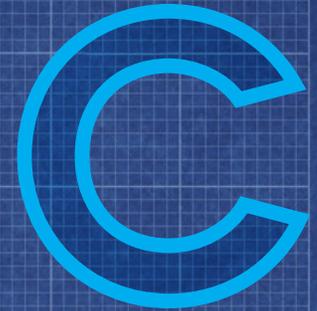


CHAPTER V



THE BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON
TRANSPORTATION

A PLAN FOR A CITY THAT WALKS, BIKES,
RIDES TRANSIT... AND DRIVES TOO

BLUEPRINT
BINGHAMTON

TRANSPORTATION:

A PLAN FOR A CITY THAT WALKS, BIKES, RIDES TRANSIT... AND DRIVES TOO

C

The transportation chapter or **BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON MINI-PLAN ON TRANSPORTATION** is about how Binghamton moves - more specifically about the multiple ways in which people travel through the City and how the City can better balance its public rights-of-way to serve those traveling on foot or by wheelchair, by bicycle, by bus, and by car to get where they need to go for work, for school, and for fun. The transportation strategies address the existing network of streets and parking areas, bike trails and transit services while seeking to add amenities, options, and alternatives to boost safety, convenience, and mobility via multiple modes.

Binghamton's transportation network provides a wide range of options for getting around the City; people can drive Binghamton's streets, ride a bicycle on a bike lane or trail, use BC Transit, or simply take advantage of the City's excellent grid system by walking to a destination. Despite the multiple modes of transportation available, the majority of people who live and work in Binghamton choose to drive. For most, it is quicker, safer, and easier to drive than to take transit, walk, or ride their bike, but driving is not always more affordable. Transportation is the largest cost for households in Binghamton, accounting for over 38% of the cost of living in the City. This is primarily due to the cost of owning, operating, and maintaining an automobile. Improving the safety and convenience of transit, walking, and biking is essential in addressing the severe economic challenges faced by a large number of individuals and families in Binghamton. Walking, biking, and taking transit also support healthier lifestyles and a healthier environment.

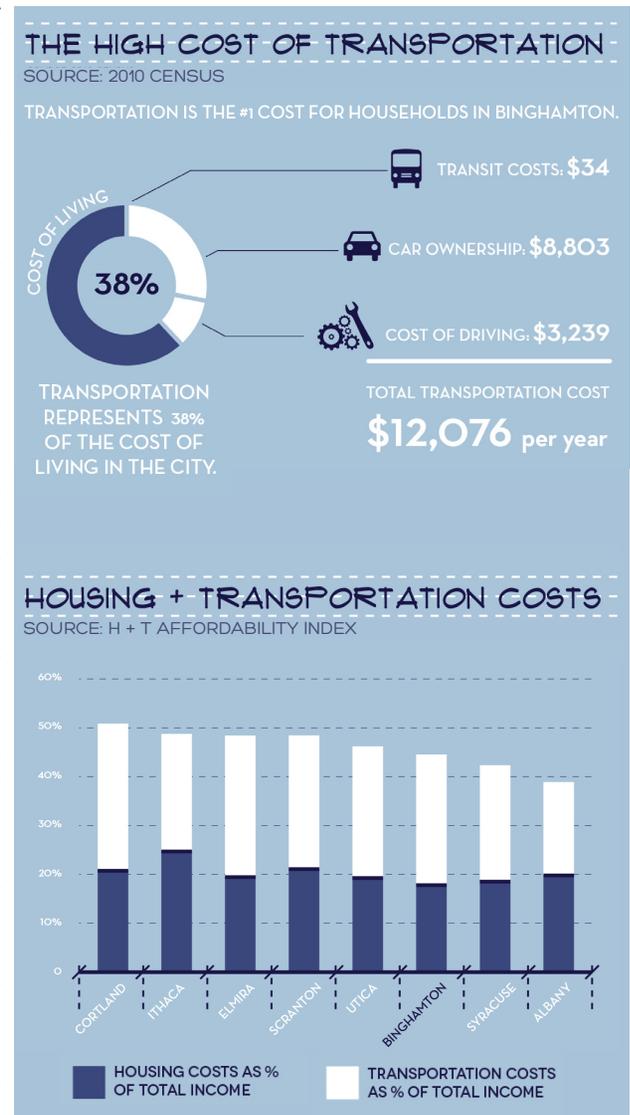
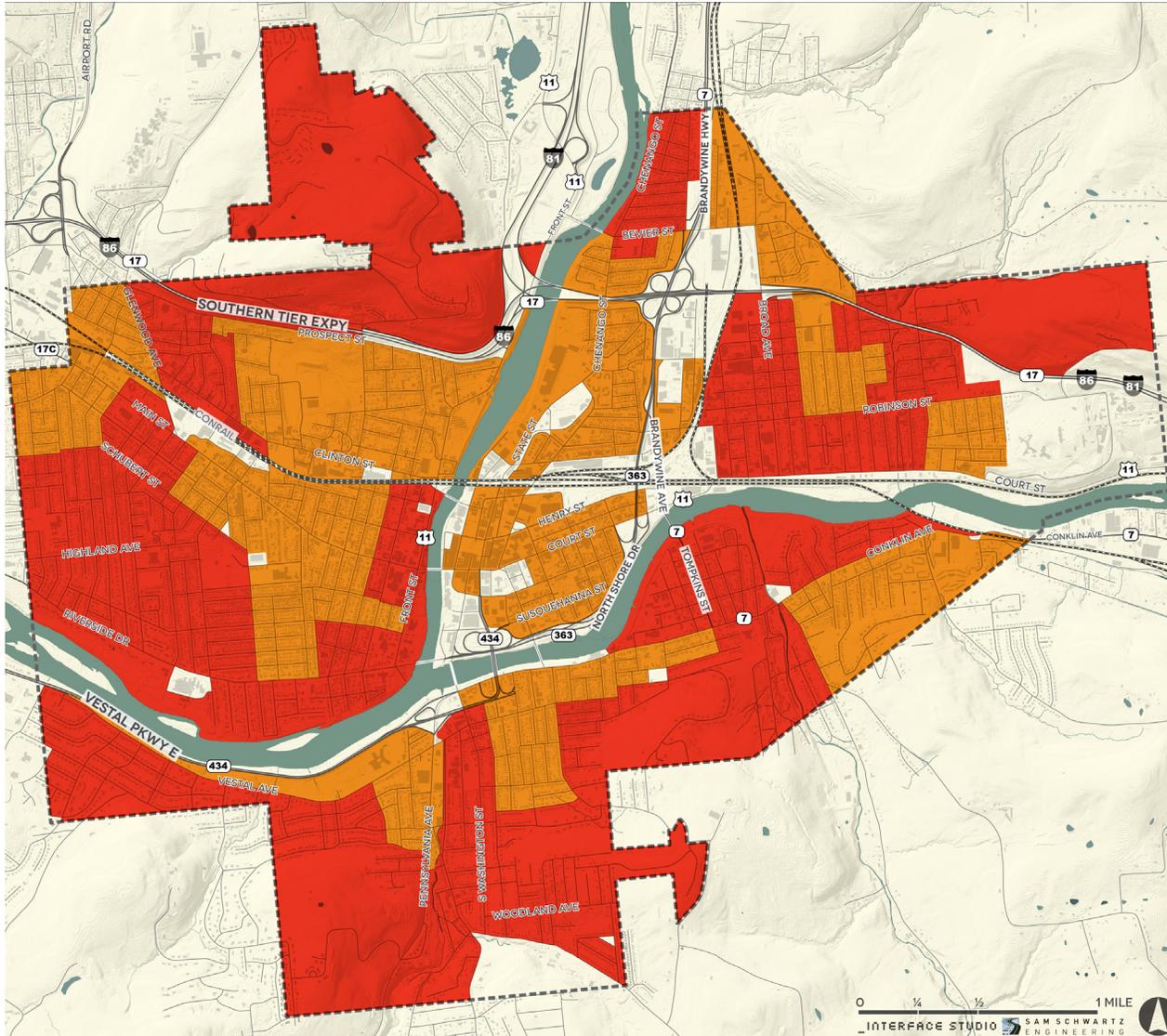


FIGURE 34: Housing + Transportation Costs

HOUSING + TRANSPORTATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF INCOME



SOURCE: H + T AFFORDABILITY INDEX

- NOT A RESIDENTIAL AREA OR INSUFFICIENT DATA
- < 45% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS
- 45% + OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS

TYPICAL HOUSEHOLDS IN BINGHAMTON:

-  **INCOME**
\$45,068 PER HOUSEHOLD
-  **PEOPLE**
2.35 PER HOUSEHOLD
-  **WORKERS**
1.03 PER HOUSEHOLD

FIGURE 35: Housing + Transportation Costs - MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

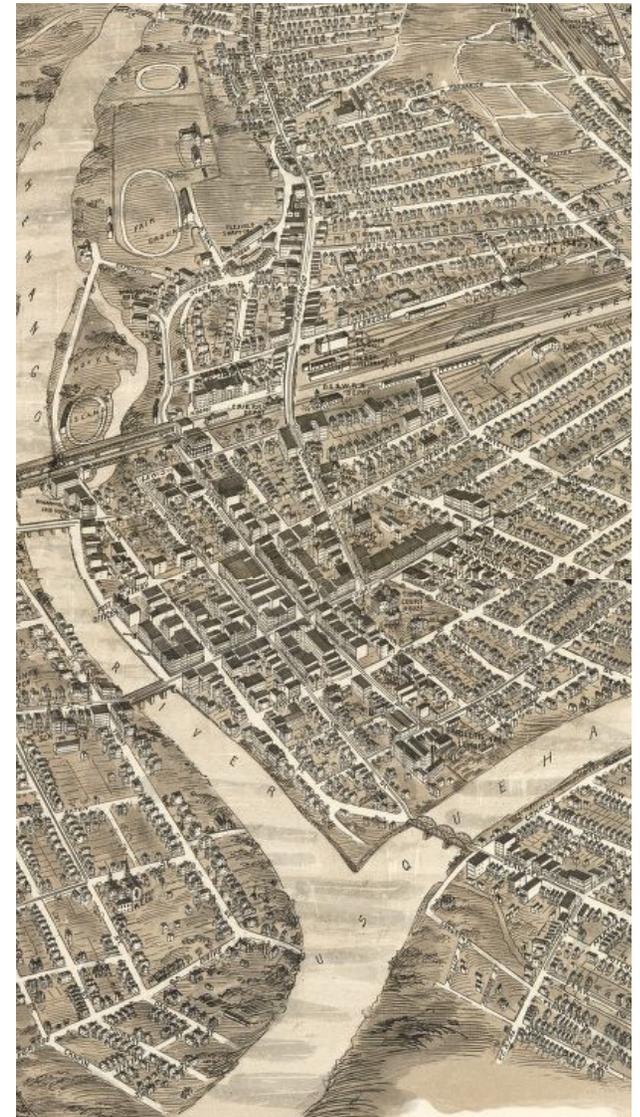
STREET NETWORK

Most of Binghamton's street network was built in the mid-20th century and designed to accommodate the cars generated by a growing residential and employment population. Though the number of residents and employees has dropped over the last sixty years, the amount of roadway infrastructure has stayed the same. These roadways now carry about half the volume of cars they were designed for, which makes it fairly easy to drive to and around Binghamton, evidenced by the fact that there were no concerns raised by the public regarding traffic congestion. Traffic crashes are not a significant problem and the majority of crashes registered in Binghamton Police report data are located along the Main Street Corridor, and near the intersection of NYS Route 434 and Washington Street.

The City's street network consists of approximately 203 centerline miles of regional (interstate and state highways) and local (commercial and residential streets) connections.

REGIONALLY, three interstate highways (I-81, I-88, and I-86) and a number of state highways (US 11, NY 7, NY 434) provide connections between Binghamton and the rest of Broome County. These highways allow vehicles to travel at high speeds to get in and out of town. They also create barriers between neighborhoods and disconnections within the City's grid network. A major construction project is currently being completed that will reconfigure the interchanges at NYS Route 17/I-81 and NYS Route 7.

LOCALLY, the street network consists of a number of grids that allow easy travel from one neighborhood to another. The variety of scales of Binghamton's streets further strengthens the grid network, with traffic flow evenly dispersed rather than funneled into a minimal number of arteries, as is the case in many suburban communities.



Historic Map of Downtown's street network

CITY OF BINGHAMTON

STREETS MAP



FIGURE 36: City Streets - MAP

There is no clear consensus among the City, County and State on where trucks should and should not travel within the city, nor is there a system in place to comprehensively designate the City's roads as an acceptable or advisable truck route. This forces truck drivers to map out their own routes, which leads to trucks on Downtown streets and other roads that may not be best suited for truck activity.

The grid network and urban density of Binghamton make it a very walkable city for the most part, navigable by pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Downtown offers a unique pedestrian experience, one that is not replicated anywhere in the region. It has smaller block lengths, and the wide sidewalks and mixture of wide and narrow streets make it easy and comfortable for most people to walk to their destinations. However, many intersections lack basic pedestrian accommodations to keep pedestrians of all abilities safe and comfortable, such as crosswalks, ADA ramps, and pedestrian countdown timers.

A number of streets in Binghamton, including Hawley Street and Court Street, have on-street bike lanes that make it safer to bike within Binghamton and provide connections to the area's regional bicycle system. Many of the on-street lanes have been installed as part of re-stripping/re-surfacing projects where lanes are narrowed or reduced to provide space for bicyclists. This is an extremely efficient way to build bike facilities, but there are a number of bike lanes that suddenly appear and disappear, which reduces the connectivity of the overall network. The rivers are natural barriers to bicycle connectivity, but a number of bridges have bicycle facilities, including bike lanes on the Clinton and Court Street bridges and the South Washington Street pedestrian bridge. "Share the Road" signage has been installed throughout the City. Although the City's partnership with the Broome County Health Department has resulted in the installation of bike bollards in strategic locations, there remains a lack of bike parking which forces bicyclists to lock their bikes to other objects, which is not desirable.

One of the primary challenges for Binghamton is the cost of maintaining a roadway network

that was built for a much larger population. The City owns and is responsible for maintenance of approximately 160 of its 203 centerline miles. In most cases, the streets are in fair or poor condition, based on observations and stakeholder interviews. The City recently developed a Pavement Management System (PMS) with the assistance of the Cornell Local Roads Program. The PMS is a tool which will allow better use of resources, save time, and help the City make better decisions about which street repairs to use and when to use them. The cost of repairs to a road can dramatically increase if not done at the appropriate time. It is therefore less expensive to keep good roads in good shape. The PMS will help the City select the proper repair treatments and apply it at the appropriate time.

The PMS is a network-level pavement management system implemented using a computer-based software package. It provides information on the condition, traffic, and importance of roads in a network to create a long-term maintenance program. This will assist the City in applying limited budget resources where they will provide the greatest road quality benefits.

The PMS gives each street in the City a score called a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) number. The streets in the City range from 8 to 94 with 100 as the high score. The City plans to continue to develop the PMS by utilizing the Cornell Local Roads Program and its Pavement Internship program. By continuing to utilize the PMS, the City will be able to maximize its limited funds to keep its streets in good condition

The City is also in the process of inputting the streets into the Public Works Database to track when the City workforce performs maintenance on each street segment. The City rehabilitates approximately 30-40 streets (usually in one to two block sections) each year, typically by milling and repaving. If the underground utilities need rehabilitation, the City usually replaces these utilities, followed by milling and paving during the following year. Historically, street selection was determined through a number of different methods, including public input, windshield condition surveys, manual review of historical paving records, and the need to perform utility work on the same street segment. Maintenance of curbs and sidewalks in the City is generally

the responsibility of the respective property owner; however, the City does have a Curb and Sidewalk Assistance Program to provide funding assistance to property owners. In cases where utility work negatively impacts curbs and sidewalks, the City will replace these right-of-way elements.

The City has had issues with public utility companies cutting trenches down City streets and not adequately replacing the pavement, thus causing the roadway to deteriorate. The City began enforcing the proper reconstruction of these trenches, which will require the City to do less repair and maintenance of its own.

The City owns and is responsible for maintenance of approximately 15 bridges or large culverts and four pedestrian bridges. The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) owns and maintains 26 bridges; Broome County owns and maintains three bridges. The NYSDOT is responsible for inspecting all vehicular bridges with a span greater than 20 feet every two years. There are 23 railroad bridges within the City limits that pass over roadways. The railroad companies are responsible for inspecting these bridges once every two years. Two of the City's bridges (Memorial and Court streets) have recently been rehabilitated. The Exchange Street Bridge will be rehabilitated in 2014 ; it will carry

a 15 ton weight posting after the rehabilitation. The East Clinton Street Bridge rehabilitation is currently in the design phase, and South Washington Street Bridge will be repainted in 2014. The City is looking to place six other bridges on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) five-year plan in order to utilize FHWA and NYSDOT funding to make repairs. Currently the Exchange Street Bridge is posted for a maximum of 15 tons; none of the other bridges are currently deemed deficient. Federal funding is required for bridge rehabilitation, as the City does not have the capital funds available to undertake any bridge rehabilitation projects.



Bike lane on Chenango Street bridge over rail yard



Court Street Bridge, recently rehabilitated

PARKING

Surface and structured parking takes up 48 acres of land in Downtown Binghamton, or over 22% of all of the developed land in Downtown, which creates a noticeable footprint. There are three public structured parking garages (ramps), one underground parking garage for permit holders at the Government Plaza, and a number of public and private surface parking lots, ranging in size from a few spaces serving one land use to the 475-space surface lot that serves the stadium. There are many blocks in Downtown where more land is taken up by parking than by buildings.

The highest demand for parking during the day is in the area near the City and County buildings, where there is the most employment. There is a mix of public and private parking lots in this area. Some of the larger surface lots are only used as guest parking for special events, like the lots at ballpark or area hotels. There is little information available online for visitors about where to park.

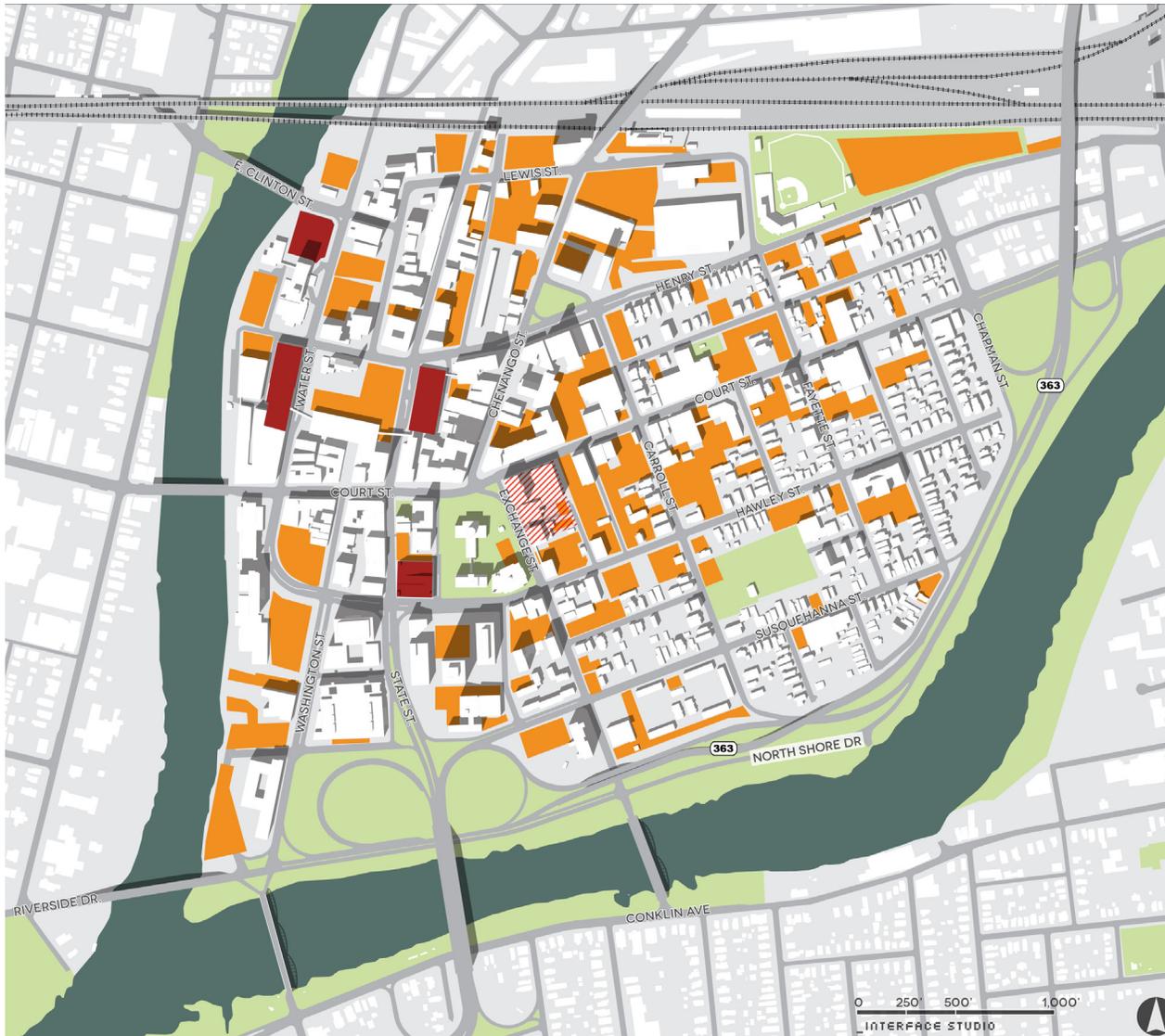
The public raised a number of concerns during the public outreach process regarding the safety of parking in the structured parking ramps, both due to their physical condition and the perceived lack of security for people walking to their vehicle, particularly at night. Security concerns include poor lighting, empty hallways and stairs, and no staff or security in place at the ramps.

The cost of parking at the parking lots or garages is relatively affordable, though more expensive than parking on-street. It was observed on a number of occasions that users could simply wait for the attendant to leave the structure on Hawley and Collier Street to avoid paying for parking. On-street parking is metered on many streets Downtown. It costs \$0.25 per hour, and the meters only accept change. All meters are free after 6:00 PM.

One of the recent changes to Downtown was the installation of back-in angled parking on Hawley Street and Court Street. While back-in angled parking is much safer for vehicles and bicyclists, special accommodations must be made for the loading and unloading of those in wheel chairs using handicap shuttles or personal vehicles. The city is continuing to evaluate the back in diagonal parking and may make adjustments in the future based on user feedback and the effectiveness of this parking scheme

Overall, the large quantity of free or inexpensive parking only invites people to drive to Binghamton, creating a cycle with diminishing returns. The abundance of parking encourages people to drive, which in turn drives up demand for parking. The poor condition of the facilities and the perceived lack of parking encourages more driving Downtown as people “cruise” for the perfect parking spot. The desire for parking next to every store or restaurant creates gaps in activity along the street that makes Downtown feel unsafe. These negative perceptions encourage more people to drive, which further creates a demand for parking. To foster a Downtown that is vibrant and safe, the parking situation in Downtown must be addressed to enable sustainable growth in the future.

DOWNTOWN PARKING



SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY
 ■ SURFACE PARKING LOT
 ■ STRUCTURED PARKING
 ▨ UNDERGROUND PARKING

48 ACRES
 OF SURFACE PARKING
 IN DOWNTOWN



THAT'S 22% OF ALL DEVELOPED
 LAND IN DOWNTOWN

4
 STRUCTURED PARKING
 GARAGES

1
 UNDERGROUND PARKING
 GARAGE

FIGURE 37: Downtown Parking - MAP

TRANSIT SERVICE

There are a number of transit options in Binghamton, and it is a critical element of life for many, including seniors, those who cannot afford a car, and those who do not have a license. These segments of the population rely on transit for basic daily needs, such as going to their job, the store, or doctor. Like many cities of similar size, the majority of people taking transit do so because they “have” to and not necessarily because they “want” to. Improving transit service in Binghamton will improve the quality of life for those who currently use it, and also encourage others to take it.



Greater Binghamton Transportation Center

BROOME COUNTY TRANSIT (BC TRANSIT)

Broome County Transit provides bus service to the City of Binghamton as well as the other municipalities in the County, including Endicott and Vestal. The entire service has 17 fixed routes and the agency’s 2013 adopted budget is \$12,246,410. While this is a 1% increase from the 2012 budget of \$11,332,457, it is a 1% decrease from the 2011 budget of \$14,523,425.

BC Transit provides bus coverage across the City, as most neighborhoods have at least one bus route that can be accessed fairly easily. There are a total of 14 bus routes that typically radiate outward from Downtown Binghamton (including two designated “commuter” buses), plus three regional shuttle routes.

BC Transit’s fixed bus routes are similarly structured without much variance. Out of the 12 regular routes, three have no Saturday service and five have no Sunday service. Those routes with greater bus frequency have weekend service and generally longer hours. On average, weekday headways are 40 minutes between buses for 10 out of the 12 routes; the other two have about one hour headways - 17 Legacy Bay and 47 Vestal.

The regular bus fare for BC Transit is \$2.00. Passes are available for multiple days or reduced fares for senior citizens and students. To encourage multi-modal connections, bike racks are attached to the entire bus fleet; the standard model rack fits two bikes. Most BC Transit buses are wheelchair-accessible. A minibus “lift” ride is available for those who need the service, such as the disabled and elderly.

A critical aspect of successful transit systems is safe and comfortable infrastructure to access a bus stop and wait at a bus stop. There are sidewalks along almost every street in the City, and thus almost every bus stop is adjacent to a sidewalk. There are many BC Transit stops that have neither facilities nor shelters, just a sign on a pole. Where there are shelters, in some cases, the shelter door faces away from the bus, so people have to walk out into the weather to board the bus. Oftentimes, the sign are hard to locate when posted in one direction only; there are some instances where “bus stop” is stenciled on the back of a sign, but this is rather improvised. Even in Downtown at Court and Water streets, the bus stop is just a small sign and easy to miss. Bus stops are provided by the County as an amenity, but maintenance responsibilities are not specifically assigned and left to the City; better coordination between County and City regarding maintenance and deployment of these transit amenities would benefit the system and its riders.

BROOME COUNTY

BUS TRANSIT MAP

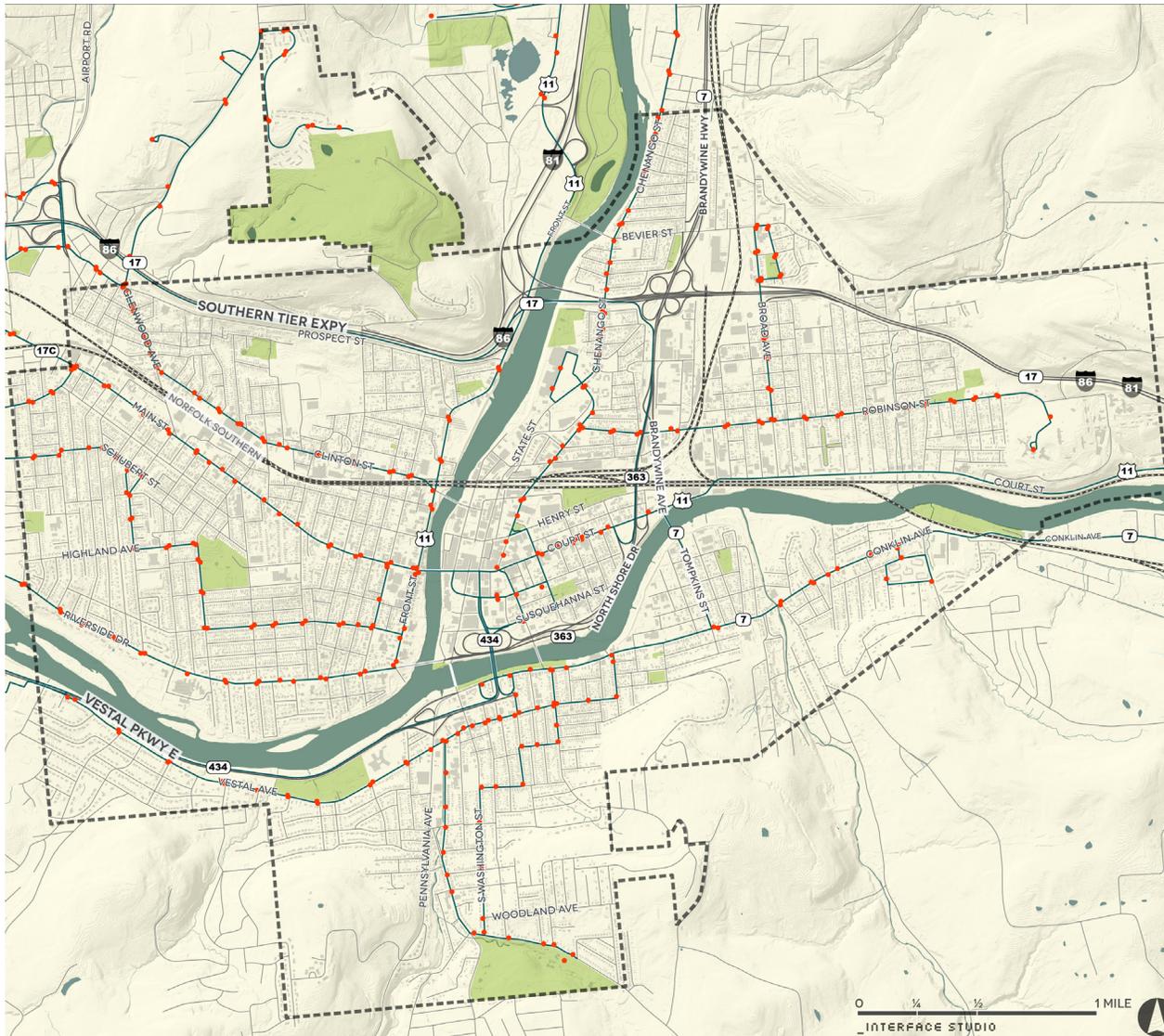


FIGURE 38: Broome County Bus Transit - MAP

General service information and detours/alerts are available at www.ridebctransit.com. The BC Transit website does mention Google Transit, mobile applications and real-time bus information, acknowledging that there have been many riders requesting these services. BC Transit is currently gathering and analyzing data, with the goal of exporting to Google Transit, which will enable “apps” and real-time transit information.

- BUS ROUTES
- BUS STOPS

OFF-CAMPUS COLLEGE TRANSPORT MAP

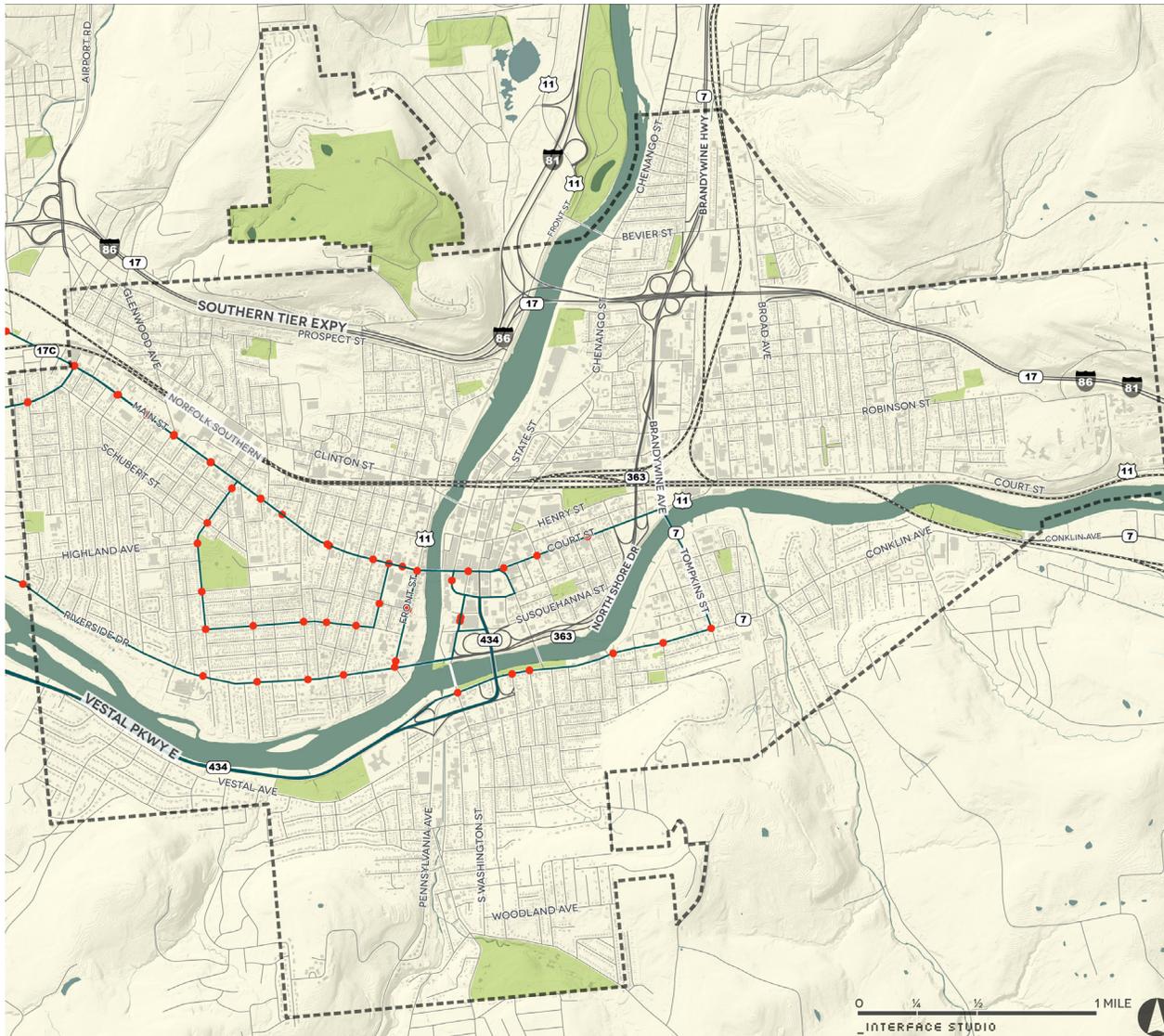


FIGURE 39: Off Campus College Transport - MAP

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY OFF-CAMPUS COLLEGE TRANSPORT BUS (BU OCCT)

BU Off Campus College Transport Bus (BU OCCT) is a student driven, managed, and operated bus service (since 1971) that transports students between campus to residences, retail hubs, and Downtown Binghamton. Passengers must be Binghamton University students, faculty, or affiliates (a guest is allowed). Riders scan identification cards to board buses, as it is a free service.

OCCT fulfills its service of running at convenient times for students during weeknights and weekends. The extended weekend nighttime service is also good for safety, as students can patronize bars and restaurants late at night and avoid driving a car back to the BU campus. OCCT's policy after midnight during the weekend is that buses are considered full once all seats are taken so that there is no standing on buses. Unfortunately, the Leroy Southside Route, which is the most direct route from the Student Union to the Greater Binghamton Transportation Center, only operates every two hours during weekday mornings and afternoons. This hinders it from being a reliable way to get to and from campus.

The Downtown Center Riverside (DCR) and the Westside Shuttle (WS) routes do connect to the Transportation Center and have very frequent

- BUS ROUTES
- BUS STOPS

REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

MAP



FIGURE 40: Regional Destinations - MAP

service that is often more heavily utilized than BC Transit traveling the same routes. The disadvantage of these loop routes is that passengers must ride the entire route to get to their destination if they desire to go the opposite direction as the routing. In sum, OCCT fills many gaps in service and frequency from BC Transit to help with students' needs and schedules; its importance grows as more students live, study and leisure Downtown.

REGIONAL TRANSIT OPTIONS

Regional bus service is provided by Greyhound, Adirondack Trailways, and Megabus. The primary connection is to New York City, but additional routes are provided to Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Toronto, Scranton, and Ithaca. There is currently no passenger rail service to Binghamton.

The Greater Binghamton Airport is located in Maine, New York, and provides a regional connection to the City. Delta, United, and US Airways all have flights at the airport.

-  INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
-  REGIONAL AIRPORT
-  INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
-  REGIONAL BUS ROUTES
-  BUS STATIONS
-  BUS STOP
-  PASSENGER RAIL
-  PASSENGER RAIL STATION
-  FREIGHT RAIL

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Binghamton is remarkably walkable due to its urban street grid, and this aspect should be emphasized with all future transportation planning. There are a number of opportunities to improve the City's transportation to reduce the cost of living in Binghamton, attract new residents, and help encourage economic development and livability.

All of the recommendations address one or more of the objectives listed below:

- Improve the **CONNECTION** between **DOWNTOWN** and the **UNIVERSITY** through improved multi-modal infrastructure and service
- Improve **WALKING AND BIKING ACCESS** to parks and open space and other destinations
- Prioritize **MAINTAINING** and **MODERNIZING** existing **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **REDUCE** infrastructure **BARRIERS** that fragment the City
- Continue to build a **MULTI-MODAL** foundation that makes it easier to live, work, and get around Binghamton without a car

COMMUNITY VOICE

B **LUEPRINT BINGHAMTON** asked YOU for your thoughts and ideas, concerns and priorities related to transportation. Your ideas for how people move through Binghamton, now and in the future, encompassed public transit, driving and parking, walking and biking, and even skating, canoeing, and soap box derbies.

Almost one quarter (22%) of all **COLLABORATIVE MAP COMMENTS** addressed transportation issues, more than any other category. You offered your insights and ideas on topics from biking to parking, trails to roundabouts, and transit to walking.

- "Better bus services, faster so that people without cars can travel better."
- "Connectivity between neighborhoods is blocked by perceived barriers, i.e. railroad underpasses, intersections perceived as unsafe."
- "Please connect the trail to Otsiningo Park."
- "Bicycling to BU on Riverside Drive is hazardous - need a dedicated route with "perks" for cyclists - water fountains, bike racks, etc."

COLLABORATIVE MAP

IDEAS. INSIGHTS. BARRIERS

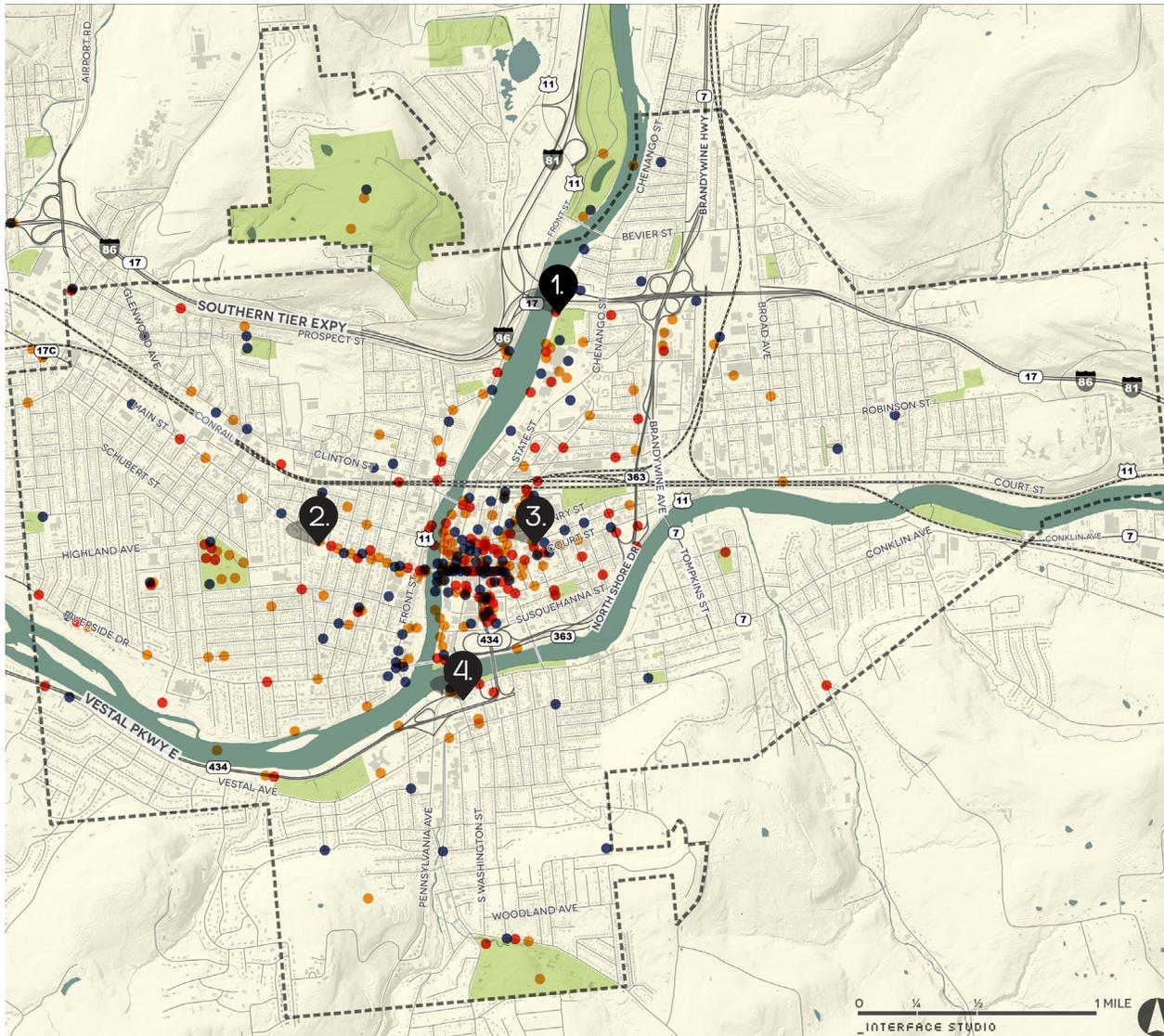


FIGURE 41: Collaborative Map Comments Locations

1

“ PLEASE CONNECT THE TRAIL TO OTSININGO PARK ”

2

“ MAKE MAIN STREET AND COURT STREET (ESP. WEST SIDE) MORE VISUALLY ATTRACTIVE SO THAT PEOPLE CAN SEE EVERY DAY THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE HOPEFUL WHO CARE FOR THE CITY (BROKEN WINDOWS THEORY) ”

3

“ BETTER BUS SERVICES, FASTER SO THAT PEOPLE WITHOUT CARS CAN TRAVEL BETTER ”

4

“ THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE (WASHINGTON) AND NEW TRAFFIC CALMING ON SOUTH SIDE WORKS WELL ”

- IDEA
- INSIGHT
- BARRIER

POSTCARDS FROM THE FUTURE

Your **POSTCARDS FROM THE FUTURE** describe a vision for a multi-modal and sustainable city, setting the tone for this mini-plan on transportation:

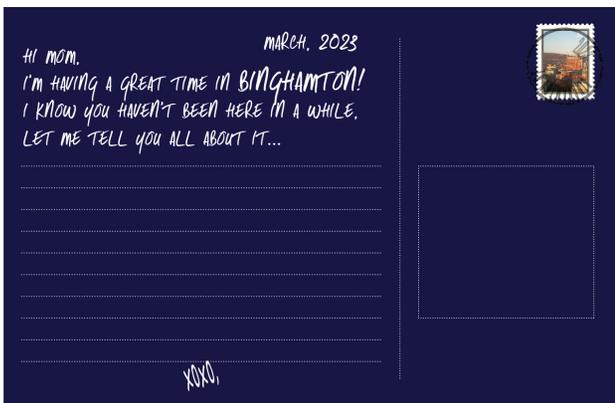


FIGURE 42: Postcards From the Future

I'M LIVING IN THIS GREAT TOWNHOUSE THAT OVERLOOKS THE RIVER. I HAVEN'T HAD TO DRIVE MY CAR IN DAYS. I WALK DOWN TO STARBUCKS IN THE MORNING FOR COFFEE AND THEN MAKE MY WAY TO THE ORGANIC MARKET AND PICK UP STUFF FOR DINNER. TOMORROW NIGHT WE ARE OFF TO DINNER AT THIS GREAT RESTAURANT AND THEN WALKING OVER TO THE MOVIES. LIFE IS GOOD IN RETIREMENT.

DOWNTOWN HAS BECOME A VERY VIBRANT WALKABLE COMMUNITY YET IS VERY ACCESSIBLE AND USER-FRIENDLY FOR 'GREEN' CARS & ENERGY ALTERNATIVES. IT IS A GREAT TECHNOLOGY HUB PARTNERING WITH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, THE LOCAL COLLEGES & COMPANIES ATTRACTED TO BINGHAMTON!

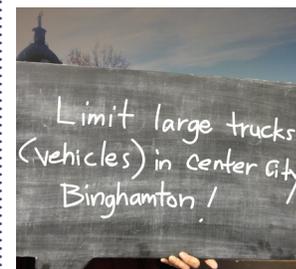
GOOD LUCK FINDING AN EMPTY BUILDING NOW! YOU WOULD THINK TRAFFIC WOULD BE TERRIBLE, BUT WITH ALL THE BIKING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN, THE ONLY TRAFFIC COMES WHEN ONE OF THE 2 MEGAWATT WIND-MILL BALES IS GOING DOWN THE HIGHWAY FROM RENEWABLE COMPOSITES.

When **5TH GRADERS** in the Binghamton City School District imagined their **DREAM NEIGHBORHOOD**, they too were concerned about the City's streets and sidewalks:

THE PERFECT NEIGHBORHOOD WOULD HAVE GREAT SAFETY. THERE WOULD BE BIKE SPACES IN THE ROAD, SO KIDS AND PEOPLE COULD RIDE THEIR BIKES AND SCOOTERS AND OTHER THINGS SO NOBODY WOULD GET HIT BY A CAR. THERE WOULD BE COPS ON EVERY OTHER CORNER. ALSO CROSSING GUARDS ON EVERY CORNER.

BIG IDEAS

You'll find your **BIG IDEAS** inform most of the transportation recommendations.



Images from the "Photo Suggestion Booth"

CITYWIDE SURVEY

And your responses on the **CITYWIDE SURVEY** echoed your desire for transportation improvements:

57% Better sidewalks and safer streets

31% New waterfront connections

30% Improved public transportation

25% New bicycle lanes



Chenango Street in Downtown

TRANSPORTATION GOALS:

The recommendations that comprise Blueprint Binghamton's Mini-Plan on Transportation [a plan for a city that walks, bikes, rides transit... and drives too] are organized into five goal areas, each titled by a key transportation goal:

01

UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

02

ADDRESS PARKING AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

03

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

04

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE ON CITY STREETS

Taken together, the Transportation Goals and their related objectives and strategies support the following themes of Blueprint Binghamton's vision for the future of our City:

- **THRIVING** - a diverse transportation network ensures that customers from throughout the City and region can access local jobs and support local businesses
- **RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE & HEALTHY TOO** - investment in alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking, transit, and electric vehicles) reduces auto-dependence, results in improved air quality, and supports safe and active lifestyles for residents of all ages
- **ALIVE** - a walkable city with an active street life and a bike trail network that is connected to the natural landscape reinforces a quality of life central to a city that feels alive

**FOR FULL VISION STATEMENT,
SEE PAGE 40.**

GOAL:

01

UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Every dollar spent today on fixing and maintaining existing infrastructure will help avoid more costly and disruptive repairs in the future. Investment in such infrastructural assets also creates an opportunity for improvement. The following transportation recommendations support Goal 1:

EXPAND AND REGULARLY UPDATE A CITYWIDE ROADWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

1.1

The City of Binghamton has a considerable amount of roadway infrastructure, all of which needs to be maintained. However, at present, the City has limited funds and manpower to address all of these needs. It is highly unlikely that any new roadway infrastructure will be required in the future, but it is imperative that the existing infrastructure be modernized and maintained. Doing this will efficiently meet the future needs of the City and make the best use of limited funds.

A Citywide Transportation Infrastructure Plan should be developed and annually updated. The plan should identify the actions that are needed now, as well as identify planning actions

for large projects, like bridge repairs and road reconstruction. The plan should be annually updated and include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Develop priority list for modernizing existing traffic signals and removing signals that are not warranted by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The City is currently studying signal removal and developing a 5 year plan.
- Continue to update the Pavement Management System every year to provide a road rehabilitation program/schedule that includes the use of asphalt seal coating on all City streets to reduce the degradation of street surfaces, prolong mill and pave cycles, and create cost savings

- Adopt Complete Streets policy as part of the City of Binghamton street repair and rehabilitation operations (see Transportation Goal 3 for a definition of Complete Streets)
- Develop priority list for pedestrian countdown signals in Downtown and on Main Street
- Identify assets that can be removed to reduce maintenance costs
- Update bridge condition status for bridges with less than a 20 foot span.
- Identify high crash locations and develop quick, affordable solutions
- Create a "Road Diet" list, with both short-term (striping) and long-term (moving curbs/increasing sidewalk widths) measures
- Develop restriping priorities



Newly paved street in Binghamton



Cracked pavement on Webster Street

1.2
**WORK WITH PRIVATE RAIL COMPANIES TO
IMPROVE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Rail serves a significant role in Binghamton's economy. Like all infrastructure, rail lines are aging and will need to be improved to allow future industry growth. However, this is quite costly and will require the City to work closely with the rail companies to ensure that these assets are preserved for continued use. As preservation and maintenance work is undertaken, the City and public art advocates should take the opportunity to coordinate with rail companies on potential aesthetic improvements to the rail overpasses as well (see Economic Development Recommendation 4.6).



Freight rail overpass at State Street

1.3
**DEVELOP GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS TO
INTEGRATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN STREET
REHABILITATION PROJECTS**

Managing stormwater is a huge challenge in Binghamton, and street rehabilitation projects represent an opportunity to integrate green stormwater infrastructure. Such efforts will not completely solve the problem but will be part of the overall solution; investments in green stormwater infrastructure are also necessary for building true Complete Streets. The City should develop guidelines, based on previous work that other cities have completed, so public and private projects integrate green stormwater infrastructure elements into their work.



Landscaping on Court Street

1.4
REDUCE CITY COSTS BY REMOVING EXCESSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE WHERE POSSIBLE

Much of the roadway infrastructure that serves Binghamton was designed for a larger population than exists today, and therefore, for more vehicles. While this infrastructure makes it very easy to get anywhere in the City by vehicle, it is also costly to maintain and creates a barrier between city neighborhoods and the area's natural assets such as the rivers and parks. North Shore Drive and the Vestal Parkway ramps are two examples of overbuilt roadways that are more burden and barrier than asset.

Many cities in the United States, including Syracuse and Buffalo, are reexamining roadway infrastructure to determine if it suits the livability qualities that they envision for their City's future. There are numerous examples of expressways and limited access highways being transformed into high-capacity, at-grade boulevards that allow people to walk, bike, and take transit.

As the highway infrastructure in Binghamton ages and decisions are made on how to maintain and rebuild, the additional option to transform unnecessary highways should be included. Based upon the experience of other cities, it will be less costly for the State to transform these highways into boulevards than to spend limited dollars in rebuilding the infrastructure as it currently exists. Potential ideas include :

- Remove the Vestal Parkway ramps, between Pennsylvania Avenue and Conklin Avenue, and redesign as a typical urban street grid

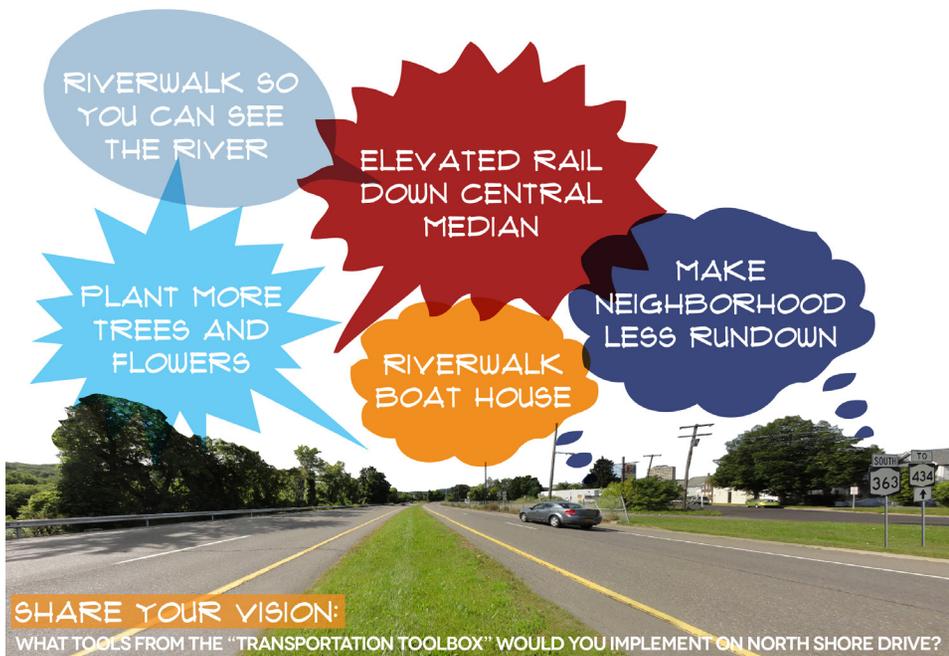
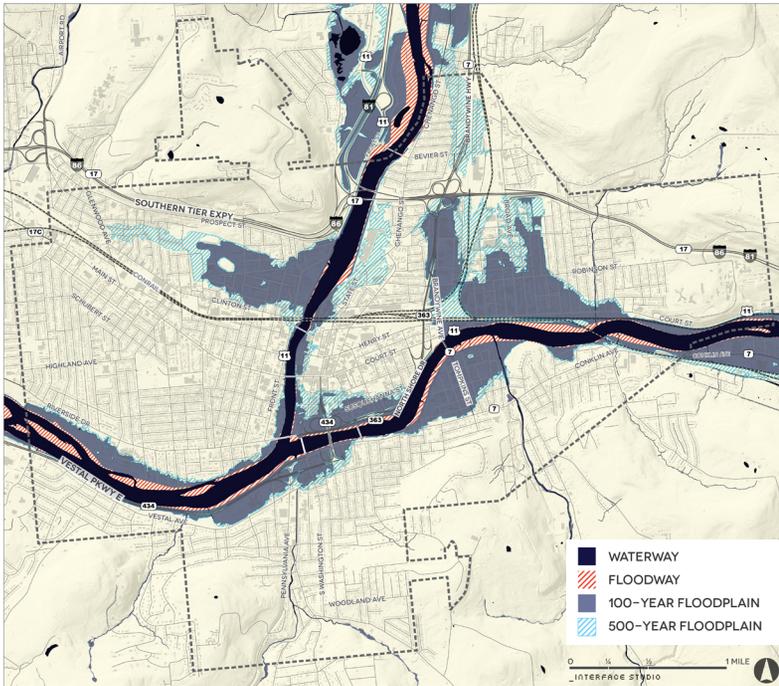


FIGURE 43: "BIG IDEA" Comments - North Shore Drive

FEMA PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN



Susquehanna Street redevelopment concept. Source: NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program

- Remove North Shore Drive and rebuild as a smaller scale green boulevard, repurposing some of the land reclaimed from the highway deconstruction as green space for parks and stormwater management. This concept has been explored through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program.
- Remove North Shore Drive entirely and provide more capacity on Susquehanna Street, affording a considerable amount of additional land for stormwater management and riverfront recreation. North Shore Drive

could be repurposed as a multi-purpose trail that would connect the East Side of the City to Downtown and the University. This idea has been considered in the past by both the City and State. The existing grid network, particularly New York State Route 7, could handle the reallocation of vehicular traffic.

Because these roadways are State-owned, the transformation of the Vestal Parkway ramps and North Shore Drive requires a detailed traffic study, feasibility analysis, close coordination, and

partnerships with New York State DOT Region 9 as well as BMTS. The potential transformation brings added benefits from reduced maintenance costs, improved access to the riverfronts, and the opportunity to create new stormwater management systems that will better protect Downtown and local businesses from flooding. Of course any removal of highway infrastructure must effectively continue to move traffic as a precondition for moving forward with this strategy.

CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

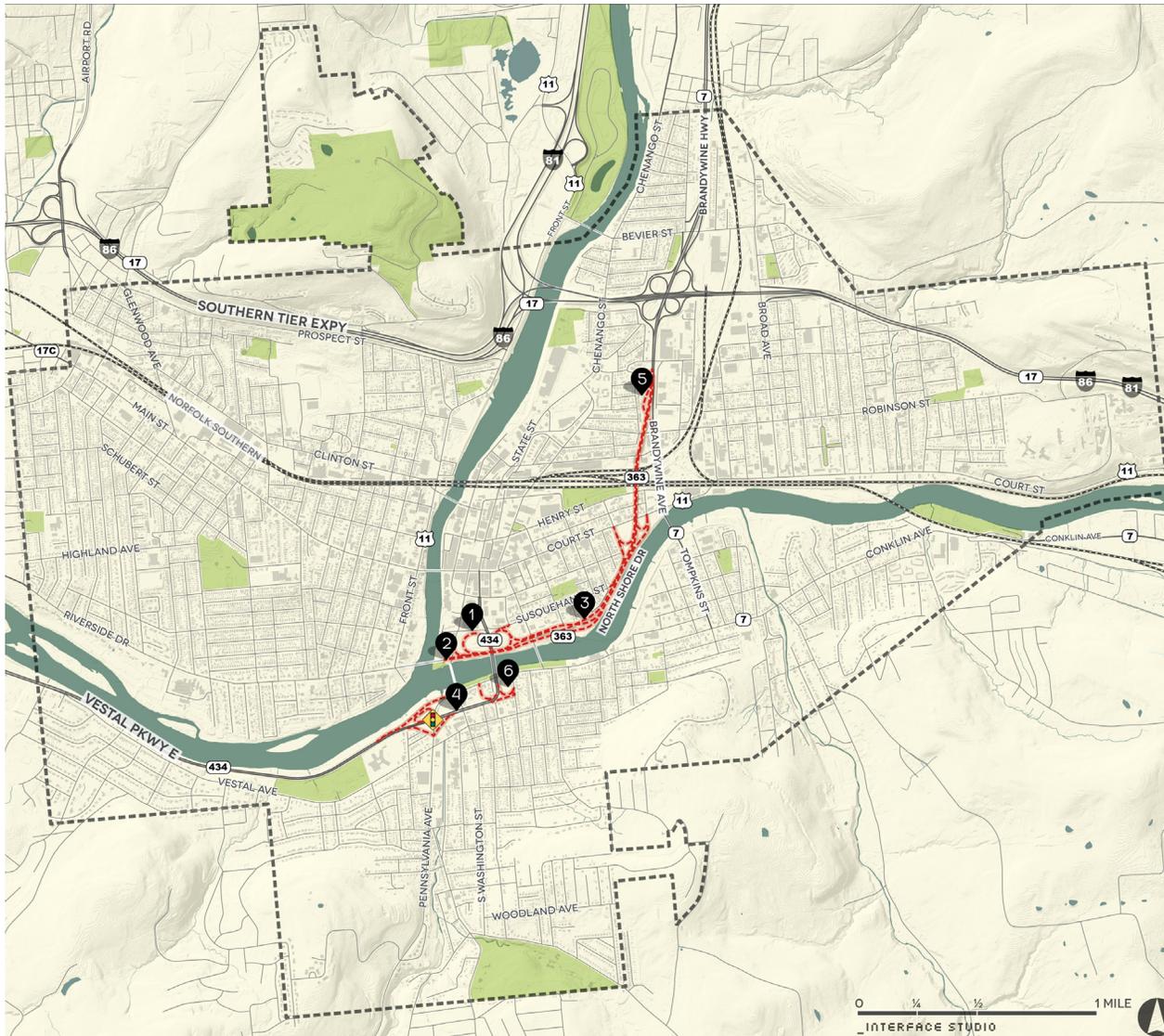


FIGURE 44: Proposed Circulation Interventions

- 1 REALIGN SUSQUEHANNA STREET**
Create a new signalized intersection at Susquehanna Street and State Street.
- 2 REMOVE RAMPS TO WASHINGTON STREET**
Remove the right turn slip lane from westbound North Shore Drive to Washington Street northbound.
- 3 RE-IMAGINE NORTH SHORE DRIVE**
Eliminate the role of North Shore Drive as a high capacity and high speed road between Washington Street and Brandywine Highway. North Shore Drive is either removed completely or repurposed in part as a multi-use waterfront trail.
- 4 ELIMINATE RAMPS AT PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE**
Remove ramps between Vestal Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue to create a new signalized intersection at-grade.
- 5 REALIGN NY STATE ROUTE 7**
With the removal of North Shore Drive, Route 7 is realigned between Frederick Street and Robinson Street.
- 6 REMOVE RAMPS TO CONKLIN AVENUE AND TREMONT AVENUE**

 ROAD SEGMENTS REMOVED

 NEW TRAFFIC SIGNALS



FIGURE 45: Rendering of proposed Susquehanna Street boulevard, trail along North Shore Drive, and stormwater management / park space as buffer from river

**EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONVERT ONE-WAY
STREETS TO TWO-WAYS**

1.5

One-way streets reduce traffic delay, but also make it harder to get around the City in a car, bus, or via bike. One-way streets are confusing not only to visitors, but also to people that use the City streets on a daily basis. Where possible, wide one-way streets throughout the City should undergo a road diet and be converted to two-way to improve overall mobility and connectivity as well as to create greater visibility for area businesses, particularly in Downtown. Each street should be evaluated on an individual basis to determine its suitability for conversion.

**CONTINUE TO PURSUE OUTSIDE
FUNDING SOURCES**

1.6

Transportation infrastructure and maintenance funding will continue to be difficult in the short term. The City must continue to seek additional outside funding sources for transportation and be creative with how they fund different parts of projects to take advantage of as many funding sources as possible. This may include new partnerships with the private sector and institutions, working with foundations, and leveraging funding from non-transportation programs to implement street design recommendations.

GOAL:

02

ADDRESS PARKING AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

With so many auto-reliant residents, parking is an issue that affects the daily lives of many Binghamtonians, but providing more parking alone is not the answer to a perceived parking problem. Parking solutions vary by neighborhood and present opportunities to generate revenue, support improvements to the public realm, encourage people to travel via alternative modes of transportation, and keep the peace in neighborhoods that suffer from a mismatch in parking supply and demand. The following transportation recommendations support Goal 2:

2.1 UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

Parking supply is an important part of any city's multi-modal transportation system, and Binghamton is no different. A comprehensive parking study should be conducted for Downtown that addresses all aspects of parking. This includes the supply/demand of all public on- and off-street parking, structural evaluation of the parking ramps, and a review of parking pricing, management, and enforcement. The recommendations of the study should focus on how parking can help support smart growth in the Downtown without becoming a limiting factor. It should also include where additional on-street parking can be provided, either by removing turn lanes at intersections that are not necessary or by converting parallel parking spaces into angled parking spaces.



Water Street Parking Ramp

The Downtown parking study should consider the application and weigh the benefits of the following parking best practices, recommended by the EPA's Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Urban and Suburban Zoning Codes :

- Fee-In-Lieu - creates a system in which developers can pay a set fee in lieu (FIL) of providing parking spaces for a new development. The FIL revenue can be invested in public parking supply or in improvements to the public realm to support alternative modes of transportation.
- Parking Maximums or Lower Parking Supply Minimums - reduced parking minimums for new developments support new business and investment and thus new land uses (see Housing Recommendation 4.4 as well). The urban context, including on-street parking supply, and alternative transportation options should be considered in lowering parking supply minimums. Alternatively, a form-based code can substitute for, simplify, or eliminate the need for more detailed parking minimum regulations in some districts.
- Off-Site Parking - Binghamton's current zoning code allows parking minimums to be met off-site, within a certain distance depending on the zoning classification. These could be private joint parking facilities or public facilities. The developer is still responsible for the cost of parking, but in some cases, it may be feasible to "unbundle" parking from residential projects, allowing parking to be provided by the open market.
- Shared Parking - allows different users to make use of a common parking resource; these arrangements require provisions to govern their creation and operation (to ensure that parking supply commitments made by developers are honored over time) as well as contracts or leases by businesses or landowners who then use the space to meet their parking needs.
- Diagonal On-Street Parking - as already demonstrated in Downtown Binghamton, the conversion of parallel on-street parking to diagonal parking can increase the parking supply per block by up to 30%, increasing parking directly in front of commercial and office uses.
- Enforcement - anticipated lack of parking enforcement invites drivers to overstay their allotted time in a given parking space, and in the case of prime on-street parking, employee cars often occupy desirable spots that should be reserved for business patrons. Ticketing not only generates revenue, but also elicits response from drivers who take advantage of under-enforced parking restrictions.

2.2
**DEVELOP A PARKING IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
IN DOWNTOWN, AND UTILIZE A PORTION OF
REVENUE FROM PARKING FOR DOWNTOWN
IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND
BICYCLISTS**

The City's meter parking revenue is currently allocated to the general fund, but all ramp revenue is dedicated to the parking fund. A Downtown Parking Improvement District should be established by utilizing a portion of this revenue for multi-modal improvements for pedestrian, bicyclists, and transit riders. Improvements could include improved bus stops, new crosswalks, or bike parking. This recommendation should be carefully evaluated in the upcoming Downtown parking study to be commissioned by the City and no action should be taken until the completion of the proposed Downtown parking study.



Collier Street Parking Ramp

2.3
**INTRODUCE SHARED PARKING ARRANGEMENTS
OR RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING IN
NEIGHBORHOODS WITH STUDENT HOUSING
ZONES**

One of the challenges with student housing in residential neighborhoods is parking. Whereas most single-family residences have one or two cars, single-family homes that students occupy often have many more vehicles because there are more drivers. This puts pressure on residential streets to handle all of this additional parking and creates an issue that affects almost every neighborhood located adjacent to an urban campus.

The short term solution is to identify additional supply that can be used for parking. This will require the City to facilitate partnerships with private lot owners to lease unused parking overnight or during other peak parking hours. The City should also consider a pilot residential parking permit system in one neighborhood. The City could expand the existing parking permit

program near NYSEG Stadium to include student housing zones. Vehicles parking on-street in the neighborhood would be required to display the permit to park on-street. Permits could be issued to drivers that show permanent residence or a maximum number of permits could be issued to each address so property owners could resell the permits if they do not need them. This program would help match parking supply and demand, and people without a permit would have to park outside of the neighborhood.

The long term solution to this issue is to address demand and reduce the number of students that own a car. This will only be accomplished if the City and the private sector make it easier to live without owning a car.

2.4
**CREATE A PARKING CREDIT SYSTEM TO
ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT**

The City should explore creating a parking credit system to better match parking needs with available spaces and serve as an economic development tool. In the credit system, the City would develop an inventory of available spaces in a district and issue credits to businesses in that district, rather than rely on the inefficient allocation of parking through parking requirements. This would allow more flexibility to businesses that may otherwise

find it difficult to meet parking requirements or be locked into uses that may not be the best and highest use of the property due to the constraints of the parking requirements. In Los Angeles, the program was adopted in 2012 and welcomed by the business community as a way to address commercial stagnation and vacancy where potential businesses were unable to meet parking requirements and forced to lease surplus spaces at high cost.

2.5
**INCENTIVIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN
SURFACE PARKING LOTS**

Surface parking lots take up a considerable amount of space in Downtown and are almost exclusively constructed with asphalt. Any new surface parking lot over 20 spaces should provide green infrastructure to help manage stormwater, either with pervious pavers, landscaping, or other green technology. This will allow parking lots to serve two purposes, storing vehicles and managing stormwater. This has been completed successfully at Southside Commons and the UHS parking lot

on Pennsylvania Avenue, which is an example of successful implementation of Binghamton Code Chapter 227. Continued enforcement of Chapter 227 is important and will foster public-private collaboration in addressing one of the City's main threats, flooding. A program could be developed with an incentive for development using green technology. The funding could come from savings in the maintenance and improvements not needed on the sewer system.

GOAL:

03

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Binghamton has many aspects of a multi-modal city: walkable neighborhoods, a well-used transit system, and bike lanes. Continuing to build the framework of a multi-modal transportation system will allow people the freedom to choose how they want to reach their destination, as well as reduce the cost of doing so. A robust multi-modal transportation network is imperative to encouraging economic development growth in urban areas as well as expanding the types of housing that can be built in the City.

A number of the recommendations are focused on creating Complete Streets, which are streets that are planned, designed, operated, and maintained for all users, regardless of age and ability. This marks a change from traditional roadway engineering that focused solely on the operations and safety of automobiles. The City currently has a Complete Streets Policy where “all street projects shall be designed and executed in a balanced, responsible, and equitable way to accommodate and encourage travel by public transportation vehicles and their passengers, bicyclists, and other wheeled modes of transportation, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.” The County and State also have similar policies. Building Complete Streets will improve the mobility of all, reduce future maintenance costs, and encourage economic development. The following transportation recommendations support Goal 3:

3.1 IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY AND DOWNTOWN

The success of Downtown Binghamton and Binghamton University are interrelated. More students are living Downtown, there are additional new student developments proposed, and new businesses are opening to attract students. This reflects an overall trend of younger people wanting to live in cities and Downtowns to take advantage of all of the amenities these places offer.

Improving the connection between Downtown Binghamton and the Binghamton University Campus will encourage more students to live, visit, and support businesses Downtown, and while also providing more flexibility and capacity for the University to grow. Some considerations to improve this connection include:

- Transit: providing two-way bus route service on OCCT (opposed to the one-way loop routes that currently exist), market bus service to students
- Bicycling: finish the Route 434 Greenway trail (NYSDOT Project #903808) currently in design phase, add bike parking in Downtown, promote Binghamton University Bike Share to all students to take advantage of connection between Downtown and BU
- Walking: improve/add crossings on Vestal Parkway, work with Broome County and the City of Vestal to consider new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Susquehanna River near Beethoven Street to connect the University population directly to Main Street.

3.2 IMPROVE THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION EXPERIENCE

Like most public transportation systems in the United States, transit ridership in Binghamton consists mainly of people who have to take transit, as opposed to those who want to. This population typically lacks an automobile, a driver's license, or both. However, many of the transit riders in Binghamton are students at Binghamton University, and this segment of the population are potential future permanent residents of the City. By providing a positive experience for students and new residents of the City, it will encourage them to choose transit in the future when they are deciding where to live and how to commute. Improving public transit supports numerous other goals of this plan and is necessary to support both

existing residents and businesses as well as future economic growth. It also aligns directly with the livability principles of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

There is currently discussion about Broome County privatizing BC Transit. While this is a County decision, it will have a considerable impact on the City's residents and employees. If BC Transit is privatized, it is likely that the City will have to monitor the impact on Binghamton's economy. Regardless of this decision, the City should work with the transit provider to improve transit service and operations. The City and the County must work closely together to improve transit in the area.



FIGURE 46: "BIG IDEA" Comments - Main Street



BC Transit bus at Washington Street Bridge

As noted in the BMTS study “Transportation Tomorrow 2035 - Creating a Sustainable Future, adding more transit service and frequency would tremendously improve the situation for existing riders. A larger investment is needed in transit service, but this is a long term recommendation.

In the short term, the focus of any transit efforts should be to improve the transit experience and the reliability of service for existing riders. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, including:

- Initiate a bus tracker program that integrates both BC Transit and OCCT. If people know when the bus is coming, they do not have to wait at the bus stop and hope. This allows people to plan their schedule and do other things so they minimize time actually waiting for bus. A bus tracker program would provide real-time information on when the next bus will arrive. This information can be displayed on bus stops or on monitors in businesses or public space as well as in mobile apps. Bus tracker programs require that all vehicles have GPS and that the data be made available to mobile app developers.

- Improve bus stops. Making waiting for the bus safe and comfortable, even in inclement weather, improves the transit riding experience, and bus shelters accomplish this. More bus shelters should be added in Binghamton, either by the transit provider or private businesses/institutions. The City can create an “Adopt a Bus Shelter” program to allow businesses, institutions, or community groups to maintain the bus shelter and alert the transit provider to any damage and repair needs. This type of program also provides an opportunity for advertisement and marketing of local businesses.
- Improve pedestrian connections. Most trips on transit begin and end with a pedestrian trip. It should be safe and comfortable for riders to walk to and from transit. This requires sidewalks, crosswalks, ADA crossings, and adequate lighting to ensure people can get to/from the bus. An audit of all bus stops should be conducted and improvements should be prioritized by demand and potential. This audit should be a collaborative effort between the City and the County.
- Keep buses running on time. This may seem like an obvious recommendation, but providing a focus on this aspect of transit while addressing the other issues related to the transit experience will improve satisfaction of existing riders and help grow ridership in the future.

In order to grow transit ridership, it is important to understand which segments of the population are potential transit riders and market or incentivize transit use to them. This could simply be done by working with Downtown businesses to provide a small discount one day a year if people show their transit pass. Large employers and the University can help provide insight and information of transit ridership among their constituencies.

In the long term, a full study of transit service should be completed to evaluate existing service and operations and identify potential improvements that could increase ridership and revenue. One of the considerations of this study should be to improve transit along Main Street to create a better connection to Downtown.

From Main Street Collaborative Brainstorm Board:
“TROLLEY/STREET CAR!” “BUS RAPID TRANSIT”



Bus Shelter on Upper Chenango Street

3.3
PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE CAR SHARE, CAR POOLING, AND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Owning a car is a considerable expense, particularly for younger residents. One of the ways for people to live Downtown, or anywhere in Binghamton, more easily without a car is the availability of car sharing. Car sharing services allow people to join as members and then rent cars on an hourly basis. The fee typically includes all of the costs of car ownership, such as gas, maintenance, and insurance. Hertz currently runs a car sharing program at Binghamton University, but only three cars are provided. The City and the University should be aggressive in bringing additional car share programs to Binghamton. One way to accomplish this would be to require developers to provide a car share vehicle in lieu of parking. The car could be available to the public, should the car not be used, the developer would supplement the monthly revenue required by the service.

3.4
INCENTIVIZE EV CHARGER STATIONS WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT, AND INSTALL AT KEY LOCATIONS IN EACH NEIGHBORHOOD

Sales of electric vehicles are growing (sales nearly tripled in the US in 2012), and purchase prices for these vehicles are going down. The City must be able to respond to the future demand for these vehicles by having an infrastructure that will support their power needs. This calls for network of EV Charger Stations, to be built out by both the public and private sector. New York currently has a statewide initiative, Charge NY, to create a statewide network of charging stations. The program is run by the New York Power

Making it easier for employees of Binghamton University or other businesses in the City to get to work without a car should be encouraged. Carpool matching is currently provided by Broome Tioga Rideshare (www.btrideshare.com), and the City should explore ways to make this service better known and reduce any additional barriers to entry. In March 2014, there were 602 rideshare accounts and between July 2009 and March 2014, 377 ride share match searches were performed.

In-town ride share services should also be supported by the City to supplement existing taxi services. Companies like Uber and Lyft make mobility in cities easier and allow the supply of rides to better match demand.

Authority and the New York State Research and Development Authority. The City should work with the County to install EV Charger Stations in the existing parking ramps and other government owned properties, as well as key locations in neighborhoods. The City should require large, new developments to install EV Charger Stations that are open to the public. This is a minimal cost that brings marketing benefits for the developer and is a recommendation included in the City's Energy and Climate Action Plan.

3.5
DEVELOP COMPLETE STREETS
HIERARCHY FOR STREET DESIGN

The City currently has a Complete Streets Policy where “all street projects shall be designed and executed in a balanced, responsible, and equitable way to accommodate and encourage travel by public transportation vehicles and their passengers, bicyclists, and other wheeled modes of transportation, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.” The next step on this policy is to develop an overall user hierarchy for street design. Pedestrians should always be considered first, as they are the most vulnerable user. If streets are safe for pedestrians to walk along and cross, they will be safe for all users.



3.6
DEVELOP CROSSWALK POLICY

There are many different types of crosswalks in the City. To create a safe environment for drivers and pedestrians, the City should develop a consistent and uniform crosswalk policy. At intersections with high pedestrian volumes, such as in Downtown or on Main Street, the international crosswalk style (<http://goo.gl/maps/nr1DY>) should be used, as they are more visible to drivers. On other streets with lower volumes of pedestrians, the crosswalk style of two parallel lines is sufficient.



Various crosswalk typologies across Binghamton

3.7
AMEND THE CITY CODE TO REQUIRE CONSIDERATION OF COMPLETE STREETS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ALL CITY ROW PROJECTS INCLUDING MILL AND PAVE PROJECTS

The City has completed a number of bike lanes during typical maintenance projects, such as mill and pave or reconstruction, by simply narrowing lanes and striping the additional space for bicyclists. This is an excellent and efficient way to build bicycle infrastructure. This program should be expanded to include pedestrian safety improvements, like new crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands, in addition to bike lanes.

3.8
MARK ALL NEW YORK STATE BIKE ROUTES IN THE CITY WITH EITHER DEDICATED LANES OR SHARROWS BY 2016

All New York State bike routes in the City are currently marked with signs. To boost driver awareness, all routes should either be striped with protected bike lanes, standard bike lanes, or sharrows.



Map of regional bicycle infrastructure

3.9 **DEVELOP A CITYWIDE BIKE NETWORK**

The majority of the current bike infrastructure in Binghamton has been developed by striping bike lanes during typical street maintenance projects. This has allowed a considerable number of bicycle lane miles to be implemented at a very low cost. However, it has not yielded a full network of facilities that connects the entire City. A full bike network plan should be developed, in conjunction with Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, to provide a bike network that connects the entire City and identifies the type of facilities that should be provided on each street. The bicycle network plan should:

- Identify priority destinations for commuter and recreational bicyclists
- Identify gaps in trail connectivity
- Improve connectivity to Downtown from all Binghamton neighborhoods
- Identify the type of infrastructure that should be built. The highest protection, cycle tracks or side paths, should always be evaluated as the first option.

3.10 **CONSIDER A SMALL BIKE SHARE PROGRAM**

Bike share is a program that allows people to share bikes to make short trips in an area. It has proven successful in large cities, such as New York, Chicago, Washington DC, and San Francisco, and many smaller cities are considering it, including Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester. Binghamton University

has started its own bike share program for students. A citywide bike share system could be successful in Binghamton with the correct financial model and business plan. The City should consult with other similar cities in New York and possibly conduct its own feasibility and business plan for a future bike share service.

3.11 **ADD MORE BIKE PARKING**

Increasing bicycle ridership requires secure places for people to store their bike. Currently, the majority of bike parking in the City is infrastructure that is meant for another purpose, like a parking meter or tree. Bike parking is fairly affordable and

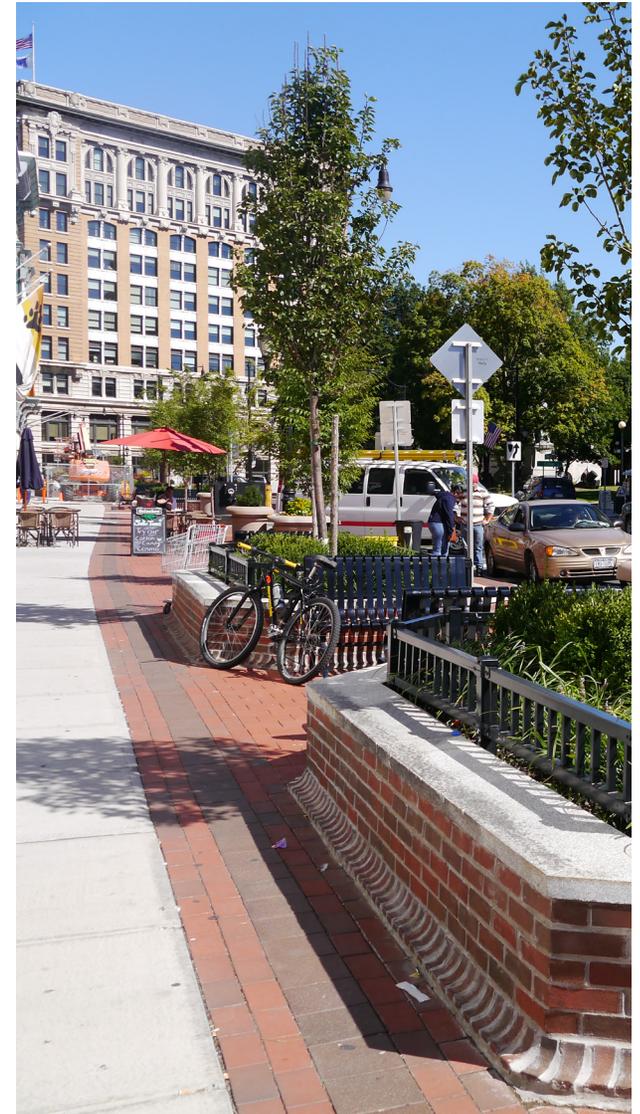
easy to implement. It is also an excellent way to integrate artists into public infrastructure and reinforce neighborhood/City branding. The City should establish a goal of installing 20 bike racks a year and one on-street bike corral.

3.12
BUILD A BICYCLING COMMUNITY

Encouraging more people to ride bikes in Binghamton will require the physical infrastructure described above, but investments in the public realm must be coupled with investments in social infrastructure. Building a local bike culture can take the form of a grassroots volunteer organization or a non-profit that markets biking, educates the public and new riders, and advocates for improvements. Such an organization can also help organize events that will encourage ridership, such as family rides, helmet checks, or educational seminars.

3.13
HOLD REGULAR BIKE THE DRIVE EVENTS

North Shore Drive provides some excellent views of the City and natural assets, but can only be accessed by car. North Shore Drive should be closed to vehicles some weekend days of the year to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to use it as a trail. This would have a minor impact on traffic, and the costs could be offset by requiring a small registration fee. NYSDOT is currently in the planning stages for a similar event on the eastbound side of Vestal Parkway. These type of events could be held on other streets in the City as well.



Bicycle locked to fence on Court Street

GOAL:

04

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE ON CITY STREETS

Residents agree that Binghamton is a walkable city, with room to embrace and celebrate its walkability as a character trait central to its identity. By retrofitting intersections or roadways to make safe space for pedestrians to walk and linger, creating moments best (or only) appreciated on foot, building a culture of walking among residents young and old, and limiting truck traffic, the City can do its part to boost pedestrian traffic by improving the overall experience. These improvements have been shown to not only encourage economic development, but also place more eyes on the street, which improves the perception of personal security. The following transportation recommendations support Goal 4:

4.1 RECLAIM UNDERUTILIZED ASPHALT SPACE ON WIDE STREETS AND INTERSECTIONS

There are a number of streets and intersections in Binghamton where the available capacity exceeds the vehicular demand. This presents an opportunity to reclaim some of that street space for other uses. Cities across the U.S. have successfully taken back space and created places for people, like pocket parks, street cafes, art installations, and places for yoga or dance. The City should pilot a program to reclaim roadway space and temporarily use it for people by coordinating the City departments responsible for implementation and maintenance. If the pilot evaluation proves a success, the program should be institutionalized.



Underutilized asphalt space on Hawley Street



"Before" Photo of the State Street - Hawley Street Intersection



FIGURE 47: Rendering of proposed improvements at intersection of State & Hawley showing a narrowed gateway to slow speeds as drivers enter Downtown

4.2
DEVELOP A LIST OF STREETS IN
NEED OF A “ROAD DIET”

There are many streets in Binghamton that can accommodate greater capacity than the number of vehicles they host on a daily basis. This often leads to drivers speeding and creates safety issues for all users. The City should partner with BMTS to identify all of these streets that are in need of a “road diet,” where lanes can either be reduced in size or removed, and that space should be repurposed for other users of the transportation system. This will make the City’s streets safer for all users and create opportunities, like wider sidewalks, room for landscaping, parking, bicycle lanes, or transit lanes, to provide additional facilities for other multi-modal uses. Many of these projects would require simply re-striping, which would be a low-cost effort.



North Shore Drive in need of a “Road Diet”

4.3
MAKE THE BRIDGES DISTINCTIVE
THROUGH LIGHTING AND HIGHLIGHTING
ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

Pedestrians move at slower speeds, with time to absorb details and beauty in the world around them. Small investments in beautification along sidewalks and bridges, while perhaps lost on drivers passing by at high speeds, become cherished reasons to walk, and retrace steps along favorite routes through the city. A new LED lighting scheme highlighting the architectural detail of Binghamton’s bridges, for example, could serve multiple purposes, including enhanced safety and lighting, an artistic element in the streetscape, and another reason to walk for residents and visitors, alike.



Washington Street pedestrian bridge



FIGURE 48: Rendering of Binghamton bridges with distinctive lighting

ENCOURAGE MORE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

4.4

Binghamton is an extremely walkable City, with its dense neighborhoods and extensive sidewalk network. Pedestrians use Binghamton's sidewalks to get to work, go to the store, and simply for recreation and exercise. However, more can be done to take advantage of this unique urban asset and help make Binghamton known as New York's Most Walkable small city. It will also increase the health of the City, improve business revenue, and reduce traffic and parking demand Downtown.

A citywide information and wayfinding system will help reduce the perception that places are farther apart than they really are. This is traditionally accomplished with maps/kiosks, but there are a number of other creative

ways that municipalities have used to make this connection such as stamping/painting directions to Downtown on sidewalks to using color on street furniture.

The City should also be creative in developing programs that encourage pedestrian activity. There are a number of different programs that cities have successfully implemented that have had tremendous impacts on the number of pedestrians. Things like lunch walks, games, or even competitions can be completed for little to no money. New apps can help people track their steps, measure progress, and engage in healthy competition with coworkers. The City should work closely with the County on this endeavor and focus initial efforts on government employees.

ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF BINGHAMTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENTS WHO WALK OR TAKE THE BUS TO SCHOOL

4.5

Transportation challenges are but one barrier to education for children. With a network of neighborhood elementary schools, many younger students walk to school, but with just two public middle schools and one public high school citywide, many older students must travel farther to and from school each day. Students in all age groups would benefit from programs tailored to those who walk, bike, or ride the bus to get to school, as such programs would promote healthy, active habits and combat truancy.

For students traveling on foot, particularly elementary school children, the City and School District should partner with Broome County's Safe Routes to School initiative to encourage more students to walk to school along safe

routes and with parental supervision when possible. Safe Routes to School was a Federal program to encourage more children to walk or bike to school; it provided funding and technical assistance for improved infrastructure, education, and programming including parent involvement. The Broome County Health Department has undertaken some Safe Routes to School initiatives with the Binghamton City School District as part of the Broome County Comprehensive Plan, including a survey about walkability at the Roosevelt School. Via the survey, administered at parent night, parents noted that a key barrier to walking to school was the lack of crossing guards or crossing guard placement.

“WALKING SCHOOL BUS!”

Source: Resident suggestion for Main Street

As the County, the City, the School District, and local families all share a desire for healthy children who lead active lives, a commitment to fostering a safer public realm for kids traveling to and from school should be a priority and a responsibility embraced by all. Although Safe Routes to School was eliminated in the new transportation bill, there are still similar type programs that can be implemented. The City should participate in these efforts by providing staff expertise in engineering and public health as well as funding.

Older students traveling by BC Transit face challenges related to bus scheduling (or busses running off schedule) as well as weather due to the lack of bus stops protected by bus shelters. The School District and City should work with BMTS to evaluate options for increased morning service along bus lines accessing Binghamton High School, as well as protected bus shelters along those routes.

4.6 LIMIT TRUCK TRAFFIC DOWNTOWN

Trucks are vital to the success of cities and downtowns. However, the presence of trucks on local streets can be a disturbance. There is no clear consensus among the City, County, and State on where trucks should and should not travel in Binghamton. The City should work with the County and State to identify the proper truck routes to minimize the amount of truck activity in Downtown and residential neighborhoods. A truck route could be designated on other downtown streets to minimize the traffic on Court Street.



An example of a truck - automobile conflict on Clinton Street

4.7 ENFORCE SIDEWALK SHOVELING

The City of Binghamton requires that property owners remove snow and ice on sidewalks within 24 hours of accumulation or after snow accumulation stops. The City should strictly enforce this policy and encourage residents to alert the City of property owners who are

not complying with the ordinance. Potential programs and partnerships should be explored to assist property owners who may encounter barriers to compliance, such as seniors. These may include youth work programs to assist with snow removal.

WANT TO KEEP
READING?

BLUEPRINT BINGHAMTON
HAS 7 MAIN CHAPTERS

A ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

B HOUSING

C TRANSPORTATION

D INFRASTRUCTURE

E ENVIRONMENT &
OPEN SPACE

F LAND USE &
ZONING

G COMMUNITY
BUILDING

