

Message from the Downtown Committee of S



Present-Day

This year holds special meaning for the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc., as 2015 marks our 40th Anniversary! In 1975, our community had the foresight to create a mechanism to ensure consistent and dedicated attention would be placed on downtown. The Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc. was the result of this foresight, and became the first organization of its kind in New York State. As the stewards of the special assessment district, we're honored to work in partnership with you to create a vibrant Downtown Syracuse.

A Forward Thinking Community

Our community has a vision for what we want our future to be, and a track record for making it happen.

Think about Armory Square. Forty years ago, this warehouse district was known for food processing. It was the vision of Bob Doucette and George Curry, two urban pioneers, that kick-started the neighborhood Armory Square has become today. Soon, others including Bill MacDowell, Tom Cunningham, and Karyn Korteling saw the potential and established a presence. Today, this warehouse district features the finest dining and retail around.

Hanover Square was once the red light district in downtown. Iconic structures, such as the Gridley Building, were slated for demolition. Forty years ago, conversations started around the preservation potential of this neighborhood. Hanover Square became the first National Register Historic District in Syracuse, paving the way for future development.

Many of the individuals that fostered these projects remain influential threads of the fabric that make Downtown thrive. Today, more than \$340 million in development activity is underway!

Progress is palpable. Every day, there's a new headline for the \$60 million renovation of the historic Hotel Syracuse. It's because of the vision and personal commitment of developer Ed Reilly and the support of many community partners, that we can now say we have a dedicated Downtown convention center hotel!

This level of investment is the direct result of visionaries in our community, committed to progress. We're building a city for our next generation. Together, we're creating a downtown of the future - a downtown where people *choose* to be.

Residential Development

Perhaps the most visible change is the number of new residents that call downtown home. In the last ten years, our residential population has increased 43%! This past year, 153 new residential units came online. There are more than 300 units either planned or under construction, expected to come online within the next two years. This would add 540 new residents to downtown's population.

Downtown Retail

18 new retail businesses have opened this past year, a sign of commitment and belief in downtown's strength. Syracuse has a track record of fostering entrepreneurs who make investments that improve our community.

Take Darren Chavis, who recently opened Creole Soul Café. Born and raised in Syracuse, he's taken his passion and established a downtown presence on Jefferson Street.

Restaurants like Modern Malt, Funk n' Waffles, Peppino's and The York demonstrate creativity through new takes on traditional food. Then, there are Café Kubal and Byblos Bar & Grill, whose owners demonstrated their belief in downtown's strength by opening second locations this year.

Downtown staple, Clark's Ale House, renewed its downtown presence. Meanwhile, the community institution, Liehs & Steigerwald, is expected to open a downtown location soon.

Finally, Kevin and Nicole Samolis, two self-starters, saw a gap in the marketplace and created Sky Armory. Fondly remembered as the former Wells & Coverly department store, today Sky Armory creates new memories with a highly personalized approach to events.

South Warren Street Renaissance

On South Warren Street, a renaissance is underway. Historically the financial district of downtown, changes in this sector led to a shrinking commercial footprint. Through the organic growth of tech-oriented companies, vacancies have been filled. This district has reinvented itself as an innovator:

- The Tech Garden anchors the southern end with cutting edge technology companies such as Lake Effect Applications, Spincar.com and Euphony, Inc.
- South Warren Street is also home to Ephesus Technologies, headquartered on the ground floor of Onondaga Tower. Not only did this homegrown company light the 2015 Super Bowl, it's slated to provide the LED technology to light the 2018 Super Bowl as well!
- TCGPlayer.com, led by Chedy Hampson, has sought out vibrant surroundings for its employees. Rapid growth is projected as the gaming operation expands in the historic State Tower Building.
- SUNY Upstate Medical University's announcement that it will bring more than 400 employees into the Galleries only fuels this fire.

As the diversity of our business mix continues to grow, it weaves a dynamic downtown fabric.

Syracuse, Inc.

Arts & Culture

Downtown is the stage on which we celebrate our community. Every year, more than 2.5 million visitors come downtown for our festivals and events. It's estimated another 1.3 million attend performances at the Oncenter and Landmark Theatre. Happening at other cultural institutions:

- The Erie Canal Museum is nearing completion on its \$1 million renovation bringing canal history to life through interactive displays.
- The Everson Museum is re-establishing its presence as a downtown destination through new family programming and Community Day activities.
- The MOST continues to delight families through new exhibits and investments in lighting and exterior façade work.
- And, at the OHA, crowd-pleasing exhibits such as Salt City Rock: The History of Rock and Roll in Syracuse, has brought a 12% increase in membership, and almost a 20% increase in visitors last year.



Public Space

The Connective Corridor streetscape project is one of the largest street reconstruction projects of the last few decades, blending arts and infrastructure. When the project is complete this season, it will solidify Syracuse's status as an innovator and improve mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

In the Heart of Downtown, Mayor Miner has prioritized the redesign of the former Common Center bus hub into a new urban space. !Melk, a New York City based design team, has been selected to work closely with our community to realize the potential of this new urban space.

Security Partnerships

Through a multi-pronged approach, we're focused on creating welcoming public spaces.

Our partnership with the Syracuse Police Department ensures dedicated attention to the district. We're incredibly fortunate to work with some of the most proactive officers in the City to maintain downtown's status as one of the safest neighborhoods.

Thanks to the incredible support from Assemblyman Magnarelli, the Downtown Committee installed 10 security cameras this

summer, providing an additional tool to protect the more than \$340 investments underway.

New this year, we've collaborated with social service providers to create a Downtown Task Force. This pilot program changes the way outreach services are provided to those living with mental illness, homelessness or substance abuse issues. Still in its infancy, the goal is to build relationships with a traditionally hard-to-reach population and get them the services they need.

The Future of Interstate 81

No bigger opportunity exists for downtown's continued revitalization than the opportunities presented with a re-imagined Interstate 81. This is our moment to write Syracuse's next chapter.

The needs of our community have changed dramatically since the viaduct was built. We live in a generation that craves walkability and authenticity. We need a solution that's going to attract our next generation of leaders, and make Syracuse stand out as a progressive city.

This decision is too important to sit on the sidelines. Lend your voice. We cannot allow the work of the last 40 years to be undermined by a highway that divides our community.

Looking Forward

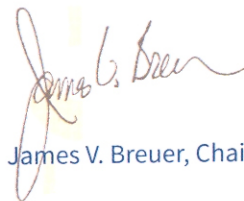
Downtown has incredible potential, but there's still more to do. As we reflect on the last 40 years of the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, there are two things the Downtown from 1975 and the Downtown of today share: a strong sense of community and a vision for transformative projects.

We have an incredibly rich fabric to celebrate in Downtown Syracuse, and at the heart of it all, are the people who make up this thriving community. Together we embrace change, together we look forward, and together we've positioned our urban core for a better, stronger future.

Let today be more than a celebration of the last 40 years. Let today be the day we make a decision, together, to have an even brighter future.

We'd like to thank you all for your continued dedication to Downtown Syracuse. Through our collective partnerships, let's keep making good things happen.

With much excitement,



James V. Breuer, Chair



Merike L. Treier, Executive Director

