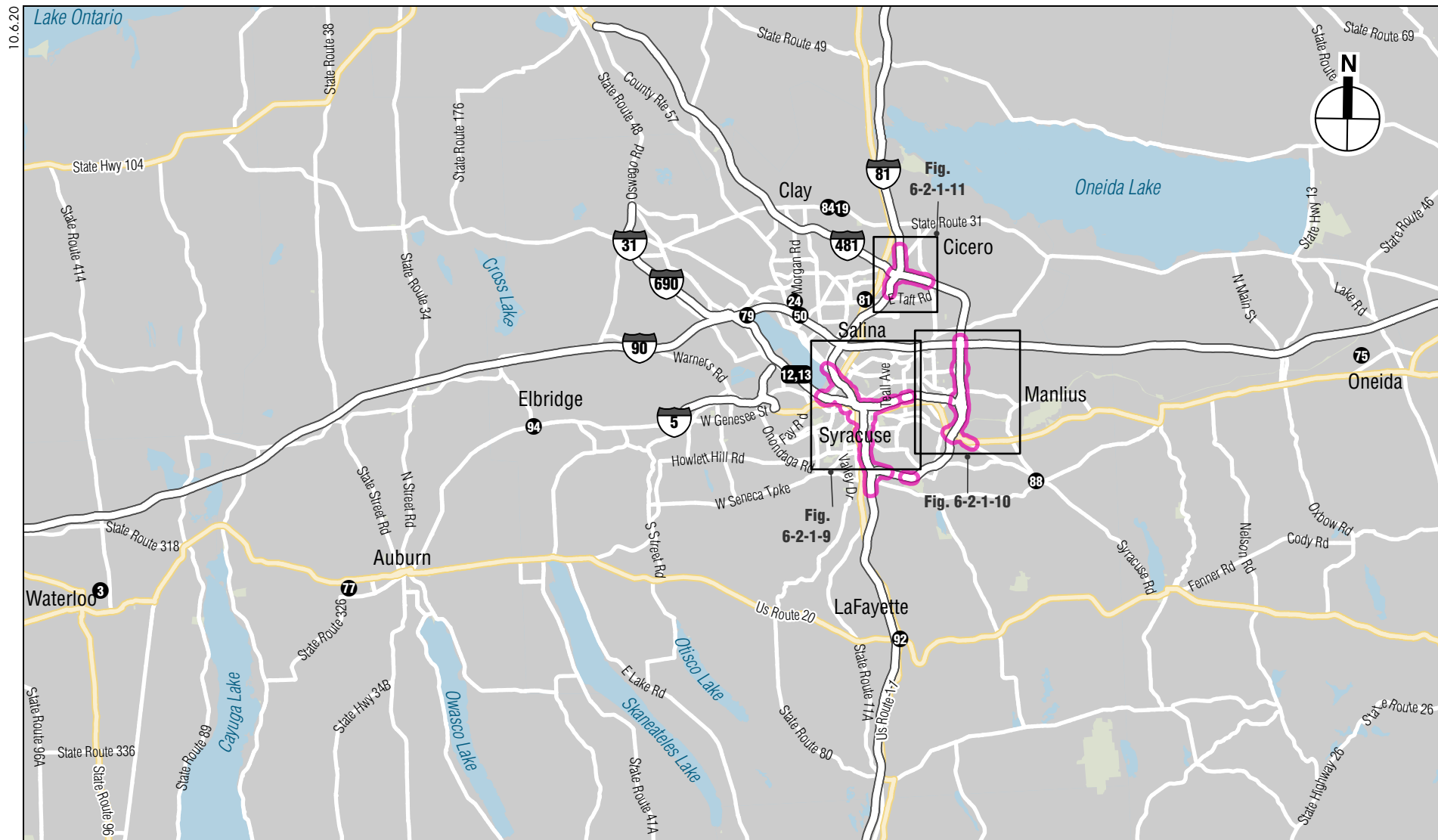
### **6-2-1.2 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

The No Build Alternative would not replace or remove portions of I-81, and it would not change the existing neighborhood character or land use in the Project Area. The No Build Alternative would not alter existing access to schools, private schools, universities, or places of worship. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements included in the build alternatives, including improvements to Almond Street, would not be achieved under the No Build Alternative. In fact, I-81 and Almond Street have been identified in various studies as hindrances to improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in and around Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The No Build Alternative would perpetuate these conditions, as the I-81 viaduct would remain an elevated highway, and many of the connectivity and current traffic patterns would likely remain.

### **6-2-1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIADUCT ALTERNATIVE**

#### **6-2-1.3.1 PERMANENT/OPERATIONAL EFFECTS**

Under the Viaduct Alternative, I-81, I-690, and the interchanges within the Central Study Area would be rebuilt and modified, improving the connections between the two interstates and increasing access from local roadways. The new design would improve safety and operations, allow for faster movement along the viaduct than on the existing viaduct, and vehicles would be able to travel more effectively and efficiently than they do today. This would benefit users of I-81 throughout the region, including residents, workers, and freight drivers. See **Section 3.4.2** for more detail.

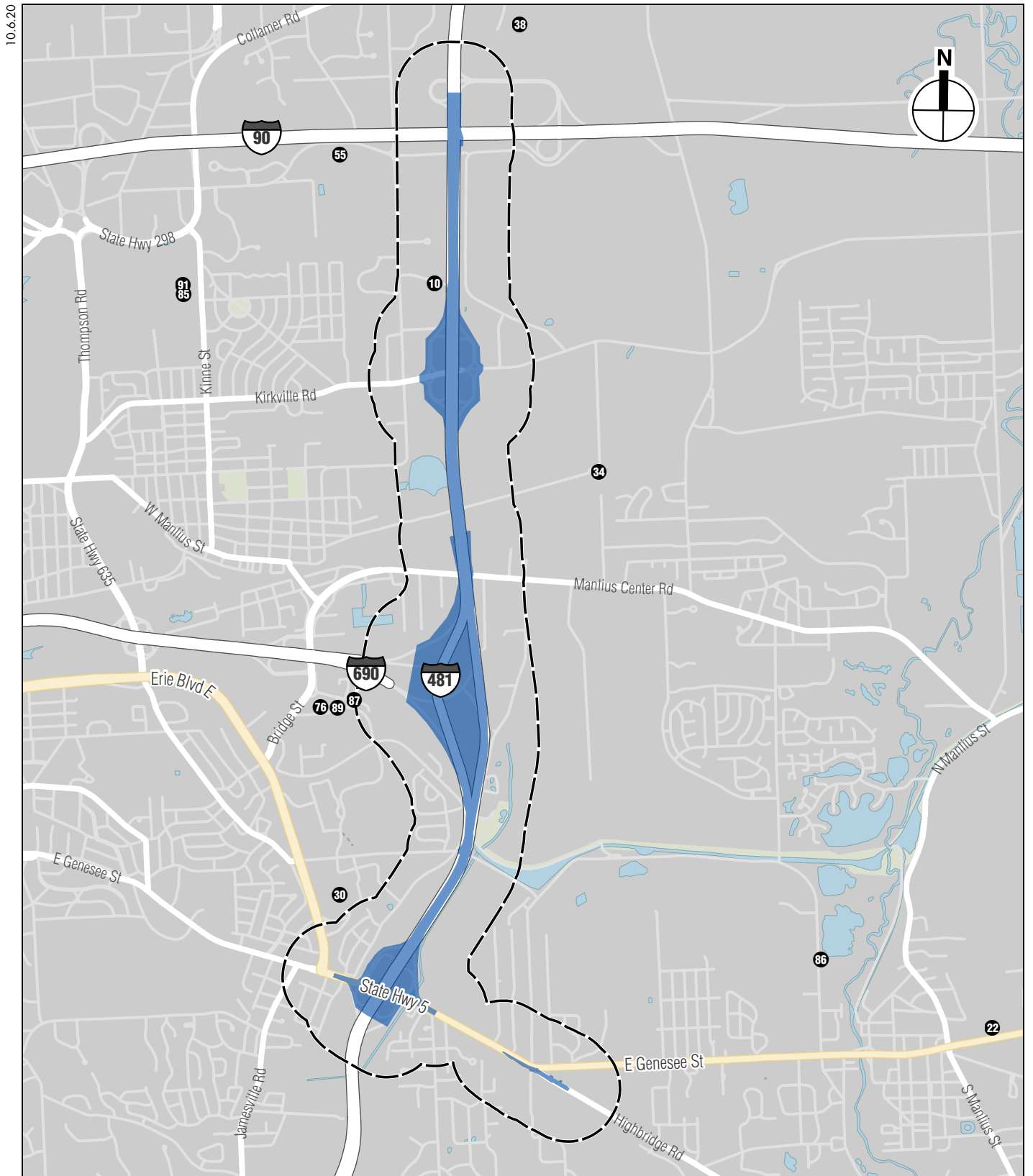


- Study Area (1/4 Mile Boundary)
- Detailed Map Extent
- 11 Planned Development

0 10 Miles



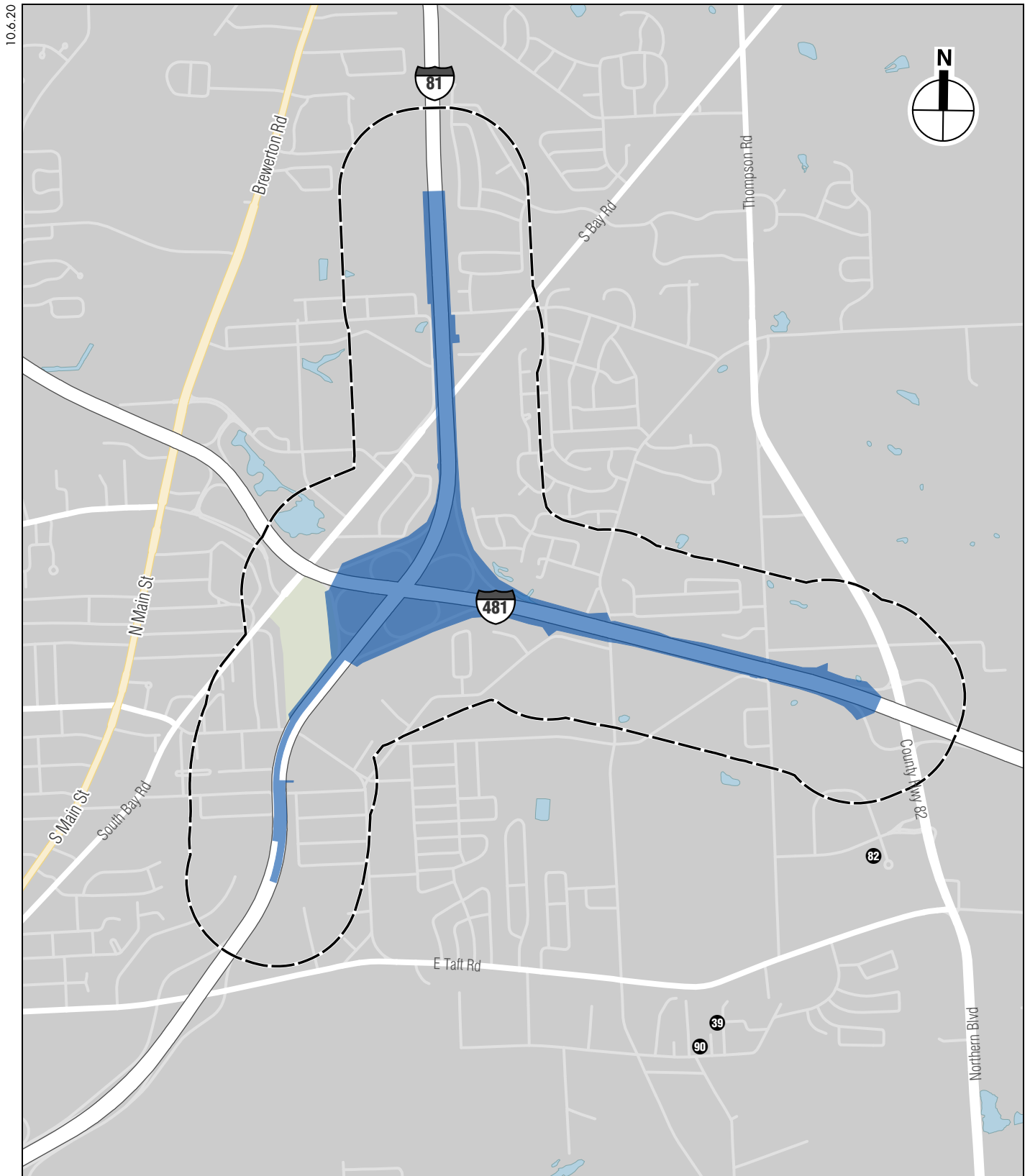




- Project Limits
- Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
- Planned Development

**I-81 Viaduct Project**

Planned Development in the  
I-481 East Study Area  
**Figure 6-2-1-10**



- Project Limits
- Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
- 11 Planned Development

Planned Development in the  
I-481 North Study Area  
**Figure 6-2-1-11**

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2  
Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
1	Inner Harbor West Bear Street, Solar Street, West Kirkpatrick Street, North Geddes Street, Syracuse, NY	West Shore- Mixed Use Residential—350 units (120,000 sf) Commercial—40,000 sf South Shore Hotel—257 rooms East Shore Office—120,000 sf Retail—50,000 sf	Hotel complete; mixed use building completed in 2019; additional buildings planned in 2020; other elements underway and will continue in phases through 2023.
2	Loguen Crossing Erie Boulevard, University Avenue, East Fayette Street, East Forman Street, Syracuse, NY	100,000 sf office building with residential, commercial, research, and development facilities.	Planned
3	Seneca Meadows 1786 Salcman Road, Waterloo, NY	2011-year contract for 24 to 36 railcar loads per day; would replace current truck hauling	Planned
4	City Center 400 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	200,000 SF Residential—19 units Office—TBD Retail—TBD Parking—840 spaces	Construction expected to begin in 2020 and take 18 months to complete.
5	Elmcrest / Christopher Community, Syracuse, NY	Salt Springs Road campus expansion – 50 units	Construction expected to begin September 2020 and take 18 months to complete.
6	City of Syracuse STEAM School 701 South Warren Street	TBD (Institutional)	Planned
7	Onondaga Creek Public Access Improvements I, Syracuse, NY	Extending bicycle and pedestrian path near Onondaga Lake	To be completed in 2020
8	Onondaga Creek Public Access Improvements II, Syracuse, NY	South extension of Onondaga Creekwalk from Walton Street to Colvin Street	To be completed in phases by 2020
9	Syracuse Smart Regrowth Sustainable Corners Ontario and Otisco Streets, Syracuse, NY	Redevelopment of small houses Residential—10 units Commercial—2 stores Community Use—Police Station	Certification in process
10	Expansion of Ultra Dairy 6750 West Benedict Road, DeWitt, NY	Manufacturing—150,000 square feet	To be completed in 2021
11	Bankers Healthcare Group 300 Spencer Street, Syracuse, NY	TBD (Residential, Commercial)	Planned
12	Loop the Lake extension, Syracuse, NY	Recreational trail	To be completed in phases beginning in 2020

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)

Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
13	Honeywell, Syracuse, NY	Mixed use redevelopment of 1,200-acre industrial park	Planned
14	Kimberly Enterprise Center Kimberly at Grant Boulevard, Syracuse, NY	Residential redevelopment of approximately 10-acre site	Planned
15	Varsity 732 and 802 S. Crouse Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Mixed-use—TBD	Planned
16	Former Coyne Textile Site Cortland Avenue, Syracuse	TBD (Office)	Planned
17	501 West Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY	TBD (Self storage)	Planned
18	Penfield Building 1714 North Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	TBD (Residential)	Planned
19	White Pine Commerce Park Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road Clay, NY	Agricultural—450 acres -- OR -- Light manufacturing/electronics—2.5M square feet Laboratory—210,000 square feet Warehousing—235,000 square feet Office—50,000 square feet	Planned
20	National Veterans Resource Center 111 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Community Facility—74,000 square feet Auditorium—750 Seats Event Space—4,000 square feet	Completed; to be occupied in 2020
21	Whitlock Building 476-480 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—26 units Office—TBD Retail—TBD	Construction completed in 2020
22	Hannafor Grocery 547 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville, NY	Phase 1: Grocery store (53,000 square feet) Memory care unit (64 beds) Commercial or retail building (TBD) Phase 2 may include approximately 50 residential units (TBD)	Planned
23	St. Joseph's Parking Garage Hickory and Willow Streets, Syracuse, NY	TBD (Parking Garage)	Under Construction
24	Amazon Distribution Center 7211 Morgan Road Liverpool, NY	Warehouse and Distribution Center—3.7M square feet Estimated 1,000 jobs	Under Construction
25	Syracuse University Campus Framework, Syracuse, NY	Syracuse University 20-year master plan; Includes new academic, residential, and recreational development	Ongoing

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)

Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
26	Washington Place 300 East Washington Street, Syracuse NY	Conversion of former NYNEX building Residential—180 units Retail—40,000 sf Office—120,000 sf	To be completed in 2020
27	Mixed Use Hotel (near St. Joseph's Hospital) 400 Prospect Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Hotel—53,673 square feet (93 rooms) Residential—13 units Medical Offices—36,787 square feet Parking—207 spaces (lower level)	To be completed in 2020
28	Syracuse Development Center Site 800-802 South Wilbur Avenue, Syracuse, NY	50 acres site that City is investigating redevelopment options	Plans in development; site seized by City in August 2019
29	177 Marshall Street (Marshall at University), Syracuse, NY	TBD (Residential/Commercial)	Planned
30	ShoppingTown Mall 3649 Erie Boulevard E., Syracuse, NY	TBD	Planned
31	Empire State Trail Segments 3, 4, and 5 Erie Boulevard E., Syracuse, NY	Erie Boulevard East will be reduced by one lane in each direction for a 3.3-mile stretch	Construction to begin in 2020
32	506 West Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY	Commercial—4,786 square feet Branch office on first floor, community meeting rooms on second.	Under construction
33	Syracuse University Research Park Redevelopment 101 Skytop Road, Syracuse, NY	TBD	Planned
34	CSX DeWitt Rail Yard Expansion/ Inland Port North Central Avenue, East Syracuse, NY	Expansion to enable intermodal cargo handling	Planned
35	Carrier Dome Renovations 900 Irving Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Improvements include a permanent roof, sound and lighting system, improved concessions, restrooms, air conditioning, and other amenities	To be completed in 2022
36	Roth Steel Site 800 Hiawatha Boulevard West, Syracuse, NY	Part of the Loop the Lake Trail is on this site. The remainder will be open for development.	Planned
37	517 West Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY	TBD (Commercial)	To completed in 2021
38	Collamer Crossing Business Park 85 Collamer Crossing Parkway, East Syracuse, NY	Commercial—177,800 square feet	Partially completed; further facilities planned
39	Hancock Airpark 7268 Caswell Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Industrial—4,800 square feet	Planned
40	Post-Standard Building 101 N. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—50 units Office—50,000 square feet	Under construction
41	415 S. Clinton Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—12 units Retail—TBD	To be completed 2020

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)

Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
42	417 S. Warren Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—3 units	Planned
43	Addis Building 449-453 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—18 units Office—TBD Retail—TBD	To be completed in 2020
44	Hyatt House Hotel 483 S. Salina Street, Syracuse NY	Hotel—120 rooms	Construction to begin in 2020
45	Steri-Pharma Expansion 429 S. West Street, Syracuse, NY	Industrial—18,500 square feet	Planned
46	Salt City Market 484 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—37 units Commercial / Office—24,000 square feet	To be completed in 2020
47	Acropolis Center 333-49 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—28 units Parking—46 spaces Retail—TBD	To be completed 2020
48	Chimes Building 500 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—96 units	Planned
49	Nappi Longevity Institute 915 Almond Street, Syracuse, NY	Medical Office Space—360,000 square feet	To be completed in 2022
50	Immediate Mailing Services Commerce Boulevard, Liverpool, NY	Industrial Renovation / Expansion—18,500 square feet across two buildings	Planned
51	Corbett Corner 444 E. Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—24 units Retail—TBD	Planned
52	728 E. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY	Residential—191 units Commercial—1,600 sf	Planned
53	Carnegie Building 335 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY	Conversion/rehabilitation of disused library building for use as office space by Onondaga County and City of Syracuse	In planning; construction could begin in 2020, with occupancy in 2021
54	CS Montgomery 320 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—31 units Common live/work space—TBD	To be completed 2020
55	New Venture Gear 6650 New Gear Drive, DeWitt, NY	Industrial—500,000 square feet	Potential
56	Brownfield Site South of I-690, between Greenway Avenue and City Crossroads Drive, Syracuse, NY	12 acres industrial site	Potential



## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)  
Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
57	The Jacob 208 W. Water Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—104 units Office—TBD Parking Garage—TBD	To be completed in 2021
58	CS Warren 351 S. Warren Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—57 units Common live/work space—TBD	To be completed 2020
59	Dey's 401 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—104 units	To be completed 2020
60	Dollarwise Building 313 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—TBD	Planned
61	Falker Building 248 E. Water Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—TBD Retail—TBD	To be completed 2020
62	Jefferson Building 401-07 S. Warren Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—28 units Retail—TBD Commercial—TBD Parking garage with 46 spaces	Planned
63	Marriott Syracuse Downtown – Phase II 100 E. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY	Expansion of 34 rooms to existing hotel	Planned
64	Mizpah Tower 350 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—TBD Retail—TBD	Planned
65	Renaud Wicks 250 E. Water Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—TBD Retail—TBD	To be completed 2020
66	Seneca Building 239-245 W. Fayette Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—20 units	To be completed 2020
67	Southern Gateway S. Clinton and Harrison Streets, Syracuse, NY	Planned redevelopment of Downtown's Southern Gateway to revitalize the area around the rail bridge to foster community and encourage safe pedestrian routes	Planned
68	St. Paul's 310 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—11 units	Planned

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)

Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
69	Symphony Tower 111 E. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY	Hotel—120 rooms	Planned
70	Tech Garden Expansion 235 Harrison Street, Syracuse, NY	Expansion of the Tech Garden campus will include renovating the façade and entranceways as well as adding two new floors	Planned
71	YMCA 330 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY	Residential—20 units and the renovation of existing units and common space	To be completed 2020
72	Blueprint 15	Reconfiguration / renovation of Pioneer Homes	Planned
73	First Student Busing, Town of Salina	TBD	To be completed in 2020
74	TTN/Anivan Corporation	Light manufacturing—50,000 square feet	Planned
75	Empire Farms, City of Oneida	Agricultural facility—4M square feet	To be completed in phases beginning in 2020
76	Canalway Commons at Widewaters Plaza, DeWitt, NY	Hotel—100 rooms Residential—75 units	To be completed in 2021
77	Cayuga Milk Ingredients Town of Aurelius, Cayuga County	Expansion of dairy processing facility	Construction begins in 2020
78	Tessy Plastics Elbridge, Van Buren, or Auburn, NY	Industrial expansion—TBD	Planned; site not yet chosen
79	Bodycote Thermal Processing Dwight Park Drive, Geddes, NY	Industrial—58,000 square feet	Planned
80	Cryomech 6682 Moore Road, DeWitt, NY	Industrial—14 acre site	Planned
81	Corso Cookies 628 Main Street, North Syracuse, NY	Industrial—34,000 square feet	Planned
82	SRC 7401 Round Pond Road, Cicero, NY	Industrial—37,500 square feet	Under Construction
83	United Auto Supply 738 Erie Boulevard West, Syracuse, NY	Industrial—80,000 square feet	Planned

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-2-1-2 (cont'd)  
Recent and Planned Developments in and near the I-81 Project Study Area

No.	Project Name/Location	Land Use and Size	Status (Estimated Completion)
84	Flex Hose Clay, NY	Industrial—TBD	Planned
85	Buckeye Corrugated 1203 Kinne Street, DeWitt, NY	Industrial—TBD	Planned
86	Waterside Commons Fayetteville, NY	Mixed Use—42 units with ground floor retail	Planned
87	Saab Defense and Security DeWitt, NY	Commercial Expansion—(TBD)	Planned
88	Willowbrook Crossing Manlius, NY	Residential—50,000 square feet (22 units) Retail—31,000 square feet Office—24,000 square feet	Planned
89	Anaren Widewaters Parkway, DeWitt, NY	Commercial/Industrial—37,000 square feet	Planned
90	Syracuse Label and Surround Printing 200 Stewart Drive, Cicero, NY	Industrial Expansion—23,000 square feet	Planned
91	Bigname Commerce DeWitt, NY	Industrial Expansion—TBD	Planned
92	ICHOR Therapeutics Lafayette, NY	Industrial—TBD Add second building to existing campus	Planned
93	Gerharz Equipment 222 Teall Avenue, Syracuse, NY	Industrial Expansion—TBD	Planned
94	Northeast Electronics Elbridge, NY	Industrial—18,000 square feet	Planned
95	Temple Concord 910 Madison Street Syracuse, NY	New 8-story apartment building 220 units of student housing 211 underground parking spaces Preservation of existing sanctuary building	Planned
96	Smith Restaurant Supply 500 Erie Boulevard East Syracuse, NY	Conversion to residential use 38 units of affordable housing	Completed
97	Aquarium at Inner Harbor Along the Inner Harbor between Bear Street and Solar Street	80,000-square-foot aquarium (redevelopment of former state Barge Canal terminal between Onondaga Lake and Franklin Square)	If approved, construction could start in late 2022 and open by late 2023

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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Connectivity between neighborhoods south of I-690—Downtown/Southside and Near Eastside/University Hill—would improve as compared to the No Build Alternative. The Viaduct Alternative would provide reconfigured roadways, new pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the study area, with added design and safety elements (including compliance with PROWAG), and improved lighting below the new viaduct, which would provide safer conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers (see **Section 3.4.2**). Sidewalks would be provided on Almond Street (on one side of the road) and new sidewalks and crosswalk would be installed along MLK, Jr. East. Under the Viaduct Alternative, I-81 would remain an elevated highway with multiple entrance and exit ramps underneath, and some bicycle/pedestrian connections would continue to be physically challenging along portions of Almond Street.

The removal of the elevated West Street overpass and ramps to and from I-690 would improve community cohesion, as the removal would re-establish connections between Downtown and the Near Westside, provide an opportunity to expand the Creekwalk, and relocate a portion of the trail to be adjacent to Onondaga Creek. This would also improve community cohesion with Franklin Square to the north of I 690.

I-690 would continue to hinder connections between neighborhoods north and south of the I-690 viaduct, and the I-81/I-690 interchange would include additional infrastructure, such as flyovers, to improve northbound and westbound traffic flow between I-81 and I-690. The flyover ramps would contribute to the existing separation between Downtown and neighborhoods to the north, including Franklin Square and Lakefront, and the Northside. However, pedestrian connections north and south of I-690 would improve with the proposed pedestrian and bicycle improvements. In addition, the new West Street interchange and Butternut Street bridge would provide the potential for new gateway opportunities between neighborhoods and the Creekwalk.

The Viaduct Alternative would result in the acquisition of 24 buildings and one structure (smokestack) in the Central Study Area. These include 16 industrial or storage uses, 12 office/medical office uses, five retail and service uses (including a nail salon, an African hair braiding salon, an e-cigarette/vape shop, a bank, and a Dunkin' Donuts), two residential uses, and one vacant building. The medical office uses include a behavioral health office, eye and tissue bank, child advocacy center, outpatient behavioral center, marriage and family therapy office, neurodiagnostics office, dental office, and general medical practice building. The Viaduct Alternative would not result in the acquisition of grocery stores or similar local retail uses; therefore, it would not affect access to supermarkets in the Central Study Area. As described in **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, there is ample commercial space within the Central Study Area for the relocation of displaced businesses. Also, numerous establishments provide the same or similar services as the businesses that would be displaced. None of the displaced businesses provides unique or hard to find services.

Approximately 95 dwelling units would be affected, primarily from residences above retail uses that would be displaced, including the Smith Restaurant Supply Building, which was converted

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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to residential use with 38 affordable units, but the Viaduct Alternative would demolish this building.

The Viaduct Alternative would directly displace buildings that contain medical uses and therapeutic services. The Viaduct Alternative would maintain access to community services and institutional uses that would not be displaced, and it would not hinder their operations.

The structures to be acquired are dispersed within the Central Study Area, but there is a concentration near the I-81/I-690 interchange in an area that was greatly disturbed by the original construction of these highways. The original highway construction created physical boundaries between neighborhoods. Buildings nearest the highway buffered it from interior blocks. The acquisition of these structures for the viaduct right-of-way would remove some of the buffer between the highway and interior blocks of the neighborhoods; however, the majority of structures that would be acquired are separated from, or disconnected from, their neighborhoods by vacant or surface parking lots or highway infrastructure. The construction of the original highway separated these buildings from the interior blocks of the neighborhoods. Thus, the acquisition of these structures would not substantively diminish the existing character and community cohesion of the neighborhoods as compared to the No Build Alternative. (For more on building acquisitions, see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, and for historic effects, see **Section 6-4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources**.)

The Viaduct Alternative would replace aging infrastructure, improve highway safety, and improve some pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. It is consistent with plans that suggest improving I-81 such as the I-81 Corridor Study and the LRTP (see **Section 6-2-1.1.3**). The alternative would not be consistent with plans, such as the University Hill Transportation Plan, that recommend or suggest replacement of the viaduct with a surface street to reconnect city neighborhoods. For example, under the Viaduct Alternative, Downtown and the Southside would remain divided from University Hill by an elevated highway. The Viaduct Alternative is also unlikely to alter current land use patterns in areas adjacent to the viaduct. Most of the land uses closest to the existing viaduct have been influenced by the presence of the highway and are underutilized and passive as evidenced by the numerous surface parking lots and vacant properties. Many of these parcels are poorly connected to, and lack visibility from, areas on the other side of the viaduct. Few have been redeveloped or are proposed to be redeveloped (see **Figure 6-2-1-8** and **Table 6-2-1-2**). These land use patterns would continue under the Viaduct Alternative, and the alternative would not improve neighborhood cohesion in these areas.

No changes to properties would occur outside of the Central Study Area under the Viaduct Alternative, with the exception of a partial acquisition of one single-family residence in the North Study Area for the potential installation of a noise barrier at the very back of the house's backyard. Thus, no additional analysis of permanent/operational impacts were performed for the remaining study areas.

This alternative would be compliant with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act (see **Appendix D-3**) as follows:

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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- The Viaduct Alternative would address structural deficiencies and non-standard highway features while creating an improved transportation corridor through the City of Syracuse.
- The Viaduct Alternative would strengthen existing communities by improving the connectivity between neighborhoods south of I-690: Downtown/Southside and Near Eastside/University Hill. New pedestrian and bicycle connections with added design and safety elements as well as improved lighting below the new viaduct would provide safer conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.
- The Viaduct Alternative would result in lower air emissions of pollutants.
- NYSDOT has coordinated with all relevant land use planning and transportation agencies, as well as community groups and local and state government.
- The Viaduct Alternative would be designed using NYSDOT design criteria.
- NYSDOT has conducted extensive outreach including public meetings and multiple presentations to communities.

Adverse traffic noise effects are predicted at locations within the study areas under the Viaduct Alternative. As described in **Section 6-4-6, Noise**, new or expanded noise barriers are recommended at multiple locations along the I-81 right-of-way. These barriers would require acquisition of some private property, but they would not result in the removal of any existing structures or the alteration of the underlying land use of the properties.

### Central Study Area

The Viaduct Alternative would convert 21.74 acres of land in the Central Study Area to new transportation right-of-way. (Construction effects of the Project are addressed in a subsequent section of this chapter.) The majority of permanent land use change would occur adjacent to the I-81/I-690 interchange and along the northern segment of I-81 between the interchange and Hiawatha Boulevard where additional right-of-way would be required to accommodate design improvements for highway realignment, increased highway width, and the I-81/I-690 ramp connections. The majority of land use effects would occur in Downtown to the south and west, Franklin Square and Prospect Hill/Little Italy to the north, and the Near Eastside to the east; however, as described below, minor changes in land use would occur in other areas as well. Twenty-four (24) buildings and one structure (a smokestack) would be acquired in the Central Study Area.

Although property along the viaduct and I-690 would be affected by new transportation right-of-way acquisition, these acquisitions would not meaningfully alter the balance of land uses in the study area, nor would they have an adverse effect on surrounding land uses. The land to be acquired would not substantially reduce the physical size of neighborhoods surrounding the highway. Since the existing highways have been in place for decades and have shaped land use patterns throughout the area, the replacement of the viaduct is not expected to result in substantive changes in land use patterns, uses, or densities beyond what could be achieved through existing and ongoing planning and/or policies.



## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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The Viaduct Alternative is consistent with many local or regional plans that call for a replacement of the existing I-81 viaduct, but it is inconsistent with plans that call for the removal of the viaduct to better connect neighborhoods and to provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Plans that recommend the latter include the University Hill Transportation Plan and the SHA Master Plan (currently under development), which aim to reconnect areas east and west of Almond Street.

Although the Federal and New York State governments are exempt from local zoning, NYSDOT has evaluated the Comprehensive Plans and local zoning ordinances to determine potential future land uses within the vicinity of the study areas. NYSDOT has also been coordinating, and will continue to coordinate, with the affected municipalities within the study area.

No public schools, private schools, universities, or places of worship would be acquired in their entirety for the Viaduct Alternative, and no adverse permanent/operational impacts to these institutions are expected. However, one specialty school within Syracuse University, the Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, would be affected as a building containing its counseling services would be acquired; no teaching facilities would be affected, and the population of students and professors at the school would not be affected. NYSDOT would coordinate with the university to relocate the services provided at this location.

Since travel patterns would not change substantively as a result of the Viaduct Alternative, sizable increases in traffic near schools, universities, or places of worship would not be expected. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including a protected bicycle and pedestrian path along the west side of Almond Street from Fineview Place to Harrison Street, and distinctive pavement markings or materials to define space for bicyclists and pedestrians would have a positive effect on pedestrian and bicyclist safety for students and workers at Upstate Medical University and at the Dr. King Elementary School and the Institute of Technology at Central.

The new southbound entrance ramp at MLK, Jr. East under the Viaduct Alternative would require closure of a driveway to the adjacent parking lot of Dr. King Elementary School (not the primary entrance), but the school's other driveway at East Raynor Avenue, which is the primary entrance, would remain open. Pedestrian access to the school and nearby Tucker Missionary Baptist Church would be improved with new sidewalks and crosswalks that would be installed along MLK, Jr. East from Leon Street to Renwick Avenue.

### *I-81 Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea*

The Viaduct Alternative would require 11 property acquisitions of existing buildings (professional building, special school, residential, distribution facility, manufacturing, drive in bank, and a billboard). As noted previously, the most change would occur in Downtown with some change in the Southside. No land use change is expected in the Near Westside. Building acquisitions are explained in greater detail in **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation** and listed in **Table 6-3-1-2**.

Most land use changes would occur in several areas. In the area south of the interchange bound by Almond Street/I-81 to the east and South McBride/Townsend Streets to the west. There

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

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is also primarily land acquisition farther east of that area and south of I-81, to the extent of the southwest neighborhood.

Eleven buildings would be acquired, including medical and therapy facilities, a restaurant supply building, a bank, storage buildings, retail shops, and vacant buildings. Five of these are historic properties (listed on or determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places). (For more on building acquisitions, see **Figures 6-3-1-1a and 1b, Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, and for historic resources effects, see **Section 6-4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources**.) Although 11 buildings within the I-81 Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea would be acquired for the Viaduct Alternative, much of the altered land in Downtown holds surface parking—including areas of the commercial, industrial, institutional, and mixed-use uses that would be converted to right-of-way. As such, the changes in land use to construct the Viaduct Alternative would not alter the overall balance of land uses within Downtown Syracuse. The locations that may experience a loss of parking are described in **Section 5.5.1** New parking lots would be built to replace lost parking spaces. Parking would be replaced either at or near the same locations of the anticipated parking losses.

The potential impact of the loss of two medical and therapy facilities and social service offices is offset by the presence of additional similar services within walkable distances. Six medical buildings and five law/social services offices were found within a mile radius of the buildings that would be acquired. Furthermore, land uses that would be closer to the wider viaduct and reconstructed I-81/I-690 interchange, including residential, commercial, and parking uses, are already influenced by the presence of the existing viaduct and interchange.

### *I-81 Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea*

In the Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea, the Viaduct Alternative would require two building acquisitions and would convert several land uses to right-of-way east of Almond Street to accommodate the viaduct replacement. The acquired properties would include a small privately owned open space adjacent to surface parking south of Erie Boulevard, a drive-thru restaurant with surface parking between East Water and East Washington Streets (Dunkin' Donuts), and a surface parking lot south of East Washington Street.

The Viaduct Alternative would alter land use on several lots in the University Hill area, including a portion of Hutchings Psychiatric Center's large surface parking lot between East Genesee and Cedar Streets and two narrow areas of surface parking between Almond Street and Harrison Avenue. Farther south, a maintenance garage on Renwick Avenue, which is used by the SHA, would be acquired. The lots would be available with reduced parking, and the alignment of the alternative considered the impact to parking for each parcel. **Appendix C-5** is a parking study that details the extent of surface lot and garage parking. Several lots near this area have off-street parking that is not fully utilized.

Given that much of the land use change would affect surface parking areas, which are in large supply within the Central Study Area, the Viaduct Alternative would not alter the balance of land uses or result in substantial adverse land use impacts within the Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea or in the larger Central Study Area. In addition, although some land uses—notably

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medical uses, including Upstate Medical University and Hospital, and residential uses, such as SHA's Pioneer Homes—would be closer to the wider replacement viaduct, these uses are already influenced by the presence of the existing highway.

### *I-81 Northern Neighborhoods Subarea*

The majority of land use change in the Northern Neighborhoods Subarea would occur in the Franklin Square and Prospect Hill neighborhoods adjacent to the I-81/I-690 interchange (see **Figures 6-3-1-1a and 1b**). The Viaduct Alternative would also alter land uses near Hawley-Green and Washington Square. The 11 buildings that would be acquired in the Northern Neighborhoods Subarea under the Viaduct Alternative include retail/residential mixed uses, office uses, a health services facility, a wholesale use, an industrial use, storage uses, and a utility use. Six of these are historic properties (listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places). (For more on building acquisitions, see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, and for historic resources effects, see **Section 6-4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources**.)

In Franklin Square, the Viaduct Alternative would alter vacant land between Evans Street and Butternut Street to the east and west of North Franklin Street. Surface parking, public utility (sewage treatment), and commercial land uses would be altered or converted along Webster's Landing just north of existing westbound I-690, including an office use that is on the State and National Register of Historic Places. The Viaduct Alternative would also alter industrial and commercial lots near Genant Drive at North Clinton and Spencer Streets.

East of I-81 in Prospect Hill, the Viaduct Alternative would alter a cluster of mixed-use (residential and retail), medical/office, wholesale, and parking uses in the Little Italy area roughly bounded by I-81, North Salina Street to the south, and Salt Street or North State Street to the east. Seven buildings would be acquired in this area. The removal of the commercial and mixed-use buildings would not result in adverse land use impacts in the surrounding neighborhood. Immediately to the north of these structures, North Salina Street is lined with many mixed-use buildings that would not be altered by the Viaduct Alternative. The removal of the medical/office use would not meaningfully affect the larger concentration of medical uses around St. Joseph's Hospital one block to the east, along with nearby medical uses on University Hill. Other uses to be acquired are either vacant, surface parking, or industrial/storage and, given their existing separation from neighborhood concentrations, acquisition would not meaningfully alter the balance of uses within the Central Study Area. (For more on building acquisitions, see **Section 6 3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**.)

In Hawley-Green, the Viaduct Alternative would acquire a commercial warehouse use between Burnet Avenue and I-690 to the east of Catherine Street. A small linear area of vacant land would also be converted to right-of-way in Washington Square near the intersection of Lodi Street and Bear Street.

Much of the land that would be altered is either vacant or used for surface parking, for which there is a sufficient supply within the neighborhood. A parking study was conducted and is included as **Appendix C-5**. This details the utilization and availability of parking in this area.

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For this subarea, there is abundant off-street and on-street parking that is less than 50 percent utilized. The Viaduct Alternative would require the acquisition of 11 buildings. The removal of the uses within these buildings would not alter the overall balance of land uses within the neighborhoods of the Subarea. As such, the Viaduct Alternative would not adversely affect land uses within the neighborhood or the larger Central Study Area.

### I-481 North Study Area

The Viaduct Alternative would involve a partial acquisition of 0.07 acres of a 0.47-acre property within this subarea. The acquisition would not affect any buildings or change land use of the parcel, so the Viaduct Alternative would not adversely affect land uses in the I-481 North Study Area.

### I-481 South and East Study Areas

The Viaduct Alternative would not involve permanent changes in right-of-way in the I-481 South and I-481 East Study Areas. Therefore, it would not result in adverse effects on land uses in these areas.

### 6-2-1.3.2 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

As described in **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**, construction of the Viaduct Alternative would occur over a seven-year period. During that time, there would be construction activity throughout the Central Study Area. As described in this FDR/FEIS, construction would result in traffic detours, increases in traffic on certain roadways, and emissions and noise from construction equipment. Property acquisition and temporary easements would also be required, which would be undertaken prior to the start of construction (see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**). To help minimize and mitigate the adverse effects of construction activities on the community, NYSDOT would require its Contractors to comply with measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects, as listed in **Table 4-7 (Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods)**. The list includes measures to address traffic diversions, dust and debris, increases in emissions and noise, access to businesses and residences, and community engagement. Cumulatively, these measures would help address adverse effects on neighborhoods and community cohesion during the construction period.

The Contractor would be responsible for identifying construction staging sites. This FDR/FEIS assumes that staging for construction equipment would occur within transportation right-of-way, properties to be acquired, or through temporary easements adjacent to the right-of-way, but additional staging areas may be required. The Contractor would likely seek out underutilized sites, such as vacant parcels or land currently used for surface parking. There are a number of these sites within the Central Study Area. NYSDOT standard specifications require the Contractor to obtain all approvals for a proposed staging area. If the Contractor proposes to use NYSDOT property, it would need a highway work permit. If the Contractor proposes other public or private properties, the Contractor would need to comply with local land use regulations and/or permitting requirements. NYSDOT would not approve the Contractor to use these sites until the Contractor has achieved the

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needed land use approvals. The use of vacant or underused sites for construction staging would represent a change in use during the construction period.

Upon the completion of construction, the Contractor would return public land to the appropriate public oversight agency, and it would be able to sell private land for future development. The future development of private lands would need to comply with all applicable land use regulations, including any requirements for environmental review and permits.

Temporary lane, road, and intersection closures would be likely during construction. These closures would temporarily affect the movement of cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists within and between the neighborhoods in the Central Study Area (described in **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations**), which would occur at different areas within different timeframes, depending on where construction work is taking place, to minimize the duration of detours at any one location. Pedestrian detours would be PROWAG accessible. These temporary closures may also affect access to residences, businesses, places of worship, and/or schools due to rerouting the movement of cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit buses. While these may have isolated impacts and temporary detours, broad land use change is not anticipated. The Contractor would maintain a point of access to these uses unless it would be infeasible and/or impractical to do so. The Contractor would undertake measures to minimize these effects to the extent practicable, such as signage, detours, and limiting work to specified hours.

Roadway construction and resultant detours have the potential to affect the routing of emergency vehicles through or around the construction zones. As listed in **Table 4-7 (Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods)**, NYSDOT will coordinate with emergency service providers, including hospitals, fire companies, and emergency medical technicians, to minimize the impact of construction activities and detours on their operations.

The Viaduct Alternative would not require the closure of schools or other community facilities during construction. NYSDOT would continue to coordinate with the Syracuse City School District during construction. During final design, NYSDOT would consider implementing additional construction restrictions within the construction zone near Dr. King Elementary School, such as time and/or seasonal restrictions where appropriate.

The eastern portion (0.12 acres) of Wilson Park would be inaccessible for two years of the construction period (see **Section 6-4-2, Parklands and Recreational Resources**), but the community center and other portions of the park would remain open. As stipulated in the measures, NYSDOT has and will coordinate with schools near the construction zone, including Dr. King Elementary School, to minimize the effects of construction activities on their operations.

NYSDOT will require its Contractor to prepare a communication and outreach plan, and NYSDOT would oversee its implementation throughout the seven-year construction period. The plan would include outreach to notify affected parties of construction activities and mitigation efforts (see **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods** and **Table 4-7**). This plan would include a communications protocol to reach out to residents and businesses,

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hospitals and emergency services, and schools and places of worship regarding pertinent construction and traffic information.

### **6-2-1.3.3 INDIRECT EFFECTS**

The Viaduct Alternative would not impede or prevent planned development within the I-81 or I-481 Study Areas. However, it is unlikely to induce development in a manner that would meaningfully alter neighborhood cohesion within the Central Study Area, or promote pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive development consistent with the vision established by ReZone Syracuse.

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse indirect effects on land use. The Viaduct Alternative represents the continuation of an existing use, and its implementation would not impede planned development or land use plans in the Project Area.

Some new development may be attracted to the Northern Neighborhoods Subarea (north of I 690) associated with the Clinton Street improvements and to the Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea (Near Westside and Downtown) associated with the removal of the West Street ramps; both areas would experience improved access, and West Street would experience increased visual connections as a result of the alternative. These improvements would complement ongoing redevelopment efforts in both areas, which have seen new residential development in formerly commercial buildings and underused sites. However, in the majority of the study area, where the Viaduct Alternative represents the continuation of an existing use, the elevated highway would continue to influence development decisions, especially south of I-690, in a manner similar to the No Build Alternative.

A number of new development projects are underway and planned south of I-690 in portions of the Central Study Area that are more bicycle and pedestrian-oriented and provide strong connections to job centers and/or educational institutions. This pattern would likely continue, given the continued presence of an elevated roadway and the associated physical and visual impediments that are not as conducive to the types of residential and/or mixed-use developments currently supported by the market. Thus, development such as residential and/or a mix of residential, office, and retail that would improve connections and cohesion of neighborhoods on either side of the viaduct would not likely occur. Further, the presence of a viaduct structure would continue the physical separation between the neighborhoods and would not result in more land area available for development.

Upon the completion of construction, NYSDOT may be able to dispose of its limited excess right-of-way or the Contractor may sell staging sites. New development, if any, on this land must meet local land use regulations, and developers would be required to obtain necessary permits and approvals from the appropriate oversight agencies. Accordingly, new development would comply with the City's zoning regulations applicable to the area where it would occur.

Overall, the Viaduct Alternative is unlikely to induce much additional development beyond the projected development for the No Build Alternative. Land use patterns are already influenced by the presence of the existing I-81 highway, as evidenced by the many vacant or surface parking lots directly abutting the highway. Although the Viaduct Alternative would

improve connections between neighborhoods, the area would still include an elevated highway that would influence development decisions.

As described in **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, the Viaduct Alternative would displace 95 dwelling units. However, the relocation of the affected residents, which could occur within the immediate area, would not substantially alter the enrollment of schools or attendance at places of worship in the Central Study Area. University and private school enrollment would not be affected by population changes within such a small area since students attending these institutions come from a wide geography and must apply for admission.

As described in **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations**, travel patterns would not change substantively under the Viaduct Alternative and would not adversely affect the accessibility or operation of public or private schools, universities, or places of worship. Parking beneath the viaduct, which serves uses Downtown, would be replaced.

### 6-2-1.3.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

When considered collectively with past, ongoing, and future planning and development initiatives in Downtown Syracuse, the Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects on neighborhood cohesion. Improvements at the West Street interchange and Butternut Street bridge would enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods west and northwest of Downtown Syracuse. South of I-690, the Viaduct Alternative would provide pedestrian and bicycle features consistent with the overall connectivity plans for the City of Syracuse, would implement safety and streetscape enhancements that would complement the increasingly residential and commercial character of downtown neighborhoods, and would be consistent with the City of Syracuse's land use plan for 2040. However, as an elevated and wider viaduct, its physical and visual presence would increase, continuing to affect land use and development patterns. Thus, induced development would not be expected in most of the Central Study Area, in particular between Downtown and University Hill job centers. Thus, although connectivity improvements between neighborhoods would occur, the physical and visual impediments that remain would limit improvements to neighborhood/community cohesion in a substantive way.

As described in **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations**, the Viaduct Alternative would meet regional travel needs into the future, accounting for existing travel demand, proposed development, and land use plans previously identified.

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse indirect effects on land use, public or private schools, universities, or places of worship. Additionally, most planned developments within the Central Study Area are residential and mixed use residential structures located in two clusters—Downtown and University Hill—several blocks from the elevated highway. This pattern is likely to continue given the existing market demand for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods. Enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities under this alternative, in combination with other conceptualized and planned improvements by the City of Syracuse, would enhance accessibility to schools, universities, and places of worship. Bicycle



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and pedestrian improvements included in the Viaduct Alternative, combined with those planned by the City of Syracuse, would improve connections between neighborhoods on either side of the highway.

Thus, the Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects with respect to neighborhood character. However, it would not remove the viaduct structure, and therefore, it would not result in substantial cumulative benefits to neighborhood character.

### 6-2-1.3.5 MITIGATION

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse permanent/operational, indirect, or cumulative effects on neighborhoods and community cohesion. The alternative would also not result in adverse effects on land use.

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse effects to public and private schools; thus, mitigation is not required. The alternative would affect one specialty school, the Syracuse University Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. This school is located in a building with other services/businesses not associated with the school. Thirteen employees would be displaced from all of the businesses in the building. This school could be relocated to an existing building within the same neighborhood, as the school does not require a full building for its operation, and therefore the impact on this use is not considered significant.

To mitigate traffic noise impacts, the Viaduct Alternative includes the potential construction of new noise barriers along sections of the reconstructed highways (see **Section 6-4-6, Noise**). The construction of these walls would result in a minor amount of land acquisition, consisting of vacant land. No additional parcels or structures would be acquired in whole. Existing noise barriers are present along parts of these corridors and described in **Section 6-4-6, Noise**. Because of the location of the noise barriers directly adjacent to the rights-of-way of the interstate highways, their construction would not substantially change neighborhood character within the study areas (and are considered minor adverse visual impacts).

During construction, NYSDOT and the Contractor would undertake measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate adverse effects on community facilities and services, as listed in **Table 4-7 (Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods)**. These proposed measures include staggering construction along roadways, limiting work to specified hours, posting appropriate signage, and implementing detours. Also, the Contractor would maintain a detour route if neighborhood connections are disrupted during construction. These measures would help to lessen construction effects on area schools and places of worship. In addition, the Contractor, in consultation with NYSDOT and FHWA, would be required to prepare an approved communication and outreach plan for implementation throughout the seven-year construction period. The plan would include outreach to notify affected parties of construction activities and mitigation efforts, and measures in the plan may include public notices, flyers, and roadway signage to notify area residents, businesses, and drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians about upcoming and ongoing work.

### 6-2-1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COMMUNITY GRID ALTERNATIVE

#### 6-2-1.4.1 PERMANENT/OPERATIONAL EFFECTS

The Community Grid Alternative would remove the I-81 viaduct above Almond Street from the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railway bridge (at Renwick Street) to the I-81/I-690 interchange and replace it with a surface street. The portion of I-81 that now travels through Syracuse would be reclassified as Business Loop 81 (BL 81). BL 81 would extend between the existing southern I-481 interchange (Exit 16A) and the existing northern I-481 interchange (Exit 29). Several local streets severed by construction of the I-81 viaduct would be reestablished. A new interchange between I-690 and Crouse and Irving Avenues would establish a new entry corridor to the Near Eastside and University Hill. Under the Community Grid Alternative, I-481 would be designated I-81 and would carry four to six lanes of through traffic around the eastern side of Syracuse. A full description of the alternative is provided in **Section 3-4-3**.

Existing highway traffic with destinations in Syracuse would use numerous north-south and east-west streets, resulting in greater use of the local street network. Almond Street would carry two lanes in each direction, as well as turning lanes when needed. Almond Street would include a planted median with breaks at key intersections and parallel parking where reasonable. The alternative would also include pedestrian and bicycle amenities with new or wider sidewalks and cycle tracks or shared use paths on Almond Street. A new interchange between I-690 and Crouse and Irving Avenues would establish a new entry into the Near Eastside and University Hill from I-690. A new northbound BL 81 off-ramp to East Colvin Street would improve highway access to the Southside/Brighton and Outer Comstock neighborhoods. The Community Grid Alternative also includes the full reconstruction of I-690 from its interchange with West Street to Beech Street, as well improvements on I-690 at West Street. The portion of BL 81 north of I-690 would also be improved.

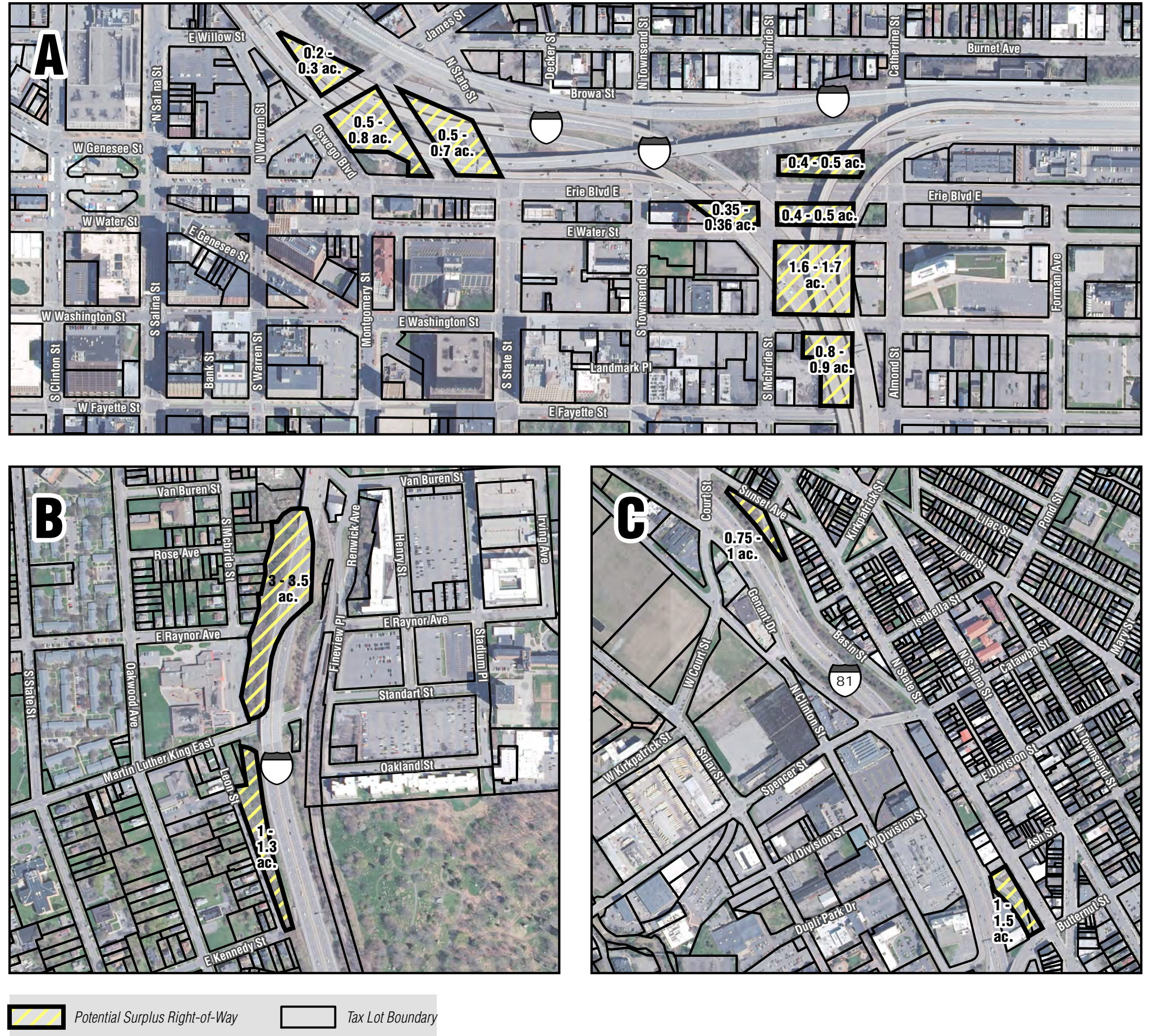
The Community Grid Alternative would improve neighborhood cohesion in the Central Study Area by removing the viaduct structure and providing improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities and connections between Downtown/Southside and University Hill/Near Eastside neighborhoods. The Community Grid would also promote the use of the street grid and the reconnection of streets (e.g., the extension of Irving Avenue to I-690 and the restoration of Oswego Boulevard and Pearl Street to their historical alignments), providing improved vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle access. It could result in surplus right-of-way where the I-81 viaduct and ramps to I-690 would be removed as well as near MLK, Jr. East, where the shifting of the highway eastward could create surplus right-of-way (see **Figure 6-2-1-12**).

Under the Community Grid Alternative, traffic from the south destined for University Hill would travel along BL 81 and then exit to Colvin Street or turn right off the Van Buren Street roundabout, which would both serve as entrances from the south to University Hill. BL 81 would not have access to MLK Jr., East. MLK, Jr. East would terminate at the rear driveway of Dr. King Elementary School. Burt, Taylor, and Jackson Streets would be signalized. Monroe Street would not be signalized.



Note: All acreages are approximate. NYSDOT will not determine the actual acreage of surplus property until construction is complete.

## I-81 Viaduct Project



Potential Surplus Right-of-way  
**Figure 6-2-1-12**



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Connections between the Northside and the Downtown and University Hill neighborhoods would continue to be hindered by I-690 infrastructure. However, streetscape enhancements, and the removal and relocation of I-81 ramp structures at Harrison and Adams Streets, would reconnect the Downtown and University Hill neighborhoods. In addition, the realignment and removal of ramps in Northside would enhance street level access and circulation for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, and improve the connectivity between Northside and the Downtown and University Hill neighborhoods over present conditions (see **Chapter 3, Alternatives**).

West Street ramps to and from I-690 would be eliminated and reconfigured to a surface alignment. This would improve community cohesion, as the removal would reestablish the physical connection between Downtown and the Near Westside. It would also provide an opportunity to expand the Creekwalk and relocate a portion of the trail to be adjacent to Onondaga Creek.

The Community Grid Alternative would result in the acquisition of four commercial buildings in the Central Study Area, none of which is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. These buildings contain five businesses: a drive-thru restaurant, a furniture business, an automotive business, a Syracuse Housing Authority garage, and a storage facility. The Community Grid Alternative would not result in the acquisition of grocery stores or similar local retail uses; therefore, there would be no change in food access in the Central Study Area. The structures to be acquired are not concentrated within a single neighborhood, nor do they provide a community service specific to a neighborhood or its population (see **Figures 6-3-1-2a through 2d**). Since these properties are not concentrated in a small area and the services they provide could be sought nearby, their acquisition and demolition would not constitute a considerable change to the neighborhoods in the Central Study Area. For more on building acquisitions, see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**.

The Community Grid Alternative would not displace any community facilities or institutional uses, including access to these services. The parking lot and driveway for a building that contains a dialysis center would be modified, but the facility could continue to operate at this location.

Under the Community Grid Alternative, I-481 would be designated I-81 and would carry a minimum of four lanes of through traffic. The alternative would not add additional access points to or from I-481 or I-81 in the North, South, or East Study Areas, thus, project elements in these study areas would be within the transportation right-of-way and would not result in adverse effects on neighborhoods or community cohesion within these areas. The Community Grid Alternative would also include improvements to the re-designated I-81 (I-481) to improve traffic flow; however, all changes would fall within the existing transportation right-of-way. These would include improvements at Interchange 5 to reduce congestion on the mainline I-81 (I-481) and the exit ramps. In addition, existing I-481 would be reconfigured at Interchange 3 (New York State Routes 5/92). The existing I-481 southbound to westbound New York State Routes 5/92 exit ramp would be widened and improved to accommodate turns onto both westbound and eastbound New York State Routes 5/92 (see **Section 3.4.2**).

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The Community Grid Alternative would incorporate approximately 20.44 acres of land in the Project Area into new transportation right-of-way, but the alternative could also result in 10 to 12.5 acres of surplus transportation right-of-way that could be converted to another use (see **Figure 6-2-1-12**). (Construction effects are discussed below.)

This alternative is compliant with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act (see **Appendix D-3**) as follows:

- The Community Grid Alternative would address structural deficiencies and nonstandard highway features while creating an improved transportation corridor through the City of Syracuse.
- The Community Grid Alternative would strengthen existing communities through an increase in community cohesion, due to the removal of the viaduct structure in a portion of the city. The removal of the viaduct would balance the transportation character of this area and better connect the uses as well as enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
- The Community Grid Alternative would result in decreases in vehicle miles traveled and improvements in travel speed, therefore reducing air emissions of pollutants.
- The dispersion of traffic under the Community Grid Alternative, the removal of the viaduct structure between neighborhoods, and the introduction of enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities would balance the vehicular transportation character of Almond Street with other uses, making it a "complete street" (vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian) and better connecting the uses on either side.
- NYSDOT has coordinated with all relevant land use planning and transportation agencies, as well as community groups and local and state government.
- The Community Grid Alternative would be designed using NYSDOT design criteria.
- NYSDOT has conducted extensive outreach including public meetings and multiple presentations to communities.

Adverse traffic noise effects are predicted at locations within the study areas under the Community Grid Alternative. As described in **Section 6-4-6, Noise**, new or expanded noise barriers are recommended at multiple locations along BL 81 (current I-81), the new I-81 (current I-481), and the I-690 right-of-way. The process for approving noise barriers is detailed in **Section 6-4-6**. These barriers would require acquisition of some private property, but they would not result in the removal of any existing structures or the alteration of the underlying land use of the properties.

### Central Study Area

The Community Grid Alternative would alter access to uses adjacent to the I-81/I-690 interchange in all subarea neighborhoods. Additional transportation right-of-way would be required in these areas to accommodate design changes to the highway configuration, including improved ramp connections between I-690 and the northern segment of I-81, which would remain (although it would no longer be designated as I-81), and the West Street ramps.

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Other areas, as described below, would experience some changes in site access due to property acquisitions, notably along South Crouse Avenue and Irving Avenue south of I-690. The Community Grid Alternative would also result in the creation of potentially developable land south of I-690 from the removal of the viaduct and realignment of surface roadways. In total, four buildings housing five businesses would be acquired in the Central Study Area under the alternative.

Although the Community Grid Alternative would acquire property for its implementation, these acquisitions would not meaningfully alter the balance of land uses in the study area, nor would they have an adverse effect on surrounding land uses. The land area to be acquired for the transportation right-of-way would not substantially reduce or increase the physical size of neighborhoods surrounding the existing viaduct. However, the Community Grid Alternative would potentially result in changes to land use patterns where surface streets replace the elevated viaduct. The Community Grid Alternative would redistribute traffic in many parts of the Central Study Area; reconnect neighborhood streets currently severed by the I-81 viaduct; improve connections between Downtown/Southside and Near Eastside/University Hill; potentially provide development opportunities on land currently in the viaduct right-of-way; and create new access points from I-690 (e.g., South Crouse and Irving Avenues). These changes would be consistent with most current planning and policy initiatives. In particular, these changes would further the redevelopment goals of ReZone Syracuse, which promotes pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive development.

Improvements include a separated 14-foot wide two-way bicycle/pedestrian path along the west side of Almond Street from MLK, Jr. East north to Adams Street. The east side of the road, between Adams Street and Van Buren Street, would have a 14-foot-wide planting strip and an eight-foot-wide sidewalk (see **Chapter 3, Alternatives**). At the intersection of Almond and Van Buren Streets, a shared use (bicycle and pedestrian) path would be located south of the intersection, along the former alignment of Fineview Place, and connect to East Raynor Avenue on University Hill. Other sidewalk and bicycle track improvements would occur throughout the local street network.

No schools would be acquired under the Community Grid Alternative. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements planned along Almond Street as part of the Community Grid Alternative would have a positive effect on pedestrian and bicyclist safety, access, and connectivity to the Dr. King Elementary School and to the Institute of Technology at Central. The Community Grid Alternative would maintain both driveways at Dr. King Elementary School. MLK Jr., East would terminate at the rear driveway of Dr. King Elementary School instead of connecting to Renwick Avenue. The main access driveway on the north side of the school parking lot that connects to East Raynor Avenue would be unaffected.

Upstate Medical University is located on either side of Almond Street/I-81. The pedestrian and bicycle enhancements included in the Community Grid Alternative along Almond Street and the removal of visual barriers caused by the existing viaduct would increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety between Upstate's facilities.

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No places of worship would be acquired under the Community Grid Alternative. Instead, these facilities would generally benefit from the pedestrian and bicycle features proposed under the Community Grid Alternative.

Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not adversely affect schools or places of worship.

### *I-81 Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea*

As noted previously, land use changes would occur in the Southwest and Southeast Neighborhoods Subareas (see **Figures 6-3-1-2a through 2d**).

This alternative would affect land uses primarily along Downtown's northern boundary with eastbound I-690 from approximately North State Street to East Genesee Street/Onondaga Creek. This includes areas with commercial, mixed use, and parking uses. Most of the affected properties would not be acquired; rather, changes would be limited to altered street dimensions. A portion of a surface parking lot at the intersection of Herald Place and North Salina Street would be acquired for right-of-way to reconfigure highway ramps; however, there is other available off-street parking in that area (private and public), as described in the parking study found in **Appendix C-5**. North and south of East Genesee Street along Onondaga Creek, the Community Grid Alternative would reconfigure the West Street interchange, which would allow NYSDOT to extend the Creekwalk. Along Downtown's southern boundary, a small area of surface parking at Almond Street and Harrison Avenue would be converted to surface roadway. The parking area supports the parcel's primary use, Upstate Medical Center Specialty Services.

Removal of the highway infrastructure would create new vacant parcels with potential for development to the west of Almond Street. Land beneath the I-690 viaduct that is currently used as surface parking may be restored to surface parking upon the completion of construction, but other excess right-of-way could be used for another purpose. In addition, a parcel east of the Dr. King Elementary School in the Southside neighborhood would be created by the realignment of the surface roadway to the east of existing I-81. As currently proposed, this parcel, which would be 3 to 3.5 acres in size, depending on how much land would be needed to accommodate the highway, sidewalk, shared use (bicycle and pedestrian) path, and other transportation features, would be part of the NYSDOT right-of-way; the exact acreage would be determined during construction. Its disposition has not been determined, but it could be made available for development, or other use, in the future. **Figure 6-2-1-12** shows this and other parcels that would become available as a result of the removal or relocation of transportation infrastructure.

The Community Grid Alternative would minimally alter existing land use within the Southwest Neighborhood Subarea. Because it would remove the viaduct and associated highway ramps, it would create surplus transportation right-of-way for potential future development or open space areas near Almond Street and MLK, Jr. East. However, there are no redevelopment plans as part of the Community Grid Alternative, and any new development would be presumed to be similar to surrounding land use and subject to the underlying zoning. As a

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result, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse land use effects within the Southwest Neighborhoods Subarea.

### *I-81 Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea*

In the Near Eastside, nearest the existing I-81 viaduct, the Community Grid Alternative would convert several land uses to right-of-way for the new Almond Street alignment. These would include a drive-thru restaurant (Dunkin' Donuts) with surface parking between East Water and East Washington Streets and a property with two commercial businesses on Lodi Street (furniture and automotive businesses).

To allow for the South Crouse and Irving Avenues-I-690 connection and to extend Irving Avenue, which currently ends at East Fayette, portions of several parcels would be acquired and converted from their current uses to transportation right-of-way. This includes a portion of a parking lot associated with a public utilities use (Spectrum, a telecommunications company) between Erie Boulevard and I-690, a professional office building between Erie Boulevard and East Water Street, a section of larger vacant lot between East Water Street and East Fayette, and a vacant parcel currently used as an entrance to a surface parking lot. The professional office building contains the Syracuse VA Dental Clinic and a dialysis center, and the Community Grid Alternative would result in a partial acquisition of 0.31 acres of the 1.49-acre property that is currently used for a sidewalk and the driveway exit from the parking lot. NYSDOT has and will continue to coordinate with the property owner to maintain a driveway exit and sidewalk. The Community Grid Alternative would not decrease the number of onsite parking spaces, and therefore would not affect community access to these medical facilities.

Roadway modifications would affect several areas of surface parking for the Hutchings Psychiatric Center along the reconfigured Almond Street. This includes the westernmost section of a large surface parking lot between East Genesee and Cedar Streets and two narrow surface lots between Cedar Street, Madison Street, and Harrison Street. Portions of these lots that include structures are not included in the Community Grid Alternative's future right-of-way. These facilities would still operate efficiently with the reduced parking as several public lots in this area are underused. **Appendix C-5** is a parking study that details the extent of surface lot and garage parking.

Given that much of the land use change would affect areas of vacant land or surface parking within the area, the alternative would not meaningfully alter the balance of land uses or result in substantial adverse land use impacts within the Southeast Neighborhoods Subarea or in the larger Central Study Area.

### *I-81 Northern Neighborhoods Subarea*

Most change would occur in the Franklin Square and Prospect Hill neighborhoods adjacent to the BL 81/I-690 interchange. The Community Grid Alternative would also alter land uses near Hawley-Green and Washington Square.

I-690 would be reconstructed from Leavenworth Avenue to Beech Street, including the former I-81/I-690 interchange. The westbound I-690 on-ramp from Bear Street would be lengthened, and operational improvements would be made on Bear Street. These



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improvements include widening select portions of Bear Street, adding raised medians to prevent turns at some locations (e.g., at Van Rensselaer Street and Liberty Street), adding left and right turns at specific locations (e.g., Spencer Street and Clinton Street), improving select sidewalks, and relocating a portion of the planned Empire State Trail connection between Van Rensselaer Street and the Onondaga Creekwalk.

In Franklin Square, the right-of-way needed for new ramp connections and surface street modifications would require the conversion of vacant land between Evans Street and Butternut Street to the east and west of North Franklin Street.

In Prospect Hill's Little Italy area, the Community Grid Alternative would alter mixed use (residential and retail), medical office, wholesale, and parking uses in an area bounded by existing I-81, North Salina Street to the south, North State Street to the east, and Ash Street to the north. One building acquisition (manufacturing) would be required along Genant Drive to accommodate new access ramps. In other areas, there would be modifications to surface streets that may affect uses during construction but would not change land uses or require acquisition. The residential and retail mixed use building on North Salina Street (319-325 North Salina Street) that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places serves as the entry point to Little Italy from Downtown, but the building would remain, and the partial acquisition of this property would affect only the sidewalk.

Street modifications would affect a small number of parcels within the subarea to the north of James Street near the existing viaduct, but uses would not change. (For more on building acquisitions, see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**, and for historic effects, see **Section 6-4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources**.)

In Hawley-Green, the Community Grid Alternative would alter the roadway in front of a commercial warehouse use between Burnet Avenue and I-690 to the east of Catherine Street. Similarly, a small linear area of vacant land would convert to transportation right-of-way in Washington Square near the intersection of Lodi Street and Bear Street.

Vacant or surface parking uses in Franklin Square converted to right-of-way would not be expected to adversely impact land uses within the neighborhood or the larger Central Study Area. The acquisition of one manufacturing building in this neighborhood as part of the Community Grid Alternative would not adversely affect land uses given that the current use of this structure is not dependent on the neighborhood where it is located and it does not provide services to local residents. Thus, the current land use patterns would continue.

### I-481 South Study Area

Within the I-481 South Study Area, eight partial land acquisitions and one full acquisition would be required. The partial acquisitions would be thin strips of land adjacent to the highway right-of-way, and the full acquisition is a vacant parcel that is fully surrounded by transportation right-of-way. No buildings or structures would be acquired. Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse land use impacts in the I-81 South Study Area.

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### I-481 East Study Area

In the northern portion of the I-481 East Study Area, within the Town of DeWitt, eight partial acquisitions would occur. These consist of strips of land adjacent to the existing transportation right-of-way. No building acquisition would occur in this area. Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse land use impacts in the I-81 East Study Area.

### I-481 North Study Area

Land acquisition would be required in this area. These are partial land acquisitions of residential property in the case when the back of a housing lot would be utilized. The remaining portions of those properties would be residential. Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse land use impacts in the I-81 North Study Area.

### 6-2-1.4.2 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

Construction of the Community Grid Alternative would occur over a six-year period. During that time, there would be construction activity throughout the Central Study Area as well as roadway work in the I-481 South, I-481 East, and I-481 North Study Areas. However, as described in **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**, construction activities would occur in phases throughout the Project Area so that no area would experience continuous construction over the full six-year duration. In many localized areas, the construction activity would consist of shorter periods of activity over fewer years of the overall construction period.

As described in this FDR/FEIS, construction would result in traffic detours, increases in traffic on certain roadways, and emissions and noise from construction equipment. Property acquisition and temporary easements would also be required, which would be undertaken prior to the start of construction (see **Section 6-3-1, Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocation**). To help minimize and mitigate the adverse effects of construction activities on the community, NYSDOT would require its Contractors to implement measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects, as listed in **Table 4-7 (Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods)**. These measures address traffic diversions, dust and debris, increases in emissions and noise, access to businesses and residences, and community engagement. Cumulatively, these measures would help address adverse effects on neighborhoods and community cohesion during the construction period.

The Contractor would be responsible for identifying construction staging sites. This FDR/FEIS assumes that staging for construction equipment would occur within transportation right-of-way, properties to be acquired, or through temporary easements adjacent to the right-of-way, but additional staging areas may be required. The Contractor would likely seek out underutilized sites, such as vacant parcels or land currently used for surface parking. There are a number of these sites within the Central Study Area. NYSDOT standard specifications require the Contractor to achieve all approvals for a proposed staging area. If the Contractor proposes to use NYSDOT property, they would need a highway work permit. If the Contractor proposes other public or private properties, the Contractor would need to comply with local land use regulations and/or permitting requirements. NYSDOT would not approve the Contractor to use these sites until the Contractor has achieved the

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needed land use approvals. The use of vacant or underused sites for construction staging would represent a change in use during the construction period.

Temporary lane, road, and intersection closures would be likely during construction. The Contractor would also undertake measures to minimize these effects to the extent practicable, such as signage and limiting work to specified hours. Temporary closures, restrictions, or detours would occur at different locations at different times, depending on where construction work is taking place, to minimize the duration of detours at any one location. These temporary closures may also affect access to residences, businesses, places of worship, and/or schools due to rerouting the movement of cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit buses. Pedestrian detours would be PROWAG accessible. While these may have isolated impacts and temporary detours, broad land use change is not anticipated. The Contractor would maintain a point of access to these uses unless it would be infeasible and/or impractical. The Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse effects on land use related to construction activities. While construction elements (such as traffic, noise, and presence of equipment) may temporarily affect user experience at nearby properties, use and function of surrounding properties would not be affected.

Roadway construction and resultant detours have the potential to affect the routing of emergency vehicles through or around the construction zones. As stipulated in the measures listed in **Table 4-7**, NYSDOT will coordinate with emergency service providers, including hospitals, fire companies, and emergency medical technicians to minimize the impact of construction activities and detours on their operations.

The Community Grid Alternative would not require the closure of schools or other community facilities during construction. NYSDOT would continue to coordinate with the Syracuse City School District during construction. During final design, NYSDOT would consider implementing additional construction restrictions within the construction zone near Dr. King Elementary School, such as time and/or seasonal restrictions where appropriate.

A 0.12-acre portion of the eastern section of Wilson Park would be inaccessible for less than one year of the construction period (see **Section 6-4-2, Parklands and Recreational Resources**), but the community center and other portions of the park would remain open. As stipulated in the measures listed in **Table 4-7**, NYSDOT would monitor air quality and noise during construction near sensitive receivers, including schools, and NYSDOT has and will coordinate with schools near the construction zone, including Dr. King Elementary School, to minimize the effects of construction activities on the schools' operations.

NYSDOT would require its Contractor to prepare a communication and outreach plan, and NYSDOT would oversee its implementation throughout the six-year construction period. It is anticipated that the plan would include outreach to notify affected parties of construction activities and mitigation efforts (see **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**). This plan would include a communications protocol to reach out to residents and businesses, hospitals and emergency services, and schools and places of worship regarding pertinent construction and traffic information. Measures in the plan may include public notices, flyers, and roadway signage to notify area residents and businesses and to inform drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians about upcoming and ongoing work.

### 6-2-1.4.3 INDIRECT EFFECTS

The Community Grid Alternative would not impede or prevent planned development within the Central, I-481 South, I-481 East, and I-481 North Study Areas, and it is unlikely that the parcels that could be redeveloped from surplus transportation right-of-way would induce major new development that is out of scale or context.

Upon the completion of construction, NYSDOT could dispose of potential surplus transportation right-of-way in the Central Study Area in accordance with Federal and State law, or the Contractor may sell staging sites. In total, implementation of the Community Grid Alternative could result in 10 to 12.5 acres of surplus transportation right-of-way, depending on how much land would be needed to accommodate the highway, sidewalk, shared use (bicycle and pedestrian) path, and other transportation features (see **Figure 6-2-1-12**). The potential surplus transportation right-of-way would consist of several sites near Almond Street and Erie Boulevard where the I-81 and I-690 ramps would be removed; a parcel north of Erie Boulevard between McBride and Catherine Streets where the eastbound I-690 ramp from McBride Street would be removed; a parcel north of Butternut Street between BL 81 and State Street where the existing northbound I-81 entrance ramp from Butternut Street would be removed; a parcel south of Court Street between BL 81 and Sunset Avenue where the existing northbound I-81 ramp to Sunset Avenue would be removed and relocated to Bear Street; and land near MLK, Jr. East where the alignment of BL 81 shifts eastward. The parcels on Almond Street would range from 0.75 to 1.5 acres; those on Erie Boulevard would range from 0.3 to 0.5 acres; the parcel north of Butternut Street would be 1 to 1.5 acres; the parcel south of Court Street would be 0.75 to 1 acre; a parcel north of MLK, Jr. East would be 3 to 3.5 acres; and a parcel south of MLK, Jr. East and east of Leon Street would be 1 to 1.3 acres. There may be additional right-of-way where the current street bed of MLK Jr., East would be abandoned. The Community Grid Alternative would also result in a total of 2 to 2.5 acres consisting of numerous land strips that would be too small for development but may be of use to adjacent property owners. NYSDOT would identify the specific boundaries of the surplus parcels and their acreages after the construction phases, and NYSDOT's Property Evaluation Review Group would determine the next steps to dispose of the right-of-way once it concludes that the land is no longer needed for transportation purposes.

NYSDOT will form a land use working group consisting of representatives from the city, the city's school district, economic development and economic opportunity organizations, the business community, environmental justice communities, neighborhood residents, and other organizations and stakeholders as appropriate to provide input to NYSDOT in establishing a framework for the non-transportation use of each potential surplus parcel. The framework will be developed during final design and construction once the location and size of the parcels as well as the timing of their disposition is fully understood. The working group would discuss and provide implementable (e.g., legal, feasible, and practical) ideas and recommendations regarding the potential uses of the surplus parcels; this input would be used in developing the land use framework plan. There will be ongoing communication with the City of Syracuse, stakeholders, and the public regarding the process to dispose of surplus right-of-way. Further details about the formation of and participation in this working group will be presented during continued project public involvement activities. Any new use or development would have to

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comply with the City of Syracuse's zoning ordinance and its Land Use and Development Plan 2040 currently being updated by the ReZone Syracuse project. Through the ReZone Syracuse project, the City has and continues to solicit community input.

Because these potential surplus properties are not large and contiguous, it is unlikely that their potential use or redevelopment would induce new land use patterns or development trends in the Central Study Area.

The Community Grid Alternative would potentially induce limited redevelopment by providing improved access to the largely vacant or surface parking parcels along Almond Street that are currently away from existing viaduct ramps. Without the elevated viaduct, land adjacent and beneath the viaduct that has been either vacant or used for parking for many years would likely be more attractive for development, based in part on improved connections and safety. Other factors that would increase development potential because of the viaduct removal include new or wider sidewalks and bicycle facilities; unobstructed views for residents/tenants on lower floors; and improved visibility of potential ground floor retail uses, which rely on visibility to draw customers. Development such as residential or a mix of uses on these parcels would better connect and enhance cohesion of adjacent neighborhoods. There are a number of large sites under public ownership near the I-81 viaduct, and the redevelopment of these sites would be subject to discretionary approvals by their owners with appropriate site plan and development approvals. Therefore, the potential to induce development would be limited to privately owned sites.

The dispersion of traffic under the Community Grid Alternative, the removal of the viaduct structure between neighborhoods, and the introduction of enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities would balance the vehicular transportation character of Almond Street with other uses by making it a "complete street" (vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian) and better connect the uses on either side. In turn, this may allow for more cohesion between neighborhoods and east and west of Almond Street and induce new development along the corridor. The removal of the West Street overpass and creation of a signalized, surface intersection at that location would include improved pedestrian crossings and result in improved visual connections, and improved vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity. Improvements to Clinton Street may also attract new development due to new sidewalks, pavement, and curbside parking, as well as improved vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle amenities. Project elements in the I-481 South, East, and North Study Areas would not result in adverse indirect effects on neighborhoods or community cohesion in comparison with the No Build Alternative, as the only takings are partial land acquisitions and would not alter the existing residential use of those parcels. **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations** evaluates travel pattern changes due to the alternative.

In summary, dispersing traffic under the Community Grid Alternative could lead to reinvestment in areas with poor accessibility due to the current viaduct, particularly along the Almond Street corridor south of I-690, and on land opened up from the removal of the viaduct. Limited redevelopment could occur on vacant land and would not displace current uses. Infill development on surplus transportation right-of-way or privately-owned, such as residential or a mix of uses that includes residential, office, and ground floor retail, would

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further reconnect existing neighborhoods and would have a minimal positive effect on neighborhood cohesion within the Central Study Area. However, several large, publicly-owned and institutional uses, including the Pioneer Homes, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and Hutchings Psychiatric Center, would continue to be predominant land uses along Almond Street.

### 6-2-1.4.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

When considered collectively with past, ongoing, and future planning and development initiatives in the study area, potential cumulative effects of the Community Grid Alternative would be beneficial with respect to neighborhoods and community cohesion. As described in **Chapter 2, Project Setting**, the construction of the I-81 and I-690 viaducts through the Central Study Area resulted in the acquisition of residential and commercial properties as well as relocation of the residents within the I-81 alignment through the center of the City. The original construction of these highways and buildings had removed and severed local street connections. Many of these connections would be re-established with completion of Community Grid Alternative.

The removal of a portion of the viaduct and the local street improvements proposed for the Community Grid Alternative may support redevelopment similar to surrounding land use and the underlying zoning. The alternative would enhance vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility and connectivity between existing and proposed new residential, institutional, and commercial uses in Downtown Syracuse. It would also allow the existing transportation right-of-way to be developed in keeping with the existing or emerging character of surrounding blocks.

The improvements at the West Street interchange, Butternut Street bridge, and North Clinton Street would enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to neighborhoods west and northwest of Downtown Syracuse while maintaining strong connections to I-690. The removal of the viaduct and reconstruction of Almond Street would better connect communities east of Downtown. The Community Grid Alternative would also provide pedestrian and bicycle features consistent with the overall connectivity plans for the City of Syracuse, and it would implement safety and streetscape enhancements that would complement the increasingly residential and commercial character of downtown neighborhoods.

The conversion of I-481 to I-81 would result in some transportation improvements in the transportation right-of-way, but the changes in alignment and access improvements in combination with other plans in these study areas would not substantially alter their neighborhood characteristics or neighborhood/community cohesion.

As described in **Chapter 5, Transportation and Engineering Considerations**, the Community Grid Alternative would meet regional travel needs well into the future, accounting for existing travel demand, proposed development, and land use plans identified above. The Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse indirect effects on land use and could produce land use benefits through potential new development opportunities and improved connections between existing neighborhoods.

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In addition, recent, conceptualized, or planned City bicycle improvements connecting directly to those proposed as part of the Community Grid Alternative would improve development opportunity of the former right-of-way parcels to better connect existing neighborhoods on either side of Almond Street. The area would also be attractive to development due to its proximity to, and improved pedestrian and visual connections between, Downtown and University Hill job centers. Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects with respect to land use.

The Community Alternative would also not result in adverse direct or indirect effects on schools or places of worship. Enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities under this alternative, in combination with other conceptualized and planned improvements by the City of Syracuse, would enhance accessibility to schools, universities, and places of worship. Thus, the Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects to schools and places of worship.

### 6-2-1.4.5 MITIGATION

The Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse permanent/operational, indirect, or cumulative effects on neighborhoods and community cohesion. The alternative would also not result in adverse effects on land use. The NYSDOT is participating in City of Syracuse committees to discuss the future of I-81 and its effects on City planning and infrastructure. The Community Grid Alternative incorporates extensive pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape improvements, and would visually and physically reconnect neighborhoods previously disrupted by the original construction of I-81.

The Community Grid Alternative includes the construction of noise barriers along sections of the existing highways. Noise barriers are not feasible along the local streets in much of the Central Study Area (see **Section 6-4-6, Noise**). The construction of these walls outside the Central Study Area would result in a minor amount of land acquisition, consisting of vacant land. No additional parcels or structures would be acquired in whole (see **Section 6-4-6, Noise**). Existing noise barriers are present along parts of these corridors. Due to the location of the proposed noise barriers directly adjacent to the rights-of-way of the interstate highways, there would not be a substantial change to the neighborhood character because of their construction.

The Contractor would be required to comply with measures, as listed in **Table 4-7** during construction to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects to the extent practicable, such as signage, detours, staggering construction along roadways, and limiting work to specified hours to minimize impacts. Also stipulated in **Table 4-7**, the Contractor would provide new connections/accessibility when other neighborhood connections are disrupted during construction. In addition, the Contractor, in consultation with NYSDOT and FHWA, would be required to prepare an approved communication and outreach plan for implementation throughout the construction period. The plan would include outreach to notify affected parties of construction activities and mitigation efforts. Measures in the plan may include public notices, flyers, and roadway signage to notify area residents and businesses and to inform drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians about upcoming and ongoing work.