

# OUTER COMSTOCK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## Neighborhood Plan

**PREAMBLE:** *The City of Syracuse's 2005 Comprehensive plan will guide the planning process of "Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today" (TNT), a City sponsored program that in turn will direct the future of the City neighborhoods. The plan provides guidance for completing a Future Land Use Plan and updating the current Zoning Ordinance that will direct land use patterns as the fabric of the City changes over time. It also allows for the modification of land use regulations, such as zoning, consistent with the City-wide land use plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan.*

*A City-wide Land Use Plan will focus on how an area should generally be used or developed. More detail relative to specific uses and design strategies should be developed in the next steps, the Neighborhood Plans and the Strategic Area Master Plans. The Strategic Area Master Plans and the Neighborhood Plans should commence after the completion of the City-wide Land Use Plan. They should be more detailed in scope and should be resident-driven. They should conform to the general land use category that is expressed in the City-wide Land Use Plan. Their recommendations should serve as the foundation for updating the City's Zoning Ordinance.*

*The City's Zoning Ordinance should be updated so that it complies with the Strategic Area Master Plans, the Neighborhood Plans, the city-wide Land Use Plan and the City of Syracuse Comprehensive Plan 2025. New York State law requires that a municipality's zoning ordinance comply with comprehensive/master plans.*

We do not know how much of the city-wide Land Use Plan has been completed, but it is clear that the Outer Comstock area is, and will remain basically residential. Since the Strategic Area Master Plans and Neighborhood Plans should be resident-driven, we are submitting the following neighborhood plan. The plan is consistent with the bylaws of the Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association (OCNA), namely to promote and preserve a neighborhood environment which is pleasant, attractive, safe, healthy, and otherwise conducive to the well-being of the residents and to maintain the single-family residential character of the neighborhood where it exists. In the plan below, items marked with an asterisk are of more immediate concern.

## OUTER COMSTOCK NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

- 1.\* New development in the neighborhood should not exceed the existing density of the area.
- 2.\* Lots in the neighborhood should not have their zoning downgraded.  
In particular, the lots bordering Thurber Street at East Brighton Avenue should not be allowed to have businesses which are forbidden by the present zoning (e.g., fast food establishments, gas stations, car washes).
- 3.\* The property on the east side of Jamesville Avenue north of Ainsley Drive (1319 Jamesville Avenue) should be rezoned from B to A1.  
According to the delinquent tax information through 2007, \$50,057.85 is owed on this property. Taxes have been owed since 1991. The property is assessed at \$45,000. The City has adequate cause to cease this property for nonpayment of taxes. Should the City own the property, it can readily be rezoned without requiring a super majority of the Common Council.

4. Curbs should be installed along the major through-streets (i.e., Comstock Ave., Jamesville Ave., and Thurber Streets). The cost of installing curbs should be born by the City. When streets are reconstructed to include curbing, green solutions to minimize storm water runoff should be incorporated when possible.

We feel that it is unreasonable that the cost of curbs on major through streets should be born by the property owner. If that had been the case in the past, how many streets in residential areas of Syracuse would have curbs? Presently the edges of these streets are muddy due to cars parking off the pavement. The edges of lawns are constantly being torn up by plows. When these streets are paved, the streets keep getting wider in places.

5. Sidewalks should be present on at least one side of the major through-streets and streets near Hughes Magnet School on which students walk to school. The cost of these sidewalks should be born by the City. Sidewalks should be installed between the school and Comfort Tyler Park because students will be using the ball field when the school becomes K-8. All sidewalks in the neighborhood should be in good condition. The sidewalk along the park fence on Vincent Street should be replaced.

We feel that it is unreasonable that the cost of sidewalks on major through streets should be born by the property owner. If that had been the case in the past, how many streets in residential areas of Syracuse would have sidewalks?

6. Snow should be cleared by the City from sidewalks on arterial streets and streets used by children to walk to school.

7.\* Bike lanes should be extended on Comstock Avenue south of East Colvin Street to Thurber and west on Thurber Street to East Brighton Avenue.

There are many apartment houses along Thurber Street, many of which house students who bicycle to the Syracuse University and other places..

8.\* Old water mains should be replaced.

There have been many water main breaks in the neighborhood. Some sections of the old mains have been replaced already. The remaining old mains that have been failing in recent years should be replaced.

9. If a street like Comstock Avenue south of East Colvin Street is reconstructed with curbs and the water mains and sewer lines replaced, the overhead wires should be put underground.

10. Street lamps on Comstock Avenue south of East Colvin Street and continuing on Jamesville Avenue to Ainsely Drive should be replaced with ones similar to those on East Colvin Street just south of Euclid Avenue.

11.\* On arterial streets with inadequate right-of-ways for proper sidewalk and street trees, right-of-ways should be obtained, where feasible, by eminent domain. In

particular the north side of East Colvin Street east of Route 81 has an inadequate right-of-way. A row of trees would enhance the approach to the neighborhood.

Many visitors to Syracuse University use this entryway and its appearance should be improved. OCNA tried to obtain a grant to put trees along the cemetery on East Colvin Street. While the cemetery manager was pleased to have trees, the grant would not allow the trees to be placed on private property. There was only a 3-4 foot right of way and even street signs were on private property.

10. The long-vacant store on the corner of Harriette Avenue & E. Colvin Street is an eyesore. It should either be remodeled and occupied by some responsible businesses (but one that does not lead to loitering or generate a mess). If a suitable business is not found in a reasonable time, the building should be razed and the property rezoned to A1 Long-vacant homes that have become eyesores, should be renovated and sold. Some of these eyesores should be razed.

Properties that should be renovated and sold include 128 Tejah and some of the houses on East Colvin Street immediately west of Jamesville Avenue. Houses that should be razed include the small one story house next to 231 Harriette and the two storey, multifamily house on Harriette Avenue across from the old supermarket.

11.\* The tennis courts should be resurfaced.

The tennis courts in Comfort Tyler Park haven't been useable for over a decade because of cracks and weeds growing in the cracks. It is doubtful that the work started in 2007 to fill the cracks will produce adequate results.

12.\* A low maintenance vegetative screen should be established at the back of Comfort Tyler Park bordering on the houses on Harriette Avenue.

A strip of land about 20 feet deep along the rear fence of Comfort Tyler Park has mostly been very messy and filled with vines, broken down vegetation and discarded rubbish. OCNA is trying to establish a vegetative screen of native plants that would screen the often unsightly back yards of the houses on the east side of Harriette Avenue. Such a vegetative screen would also offer privacy to these houses.

13.\* Comfort Tyler Park should be a gathering place for all age groups. Events should be held in the park. Benches should be placed on the north side of the park.

14. Paths (stone dust, much, etc.) should be installed in the northern section of Comfort Tyler Park connecting the stone steps off of East Colvin Street, circling around the area and connecting with a new entrance to the park near the intersection of Comstock Avenue and East Colvin Street and with the path leading to the southern section of the park. The grouting on the stone steps should be repaired.

There is evidence that can be seen using Google Earth that an oval path once encircled the northern section of the park. These paths connected with the stone steps from East Colvin Street. There was also an entrance from the corner of East Colvin Street and Comstock Avenue. We do not know when and why these paths were removed. By reinstalling these paths, we believe the park used and enjoyed more. With paths in place, benches would be a useful addition.

15.\* Street trees should be encouraged throughout the neighborhood.

16.\* Improvements should be made to eliminate puddling on the streets. This may involve changes in the drain or pavement.

Areas such as the western end of Pine Grove Street and the southern end of Harriette Ave are persistent problem areas.

17.\* Install a flashing red light at the intersection where Comstock Avenue joins Jamesville Avenue and Thayer Street.

This is an extremely dangerous intersection especially since so many cars run the stop sign. Complaints about this intersection have been prevalent for a very long time.