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I. Introduction

“Castle Street has several weak spots and missed opportunities that need to be addressed to realize the full potential of assets adjacent to the corridor. To move forward, Geneva should consider this corridor a testing ground for new strategies designed to strengthen stable neighborhoods…” (czb, 2016, p. 34).

During the spring 2018 semester, students and faculty from Hobart and William Smith Colleges’ ENV402: Sustainable Community Development (SCD) Capstone class partnered with the City of Geneva to reimagine the Central Castle Street Corridor which spans from the five-points intersection of Castle, North Main, Milton, and South Main Streets to the intersection of Castle and Oak Streets (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The 2016 City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide includes a series of prioritized initiatives that support a vision of Geneva as being beautiful, prosperous, equitable, connected, and sustainable (czb, 2016). Within the series of initiatives proposed in this plan, the Castle Street corridor is prioritized due to its “historic and cultural assets” and because it serves as a “dramatic gateway to downtown for thousands of City residents” (czb, 2016, p. 34). In addition to leveraging the corridor’s unique assets, our proposals attempt to enhance environmental resiliency, promote social justice, and encourage more inclusive economic opportunities in the City of Geneva.

Our vision for the Central Castle Creek Corridor focuses on the following three main themes:

1. **Changing public perceptions of urban nature:** The first theme highlights the need to change public perceptions of the potential for nature in cities. Increasing the visibility of urban nature will encourage citizens to be better stewards of their natural environment while creating opportunities for nature to be more thoroughly integrated into the daily lives of Geneva’s residents and visitors.

2. **Enhancing community gathering spaces:** The second theme, community gathering spaces, addresses the need for truly public and accessible areas for residents to use for leisure and community-building. Our plan will attempt to identify and expand upon areas within our corridor that have the potential to host inclusive social interactions and gatherings.

3. **Creating resources for economic opportunities:** Lastly, the third theme, creating resources for economic

![Figure 1-1. Location of project site along the Castle Street Corridor in Geneva (Source: Furaya, 2018)](image1)

![Figure 1-2. Site plan for the Central Castle Street Corridor (Source: Furaya, 2018)](image2)
opportunities, identifies the “factors that promote or diminish upward mobility — education, transportation, housing, and workforce development” (czb, 2016, p. 36). Within our proposals, we have focused on specific programmatic ideas and the necessary physical spaces to support skills-building programs and the financial autonomy of economically disenfranchised citizens.

In order to recognize the diversity of land uses along the Central Castle Street corridor, we divided the corridor into three zones (Figure 1-3) in which we developed a series of proposals for physical changes, programming, and policy changes. These zones include: 1) Byrne Dairy and the Five-Points Intersection (see Chapter III); 2) the Geneva Public Library and the residential properties (see Chapter IV); and, 3) the lot of the former Madia’s and the portion of Castle Creek behind this lot (see Chapter V).

Figure 1-3. Map of the Central Castle Street Corridor showing the location and boundaries of the three zones used in project work (Source: Furaya, 2018)
II. Class Process

Course Approach, Timeline, and Outputs
During the spring 2018 semester, ENV402 was organized into three distinct phases, with assignments and outputs particular to each phase.

I. Inventory and Analysis Phase
During the first five weeks of the course, students became more familiar with the City of Geneva, the Central Castle Street Corridor, and their defining characteristics, through completing a series of related activities. During the first phase of the class, students worked in teams of 3-4 students conducting an inventory and analysis of existing conditions at the project site using four different lenses (natural/environmental, economic, sociocultural, and regulatory)

a) Document analysis: Students began their background research by first reviewing the 2016 City of Geneva Comprehensive Plan and Community Decision-Making Guide to gain insight into Castle Street and its role in the community. Students also reviewed other documents that provide insight into the project site and its assets and issues, such as Tools for Social Change’s “Let’s Talk Economic Opportunities” report and the Geneva Active Transportation Plan.
b) Mental mapping activity: Prior to visiting the project site for the first time, students drew their own map of the Central Castle Street Corridor based on their own personal recollection of and experiences in the project site. Students then compared maps to get a sense of what they might have missed or overemphasized in their initial maps.
c) Site tour and observations: After the mental mapping activity, Professors Blankenship and Lewis led the class on a tour of the project site, emphasizing the various environmental, economic, sociocultural, and regulatory factors shaping the site. Students recorded their observations of the site and its defining characteristics for the post-tour debrief.
d) Community partner visit: On January 24, 2018, Acting City Manager and Director of the Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center (GNRC) Sage Gerling visited our class to provide us with her perspectives on the corridor and the City’s vision for this section of Castle Street.
e) Existing conditions report: Working in their inventory and analysis teams, students compiled their inventory and analysis research into a series of four written reports summarizing their thematic findings. These background reports became the foundation for our work moving ahead.

II. Scenario Development Phase
By mid-February, we turned our attention to researching the best practices and precedents for community planning and design in locations around the world. During this phase of the course,
students were divided into three teams that were charged with developing scenarios that prioritized one of the following themes: environmental resiliency, economic opportunity, and social justice.

a) Community conversations: In the early weeks of the semester Sage Gerling met with the class to discuss initiatives focused on economic prosperity, cityscape development, and other topics. In the following weeks, phase II teams invited other key constituents to speak with the class. Table 2-1 summarizes our visitors and their role(s) in the broader Geneva community.

b) Midterm presentation: On March 14, 2018, the students presented their scenario development research to Professors Blankenship and Lewis. After the teams presented, the class engaged in informal discussions about how to advance the scenarios each team developed into a set of evidence-based recommendations for the City of Geneva.

Table 2-1. List of visitors to the SCD capstone class during the spring 2018 semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITOR</th>
<th>ROLE(S) IN GENEVA COMMUNITY</th>
<th>VISIT DATE(S)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sage Gerling</td>
<td>Interim City Manager, City of Geneva; Director, Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center</td>
<td>01/24/2018; 04/04/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Augustine</td>
<td>Former City Council Member, City of Geneva</td>
<td>02/28/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Amadori</td>
<td>Sustainability Manager, Hobart and William Smith Colleges; Member, Geneva Green Committee</td>
<td>03/07/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Camera</td>
<td>City Council Member, City of Geneva; Member, Geneva Green Committee</td>
<td>02/28/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda Everdyke</td>
<td>Communications and Engagement Director, City of Geneva</td>
<td>02/28/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Palmieri</td>
<td>Director, Geneva Business Improvement District (BID)</td>
<td>03/07/2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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c) Final presentation: On May 8, 2018, the class presented its recommendations for the Central Castle Street Corridor to a room full of stakeholders that included representatives from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva Public Library, Geneva City Council, and GNRC. The final presentation was followed by a brief question and answer (Q&A) session that led to further dialogue about the future of the Central Castle Street Corridor.

III. Recommendations Phase

At mid-semester we transitioned into the final phase of the class in which we narrowed down our previous scenarios into a set of complementary recommendations for the Central Castle Street Corridor. In this phase of the class, students were grouped into “zone teams” with each team focused on one of the following three sections of the Central Castle Street Corridor: Byrne Dairy and the 5-points intersection; residential properties and the Geneva Public Library; and, the former Madia’s lot and Castle Creek.

a) Idea pitch: On April 4, 2018, phase III teams pitched their preliminary proposals for each zone to Acting City Manager and GNRC Director Sage Gerling in order to solicit her feedback before further narrowing their ideas down to a final set of proposals.

b) Recommendations report: After refining their proposals into a set of complementary ideas for their assigned zone, each student team prepared a written report summarizing their recommendations for the Central Castle Street Corridor. Together, these three written reports provided a strong foundation for compiling the final report.
INTRODUCTION
This section of the report focuses on the area of the 5-points intersection where Castle Street, South Main Street, Milton Street, and North Main Street meet and the Byrne Dairy property adjacent to this intersection. The City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide recognized the challenges posed by this particular intersection, arguing that the intersection is “a visual mess—a poorly organized expanse of asphalt and concrete” (czb, 2016, p.35; see also Figure 3-1). Yet the 2016 comprehensive plan also recognizes the potential of the 5-points intersection to become “a fitting entryway for downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods” (czb, 2016, p.35). In this section of the report, we provide a series of proposals that aim to transform the 5-points intersection from an eyesore to a visually appealing gateway to the City of Geneva by utilizing the unique assets present in this section of the Castle Street corridor. These proposals also include suggestions for how the City and Byrne Dairy might work together to redevelop this important property in a commercially viable way while also “ensur[ing] designs complement the intersection” (czb, 2016, p.35).

Byrne Dairy Lot
Existing Conditions
Built in 1985, Byrne Dairy, located at 201 Castle Street, is the only gas station in downtown Geneva, making it a key location in the central Castle Street corridor (Fox, 2009). Not only is Byrne Dairy a place to refuel, but it also serves as an informal gathering spot for residents of Geneva who periodically congregate outside the store in the parking lot (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 3 Apr 2018). More specifically, Byrne Dairy serves as a popular afternoon hang-out location for teenagers who often utilize the parking lot for informal gatherings (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 3 Apr 2018).

Our observations of usage patterns at the site suggest that visitors to Byrne Dairy who are not refueling their cars, arrive predominantly by

Figure 3-1. Aerial view of the current 5-points intersection (Source: Google Earth, 2018)

Recommendations in Brief

- Enhance the current role of Byrne Dairy as a key private business that also offers important public amenities through a redesign of the lot and addition of plaza spaces, a bus stop, and expanded services within the Byrne Dairy store.
- Create a more visually coherent 5-points intersection by expanding public gathering spaces and improving streetscape amenities on the corners of Byrne Dairy, Rite Aid, and the Geneva Public Library.
- Improve pedestrian safety by repainting existing crosswalks at the 5-points intersection and adding an additional raised mid-block crosswalk from the Geneva Public Library to Byrne Dairy.
- Enhance local and regional identities through beautification projects such as painting electrical boxes and adding Seneca Lake themed bike racks in existing public spaces.
foot. It is therefore important to remember that many Genevans lack reliable access to public transportation (Tools for Social Change, 2016). Moreover, the closest bus stop to the Byrne Dairy lot and the adjacent public amenities is located nearly a quarter of a mile away in the Exchange Street parking lot (Regional Transit Service, 2017). While a quarter mile walk may be enjoyable in warmer parts of the year, traveling this distance by foot in winter months can be quite treacherous.

Sonbyrne Sales, Inc., a subsidiary of Byrne Dairy, owns four additional properties adjacent to the current lot. With this additional space, Byrne Dairy has an opportunity to expand its storefront and the services it offers to the community (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 3 Apr 2018). Since the owner of this particular Byrne Dairy plans to renovate in the near–term future, it would benefit the City of Geneva to work with Sonbyrne Sales, Inc. to redevelop the site in a way that benefits both the Byrne Dairy and the broader Geneva community (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 3 Apr 2018).

Proposal 3-1: Redevelopment of Byrne Dairy Lot
In conjunction with Byrne Dairy’s planned redevelopment of the lot, our first proposal is to move the Byrne Dairy store and its gas pumps further back onto the undeveloped adjacent lots in order to develop shared private-public space at the westernmost corner of the lot (Figure 3-2). Such redevelopment of the property would provide more indoor and outdoor seating for customers, improve both pedestrian safety and traffic flow, and allow a new Regional Transit Service (RTS) bus stop to be placed behind the store.

Proposal 3-2: New Bus Stop
As noted in the 2016 “Big Talks” report, some Geneva residents feel “that the bus system negatively impacts working class residents through limited scheduling and unreliability” (Tools for Social Change, 2016, p. 12). In
In order to start addressing such concerns, we recommend that the City of Geneva work with Sonbyrne Sales, Inc. to install a new bus stop on the redesigned Byrne Dairy lot. In order to provide easy access to the bus that does not interfere with utilization of the gas pumps, we propose that the new bus stop be placed at the back of the store (Figure 3-2). Ideally, the bus stop will also include ample seating for those individuals waiting for the bus (Figure 3-3).

**Proposal 3-3: Byrne Dairy Store Remodel and Expansion**

As part of the renovations that we are proposing for the Byrne Dairy lot, we recommend a new layout for the store (Figure 3-4). We suggest dividing the store into two separate spaces—one for purchasing food and beverages and another for consuming these items (Figure 3-5). The creation of a separate dining area with ample seating and large windows will not only allow customers to sit and enjoy their purchases but this dining area will also provide shelter for those waiting for the bus. In order to support the City of Geneva’s various sustainable materials management initiatives, we recommend that Byrne Dairy install a waste management station adjacent to the aforementioned dining area and that the waste receptacles be accessible from inside and outside the store (Figure 3-6). In order to encourage the proper sorting of waste materials by users, we suggest that educational signage accompany the waste management system (Figure 3-7). We encourage Byrne Dairy management to collaborate with the City and/or the Colleges in designing the waste management station and the signage accompanying it.
Gathering Spaces
Existing Conditions
As noted previously, the 5-points intersection was recently described as a "visual mess" (czb, 2016, p. 35; see also Figure 3-1). The 2016 City of Geneva Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide goes on to characterize this particular intersection as also lacking a strong identity despite its key position as a gateway to downtown Geneva from surrounding neighborhoods (czb, 2016). The design of the corners of the Byrne Dairy, Rite Aid, and Geneva Public Library lots only further add to the intersection's lack of visual cohesion as they each feature only a small grassy area and some signage (Figure 3-8).

The City of Geneva's policies formally prohibit loitering that may interfere (or is perceived to interfere) with the ability of public or private businesses to conduct their affairs (City of Geneva, 1993). The City's current loitering policy is ambiguous, often misinterpreted, and perhaps even outdated, leaving some community members feeling uncomfortable accessing existing public spaces in Geneva (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 24 Jan 2018).

Proposal 3-4: Byrne Dairy Plaza
Our recommended redesign of the Byrne Dairy lot creates a considerable amount of usable space in the westernmost corner of the lot (see Chapter III, Proposal 1; Figure 3-2).

We propose transforming this end of the lot into an elevated plaza enclosed by planters with integrated benches, as well as moveable chairs and tables, to allow the corner to be utilized as a public gathering space (Figure 3-9). We recommend lining the side of the plaza that faces the gas pumps with native trees.
that enhance local biodiversity (Figure 3-9). Moreover, we urge the City of Geneva to work with Byrne Dairy to install a clock tower (or similar landmark feature) in the westernmost corner of this plaza that serves as the focal point for the 5-points intersection (Figure 3-9).

Proposal 3-5: Rite-Aid Seating Square
We recommend that the easternmost corner of the Rite Aid lot be terraced to allow for the placement of a small seating square, which features bench seating, planters, shade trees, and a small art installation (Figure 3-10). The benches in this square could be oriented in two directions, one facing the Geneva Public Library and the other facing Byrne Dairy, in order to establish clear visual linkages and to further establish a more coherent identity at the 5-points intersection (Figure 3-10).

Proposal 3-6: Geneva Public Library Plaza
While the corner of the library lot is more landscaped than other portions of the 5-points intersection, the front lawn of the Geneva Public Library could be better utilized as public space (Figure 3-8c). We propose expanding the library’s programming into outdoor spaces beyond the terrace in order to create another public plaza at the intersection (Figure 3-11). In an effort to embrace the Geneva Public Library’s identity as one of the most inclusive spaces in Geneva (Tools for Social Change, 2016), we propose that this particular plaza include a series of planters featuring native vegetation that double as outdoor seating for residents and visitors alike (Figure 3-11). We also recommend that the plaza include several trees to provide shade for those visiting the plaza (Figure 3-11) and that tree species selection proceed with input from the City of Geneva’s Shade Tree Committee. Finally, we urge library staff to find ways to expand their existing programming into, and develop new programming tailored to, this new plaza space.

Pedestrian Safety
Existing Conditions
The City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide recommends that any changes to the 5-points intersection make it easier for pedestrians to cross the intersection safely (czb, 2016). The recent Geneva Walkability Action Plan characterized the 5-points intersection as “busy/dangerous” (Genesee Transportation Council, 2015, p.2). Uneven sidewalk conditions and worn/faded crosswalk markings only add to pedestrian safety concerns at the intersection (Barton & Loguidice, 2017). Moreover, pedestrians do not always utilize existing crosswalks when traveling to and from the library (S. Gerling, pers. comm., 3 Apr 2018), thereby increasing their risk of being involved in an automobile-related accident. Notably, Barton & Loguidice (2017) report that the majority of Geneva’s pedestrian-related crashes occur when pedestrians cross roads between designated crosswalks.

Castle Street is currently designated as a “through highway” between Main Street and West North Street by the City of Geneva Code (City of Geneva, 1968). This particular designation disallows the installation of any additional stop signs along this section of Castle Street (City of Geneva, 1968), suggesting other forms of traffic calming may be an appropriate addition to roadways in this corridor.

Proposal 3-7: Crosswalk Enhancements
The need for enhancing the safety and accessibility of the 5-points intersection is recognized by the City (czb, 2016) and its residents alike (Byrne Dairy Employee, pers. comm., 10 Feb 2018). We recommend that the City of Geneva repaint all crosswalks at the 5-points intersection using high-visibility patterns such as those depicted in Figure 3-12.
Research by McGrane and Mitman (2013) indicates that the application of high-visibility crosswalk markings at controlled intersections can lead to a better yielding rate by motorists and therefore increase safety for all roadway users (see also Anderson et al., 2015). Thus, any enhancements of existing crosswalks in the Central Castle Creek Corridor will likely help to mitigate concerns about pedestrian safety at the 5-points intersection.

Proposal 3-8: Raised Mid-Block Crosswalk

In order to encourage the use of crosswalks opposite Geneva Public Library, we propose the installation of a raised midblock crosswalk opposite the Castle Street entrance to the library (Figure 3-13). Midblock crosswalks are especially helpful in areas where jaywalking is common as these types of crosswalks encourage pedestrians to utilize appropriate crossings rather than to cross streets illegally (Sacramento Transportation & Air Quality Collective, 2005). In order to increase the visibility of the midblock crosswalk, we recommend that the City consider enhancing this new crosswalk with additional countermeasures such as flashing signals, roadway signage, and/or pavement markings (American Fork City, n.d.; Beneficial Designs Inc. et al., 2001; Minnesota Local Road Research Board, 2014; U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2009).

A local precedent for raised mid-block crosswalks can be found along Pulteney Street between 5 & 20 and Jay Street. Fully integrated into the streetscape, the series of raised crosswalks along this stretch of Pulteney Street fosters a more pedestrian-friendly environment on the campus of Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Shaw, 2015).

Public Arts & Streetscape Beautification

Existing Conditions

As the City of Geneva’s recent comprehensive plan highlights, “a poorly organized expanse of asphalt and concrete” (czb, 2016, p.35) is the dominant aesthetic feature of the 5-points intersection.
An array of utility poles, adorned with a random assortment of stickers and faded advertisements, are joined by a large electric utility box outside Man Yuan (Figure 3-14) in cultivating a confusing identity for the Central Castle Street Corridor. Meanwhile, the lots adjacent to the 5-points intersection have limited vegetation apart from grass, shrubs, and a few nearby trees (Figure 3-1), only furthering an overall lack of visual coherence at this important gateway intersection.

Proposal 3-9: Utility Box Mural

Across the United States, municipalities are transforming electrical utility boxes into unique pieces of public art. According to the City of Ithaca Public Art Commission (n.d.), electric utility boxes are among the “surfaces that are often overlooked” (p.1) when considering public arts projects in urban areas. In 2012, the City of Ithaca launched the “21 Boxes: An Electrical Box Mural Project” in an effort to engage the community in the City’s streetscape beautification efforts (Montana, 2012; see also Figure 3-15). Soliciting proposals from local artists, the “21 Boxes” project aimed to “create[e] a safe, inclusive and inspired urban environment” (City of Ithaca Public Art Commission, n.d., p.1). We suggest that the City of Geneva, in coordination with the Public Arts Committee, explore whether a similar effort to beautify electric utility boxes may be a viable option here. Rather than committing to the painting of electric utility boxes in Geneva, we recommend that the City consider the vinyl art wrap option being used in Minneapolis, Minnesota (City of Minneapolis Public Arts Administration, 2018) and consider forging a long-term partnership with SpaceVinyl to produce, install, and maintain utility box arts wraps around the City.

Proposal 3-10: Road Mural

Another low-cost means by which to beautify a streetscape while also engaging the community in the place-making process is to install an intersection (or road) mural (Project for Public Spaces, 2015; Walk San Francisco, n.d.). Research indicates that intersection murals also serve as effective traffic-calming devices, thereby increasing pedestrian safety at busy intersections (Meier, 2014; Walk San Francisco, n.d.). In Bayville, New York, the city implemented a compass rose road mural at a key intersection (Figure 3-16). We recommend that the Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center (GNRC), in coordination with the Public Arts Committee, develop an intersection mural pilot project that engages residents in the design and implementation of such murals at key intersections. In line with the recommendations of the City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide, we suggest using the Central Castle Street Corridor as a “testing ground for new strategies designed to strengthen stable neighborhoods” (czb, 2016, p.34). Given its location at the juncture of several different neighborhoods and the persistent pedestrian safety concerns in the area, we strongly urge the City to install the first road mural at the 5-points intersection.

Proposal 3-11: Bike Racks

In order to promote “greater active transportation choices” (Barton & Loguidice, 2017, p.1) in Geneva, we recommend installing bike racks in each of the proposed plaza spaces at the 5-points intersection (see proposals 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6 for more information). The presence of bike racks in highly visible locations throughout the city, such as outside the Geneva Public Library, will signal to roadway users that non-vehicular modes of transportation are prioritized and accommodated by the community (Green & Klein, 2011). Rather
than installing simple u-shaped bike racks in these locations, we recommend that the City “tastefully deploy...creative designs and use of materials to help brand the space[s]” (1000 Friends of Wisconsin, 2013, para.1). We suggest the City work with Vance Metal Fabricators to design a more iconic bike rack for the 5-points intersection plazas such as the Seneca Lake design shown in Figure 3-17.
INTRODUCTION
This section of the report addresses Castle Street from the Geneva Public Library at 220 Castle Street to the overlook of Castle Creek directly to the west of 333 Castle Street (Figures 1-2 and 1-3). Identified as a priority corridor by the 2016 City of Geneva Comprehensive Plan, this section of Castle Street has particular potential for "promot[ing] reinvestment and community pride by...reinforcing Castle Street's strong residential character" (czb, 2016, p. 23). The proposals identified in this section of the report address the goal of enhancing the neighborhood identity of the project's residential area through creating and programming public space, reimagining the streetscape, and promoting programs and policies that aim to improve the housing experience of residents.

Specifically, we recommend the creation of a flexible, multi-purpose outdoor space for the library where the vacant Touhey Building is currently located at 226 Castle Street, seen in Figures 4-1 and 4-2. We also propose several "urban porches"—small public spaces created along the curbline of the street—be created in order to foster a heightened sense of connection and community among residents in the Central Castle Street Corridor. Finally, we advocate for a series of housing programs that use the Central Castle Street Corridor as a case study for better understanding landlord-tenant relations and generating policies that ensure all residents experience a safe, fair and pleasant living experience in the City of Geneva.

Recommendations in Brief

- Create an inclusive and interactive public space associated with the Geneva Public Library in the vacant Touhey Building lot.
- Repair and reconstruct public sidewalks along Castle Street in order to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Dedicate one day a year to a Community Clean Up Day to bring the neighborhood together to learn about environmental respect, health, and awareness.
- Build "Urban Porches" in some of the current street parking spots to encourage community engagement and neighborhood pride.
- Run a program in conjunction with the Geneva Public Library that educates tenants of their rights and promotes a mutually beneficial conversation with landlords.
Public Space

Existing Conditions
The library plays an important role in the Geneva community because it is the only public space available to all residents within the primarily residential Castle Street Corridor. The library, seen in Figure 4-3, is cited in the “Big Talks in a Little City” as the only truly inclusive and accessible place in the community (Tools for Social Change, 2016). In fact, “according to participants, the library is accessible because it is free, is walking distance from many (though not all) neighborhoods in Geneva, has various kinds of programming for different social groups, and is a place where most in the community seem to feel comfortable and welcome” (Tools for Social Change, 2016, p.18).

Proposal 4-1: Touhey Lot Renovation
The most extensive proposal in this chapter centers on the outdoor expansion of the library and the sense of inclusion it provides residents. We discussed extending the library’s programming with library director, Chris Finger, who expressed an interest in more off-street parking, as well as an extension of the limited green space on the northeast side of the building to expand outdoor capabilities (C. Finger, pers. Comm., 9 April 2018). A major component of the library’s potential expansion is contingent on the demolition of the currently vacant Touhey Building, located one lot west of the Geneva Public Library. According to Chris Finger, the library would like the green space to include seating, a playground or interactive sculpture for kids, outdoor event space, and potentially a new entrance to the children’s section of the library on the west side of the building (C. Finger, pers. Comm., 9 April 2018). In essence, the new outdoor space we are recommending for the Geneva Public Library would be a natural extension of the library, used for “programs, fundraisers and concerts…” (Kirkland, 2012, para. 3-4).
As illustrated by Figure 4-4, our proposal features five key components in an effort to support the library’s current programming, create an accessible and active play space for children, and provide an upgraded space for lectures and the summer concert series. The first component is an amphitheater with a central stage that takes advantage of the natural slope of the landscape, and uses grass terraces to negotiate the elevation change of the site (Figure 4-5). The location of the stage allows for the building itself to serve as a backdrop for events (Figure 4-5). Additionally, the stage and amphitheater also serve as a simple platform that promotes sitting, reading, and gathering when events are not scheduled (Figure 4-5). The second component is a reading grove at the north-west corner of the site (Figure 4-6). As shown in Figure 4-4, the grove is located far enough north for both the morning and afternoon sun to reach it, appealing to users during the cooler Spring and Autumn months. However, the abundance of trees also creates shade (Figure 4-4), attracting visitors during the warmer summer months as well. The third component, a play space specifically designed for children of all ages (Figure 4-7), would be located to the north of the stage. We recommend installing interactive structures in this play space such as a human trumpet (Figure 4-8) and human chimes (Figure 4-9) that allow children to both play and learn in the innovative playspace offered in this proposal. Situating a playground adjacent to the basement of the library would also allow for the future creation of a door between the children’s space in the basement, and the outdoor play space. In terms of safety, the play space is located the furthest away from automobile traffic on Castle and Main.
Streets (Figure 4-4). The fourth component of a design is a pedestrian path that winds from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of the library property, allowing for easy pedestrian and wheelchair access throughout the proposed outdoor space. This path would lead directly to a more formal north entrance into the basement of the library (Figure 4-10), welcoming users directly into the library from the rear parking lot. The fifth component is a modification of the existing parking lot, which includes narrowing the center lane near the north entrance, creating additional handicap parking in the parking spaces directly adjacent to the north entrance of the library, and angling spaces on the north end of the parking lot (Figure 4-11). We recommend that the library designate the expanded parking for library patrons during business hours and then allow the lot to be used by the broader community after the library closes for the day, thereby easing the demand for on-street parking directly outside the library on Castle Street. Overall, the proposed design of an outdoor space at the Geneva Public Library is flexible enough to allow the library to extend their programming outdoors while also allowing multiple types of users to utilize the space during all times of day.

**Proposal 4-2: Clean-Up Day**

One additional program that would improve existing public space is the re-establishment of a community-wide Clean-Up Day. We suggest that the Geneva Public Library coordinate this program with assistance from the Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center (GNRC). Our proposal for this Clean-Up Day extends beyond a simple waste collection event to instead focus on building a stronger sense of community in the Central Castle Street Corridor. The program could be modeled after the Geneva Clean-O-Rama that occurred in the early 1960s, drawing over 2,000 children, Hobart College fraternity pledges, and Geneva citizens turning out to sweep streets, repaint houses, clean yards, and plant vegetation in Geneva (Army of 2000 Genevans Respond to Clean Up City, 1960; College Pledges Will Aid Geneva Cleanup Program, 1961). In order to maximize the number of participants in the Clean-Up Day event, we recommend that GNRC recruit “block captains” who are tasked with rounding up twenty friends/neighbors to work in assigned areas of the corridor (Curtis, 1960). We believe this new program would meld well with the types of neighborhood programs sponsored by the GNRC and extend such efforts into the transitional zone of the Central Castle Street Corridor where such programming has yet to regularly occur (Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center, 2018).
Proposal 4-3: Citizen Science
We also propose expanding the library’s primarily social programs to include environmental education workshops that center on Castle Creek and the various ecosystem services it provides to the community. As mentioned in the City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide, “uncovering the urban environmental asset in Castle Creek” (czb, p. 35) is one way to (re)connect Genevans with the natural environment. In order to promote a sense of place and greater familiarity with urban nature, educating the residents of Castle Street on their surrounding environment is crucial. One way to do so is through citizen science projects such as involving residents of the Central Castle Creek Corridor in water monitoring and invasive species management, in collaboration with the Finger Lakes Institute (FLI), as well as recruiting these individuals to help update the city’s street tree inventory, in collaboration with the City of Geneva’s Shade Tree Committee. Other related programs could focus on promoting efficient resource use such as a waste diversion workshop to show residents how to properly sort their waste or a workshop on how rainwater can be collected and used in Genevan homes.

Streetscape
Existing Conditions
The 2008 Neighborhoods of Geneva, NY study recommended the creation of eleven neighborhood associations (czb, 2008), organized with assistance from the GNRC. However, as illustrated by Figure 4-12, the project site is located within a transition zone between several neighborhoods and the downtown business district. While the neighborhood is technically located in the downtown district, it has far more in common with the three residential districts that surround it (i.e., (Historic North, Hildreth Hill, and Castle Heights), leaving residents without a cohesive neighborhood identity (Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center, 2018). However, despite this lack of an official neighborhood identity, we have observed that residents across the project site have developed their own sense of community. Residents in this section of Castle Street regularly gather on their porches and front laws and socialize with their neighbors. We believe that this sense of community can be enhanced by focusing on the streetscape components that support these community interactions.

Porches: Historically, front porches were used as an outdoor living room where families could gather after a long day’s work to enjoy the outdoors and as a space for community members to come together and interact with one another (The Cultural Significance of the American Front Porch, n.d.). Particularly in warmer months, we have noticed that numerous residents on Castle Street enjoy spending time on their front porches. Whether it be to enjoy the fresh air or spend time with family and friends, the residents of Castle Street appear to utilize their porches as a social space.
Sidewalks: Sidewalks within the project site are in poor condition (Figures 4-13 and 4-14). This problem, however, is not just limited to the Castle Street corridor. As is apparent in the “Big Talks in the Little City” report, Genevans have expressed their concern about the sidewalk conditions in relation to accessibility, walkability, and transportation city-wide (Tools for Social Change, 2016).

Front Lawns: Per our observations, front lawns on this street mainly consist of grass and the occasional flowerbed. A majority of the street trees on Castle Street are located in the tree lawn—the space between the sidewalk and street—which is managed by the City of Geneva Shade Tree Committee (City of Geneva, Chapter 327: Trees, 2016).

Policies: For future development of the streetscape to occur, it is important to note relevant city policies that may potentially need to be amended. The parking regulations, maximum speed limit, and addition of traffic regulation signs for Castle Street can be found in Chapter 335: Vehicle and Traffic of the city code (Geneva City Code, 1968). It may also be important to reference Chapter 350: Zoning and Chapter 351: Zoning Appendix to get a better understanding of the current off-street parking and loading regulations, and procedures for rezoning within the City of Geneva (City of Geneva, 1968).

Proposal 4-4: Sidewalk Improvement
We propose the improvement of the existing sidewalks in front of the residences located along Castle Street in order to promote a safer and more inviting walkway. As mentioned in the City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide, the City should consider “sidewalk and street improvements… as an opportunity to hone existing and new programs for adoption in other neighborhoods” (czb, LLC et al., p. 35). The improved sidewalk will also provide better accessibility options for residents going to and from downtown.

There is not currently an effective regulatory system put in place for maintaining the sidewalks specifically within our site, although the city code does mandate such upkeep (City of Geneva, 1986). Current policy regarding sidewalk maintenance, last amended in 1987, states that any property owner or occupant of a building, vacant or not, holds the responsibility for the adjacent sidewalk (City of Geneva, Chapter 306: Streets and Sidewalks, Article I, 1987). If such owners or occupants neglect to clear, clean, or fix damages or obstructions on the sidewalk adjacent to their property or place of the city will have the Director of Public Works address the conditions accordingly (City of Geneva, Chapter 306: Streets and Sidewalks, Article I, 1987). The cost of the work provided by the City will be charged to the owner and
residences, as well as, an extra fee of 50% of the cost as punishment of neglect (City of Geneva, Chapter 306: Streets and Sidewalks, Article I, 1987). In order to set about repairing the sidewalks, collaboration with the City of Geneva is necessary to comply with Chapter 306 of the local city code (City of Geneva, 1968), in order to adhere to the basic safety and construction standards set forth by the city.

**Proposal 4-5: Urban Porches**

Since 2010, the City of San Francisco has run a successful program called, “Pavement to Parks,” which focuses on taking over parking spaces in order to create space for seating, landscaping, bike parking, etc. (San Francisco Parklet Program, 2018). San Francisco has already built 38 different parklets across the city with different groups acting as sponsors to develop and maintain the sites. In 2015, the City of Geneva launched its own parklet pilot program (Buchiere, 2018), providing local business owners with the opportunity to extend their operations outside during summer months. Local business owners initially expressed concern about the loss of parking spots downtown, but these concerns have dissipated since the program was first established (Buchiere, 2018).

Rather than simply expanding the parklet program into the Central Castle Street Corridor, we instead recommend that the City of Geneva develop a series “urban porches” in order to promote community engagement and encourage place-making in this particular neighborhood. Each of these newly constructed “urban porches” would occupy the equivalent of two parking spots (8’ x 40’), diminishing the number of total parallel parking spots available to residents. Yet, the benefits of installing an “urban porch” could be significant for residents of this stretch of Castle Street and beyond. Not only will residents have a designated public space for neighbors to congregate but the installation of these modified bulb-outs will visually narrow the roadway will be visually narrowed and slow traffic in the residential area (SF Better Streets, 2015). Siting recommendations for these Urban Porches can be seen in Figures 4-15 and 4-16 and a few possible designs for the urban porches themselves are depicted in Figures 4-17, 4-18, and 4-19. We strongly urge the City to engage residents of the Central Castle Street Corridor in the design of each urban porch so that they feel invested in this project from the get-go.

The “social steps” concept is the most literal interpretation of the phrase “front porch” as a place for neighbors to gather. This porch includes several tiers (or steps) of varying heights, as well as important safety features such as planters to act as a wall to ensure the safety of children in close proximity to the roadway (Figure 4-17). Rather than changing the identity of the neighborhood, the multi-level, open design of the social steps instead offers residents a nearby public space where
they are welcome to congregate, socialize, and relax as they would on their own porches.

The “herban porch” concept is more than simply a space to gather. This design, by comparison, offers both environmental education and community gardening opportunities (Figure 4-18). In the planters incorporated into this urban porch, residents of the Central Castle Street Corridor could grow various herbs for their own consumption. Educational signage could be developed to accompany these herbs so that passers-by can read about what is being growing in the herban porch. We recommend that residents who contribute to the herb garden be able to reap the benefits of their own labor by periodically harvesting the crops for use in their own kitchens. Should this concept gain traction within the community, we suggest that the City partner with Growing Geneva Together and/or Tools for Social Change to install similar herban porches in other interested neighborhoods.

The “Castle Creek” concept draws attention to one of the City’s most important natural features and its namesake: Castle Creek (Figure 4-19). We propose that this structure showcase vegetation native to riparian areas in the Finger Lakes. Similar to the “herban porch” concept, we recommend that the “Castle Creek” porch include educational signage that is integrated into the design of the porch. This particular urban porch could also include a rainwater harvesting system and/or materials management system, furthering its value to the community.

**Housing**

**Existing Conditions**

There are three important existing conditions relating to housing in this section of the report:
the zoning of the project site, the physical conditions of housing stock in the Central Castle Street Corridor, and tenant-landlord relations in this area.

**Zoning:** The project site is filled primarily with residential buildings (one, two and three-family houses) (Ontario County, 2014). However, the site has been zoned as Business-1 since at least 1968 (Figure 4-20), meaning that only new commercial (rather than residential) buildings can be constructed in this section of the Castle Street corridor (City of Geneva, 2018b). As such, the Business-1 zoning designation of the project site clearly illustrates a conflict between reality and policy, and restricts the site’s potential for developing into a cohesive neighborhood by prohibiting any new construction of residences.

**Housing Stock:** Per our observations, the 39 buildings within the site differ in physical appearance, ranging from some well-maintained structures (Figure 4-21) to some houses with crumbling porches and “do not occupy” signs on the doors (Figure 4-22). Average sale values for houses in the Historic North neighborhood, which this site borders, were $60,478 in 2008; in 2018, a typical single family home in this site (269 Castle St, with two bedrooms, one bathroom, and 960 square feet) is for sale for $69,000 (czb, 2008, p. 54; Trulia, 2018a,b).

**Tenant-Landlord Relations:** Of the 39 buildings in the project site, only 10 are owner-occupied, while 29 are rental properties (Ontario County, 2014). Of these 29 rental properties, 11 are owned by Geneva residents, 16 are owned by New York State residents not living in Geneva, and two are owned by people living outside of the state (Ontario County, 2014). This high rate of out-of-town landlords is highlighted in two recent studies conducted in Geneva: *Big Talks in a Little City* (Tools for Social Change, 2016), and *Let’s Talk Economic Opportunity* (Tools for Social Change, 2018). Both of these documents document tenants’ relationships and frustrations with “slumlords,” landlords who rent out subpar or even unsafe properties to tenants and do not respond to requests for improvements (Tools for Social Change, 2016, p. 10). For instance, one resident expressed that “a lot of well-known slumlords...they're gonna want $700, but they're going to have filthy carpets and roaches...and paint peeling, and you know, just deplorable conditions” (Tools for Social Change, 2016, p. 10).

Furthermore, many residents feel that these “slumlords” are not held accountable by the City of Geneva, either due to lack of oversight or reputation. One resident even suggests that the landlords are “big names in the city...which keeps them out of trouble” (Tools for Social Change, pp.10-11). While it is likely that some of the 53 tenant residents in this area have had similar experiences, it is also worth noting that four houses in the site have been purchased by Debra Cleveland, a landlord with a reputation for rehabilitating houses; in particular, one of her Castle Street properties has experienced marked improvements in its curb appearance between 2013 and 2018 (Cleveland, 2018; Ontario County Online Resources; Google Maps; pers. observ., 12 April 2018).

**Introduction to Proposals 4-6 to 4-8:** In order to begin addressing the problems surrounding the housing stock, zoning, and tenant-landlord relations in the Central Castle Street Corridor, we propose a three-pronged approach. These goals include: 1) improving awareness of tenant’s rights, 2) facilitating a community conversation between landlords and tenants, and 3) creating mutual accountability and a sense of rapport between the landlords and tenants. The following proposals are centered around the Public Library, in hopes that its proximity to these residential properties will encourage greater community involvement. Moreover, we recommend that the City field-test the following proposals in the Castle Street Corridor in anticipation of expanding these initiatives to other neighborhoods in the City.

**Proposal 4-6: Tenant-Landlord Awareness**
We recommend that the City administer a series of surveys to tenants living and landlords
owning properties in the Central Castle Street Corridor. These proposed surveys would help community leaders better understand how landlords and tenants perceive the residential area in which they own or reside (MassLegalHelp, n.d.). These surveys could be mailed to landlords and tenants, handed out at a formal tenants’ awareness meeting at the Geneva Public Library, and would also be stocked in the handout and flyer board to the left of the Library’s entrance to facilitate greater participation on non-meeting days. These surveys would demonstrate to tenants that a process is underway to transform landlord-tenant relations and begin a conversation that can address issues specific to this corridor.

Suggested questions for the tenant and landlord surveys are available in Appendices II and III, respectively.

Proposal 4-8: Creation of Neighborhood (or Block) Taskforce

In order to foster a sense of community pride and provide a formal structure in which to engage in important conversations about community issues, we recommend that the GNRC work with residents of the Central Castle Street Corridor to establish a neighborhood (or block) taskforce. Due to the small size of this particular residential area, we do not propose the creation of a 12th formal neighborhood in Geneva. However, our research suggests that this residential area would benefit from more acute attention and support from the city. We suggest that GNRC initiate discussions about the creation of a neighborhood (or block) taskforce with residents along this stretch of Castle Street. We recommend that residents elect individuals to serve on the taskforce in order to gain a greater sense of ownership over their neighborhood. Once established, the taskforce could organize meetings and other activities designed to activate the community around the various objectives residents of the Central Castle Street Corridor share. Overall, this group of citizens would help guide the decision-making process.
process for the creation of new developments like community porches and landlord-tenant conversations and facilitate the clean-up events discussed in proposal 4-2.

**Introduction to Proposals 4-9 to 4-12:**

The following four proposals are intended to enhance and promote landlord-tenant accountability and respect. These policies would both provide legal reinforcement for ideas from previous three proposals and lead to more active enforcement of the rules and regulations provided in Chapter 158: Fair Housing of the Geneva City Code (City of Geneva, 1968).

**Proposal 4-9: Landlord-Tenant Commission**

The first step towards promoting mutual accountability between landlords and tenants would be the creation of a landlord-tenant commission that initially focuses on the project site but is later expanded to encompass the entire city. We suggest that the City of Geneva look to the landlord-tenant commission in Arlington, VA for inspiration on how to structure this commission. This particular landlord-tenant commission is hailed as a success given how fairly it dealt with housing issues in the community (Arlington County Government, 2018), while the City of Burbank’s landlord-tenant commission has 15 members with membership divided evenly among landlords, tenants, and the public at-large (City of Burbank, 2018). Meanwhile Montgomery County, MD, has a similar type of commission that actually holds legal power to hold landlords and tenants accountable for an agreed-upon bill of rights (Montgomery County Government, 2018). Once the City of Geneva has determined the appropriate size and composition for its tenant-landlord commission, we recommend that the commission operate independent of the municipality as a formal organization with legal packing that provides tenants and landlords alike an official forum in which to air grievances, settle disputes, and build trust. Ideally, the proposed commission would partner with the existing Fair Housing Board to advance equity-oriented housing initiatives in Geneva.

**Proposal 4-10: Rental Inspection Program**

Another policy that would greatly benefit Geneva is a rental inspection program. Research suggests that such programs help to improve the overall quality of the housing stock and help ensure that the homes always meet a baseline living condition. It should be noted that the proposal we present here is not an original one, as the idea for a rental inspection program was included in the 2016 City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide where the city was urged to “pursue strict code enforcement” (czb, 2016, p. 35) for homes on the North end of Castle Street.

The rental inspection program we are recommending would require all rental properties to be registered with the City of Geneva (specifically working with the Fair Housing Board outlined in City Code section 158-15). Registration would include a deposit that the landlord could get back in either tax credits or cash – assuming the property(ies) meets all standards following the City’s annual inspection of the property(ies). Similar programs are present in Oskaloosa City, IA, where the city required a fifteen dollar annual deposit from landlords (City of Oskaloosa, 2017), and in Sacramento County, CA, where their rental inspection program resulted in a 22 percent reduction of dangerous building cases (Wegener, 2017). However, there was pushback from some landlords regarding the establishment of such a program in Raleigh, NC due to the perceived financial burdens to landlords associated with the program’s annual fee (American Apartment Owners Association, 2011). While we acknowledge that the City of Geneva must proceed with care in establishing its own rental inspection program, we are hopeful that requiring a refundable deposit may alleviate some local landlords’ financial concerns and bring them on board with the program. Overall, this proposed program would
require that landlords bring their homes up to a city-designated standard for both livability and appearance, thereby benefiting landlords, tenants, and the broader Geneva community as a whole.

**Proposal 4-11: Rent Cost Moderation**

With improvements to the housing stock, another potential problem often emerges: gentrification (Hengels, 2015). A widespread issue in 21st century America, gentrification is the process of revitalizing neighborhoods, one that often leads to wealthier residents moving into newly gentrified areas while lower income inhabitants are priced out (Wilson, 2017). With any significant investment in the Central Castle Street Corridor, gentrification becomes a significant risk. Indeed, many Genevans point out that gentrification is already occurring in the downtown district (V. Casimir, pers. comm., 20 February, 2018). However, the proposal below is a direct response to such concerns because it moderates rental costs in a fair and equitable way for all citizens of Geneva.

Although rent control (i.e., the assurance that rents cannot be raised) can often cause a greater division between the lower and middle class if not implemented correctly (Beyer, 2015; Malik, 2016), we believe it is still important for the City of Geneva to create a new policy that mitigates the potential increases in rental costs that may accompany its efforts to revitalize the Central Castle Street Corridor, its housing stock, and the area’s overall livability. Because rent control and rent stabilization (i.e., the limiting of increases in rent costs from year to year) are city-determined issues in New York State (New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal, n.d.), we propose that the City of Geneva establish a rent stabilization rate of 2.5% annually at maximum. Notably, rental control rates in New York City, where property values and monthly rental costs far outpace those in Geneva, are between 1.5% and 2.5% (Moynihan, 2018). Of course any move toward rent cost moderation in Geneva will require the City to review its current code to determine what, if any, changes may be required to enact rent control and/or rent stabilization programs locally.

**Proposal 4-12: Incentivizing Low-Income Housing**

A final strategy for ensuring that residents do not get priced out of gentrifying neighborhoods is “inclusionary housing,” which involves incentivizing landlords with tax breaks or subsidies for offering low income housing. This process has found success in other municipalities such as Boulder, CO. In Boulder, landlords are given incentives – for instance, tax breaks – to keep 30% of their rental units low-income housing, thereby increasing the number of available low income housing options in the area (City of Boulder, 2016). Implementing a similar system in Geneva could further strengthen the City’s ability to maintain sufficient housing stock for its low income residents amidst any residential improvements in the Central Castle Street Corridor.
INTRODUCTION
This section of the report focuses on the site of the former Madia’s Big M grocery store, which is currently occupied by a laundromat, barbershop, and a mini mart. While current uses of the site are serving community needs, the site has arguably lost its importance as a communal hub for residents in the Central Castle Street Corridor. The abundant space of the former Madia’s lot offers opportunities for embracing new site design strategies that aim to reintroduce the communal functions of the site, while also working to change the public perception of urban nature by drawing greater attention to Castle Creek through on-site environmental and educational programming. In this chapter of the report, we present two proposals for the physical space at the former Madia’s Big M property and nearby Castle Creek. Our near-term future (1-10 year) proposal includes adaptive reuse of the existing structure, while our long-term future (10-20 year) proposal calls for a complete reconceptualization of the former Madia’s site in terms of its land use and the types of programming it supports (Figure 5-1). Each proposal aims to address important environmental, economic, and community-centered concerns and focuses on using design strategies that highlight the visibility of urban nature in an otherwise intensively developed built environment.

Recommendations in Brief

Near-Term Proposals:
- Renovate existing building and retrofit space using sustainable building practices such as green roof systems, rainwater collection and filtration, solar panels, natural cross-ventilation, and deep angled roof overhangs for passive solar efficiency
- Plant the site with native and non-invasive vegetation in order to enhance the biodiversity of the area
- Develop inclusive, accessible, and inviting outdoor public spaces featuring fixed and flexible seating, paved walkways, and abundant greenspace
- Institute a “virtual daylighting” of Castle Creek featuring informational signage and a brick inlay paving mural following the approximate course of the creek to draw attention to this important natural feature

Long-Term Proposals:
- Demolish existing building and erect two new buildings centered around a common, the daylighting of Castle Creek, and a pedestrian trail connecting from the site to North Main Street
- Create spaces that support an inclusive community and highlight environmental awareness and civic engagement
  - Building 1: Marketplace with communal cooking space and Castle Creek overlook
  - Building 2: Skills building and community innovation center
- Through physical design and programming, educate and change perceptions about the potential for, and accessibility of, urban nature in the City of Geneva
Located at an important transitional point in the Castle Street corridor, the former Madia's lot sits at the base of the Castle Heights neighborhood. Once a large communal hub, this space is now occupied by a large and often underutilized parking lot (Figure 5-2), as well as a laundromat, a small barber shop, and a mini mart with a large vacant storefront that faces Castle Street (Figure 5-3). Since Madia’s Big M closed in November 2014, the site has largely lost its strong ties to the community and no longer serves as a social space and meeting area for local residents (R. Madia, pers. comm., 14 Feb 2018). Moreover, the structure and parking lot on the property obscure one of the City’s important natural features, Castle Creek, which is piped beneath the property before resurfacing behind the rear of the building.
The vast majority of our land cover at the former Madia’s lot is impervious surfaces (e.g., asphalt and concrete). Meanwhile, the vegetative cover in this area of the Central Castle Street Corridor is primarily grass along with a few scattered shrubs and trees (Figure 5-4). Vegetation density increases where Castle Creek resurfaces from its underground, which is currently just east of the former Madia’s lot (Figure 5-4).

Castle Creek is considered to be the most urbanized stream in the Seneca Lake watershed (SLWMP, 2012, 110). On its westernmost end, the path of Castle Creek begins in agricultural land then flows through a gradient of suburban land uses before entering the more urbanized area of the Central Castle Creek Corridor. Since the 1930s, the creek has been incised and manipulated countless times, now running underground for about 1,716 feet total between five separate sections, making the creek visible on the surface in only a few locations throughout the City (Meyer, 2012), including in the project site. Although the creek is above ground in this section of Castle Street, our research suggest that it is far from a healthy natural stream channel. Soil erosion, stormwater pollution, and the public dumping of debris all plague Castle Creek at present, suggesting there is much room for improvement in how Genevans interact with this precious natural resource.

Near-Term Future: Retrofitting the Current Structure on the Former Madia’s Lot

Proposal 5-1: Physical Space Renovation

The 2016 City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide highlights the former Madia’s site as one with great potential to initiate several improvements for the Castle Street corridor by providing commercial amenities through mixed-use development (czb, 2016, p. 35). As such, we propose an adaptive reuse of the existing structure to create an innovative and community-centered space that is also an exemplar of sustainable renovation and building practices (Figures 5-5 and 5-6). The practices adopted in our short-term renovation proposal include green roofs, rainwater collection and management systems, natural cross-ventilation and deep, angled roof overhangs for passive solar efficiency (Figures 5-5 and 5-6). Whenever possible, we
recommend the use of recycled and reclaimed materials to keep the environmental footprint of these renovations low.

While the exterior of the building in the short-term building renovation proposal will undergo a drastic change (Figures 5-6 and 5-7), the laundromat, barber shop, and mini mart could continue to operate within the building. The major interior change, however, involves a repurposing of the vacant space facing Castle Street adjacent to the mini mart. We propose to transform this portion of the building into a welcoming multi-use space outfitted with ample seating (Figure 5-8). The location of this multi-use area complements the position of the urban porch proposed in Chapter IV (see also Figure 4-19). This urban porch will serve as an outdoor gathering space that will lead directly into the proposed entrance of the new multi-use space (Figure 5-8). The interior space will feature tables and a variety of flexible seating options for eating, working, or conversing (Figure 5-9). Either through an expansion of the mini mart or the addition of a new business, we recommend that fresh produce and prepared foods be available in the renovated space in order to provide area residents with greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables and quick, healthy meals for those on the go.

Proposal 5-2: Prohibition of Littering in Public Waterways
At present, §218-1 of the city code prohibits littering “in any public park, place, playground, cemetery, fountain, street, or building, except in receptacles for such purposes” (City of Geneva, 1968, n.p.), while §350-24 of the code mandates that liquid and solid waste not be “discharge[d]...into any stream or body of water” (City of Geneva, 1968, n.p.). Given our observations of debris in Castle Creek, we urge the City to strengthen and clarify its littering regulations regarding public waterways. Specifically, we recommend that the City add “streams, creeks, and other water bodies” to the list of places where littering is prohibited under §218-1 of the city code. In addition, we suggest that code enforcement officers regularly monitor Castle Creek and be empowered to levy fines against any residents who are observed littering in the waterway. Stricter enforcement of an enhanced littering code would likely dissuade residents from continuing to use Castle Creek as a dumping ground and thereby improve the health and appearance of this critically important natural asset.

Long-Term Future: Three-Phase Comprehensive Transformation of the Former Madia’s lot
Proposal 5-3: Demolition of Existing Structure and Daylighting of Castle Creek (Phase I)
When funding is available, we recommend that the City of Geneva demolish the existing structure on the former Madia’s lot in order to further daylight Castle Creek and make room for additional structural changes to occur on the site (see proposal 5-4 for more details on our proposed structural changes). Daylighting—the removal of obstructions covering a waterway in order to restore the waterway and its ecological community—offers numerous benefits to human and ecological communities alike, including increased hydraulic capacity for flood control, reduced...
levels of erosion downstream due to lower water velocities, and reduced risks of sewer overflows in nearby waterways, as well as marked increases in overall water quality (Trice, n.d., p. 9). In 2010, the daylighting of the Saw Mill River in Yonkers, NY began with the goal of creating “13,775 square feet of aquatic habitat” (Trice, n.d., p.14) that would enhance both the natural and built environments. When the project was completed a year later, the Saw Mill River restoration site was a community hub, “hosting outdoor ecological workshops and musical performances as well as a providing a reading area and wireless internet” (Trice, n.d., p.14). Notably, the Saw Mill River daylighting project was a key part of Yonkers’ own urban revitalization efforts (Trice, n.d.). Thus it is likely an ideal time for the City of Geneva to initiate similar daylighting efforts in the Central Castle Street Corridor and beyond.

Daylighting can take one of three main forms. Natural daylighting involves restoring the waterway back to its original conditions and, as such, this form of daylighting is cited as the most effective strategy in areas where flood mitigation, stormwater control and/or water quality issues are a concern (Trice, n.d.). Architectural daylighting brings a piped waterway to the surface while keeping above-ground water flow constricted to a concrete channel (Trice, n.d.). Cultural daylighting, by comparison, “celebrates a buried stream through markers or public art used to inform the public of the historic path [of the stream], although the stream remains buried” (Trice, n.d., p.4). In the case of Castle Creek, we recommend using a combination of architectural and cultural daylighting to showcase the features of this important natural resource to the Geneva community (Figure 5-10). We recommend that the City modify the existing surface channel to create a stone waterway where Castle Creek exits the underground pipe on the east side of the former Madia’s lot (Figure 5-10). In order to catalyze resident investment in Castle Creek and its health, we propose that the City construct...
an overlook near where the creek resurfaces (Figure 5-11) and use cultural daylighting to highlight the creek's historical path under the former Madia's lot. We suggest cultural daylighting of the creek take the form of a brick inlay that follows the approximate path of the waterway as it passes underneath the parking lot, sidewalks, and structures before resurfacing on the east side of the lot (Figures 5-10 and 5-12). It is essential that educational signage accompany these newly daylighted sections of Castle Creek in order to draw residents' attention to the significance of waterways such as Castle Creek in the ecosystems of urban areas like those in Geneva.

Proposal 5-4: New Development on Site (Phase II)
Following the demolition of the existing building and the daylighting of a portion of Castle Creek, we propose the addition of two new structures on the site, each with its own set of associated programming. We propose that the first structure be built adjacent to Castle Street (Figures 5-1 and 5-13), and that this building house both a marketplace and a communal cooking area. Community kitchens are being implemented in cities across the country in hopes of improving social interactions within these communities (Iacovou et. al, 2013). Within the kitchen itself, community members should have access to state-of-the-art facilities, as well as culinary classes and workshops highlighting various cooking techniques and traditions and lessons on how to prepare simple, budget-friendly recipes. We recommend that the City of Geneva forge a partnership with the owners of local restaurants to have their staff lead these classes. Geneva has seen some success on this front with the gardening and cooking programs facilitated by Sarah Meyer, Food Systems Program Manager at the Finger Lakes Institute, at HWS Fribolin Farm (R. Lewis, pers. Comm. 30 Apr 2018). In addition, in order to expand the range of uses for this new communal cooking space, we urge the City inquire with the Cornell Food Venture Kitchen Center to see if the facilities we are proposing for the former Madia's lot might be utilized by local entrepreneurs when developing their product lines for new foods and beverages.

The second structure we are proposing to be built on the former Madia's lot is a skills building and community innovation center.

Ideally, this facility would be located at the rear of the site behind the structure described above (Figures 5-1 and 5-14). Given its central location and proximity to the City's most valuable community asset, the Geneva Public Library, this second structure could offer an additional community space open to all Geneva residents. We suggest the City work with relevant local stakeholders to develop (or expand) programs on financial management, parenting/childcare, English as a second language, and so on. We also urge the City to partner with a local college or university to offer evening and weekend classes on plumbing, electrical work, and carpentry that could allow under- or unemployed Genevans to learn skills that increase their employability and, if so desired, pursue a new career path.

Proposals 5-5: Changing Perceptions of Urban Nature through Enhancement of Green Space and Native Vegetation (Phase III)
With Castle Creek as the focal point of our long-term design proposal, it is essential that the City of Geneva commit to enhancing the vegetation and green spaces in the former Madia's lot, as well as along Castle Creek. In urban environments, open green space has many advantages, such as providing space for formal and informal recreation, providing habitat for biota, and supplementing urban stormwater management (Parks Victoria, 2018). In this stretch of the Castle Street Corridor, we suggest additional plantings being
added to existing green spaces in an effort to attract pollinators and other animals while simultaneously enhancing the ecosystem services provided by these green spaces. We strongly urge the City to use native species as often as possible in order to reap the numerous benefits of these plant species, as native plants are known to require less maintenance and upkeep, conserve water, and create habitat for various animal species (Tallamy, 2007).

In addition, we recommend that the City explore whether it would be possible to construct a greenway along the stretch of Castle Creek passing through the project site. The 2016 City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide reports that residents are interested in having access to more public green spaces, while the Geneva Active Transportation Plan explicitly recommends the City and town establish a public bicycle/pedestrian committee that is charged with “promot[ing]...greenways and connected corridors with adjacent towns” (p.110). Our research suggests that the Central Castle Creek corridor is an ideal location to pilot a Geneva-wide greenway expansion. More specifically, we recommend that a small trail be added on the northern back of the creek connecting the former Madia’s lot with Inglesia Apostólica Jesús El Rey on North Main Street. At both entrances to this recreational trail, the City could install educational signage highlighting how Castle Creek and the ecosystem services it provides serves the broader Geneva community. A suggested design for signage the City could use at these entrances is provided in Figure 5-15.

Should this new greenway become a popular recreational trail for Geneva residents and visitors, we recommend that the City of Geneva consider expanding the greenway to connect with other nearby green spaces. Extending the Castle Creek Greenway to Brook Street Park would be a good first step in improving the connectivity of green spaces in Geneva while concomitantly providing residents with a safer way to reach this park from the Central Castle Creek Corridor. According to the European Climate Adaptation Platform (2015), connecting isolated fragments of green space within an urban context helps to improve biodiversity, aids in the dispersal of floral and faunal species, and assists in stormwater management. Meanwhile, providing residents with increased access to green space is thought to promote more active lifestyles, improve mood and attitude, and reduce stress levels (Wolf, 2017).
As the capstone experience for students pursuing an academic minor in Sustainable Community Development (SCD), this course provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom while simultaneously assisting a local municipality in working toward completing some of its broader community development goals. Such experiences are crucial for students wanting to pursue careers in architectural studies, environmental studies, and community planning and design.

Next Steps
Castle Street was identified in the 2016 City of Geneva’s Comprehensive Plan and Decision-Making Guide as a priority corridor and a testing ground for new ideas that may inform future planning initiatives in Geneva. Addressing this recommendation, the City has engaged the consulting services of Barton and Loguidice to re-envision Castle Street from 5-points to the Lakefront. Our plan extends these forward-looking planning efforts beyond the downtown core and into the neighboring residential areas of the Central Castle Street Corridor. Wide-ranging in its scope and innovative in its intent, “Building Accessible Communities: A Vision for the Central Castle Street Corridor” offers the City of Geneva the opportunity to advance its efforts to be “beautiful, prosperous, equitable, connected, and sustainable” (czb, 2016, p.1).

As suggested in Chapter II, the recommendations in this report should not be considered “final” after only 15 weeks of work, but these proposals do provide an opportunity for the City of Geneva to consider ideas that may not arise through traditional planning methods. For example, some of the recommendations in this report consider the benefits of private/public partnerships in redeveloping important parcels within the Central Castle Street Corridor. Both the Byrne Dairy and the Former Madia’s lots are privately owned, and our recommendations for the redevelopment of these parcels would require a significant collaborative effort between the City of Geneva and these property owners. Rather than suggesting definitive plans, we hope that our recommendations provide a platform for conversations about how these parcels could be redeveloped, with the final plans emerging from long-term communications between the City, its citizens, and these private partners.

The timeline for addressing the recommendations in this report is difficult to ascertain, as many of the proposals we provide depend on the goodwill and cooperation of private landowners. Yet, some of our proposals can be implemented more quickly. For example, streetscape improvements (especially those focusing on public safety and the creation of new public spaces) and fair housing policy changes could be taken up by City Council at any time. In addition, if the Geneva Public Library decides to purchase the Touhey building lot, plans could begin immediately for expanding the library’s services into an outdoor public space. Ultimately, it is up to the City of Geneva to decide which of these projects, if any, should be prioritized and on what timeline(s).


VII. Works Cited


VIII. Appendices
Appendix I: Overview of the Sustainable Community Development Program

The Sustainable Community Development (SCD) Program was established in 2011 with support from the Isabel Foundation. In response to growing student interest and public recognition of the need for communities to address a myriad of social, economic and ecological challenges, Hobart and William Smith Colleges developed the SCD Program to better prepare students for careers in economic development, social justice, and stewardship of the natural environment.

To date, SCD students and faculty have completed 12 different community-based research projects with eight different community partners throughout the Finger Lakes on topics ranging from stormwater management and green infrastructure to sustainable materials management and multimodal transportation.

The SCD Program is chaired by Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Robin A. Lewis, and is overseen by the SCD Advisory Committee comprised of Associate Professor of Architectural Studies Jeffrey Blankenship, Finger Lakes Institute Director Lisa Cleckner, Director of Introductory Biology Laboratories Susan Cushman, Assistant Professor of Architectural Studies Gabriella D’Angelo, Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies Tom Drennen, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Darrin Magee, and Visiting Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurial Studies Craig Talmage.

Appendix II: Tenant Survey

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the perception of residents on your section of Castle Street regarding their housing experience. Your input is vital to the success of this survey, and your answers will be non-identifiable. However, your participation is completely voluntary and you are welcome to skip questions. Thank you for your time.

How many years have you lived in Geneva? How many years have you lived on Castle Street specifically?

What are your favorite aspects of living on Castle Street?

If you could change something about your neighborhood, what would it be and why?

What, if any, are the unifying features of the area in which you live? Do you feel connected to any of the 11 neighborhoods designated by the City of Geneva in 2008?

How often, if at all, do you interact with your neighbors? How would you describe these interactions?

Describe your experience with your current landlord. How often do you interact with your landlord?

How would you describe the conditions of the property that you rent? How does this property’s conditions compare with other properties you have rented in the past?

Appendix III: Landlord Survey

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the perceptions and experiences of landlords who own property on Castle Street between the Geneva Public Library and the plaza at the intersection of Oak Street. Your input is vital to the success of this survey, and your answers will be non-identifiable. However, your participation is completely voluntary and you are welcome to skip questions. Thank you for your time.

Have you ever lived in Geneva? If so, for how long?

How long have you owned property on Castle Street?

How many total properties do you own? In Geneva specifically?

Why did you decide to purchase properties on this section of Castle Street specifically?

How often, if at all, do you interact with your tenants, and under what conditions?

How would you describe these interactions? Positive? Negative? Neutral?