

NOVEMBER 2020

NOMINATION STUDY + MASTER PLAN

SHERIDAN HOLLOW BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

ALBANY, NEW YORK

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	viii
SECTION 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION + BOUNDARY	2
Lead Project Sponsors	4
Project Overview	6
Related Planning Initiatives.....	10
Community Vision + Goals.....	12
BOA Boundary Description + Justification	16
SECTION 2. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	18
Community Participation	20
Techniques to Enlist Partners	22
SECTION 3. ANALYSIS OF THE SHERIDAN HOLLOW BOA	24
Community + Regional Setting.....	26
Inventory + Analysis	36
Economic + Market Trends Analysis.....	92
SECTION 4. MASTER PLAN.....	112
Recent Projects.....	114
Sheridan Hollow Master Plan.....	116
Mobility Projects	118
Public Realm Projects	124
Redevelopment Projects.....	132
Policies + Programs.....	138
SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	150
Implementation Plan Overview	152
Recommended Actions for Step 3 BOA	154
Short-Term Actions.....	164
Long-Term Implementation Framework	168

List of Figures

MAPS

Community Context	8
Study Area Context	9
Sheridan Hollow BOA Boundary	17
Existing Zoning.....	37
Existing Land Use.....	39
Land Ownership	41
Transportation Systems	43
Utilities	47
Natural Resources & Environmental Features.....	51
Parks & Open Space.....	53
Food Access	57
Historically Significant Areas.....	59
Archaeological Sensitivity	61
Investments.....	67
Underutilized Sites.....	71
Potential Brownfields.....	73
Strategic Sites	81
Recent Projects.....	115
Master Plan	117
Green Infrastructure Opportunities	129

TABLES

Capital Region Employment Projections.....	93
Sheridan Hollow Retail Market	99
General Reuse Budget.....	109
Potential Job Creation	109
Eligible Pre-Development Activities for Step 3 BOA Funding.....	155
Actions Recommended for Step 3 BOA Funding.....	156
Short-Term Actions for AHP to Advance	165
Potential Funding Sources.....	169
Long-Term Implementation Framework	174

List of Acronyms

AADT – Annual Average Daily Traffic	HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
ACAP – Albany Community Action Partnership	HVAC – Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
ACDA – Albany Community Development Agency	IPH – Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless
ACES – Albany Center for Economic Success	LIHTC – Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
ACLB – Albany County Land Bank	NORC – Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities
ACLT – Albany Community Land Trust	NPRA – National Parks and Recreation Association
ADA – American Disabilities Act	NYS – New York State
AHP – Affordable Housing Partnership	NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
BER – Business Environmental Risk	NYS DOS – New York State Department of State
BOA – Brownfield Opportunity Area	NYS DOT – New York State Department of Transportation
BOCES - Boards of Cooperative Educational Services	NYS EFC – New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation
CDC – Centers for Disease Control	NYS EPF – New York State Environmental Protection Fund
CDPHP – Capital District Physicians’ Health Plan	NYS ESD – New York State Empire State Development
CDTA – Capital District Transportation Authority	NYS HCR – New York State Homes and Community Renewal
CDTC – Capital District Transportation Committee	NYS OGS – New York State Office of General Services
CSO – Combined Sewer Overflow	NYSERDA – New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
DRI – Downtown Revitalization Initiative	PCB – Polychlorinated Biphenyl
EDF – Economic Development Fund	REC – Recognized Environmental Concern
ESA – Environmental Site Assessment	REDC – Regional Economic Development Council
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency	RFP – Request for Proposals
FHA – Federal Housing Administration	SEQRA – State Environmental Quality Review Act
GHHI – Green & Healthy Homes Initiative	SHARE – Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy
GIGP – Green Innovation Grant Program	SONYMA – State of New York Mortgage Agency
HREC – Historic Recognized Environmental Concern	USDO – Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance
	UST – Underground Storage Tank

Appendices

1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES

APPENDIX 1.1. Phase 1A Literature Review and Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment: Sheridan Hollow Brownfields Assessment

2. COMMUNITY PLANNING

APPENDIX 2.1. Hope in the Hollow: A Report on Opportunities for Planning and Redevelopment in Albany's Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood

APPENDIX 2.2. Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Plan

APPENDIX 2.3. Arbor Hill Community Benefits Agreement Plan

APPENDIX 2.4. Piloting New Partnership Opportunities Between a Land Bank and a Community Land Trust in Albany, NY

APPENDIX 2.5. Recommended Updates to Albany's Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX 3.1. Economic Development Gap and Resources Analysis for Sheridan Hollow

APPENDIX 3.2. Survey of Mixed-Use Buildings in Sheridan Hollow

APPENDIX 3.3. 222-268 Spruce Street (former Freihofer building) Adaptive Reuse Study

APPENDIX 3.4. Hungry Hollow Adaptive Reuse Study

APPENDIX 3.5. Sheridan Hollow Creative Placemaking and Cottage Industry Opportunities

APPENDIX 3.6. Freihofer Historic District Nomination Study

4. ENVIRONMENTAL

APPENDIX 4.1. Sheridan Hollow Desktop Environmental Review

APPENDIX 4.2. Phase I ESA: 268 Spruce Street

APPENDIX 4.3. Phase I ESA: Elk and Sherman Street Lots

APPENDIX 4.4. Phase I ESA: 228 Elk Street

APPENDIX 4.5. Phase I ESA: Orange Street and Clinton Avenue Lots

APPENDIX 4.6. Phase I ESA: 293 and 295 Orange Street

APPENDIX 4.7. Soil Testing Lab Results

5. HOUSING

APPENDIX 5.1. Minding the Gap and Finding the Resources: Financing Housing and Redevelopment in Sheridan Hollow

APPENDIX 5.2. Concept Proposal: Capital Region Vacant Building Fund ("Take Stock in Your Block" Program)

APPENDIX 5.3. Concept Proposal: Sheridan Hollow Eco-District

APPENDIX 5.4. Moving Neighborhoods Out of Blight in an Equitable Way

APPENDIX 5.5. Emergency Demolition Policy Recommendations

Appendices (CONT.)

6. INFRASTRUCTURE

APPENDIX 6.1. Complete Streets Design Plan

APPENDIX 6.2. Veteran's Memorial Park Concept

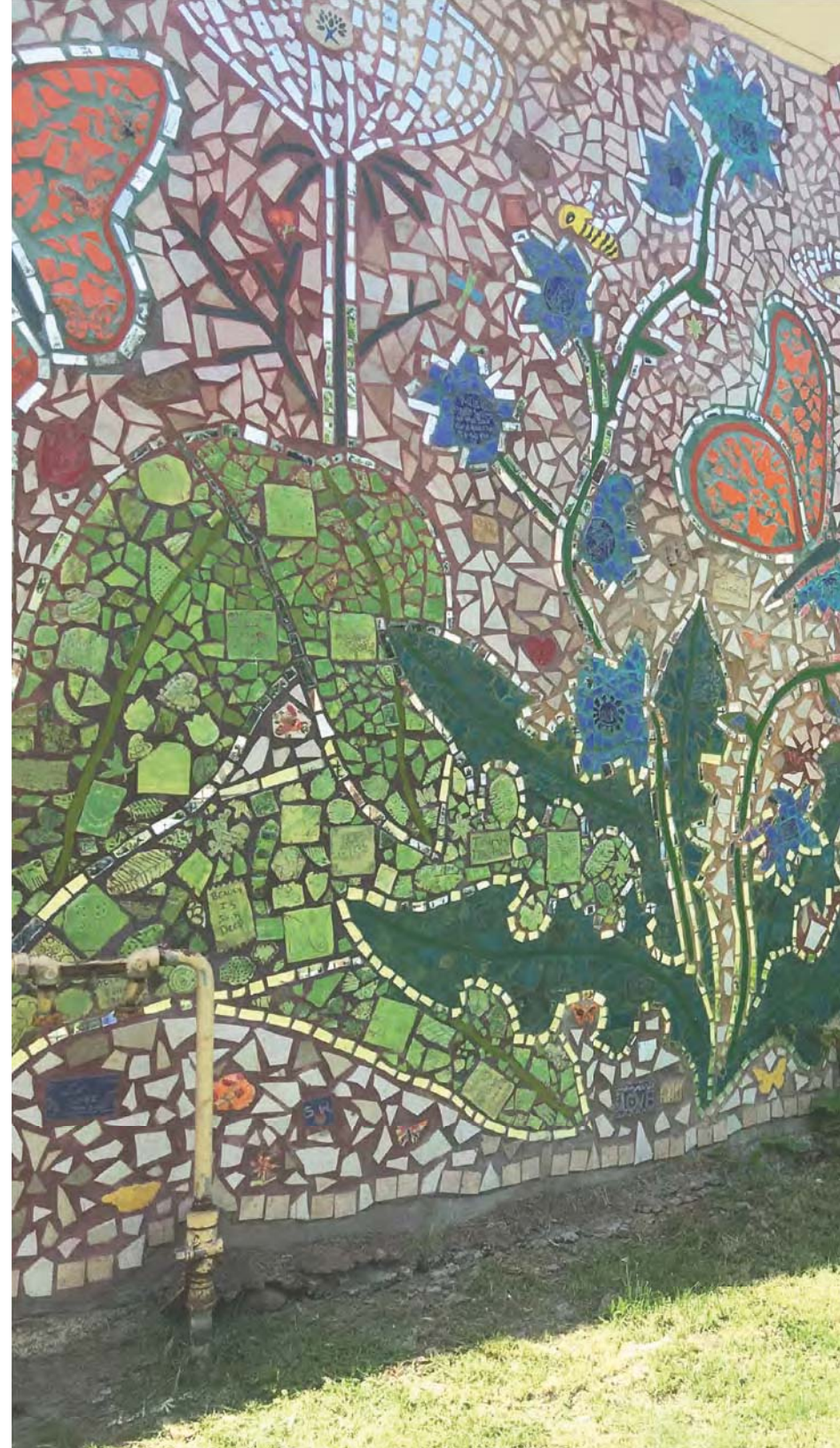
APPENDIX 6.3. Sheridan Hollow Green Infrastructure

7. SITE-SPECIFIC REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

APPENDIX 7.1. Freihofer Building Redevelopment Plan

APPENDIX 7.2. ACES Lot (236 Clinton Avenue) Archaeological Studies
(Phases 1A, 1B, 2, and 3)

APPENDIX 7.3. Lower Orange Street: Renderings of Proposed
Redevelopment





3

**ANALYSIS OF
THE SHERIDAN
HOLLOW BOA**



Community + Regional Setting

LOCATIONAL CONTEXT

City of Albany

Albany was founded in the 17th century as a trading post on the Hudson River. Transportation access remains one of the chief assets of the city, including the Port of Albany, Albany International Airport, near-by rail and bus terminals, and the intersection of interstate highways that allow travel to New York City, Montreal, Boston, and Buffalo/Rochester/Syracuse within five hours or less.

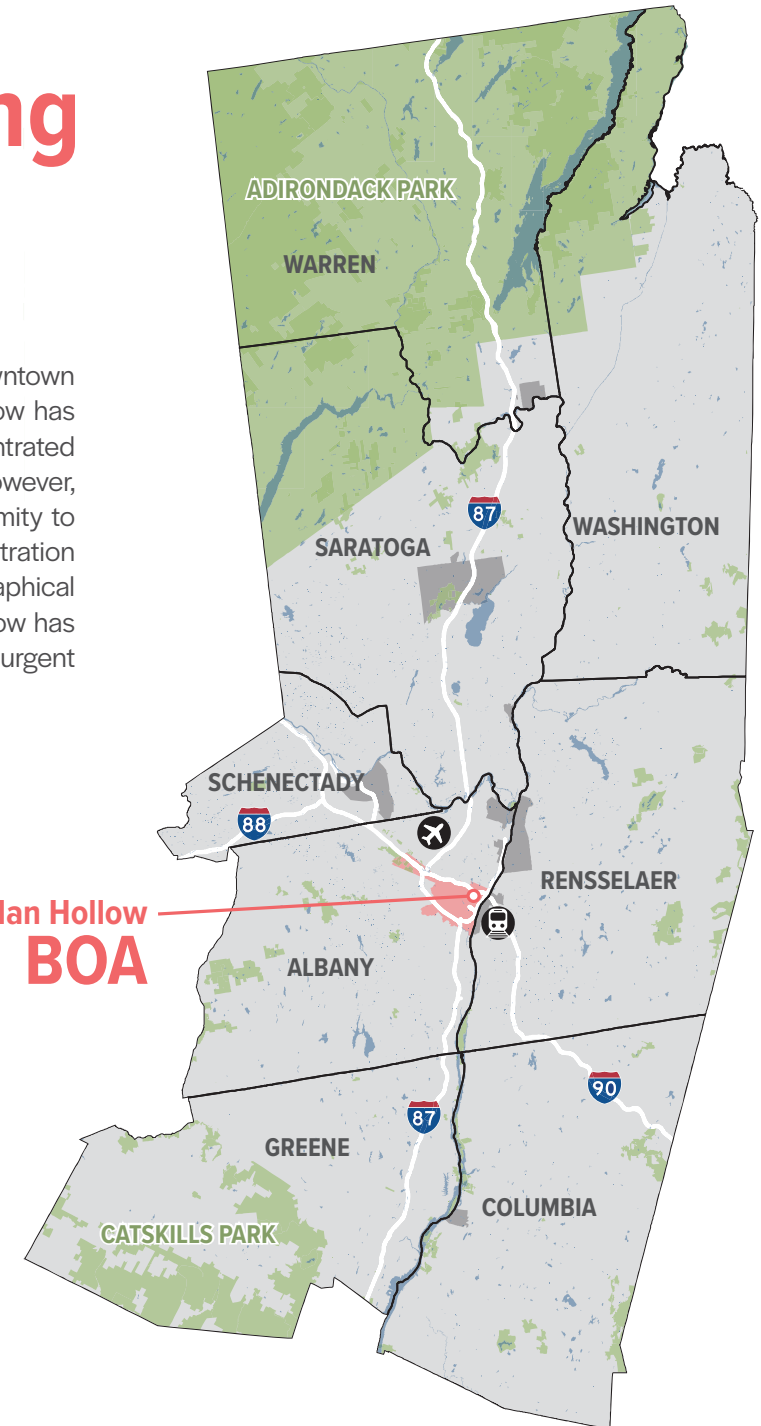
In 1797, Albany became the capital of New York State and today remains the urban hub of the entire Capital Region. As a result, the city benefits from a stable employment base, supported by the large number of employees working for the State and supporting business services. Other strengths in the region include its concentration of hospital and medical centers and its many colleges and universities.

Sheridan Hollow

The Sheridan Hollow neighborhood is located on the western edge of Downtown Albany in a topographic ravine between Capitol Hill to the South and the Arbor Hill neighborhood to the North. Since its settlement in the late 1700s, Sheridan Hollow has been home to a predominantly lower income and minority population, largely due to the neighborhood's physical conditions (i.e., topography and susceptibility to flooding) and historic disinvestment.

While other neighborhoods adjacent to downtown have had a mild renaissance, Sheridan Hollow has not followed suit and still struggles with concentrated poverty and a deteriorating housing stock. However, given its relatively low housing prices, proximity to Capitol Hill and downtown Albany, concentration of historic row houses, interesting topographical views, and recent investment, Sheridan Hollow has the potential to become Albany's next resurgent neighborhood.

Sheridan Hollow
BOA



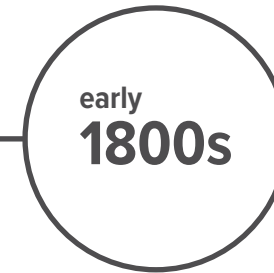
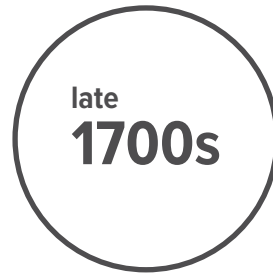


Community + Regional Setting

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the BOA area has been located on the edge of the city's downtown area, but is isolated from it by the steep slope of the Fox Creek ravine. Residential development of the area began in the second half of the seventeenth century and the neighborhood generally developed from east to west, with the earliest settlements along North Pearl Street and Sheridan Avenue. Its growth was closely linked with the influx of Irish immigrants during the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the century, ethnic diversity in the neighborhood increased and included many African Americans. Most residents of the neighborhood, however, were poor, as the topographic and flooding conditions created by the ravine made the area undesirable and contributed to the construction of cheap housing. After Fox Creek was enclosed in the mid-nineteenth century, the neighborhood expanded westward with a mix of residential and light industrial uses, but the neighborhood population remained primarily low income.

Today, Sheridan Hollow continues to struggle with concentrated poverty, deferred maintenance, and a lack of resources. However, a diverse stock of historic row houses and interesting topographical views still remain appealing characteristics of the neighborhood.



Early colonists who settled in the Albany area relied heavily on the fur trade and exchanged European goods for furs with Native Americans. A 1756 plan of Albany shows a trade route along present-day Road Street. Glass trade beads were also found at the nearby Sheridan Hollow Garage.

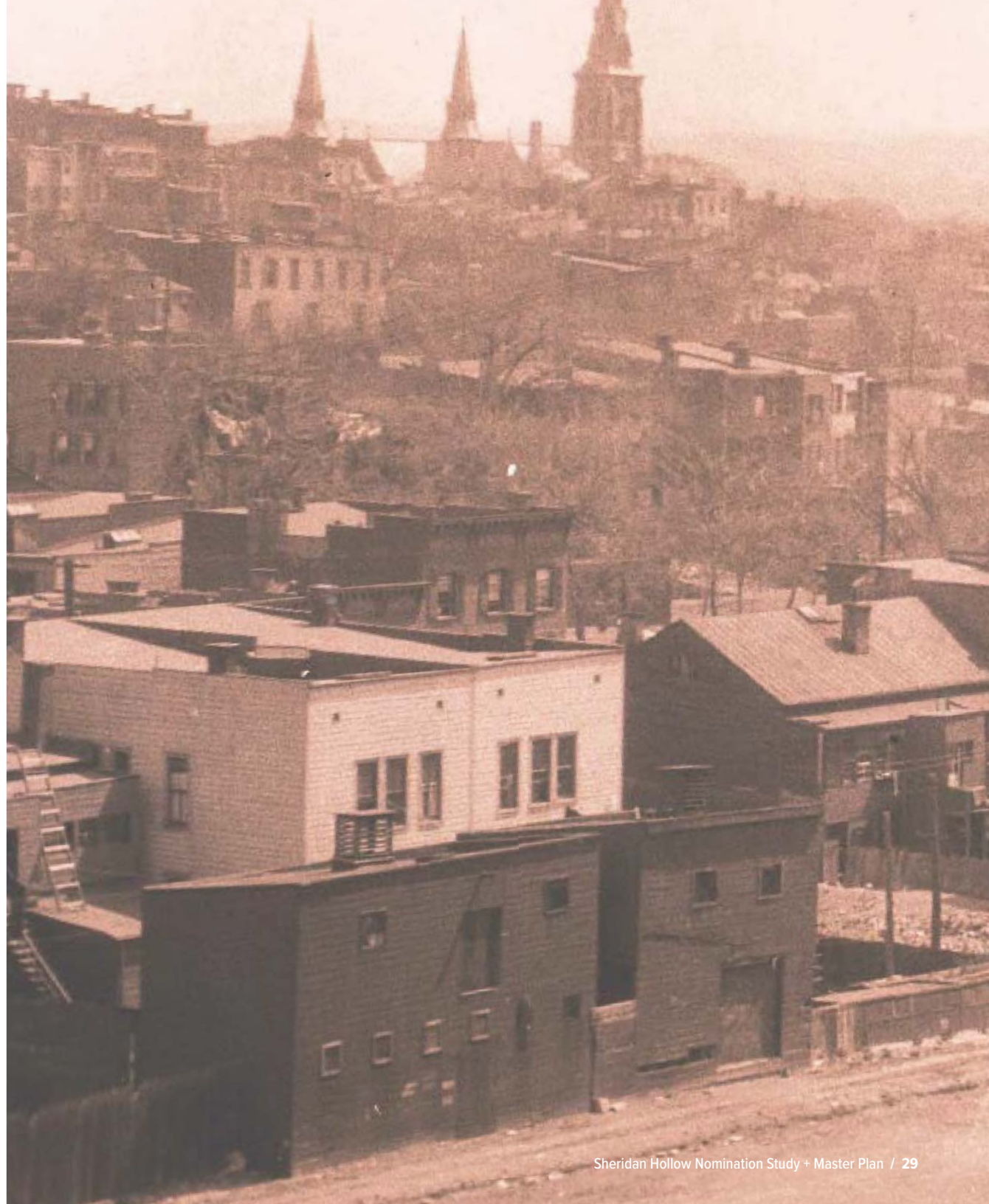
During this same time period, British troops were encamped along the southern boundary of the BOA area, near what is now Elk Street, and were battling with France for control of northern New York. Albany would serve as a strategically important encampment for British troops throughout the duration of the Seven Years War.

By 1800, at least 17 houses were constructed on what is now Sheridan Avenue. Among the earliest occupants of the neighborhood were Albany's free blacks, with 10 African American-headed households located in the neighborhood by 1815.

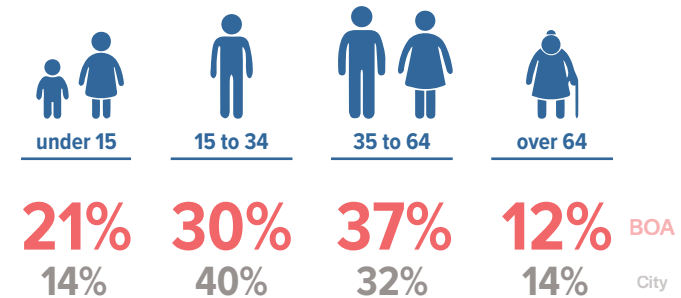
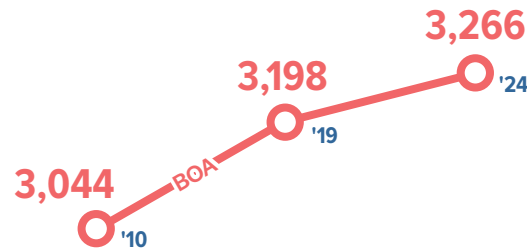
During this time period, the eastern end of the BOA was predominantly residential while the area west of Chapel Street remained largely undeveloped except for extensive brickmaking operations. In 1840, Fox Creek was enclosed in a culvert and buried, allowing for further development in the western portion of the neighborhood.

late
1800s

Because the Sheridan Hollow neighborhood was located in a low-lying ravine, chronic water management problems predisposed the neighborhood to being one of the city's poorest. During the course of the nineteenth century, the city's population doubled and Irish immigrants of little means packed into tenement houses along the historic Fox Creek ravine. So-called "rooming houses" popped up in the neighborhood and were designed to house six family groups across three floors. By the end of the nineteenth century, Sheridan Hollow was a working-class neighborhood, densely populated with Albany's poorest residents.



Community + Regional Setting



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Understanding local and regional population trends, age characteristics, and other demographic factors is critical for the development of context-sensitive recommendations for redevelopment and revitalization. The recommendations in this Plan are informed by this socio-economic analysis and tailored to the unique needs and vision of the Sheridan Hollow BOA.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024.

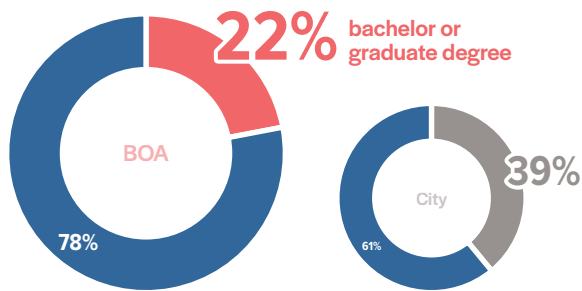
Population + Race

As of 2019, the population of the BOA was 3,198, which accounts for roughly 3% of the City of Albany’s total population of 100,337. Since 2010, the BOA’s total population grew by 5%, while the city’s population grew by only 2.5%. Based on future projections, it is expected that the BOA will continue to grow at a faster rate than the city. Through 2024, the BOA’s population is projected to grow at an annual rate of 0.4%, double the 0.2% annual rate at which the city is expected to grow.

Compared to the City of Albany, where a majority of residents are white (51%), Sheridan Hollow is a predominantly black community. In the BOA, 68% of the population is Black, 17% is white, and 14% is of Hispanic origin.

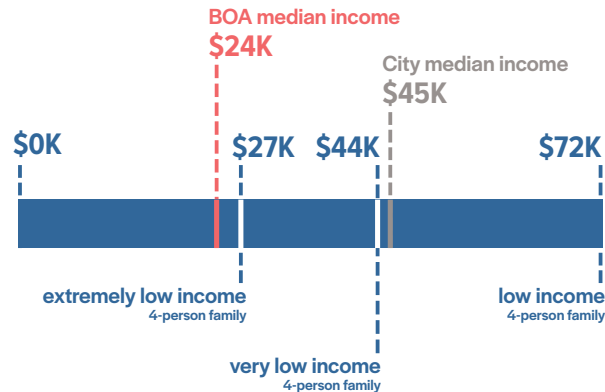
Age Distribution

Though the median age of the BOA (34 years) is slightly older than that of the City of Albany (32 years), the BOA has a larger percentage of children under the age of 15 (21% in the BOA compared to 14% in the city). The BOA also has a larger percentage of middle-aged residents, with 37% of its population between 35 to 64 years old compared to 32% of the city’s population in this same age range. The BOA, however, has comparatively fewer young adults and college-aged residents, with only 30% of residents between 15 to 34 years old compared to 40% in the city as a whole.



Education

While 33% of BOA residents are high school graduates or have earned a GED, only 22% have a bachelor or graduate degree. Comparatively, 39% of city residents have earned a bachelor or graduate degree.



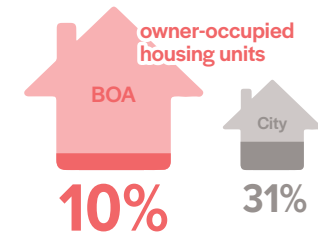
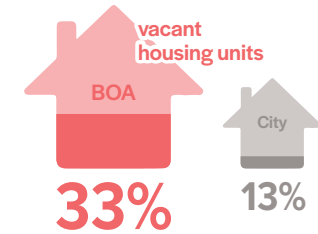
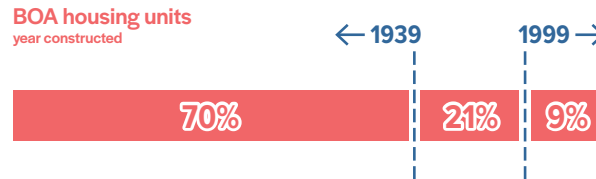
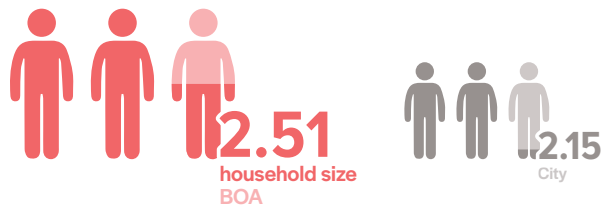
Median Household Income

The median household income in the BOA is \$24,406, compared to \$45,334 in the City of Albany. Based on 2019 HUD income limits for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy MSA, a 4-person household earning the median BOA household income of \$24,406 would be considered extremely low income. To be considered financially stable, a single-person household would need to earn \$50,350 – more than double the median household income in the BOA. Almost 48% of BOA residents are at or below the poverty level, while only 25% of city residents reach this same threshold.

KEY FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Population in the BOA area is growing. In the future, it will be important for the BOA area to provide a level of housing and services that continues to support its growing population.
2. The BOA area is home to many families with young children, making the provision of educational and recreational services particularly important in the neighborhood.
3. It is important for new jobs in the BOA area to match the skill levels of residents. An influx of high-skill jobs may diversify the workforce but may also displace existing residents. A workforce training program may be an effective way to elevate skill levels of existing residents.
4. The BOA area is one of the most economically-depressed areas in the City of Albany. Attracting jobs suited to a wider range of skill levels and increasing access to higher paying jobs would help combat concentrated poverty and expand employment opportunities in the BOA area.

Community + Regional Setting



Household Size + Type

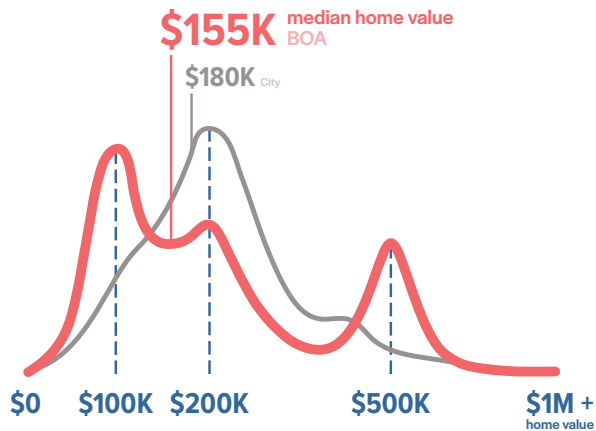
The average household size in the BOA is 2.51 people, which is slightly larger than the 2.15 people average household size in the City of Albany. While the BOA and the city are relatively comparable in percentage of single-person households, the BOA has a greater percentage of larger-sized households, with 34% of its households having 3 or more people. The BOA also has considerably more households with children – 31% compared to the city’s 22%. These metrics suggest that not only are households in the BOA larger, but they are more likely to have multiple children.

Age of Housing Stock

More than 70% of housing units in the BOA were built prior to 1939, compared to only 52% of units in the City of Albany. Older housing is generally more expensive to maintain, requires significant investment to update with modern amenities, and is frequently characterized by environmental contaminants (e.g., lead-based paint, asbestos). While the housing stock in the BOA is aging, the area has also experienced some new construction in recent years, with 9% of its housing stock being constructed since 1999, compared to only 3% in the city as a whole.

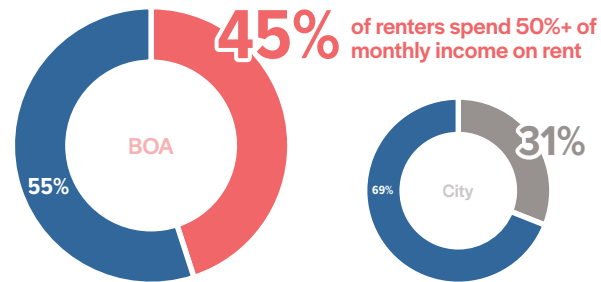
Housing Tenure + Ownership

As of 2019, a significant portion of the BOA’s housing units were vacant – 33% compared to only 13% in the City of Albany. Only 10% of all housing units in the BOA are owner-occupied, which is much lower than in the city as a whole (where 31% of all housing units are owner-occupied) and is likely driven by the high concentration of vacant buildings in the BOA. The rate of renter-occupied units (57%) in the BOA is equivalent to that in the city.



Home Values

Home values in the BOA are generally lower than those in the City of Albany. The median home value in the BOA is \$155,303 compared to \$179,739 in the city. Similarly, 33% of owner-occupied units in the BOA are valued below \$100,000 while only 14% of units in the city are valued at the same level. Although the values of owner-occupied housing units are generally lower, the BOA does provide a fairly large range of options for various income levels up to \$750,000 in value. In fact, 26% of owner-occupied units in the BOA range in value from \$250,000 to \$750,000, compared to only 18% in the city as a whole.



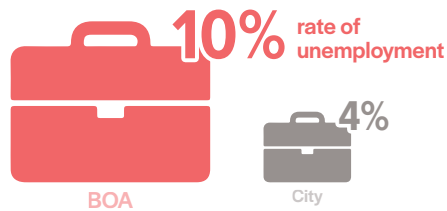
Housing Affordability

The median rent per month is \$654 in the BOA and \$801 in the City of Albany. Although rents are lower in the BOA, a greater percentage of BOA residents are unable to afford their rent. In the BOA, 45% of residents spend 50% or more of their income on rent; 30% or less of monthly income spent on rent is considered the threshold for affordability. For homeowners, the housing affordability index in the BOA is 67, far less than the ideal value of 100, which indicates that homes are less affordable in the BOA and that many residents may have trouble qualifying for a loan on a median-priced home.

KEY FINDINGS: HOUSING

1. Households in the BOA are larger on average than those in the City of Albany, and they likely have multiple children. Providing opportunities to age in place, such as first floor units and in-law apartments, will help meet the needs of large, multi-generational family households.
2. The housing stock in the BOA area is aging. Rehabilitating existing homes and providing new housing options could make the BOA a more attractive residential location.
3. The BOA area struggles with vacancy and a lack of homeownership. Opportunities exist to rehabilitate and redevelop vacant units to reduce vacancy and promote increased homeownership.
4. Homes in the BOA are available to a variety of income levels. Increasing home ownership opportunities in the neighborhood will allow residents to better control the quality of their housing, thereby increasing property values and wealth.
5. Housing costs for BOA residents are generally unaffordable for both renters and homeowners. It is critical to increase the affordability of housing throughout the neighborhood.

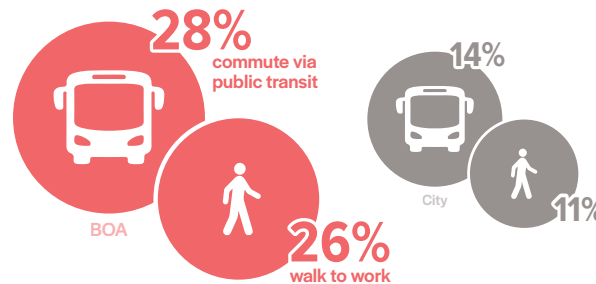
Community + Regional Setting



Employment + Businesses

As of 2019, the unemployment rate in the BOA was 10%, which lags behind the City of Albany's 4% unemployment rate. The largest industry sectors in the BOA are consistent with those in the city. Most BOA residents are employed in the services industry (58%), while public administration is the next most popular industry at 15% of total employment.

A total of 143 businesses operate in the BOA and employ 2,788 people – mostly from outside the BOA. In 2015, only 22 people both lived and worked in the BOA while 1,200 commuted into and 1,000 commuted out of the BOA for work.



Transportation to Work

Compared to City of Albany residents as a whole, BOA residents are much more likely to commute to work through modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. In the BOA, 28% of workers commute via public transit compared to only 14% in the city. Likewise, 26% of BOA workers walk to work while only 11% of city residents do the same.

KEY FINDINGS: BUSINESS

1. BOA residents are unemployed at a higher rate than city residents overall, suggesting a lack of available, desirable, or skills-appropriate jobs in and around the BOA area. A workforce training program could help match residents' skills with those required for area jobs.
2. Most BOA residents work outside the area. Providing a wider variety of skill-level and pay-range jobs in and around the BOA area would enable more residents to work within close proximity to the BOA, rather than commuting longer distances, which can be challenging and cost-prohibitive.
3. For commuting to work, alternative modes of transportation and public transit are popular in the BOA area. This metric highlights the need for reliable and frequent bus service and for safe and accessible pedestrian connections.
4. Given that unemployment is high and jobs are limited within the BOA area, redevelopment projects should focus on the creation of live/work spaces and entrepreneurial opportunities to build wealth through ownership.

SUMMARY

Community + Regional Setting

Sheridan Hollow is named for its location in a low-lying ravine. Historically, this ravine has physically and socially isolated the neighborhood from downtown, Capitol Hill, and Arbor Hill. Difficult topography and poor drainage made residence undesirable, and the area was first settled by the city's poor and working-class residents.

Today, Sheridan Hollow has a diverse and growing population. It is home to a large minority community with many families and single parents with young children. Most residents are renters and many use public transit. The neighborhood continues to struggle with poverty and unemployment and is one of the most economically-depressed in the City of Albany. In general, household incomes in the neighborhood are low and many residents rely on some form of public assistance to supplement their income.

Businesses in the neighborhood struggle because residents have little disposable income to support them. Many residents also have difficulty finding jobs because they either lack a college degree or their skills do not match those required for available jobs. Residents who are employed work primarily in the services or public administration industries.

The neighborhood's housing stock is dominated by pre-1939 row houses which, although historic and rich in architectural character, are deteriorating due to high vacancy rates and deferred maintenance. Home values and rents in the neighborhood are correspondingly low. Residents, however, still have difficulty affording their housing costs, sometimes at the expense of other necessities like food, clothing, and medical care.