

Acknowledgements

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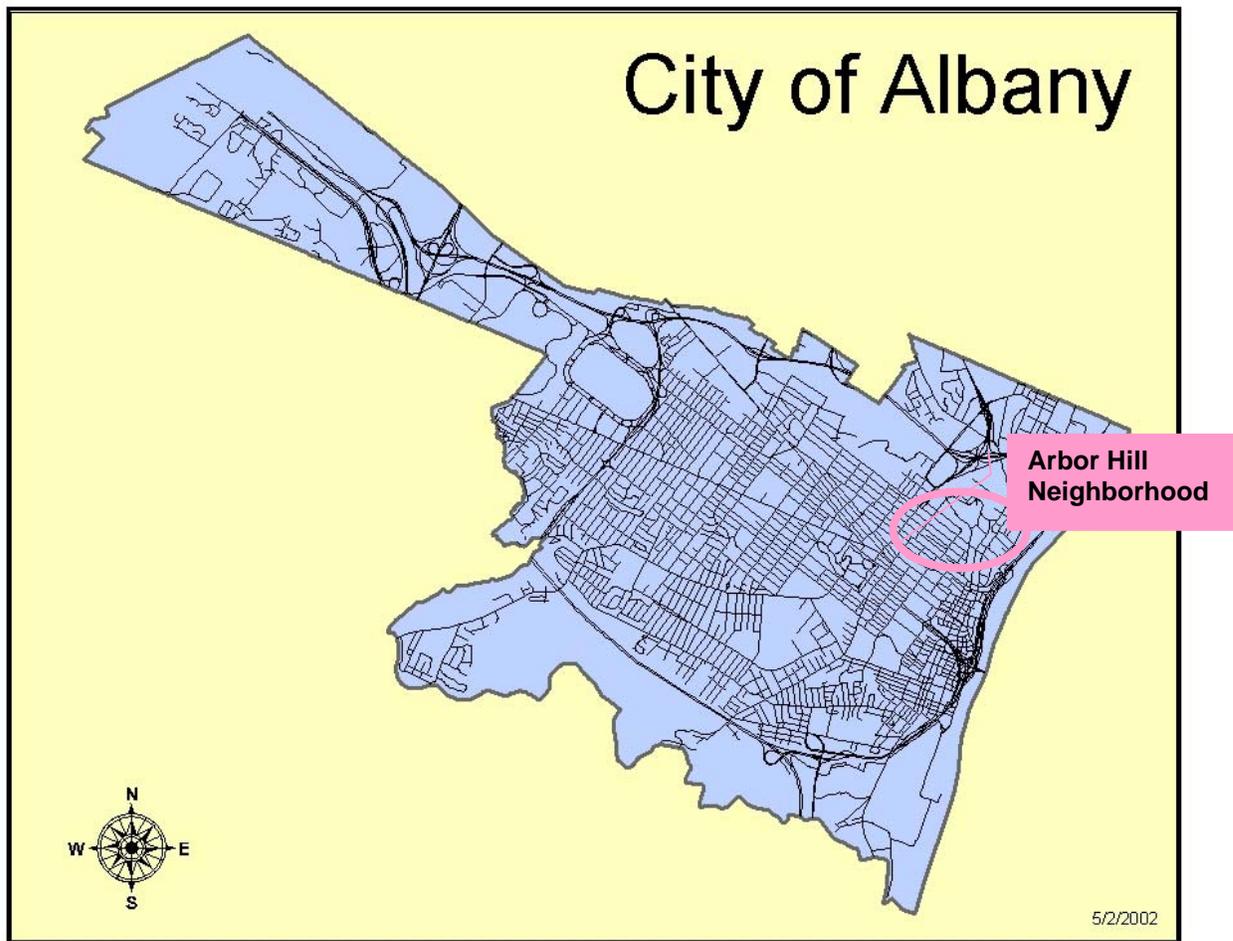
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Arbor Hill Neighborhood

Existing Conditions



October 2002

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Executive Summary

Arbor Hill is an older urban area located in the northeastern section of the City of Albany. Sheridan Hollow and Ten Broeck Triangle are two smaller neighborhoods within the larger area. There are three neighborhood associations: Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens, Sheridan Hollow, and the Ten Broeck Neighborhood Associations.

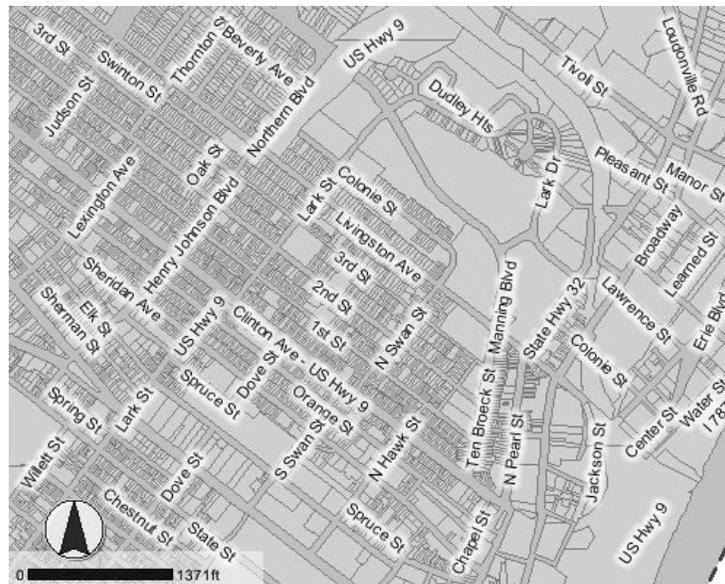
Arbor Hill is primarily a residential area with few commercial services and no employment centers. Arbor Hill has several historic districts and outstanding structures and streetscapes in the Ten Broeck Triangle, and along Lark Street and Clinton Avenue.

The southern half (south of Livingston) of the neighborhood is closest to the center of Albany. It was developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, mostly with one to three family homes on urban lots. What remains of a formerly vital urban neighborhood is a mixed bag of maintained homes, run down structures, vacant buildings, small overgrown lots and too frequent evidence of abandoned real estate.

The northern neighborhood area is more like a new town. It was developed on larger land parcels created under an urban renewal plan of the 1960s. This area contains a fire station, the Whitney M. Young Health Center, Arbor Hill Elementary School, and large housing complexes. Almost half the neighborhood population lives in this northern area.

The 2000 US Census reported a total neighborhood population of 5,491 persons. 77% are black, 14% white, and 7% Hispanic. Indicators of distress in neighborhood demographics include higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and young residents within the population. Most of the housing is rental. The owner occupancy rate is 22%, compared to a citywide rate of 38%.

Arbor Hill has been designated for improvement by social and economic development programs sponsored by federal and state agencies, including the Community Development Block Grant, Enterprise Community, and Empire Zone programs. There have been several attempts at redevelopment and revitalization in the past. The Northern Boulevard Redevelopment Plan (1989), Gateway Commons and Partnership Homes Initiative by the Urban League (c. 1998) and proposed North Swan Street Redevelopment (2001) are examples.



Arbor Hill Neighborhood Boundaries

I. Location

A. Arbor Hill Neighborhood Boundary

The Arbor Hill neighborhood covers approximately 200 acres in the City of Albany beginning at Broadway on the east and Henry Johnson Boulevard on the west. The elevation change between central Albany and Sheridan Hollow creates a natural separation between Arbor Hill and areas to the south. Topography, highway and railroad corridors create a natural boundary the north.

B. Context within City of Albany and Capital Region

Arbor Hill is north and north west of the City’s central business district. Central Avenue is a regional commercial spine that begins in Albany and ends in the City of Schenectady. West of Arbor Hill are dense urban residential neighborhoods. Directly north is North Albany with a mixture of industrial and residential uses. East of Arbor Hill is I-787, a regional highway that provides north-south bound traffic between southern Albany and the City of Cohoes. I-787 is located directly west of the Hudson River and serves to separate Arbor Hill and the City in general from the river.

The City of Albany is part of the Capital Region, encompassing four central cities and surrounding communities. The region’s assets include high quality air and water resources, open space and recreational opportunities, a convenient transportation network, excellent educational and cultural facilities, and proximity to other major cities. The economy is primarily rooted in government, wholesaling, retailing, and services. Like other communities across the nation, there has been a gradual shift away from manufacturing to a service-based economy.

The City of Albany is approximately 150 miles north of New York City, 215 miles south of Montreal, 165 miles west of Boston, and 290 miles east of Buffalo.

Capital District Minor Civil Divisions



Prepared by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission

C. Proximate employment, recreation, shopping, and cultural centers

Albany is the capital of New York State and host to government agencies, legislative operations, and accessory economies. Albany is also a regional center for banking, health care, and manufacturing. The central city of Albany is 1 mile from Arbor Hill. It contains the Empire State Plaza and State Capitol and is a regional center for office space.

Like other neighborhoods in Albany, Arbor Hill does not contain a major grocery store – such stores are located along Central Avenue in the City or on major routes in the suburbs. New York Grocery is a recently opened medium-sized grocery store on Henry Johnson Boulevard that offers a smaller selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, and other convenience items.

The closest large grocery store to Arbor Hill is the Price Chopper on Delaware Avenue in Albany (@1 mile). “Super center” grocery stores are to the west and north. The closest are Westgate Plaza and Hannaford Plaza on Central Avenue (about 2 miles from Arbor Hill). Compare Market on Quail Street in West Hill is also nearby.

Strip commercial retail development is located along Washington Avenue and Central Avenue, beginning just south of Arbor Hill and continuing west. The southern end of Lark Street is another commercial corridor adjacent to Arbor Hill. The closest stores are on Lark Street and Central Avenue (Townsend Park) as near as .25 miles for residents on the south side of Arbor Hill (Sheridan Hollow) and as far as 2 miles for those on the north end. There is strip retail development on Northern Boulevard near Memorial Hospital about 1 mile from residents in the northern edge of the neighborhood. Farther away are neighborhood commercial establishments along Delaware Avenue. The large area shopping malls are 5 or so miles to the west located on the outskirts of Albany.

Businesses in Arbor Hill are limited and are scattered in Sheridan Hollow and along Broadway Avenue. The Albany Center for Economic Success is located on Orange Street and is the only business incubator in the City.

Albany is a center for cultural life and there are cultural outlets - museums, libraries, theatre – near Arbor Hill. Several large public parks are a short drive or a longer walk including Washington Park, Tivoli Park, the Corning Preserve on the Hudson River, and Swinburne Park. Smaller recreational spaces are interspersed throughout the community and provide open space and recreational opportunities to the community.

D. Vehicle and pedestrian linkages to and through the neighborhood

Four roads – Henry Johnson Boulevard, Lark Street, Pearl Street, Broadway, and Clinton Avenue - connect Arbor Hill to other areas of the city including downtown Albany, and commercial and retail destinations.

The Ten Broeck area is easily accessible on foot or by vehicle from downtown Albany. Ten Broeck is adjacent to North Pearl Street and Broadway and you can walk south into the City’s downtown in minutes (less than .5 miles). This puts the neighborhood within walking distance of major employers (State, finance), cultural centers (Palace Theatre, Capital Repertory Company, Quackenbush Square), and the Corning Preserve. Clinton Avenue is a major east/ west road with sidewalks on both sides that provides this linkage to downtown and the rest of the city.

Sheridan Hollow is directly north of Central Avenue, a major corridor through Albany. Central Avenue is accessible from Sheridan Hollow by foot and vehicle via Henry Johnson Boulevard.

The Northern portion of Arbor Hill is more remote for an urban area. I-90 forms a northern boundary and cuts off access. The area is 2 miles or more from Central Avenue and downtown Albany. Residents typically need to drive or take public transportation to reach employment and shopping.

II. Neighborhood Description

A. Neighborhood Development History

The name Arbor Hill was given to the area because the land sloped upward from the Hudson River. Most of the neighborhood - north of Clinton Avenue and east of Henry Johnson Boulevard - was developed between 1825 and the turn of the century by the wealthy Van Rensselaer family in a grid street pattern. Arbor Hill served as a home to industrialists, business owners, and lumber barons conducting commerce stemming from the Erie Canal. Later, emergence of the City as a major transfer point for east-west shipping increased the demand for residential and commercial construction. Greek revival and early Italianate predominate as the architectural styles of the neighborhood. Arbor Hill is said to have been a major stopover point for the Underground Railroad in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The neighborhood's historic fabric has eroded in the last 50 years as suburbanization, aging structures and facilities, the automobile, and construction of regional highways have taken a toll.

B. Sub-neighborhoods

Two sub-neighborhoods within Arbor Hill have established an independent identity. Sheridan Hollow is the southern side of Arbor Hill encompassing roughly all the area south of Clinton Avenue. It is the area closest to Lark Street and Central Avenue. This area includes the length of Sheridan Avenue and Orange Street within Arbor Hill.



Ten Broeck Triangle Playground

Sheridan Hollow got its name from the steep topography on the south separating Arbor Hill from Washington and Central Avenues in Albany. This area has a population of approximately 800. The streets are narrow and in a grid pattern. Development dates to the 19th century. There are still many row structures providing apartments and single unit dwellings. Lark Street is the only area with an historic designation within Sheridan Hollow. The Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association represents the interests of this sub-neighborhood.

The Ten Broeck Triangle is another distinct sub-neighborhood in Arbor Hill. This area roughly coincides with the Ten Broeck National Register Historic District and has an outstanding architectural quality. (See Ten Broeck photo, left). Most of the former ornate row house mansions are now multi-unit rental properties. Deterioration is a real threat to many of the buildings. There is a Ten Broeck Triangle Neighborhood Association.

C. Population characteristics: household composition, race, sex, age, income, employment

The boundaries of Arbor Hill overlay with the boundaries of US Census Tract 2. The 2000 census for the area provides a snapshot of population characteristics. (see attached tables as well).

Arbor Hill Population Character (2000 U.S. Census)

2000 Population	5491 [from 6167 in 1990]
Black	4218 (77%)
White	814 (15%)
Hispanic	401 (7.4%)
Persons Under the age of 18	1900 (35%)
Persons over 65	534 (9.7%)
Median Household Income (1999 data)	\$16,222 [vs. \$42,935 in Albany County]
Households in poverty (1999 data)	34.8% [vs. 10.6% in Albany County]
Over 16 in labor force	56.8% [vs. 65.8% in Albany County]
Unemployment	10.4% [vs. 6.8% in Albany County]

The neighborhood population has decreased over the last decade. This is a consistent trend in Troy and Schenectady as well. Arbor Hill has a concentrated minority population where 84.4% are either black or Hispanic. The neighborhood has a high percentage of persons under 18 years of age. Compared to Albany County, Arbor Hill had slightly higher rates of foreign born but not new residents, and residents who moved from elsewhere in New York State in the last 5 years.

The income data describing household characteristics display a population living in poverty in both absolute and relative terms. Neighborhood median incomes are strikingly low compared to the surrounding county, and the poverty rate is very high. The poverty rate is even higher for households with children under 18 at 42.8%.

Unemployment (10.4%) is higher than in the surrounding county (6.8%) but not outstanding. Despite the neighborhood’s proximity to managerial, professional and government jobs in downtown Albany, the 2000 Census portrays neighborhood residents who commute by car or bus to employment elsewhere in Albany County. Neighborhood residents tend to be employed in traditionally lower paying sectors. 30% of residents worked in the service sector (2000 US Census) as compared to 14% of all Albany County employed persons. 25% are professional and managerial, compared to 42% countywide. Only 20% worked in government compared to 28% countywide.

The population data can be broken down further into Arbor Hill’s four block groups. Block group 1 covers everything north of Livingston Avenue. Block group 2 encompasses Second Street to Livingston Avenue. Block group 3 lies between Clinton and Second Street, and Block group 4 lies between Clinton and Sheridan Avenues.

Data displays that half of the neighborhood population lives north of Livingston Avenue in Block group 1- primarily in the Ida Yarborough and Skyline Gardens complexes. In Block group 1, 85% of housing units are rented, which is even higher than in the neighborhood overall (79%).

The highest owner occupancy rate (35%) in Arbor Hill is in the area along Livingston Avenue south to North Second in Block Group 2. This is an area where many affordable infill housing projects were developed in the last 15 years with state and federal subsidies and private development partners. Owner occupancy in Block Group 3 containing the Arbor Hill Historic District (Ten Broeck) is 22%, which is equal to that of the rest of Arbor Hill.

Neighborhood Demographics by Block Group

Block Group	Location	Population	Owner Occupancy Rate	Rental Housing Rate
1	North of Livingston Avenue	2534	15%	85%
2	Second Street to Livingston	730	35%	65%
3	Clinton to Second Street	1436	22%	78%
4	(Sheridan Hollow) Sheridan to Clinton	791	23%	77%

D. Land Use

Arbor Hill is primarily a residential area, with commercial uses located along Clinton Avenue, Henry Johnson Boulevard, Lark Street and Swan Street. Most of the area south of Livingston Avenue was developed with one to three family attached, semi-attached and detached residences with lots measuring approximately 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep (2500 sf). Today, many vacant lots disrupt the streetscapes; these are the result of demolition of hazardous structures.

In contrast, the area north of Livingston Avenue has an auto dependent, new town character. Large apartment complexes, an elementary school, and a health center were developed as part of urban renewal plans starting in the 1970’s.

1. Residential

The 2000 US Census reports that Arbor Hill has 2914 housing units. 639 or 28% of those units are vacant due to turn over or abandonment. 42.9% of units were built before 1939 and less than 10% of units were built after 1990. Most housing in the neighborhood is within structures containing 2 to 9 units. Only 17% of units are single family home within large apartment buildings co



Pieter Schuyler Court, owner –occupied housing.



The Capital Woods complex resulted from redevelopment of the former Dudley Apartments with a \$15 million investment.

The area south of Livingston Avenue is developed with one to three unit homes. Over the years, many structures have been demolished as they have deteriorated beyond repair. In many cases vacant lots remain. But there have been several infill housing projects that have resulted in new housing construction at an urban density to fill in the voids left by demolition. These rows of housing (1 to 2 family structures) built after 1980 are scattered along Livingston Avenue, Lark Street, First Street and other areas.

North of Livingston Avenue there are 4 large apartment complexes built after 1950. Robert Whalen Homes and Ida Yarborough are traditional public housing complexes managed by the Albany Housing Authority. Capital Woods is a newly reconstructed complex owned by a limited partnership created by the Albany Housing Authority. Skyline Gardens is privately owned. The Housing Authority and Skyline Gardens report a low vacancy rate at these properties.

Seventy historic row buildings on Clinton Avenue, some contiguous, some not, were redeveloped in the mid-80s with public and private funding. This ambitious Clinton Avenue project involved construction of streetscape amenities, off-street infill parking lots, and 216 rental units. The project has had ongoing financial and management challenges evidenced by several bankruptcies and a number of owners over the last 15 years. It is currently rented but the vacancy rate is in the range of 30% and turnover is high. These properties have had substantial renovation in the last five years and more work is planned.



Lighter parcels along Livingston Avenue and Lark Drive denote large apartment complexes.



Clinton Avenue rehabilitated apartment units.

Apartment Complexes and Owner

Name and Address	Owner	Number of Units/Type	Occupancy Descriptions	Vacancy Rate
Robert Whalen Homes North Lark Street	Albany Housing Authority (AHA)	108 family units	Public housing	5%
Ida Yarborough High and Low-rise Livingston Avenue and North Pearl	AHA	353 units family and single adult	Public housing	3%
Capital Woods (formerly Dudley Heights) Lark Drive	Limited partnership	140 family	Private	0%
Skyline Gardens Livingston Avenue	Private	80 units family	Private	3%
Clinton Avenue (70 buildings)	Private (CPC)	216 units	Private	30%

2. Vacant Buildings and Lots

In September 2002, Historic Albany, Community Builders and the City of Albany compiled an inventory of 179 abandoned buildings between Henry Johnson Boulevard, Orange Street, North Manning Boulevard, and Broadway. This is 12% of structures in the area.

Abandoned buildings are scattered in Arbor Hill south of Colonie Street. Most of the buildings are row type structures containing apartments. Only 33 of the buildings had any commercial space in them and one was a church. (See Abandoned Buildings section for more information).

Private individuals owned one hundred thirty-eight (138) of the abandoned buildings. No single private entity was listed as owner of more than three or four properties. Only 7 properties were owned by private mortgage finance companies. Twelve (12) buildings were owned by nonprofits; including five owned by the City’s Albany Community Development Agency. Twenty-nine were owned by Albany County.

A comparison between ownership in September 2002 to ownership in April 2001 found that 74 of the 179 buildings changed hands over that 18-month period. Albany County was a party to forty-one (41) of the transfers. Nineteen of the buildings were sold by the County to private individuals. The County took ownership of 22 buildings over the period, presumably the result of a foreclosure action.

There are 100 to 150 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill considered to be abandoned. These are suitable for reuse or ongoing maintenance and are not currently used for parking, yard space, or designated for construction. Albany County or private individuals own most of the lands. The vast majority of these properties are classified as unimproved, residential lands. These lots are scattered in all areas south of Colonie Street. Many remain from demolition.

3. Parks and Recreational Facilities

The neighborhood has notable recreational programs including: a City operated Community Center and pool (attached to the New Covenant Charter School built on Lark and First Streets in 2001), and baseball fields run by the Kids Improvement District on North Lark Street (operated by the YMCA in 2002).

Recreational Resources Serving Arbor Hill

Name	Programming	Operator
Community Center at New Covenant North Lark Street	Pool, gym	City of Albany
Arbor Hill Community Center North Lark Street	Youth Programs operated by Trinity Institute	Trinity Institute
Kids Improvement District Manning Blvd. below Lark Drive	Basketball courts, tennis courts, ball fields	City
Arbor Hill Courts 73 N. Swan Street	Basketball courts	City
Lark Park	youth baseball leagues, basketball, tennis	YMCA

2 Lark Street	courts, ball fields	
Oak Street Playground Oak and Second Streets	Playground	City
Bayhill Park Sheridan and Dove Streets	Wading pool, playground	City
Livingston Community Center 315 Northern Blvd.	Pool, fields, gym, game room, weight room	City
Livingston Ball Field Northern Blvd.	Fields	City
Livingston & Lake Playground Livingston and Lake Streets	Wading pool, playground, basketball courts	City
Wilkie Playground Colonie and Lark Streets	Wading pool, playground, and basketball courts	City
Playground at Ten Broeck Triangle	playground	City

Recreational Resources Near Arbor Hill

Washington Park Bounded by Madison Avenue, State and Willett Streets and Lake Avenue	Fields, gardens, ampitheatre, playground, carriage paths	City
Tivoli Park Entrances at Judson Street and Manning Blvd.	Nature sighting, birdwatching, swimming in lake	City
Swinburne Park Clinton Ave. & Manning Blvd.	Wading pool, ice skating, playground, basketball courts, ball fields	City

4. Stores and Retail Services

A shortage of and variety of quality neighborhood commercial businesses is common among Albany’s residential neighborhoods regardless of income. Retail shopping and services within Arbor Hill are limited. Clinton Avenue, Henry Johnson Boulevard, and North Swan Street, zoned C-1 to accommodate commerce, include neighborhood retail uses. Stewart’s Convenience Store and Dunkin’ Donuts on Henry Johnson Boulevard are chain stores in Arbor Hill. Rite Aid Drug Store was there until Spring 2002 when corporate problems forced its closing. In September 2002, 14 of 29 businesses were categorized as grocery or convenience stores. There were also 5 hair salons and 1 beauty supply store.

Shopping and Services in Arbor Hill (September 2002)

Name	Address	Type
Sanitary Barber Shop	59 N. Swan St	Hair
V.J. Franze and Sons Market	51-53 N. Swan St	Grocery

A & M Grocery	32 N. Swan St	Grocery
Keith's Bait and Tackle Store	101 1/2 Clinton Ave	Convenience
R & J Grocery and Deli	277 Clinton Ave	Convenience
AKA New York Supermarket	184 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Stop and Shop	21 Lark St	Convenience
Colonie Market	188 Colonie St	Convenience
The Silver Slipper	97 Henry Johnson Blvd	Bar
Kenneth's Tastebud	177 Henry Johnson Blvd	Restaurant
Roy's Caribbean	185 Northern Blvd	Restaurant
Stewart's	202 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
NU "UZ" Salon	176 Henry Johnson Blvd	Hair
Boulevard Grocery/ Golden Fried Chicken	139 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Taysha Florist	191 Henry Johnson Blvd	Florist
Clinton Ave Grocery	153 Clinton Ave	Convenience
Star Market	203 Livingston Ave	Convenience
Hair Fashion by Roma	180 Clinton Ave	Hair
Modern Barber Shop	152 Clinton Ave	Hair
Barber Shop (No Name)	Eastern Corner of Swan and Livingston	Hair
Corner Store (No Name)	157 Henry Johnson Blvd	Convenience
Dunkin' Donuts	201 Henry Johnson Blvd	Fast Food
Advantage Limo	139 Lark St	Limo Service
Shahnee's Caribbean	127 Lark St	Caterer
Michigan Market	108 Lark St	Convenience
Cell Phone Store (No Name)	275 Clinton Ave	Retail
ARED	273 Clinton Ave	Beauty Supply
Tailorama	178 Clinton Ave	Dry Cleaner
New York Grocery	155 Henry Johnson Blvd.	Grocery

5. Institutional (Healthcare, Education, Childcare, Churches, Social Service Agencies)

a. *Healthcare*

Healthcare in Arbor Hill is available at Whitney M. Young Community Health Center and Memorial Hospital on the fringe of Arbor Hill. The Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center is dedicated to the health and well being of infants, adolescents and adults. The Health Center was founded in 1971 to provide comprehensive health and dental services to the residents of Arbor Hill and North Albany. Providing services to a variety of patients from the cities of Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady, Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center today offers a wide range of health services and special programs on an outpatient basis. The center is on Arbor Drive. There is also a Family Alcoholism & Chemical Dependency Treatment Service (FACTS) on Lark Drive.

Albany Memorial Hospital is a 165-bed facility located at 600 Northern Boulevard. It has been located in Albany since 1868, and at its present location on Northern Boulevard since 1957. Albany Memorial Hospital was recently named as one of the *100 Top Hospitals'* Intensive Care Units.

These healthcare institutions are within walking distance and are also sources of employment for the neighborhood.

b. Education

The neighborhood is within the geographical area served by Arbor Elementary School, a public school at 1 Arbor Drive. School enrollment as of May 31, 2001 was 541 students and 100% of children were free lunch eligible. The 4th grade English passage rate was 21%; the math rate was 36% in 2000 (Source: Times Union School Report Card). The school is composed primarily of students from the immediate vicinity with lower turnover than other elementary schools within the district.

The Albany City School District offers an open enrollment policy for students to attend other elementary schools within the district if parents so choose. The guidelines stipulate that the child going to a different school cannot displace a child from the neighborhood where the school is located, nor upset the racial balance within the school. An estimated 25 requests to move students to a different school under this policy were granted in 2001. This policy will continue with the federally mandated ‘No Child Left Behind’ program set to start in 2002-3. Students from

Arbor Hill can also participate in the lotteries used to determine enrollment in the City’s 3 magnet schools. Livingston Middle School (786 students) at 315 Northern Boulevard and Albany High School provide public secondary education for students from Arbor Hill.



Arbor Hill is host to one of the State’s first charter schools. The New Covenant Charter School (see photo) was chartered in 2000 and moved to a new building (50 N. Lark Street) in September 2001. The school provides K-6 education. Enrollment of over 800 is expected in 2002-3. Students from anywhere in the Albany City School District can apply for admission at New Covenant. There is also a

New Covenant Charter School on Lark Street

second charter school (Brighter Choice) that opened in Albany in the fall of 2002 and neighborhood students can participate in a lottery for those spots as well.

St. Casimir Regional Catholic School at 309 Sheridan Avenue and Blessed Sacrament on Central Avenue are Catholic schools nearby providing K-8 education.

The Albany Public Library main branch is located on Washington Avenue adjacent to Arbor Hill. It is within walking distance for residents of Sheridan Hollow, but far from northern Arbor Hill and the Ten Broeck Triangle.

c. Childcare

Arbor Hill residents rely on family, home care or daycare centers within the neighborhood. Demographics indicate a need among the population for 716 childcare spots. A severe shortage of licensed care, convenient to Arbor Hill, is demonstrated (from an analysis conducted in a 2001 grant application for a daycare center at Capital Woods). Robin and Masterson daycare centers have also recently closed, exacerbating the problem in the area.

Daycare Facilities in Arbor Hill

Daycare Facility	Children Enrolled
Beginnings 25 Monroe St.	74 children/ 25 with special needs

Club Fed N. Pearl St.	75
Arbor Park 96 Second St.	68
Downtown Daycare Center 110 N. Pearl St.	40

Total 257

There were nine family care homes as of 11/30/00. These offer an estimated 221 spaces for infants, toddlers, and pre-k children. There is a full day pre-k program at Arbor Hill Elementary School.

There are several childcare centers south of Arbor Hill in the central part of the city and in downtown available to and used by Arbor Hill families. These families also use childcare around the region depending upon their commuting patterns.

Head Start is a federal program managed by Albany County Opportunity, Inc. for preschool children from low-income families. The program provides comprehensive health, dental, mental health, education and family services. Parent training classes are offered on child rearing, health, and nutrition. Assistance is provided for parents wanting to earn their GED, learn to read, English, or in obtaining job training.

d. Churches

There are a number of churches and storefront ministries in Arbor Hill and nearby West Hill serving neighborhood residents.

Churches and Ministries, March 2002

Name	Address
New Life Revelation	252 Orange Street
Victory Christian Church	118 Quail Street
Triumphant Fellowship Ministry	150 Sherman Street
Apostolic Gospel Church	101 First Street
Mount Moriah Baptist Church	269 Spruce Street
Metropolitan New Testament Missionary Baptist Church	105 Second Street
Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church	236 No. Pearl Street
Bethany Baptist	59 Second Street
Grace Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church	Corner Clinton & Ten Broeck Streets
Christian Memorial Church of God in Christ	381 Sheridan Ave
The First Church in Albany	110 North Pearl Street
St. Casimir's Church	309 Sheridan Ave
Church of God in Prophecy	57 Lexington Ave
Arbor Hill Church of God in Christ	40 Lark Street
Revelation Church of God in Christ	248 Orange Street
New Covenant Christian Fellowship	165 Clinton Ave
Sojourner Truth AME Zion Church	351 Livingston Ave
New Jerusalem Home of the Saved Church	160 Sheridan Ave

Evangelical Protestant Church

Clinton Ave

e. Social Service Agencies

The neighborhood has many families and individual residents eligible for social services available through State, County, and City governments, non-profits, and institutions. While many of these providers are located in other areas of the City, particularly on Central Avenue, Washington Avenue or downtown Albany, or in a few cases in outlying areas, several service agencies are housed in right in the neighborhood.

Social Services Agencies Located in Arbor Hill, June 2002

Agency Name	Address	Mission
Arbor Hill Community Center	Lark Street (firehouse)	Youth programs
Albany Boys and Girls Club Satellite	Ida Yarborough Complex	Youth programs
Albany County Head Start	Robert Whalen Homes	Early Childhood Enrichment
United Tenants of Albany	33 Clinton Ave	Tenant Advocacy
Historic Albany Foundation	81 Lexington Ave (West Hill)	Historic preservation
Capital District Community Loan Fund	255 Orange Street	Community development financing
Albany Guardian Society Home	553 Clinton Ave	Adult assisted living home
Arbor House Day Treatment Program	340 First Street	Case management for women 16-21 involved in legal system
Arts Councils	19 Clinton Avenue	Assistance to artists and arts organizations, arts advocacy
Mercy House	12 St. Joseph Terrace	Emergency shelter for women and children
Circle of Hope	454 N. Pearl Street	Counseling, therapy for troubled adolescents
Albany County Community Services Board for Mental Health	245 Lark Street	County operated mental health outpatient clinical services
Employee Ownership Project	340 First Street	Business, legal, and technical assistance to low income entrepreneurs
Grace and Holy Innocents	498 Clinton Avenue	Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen
First Church in Albany Food Pantry	110 N. Pearl Street	Food Pantry, counseling, referral
Healthy Capital District Initiative Covering Kids	315 Sheridan Avenue	
Food Pantries for the Capital District	340 First Street	Coordination of food distribution to shelters
Hope House Adult Residential Program	261 N Pearl Street	Long term substance abuse treatment
NAACP	93 Livingston Avenue	Minority rights advocacy
Everly Cromwell Community Center	Ida Yarborough High Rise 260 N Pearl Street	Senior counseling, information and referrals

Trinity Institution- Homer Perkins Center	76-82 Second Street	Drug treatment residential program, HIV, group and family counseling
Whitney M. Young HIV Program	Lark and Arbor Drives	Case management, counseling, education
With a Little Help from My Friends	226 Clinton Avenue	Furniture, clothing exchange and bartering
Women, Infant, Child Programs (WIC)	Lark and Arbor Drives	

Housing Related Institutions

Arbor Hill Development Corporation	241 Clinton Avenue	Housing Development Corp.
Albany Housing Coalition	278 Clinton Avenue	Affordable Housing Development and Management
St. Joseph’s Housing Corporation	341 Clinton Avenue	Housing
Albany Community Development Agency	200 Henry Johnson Boulevard	Housing, economic development, neighborhood improvement
Albany Community Land Trust	341 First Street	Homeownership counseling, purchase/lease opportunities

E. Existing Regulation Affecting Use of Property

1. Zoning

The zoning in Arbor Hill implies a neighborhood comprised of residential areas served by three primary commercial districts.

The northern section of Arbor Hill is primarily zoned R-3A multi-family low-density residential. Permitted uses include garden apartments, single and two-family detached dwellings, and houses of worship. The central part of Arbor Hill between Henry Johnson Boulevard and N. Swan Street is zoned R-2A. Permitted uses include single and two family detached dwellings and houses of worship.

R-2B- one and two-family medium density residential zoning is located in the southern part of Arbor Hill extending from Henry Johnson Boulevard to N. Pearl Street. R-2B includes R-2A permitted uses and also permits semi-detached dwellings, and single and two-family rowhouses.

An R-4 multifamily high-rise residential district is located between Manning Blvd. and N. Pearl Street bounded by Lark Drive on the north and Livingston Avenue on the south. Principal permitted uses are multifamily/ high-rise dwellings, garden apartments, and two-family rowhouses.

North Swan Street and Henry Johnson Boulevard are designated C-1 Neighborhood commercial districts. C-1 is characterized by mixed-use commercial and residential spaces, with the commercial space meant to primarily serve the surrounding neighborhood.

A C-3 district (central business district) is located on North Pearl Street in the eastern portion of Arbor Hill and includes C-1 permitted uses as well as a number of commercial and office type facilities. A C-M- light industrial

district is located between S. Swan and N. Hawk (east to west boundaries), and Sheridan Avenue and Orange Street (north and south boundaries). Permitted uses include commercial business facilities and light manufacturing.

2. Urban Renewal Designations

Two areas in Arbor Hill have been designated in the past under New York State Law as Urban Renewal Areas to facilitate redevelopment.

Henry Johnson Boulevard (Clinton Avenue to Livingston Avenue), was designed for special attention in 1990 (Northern Boulevard Redevelopment Plan, 1989). The plan for this area was to create mixed-use retail and residential development to line the corridor. It was developed after a participatory community planning process in 1989 where alternatives were evaluated and mixed use, urban style development was chosen.

There has been significant development on the boulevard north of Second Street in the last decade in attempts to bring economic development and retail space. The Dunkin' Donuts/Rite Aid Building and Stewart's were retail projects. Gateway Commons, south side between Second and Third Streets, was launched and developed to house a private sector employer. 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard, east side between Third and Livingston, was constructed as office space and now houses the Albany Community Development Agency.

Arbor Hill Project No. 1, 1960's- Bounded on south by Livingston Ave, west by Henry Johnson Boulevard, east by N. Pearl Street, and north by the railroad tracks. It includes Lark Drive, and Manning Drive. This area has been developed with large land uses including Arbor Hill Elementary School, Arbor Hill Firehouse, Skyline Garden Apartment Complex, Ida Yarborough Housing Complex, Whitney M. Young Health Care Center, and Capital Woods Housing Complex (formerly Dudley Heights). This area covers most of census block group one which had a population of 2534 in 2000.

F. Public Bus Transportation and Pedestrian Safety

1. Public Transit and Bus Shelters

The 2000 Census indicates that over 17% of the population relies on public transportation to get back and forth to work. This is over 3 times the Albany County rate. Arbor Hill is served by the Route 8 bus (Arbor Hill-Mount Hope) that travels north-south and provides access to major transportation hubs (such as Washington and Lark). From these major hubs, an Arbor Hill resident can easily reach work, shopping or other commercial destinations- downtown, Central Avenue, Crossgates Mall, Colonie Center, or adjacent communities such as Menands, Troy, Rensselaer or Latham.

Bus shelters are located at the following locations in Arbor Hill:

- North Pearl Street and Livingston Avenue
- Broadway Avenue and Livingston Avenue
- Clinton Avenue and North Pearl Street
- Broadway Avenue and Livingston Avenue
- Livingston Avenue and North Lake Street
- Livingston Avenue and Northern Boulevard (2)
- Henry Johnson Boulevard and Second Street

2. Streets and Sidewalks Infrastructure

Street and Sidewalk condition for most of Arbor Hill is good to fair. There are a handful of specific locations that were identified as needing repair. For much of the project area maintenance is a problem. Litter, broken glass, and weeds on private property and sidewalks contribute to the conclusion that divestment of property is commonplace.

a. Northern Portion of Arbor Hill (North of Livingston Avenue)

The redeveloped portion of Arbor Hill enjoys newer public infrastructure and sidewalks which are all in good condition. Curbs are fully intact. North Pearl Street between Clinton Avenue and Livingston was completely rebuilt in 2001 and features new brick pavers, sidewalks, curbs and pedestrian lighting. Colonie Street’s (east of Lark Street before it turns into N. Swan) roadways and sidewalks are in poor condition. Maintenance is also an issue.

b. Ten Broeck

Sidewalks and streets in the Ten Broeck area are generally in fair condition, with some instances of asphalt patching or cracked sidewalks. Sidewalks are even, and curbs fully intact. Along Ten Broeck Street and Clinton Avenue decorative pavers are also present. North Swan Street has very poor sidewalk and street infrastructure. Sidewalks are missing in places, or asphalted over. The Lark St/ Clinton Avenue intersection is in poor condition with numerous patches, uneven surface. There is a maintenance issue for much of the area. Littering and weeds are present in many parts of the area, adding to a sense of neglect.

c. Sheridan Hollow

Sheridan Hollow generally has fair to poor street and sidewalk conditions. Orange Street (from Chapel Street to Dove Street) has streets and sidewalks in poor condition. Sheridan Avenue from Chapel Street to Henry Johnson Boulevard has generally fair condition street and sidewalks. Maintenance overall is decent here, although there are sections where weeds and litter detract from the appearance of the block.

Henry Johnson Boulevard marks the western boundary of Arbor Hill. The street is in good condition, while the sidewalk is in fair to poor condition. The block between First and Second Street has poor condition sidewalks. Dove and South Swan Street both have fair to poor sidewalk condition. Heavy weeds and blacktop on both sides of the sidewalk are also present.

Fair to Poor Street and Sidewalk Conditions Identified in Arbor Hill, September 2002

Street Segment	Street condition	Sidewalk condition
Orange Street (Lark to N. Hawk)	Poor	Poor
North Swan Street (First to Colonie)	Poor	Poor
Colonie Street (North Swan to Lark)	Good	Poor
Livingston Avenue (Ten Broeck to Henry Johnson)	Excellent (Newly repaved)	Fair to Poor
Dove Street (Sheridan to Clinton)	Fair	Poor
Sheridan Avenue (Henry Johnson to S. Swan)	Fair to Poor	Fair to Poor
Lark Street (Second to Colonie)	Fair to Poor	Fair to Poor
Henry Johnson Blvd. (Sheridan to Livingston)	Fair	Fair to Poor

3. Lighting

Niagara Mohawk is under contract for the supply and maintenance of lighting for the entire City. The main thoroughfares of Clinton Avenue and Henry Johnson Boulevard are both well lit during nighttime hours.

4. Crime and Prevention Tactics

Crime and related issues of drug dealing and gangs are expressed as problems confronting the Arbor Hill community. The Public Safety Department offers general programming and specific initiatives for the neighborhood to address issues such as this. With the combination of law enforcement, fire department resources, and building inspections, the department has made significant improvements in addressing absentee landlords that rent to drug dealers, abandoned houses that are used for criminal activity, and the clean-up of several streets cluttered and littered with debris. The Albany Police Department has also implemented a community-policing program since 1999 that involves the patrol of officers on foot, bike and vehicle on a regular basis through the neighborhood. Creating a visible presence and improving the working relationship between the police department and Arbor Hill residents are primary goals of this program. In addition, the Community Response Unit of the APD (formed in 2000) has been tasked with addressing a wide variety of specific neighborhood problems.

G. Underground Utilities (water, sewer, fiber)

There is no compiled assessment of infrastructure conditions in Albany. The City Water Department reports that the waste and sanitary sewer lines along Livingston Avenue were separated in the 1970s. There is a dedicated storm sewer system and there have not been incidences of breakage or complaints.

The Water Department reports that the neighborhood water system is in good condition and there are major transmission mains in the area. No obstacles to development have been identified in the area of water and sewer utilities.

It is noted that utility repairs and accessing underground infrastructure have left a patched-over uneven surface at many locations on the roadways and sidewalks.

H. Environmental Factors

The land's natural geography has defined Arbor Hill's physical form. A ravine on the south creates a natural boundary. The steep slopes north of Clinton Avenue complicate development conditions.

All the land area in the neighborhood has been developed at one time or another. Most of the development has been residential as opposed to industrial or commercial. There are former commercial uses scattered throughout the neighborhood, and former and current commercial and industrial uses with unknown waste disposal or hazardous substance storage facilities.

Arbor Hill has an active environmental advocacy. The mission of the Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation is to serve the community as an environmental and public health advocate, conduct environmental testing, and rehabilitate green and open space. From 1984 until 1994, the State of New York operated a regional trash incinerator in the heart of the Arbor Hill community. Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens was instrumental in closing this incinerator in Sheridan Hollow, and the Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation grew out of the settlement.

There are no wetlands and flood plains in Arbor Hill presented on the NYSDEC Wetland and FEMA Floodplain Map.

I. Historic Districts and Sites

Arbor Hill was the most inconsistent of Albany neighborhoods, once a place of wealth, and a mix of aristocrats and workers. Originally part of the Patroon’s area, called The Colonie, and later the site of the Ten Broeck Mansion, the neighborhood was named Arbor Hill because of its grape arbors and its lofty position on a hillside. Ten Broeck Mansion was built for Brigadier General Abraham Ten Broeck; the general later became State Senator and two-time Mayor of Albany.

Arbor Hill was also one of the fastest growing industrial areas in New York. Its fast growing industry produced more jobs and led to a greater influx of residents to Arbor Hill.

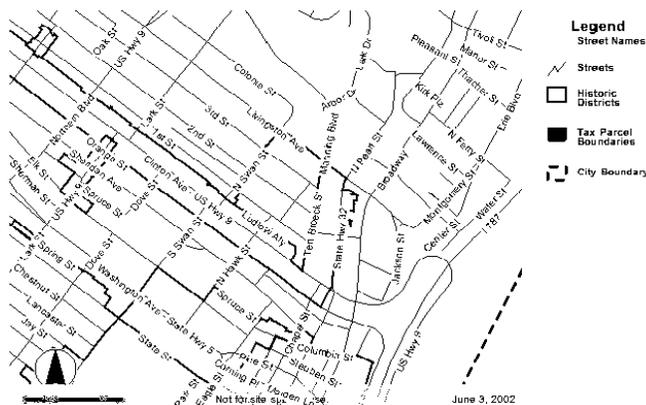
The majority of Arbor Hill developed in the nineteenth century. It is part of a large area just north of the central business district which generally extends about one mile northward along the Hudson River and more than one and one half miles west from the riverbed. Many of the historic districts established to recognize and protect nineteenth century historic fabric overlay upon properties and areas in Arbor Hill. The area retains much of its nineteenth century historic character, although demolition and redevelopment have taken its toll in some parts. What once consisted of unbroken, separate historic districts has deteriorated into remaining historic properties- many in poor condition and interspersed vacant lots.

There are four distinct areas in Arbor Hill which have been recognized for historic quality and placed upon the National Register of Historic Places. Once designated, properties in these areas proposed for modification utilizing State or Federal funds must undergo review by the State Office of Historic Preservation prior to construction.

Two of the districts are designated by the City of Albany’s local historic district ordinance. The Historic Resources Commission must review proposed exterior building modifications for historic consistency prior to issuance of a city building permit.

National Register Historic Districts in Arbor Hill

National Register Name	Local Name If Different	National Register Status	Locally designated?
Broadway/Livingston		y	n
744-755 Broadway		y	n
Clinton Avenue		y	y
Arbor Hill	Ten Broeck	y	y



Broadway/Livingston Historic District

This district is situated a few blocks west of the Hudson River and two blocks north of the central business district at the intersection of Broadway and Livingston Avenue. There were 20 commercial and residential buildings in the district when it was listed on the register.

The Broadway/Livingston Historic District represents the last surviving concentration of early to mid-nineteenth century commercial/residential buildings along what was formerly a long uninterrupted streetscape of homes and businesses stretching from Clinton Avenue to the New York Central Railroad Bridge at Colonie Street. These structures provided commercial space associated with Hudson River commerce and elegant housing for middle and upper middle class businesspersons.

744-750 Broadway

This district includes 4 buildings on the east side of Broadway near Wilson Street. These are remaining structures from what was once a long uninterrupted commercial and residential streetscape on Broadway from downtown north to Colonie Street. Today demolition has isolated these buildings. 774 and 746 are identical three-story Greek revival row houses; 748 is the oldest structure; 750 is a three-story Italianate style building.

Clinton Avenue Historic District

The Clinton Avenue Historic District was listed on the national register in 1981 because its development is characteristic of row house fabric of the 1900's. The largest section of the district is nine blocks along Clinton Avenue beginning at North Pearl on the east and ending at Quail Street on the west. The district also includes short adjacent segments of North Pearl Street, Elk Street, Lark Street, First Street, and Lexington Avenue. This shape of the district illustrates Albany's unrelenting westward growth following the opening of the Erie Canal through the end of the 19th century.

There were 576 buildings in the district when it was nominated for the register. The vast majority of these buildings are brick row homes, two and three stories high with front stoops. The buildings were developed between c1830 and c1919 as speculative middle class housing.

In the early 1980s many of the row homes along Clinton Avenue were rehabilitated with private and public funding under a large development project managed by Vulcan Development. Rental management of these buildings passed from Vulcan to others in a series of transactions and project bankruptcies. The Community Preservation Corporation now owns most of the buildings.

The Palace Theatre, a local landmark, is located within the district and is on individual State and National Register listings.

Arbor Hill Historic District (locally known as the Ten Broeck Historic District)

The original district is triangular in shape and encompasses all row homes surrounding two small urban parks and the monumental St. Joseph's Church along Ten Broeck Street, Hall Place, and St. Joseph's Terrace. There were 97 structures in the district when it was originally listed on the National Register in 1978 under the name "Ten Broeck Historic District". In 1985 an expanded district containing a total of 220 structures was listed in order to include areas west of the triangle proper along First, Second, North Swan, Ten Broeck Place, and North Hawk Streets. The district's name was changed to the Arbor Hill Historic District at that time.

The district includes St. Joseph's Church, Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church, and the Ten Broeck Mansion. St. Joseph's Church and the Ten Broeck Mansion are listed individually on the State and National Register of Historic Places in addition to being contained within recognized districts.

The Ten Broeck Mansion is owned, operated, and maintained by the Albany County Historical Association as an historic site. It is one of several mansions in the City of Albany open to the public and to school groups to showcase this area's history.



St. Joseph's Church.

The Ten Broeck Mansion is set on spacious grounds. It is a federal style house which was built for Abraham Ten Broeck in 1798, a prominent Revolutionary War Figure, delegate to the Continental Congress and later State Senator and Mayor of Albany. The mansion featured an uninterrupted view of the Hudson River when it was built.

Construction of St. Joseph's Church began in 1855. St. Joseph's School occupied several buildings before the structure on North Swan Street was constructed in 1905. North Swan Street developed as a commercial corridor in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Construction of row homes surrounding the church, by Albany's wealthy Irish, "lumber barons" and other industrialists followed during the latter half of the 19th century. In the Mid 19th Century the area was known as Millionaire's Row.

The Ten Broeck Preservation League is an organization established to be an advocate for historic preservation with a particular focus on this Arbor Hill area. The organization also conducts house tours and community beautification projects.

Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad is said to have utilized properties in Arbor Hill and other Albany neighborhoods. Particular properties said to have been of importance to the Underground Railroad are listed as: 10 Lark St, 168 Third St., and 198 Lumber St.

The Underground Railroad Workshop is a non-profit organization that is working to research and further document Underground Railroad ties within the community. They currently lead walking tours within Arbor Hill and are a source of confirmed and unconfirmed information for Underground Railroad activity in the region.

Sources

2000 US Census

City of Albany Tax Assessment Information

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Needs Assessment Report, Dennison (2001)

City of Albany Consolidated Plan

Site Visits and Infrastructure Inspections (2002)

City of Albany Zoning Ordinance

Urban Renewal Plans and Legislation

Historic District Registry Information

Abandoned Property: Statement of Existing Conditions, Goals and Objectives

I. Introduction

Albany's older urban neighborhoods have a number of empty, boarded buildings and scattered vacant lots remaining after structures have been demolished. These properties are not inhabited. Most do not appear to be maintained. Garbage, overgrown grass, broken windows, and structural failures pose a public safety concern. If the structures are not secured (i.e. protected by sound roofing and boarded windows and doors) they can become havens for squatters and crime. These "abandoned" properties are both symptom and cause of neighborhood decay.

Arbor Hill is in one of the weakest real estate markets in the region making the market return on private investment insufficient to make large-scale rehabilitation and new construction activities feasible. There is no dedicated source of public funding to deal with abandoned properties in a comprehensive manner and limited federal and state funding. For these reasons, the city is challenged with mobilizing available municipal resources and where possible, leveraging other public, private and institutional resources to respond to the problem.¹

II. Definitions

"Abandoned properties," as referred to in this paper, cover "abandoned buildings" and "abandoned lots." "Abandoned buildings" are clearly vacant and not immediately inhabitable and typically have boarded doors and windows. "Abandoned lots" are vacant lots not in apparent use for example, as side yards or off-street parking. Both types of property have a blighting influence on the neighborhood.

III. Existing Conditions

In September 2002 the project team conducted a visual survey of the area contained between Henry Johnson Boulevard, Orange Street, North Manning Boulevard, and Broadway to identify abandoned buildings. 179 such buildings were identified. This is 12% of structures within the area.

Abandoned buildings are scattered in Arbor Hill south of Colonie Street. Most of the buildings are rowhouse structures containing apartments. See the table on the following page summarizing the results of the visual survey.

As of September 2002, private individuals owned 131 of 179 abandoned buildings (73%). No one private owner was listed as the owner of more than three or four properties. Only 7 properties were owned by private mortgage finance companies. Twelve (12) buildings were owned by nonprofits; including the five owned by the City's Albany Community Development Agency. Twenty-nine (29) were owned by Albany County.

A comparison of ownership in April 2001 and September 2002 found that 74 of the 179 buildings changed hands over that 18-month period. Albany County was a party to forty-one (41) of the

¹ John Kromer, *Vacant-Property Policy and Practice: Baltimore and Philadelphia*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2002.

transfers. The County sold 19 of the buildings to private individuals. The County took ownership of 22 buildings over the period, presumably the result of foreclosure actions.

**Survey of Abandoned Buildings In Arbor Hill
September 2002²**

Buildings in Arbor Hill planning area		1497
Buildings identified as Abandoned		179 (12% of total)
Land Use	One Family Residence	22
	Two Family Residence	73
	Three Family Residence	37
	Containing 4 or more apartments	13
	Commercial	33
	Church	1
	Ownership	Private Individual/Corporation
Finance Company		7
Albany County		29
Nonprofit (including ACDA)		12
City of Albany		0

Abandoned buildings can be secured (i.e. properly roofed and boarded), demolished or rehabilitated. The expense of renovating an abandoned building can vary greatly, \$15,000 to \$65,000 per unit, depending on the condition of the building.³ A ballpark estimate for renovating a two to three unit structure therefore ranges between \$37,500 and \$162,500. The total investment required to rehabilitate 179 structures would be in the range of \$ 7-29 million, resulting in 350 to 500 newly rehabilitated housing units. The high cost of renovating some of the vacant building stock in Arbor Hill speaks to the importance of establishing guidelines for weighing the economic utility of the building against its preservation value.

The cost to remove a structure now averages \$17,000/building making the cost of demolition of 179 structures approximately \$3 million.⁴ Such demolition in Arbor Hill would result in scattered plots of vacant land, presumably ready for development of housing and other land uses, with a cumulative total area of 13 acres.

In addition to abandoned buildings, there are 100 to 150 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill considered to be abandoned. These are suitable for reuse or ongoing maintenance and are not currently used for parking or yard space, or designated for construction. Most of the

² Historic Albany Foundation, City of Albany Department of Development and Planning, and The Community Builders survey in September 2002. City of Albany Tax Assessment Record (September 2002) provided ownership information. Tax Assessment record of April 2001 provided land use and number of total buildings in the neighborhood.

³ According to the recent experience of the Community Preservation Corporation.

⁴ According to Albany Community Development Agency staff.

lots are owned by Albany County or private individuals. The vast majority of these properties are classified as unimproved, residential lands. These lots are scattered in all areas south of Colonie Street. Many are vacant as a result of demolition.

Property ownership trends and mapping indicate that there are many additional vacant lots in Arbor Hill. All totaled there were 621 vacant land parcels in Arbor Hill in April 2001 (Source: Real Property Service Data). The majority of these are not abandoned properties in the true sense of the term. Much of the vacant land is owned by private, nonprofit, or quasi-nonprofit corporations, as part of the Gateway Commons, Pieter Schuyler Court (now known as the Albany Family Housing Initiative), and the New Covenant Charter School development initiatives. Other vacant lots are used as parking or side yards. They are land locked slivers of land or public alleys.

The Arbor Hill Planning Initiative established four guiding principles for the development of actions for the neighborhood:

- Support Homeownership and Residential Reinvestment
- Celebrate Unique Culture and Heritage: People and Place
- Expand Business Development and Job Creation
- Strengthen Quality of Life.

Based on these principles, preliminary plans for addressing abandoned properties call for a combination of rehabilitation of existing structures and new infill construction compatible with the neighborhood context.

To assist in the Arbor Hill Planning Initiative, the inventory of abandoned buildings identified in the visual survey combined with vacant lots as identified by the Real Property Service data is presented in a map at the conclusion of this paper.

IV. Code Enforcement Pertaining to Abandoned Property

The City of Albany's Public Safety Department's Divisions of Fire Safety, and Building and Codes are the agencies responsible to inspect property and enforce codes where necessary. In the case of abandoned property, inspection takes account of a building's structural condition, security (boarding of the first floor is required), and other public health and safety hazards. Early code intervention is especially important to address problems such as water damage early before significant deterioration to the building occurs.

Structures found to be unsound can be demolished or partially or fully stabilized, if feasible, by the City of Albany, if the property owner fails to respond to notification from the city. However, city resources for demolition are very limited. Demolition of abandoned buildings in several areas of Arbor Hill – including the Ten Broeck Triangle and along Clinton Avenue - is not desirable. On the contrary, restoring these buildings is a pressing need because these are early urban settlements designated for preservation and lie within historic districts (Downtown Albany District, Broadway/North Pearl Street

District, Ten Broeck Historic District, Clinton Avenue District). In these areas, the City desires, when feasible, to stabilize these structures.

The Common Council established a Vacant Building Registry in February 2000. It established a requirement for registering vacant buildings with the City. In addition to identifying the property and its owner or owners, the registration requires a vacant building plan calling for the property to be demolished within a specified time frame, secured and maintained, or rehabilitated within 365 days. The owner is required to notify the Enforcement Officer of any changes in information supplied as part of the vacant building registration within 30 days of the change. Further, any revisions to the plan or timetable for the vacant building must meet the approval of the Enforcement Officer.

The Department of Fire, Emergency and Building Services is responsible for enforcement of these plans. Any person violating any provision of the Vacant Building Registry or providing false information to the Enforcement Officer will be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 per day of violation, and/or imprisonment not exceeding one year.

The Department of General Services is responsible for enforcing several sections of the municipal code of the City of Albany which contribute to quality of life in Arbor Hill. Among these are codes relating to refuse collection, illegal dumping, anti litter, snow removal, streets and encroachments.

V. Property Tax Collection, Lien, Foreclosure and Disposition

Many abandoned properties fall delinquent on annual municipal tax payments, resulting in tax liens, and sometimes foreclosure. In the City of Albany, the property tax assessment and collection process begins when the City issues tax bills each year for each taxable property. The municipal bills include municipal property tax and additional costs incurred for the property in the prior year, which can be added to the property tax bill under State Law. These include the cost of actions taken by the locality to clean or secure the property, and water and sewer charges.

The local tax bill is payable to the City Treasurer. At the end of each tax year, outstanding property tax bills are tallied and forwarded to Albany County. Albany County reimburses the City of Albany for outstanding tax bills. This effectively provides the City with 100% of the revenue due from property tax levy. A similar practice is in place for the school tax.

Albany County then takes over tax enforcement for the outstanding amount due in taxes. A penalty of 5% is added to the bill as soon as it becomes payable to the County. An additional 1% per month is added to the bill if left unpaid at the end of each month.

Albany County undertakes efforts to collect outstanding taxes including targeted mailings, informational packets on the delinquent property tax installment plan to taxpayers who qualify, and notices of the foreclosure action specified by law. In

addition, each year the County provides the City Treasurer with a list of unpaid taxes so that a notice can be added to the current City bill indicating that a tax remains unpaid.

If left unpaid after those notices, Albany County can foreclose on the property under State Law. Foreclosure on a residential property can occur once a real estate tax bill is delinquent for three years, while foreclosure on a nonresidential property can occur after delinquency of two years.

The County inspects, secures, and when warranted, demolishes structures it owns, to protect public health and safety. However, properties are moved to auction as soon as possible after foreclosure to reduce costs to County taxpayers and return the properties to productive use.

The County of Albany disposes of these properties in accordance with the County Real Property Disposition Plan. Accordingly, public auctions have been held regularly and over 1500 properties have been sold since 1995. The County requires a 20% down-payment at the time of auction, and reserves the right to reject any bids. Bidders that have delinquent taxes with Albany County must pay those in full before closing on the property.

Albany County will consider the private sale of parcels (instead of public auction) in limited circumstances to nonprofit organizations and municipalities for community use and public benefit. Unlike the public auction sales that carry no deed restrictions requiring rehabilitation, the deeds transferring properties by private sale often include conditions for improvements. There is also a very limited provision for sale to an adjacent owner, but that property must have no value to any other interested party.

Former delinquent owners can reacquire the residential property under very limited circumstances. All taxes, fees, and interest due through the closing of that sale must be paid in full, and the owner must be living in the structure at the time of the foreclosure action in order to qualify.

Relevant Laws: NY State Real Property Tax Law (see sections 942, 1166, 1330, 1332, 1442); County Law section 215; Albany County Charter; Albany County Local Laws (see #2 of 1998, Resolution 111 of 2002); Albany City Charter and Laws.

VI. Goals for Abandoned Property

Recognizing the blighting influence of abandoned properties on Arbor Hill and the mechanisms presently in place to address this problem, four goals have been established to address this issue:

1. Educate the public about abandoned properties.
2. Develop and maintain an inventory of abandoned buildings in the city.
3. Manage abandoned property in a manner to secure health and safety, and to minimize the blighting influence upon neighboring properties.
4. Encourage the reuse of abandoned properties.

Pursuit of many of these goals will require substantial investments in code enforcement and neighborhood beautification activities. It will also require targeted construction investment and collaboration among diverse and numerous private and public stakeholders to direct the use of available public subsidies. Albany County, Albany City, housing developers, public safety interests, neighborhood leaders, and other stakeholders have to engage in strategic planning to identify, target and dispose of tax delinquent and publicly-owned property in a manner which supports neighborhood redevelopment.

Stronger institutional, nonprofit, or private partnerships are needed to stabilize, rehabilitate, and sell property in Arbor Hill. Tax collection, lien, foreclosure and disposition processes of the City and County should be evaluated and modified to improve financial management and time efficiencies. Specific objectives under each goal are listed in the work plan below.

Abandoned Property Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Educate the public about abandoned properties.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Publish a City of Albany Abandoned Properties Primer which explains the extent of the problem, why properties become abandoned, and the roles of various stakeholders in addressing the problem, including nearby residents and businesses.
- 1.2 Circulate the primer to public agencies, neighborhood associations and neighborhood not-for-profit organizations.

Goal 2. Develop and maintain an inventory of abandoned buildings in the city.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Build on the efforts of Historic Albany Foundation and SUNY Albany to develop and maintain a citywide inventory of abandoned properties.
- 2.2 Support the Historic Albany Foundation in the development of a technical advisory committee to work with neighborhoods to develop consensus on the treatment of abandoned properties.

Goal 3. Manage abandoned property to secure public health and safety, and to minimize the blighting influence upon neighboring property.

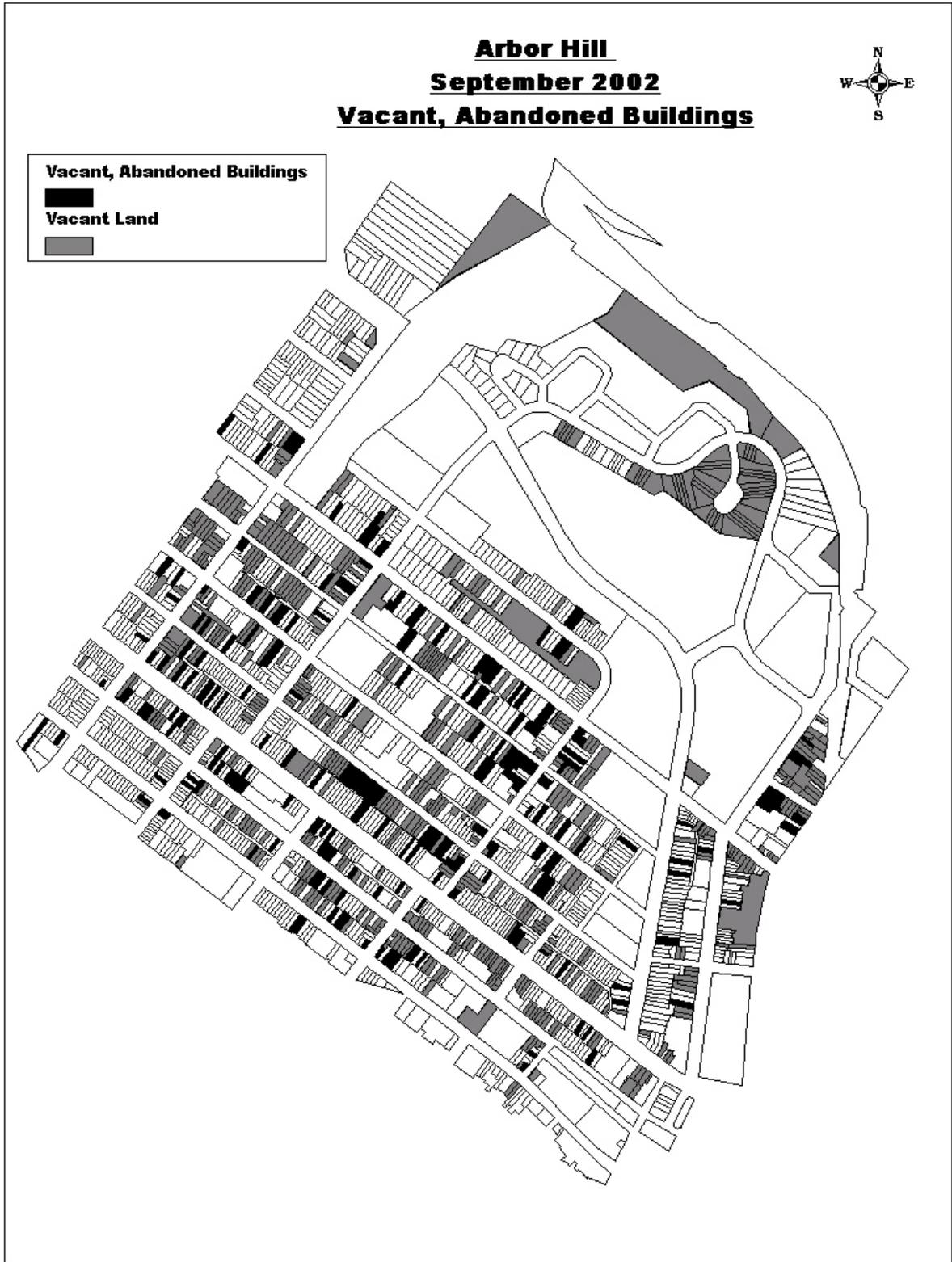
Objectives:

- 3.1 Inspect all abandoned properties to assess water damage and other structural threats.
 - 3.1.1. Stabilize and secure abandoned structures with historic, architectural or community value for rehabilitation in the future.
 - 3.1.2. Repair or demolish structures that threaten public health and safety.
- 3.2 Enforce applicable building codes, Vacant Building Registry Legislation (requiring the securing of first floor windows and doors) and property maintenance standards to improve the safety and appearance of abandoned buildings and lots.
- 3.3 Promote community projects and owner education to improve the maintenance of properties in Arbor Hill.

Goal 4. Encourage the reuse of abandoned properties.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Launch a marketing campaign to promote the reuse of abandoned properties.
- 4.2 Identify or create an entity (or collaborative) focused on abandoned property renewal to acquire, redevelop (through demolition or rehabilitation) and dispose of abandoned properties.
- 4.3 Create a proactive partnership of key stakeholders in abandoned property renewal: City, County, lenders and others to support the efforts of the entity.
- 4.4 Reuse abandoned property as part of development initiatives.
- 4.5 Facilitate the reuse of abandoned properties outside redevelopment areas.



Note: Abandoned Buildings as identified in visual survey.

City of Albany
Community Development Agency
Request for Proposals

PROPERTY ADDRESS _____

PROPOSER NAME (specify if individual, joint venture or corporation. If joint venture list name, address, & phone number of each entity and percentage of partnership interest:

ADDRESS OF PROPOSER _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

PURCHASE PRICE _____

A. PROPOSED USE - Indicate number of uses/units per building and specify if units will be leased or owner-occupied. Indicate use: residential or commercial or not-for-profit. If commercial tenants, please list corporate name.

B.SCHEDULE

Time required to complete rehabilitation will be _____ months from conditional closing. Upon selection of the RFP proposal, a complete schedule must be provided. (Please note 8/1 properties subject to conditional reversion provision; the City of Albany has the right, but not the obligation, to repossess with damages, if the schedule is not met.)

C. FACADE PLAN

Describe in detail below the proposed street facade of the building, including:

1. Exterior siding material;
2. Type, size and number of windows and doors;
3. Proposed color of exterior;
4. Exterior lighting plan;
5. Security measures, if any; and
6. Size, location and number of exterior signs.

Please note that the facade and rehabilitation plan must be completed as approved prior to the transfer of title.

D. REHABILITATION PLAN BUDGET

Please develop an itemized estimate of anticipated rehabilitation or construction costs based on the **Cost Estimate Outline** below:

<u>EXTERIOR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COSTS</u>
1. Chimneys -point Of rebuild	\$ _____
2. Roof -repair or replace	_____
3. Cornice and trim repairs	_____
4. Siding -repair or replace	_____
5. Gutters & downspouts	_____
6. Exterior door -repair or replace	_____
7. Steps & porch repairs	_____
8. Foundation wall pointing & repair	_____
9. Exterior protective covering	_____
10. Storms & screens	_____
11. Accessory Building repairs	_____
12. Service walks repairs	_____
13. Driveway/Parking Lot	_____
14. Landscaping	_____
15. Fence	_____
16. Other: _____	_____
<u>SUBTOTAL EXTERIOR:</u>	\$ _____
<u>INTERIOR</u>	
16. Joist or beam repairs	\$ _____
17. Wall changes	_____
18. Wall & ceiling treatments	_____
19. Electric	_____
20. Heating	_____
21. Plumbing	_____
22. Window repairs	_____
23. Door repairs	_____
24. Stairways & railings	_____
25. Insulation – attic/sidewall	_____
26. Kitchen cabinets & counters	_____
27. Floor repairs	_____
28. Cellar enclosures	_____
29. Other: _____	_____
<u>SUBTOTAL INTERIOR:</u>	\$ _____
<u>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:</u>	\$ _____
<u>PURCHASE PRICE:</u>	\$ _____
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE:</u>	\$ _____
Cost per sq. ft. \$ _____	
Cost per unit \$ _____	

Name source of estimates:

Architect: _____ Contractor: _____

B. Compatibility: The compatibility of the proposed plan with existing zoning, land use, density, and building rehabilitation standards.

C. Schedule: The timetable for the project, including evidence of capability to carry out the project in an expeditious manner.

D. Financial Capability: Evidence of financial ability to complete project;

E. Public Assistance: The requirements for a reliance upon public (City, State, Federal) program assistance in undertaking the project.

F. Use of Property: The proposed use of property (i.e. is proposed use identified as priority in neighborhood plan)

G. Long-term ownership of Property: Is property proposed for home ownership or investment purposes;

I. RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS AND WAIVE INFORMALITIES

City reserves and may exercise the following rights and opinion with respect to this selection process;

1. To reject any or all proposals and reissue the RFP at any time before execution of a final contract.
2. To supplement, amend, or otherwise modify this RFP at any time before selection of one or more Respondents for negotiation and to cancel this RFP with or without issuing another RFP.
3. To accept or reject any or all of the items in any proposal and award the contract, in whole or in part, if it is deemed in the City's best interest to do so.
4. To reject the proposal of a respondent that, in the City's sole judgement has been delinquent or unfaithful in the performance of any contract with the City , is financially or technically incapable, or is otherwise not a responsible respondent.
5. To waive any minor informality, defect, or deviation from this RFP that is not, in the City's sole judgement, material to the proposal.
6. To request that some or all of the respondents clarify, modify or supplement proposals.
7. To conduct concurrent contract negotiation with multiple respondents if it is in the best interest of the City to do so.

J. CLOSING

Upon selection of the RFP submission by the City of Albany, a non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 will be required. Prior to the transfer of the deed, the following must be submitted to the City;

1. Approved plan and sample for completion
2. Insurance documentation
3. Documentation of financing; documents must show that 100% of costs are covered.

K. CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION

Applicants or principals identified on page 1, or any principal, general partner or corporate officer with ownership of more than 10% of the shares of the organization will be disqualified for adverse finding with respect to:

1. Any City or County mortgage foreclosure proceedings or currently more than 90 days in arrears on any City or County loan;
2. Ownership or management interest in any property that was taken In Rem by the City or County or any tax arrears;
3. Owning any properties within the City of Albany that are in violation of the City building code or are the subject of enforcement actions;
4. Any record of building code violations or litigation against properties owned by the proposer or any entity or individual that comprises the proposer;
5. Any felony conviction or pending case; 6. Arson conviction, or pending case;
7. Previous record of default or non-performance on work affiliated with a public contract;
8. In the last 7 years, filed a bankruptcy petition or been the subject of involuntary bankruptcy proceedings
9. In the last 5 years, failed to file any required tax returns, or failed to pay any applicable Federal, State, County or City taxes or other charges.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Are any of the following land uses or environmental resources either to be affected by the proposal or located within or adjacent of the project site(s)? Check appropriate box for every item of the following checklist:

	YES	NO	UNKNOWN		YES	NO	UNKNOWN
a. Industrial	[]	[]	[]	t. Freshwater Wetlands designated by DEC	[]	[]	[]
b. Commercial	[]	[]	[]	u. Floodplain as designated by Federal Insurance Administration	[]	[]	[]
c. Office	[]	[]	[]	v. Within 100' of Genesee River, River Gorge, Barge Canal, Lake Ontario	[]	[]	[]
d. Residential	[]	[]	[]	w. Scenic views or vistas of importance to the community	[]	[]	[]
e. Utilities	[]	[]	[]	x. Wildlife, including critical Habitats of endangered/threatened species	[]	[]	[]
f. Recreational	[]	[]	[]	y. Air quality including ambient noise levels	[]	[]	[]
g. Transportation	[]	[]	[]	z. Historic, Archaeological sites (listed on National Register or eligible for listing) and/or designated City Landmarks/Preservation District	[]	[]	[]
h. Parks	[]	[]	[]				
i. Hospitals	[]	[]	[]				
j. Schools	[]	[]	[]				
k. Open Spaces	[]	[]	[]				
l. Steep Slopes (15% or greater)	[]	[]	[]				
m. Heavily Wooded Area	[]	[]	[]				
n. Shoreline	[]	[]	[]				
o. Erosive Soils	[]	[]	[]				
p. Energy Supplies	[]	[]	[]				
q. Solid and/or Hazardous Waste	[]	[]	[]				
r. Natural Drainage Course	[]	[]	[]				
s. Stream or other Water Body	[]	[]	[]				

4. Are any facilities under ownership, lease or supervision to be utilized in the accomplishment of this project, either listed or under consideration for listing on the Environmental Protection Agency's List of Violating Facilities? [] Yes [] No

5. Is there public controversy concerning the project? [] yes [] No

6. PRIOR REVIEW

A. Has an environmental impact statement (EIS)/analysis been prepared for this project or a project inclusive of this project, or for another agency at an earlier date? [] Yes [] No

If yes, identify the EIS/analysis, including the date of preparation, or attach a copy.

B. Has the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) been provided a detailed project description and been requested to comment thereon? [] Yes [] No

Date submitted to SHPO: _____

7. Identify all governmental actions (i.e. funding, permits, approvals, leases, etc.) Necessary for project implementation:

Level of Government & Agency Type of Action Status Project ID#

Federal

State

Local

8. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

List the potential environmental impacts/issues as identified by responses to sections 3, 4 and 5 above. Discuss alternatives and mitigation measures for these issues.

CITY OF ALBANY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CREDIT REPORT AUTHORIZATION FORM - ATTACHMENT 2

I authorize the City of Albany Community Development Agency to obtain a credit report for:

Individual _____

Company _____

Tax ID Number _____

Date of Incorporation/Joint Venture Formation _____

Name _____

Principals, List all names _____

Address _____

Social Security # _____

Date of Birth _____

Prior Address _____

Former Name (if Applicable) _____

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

**CITY OF ALBANY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS -ATTACHMENT 3 - FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Assets Statement must describe financial status within the last twelve months.

Financial information is submitted for:

- _____ Individual
- _____ Corporation
- _____ Limited Partnership
- _____ Not-for profit
- _____ Other

A. Personal Information

Name: _____
 Business Name: _____
 Business Phone/Fax: _____
 Residence Address: _____
 City, State, Zip Code: _____
 Business Address: _____
 City, State, Zip Code: _____
 Position (Title): _____
 Years of Service: _____ Annual Salary: _____
 Bonus/Commission or other Income: _____

Are you a defendant in any lawsuits or legal action? If yes, provide details:

Have you ever declared bankruptcy? If yes, provide dates and details:

Do you have any contingent liabilities? If yes, please describe:

B. Statement of Financial Condition

ASSETS	DOLLARS (Omit Cents)	LIABILITIES	DOLLARS (Omit Cents)
Cash on Hand and in Bank		Note Payable to Banks - Secured	
		Notes Payable to Banks - Unsecured	
Notes Receivable		Notes Payable to Others - Secured	
Real Estate (List)		Notes Payable to Others - Unsecured	
Mortgage Owned indicate Primary residence (list Separately and check those pledges as collateral		Debt Balance in Margin Accounts with Brokers	
Securities		Mortgages	
Total		Total Liabilities	
		New Worth	

Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Print Name: _____