

2.0 Vision Statement

The Vision Statement defines the place that citizens want Albany to be in the future. It provides the mandate for action to implement the Comprehensive Plan, guidance for planning decisions, and the overall benchmark against which implementation progress will be measured. The Vision Statement directly reflects extensive public input received during Stage One (Community Assessment and Visioning) of the planning process. The City and consultant team hosted two series of community forums (three meetings each in different parts of the City) to provide citizens with the opportunity to openly discuss concerns, community values, and aspirations for Albany's future. Held in January 2010, Community Forum Series #1 was designed to define areas of citizen consensus on the important issues facing the City. The meetings began with a summary presentation of the findings of the data, trends, and issues analysis to set the context for discussion. Citizen participants then broke into facilitated groups to discuss and build consensus on Albany's strengths, weaknesses, and ideas for the future. Keypad polling was used to allow participants to prioritize issues by voting on the top five strengths, weaknesses, and vision ideas.

The results of Community Forum Series #1 and associated outreach activities (an interactive website, "house parties," stakeholder interviews, etc.) were used to create a draft Vision Statement comprised of six components directly reflecting the input received. Community Forum Series #2 was conducted in April 2010 to allow citizens to review and give feedback on the draft. Participants again used keypad polling to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the draft Vision Statement. Eighty-one percent of the participants either agreed somewhat (45%) or strongly agreed (36%) with the Vision Statement. Participants were also provided the opportunity to recommend any proposed changes to the wording of the draft. The final Vision Statement (presented below) incorporates public comments from Community Forum Series #2 as well as input received via the Albany 2030 website. Based on the input, one of the five components of the draft (Sustainable City/Prosperous Economy) was divided into two components of the final Vision Statement (Green City and Prosperous Economy).

In considering the Vision Statement, it is important to understand its perspective, context, and role in the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement expresses citizens' aspirations for the future of Albany in the year 2030. Because it describes the future as citizens choose it to be, it is written from the perspective of a future Albany resident observing the City in 2030 and reflecting on the past two decades of progress – progress guided by the goals, strategies, and actions of the Comprehensive Plan, as maintained and updated over time. The Vision Statement expresses citizens' collective values and motivations – **what we intend Albany to be** – while Chapters 3 (Comprehensive Plan Systems) and 4 (Implementation) lay out in detail what **we must do to achieve the vision**.

2.1 THE VISION OF ALBANY IN 2030

Albany in 2030 has built on its history and diverse natural, cultural, institutional, and human resources to become a global model for sustainable revitalization and urban livability. The City promotes a balanced approach to economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental quality that is locally driven, encourages citizen involvement and investment, and benefits all residents.

2.2 THE VISION COMPONENTS

1. Safe, Livable Neighborhoods

Every neighborhood in Albany is a desirable place to live because of its walkable streets, historic architecture, range of housing choices, mixed-use neighborhood centers, quality schools, parks and recreation facilities, and easy access to Downtown Albany and other job centers.

2. Model Educational System

Albany nurtures its most valuable resources, its children, by promoting excellence in education at all levels. The City's institutions of higher education are valued resources and partners in initiatives to expand economic opportunities, enhance work force skills, and promote lifelong learning.

3. Vibrant Urban Center

As the capital of New York and a destination for work, play, and tourism, Albany is the region's primary center of government, education, health care, employment, and the arts. Downtown Albany is a vibrant mix of business, residential, educational, cultural, and entertainment uses connected to the Hudson River waterfront.

4. Multi-Modal Transportation Hub

Albany's neighborhoods and centers are connected to each other and to the rest of the region by an extensive, efficient, and safe network of complete streets, mass transit, bikeways, trails, and sidewalks.

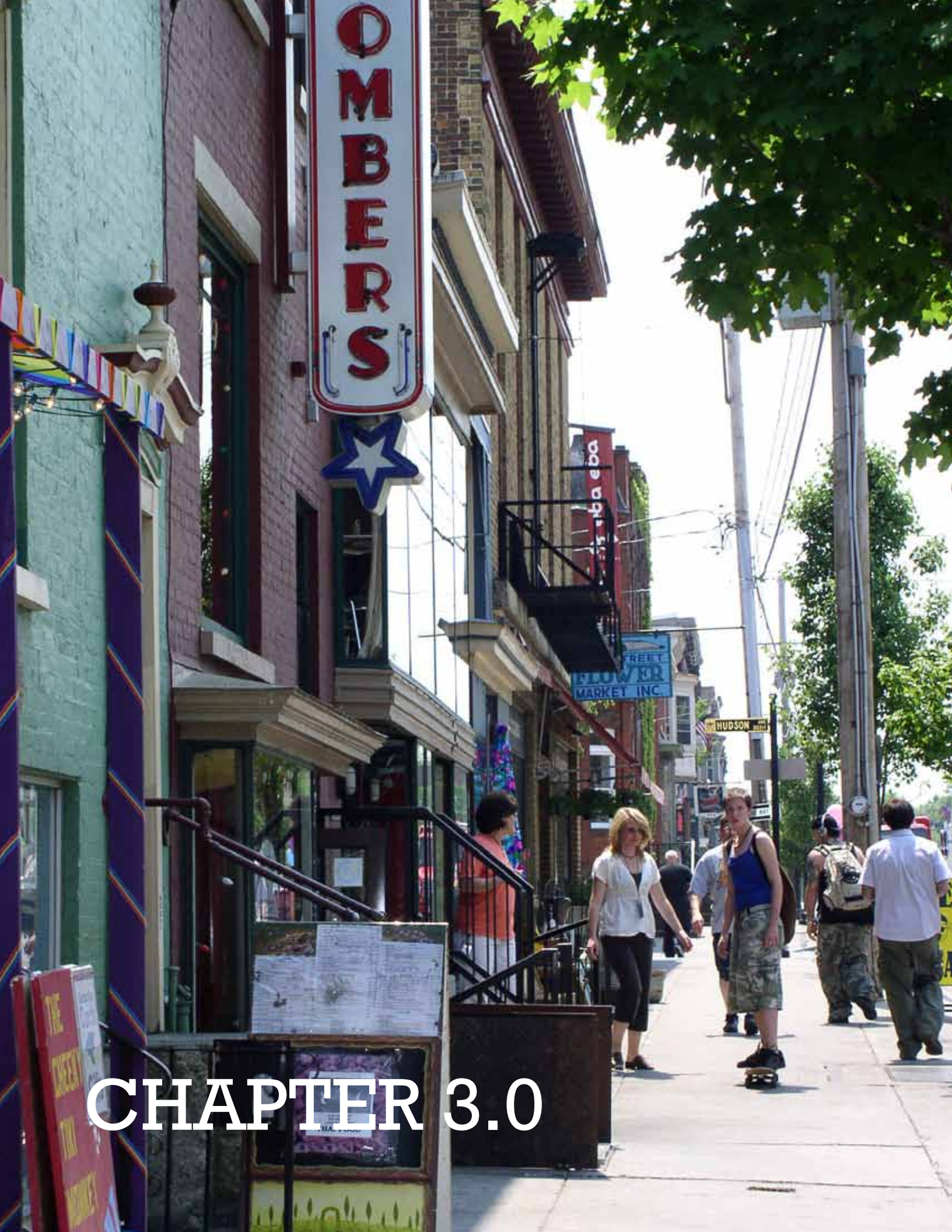
5. Green City

Albany is a model of community health and sustainability in its planning, restorative development, and conservation of energy, water, and natural resources.

6. Prosperous Economy

The City is a pillar of the regional and global economies, providing good employment opportunities for all residents with a focus on green jobs and technology.





CHAPTER 3.0