

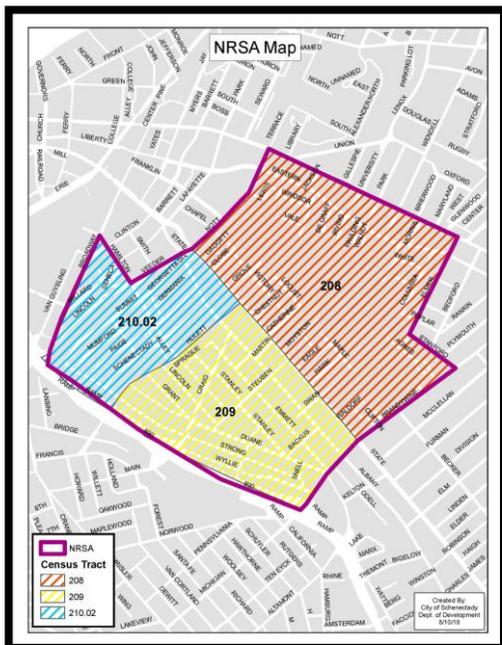
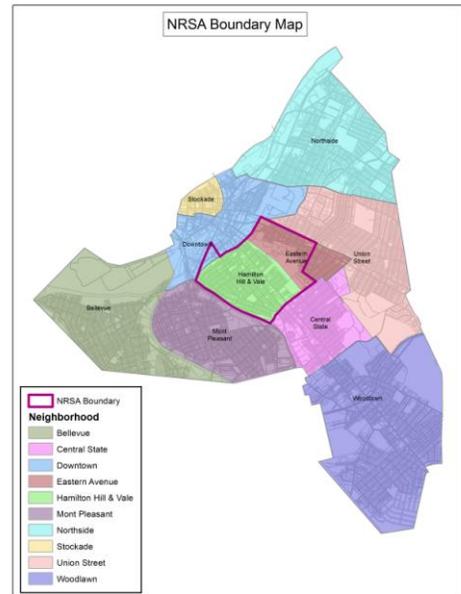
2018-2019 NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA (NRSA) SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Schenectady is an entitlement community funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. This classification allows the City of Schenectady to designate specific areas as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA). The NRSA designation allows greater flexibility in the use of CDBG funding for projects and activities that would promote the revitalization of particular areas.

BOUNDARIES

The proposed Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) is located within the Eastern Avenue, and Hamilton Hill and Vale Neighborhoods as identified in the City of Schenectady’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The proposed area of approximately .94 square miles is designated by census tracts 208 (Eastern Avenue), 209 and 210.2 (Hamilton Hill and Vale), and includes all block groups in each tract. The area is bounded by Union Street one block north of Eastern Avenue to the North, McClellan and Brandywine Avenues to the East, NY-890 to the South, and Veeder Avenue and Nott Terrace to the West. The area is primarily residential, 74% of the parcels within the proposed NRSA classified as residential. The remaining parcels are vacant land, or have commercial or other uses (government, industrial, cemetery, etc.).



ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the HUD Exchange, a full 79% of residents living within the proposed City of Schenectady NRSA are characterized as low/moderate (low/mod) income. Across the three census tracts that make up the NRSA, an average of 39% of families live below the federal poverty level. The three tracts have median household incomes well below the rest of the city. An average median household income for the three proposed NRSA census tracts is \$19,536.

CONSULTATION

The NRSA is being designated based upon areas of identified need in the City and stakeholder and community engagement including public participation during development of the 5-Year Consolidated Plan (2015-2019), the HUD Community Needs Assessment (2016), and the 2018 Annual Action Plan. The City will hold an additional public meeting on November 13, 2018 to engage residents and stakeholders and solicit public input regarding the proposed NRSA designation and plan.

ASSESSMENT

Economic Conditions

Economic conditions of the proposed NRSA are very poor in comparison to the City as a whole, whereby, median income levels in these tracts range from 12,886 to 27,275 less per household, and \$5,597 less to \$33,988 per family. Incomes are even lower compared to the county, state and the U.S.

Ethnic and Racial Changes in Targeted Neighborhoods & Concentrated Areas of Poverty

There have been significant shifts in the ethnic and racial makeup of the targeted neighborhoods—the most significant being in the “some other race” category, which refers to persons identifying as *multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish group (i.e. Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Spanish)*.

Two of the three census tracts, 209 and 210.02, are considered Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs). The third R/ECAP designated tract is outside of the proposed NRSA, but has recently been designated a Federal Opportunity Zone designation.

Transit

The NRSA is bisected by State Street (NYS Route 5), which serves as the main car and bus transportation route within the City, handling over 11,000 vehicular trips per day on average within the NRSA. Transit related statistics reflect the high rates of poverty/low-income levels of the residents living in the targeted area. Census data reports that a working individual household living within the NRSA spends an estimated 61.3% (tract 208) and 58.3% of income (tracts 209 and 210.02) on housing and transportation costs. A single parent family household spends an estimated 75% and 66% respectively of its income on housing and transportation costs.

Employment and Educational Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Labor reports unemployment in the City of Schenectady is 4.8% (August 2018). Historically, unemployment rate within the targeted census tracts have been much higher. U.S. Census American Community Survey 2012-2016 projections for the proposed NRSA are roughly 3% greater than the rate that was projected for the City.

The Capital Region of New York is home to over 20 colleges and universities, and over 17,000 people work for major employers (companies or organizations with over 400 employees) located in the City. There are no major employers specifically located within the boundaries of the NRSA. Most employment and economic activity occur at small restaurants, retail and convenience stores located along the State Street/Albany Street corridor. Poverty, illiteracy and lack of educational attainment are the high among residents of the proposed NRSA; these factors and lack of transportation resources limit opportunities for stable employment.

Critical Housing Challenges

Housing conditions are poor throughout the City of Schenectady, with the majority of the housing stock having been constructed during the early part of the 20th century. Substandard conditions and vacancy rates within the NRSA exceed those found in other parts of the City, as well as the county, state and nation. Vacancy rates are high, homeownership rates are low and a significant number of households, are severely burdened by housing costs.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Housing Opportunities

Potential housing projects currently in the pipeline that may be considered for NRSA allocations include:

Demolition of Vacant Properties & Housing Rehab

The Capital Region Land Bank is providing additional financial resources within the NRSA to encourage housing rehab opportunities for homebuyers of all income levels. Local housing providers continue to pursue funding for rehabilitation of substandard units and acquisition of derelict properties resulting in new home ownership by low/mod income households.

Hillside View Phase 2

The Community Builders are planning further demolitions and development of new affordable housing in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood, as the second phase of a proposed \$40 million neighborhood revitalization project.

Better Neighborhood Inc.

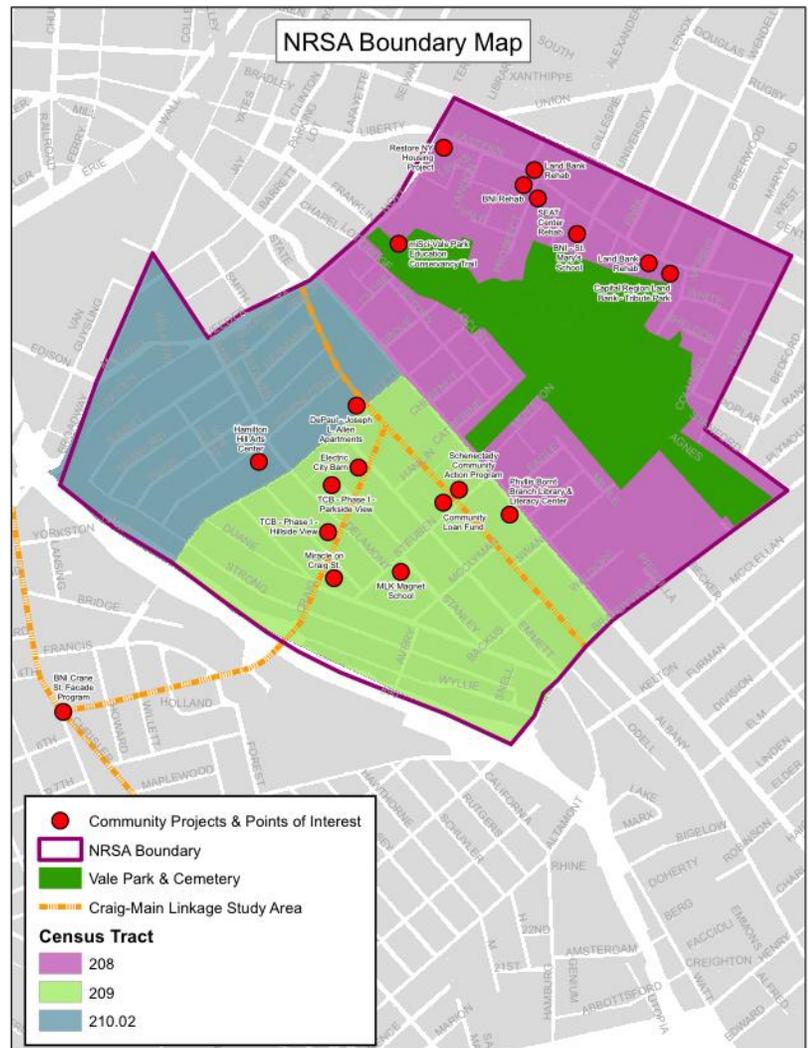
For nearly 50 years, Better Neighborhoods Inc. has improved the quality of life in for citizens in the City by rehabilitating and building homes in Schenectady. Their goal is to increase homeownership for low-to-moderate income individuals in Schenectady.

St. Mary's School Renaissance Square

Home Leasing, LLC and **Better Neighborhoods, Inc.(BNI)** propose the use of low income tax credits for the redevelopment of the former St. Mary's School in the Eastern Avenue neighborhood. Vacant buildings are to be demolished and replaced with new apartments and commercial/retail space.

NRSA 5-year housing goals include:

30 demolitions, 80 new construction and 80 rehabilitation units, 30 market rate units, 15 homeownership units,with approximately 140 Low Income Housing Credits.



Economic Opportunities

The City also plans to fund programs that will result in increased economic opportunity for NRSA residents. Targeted populations for employment goals include youth aged 16-24, and adults living in the NRSA. The City anticipates creating/retaining jobs in construction and related trades through NRSA investments and jobs for local artisans and small businesses. Entities with programming that meets this criteria include, but are not limited to:

City of Schenectady AAO Section 3 Training Program
The Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region
The Electric City Barn
The Social Enterprise and Training Center (SEAT Center)

Other planned (non-housing) economic development initiatives in the NRSA include:

CDTC Linkage Study/Complete Streets Plan

The City will create a detailed master plan that can be used as the basis of future engineering and construction projects in the Hamilton Hill and Mont Pleasant neighborhoods, addressing vehicular traffic patterns in areas undergoing revitalization efforts, and the need for infrastructure to ensure pedestrian and bicycle safety.

MiSci (Museum of Science and Innovation) -Vale Park Education & Conservancy Trail

This project includes a nature trail connecting miSci and Vale Park, pedestrian paths with interpretive signage and outdoor classroom – improving accessibility and attracting visitors.

National Grid SMART Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) Demonstration Project

Approximately 4,200 streetlights will be replaced with advanced LED lights retrofitted with controls and smart city technologies. Upgrades will improve asset management capabilities and City operations by enabling real-time data analytics and lighting controls.

Tribute Park Phase 2

Community members, with the help of local philanthropic groups and business sponsors, continue to raise funds to install playground and fitness equipment at the new Tribute Park.

Miracle on Craig Street

This is a grassroots effort by neighborhood residents to restore and re-open the closed Carver Community Center on 846 State Street in Hamilton Hill.

Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP)

Works with at-risk families located in the service areas to ensure long term goals of stable permanent housing and self-reliance.

The Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge

The Schenectady Foundation, leads this initiative, and with its partners, pledges up to \$100,000 to support neighborhood revitalization projects proposed by City residents.

NRSA GOALS & LEVERAGED FUNDING SOURCES

Goals (outcomes) for the proposed NRSA include: reduced vacancy rates and blight; increased rates of homeownership, increased rates of educational attainment and employment; increased home values and an increased household median income. Proposed leveraged resources for projects and programs funded through the NRSA plan may include, but are not limited to:

- Federal and New York State grants and financial incentives
- Cash, grants or in-kind resources pledged by HUD- funded recipients or project partners
- Capital Region Land Bank in-kind resources and matching grant funds
- City of Schenectady in-kind resources
- Local and regional private foundations
- Other private and public resources as available

PUBLIC ACCESS TO UNABRIDGED NRSA PLAN

This is a summary of the complete NRSA designation proposal, which is being prepared for submission as per HUD guidelines as an amendment to the City's 2018 Annual Action Plan. The full proposal includes detailed statistical data and additional information on community assets and current investments in the proposed NRSA. An electronic copy of the full plan is available at www.cityofscheneectady.com. Printed copies will be made available for viewing at the following locations in the City of Schenectady: City Hall, Room 14 at 105 Jay Street; the Hamilton Hill Arts Center at 409 Schenectady Street; the Phyllis Bornt Library Branch at 948 State Street; and the Electric City Barn at 400 Craig Street.