Social systems encompass a range of services that together address the City’s ability to meet the health, developmental, and intellectual needs of its citizens. These services are critical for an urban population with generally lower incomes and educational attainment levels than surrounding suburban communities. A key priority identified by participants in the Albany 2030 planning process is to improve education and training at all levels to enable students and adults to succeed in the 21st century economy. To achieve this priority, partnerships among the Albany City School District, higher educational institutions (e.g., University at Albany, College of Saint Rose, Albany Law School, Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Medical College, and Sage College), and the business community are essential.

Delaware Avenue combines vibrant retail, arts, service and entertainment opportunities with a close-knit community.
3.3 Social

Social systems addressed by the Comprehensive Plan include education, community health and recreation, public safety, arts and culture, and social services.

**EDUCATION**

Albany’s education system includes the teaching and learning of specific skills, but also the imparting of knowledge, good judgment and wisdom throughout an individual’s life-cycle. It includes formal primary and secondary education for children, higher education for young adults, workforce training to build particular employment skills, and continuing, individualized learning opportunities for persons of all ages. The institutions that encompass the educational system include public and private primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, technical schools, libraries, community centers, and cultural organizations. See Map 2 for a map of Albany’s educational facilities.

**Goal:**

Elevate the quality of Albany’s educational system, including K-12, pre-K, adult education, higher education, libraries, cultural organizations, etc., to a high standard based on established targets.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- ED-1 Champion urban education in Albany.
- ED-2 Increase partnerships between institutions and the business community.
- ED-3 Increase partnerships with higher education.
- ED-4 Partner with arts, music and cultural organizations.
- ED-5 Extend digital literacy programs.

- Performance levels among students in the Albany City School District are slowly improving; however, graduation rates are low (53% in 2009) and many families move to surrounding districts.
- Charter schools are run independently of the Albany City School District and local property taxes support both the public and charter schools.
- Despite the many positive benefits from Albany’s higher education facilities (e.g., young, creative population), potential negative impacts include tensions between neighborhoods, residents and students, and impact of expanding non-taxable property.
- Overall crime rates have decreased by 30% between 2003 and 2009, but there is still a negative perception of high crime in Albany.
- There are only four full service grocery stores in Albany, and these are not in close proximity to all neighborhoods.
- There are eight seasonal farmers markets in Albany that are accessible to some, but not all neighborhoods.
- Albany is served by over 100 social and human service organizations, many of which have overlapping services.

Although the schools struggle with perception issues, Albany’s K-12 students are offered exciting and challenging educational programs and activities.
Map 2 Educational Facilities
ED-1 Strategy: Champion urban education in Albany. (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-2, ED-3; Institutions FP-6)

Actions:

a. Assist the Albany School District in establishing and meeting targets for measuring educational performance using indicators from the National Cooperative Education Statistics System (e.g., class absence rate and percentage of schools making adequate yearly progress). The full list of indicators is included at the end of this section.

b. Create a “Partners in Education Program” with the Albany School District and charter schools to address and integrate the divided education system.

c. Engage the State Board of Regents to discuss the benefits and potential impacts of charter schools on the Albany City School District.

d. Coordinate school facility planning and use with community and neighborhood needs.

e. Market the positive accomplishments of public schools (e.g., magnet school programs, full-day kindergarten, public-private partnerships, rising test scores).

f. Encourage and support a “sustainability curriculum” in primary and secondary schools to educate students about issues associated with civic responsibility, urban planning, and sustainability and climate change.

g. Highlight the Albany public library system’s six newly-renovated, state-of-the-art neighborhood branches and main library.

ED-2 Strategy: Increase partnerships between institutions and the business community. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy EMP-3, DIV-2; Institutions RP-1)

Increase partnerships with government, institutions (e.g., State of New York, Albany County, University at Albany, Albany Medical Center), and the business community to expand learning opportunities for all ages (library service expansion, adult education, workforce training), including green job opportunities.

Actions:

a. Form a permanent public-private partnership that bridges city leaders, the city's schools, institutions, and the business community to share information, advance research and policy discussions, and act as an “incubator” of innovative education programs.
The Austin Partners in Education Program recruits volunteer coaches and mentors to work with a small group of students each week for an entire school year, generally in economically disadvantaged schools. The coaches work with the same teacher and students throughout the year and build relationships through mentoring, encouragement, and group work in reading, writing, or math. During the 2007-2008 school year, test scores improved across the board for schools within the partners in education program and the number of college-ready students increased. During 2008-09, businesses, foundations, and volunteers donated over $13 million in cash and services and 580,000 volunteer hours.

http://www.austinpartners.org/

b. Assist in the development of pilot programs between the business community and schools in low-income neighborhoods.

c. Involve the business community in planning for adult education and workforce training to match needed skills with education.

d. Utilize library branches as local educational resources, and the main branch as a hub of educational opportunities.

ED-3 Strategy: Increase partnerships with higher education. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy EMP-3, EMP-4; Institutions RP-1)

Increase partnerships with higher education institutions to increase access to and promote the benefits of higher education for public school students.

Actions:

a. Expand existing and develop new outreach/mentorship programs where students from local universities visit public schools to increase awareness of opportunities for higher education in Albany.

b. Support and expand the efforts of local colleges, universities, and other organizations (e.g., College of Pharmacy, College of St. Rose, Help Yourself Foundation) to expose public school students to the benefits of higher education through college visits, after-school programs, and outreach.

c. Investigate the potential for a collaboration that ensures admission and financial aid to all City of Albany public school students who achieve benchmarks and graduate high school. See the Syracuse University Challenge program as a model.

ED-4 Strategy: Support and partner with arts, music and cultural organizations to improve educational opportunities and cultural learning for residents of all ages. (Interrelated Strategies: Social AC-1, AC-2, AC-3, AC-4, AC-5)

Action:

a. Support existing cultural organizations and partner with them to work with adults and youth toward improved educational attainment.

b. Foster the development of education-focused programs linking students with Albany’s strong network of arts, culture, and entertainment organizations (e.g., Albany Symphony Orchestra, USS Slater Foundation, Albany Barn, Albany Institute of History and Art, Capital Repertory, Slater, First Friday Albany).
c. Promote and support the formation of new cultural organizations that have a focus on providing creative programs and learning opportunities to neighborhood residents.

ED-5 Strategy: Extend digital literacy programs to all neighborhoods. (Interrelated Strategies: Utilities & Infrastructure COM-2)

**Action:**

a. Work with City libraries, educational institutions, and neighborhood organizations to expand on the success of the City of Albany/Tech Valley partnership which aims to provide free wireless internet and digital literacy programs.

b. Support the library system in creating programs and accessibility to bridge the digital divide.
COMMUNITY HEALTH AND RECREATION

Albany’s community health and recreation system includes opportunities and access to parks, recreation, and community centers; walking and biking; healthy food; preventative health care; and physical activity.

Goal:

Improve community health through increased access to recreation opportunities, healthy, fresh food, and healthcare.

Strategies and Actions:

CHR-1 Improve connections between neighborhoods and recreation locations.
CHR-2 Promote walkable neighborhoods and complete streets.
CHR-3 Increase access to healthy food options.
CHR-4 Partner with healthcare institutions to promote preventative health measures.
CHR-5 Increase multi-modal connections to healthcare institutions.
CHR-6 Provide intergenerational opportunities for recreation.
CHR-7 Increase opportunities for recreational use of waterways.
CHR-8 Strategy: Improve and enhance public access to institutional facilities and open spaces.
CHR-9 Develop active design guidelines to promote physical activity and health.

CHR-1 Strategy: Improve connections between neighborhoods and recreation facilities. Provide parks, public spaces, recreation and community centers within walking distance of each neighborhood. (Interrelated Strategies: Social CHR-6, CHR-7; Housing and Neighborhoods NS-4)

Actions:

a. Use service areas for existing parks, public spaces, recreation and community centers (i.e., 1/4 to 1/2 mile walking distance depending on facility type) and develop a parks plan prioritizing neighborhoods in need of facilities based on mapping and quality of recreation facilities. See Map 3, Parks and Open Space Access, for a map of parks and recreation service areas.

b. Develop a process for tracking facility conditions, usage and need for equipment repair, replacement, or upgrade.

BEST PRACTICES: THE FOOD TRUST SUPERMARKET CAMPAIGN

The Food Trust combines research and policy advocacy to forge innovative public/private partnerships that bring supermarkets to underserved urban and rural neighborhoods. The approach is based on the successful Fresh Food Financing Initiative first launched in Philadelphia in 2001. The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative is a first of its kind grant and loan program to promote supermarket development in underserved neighborhoods throughout the state. The initiative has provided funding for 88 fresh-food retail projects.

In 2009, New York State Governor David Paterson created the $10 million Healthy Food / Healthy Communities Initiative, which provides grants and loans to supermarkets who invest in underserved communities throughout the state. The program is modeled on the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative and administered as a public-private partnership by the Low Income Investment Fund, The Reinvestment Fund and The Food Trust.

Map 3 Parks and Open Space Access

A detailed list of parks and preserves is located in the Albany 2030 Data Book.
Map 4 Food Access

Food Access
- Veggie Mobile Pick-Up (1/4 Mile)
- Farmers Market (1/4 Mile)
- Grocery Store (1/2 Mile)
- Neighborhood Association Boundary

Data Sources: City of Albany GIS

Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Albany
c. Partner with public and private schools to share resources and increase or allow community access to school playfields and recreational facilities where appropriate.

d. Develop partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to fund recreational facilities.

e. Develop a green infrastructure plan that includes pedestrian, bicycle, and trail connections between neighborhoods, parks, and recreational centers.

f. Investigate access to and recreational opportunities at the City’s waterways including the Normans Kill, Patroon Creek and Tivoli Lake.

**CHR-2 Strategy:** Promote walkable neighborhoods and complete streets to encourage walking and cycling.

*Promote walkable neighborhoods and complete streets to encourage walking and cycling. (Interrelated Strategies: Transportation MM-1, BIC-1; Natural Resources AQ-1)*

**Actions:**

a. Adopt policies or guidelines to increase safe, comfortable mobility options for bicyclists, transit users and pedestrians.

b. Continue to implement the City of Albany Bicycle Master Plan.

c. Designate safe routes to schools and improve sidewalk and bicycle networks in these areas.

d. Use traffic calming measures (e.g., landscape medians, pavement treatments, bike lanes or sharrows street trees and planters, etc.) to encourage walking and biking and improve safety.

**CHR-3 Strategy:** Increase access to healthy food options. See Map 4, Food Access, for a map of grocery stores and farmers markets within a ½ mile and ¼ radii of neighborhoods. (Interrelated Strategies: Social CHR-9; Natural Resources OS-2, OS-3; Housing and Neighborhoods NI-3, NS-7)

**Actions:**

a. Partner with organizations such as The Food Trust and Low Income Investment Fund to bring full service grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods.

b. Identify and market suitable sites for grocery stores within walking distance of neighborhoods and require pedestrian and bicycle amenities during site design (e.g., sidewalks, bike racks, parking located in garages).
BEST PRACTICES: NYC ACTIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES.

New York City’s Active Design Guidelines provide strategies for creating healthier buildings, streets, and urban spaces based on the latest research and best practices. Urban design strategies include improving access to public transit, providing easy access to parks and open space, and design public plazas to support recreational activities. Building design strategies for promoting active living through the placement and design of stairs, elevators, and indoor/outdoor spaces are also included.


c. Promote and incentivize community gardens, rooftop gardens, seasonal and year-round farmers markets, and urban gardening.

d. Develop a partnership between farmers markets and the Albany School District to incorporate fresh, healthy food in city schools and improve nutritional education.

e. Revise zoning to permit farmers markets in commercial or industrial zoning districts, with appropriate performance standards to minimize any potential negative impacts.

f. Develop an Urban Agricultural Plan to support efforts to grow and consume more fresh, sustainably produced, and locally grown foods within the city, increasing community health, economic diversity, and local food security.

g. Encourage local restaurants and stores to carry and use locally-sourced fresh produce, dairy and meat.

CHR-4 Strategy: Partner with healthcare institutions to promote preventative health measures (i.e., nutrition, smoking cessation and prevention, exercise). (Interrelated Strategies: Social CHR-9)

Actions:

a. Increase marketing of existing nutrition and healthy living programs and classes.

b. Encourage use of social media in promoting preventative health care measures and programs.

c. Work with local partners to develop media campaigns to encourage children to participate in daily physical activity.

d. Ensure adequate transportation access is available to preventative healthcare institutions and classes.

CHR-5 Strategy: Increase multi-modal and affordable options for connections to healthcare institutions. (Interrelated Strategies: Community Form LU-2; Transportation MM-2)

Actions:

a. Determine the need to improve transit access to and from healthcare institutions.

b. Consider a volunteer ride-share program to connect people with rides to and from doctor’s appointments.
CHR-6 Strategy: Provide intergenerational opportunities for recreation. (Interrelated Strategies: Social CHR-1)

Actions:

a. Consider the needs of neighborhood children, teens, adults, and seniors when designing parks and recreational facilities.

b. Design recreational facilities, parks and programming to attract a wide range of users (e.g., attractive public spaces for resting, opportunities for walking and biking, active play areas).

CHR-7 Strategy: Increase opportunities for the recreational use of City waterways. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-1, INV-2; Social CHR-1; Transportation MM-2, PED-2, TR-3; Natural Resources OS-1)

Actions:

a. Increase pedestrian and bicycle access to the Hudson Riverfront and the Mohawk-Hudson River Trail. Extend the Mohawk-Hudson River Trail south from the Corning Preserve along the Hudson River to the proposed Albany County Rail Trail via the existing road network.

b. Improve access to the waterfront, particularly the Albany Rowing Center and Corning Preserve, for all modes of travel to make it easier for residents and visitors to get to water recreation facilities.

c. Develop a feasibility study for adding a marina and increasing dock space on the Albany side of the Hudson River waterfront.

d. Identify and address barriers to boat passage for boats of all sizes, including bridge clearance and channel width and depth.

e. Work with the Albany Rowing Center to improve its appearance and function, including sidewalk repairs, improvements to the parking area, and physical improvements to the existing boathouse or identify a location and funding for a new facility.

f. Work with the Downtown BID and the Albany Rowing Center to develop a marketing campaign for existing special events (e.g., Head of the Hudson Regatta) and consider new events.

g. Work with the State and the Albany Port District Commission to change the policy on commercial development at Corning Preserve to provide retail services (refreshments, bike and kayak rentals, etc.) for water recreators and visitors.
CHR-8 Strategy: Improve and enhance public access to institutional open spaces. (Interrelated Strategies: Institutions FP-4)

**Actions:**

a. Improve connections and access (e.g., sidewalks, signage, trails, bicycle paths, etc.) between institutional facilities, surrounding neighborhoods, and the waterfront.

CHR-9 Strategy: Promote physical activity and community health through active design guidelines. (Interrelated Strategies: Community Form UD-1, UD-2, UD-3)

**Actions:**

a. Develop citywide active design guidelines.

b. Incorporate opportunities for physical activity (e.g., walking, stair climbing, plazas and recreation areas, visible activity areas) into new development, while still ensuring universal access.

c. Consider placement of parking, signage for transit stops, and bike racks when designing sites.

d. Consider developing a citywide campaign such as Shape Up Sommerville to increase physical activity and healthy eating through programming, physical infrastructure improvements, and policy work.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety services in Albany refer to police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS). The Albany Police Department and Department of Fire and Emergency provide public safety services to residents. In addition to formal public safety services, community design, neighborhood condition, and the presence of town watch and other community organizations greatly impact public safety.

**Goal:**

Improve and maintain public safety in all parts of the City, including crime prevention and pedestrian mobility.
Strategies and Actions:

PS-1 Remove blighting influences.
PS-2 Promote walkable neighborhoods and complete streets.
PS-3 Expand and promote neighborhood watch programs.
PS-4 Focus on a community policing method.
PS-5 Partner with the New York State Police to address the regional nature of crime.
PS-6 Enhance resiliency against natural events.
PS-7 Utilize crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).

Public safety emerged as a major theme throughout the community participation efforts.
PS-1 Strategy: Remove blighting influences (vacant/substandard properties) to prevent or reverse neighborhood decline. (Interrelated Strategies: Community Form LU-3, ARCH-2; Economy INV-3; Social AC-6; Housing and Neighborhoods NI-1)

**Action:**

a. Prioritize vacant and abandoned property acquisition and redevelopment to implement the land use framework and connect land use and transportation networks based on criteria and assessment methods established in the City of Albany Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Plan.

b. Continue the City’s national best practice Vacant Building Court, Vacant Building Registry and Vacant Building Inventory. Expand these practices to strategically assess properties, and incorporate new technology.

c. Develop incentives for the rehabilitation and reuse of vacant and substandard properties to promote reuse of financially challenging properties and provide gap financing where strategically necessary.

d. Enhance stabilization code and practices to require artistic board-up and tighter restrictions for building maintenance while vacant.

e. Capitalize and formalize a City of Albany Strategic Acquisition Fund and Land Bank that can acquire and hold strategic properties for stabilization and future reuse. Work with the County to develop a beneficial partnership under the recently approved New York State Landbank legislation.

f. Develop a citywide vacant/abandoned property strategic disposition strategy based on assessment of each property’s structural soundness, market value, historic value and other indicators outlined in the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Plan.

g. Identify, assess and remediate brownfields using available State funding where appropriate.

PS-2 Strategy: Promote walkable neighborhoods and complete streets to protect pedestrians and keep “eyes on the street.” (Interrelated Strategies: Community Form UD-3; Economy INV-3; Transportation MM-1)

**Action:**

a. Implement complete street design standards (e.g., using design guidelines for different types of streets) to increase visibility and safely accommodate a range of users (e.g., walkers, bikers, transit users, and drivers) as streets are targeted for improvements.
PS-3 Strategy: Expand and promote neighborhood watch programs. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-3; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-5)

**Action:**

a. Work with community stakeholders and the Albany Police Department to expand neighborhood watch programs.

PS-4 Strategy: Focus on a community policing method. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-3; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-5)

**Actions:**

b. Strengthen relationships between the police department and community leaders and neighbors in areas where crime is an issue.

c. Strengthen the relationship between the police department and schools.

BEST PRACTICES: PADUCAH, KY ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM.

A national model for using the arts to foster economic and neighborhood investment, the Paducah, KY program offers financial incentives to artists interested in relocating. The program is managed by the Paducah Renaissance Alliance and offers incentives such as free or low-cost properties, moving assistance, start-up business assistance, and restaurant grants to qualified artists and businesses. Since it began in 2000, the program has relocated more than 50 artists to the LowerTown Arts Districts. Over $30 million has been invested in the neighborhood since 2000.

http://www.paducahalliance.org/artist_relocation_program.php#about
PS-5 Strategy: Partner with the New York State Police to address the regional nature of crime. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-3; Institutions RP-5)

**Action:**

a. Increase coordination between the City and State police departments through regular communication and information sharing.

PS-6 Strategy: Enhance resiliency against natural events linked to climate change and that threaten the well being of the community. (Interrelated Strategies: Natural Resources OS-3; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-11; Utilities and Infrastructure EN-1)

**Actions:**

a. Complete and implement the Albany Climate Adaptation Plan to anticipate ways the city will need to adjust its resource management, infrastructure, and land use planning incrementally to address both current climate variability and future climate change.

b. Identify populations most vulnerable to a changing climate and increase resilience in those populations.

The Downtown BID’s annual Sculpture in the Streets exhibit brings nationally-recognized artists to Albany to provide one-year cycles of public art.
c. Assess emergency response plans in anticipation of climate change impacts and
develop a citywide natural disaster response plan to anticipate and quickly respond
to extreme weather and other emergency events.

d. In the emergency response plan, include provisions for emergency shelter and tem-
porary relief (such as cooling stations in response to rising temperatures and more
frequent and intense heat waves) to be directly used for protection from environmental
conditions and natural disasters.

e. Partner with the New York State Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to increase
coordination between the City of Albany Police and Fire and Emergency Services
Departments and the state and region.

PS-7 Strategy: Utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to in-
crease public safety. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-3; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-5)

Action:

a. Increase coordination between City departments to include best practices for CPTED
in site plan review.

b. Communicate CPTED principles to local property owners and neighborhood associa-
tions for implantation at the neighborhood level.

ARTS AND CULTURE
Arts and cultural elements in Albany include the City's museums, galleries, theaters,
exhibition areas, historic sites, and music venues. A strong emphasis on arts and culture
can impact the City's systems in a number of ways (e.g., improving education, public
space, livability, etc.).

Goal:
Promote and enhance arts and culture in the City.

Strategies and Actions:

AC-1 Promote cultural identity.
AC-2 Make art education available at all school levels.
AC-3 Foster opportunities for public art.
AC-4 Strengthen the City's arts and cultural districts.
AC-5 Enhance access to arts and cultural facilities.

BEST PRACTICES: HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE PROJECT

The Harlem Children’s Zone Project is a unique, holistic, and tremen-
dously successful approach to rebuilding a community from the
ground up, through programs that focus on the social, health, and
educational development of children. “Baby College” is one innovative
program that offers a nine-week parenting workshop to expecting
parents and those raising a child up to three years old, the years that
are proven to be essential for future educational success.

The Harlem Children’s Zone Practi-
tioners Institute provides resources
and low-cost workshops to com-
munities interested in organizing a
similar strategy for early childhood
education.

http://www.hcz.org/about-us/hcz-
practitioners-institute
AC-6 Provide opportunities for live-work space for artists.

AC-7 Create a welcoming atmosphere for artists.

AC-1 Strategy: Promote cultural identity through community engagement. (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-4)

Actions:

a. Work with the City’s arts and cultural organizations to expand and promote Albany’s offering of cultural programs (e.g., festivals, concerts, art fairs, historic celebrations, etc.).

b. Increase awareness of the City’s historic and cultural resources through special events, exhibitions, walking tours, and public art.

AC-2 Strategy: Make art education available at all school levels and through community service. (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-4)

Actions:

a. Encourage Albany public and private schools to include art and music education as a part of their regular curriculum and increase opportunities for after-school extracurricular participation in the arts.

b. Develop partnerships between the Albany School District and arts organizations to encourage students to participate through community service.

AC-3 Strategy: Foster opportunities for public art. (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-4)

Actions:

a. Integrate public art into streetscape and transit station improvements (e.g., light poles, gateway signage, bus shelters, etc.) where appropriate.

b. Include public art in planning for parks, plazas, and public buildings.

c. Continue to implement innovative public art programs that encourage public interaction (e.g., Albany Sculpture in the Streets).

d. Explore the creation of a Public Art Review Process to streamline the installation of new public art projects.

BEST PRACTICES: PHILADELPHIA MURAL ARTS PROGRAM

The Mural Arts Program began in 1984 as a component of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network to reach out to graffiti writers and redirect their energies to constructive mural painting, providing opportunities for them to channel their creative talent. The murals they create on vacant properties and other structures throughout the city add color, beauty, and life to an older, industrial city struggling with decades of economic distress.

In 1996, the Anti-Graffiti Network became the Mural Arts Program, which has produced over 3,000 murals throughout the City of Philadelphia. Mural Arts’ education programs are offered free and are targeted to at-risk youth. The programs use an intensive curriculum that involves mural-making as a dynamic means to engage youth and to teach transferable life and job skills.

The Mural Arts Program has also become a national leader in arts in criminal and restorative justice, currently offering educational programs in local prisons and rehabilitation centers using the restorative power of art to break the cycle of crime and violence in communities.

http://muralarts.org/
AC-4 Strategy: Strengthen the City's arts and cultural districts. (Interrelated Strategies: Economy INV-2, DIV-1; Social ED-4, AC-6, AC-7; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-5)

Actions:

a. Define and market existing arts and cultural districts in Albany.

b. Include arts and cultural districts in branding and marketing materials to encourage city living and homeownership in Albany's neighborhoods.

c. Increase marketing of the City's public art collection on the City of Albany's website and in promotional materials (e.g., Empire State Plaza Art Collection).

d. Build on the success of 1st Friday Albany and the Art on Lark Festival to expand the location and types of arts and cultural festivals and events (e.g., open studio tours).

e. Support community organizations in efforts to develop low-cost artist studio and performance space.

f. Promote and support the formation of new cultural organizations that have a focus on providing creative programs and learning opportunities to neighborhood residents.

AC-5 Strategy: Enhance access to arts and cultural facilities from and within the City's neighborhoods. (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-4)

Actions:

a. Promote access for residents to the City's museums and cultural facilities (e.g., through special low-cost admission days or events).

b. Determine the availability and need for arts and cultural programming and educational classes at existing community centers.

Children of all ages have been welcomed to participate in Albany 2030 so their voices are heard in planning for their future.
**AC-6 Strategy:** Provide opportunities for live-work space for artists. (Interrelated Strategies: Community Form LU-3, ARCH-2; Social PS-1; Housing and Neighborhoods NI-1)

**Actions:**

a. Develop public/private partnerships to adaptively reuse vacant buildings for live-work studio space.

b. Encourage construction of affordable live-work space through the reuse of vacant land and the City’s proposed Land Banking Program.

**AC-7 Strategy:** Attract artists to relocate to Albany by creating a welcoming atmosphere for artists. (Interrelated Strategies: Social AC-4, AC-6; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-2)

**Actions:**

a. Use zoning, such as a live-work overlay, and development regulations to encourage mixed-income and affordable housing units throughout the City (Hyperlink: Housing & Neighborhoods HDC-2).

b. Highlight local artists in exhibition/wall space within the City’s public buildings.

c. Invite artists to participate in competitions for public art and other design installations (e.g., lighting, bicycle or transit design elements).

d. Partner with new and emerging arts and cultural organizations to increase opportunities for artists

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Goal:**

Improve the social well-being of Albany citizens in need.

**Strategies and Actions:**

- SS-1 Maintain access to human service agencies, expand service where needed.
- SS-2 Encourage coordinated promotion and access to social services.
- SS-3 Focus on strategies for preparing low-income children for K-5 schooling.
- SS-4 Consider social and environmental equity in all decisions.
- SS-5 Foster collaboration between organizations that provide similar services.
- SS-6 Improve and enhance public access to institutional facilities and services.
- SS-7 Improve and coordinate homelessness assistance programs.
SS-1 Strategy: Maintain access to existing human service agencies and expand services where needed. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-2, SS-6, SS-7)

Action:

a. Review the inventory of social service agencies and identify gaps in services.

b. Support, promote and expand current specialized services for target groups such as veterans and refugee populations.

SS-2 Strategy: Encourage coordinated promotion and access to social service opportunities. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-1, SS-4, SS-5, SS-7)

Actions:

a. Co-locate social services agencies and share resources between organizations where feasible to reduce costs, leverage resources of multiple organizations, and mitigate potential inefficiencies.

b. Assist with developing shared outreach materials for the City’s social service agencies.

SS-3 Strategy: Focus on proven strategies for preparing low-income children for K-5 schooling (e.g., pre-natal care, home visits from a registered nurse following birth, preschool programs). (Interrelated Strategies: Social ED-1, ED-2)

Actions:

a. Partner with the City’s healthcare institutions (e.g., Albany Medical Center, St. Peter’s Hospital, non-profit service providers, and others) to increase access for all residents to prenatal and early childhood health care.

b. Develop parenting and early childhood education to prepare children for primary school. Use the Harlem Children's Zone Practitioners Institute as a resource.

SS-4 Strategy: Consider social and environmental equity in all decisions. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-2, SS-6, TR-3, TR-4)

Actions:

a. Evaluate the social and environmental equity of all proposed capital improvement projects.

b. Develop a comprehensive map of all social service providers, sites, and organizations to better allow for informed decision making.
SS-5 Strategy: Foster collaboration between organizations that provide similar services to reduce competition for funding and improve service efficiency and effectiveness. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-1, SS-2, SS-7)

Actions:

a. Work with existing organizations to partner and share resources and collaborate on marketing the services they offer.

b. Identify gaps in service that are not being met through existing organizations.

SS-6 Strategy: Improve and enhance public access to institutional facilities and services. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-1; Institutions RP-4)

Actions:

a. Expand access to the existing network of community facilities and strengthen linkages between health care and social service organizations. Albany has a strong network of health care providers and hospitals. Health care organizations should connect with and support social service providers to improve access to services for residents (e.g., housing assistance, homelessness assistance and prevention, family counseling, preventative health services, etc.) and more efficiently serve a wider demographic.

SS-7 Strategy: Improve and coordinate homelessness assistance programs. (Interrelated Strategies: Social SS-1, SS-2, SS-5; Housing and Neighborhoods HDC-10)

Actions:

a. Work with existing homeless assistance organizations to partner and share resources.

b. Identify gaps in service that are not being met through existing homeless assistance organizations.

c. Study the effectiveness of preventative programs, including housing subsidies, supportive services (substance abuse, mental health, etc.) coupled with permanent housing, legal support for evictions, and identifying and overcoming barriers to permanent housing.

d. Consider developing a housing and homelessness strategy that includes the following elements:

- Identify homeless demographics and the root causes of homelessness in Albany
- Evaluate existing programs and identify overlaps and gaps
- Identify proven strategies for homeless prevention, permanent housing solutions, temporary assistance, and continuing services
Best Practices: National Cooperative Education Statistics System Indicators (see Strategy ED-1)

- Class Absence Rate (Teacher & Student)
- Percentage of Schools Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- Average Student Assessment Score
- Percentage of Students Demonstrating Proficient or Advanced Performance
- Average Class Size
- Percentage Graduate Participation in College Entrance Testing
- Average Student Score on College Entrance Testing
- Percentage Students Completing (Advanced) Courses
- Percentage Students Enrolling in (Advanced) Courses
- Teacher’s Education Level
- Teacher’s Experience Level
- Number of Expulsion Incidents Per 100 Students
- Completion Rate / Graduation Rate
- Annual High School Dropout Rate
- Student Retention Rate
- Teacher Retention Rate
- Percentage School Capacity Used
- Student Enrollment Stability Rate
- Instructional Computer / Student Ratio
- Student / Teacher Ratio
- Percentage of Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspensions
- Administrator / Teacher Ratio
- Schoolwide Truancy Rate
- Reported Violent Incidents Per 100 Students
- Percentage Completers of Vocational/Technical Programs