

# Message from the Chair



This past year we have been able to witness exciting developments in several forms. Downtown Syracuse is alive with activity. This past year 23 buildings were redeveloped, 17 new retail businesses opened, downtown residency has risen to 2,700, and \$180 million in development activity is completed or underway, which doesn't even take into account the projects planned for the next twelve months.

One of the most exciting developments has been the level of activity on Syracuse's "Main Street." Real estate activity has resumed in the heart of downtown and Salina Street is changing. The \$16 million stage house expansion of the Landmark Theatre is underway and will be complete this fall. To the south, construction is well underway on the \$14 million Central New York Regional transportation hub. This relocation has sparked other development interests in downtown's core:

- PEMCO Group completed their renovations at the Syracuse Trust Building offering four residential condos.
- Earlier this year, developers Bob Doucette and Rich DeVito added 45 incredible apartments to the Dey's Plaza, all of which are now leased.
- Just to the west, the Butler Building has completed the addition of 12 apartments in Armory Square.

In addition to the transformation in the heart of downtown, there have been investments made by community partners both large and small throughout downtown.

- SUNY Upstate Medical is investing in downtown's east side with the \$45 million conversion of Harrison House and Townsend Towers into 320 upscale apartments for medical students and staff.
- Through its Save the Rain and Green Infrastructure programs, Onondaga County has actively sought out downtown projects to support, many times focusing on areas where major community investments are being planned.
- O'Brien & Gere and MVP Healthcare have moved back into the central business district setting an example that 21st century tenants are attracted to the lure of downtown's activity.
- The Syracuse Technology Garden is full, for the first time ever, with 37 great companies and 150 employees. Space is at a premium as more and more innovative minds flock to this collaborative downtown work environment.
- The Onondaga Historical Association has opened a new history-themed gift shop to connect visitors to our community history.

One of the more notable changes has been the "greening" of downtown. In Armory Square, the \$28.5 million, LEED-certified Washington Station opened in August. It recently welcomed the combined economic development offices of the City and County as new tenants. On the east side of downtown, the Central New York Community Foundation, with a goal to secure LEED Silver certification, completed its renovation of the former University Club building. Two blocks north, Synapse Partners is developing the former Water Street Gym and seeking LEED Platinum certification. The new facility will serve as a showcase for green technologies including solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations.

Although it took Syracuse some time to catch up to its counterparts, downtown is now home to 8 locations that are either LEED-certified or seeking their certification. This is an impressive accomplishment among cities the size of Syracuse.

Demand for downtown living continues to drive development. Downtown is home to 1,300 residential units with a 99% occupancy rate. Over the next twelve months, 570 residential units are expected to be built, bringing new life and activity to underutilized buildings in downtown.

This past year has also been a year of change. David Mankiewicz, who has been a Downtown Committee fixture for over 30 years and the Downtown Committee's Executive Director since 2008, will now be leading CenterState CEO's new strategic planning initiatives with the Brookings Institution, an exciting opportunity for the central New York region. David has directed many of downtown's most transformational projects, two of which have won National Awards from the International Downtown Association. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to thank David for all that he has contributed to downtown Syracuse and the Downtown Committee.

It's with great excitement that we welcome Merike Treier to the helm as Executive Director of the Downtown Committee to lead the organization's efforts moving forward. Merike has been with the Downtown Committee since 2004 and brings passion, enthusiasm and vision for the future of the organization.

Our sincere thanks to those in the public and private sectors making investments in downtown, especially Mayor Stephanie Miner and our partners at the City of Syracuse who have focused their energies on downtown revitalization.

James V. Breuer, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James V. Breuer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J".

