

City of Rome Comprehensive Plan

Community Profile



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Overview and Development History

The City of Rome is located in Oneida County at the geographic center of New York State. The 2000 Census reported a population of 34,950 people, a significant decrease from 44,350 in 1990. Rome enjoys excellent transportation access by water, road, and rail. The Erie Canal, Mohawk River and freight and passenger rail lines run through the City. Recent improvements to the City’s train station have upgraded passenger facilities. The New York State Thruway is located just south of Rome providing excellent vehicular access to the City.

The City of Rome encompasses over 72 square miles, making it one of the largest land areas of any city in the nation. The City is divided into an Inner and Outside District, largely for the purposes of municipal services offered and property taxes levied, though in recent years, the lines between services offered in each district have blurred with the extension of police (although the department is only obligated to serve the Inside District) and fire protection as well as water and sewer infrastructure in some areas.



City of Rome and surrounding areas.

The Inner/Outer distinction also addresses the unique environmental conditions of the Outside District with zoning regulations in place to protect these natural resources. To a great extent, the Inside District has maintained a traditional neighborhood design with most streets and blocks planned in a grid pattern and some mixed use neighborhoods. Most construction in the Outside District has been compatible with the rural character of the district.

The City’s origin is steeped in history. The Mohawk River and Wood Creek played a major role in the early development of the region, serving as the main transportation routes by canoe to the east and the west. Rome was essentially the land area between the two bodies of water, where it was necessary to portage boats. The Oneida Indians, the first people to live in the area, called it Deo-Wain-Sta or the Great Carry. Given the portage, early European settlers determined the area a crucial location for defensive purposes. These settlers constructed Fort Stanwix near the portage. Fort Stanwix ultimately played a pivotal role in the American victory at Saratoga during the Revolutionary War and is also recognized as the first place where the American flag was flown in battle. This fortress was reconstructed in 1976 at the end of Rome’s urban renewal period as a part of the nation’s bicentennial celebration and is now located in the City’s central business district.

Initially a market town to supply local farmers, Rome incorporated as a village in 1819, adopting the name Rome, which followed a trend of the time of naming settlements after

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classical places. The Village of Rome later incorporated as a city in 1870. It was at the time of the City's incorporation that Rome became the size it is today. In order to meet the population requirements of incorporation the Village of Rome incorporated with the Town of Rome to become the City of Rome. Transportation has continued to play a critical role in the growth and development of the City. Construction of the Erie Canal began in Rome, the mid-point of the canal, on July 4, 1817. Unfortunately for Rome, the canal ran half a mile south of the village through swampland and so it did not reap many of the canal's benefits. In 1851 the Black River Canal opened linking Lyons Falls in the north with Rome and the Erie Canal, making the nation's major markets accessible to area farmers. It was not until 1839 with the coming of the railroad through Rome and 1844 with the relocation of the Erie Canal through the center of town that the City truly began to prosper.

Good transportation access made Rome a strong location for new industry including knitting mills, canning factories, soap manufacturers, a locomotive works, iron works, and later copper mills and cable and wire manufacturers. Like many other communities in the northeast, Rome was hit with the migration of the manufacturing sector to the south in the 1950s through the 1970s. Today there are only remnants of many of the formerly important industries with such companies as Rome Cable, a much smaller Revere Copper factory and the Rome-Turney Radiator Company, which are still in operation. Recently, the City has been successful in working with government agencies and private property owners to secure the resources needed to clean-up and redevelop several former industrial sites.

In February, 1942, another critical economic force for the City came when the Rome Air Depot opened as an aircraft supply, repair and training base for World War II. At its peak during the war it employed over 9,000 civilians. Following World War II, like other wartime bases, Rome Air Depot downsized dramatically and became a storage facility. Scheduled to close in 1948, it received a reprieve when it was decided to move Watson Laboratories to Rome from New Jersey.

Renamed Rome Air Development Center (RADC), it became one of the major research facilities of the U.S. Air Force. With the establishment of the Air Force as a separate military entity in the National Security Act of 1947 that also established the National Military Establishment (renamed in 1949 to the Department of Defense), the base was renamed Griffiss Air Force Base. During the Cold War, Griffiss hosted many different missions and units including research & development, air defense, maintenance of a retaliatory bomber force and electronics and communication. With the end of the Cold War, Griffiss became one of the bases that were realigned in September of 1995. Almost 5,000 military personnel were lost, significantly impacting the economy and demographic composition of the City.



A decommissioned airplane on display at Griffiss today.

Other significant changes in the City have also had significant impacts on the City to this day. In the 1970's most of Rome's original downtown business district was demolished under an urban renewal plan. A component of the plan was to re-create Fort Stanwix as a National Monument operated by the National Park Service. A "superblock" of pedestrian



retail space replaced the downtown retail areas. The original idea was to create two shopping mall-style “superblocks” adjacent to Fort Stanwix connected to each other by a pedestrian bridge. But changes in the way Americans shop were taking place and, instead of becoming a major retail center, Rome’s downtown slowly lost its small retail stores to outlying shopping districts and suburban malls

Today Rome has focused on economic diversification using the new Griffiss Business & Technology Park, with several military units at its core including Rome Labs (Air Force), the Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) and the Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS). The Griffiss Local Development Corporation, the local agency charged with redeveloping the former air base has worked to attract a number of private companies to the site including BAE Engineering Services, TRW Corporation and others. The new Rome Free Academy High School was constructed at Griffiss. This state-of-the-art educational facility provides a significant new amenity to attract new businesses and residents.

The City of Rome has been through dramatic changes in the last 10 years. Its plan for the future must build on its considerable assets including location, ample infrastructure that is in good condition, historic assets, natural resources, good schools and others to create the tools to encourage new growth and development.



Demographic Overview

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- The City of Rome’s population decreased by 21.2% between 1990 and 2000, due to many factors including the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base
- Rome’s population is growing older considerably faster than other communities. The median age increased from 30.9 in 1990 to 38.2 years in 2000. The statewide median age is 35.9 years.
- Rome has a significant number of low and moderate income households, with a high proportion of very low income households (those earning 50% or less of the MSA median family income).
- Approximately 74.0% of Rome residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma. Further, 15.7% of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 18.3% in Oneida County.

Population

The City of Rome is located in the center of Oneida County and encompasses 72 square miles. According to the 1990 Census, a total of 44,350 persons lived in the City. In 2000, the City’s population fell by about 21% to 34,950 due to the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base. Oneida County’s population also decreased between 1990 and 2000, but at a much lower rate (-6.1%). The City of Rome’s population loss accounted for just over 60% of the county’s total population loss. Rome accounted for 14.8% of the County’s overall population base in 2000, compared to 17.7% in 1990.

Year	City of Rome	% change	Oneida County	% change
1990	44,350	n/a	250,836	n/a
2000	34,950	-21.2%	235,469	-6.1%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000) SF1.

Households

Reflecting the general trend toward smaller families and the increasing prevalence of single parent single person households, the average household size in Rome has decreased steadily, dropping to 2.30 persons per households in 2000 from 2.56 in 1990. The 2000 Census reports that there were 13,653 households in Rome, a decrease of 12.9% since 1990. In comparison, households declined 1.9% in Oneida County.

Year	City of Rome	% change	Oneida County	% change
1990	15,754	n/a	92,562	n/a
2000	13,653	-13.3%	90,496	-2.2%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000) SF1.

Race

One of the most notable format changes of the 2000 Census was on the question addressing race. Each respondent was asked if they were Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. The Census also asked individuals to report the race or races they considered themselves to be. The Census reports that the 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 Census or earlier censuses and that caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time.

According to the 2000 Census, there are 4,246 minorities in the City of Rome comprising 12.1% of the population, nearly identical to the 12.5% reported in 1990. All ethnic groups experienced decreases in total population, with the exception of persons identified as “other race.” The largest minority group is the Black or African American population, which comprises nearly one-third of all minorities and 7.6% of the City-wide population. Only 2.0% of Rome residents reported that they were of two or more races.

Table 3: Race & Hispanic Origin

	1990 Number	1990 Percent	2000 Number	2000 Percent	% Change 1990-2000
White	39,657	89.4%	30,704	87.9%	-22.6%
Black	3,526	8.0%	2,650	7.6%	-24.8%
American Indian	107	0.2%	93	>1.0%	-33.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	565	1.3%	315	>1.0%	-33.5%
Other Race	495	1.1%	473	1.4%	-4.4%
Two or More Races	n/a	n/a	715	2.0%	n/a
City of Rome	44,350	100.0%	34,950	100.0%	-21.2%
Hispanic Origin	1,714	3.9%	1,648	4.7%	>-1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000) SF1.

Age

Between 1990 and 2000, all age groups experienced declines in population. Pre-school children under 5 experienced the greatest loss at 40.8%, while individuals over age 65 declined by only 1.5%. Adults (20–64), whom account for 58.4% of the City’s overall population, declined 22.1% between 1990 and 2000. School-age children experienced a loss at 24.6%. The percentage of seniors in the City’s overall population increased from 13.7% to 17.2%. This change will impact the City’s service needs and workforce composition.

Table 4: Age Characteristics

City of Rome	1990	%	2000	%	# change	% change
Pre-School (0-4)	3,455	7.8%	2,045	5.9%	-1,408	-40.8%
School (5-19)	8,673	19.6%	6,502	18.6%	-2,120	-25.0%
Adult (20-64)	26,134	58.9%	20,407	58.4%	-5,782	-21.9%
Senior (65+)	6,088	13.7%	5,996	17.2%	-90	-1.5%
Total	44,350	100.0%	34,950	100.0%	-9,400	-21.2%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000) SF1.



The median age of City residents increased dramatically between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. According to the 2000 Census, the median age of City residents is 38.2 years. This compares to 30.9 in 1990, showing an aging of Rome's population of 7.3 years in ten years' time (Table 5). In comparison, the median population age for New York State as a whole increased from 33.8 to 35.9 between 1990 and 2000. Thus, the City's population base appears to be aging much faster than the state as a whole. This rapid change is likely the result of the Griffiss Base closure, as military personnel and many base support workers and their families left Rome, while many retirees chose to stay.

Table 5: Age Distribution	
	Median Age
Rome City	
1990	30.9
2000	38.2
Oneida County	
1990	33.8
2000	38.2
New York State	
1990	33.8
2000	35.9
MSA	
1990	
2000	38.4

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000

Educational Attainment

Data on educational attainment levels in Rome reveal that 74.0% of residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma. Oneida County has a slightly higher percentage of high school graduates (79.0%). Additionally, 15.7% of City residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. New York State as a whole has a significantly higher percentage of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher (27.4%). According to the New York State Department of Education, the Rome City School District had a high school dropout rate of 2.6% during the 2000-01 academic year. The statewide dropout rate was 3.8%. Rome's drop out rate is about one-third lower than the statewide average

	No High School Diploma		High School Diploma or higher		Bachelor's Degree or higher	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
	City of Rome	25.7%	26.0%	74.3%	74.0%	15.4%
Oneida county	24.9%	21.0%	75.1%	79.0%	16.7%	18.3%
Utica-Rome MSA	25.4%	20.9%	74.6%	79.1%	15.9%	17.7%
New York State	25.2%	20.9%	74.8%	79.1%	23.1%	27.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990).

Income Levels

According to the 1990 Census, the median household income for the City of Rome was \$24,234 and per capita income was \$11,171. Oneida County had a slightly higher median household income of \$26,710 and per capita income of \$12,227 in 1990. Further, 4,840 or 12.1% of City residents are living below poverty level, according to the 1990 Census. This figure is marginally higher than that of Oneida County (11.9%) and significantly higher than that of upstate New York as a whole (8.7%).

Median household income for Rome was reported as \$33,643 in the 2000 Census. Per capita income was \$18,604. Oneida County's median household income and per capita income were \$35,909 and \$18,516 respectively. Additionally, a total of 4,728 individuals live below the poverty level. Although the number of individuals living below poverty has declined between 1990 and 2000, a greater percentage of Rome's population lives below the poverty level (15.0%) than in 1990.

Income data collected from the census reflects the income levels of the previous complete year in which the census is taken. In order to directly compare changes in income between the censuses taken in 1990 and 2000, 1990 (based on 1989 income) Census income data was converted to 1999 dollars using the consumer price indices of 1989 and 1999 as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to calculate an inflation rate of 31.8% over the 10 year period.

	City of Rome (1989)	Adjusted* City of Rome (1999)	City of Rome (1999)	Oneida County (1989)	Adjusted* Oneida County (1989)	Oneida County (1999)
Median Household Income	\$24,234	\$31,940	\$33,643	\$26,710	\$35,204	\$35,909
Median Family Income	\$28,821	\$37,986	\$42,928	\$32,557	\$42,910	\$45,341
Per Capita Income	\$11,171	\$14,723	\$18,604	\$12,227	\$16,115	\$18,516
Individuals Below Poverty Level	12.1%	n/a	15.0%	11.9%	n/a	13.0%
Families Below Poverty Level	9.7%	n/a	12.0%	8.8%	n/a	9.8%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

*For purposes of comparison, 1989 dollars have been adjusted for inflation to 1999 dollars.

As Table 7 indicates, when year 1989 incomes in the City of Rome were adjusted for inflation, median household income increased 5.3% from 1989 to 1999 and median family



income increased (13.0%). Per capita income increased by 26.4%. In comparison, Oneida County's median household income increased slightly by 2.0%. Median family income increased by 5.7% and per capita income de/increased by 14.9%.

Rome contains a significant proportion of low and moderate income households. Census figures indicate that approximately 52.0% of households in the City in 2000 were considered low and moderate income households (i.e., households with income less than 80 percent of the Utica-Rome MSA median as reported by the Census) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Further, 32.8% of households in the City are very low income, earning 50% or less of the MSA median family income.



Economic Profile

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The closure of Griffiss Air Force Base in 1995 resulted in the loss of nearly 5,000 jobs and dramatically reduced the economic base of the City.
- The City and its partners are aggressively pursuing strategies to expand and diversify the City's economic base using the former air base and other former industrial sites throughout the City.
- Two New York State Empire Zones exist in Rome, providing significant economic incentives for businesses to locate or expand in the Zones.
- The City is supported by several economic development organizations including the Rome Industrial Development Corporation, Mohawk Valley EDGE and the Griffiss Local Development Corporation.
- The Griffiss Business and Technology Park has been successful in recruiting new businesses to Rome.
- The City's retail establishments appear to be drawing shoppers from the County and MSA as they are performing better than expected given the city's demographics.
- Agriculture is still a significant economic generator for Oneida County and the City of Rome

Griffiss Air Force Base Closure

The economic and demographic structure of the City of Rome changed dramatically in 1995 when Griffiss Air Force Base closed in response to military downsizing. Employment at the Air Force Base had represented 30% of the City's economy, and as a result of the closing, the City experienced an acute loss of population (nearly 5,000 people) and the economy went into a tail spin. Faced with the need to stem the population losses and create new job opportunities, the City has taken several steps towards diversifying its economy using the former air force base as an opportunity for attracting new industries.

Griffiss Local Development Corporation (GLDC) was formed by the City in 1994 as a development partnership with Oneida County. GLDC is a public corporation created for master planning, implementation and long-term management of the former Air Base. GLDC is charged with implementing the *Master Reuse Strategy for Griffiss Air Force Base* produced in 1995 which called for:



- Creation of new jobs to replace or exceed the jobs lost with equal or better wages
- Realistic and long-term implementation strategies
- Promotion of land reuse that is compatible with Rome Lab and other Department of Defense uses
- Minimization of fiscal and economic burden on local jurisdictions
- Compliance with community development needs, consistent with local planning policy

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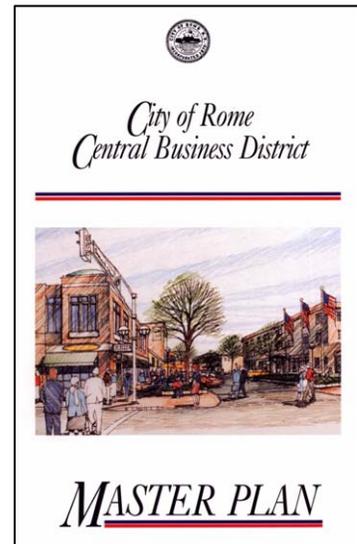
The result of the Master Reuse Strategy is the *Griffiss Business and Technology Park*. Griffiss Business and Technology Park encompasses 3,500 acres of the former air force base that is owned by GLDC and operated by *Mohawk Valley EDGE* (Economic Development Growth Enterprises). Much of the Park is within an Empire Zone. The New York State sponsored Empire Zone program provides tax credits and utility rate reductions to businesses that choose to locate in a designated Empire Zone.

The Park is divided into seven distinct development sites. Each site has been developed with its own identity catering to a specific type of use including commercial, technology, heavy industry, defense, office, aviation, education, recreation and open space.

The Park is currently anchored by established tenants such as the Air Force Research Laboratory and the New York State Technology Enterprise Corporation. Over \$15 million in capital improvements have modernized the Park infrastructure; however, the responsibility for infrastructure maintenance is currently in negotiation between the City and GLDC.

Rome CBD Master Plan

The City of Rome's Comprehensive Planning Program developed the *Central Business District Master Plan* in 1996 as a strategy to revitalize downtown Rome. The City's *2000 Consolidated Plan* describes the urban renewal program in the 1970's stating that "during the 1970's a large part of Rome's original central business district was razed to accommodate the re-creation of Fort Stanwix National Monument by the National Park Service. Concurrent with, and partly in response to this significant change in the structure of its urban core, the City undertook to redesign its CBD using the Urban Renewal programs of the time. Downtown was replaced by a retail pedestrian superblock. The original idea was to create two shopping mall-type "superblocks" adjacent to Fort Stanwix connected by a pedestrian bridge. But, in the same period, sweeping changes in the way Americans shop were taking place and, instead of becoming a major retail center, Rome's CBD slowly lost its small retail stores to outlying shopping districts and suburban malls."



The Plan goes on to say that twenty years later, most of the old retail structures had been torn down, leaving an urban core with gaps and holes, detours and barriers. By 1995, the failure of the original idea was obvious to all, as was the impossibility of regaining what was lost. But, having languished for 20 years, a new identity for "downtown" was just beginning to take root. Instead of an urban shopping mall, the Plaza had emerged as a financial, business and government center. A major revitalization strategy was needed to stabilize existing businesses and to attract new ones. The 1996 Master Plan for the central business district addressed those issues. The City completed Phase I in 1997, which addressed traffic and circulation issues and plans to begin implementation of Phase II in the near future.



East Rome Business Park

The East Rome Business Park is a 200-acre site that was once the site of the General Cable Company complex. According to the City of Rome's *2000 Consolidated Plan*, "early in the City's history, because of its proximity to the Mohawk River and the Erie Canal, the east Rome area was composed largely of metal and other heavy industries, together with the residences of the people who worked there. However, the technological and transportation improvements of the past two centuries, coupled with the difficult economic times of the past few decades, caused much of the industry that once thrived in this area to move. Abandoned and neglected factories and warehouses are all that is left behind, a sorry sight for the people who once were employed within these buildings and still live in the neighborhoods."

In order to revitalize this area, the City has developed and is in the process of implementing a plan to create a small business center, the East Rome Business Park, at the General Cable Company site. So far, a new access road has been constructed, a Phase I environmental assessment has been conducted for the entire site and a 17-acre target area has undergone Phase II assessments. Environmental remediation, selective demolition and reconstruction are now taking place. Remediation has been completed on a portion of the site that includes the Right-of-Way.

Important Economic Development Organizations and Programs

The *Rome Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC)* acts as an economic development arm of the City of Rome. RIDC is a not-for-profit, public-private partnership that receives 50% of its operating budget from private sources. The RIDC provides a wide range of services to small businesses in the City of Rome, manages the City's Empire Zone and owns several properties in the City for redevelopment purposes. The RIDC has been charged with redeveloping parcels targeted for redevelopment as part of the City's *Central Business District Master Plan (1996)*. The programs administered by the RIDC include:

- *Rome Empire Zone benefits* -- The NYS sponsored Empire Zone program offers incentives to businesses relocating from out of state or expanding in Rome in the form of exemptions from real property taxes and state sales taxes, wage tax credits, investment tax credits, sales tax exemption credits, real property tax credits, tax reduction credits, utility rate reductions and capital credits.
- *Local Loan Funds* – Local Loan Funds provide low interest loans to companies creating new jobs for low and moderate income persons. The program includes loans to very small businesses. Funding for the program comes primarily from the federal Community Development Block Grant Fund. Projects that don't qualify for the federal program can be funded through private funding sources. There is also a *Commercial District Loan Fund* that targets businesses in certain parts of the City and provides working capital loans. RIDC has also partnered with the New York State Business Development Corporation to provide business loans from \$25,000 to \$100,000 at market rates.
- *State Assistance* – RIDC also acts as a conduit for businesses seeking assistance from the state in the form of training assistance, low cost financing, infrastructure loans and grants and other programs.

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Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprises) is an economic development corporation that provides planning and economic development services for Oneida and Herkimer County communities and businesses. EDGE provides research and planning studies, feasibility studies, GIS support and other technical support to communities and prospective businesses and developers. EDGE manages real estate development projects and other aspects of business development to attract and retain business in Oneida and Herkimer County.

Industry Mix

The mix of private and public sector employers located in the City of Rome have shifted since the closing of Griffiss Air Force Base in 1995. As the discussion above indicates, since the Base closure, the City has been focused on expanding and diversifying its employer base to include large and small employers across all industries. The following is a list of the current major public and private sector employers in the City of Rome.

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The analysis below reviews Rome's industry mix in 1995 and 1999 (2000 data is not yet available) and compares the local trends to trends in Oneida County, New York State and the nation. This analysis provides some insight into whether the trends Rome is experiencing are occurring elsewhere, or if they are unique to Rome.

The most recent data available on industry mix in the city of Rome is 1999 data from *Zip Code and County Business Patterns*¹. This US Census report provides zip code-level information including number of establishments and employees but not revenue or wages. In the analysis below, the "Rome Area" is defined as the 13440 zip code. This zip code includes the City of Rome with the exception of the far western "Plains" area. It also includes small portions of the following adjacent towns: Verona, Westmoreland, Floyd, Lee and Western. Griffiss is located within the 13441 zip code.

The most significant impact on Rome's recent economy was the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base. *Zip Code and County Business Patterns* excludes government employment, so this analysis cannot show the direct employment impact of the base closure. However, the secondary impacts on local businesses are reflected.

	1995	1999
Forestry, fishing, hunting, ag support	4	0
Mining	1	1
Construction	58	59
Manufacturing	41	44
Wholesale Trade	34	21
Retail Trade	255	256
Transportation/utilities	27	14
FIRE	64	85
Services	299	307
Unclassified	6	9
Totals	785	796

Source: Zip Code Business Patterns

As the table to the left indicates, there were 796 business establishments in the Rome Area in 1999 –1.4% greater than 1995. Most of the businesses were in the retail and service sectors. There were also a significant number of finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE), construction and manufacturing businesses. Since 1995, Rome lost the remainder of its forestry, fishing,

¹ *Zip Code and County Business Patterns*, a product of the U.S. Census Bureau, is an annual series that provides economic data by industry on a "place-of-work" basis. Although it covers most economic activity, it excludes data on self-employed individuals, employees of private households, railroad employees, agricultural production employees, and most government employees.



hunting and agricultural support businesses and a substantial number of its wholesale trade businesses (13). Over the past four years Rome gained the most businesses in the FIRE sector (21) as well as eight new service sector businesses and three manufacturing businesses.

The table on the following page illustrates industry trends from 1995 to 1999 for the Rome Area, compared to the county, state and nation. Overall, the industry mix in the Rome Area is similar to 1995, shifting away from wholesale trade and some of the transportation, warehousing, utilities sectors toward more real estate, finance and insurance businesses. The Rome Area still has more service sector establishments than any other industry, followed closely by retail trade establishments. These same sectors dominate the industry mix of the county, state and nation.

In most cases the trends in the Rome Area were similar to those at the county, state and national levels. However there are several notable exceptions: The number of finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) sector businesses in the Rome Area increased by 32.8%, far more than in the county (loss of 8%), state (gain of 2.8%) or nation (gain of 15.2%). According to the Zip Code Business Patterns, Rome has gained seven banks and credit unions and nine real estate-related businesses that appear to be in the business of commercial leasing. Rome gained manufacturing businesses while the county, state and nation have seen a significant decrease in manufacturing industries. While wholesale trade industries have declined at all levels, Rome and Oneida County have seen greater losses than the state or nation.

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The discrepancies between Rome and the county, state and nation may be the result of the base closure and subsequent economic development efforts. New manufacturing businesses in Rome may well be the result of the efforts of the City and its partners to attract new industry. Wholesale trade differences could have resulted from decreased business opportunities resulting from the base closure, as the increase in FIRE sector business could be explained by former civilian base professionals setting up new businesses in an effort to remain in Rome.

The retail trade sector has remained flat among all four geographical areas. The service sector has gained very few businesses in the Rome area, likely due to the acute loss of population in Rome during this time and therefore fewer customers to serve, while the county, state and nation gained a significant number of service businesses. It should be noted, however, that in the Rome area, service sector businesses were a larger portion of the industry mix (38%) than in the County (35.5%), State (36%) or Nation (36%) in 1995.

Retail Trends (1992-1997)

The most recent sales data available for the City of Rome is from the US Bureau of Census in the *1997 Economic Census*. The following analysis reviews Rome's retail trade industry between 1992 and 1997 and provides a detailed analysis of the performance of the mix of stores. It also provides a regional comparison of Rome to Oneida County and the Utica-Rome MSA.

For purposes of this analysis, "retail-related" refers to all types of retail included in the *Economic Census of Retail Trade* as well as eating and drinking establishments which the

US Census Bureau no longer includes in the Census of Retail Trade, and instead includes in the Census of Accommodations and Foodservices. In 1997, retail-related sales in the Utica-Rome MSA amounted to approximately \$2,349 billion. Of this, \$2,001 billion, or 85.2%, originated in Oneida County. Approximately \$347.7 million originated in the City of Rome, comprising 17.4% of the County's sales and 14.8% of Utica-Rome MSA sales.

Establishments

There were 245 retail establishments in the City of Rome in 1997. The most common type of retail-related business was eating and drinking establishments comprising a third of all retail in the City. There were also 27 motor vehicle and parts stores, 19 health and personal care stores, 19 gas stations and 20 food and beverage stores. The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the types of retail found in the City.

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Retail Change Over Time

The number of retail establishments in the City of Rome dropped 11.2% from 1992 to 1997. This is a greater percentage than the county and MSA and may be in part due to the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base. In 1997, the City had 16.8% of Oneida County's retail establishments and 13% of the Utica-Rome MSA retail. This is just a slight decrease from 1992 when the City had 17.3% of all retail in the County and 13.9% of the MSA's retail industry. The table below provides detailed information on changes in the retail mix between 1992 and 1997

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Employment

In 1997, the 3,089 people employed by retailers in the City of Rome represented 17.2% of those employed in retail county-wide and 14.5% of those employed in retail in the MSA. Employment figures were not available on the City level in 1992.

Sales

Retail-related businesses in the City of Rome generated \$347,702,000 in sales in 1997. This is a 14.7% increase in the sales generated in 1992 when 1992 dollar amounts are adjusted to 1997 dollars to reflect inflation.² The large increase in total retail sales versus the significant loss of total establishments may be due to a stronger mix of remaining and new businesses in Rome since 1995. Some retail sectors may have been saturated in 1995 and businesses were therefore diluting each others success. Another reason might be that businesses that could no longer compete due to changing consumer needs in the region may have closed, leaving behind or replaced by those businesses that address consumer needs.

² To compare sales in 1997 constant dollars, sales figures were adjusted to reflect the change in the consumer price index (CPI) as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, to calculate 1992's sales figures into 1997 constant dollars, the following formula was used:

$$1997 \text{ Price} = 1992 \text{ Price} \times \left(\frac{1997 \text{ CPI}}{1992 \text{ CPI}} \right)$$



In 1997, retail trade businesses in the City generated 17% of Oneida County's retail sales compared to having 17.7% of the County's population in 1990 and 14.8% of the County's population in 2000. The City also generated 14.8% of the Utica-Rome MSA retail sales in 1997. The City generated approximately the same share of the County and MSA retail sales in 1992 as in 1997.

The fact that the City was able to maintain its share of County and MSA sales between 1992 and 1997 despite the base closure is a positive sign, however, the relatively small share of retail establishments and sales generated by retailers in the City of Rome as a part of the County and MSA is of concern.

Retail Sales

In 1997, the average retail store in Rome generated \$1.566 million in gross revenue, more than stores county-wide (\$1.514 million) and throughout the MSA (\$1.406 million). The retail businesses generating the most revenue per establishment in the City of Rome included department stores (\$12,194,000), motor vehicle and parts stores (\$3,389,000) and food/beverage stores (\$3,038,000). The businesses generating the least amount of revenue per store are eating and drinking establishments. This is typical for eating and drinking places county-wide and throughout the MSA as well.

An analysis of per capita sales for retail establishments provides a good comparison of local sales generated by establishments in Rome, the county and MSA. This analysis estimates retail sales data for the year 2001 assuming that the retail trade market was similar in 2001 to that of 1997, by taking 1997 US Economic Census of Retail and Accommodations and Food Services data and adjusting the sales data to 2001 constant dollars. These annual sales were then divided by 2000 Census populations to derive estimated per capita sales.

In the City of Rome, total per capita sales for retail-related establishments is estimated to have been \$10,978 compared with \$9,378 in Oneida County and \$8,642 in the MSA. That per capita sales were higher in the City than the county or region suggests that the City may be exporting goods to other parts of the region. A closer examination of the data reveals that retailers in the City of Rome of all major store types, except clothing and accessory stores and "miscellaneous stores," sell more per capita than their County and MSA counterparts.

Per Capita Demand

To shed more light on the effectiveness of Rome's current retail, an analysis of resident consumer spending was undertaken based on year 2001 estimates from Claritas, Inc. This analysis examines the spending behaviors of the people who live in the City, while the Retail Sales analysis above examines the performance of the retail establishments in the City.

Data from Claritas on expenditures in selected retail stores shows that the City of Rome is a weak market compared to the nation. Resident spending in all categories of stores ranked well below the US average with most stores ranking between 50-70 on an index in which the US average is 100. Oneida County and the Utica-Rome MSA were considered to have slightly better markets than the City with expenditures ranking from 60-80 but spending was still estimated to be below the US average in every store type. The following table shows

estimated per capita consumer expenditures per selected store types for Rome, the county and the MSA.

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According to Claritas, residents of the City of Rome are projected to spend less in all selected retail stores than residents in Oneida County and the Utica-Rome MSA. This is not surprising given that wealth of the City of Rome is considered to be below that of the County and the MSA. What is surprising is that retailers in Rome actual perform better per store and per capita than the county or MSA, (see retail sales above) given the lower wealth of the City. This further suggests that Rome retailers attract customers from outside of the City and that the City is exporting retail goods.

Agriculture

Information regarding the agricultural industry specific to the City of Rome is scarce, however, the City's real property database indicates that nearly 7,000 acres of land in the City are classified as agricultural.

Agriculture is one of the leading industries across Oneida County. According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, the most recent agricultural census produced by the United States Department of Agriculture, there were 216,094 acres of farmland in Oneida County with 928 farms, 592 of which were full-time. Most of the farms are family farms, with 12.5% operating as partnerships or corporations. Oneida County's agricultural industry ranked thirteenth in New York State in terms of total value of agricultural products sold. The top five agricultural commodities sold were dairy products (ranking ninth in the State), cattle and calves (ranked eight in the State), nursery and greenhouse crops, corn for grain and vegetables, sweet corn and melons.



Housing

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- The closure of Griffiss Air Force Base resulted in significant vacant housing stock, including a 14.3% vacancy rate for rental units and a 30% decrease in home values.
- Since the base closure in 1995, vacant structures have not been maintained or stabilized. Many have deteriorated beyond repair.
- The City’s homeowner assistance programs have rehabilitated a significant number of units since their inception 20 years ago, but have been overwhelmed by recent demands.
- Rome’s housing stock is older with nearly 40% built before 1940.
- Approximately 11.3% of Rome’s housing units are subsidized.
- The City’s 2000 Consolidated Plan identified housing rehabilitation, low income homeownership and neighborhood stabilization as priority housing needs.
- The City’s 2000 Consolidated Plan identified down payment requirements and high property taxes as the most significant barriers to affordable housing.
- The City’s Neighborhood Improvement Program and HOME Program provide assistance to Rome’s low income residents.

General Housing Characteristics

According to the 2000 Census, there are 16,272 housing units in the City. Of the total housing units counted in the Census, 13,653 were occupied. Owners make up 57.1% of the occupied housing in the City and renters 42.9%. The 2000 Census also reports that the vacancy rate of for-sale housing in the City was about 3.3% and the vacancy rate for rental housing was 14.6%. The high vacancy rates can be attributed to the closure of Griffiss Air Force Base in 1995.

	1990		2000		% change 1990-2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Housing Units	16,661	100.0%	16,272	100.0%	-2.3%
Total Occupied Units	15,754	94.6%	13,653	83.9%	-13.3%
Total Owner Occupied Units (% of occupied)	8,413	53.4%	7,792	57.1%	-7.4%
Total Renter Occupied Units (% of occupied)	7,341	46.6%	5,861	42.9%	-20.2%
Vacant Units	907	5.4%	2,619	16.1%	188.8%
Vacant For-Sale	61	0.7%	270	3.3%	342.6%
Vacant For-Rent	477	6.1%	999	14.6%	109.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

Based on the 2000 census, single-family detached structures are the predominant housing type in the City of Rome, making up 49.0% of the market. Two, three- and four-family buildings comprise 28.2% of the housing stock in the City. Apartment buildings of ten or more units account for 1,608 units, 9.9% of the market. The 2000 Census reports that a significant portion of the City’s housing units (35.6%) were constructed before 1940. Since

1990, a total of 466 units were constructed in Rome. Most of these units were built between 1990 and 1994.

Characteristics of Rental Housing

Rental housing accounts for 42.9% of occupied housing in the City of Rome according to 2000 Census figures. The average household size of renter occupied units is 2.11 persons. The majority of occupied rental units are one- and two-bedroom, followed by three-bedroom units (22.0%). Nearly one-half of rental units are in two, three, and four family structures.

The median gross rent in Rome was \$393 in 1990. Adjusting the 1990 median rent for inflation to 2000 dollars results in a median rent of \$518. The 2000 Census reports that the City of Rome has a median gross rent of \$462. Rental costs have actually decreased 10.8% in comparison to 1990 figures when adjusted for inflation.

As part of the housing analysis, a survey of recent rental listings in the *Sunday Sentinel* was conducted from the June 16, 2002 listings. There were 25 apartments listed for rent. Most of the apartments available in the City of Rome were for one- and two- bedroom units. Rents were generally in the \$300-\$400 range, with some apartments including utilities. The mean asking price for a one-bedroom unit was \$334.83. The mean asking price for two bedroom units was \$430.50 and \$545 for three-bedroom units.

One factor in assessing general housing needs within a community is the availability of housing choice. A healthy housing market should provide sufficient opportunities to its residents to secure good quality units that address their needs in terms of number of bedrooms, location and other considerations. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates of about 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. The City-wide vacancy rate for rental housing (2000) was much higher at 14.6%.



The needs of lower income households can best be understood by examining the numbers of cost burdened households in the City of Rome by income range and tenure. Cost burden is defined as the extent to which gross housing costs exceeds 30% of gross income, based on data published by the Census Bureau. According to the 2000 Census, 2,223 households in Rome reported rental housing costs in excess of 30% of income. This represented 40.0% of all reported renter households. Not surprisingly, the extent of cost burden was significantly greater on lower income households. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 1,993 or 89.7%, of the households determined to be cost burdened.

Assisted Housing

A small portion of the rental housing within the City of Rome is provided through subsidized funding sources such as the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



According to the HUD housing inventory, there are approximately 1,833 subsidized housing units in Rome, of which 24% are occupied by the City's elderly population.

The Rome Housing Authority provides 477 units in four subsidized housing projects. Liberty Gardens is the largest facility with 180 units. The Housing Authority maintains a waiting list for these subsidized units. The Housing Authority is also the primary administrator of the Section 8 Program in the City.

**Table 15: City of Rome
Subsidized Housing Inventory**

Facility	Total						Subtotal Elderly	Subtotal Non- Elderly	Subtotal Special Needs
	Units	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4+BR			
Rome Mall	45	0	45	0	0	0	45	0	0
Wright Park I*	200	0	56	102	30	12	4	196	0
Wright Park II*	99	0	0	30	59	10	4	95	0
Rome Towers	123	0	60	63	0	0	0	123	0
Park Drive Manor I	102	0	28	48	26	0	11	91	0
Madison Plaza	126	29	48	49	0	0	0	126	0
Shelto, Inc.	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Chronic Mentally Ill	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Section 8 units	404	0	87	161	131	25	0	404	0
Park Drive Manor II	167	0	0	84	67	16	0	167	0
Liberty Gardens	180	0	16	116	48	0	0	180	0
Colonial 1	98	39	55	4	0	0	98	0	0
Colonial 2	100	0	100	0	0	0	100	0	0
Valentine apts.	99	0	99	0	0	0	99	0	0
Georgian Arms	80	0	80	0	0	0	80	0	0
Totals	1833	68	684	657	361	63	441	1382	10

* - to be demolished

Characteristics of Owner Occupied Housing

There are 7,792 owner-occupied units in the City of Rome, comprising 57.1% of occupied housing in the City. The average household size of owner-occupied units is 2.45 persons. One-half of the City's owner-occupied units have three-bedrooms. Approximately 41.4% of owner-units are in two- and four-bedroom units. A total of 6,530 units or 83.8% of owner-occupied units are in single-family detached structures. According to 2000 Census figures, the vacancy rate of for-sale housing is 3.3%. Since 1990, the vacancy rate of for-sale housing has sky-rocketed 342.6%.

The median value of owner-occupied homes in Rome as reported in the 1990 Census was \$68,500. Adjusting the 1990 median value for inflation to 2000 dollars results in a median value of \$90,250. According to the 2000 Census, median value of owner-occupied units is \$64,800. As reported by home owners in Census data, housing in Rome is losing value. Additional information on sale prices was obtained from the New York State Association of Realtors, which has data on the county level. According to the Association of Realtors, in

Rome Comprehensive Plan

June 2000, the median sales price of homes in Oneida County was \$67,900. In June 2002, the median sales price was \$70,000. These prices are similar to the reported median value of owner occupied units in Rome as reported in the Census.

A listing of homes for sale was obtained through the March 1-7, 2002 *Rome Observer*. There were 25 single-family homes and five two-family homes listed for sale. The majority of single-family homes were three-bedroom units (17 total). The average asking price of a three-bedroom is \$57,041 with prices ranging from \$34,900 to \$94,500. There were five four-bedroom units listed ranging in price from \$39,995 to \$99,900, with an average asking price of \$62,519. One home listed had five-bedrooms and was priced at \$170,000. Two two-bedroom homes were listed with an average price of \$37,950. The five two-family homes that were listed ranged in price from \$24,900 to 49,500. The average asking price was \$39,960.

The 2000 Census reports that 1,113 or 17.9% of homeowners are cost burdened. Cost burden is defined as the extent to which gross housing costs exceeds 30% of gross income, based on data published by the Census Bureau. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 529 or 47.5% of the households determined to be cost burdened.

Housing Assistance Programs

The City offers two housing programs. The Neighborhood Improvement Program rehabilitates substandard housing and brings units into compliance with New York State Building Codes. The program primarily targets neighborhoods in which more than 50% of residents are low income. Only owner-occupied structures are eligible for assistance. Rome's HOME Program is a low income homebuyer program. This program provides assistance to help offset the cost of purchasing a home in the City.

Consolidated Plan 2000

The City of Rome updated its HUD Consolidated Plan in 2000. The Consolidated Plan evaluates housing needs, including homelessness and special needs populations, and community development needs, including public facilities, public services and economic development. The Consolidated Plan reported that since 1995 total Rome population has decreased by approximately 10%, housing prices have dropped 30% and school enrollment has decreased by about 18%, necessitating redistricting and closure of some neighborhood schools.

The Consolidated Plan reports that overall the City's housing stock was in very sound condition in 1990. The Census found only about 9% to be substandard. This very positive situation existed in part because of the stability of market demand. City Programs contributed to high-quality housing stock with a comprehensive policy of promoting new housing construction and of using CDBG programs to help low and moderate income homeowners in older city neighborhoods to maintain their homes. The City's Neighborhood Improvement Program has rehabilitated over 1,520 units of housing since its inception over 20 years ago.

According to the Consolidated Plan, Rome has lost approximately 4,558 in total population since the base closure. This loss has led to a dramatic decrease in the cost of housing and a concurrent increase in the vacancy rate. Almost every block in the City has at least one



vacant home. Some of these houses are not being stabilized or maintained and have deteriorated beyond repair, while others are at risk. The presence of vacant deteriorating housing is a major factor in the destabilization of neighborhoods and of a decrease in the quality of life provided by a City.

The Consolidated Plan identifies priority housing needs that focus on mitigating the economic and social stresses resulting from the realignment of Griffiss Air Force Base. It recommends focusing on neighborhood stabilization and revitalization, for both owner and renter occupied housing, with an emphasis on helping low and very low income households. The plan sets an overall goal to ensure decent housing and neighborhoods, and a suitable living environment and recommends City-operated housing rehabilitation, low-income homebuyer programs and selective demolition of dilapidated vacant buildings as the primary tools for achieving these goals. Other needs identified are vacant property maintenance programs and tools to avoid abandonment. The key housing affordability issues identified were down payment requirements and high property taxes.

While stabilization has become a critical issue, new housing has become less of a priority as the City struggles to lower its vacancy rate in existing housing. 400 units of rental housing were constructed from 1980 to 1990. These additional units helped to satisfy a steadily increasing demand for sound rental housing from the City's two largest employers, Griffiss Air Force Base and the New York State Department of Corrections. But, the loss of Griffiss Air Force Base has now reversed that trend. The sharp drop in population has resulted in a glut of housing, plummeting prices and vacant deteriorating buildings. These current conditions have obliterated any need for new rental housing. Rome must now work to maintain the housing it has in order to keep its neighborhoods from deteriorating into blight and decay. The plan identified three priority objectives to meet the City's overall housing needs. These include rehabilitating 150 units of substandard housing through the Neighborhood Improvement Program; assisting 25 low and moderate income households in buying homes; and demolishing 15 vacant and dilapidated buildings.



Land Use Analysis

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- Outside of Griffiss Business and Technology Park, nearly 90% of the City's land is in residential use.
- Nearly 16% of the City's residential properties are vacant.
- With 3,506 acres of land, Griffiss Business and Technology Park offers considerable capacity for new commercial and industrial development. Beyond the Park, there are about 740 acres of industrial uses across 59 parcels and 950 acres of commercial uses across 743 parcels. There are also 25 vacant industrial parcels over about 385 acres and 170 vacant commercial parcels over about 230 acres.
- Approximately 22% of the City's existing commercial land is vacant or underutilized. These parcels are scattered throughout the City.
- The current zoning ordinance, as it relates to existing land uses, is out of date and functionally obsolete. The City will review and update its zoning ordinance to reflect the City's current state, its potential future development, and different techniques related to zoning.

The City of Rome is made up of approximately 41,200 acres of classified land uses across 13,302 parcels of land.³ More than 57% of the properties in Rome are classified as single-family residential, making up about 68% of the total acreage or about 28,350 acres. Griffiss Business and Technology Park is not included in the City's database but is approximately 3,506 acres in size (the base also has an addition 71 acres in the Town of Floyd). The Park is a mix of uses that includes ball fields, a golf course, light industry such as research and development, health care, office space, and the new Rome Free Academy. The runway still exists through the center of the site, a remnant of the Park's former role as an Air Force Base. Also remaining at the Park are two small neighborhoods that were once inhabited by members of the Air Force and their families.

Other forms of residential use also add to the predominately residential composition of the entire City of Rome. Together, general residential uses, both occupied and vacant according to the City's Real Property Database, account for almost 35,850 acres or 87% of the City's acreage and 11,439 properties or almost 86% of all properties in Rome. Vacant residential uses account for 1,794 properties and 4002 acres.

Commercial uses are the second most common uses and account for about 7% of the City's land area and 913 properties, 170 (approximately 645 acres) of which are listed as vacant. The following table (Table 16) shows the break down of different land uses, associated acres, and number of parcels throughout the City.

³ Figure does not include the former Griffiss Air Force Base as it is not included in the Real Property Data GIS provided by Oneida County.

Table 16 Land Use		Total Parcels	Total Acres
0	Unclassified	0	0
210	Single Family Residential	7606	28354.4
220	Two Family Residential	1372	1944.57
250	Estate Residential	0	0
695	Cemeteries	21	66.96
100-190	Agricultural	183	380.89
200, 260, 270, 283	Residential	30	8.85
230, 271, 280, 281, 411	Multi-Family Residential	509	1174.67
240, 241, 242	Rural Residential	128	358.54
300, 350, 380	Vacant	39	10.89
310-316	Vacant Residential	1794	4002.12
320-323	Vacant Rural	201	531.6
330-331	Vacant Commercial	170	644.77
340-341	Vacant Industrial	63	198.95
400, 410, 414-455, 470-475, 486	Commercial	295	1397.07
460-465	Professional Offices & Banks	38	80.69
480-485	Mixed Use Commercial	410	856.18
500-583	Recreation & Entertainment	22	8.51
590-593, 960-963	Parks	25	153.86
600-642, 680-694	Community Services	129	289.26
650-670	Government & Protection	22	45.28
700-749	Industrial	59	59.37
800-885	Public Services	109	412.66
900-950, 970-994	Conservation Lands & Preserves	77	192.09

Inside District

The Inside District is predominately two-family and multi family homes, single family homes, vacant residential properties, scattered commercial properties, and community services. The greatest mix of these uses is seen in the west of the Inside District. In the north, the pattern becomes more residential and more single-family residential.

There are some distinct development and land use patterns that emerge in Rome evident by actual field examination of the area. Downtown, the area roughly bound by Liberty Street to the north, South James and Fort Stanwix to the east, Freedom Plaza to the south, and Jay Street to the west, is predominately large commercial buildings built during the urban



renewal period and up to the present. A number of older buildings remain in this area on the periphery including old City Hall, the Capitol Theater, and the Court House.

East Dominick, roughly the area east of Erie Boulevard and west of the Skyline Entrance, between the Mohawk River and Erie Canal, is a mix of residential streets north of East Dominick, the Revere site along the Mohawk, and the East Rome Business Park site. The homes are single-family detached homes and two family flats situated on small lots. The commercial development along East Dominick ranges from older commercial and mixed-use structures built to the sidewalk in the western portion near downtown to strip commercial development in newer, automobile-oriented buildings in the eastern portion.

Vogel Park is defined roughly by the area south of Chestnut Street, west of Black River Boulevard, east of Turin Street, and north of the Turin/Black River intersection. The area is predominantly made up of medium to large single family homes. Commercial uses are limited to along Black River Road and Turin Street to the extreme north and south of those roads in the neighborhood.



East Chestnut is the corridor along East Chestnut Street. Most of the uses are commercial along this major road into the Griffiss Business and Technology Park. Most of the sites are developed as strip malls or roadside convenience uses.

Ridge Mills, the area north of West Chestnut between Turin Street and Black River Road, is mostly medium-sized homes, developed after the 1940s. Most of these homes are single story ranch-style homes on larger lots than those closer to the City's center.

Indian Creek, north of Erie Boulevard, west of Jay Street to the Inside District boundary, and south of Thomas Street, is mostly small to mid-sized one and two family homes.

Bellamy-Gansevoort, the area made up of the historic district by the same name, east of Route 46/Black River Road in the vicinity of the courthouse. The area is predominantly mid-size and large single family homes dating from the mid 1800's to the turn of the 20th century. A number of these homes, however, have been converted into apartments and office uses.

Rome Center is the area along Erie Boulevard between Route 46 and Madison Street. This area, commercial in nature, is also the area of Rome's past urban renewal efforts where older buildings were replaced by newer buildings, such as the Freedom Plaza, the former Living Bridge, City Hall, and other large commercial structures.

Transfiguration is the area west and south of Erie Blvd in the area of the Transfiguration parish. This area is characteristic of an older, working class neighborhood from the early to mid 1900's. The area is mostly small single and two-family units on small lots with homes close to one another.

Outside District

The Outside District is dominantly large single-family residential properties. In the south, there is an increased mix of large vacant, commercial, and rural properties.

In the northeast, there are some suburban residential developments characterized by non-grid patterned streets and cul-de-sacs.

The *Delta Lake* area can be categorized as mostly small vacation cottages, with some infill development of newer and larger homes.

Griffiss Business and Technology Park is a former Air Force Base in the east of Rome that has been converted into a business and technology park. It is dominated by the large runway that still sits in the center of the site. Today, the site is becoming a location for multiples uses. The Mohawk Glen Golf Course is situated on the western periphery of the site. The Rome City School District is completing the construction of its new high school just south of the Campus Green area of the park. The hangars and inner buildings are being inhabited by public and private uses (the air force still operates some functions in the park). There are also two small neighborhoods of abandoned base housing along the south of the park. These homes are a mix of single family detached and duplex homes built on slab foundations. These homes were used for the military personal assigned to Griffiss when the base was active. The homes now site abandoned, vandalized, and exposed to the elements.



South Rome is mostly large lot residential with small to midsize single family homes and quad housing. There is also some commercial mixed in along the major roads. The Mohawk and Oneida Correctional Facilities are also located here.

West Rome is mostly large lot residential with less commercial activity along major roads in comparison to South Rome.

Natural Resources and Environment

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The Mohawk River and Erie Canal provide significant recreation and tourism opportunities for the City and region.
- Wetlands in the western and southern portions of the Outside District create significant challenges to development.
- The historic and natural significance of the Rome Sand Plains provide strong recreation, tourism and educational opportunities.
- The City of Rome and its partners have made considerable progress in identifying potential brownfields sites and in the investigation and clean-up steps necessary to make these sites available for redevelopment.

Waterbodies

Mohawk River and Erie Canal

The Mohawk River is the largest tributary of the Hudson River. The Mohawk begins about 20 miles north of Rome and flows southeast for nearly 150 miles before entering the Hudson roughly 10 miles north of Albany. The Mohawk River valley's role as a key transportation route from the Hudson Valley to the Great Lakes region began in pre-colonial days and continues today. Two railroads, the New York State Thruway and the Erie Canal run along the Mohawk for much of its length.

Before the canals, three miles of land separated the Mohawk from the Great Lakes. Forced to carry their canoes from one spot to the other, Native Americans called present day Rome *De-o-wain-sta* "The Carrying Place." The proximity of the two water bodies was also important to European trappers and traders, who used the route to carry riches in furs from the heartland of the New World to East Coast ports.

Completion of the Erie Canal in October 1825 eased trade and prompted westward migration and the development of farms throughout the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest. The Canal provided the primary mechanism for transporting fresh produce back to the growing metropolitan areas of the east and sending consumer goods to the agricultural areas in the west.

By the early 1980s the Erie Canal was a relatively minor commercial waterway due to competition from the Saint Lawrence Seaway, as well as railroads and highways.

Today the Erie Canal is enjoying a rebirth as a recreational and historic resource. In 2001, the New York State Canal System was designated as the nation's twenty-third National Heritage Corridor, joining the ranks of America's most important historical resources. The NYS Canal Corporation manages the Canal System with the goal of transforming the system into a world class recreationway, with clustered development to foster recreation, tourism and economic development, while preserving the natural and historic environment of the system and adjacent communities. People of New York also use the canal system as a source of hydroelectric power, flood control, irrigation for farms, and fresh water.

Lake Delta

The southernmost corner of Lake Delta is located within the City of Rome. Lake Delta is a reservoir for the Erie Canal and is owned and operated by the NYS Canal Corporation. A state park, Delta Lake State Park, is located on a peninsula extending into the reservoir, providing significant recreation opportunities. The terrain is wooded and generally flat. The park has a sandy beach, picnic areas, hiking and nature trails, a boat launch, fishing for trout, pike, bass, bullhead and perch, and 101 tent, trailer or RV camping sites. Winter visitors can cross-country ski, snowshoe or ice fish.



The park is open year-round. Camping season begins on the first Friday in May and continues through Columbus Day. The boat launch is open 24 hrs a day from early May to late November.

Other Water Resources

Other significant rivers and streams in Rome include Wood Creek, which begins at Oneida Lake, transverses the Rome Sand Plains (see below), and continues eastward into the City of Rome, where it turns north before terminating just west of Lake Delta. Wood Creek played a significant role in historic transportation patterns as travelers portaged from the Mohawk to Wood Creek to make connections between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean.

Other notable streams include Fish Creek which forms a portion of the City's northwestern boundary. Burk, Beaver and Mud Creeks are smaller tributaries to Wood Creek.

Wetlands

The western and southern portions of Rome's Outside District are significantly impacted by the presence of wetlands. The following map shows that well over half of the land in these areas is classified as wetland by NYSDEC. Smaller wetland areas occur in the north, west and southeast portions of the Outside District. Little of the Inside District is impacted by wetlands.

The presence of wetlands in the Outside District has a significant impact on the development potential of the area. NYSDEC regulates development in wetlands under the 1975 Freshwater Wetlands Act (the Act) with the intent to preserve, protect, and conserve freshwater wetlands and their benefits, consistent with the general welfare and beneficial economic, social, and agricultural development of the state.

While not all activities are regulated, conducting regulated activities in a protected wetland or its 100-foot adjacent area requires a NYSDEC permit. (See below for more detail on regulated activities.) The permit standards require that impacts to wetlands be avoided or



minimized. A permit may be issued if the permitting agency determines that the benefits gained by allowing the action to occur outweigh the wetland benefits lost.

Most of the wetlands in the City of Rome are Class I or Class II wetlands. Class I and II wetlands provide the most benefits, and consequently have the most rigorous permitting process. The Act requires DEC to rank wetlands from Class I, which provide the most benefits, to Class IV, which provide the fewest.

According to the Act, certain activities are specifically exempt from regulation and do not require a permit, while other activities specifically require a permit. The following lists describe the regulatory status of some common activities:

Exempt Activities (do not require a permit)

- Normal agricultural practices (except filling and clear-cutting)
- Recreational activities (fishing, hunting, hiking, swimming, or picnicking)
- Routine maintenance of existing structures, lawns, and similar facilities
- Selective cutting of trees and harvesting of fuel wood

Regulated activities with minor impacts

- Installing utilities to a residence (exempt in an adjacent area)
- Drilling an individual water well in an adjacent area
- Replacing existing, functional bulkheads
- Installing docks, piers, or wharfs

Regulated activities with major impacts

- Filling and grading
- Erecting buildings (including houses, garages, and commercial facilities)
- Restoring, modifying, or expanding existing structures
- Draining (except for agriculture), dredging, or changing water levels
- Installing roads
- Mining
- Application of pesticides in wetlands
- Clear-cutting trees or other vegetation

Floodplains

Flooding from stream and river overflow is not a major development issue for the City of Rome. Flooding in the area is minor and consists primarily of localized flooding at storm drains throughout the City during storm events due to rising water levels on the Mohawk. The Public Works Department mitigates this problem by regularly clearing storm sewer outflows after storm events and ice in the winter.

As with wetlands, the western and southern areas of the Outside District are the most heavily impacted by floodplains. The following map shows the floodplains in the City of Rome.

Rome Sand Plains

The Rome Sand Plains is one of only a handful of inland pine barrens in the nation, encompassing approximately 5,000 acres in the City of Rome. The area consists of high

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sand dunes and low peat bogs, along with pine barrens and hardwood forests, meadows and wetlands. The Rome Sand Plains include two walking trails which allow visitors to explore the unique features of the area.

DEC has been acquiring lands in the Sand Plains since the 1980s, and works with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to acquire and protect critical parcels. In addition to individual parcels owned by DEC and TNC, the Izaak Walton League, Oneida County and the City of Rome also own property in the Sand Plains. These five organizations own approximately one-quarter of the Sand Plains.

NYSDEC formally dedicated the Rome Sand Plains as a Resource Management Area in October 1997. The site is cooperatively managed by the Rome Sand Plains Resource Management Team⁴. The management team is preparing a unit management plan for the area in order to protect, maintain and enhance the geological, ecological and historical values of the Sand Plains, while promoting recreational opportunities.

Brownfields

The City of Rome has a long industrial history that has resulted in a number of sites that have, or are perceived as having, environmental contamination. Some sites are still in active industrial use, while others are vacant or significantly underutilized. The City of Rome and its partners have made considerable progress in identifying potential brownfields sites and in the investigation and clean-up steps necessary to make these sites available for redevelopment.

Three key sites have undergone considerable investigation and remediation. These are the East Rome Business Park, Griffiss Business and Technology Park, and a former landfill site.

“The Rome landfill is an inactive municipal landfill that is located in a wetland. Industrial wastes from various companies in the city were reportedly brought here. Analytical data has confirmed the presence of hazardous waste constituents in both surface and groundwater. Previous inspections have noted the presence of surface leachate. An EPA Site Investigation was completed for this site. The DOH sampled residential drinking water wells in the vicinity but no contaminants above the drinking water standards were found. An EQBA Order for Title-3 funding was signed on February 3, 1992. The funding was used to properly close and monitor the landfill. A Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study (RI/FS) was completed in early 1995, and a Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in March of 1995. The ROD called for the following: 1) Regrading the landfill with clean fill, 2) Reclamation of an adjacent 11 acre wetland, 3) Construction of a landfill cap, 4) Construction of a slurry wall, 5) Construction of a leachate pump & treat (p&t) system with the resulting leachate taken to the City of Rome’s sewage treatment plant, 6) Extending the drinking water main to affected residences along Tannery Road, 7) Construction of fencing around the perimeter of the landfill and 8) Providing deed restrictions and continued site monitoring. Work on the water and sewer lines was completed in August of 1995.

⁴ The Rome Sand Plains Resource Management Team includes representatives from DEC, the City of Rome, Oneida County, the State Department of Transportation, the New York State Canals Corporation, the State Museum, The Nature Conservancy, the Izaak Walton League, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission, New York Rivers United, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Rome Area Chamber of Commerce, the Oneida Nation, the Rome Historical Society, and West Rome Riders, Inc.



Construction of the landfill cap and the leachate collection system was completed in September of 1997. A “p&t extraction well” and a monitoring well are not currently functional and must be replaced. An Operation monitoring and Maintenance (OM&M) program has been implemented, and is ongoing. A site inspection in June of 2001 revealed that there is still a serious leachate concern here. Leachate flow from the landfill passed underneath an adjacent ash fill and eventually migrated across an old railroad bend and then to a roadside ditch. Additional investigation is needed to evaluate the potential impact of the leachate to health and the environment, and also the effectiveness of the remedy.”⁵

East Rome Business Park

The East Rome Business Park is the former site of General Cable and has been identified as a priority redevelopment opportunity for the City. This 200-acre former industrial site is located in the east-central portion of the City. The RIDC owns a considerable amount of land in the business park.

The East Rome Park is the site of one of the first U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Pilot Demonstration Projects. The City received \$200,000 for site assessment, investigation and remediation planning. Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments have found that the site represents a lower risk to public health and the environment than is expected at a property formerly used for industrial purposes. The research concluded that remediation could be based upon “hot spot” removal, containment, limiting development of all or part of the area to industrial or commercial development and/or limiting the use of groundwater.

The City has begun efforts towards redevelopment of the core area of the Park. This has included land acquisition, building demolition and construction of a new access road thorough the site. The City is currently completing remediation of 300 Railroad Street using resources from the NYSDEC Brownfields Program. Work is expected to be complete in fall 2002. The City acquired much of the property except of a portion of the General Cable site, the former rod mill site, after the private property owner remediated the site under the NYSDEC Voluntary Clean-up Program. The City plans to demolish the structures remaining on this site during the summer of 2002.

The Niagara Mohawk portion of the site is under an Order of Consent between Niagara Mohawk and NYSDEC. NYSDEC issued a Record of Decision in March 2002 that identifies site remedies including excavation and removal of soil, removal of underground structures, subsurface containment, a clean soil cover, and a long-term operation, maintenance and monitoring program. Niagara Mohawk, the site owner, will design and implement the remedy.

Griffiss Business and Technology Park

The 3,577-acre former Griffiss Air Force Base is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Priorities List and the remediation of the site is being addressed by Federal actions.

⁵ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites in New York State, Volume 6. 2002, 6-55.

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Underground storage tanks and contaminated soil were removed from the base between 1985 and 1989 and a program to remove or replace all tanks on base is almost complete.

In 1991, the Air Force provided funds to the community to extend the municipal water supply in order to replace the wells contaminated by the base. Most affected residents have taken advantage of these supply extensions. In 1997, Griffiss removed PCB contaminated soil and sediments, petroleum contaminated soil, and drywells and sumps used in the disposal of liquid waste and one small landfill used to house low level radioactive tubes.

The Air Force has conducted a study to determine the extent of contamination to the groundwater, soil, and the rest of the base. Draft-final Records of Decision (ROD) for 31 Areas of Concern are under review. Five sites have approved RODs, which indicate that no further action is required provided the land use remains the same and the stipulated deed restrictions are followed. In addition, supplemental data has shown that other sites can be proposed for no further action. Finally, additional areas of interest (AOI) have also been identified. Some are completing their investigation, others will proceed to RODs and others require no further action.

Plans for base cleanup to facilitate realignment are completed and are updated regularly (latest update was January 1998). Griffiss is seeking to transfer portions of the base to Griffiss Local Development Corporation in advance of required cleanup. The Air Force may transfer property prior to completing the remediation process so long as they make various guarantees to complete the cleanup.

Tax Delinquent Property Assembly Program

The City is reviewing tax delinquent properties for redevelopable brownfields sites. Sites include former industrial plants, dry cleaners and gas stations. Rome is using City resources to work with property owners to perform Phase I site assessments.

The results of the Phase I site assessments are being used to help the City understand the potential risk of taking the properties for back taxes. As the City acquires the tax delinquent sites, it will apply to NYSDEC for resources to perform Phase II site assessments and required site clean-up in order to make the sites available for redevelopment.



Historic Resources & Heritage Tourism⁶

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

- The City of Rome is a key component of several existing and developing federal and state heritage areas,⁷ but it is not currently in a position to realize its full potential as a heritage tourism destination.
- The City's current historic preservation practices are somewhat irregular and make it difficult for property owners and residents in general to realize related economic benefits.
- Owners of the City's high proportion of older, historic, and potentially historic homes could benefit from incentives to maintain and improve their properties. It should be noted that a residence is generally a property owner's single largest purchase and investment over a lifetime, and municipal investments that strengthen and enhance these private investments help private property owners earn a stronger return on investment.
- There is a growing interest in heritage tourism among City organizations and the surrounding region.
- Historic preservation and heritage tourism are proven economic development strategies, but the City's current historic preservation practices make it difficult for property owners and businesses to benefit from these strategies; the City is not really capitalizing on some of its most important assets.
- Fort Stanwix, Erie Canal Village, and other amenities are good visitor "draws" that should be protected, enhanced and promoted. Improvements at these and similar destinations, as well as improved connections between them such as interpretive signage and trails, will likely result in better visitor experiences and increased visitation.

Communities that successfully use historic preservation tools as part of their comprehensive community and economic development strategies implement policies, projects and programs designed to build on the characteristics, assets and strengths that make them unique and set them apart from other communities. They look for opportunities to maximize their assets by working with similar communities to protect like resources. They try to evaluate the community impacts that might result from not preserving and protecting historic resources. They also recognize that the decision to protect, preserve, enhance and promote unique assets such as historic resources does not come without costs that must be borne by municipal government, business and industry, and local property owners, and they develop ways to mitigate those costs. Finally, they also establish administrative procedures and practices that allow and encourage public discourse and decision-making.

With these success factors in mind, the purpose of this section is to document the City's existing historic preservation efforts, to assist the City in identifying the economic values and risks associated with historic resources, and provide information that will enable the City to

⁶ This section is intended to provide an overview and summary of our findings related to historic resources, historic preservation and heritage tourism in the City of Rome. A more detailed, stand alone document and/or technical memoranda regarding specific preservation issues and tools will be prepared later in the planning process to assist the City in making decisions about its historic resources.

⁷ These include the Erie Canalway National Heritage Area; Mohawk Valley Heritage Area; and, potentially, a Northern Frontier Heritage Area and/or Oriskany Battlefield Heritage Area.

evaluate whether historic preservation strategies are, or can be, effective and worthwhile economic revitalization tools. This section will also assist the City in determining whether there is more it can do to capitalize on the economic development and heritage tourism potential of Rome's historic resources.

Listings in the National and State Registers of Historic Places



National and State Register-listed historic resources in the City of Rome include two National Historic Landmark sites; one historic district encompassing approximately ten buildings, two structures and two objects; four individually-listed historic buildings; and one historic site. The City has also established a local historic district (see below) and numerous other structures are potentially eligible for listing in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.⁸

The *Fort Stanwix National Monument* is a National Historic Landmark. It is bounded by Dominick, Spring, Liberty and James Streets. The Fort is a 1976 reconstruction of the site of the fort which was the location of a major treaty with the Iroquois Indians in 1768 and figured prominently in the American Revolution under control of the Continental Army. Fort Stanwix is operated by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior (see section on heritage tourism below).

The *Bellamy-Gansevoort Historic District* is generally bounded by Liberty, Steuben, and Huntington Streets to Bissell Street, and encompasses two adjacent half-acre parks and ten surrounding buildings, including the County Courthouse, Old City Hall, Justice Building, two churches, and four residences.

Buildings listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places include:

- **Arsenal House** (514 West Dominick Street): Federal brick residence built 1813 by the federal government for the commandant of the arsenal formerly located on this site.
- **Jervis Public Library** (613 North Washington Street): Large Greek Revival/Italianate former residence with Doric portico which was constructed in 1858. It was originally designed and occupied by the prominent 19th century engineer John B. Jervis.
- **Mills House** (507 North George Street): Large Venetian Gothic residence constructed in 1877.



⁸ In terms of compliance with federal and state historic preservation laws, properties that are *eligible* for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are treated essentially the same as those that are formally listed.

- **Zion Church** (140 West Liberty Street): Constructed in 1850. Designed by Richard Upjohn. Oldest church in Rome. Neo-Gothic. The church was enlarged in 1866-67 and the parish hall was added in 1885 by Upjohn's son and grandson, respectively. Original opaque glass windows were replaced by stained glass, with several from the Tiffany studios, beginning in 1873.

Locally-Designated and Protected Historic Resources

Local Law No. 7 of 1994, adopted September 14, 1994, regulates the locally designated North George Street Historic District and the Bellamy-Gansevoort Historic District (described above).

The five-block long North George Historic District is bounded by Liberty Street to the south, Sycamore Street and Vogel Park on the north; and by the alley to the rear of the properties on the east and west sides of North George Street.

Other Properties of Significance

Rome's older and historic buildings tell the story of the City's development, with links to its major businesses and industries. An informal windshield survey combined with review of the Herschensohn & Reed historic resource survey completed in 1981 indicates that many other structures in Rome are eligible for the National Register because of their architectural and/or historical significance.

These buildings include notable examples of the work of architects Richard and Hobart Upjohn of New York City; Marcus F. Cummings of Troy, New York; Archimedes Russell of Syracuse, New York; and others such as Francis A. Nelson, Otis Wheelock, W. Stanwood Phillips, Isaac Perry; Francis Himpler; G. Edward Cooper; and John B. Jervis. The work of local builders and craftsmen is also well represented, including John J. Parry & Watkyn Parry (father and son brick mason/layers), Elijah Brush (builder), and Woodman Kimball (mason and bricklayer).

Rome's older and historic neighborhoods also include notable examples of a wide range of building styles, among them, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic, Italianate, Tudor, Queen Anne, and others. The Rome Cemetery is also historically and architecturally significant.⁹

Most of these buildings are located in the older areas of the City, generally bounded by Locust, Turin, Black River, Jervis, and Thomas Streets; as well as commercial buildings on East Dominick Street and residential buildings on First, Second, Third and Fourth Streets, just off East Dominick Street. The commercial buildings along East Dominick Street would benefit greatly from façade improvement and "Main Street" type revitalization. Portions of the commercial area along the southern end of North James Street might also be appropriate for rehabilitation and improvement.

⁹ These buildings and the Rome Cemetery are documented on NYS Building Structure-Inventory Forms (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation) and related maps and documentation. It appears that in addition to the 1981 survey, efforts have been made more recently to expand the City's National Register and local historic districts. This information is available in Planning Department files.

Comprehensive Planning, Zoning, and Local Ordinances

Focused long-term planning and land use controls such as zoning ordinances; historic preservation, landmark or architectural review ordinances; and various types of overlay districts, are among the strongest tools available to local governments wishing to preserve community character or have a direct impact on the future development of the community.

The City of Rome's first comprehensive plan, *Rome Master Plan 1970 – 1990*, included a number of goals related to industrial development, residential development, commercial development, community facilities development, circulation development, utility system development, and urban design.

Urban design goals included:

- Encouraging exemplary architectural design in public facilities development;
- Strengthening and protecting the existing natural elements of the City.
- Protecting recognized historic and architectural landmarks through local legislative controls.
- Encouraging the development of appropriate settings for important public buildings through the introduction of landscaped open spaces.
- Encouraging in all types of physical development an awareness of basic design principles in order to create a pleasing visual environment within the City.

The protection of historic resources in the City of Rome has fluctuated considerably and existing ordinances and procedures are somewhat irregular, jeopardizing historic resources and leaving the City potentially vulnerable to legal challenges. Current practices and laws should be revisited and standardized in the new zoning ordinance being prepared concurrently with the comprehensive plan.

The primary tool for protecting historic resources in the City of Rome is Article XII of the Zoning Ordinance (2000), which outlines historic and scenic preservation commission regulations.¹⁰ In accordance with Article XII, Section 72.3, all properties within the Bellamy-Gansevoort Historic District and the North George Street Historic District were surveyed by Herschenson & Reed Associates,¹¹ with assistance from representatives of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in 1981. They were subsequently classified in terms of historic significance, condition and degree of alteration. This classification system is included in slightly modified form in the City's Scenic and Historic Commission Law (Article XII of Zoning Ordinance). Properties are classified as one of five categories and property owners may apply for reclassification:

- **Class A:** Highly significant, good condition, minimal alteration.
- **Class B,** Significant, minimal alteration.
- **Class C,** Significant, alterations exist.
- **Class D,** No historic significance, sympathetic to nearby structures.
- **Class E,** Modern, no historic significance.

¹⁰ The Historic and Scenic Preservation Commission has been disbanded by the Mayor. Its duties are now performed largely by the City's planning department and planning board.

¹¹ The survey was fairly comprehensive, but did not result in designation of districts or buildings to the extent recommended. Both historic districts are smaller than they are described in NYS "blue forms" used in the survey.



Site plan review is required before a building permit is issued; Article XII, Section 74 stipulates that “No person shall carry out any exterior alteration, restoration, reconstruction, demolition, new construction, or moving of a landmark or property within the historic district, nor shall any person make any material change to the appearance of such property, its light fixtures, signs, sidewalks, fences, steps, paving, or other exterior appearance and cohesiveness of the historic district, without first obtaining a certificate of approval from the Planning Department.”¹²

Site plan review and the approval or disapproval of building permits for buildings designated Class D or E can be performed by planning department staff. Properties designated Class A or B require review by the Planning Board and issuance of a Certificate of Approval. Many projects involving Class C buildings can be approved by the Planning Board, but projects involving changes in square footages of floor or roof areas, material changes in siding, and/or material changes in doors or windows also require review by the Planning Board and issuance of a Certificate of Approval.

In reviewing applications for building permits and certificates of appropriateness, planning department staff and planning board members seek to alter the historic features of contributing buildings as little as possible; ensure that alterations of existing properties are compatible with the structure’s historic character as well as that of the surrounding district; and ensure that new construction is compatible with the district in which it is located. Contemporary designs are allowed as long as they are compatible with review criteria.

Rome’s specific design review criteria include, but are not limited to, the following guidelines:

- The historical and/or architectural value and significance of the structure and its relationship both to the surrounding neighborhood as well as to the historic district as a whole.
- The general design, character and appropriateness to the property of the proposed alteration or new construction.
- The integrity of the original design.
- The scale of proposed alterations or new construction in relation to the property itself, surrounding properties and the neighborhood.
- Texture, materials, and color, and their relation to similar features of other properties in the neighborhood.
- Visual compatibility with surrounding properties, including proportion of the property’s front façade, proportion and arrangement of windows and other openings within the façade, roof shape and rhythm of spacing of properties on the streets, including setback.
- The importance of historic, architectural or other features to the significance of the property.

¹² The City’s Scenic and Historic District Commission has been disbanded, although some of its functions are performed by Planning Department staff, the Common Council’s Historic Preservation Committee, and certificate of approval ad hoc appeals committee. However, to establish a proper community forum for addressing historic preservation issues, a new, objective historic district commission is needed. This commission should include representatives from historic districts and buildings; an architect or design professional; a realtor; a lawyer; a historian; and possibly others with education or experience related to historic preservation. Such commissions generally perform a variety of duties that cannot at present be adequately be performed. Historic district commissions play a critical role in determining what is historic and in ensuring fairness in accordance with established definitions and standards.

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- The criteria established in the Secretary of Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" as developed and published by the United States Department of the Interior.

Hardship provisions for property owners denied a certificate of approval for alteration or demolition are set forth in Article XII, Section 77.1. To establish a hardship claim, the applicant must show that the property is incapable of earning a reasonable return, the status of the structure within the historic district presents the use of the structure as a residence or cannot be adapted for any other use (in the case of proposed demolitions); and efforts to find a purchaser interested in acquiring the property and preserving it have failed.

Applicants may dispute and challenge findings of the Planning Department by filing an appeal with the chairperson of the Planning Board and the chairperson of the City of Rome Common Council committee on historic preservation. A five person administrative review board is then established and is made up of two members of the Common Council (appointed by the Council President); two members of the Planning Board, and a Planning Department representative is then established. If an agreement is still not reached, the administrative review board submits a written report to the full Planning Board, which can then overturn the recommendation of the administrative board or deny the appeal.

Rome's historic preservation regulations lack several important elements such as definitions of key terms; provisions for a standing historic preservation commission with qualified members; administration of the building permit and certificate of approval review process; narrative description of historic district boundaries or list of historic buildings and districts; etc. Such deficiencies can result in controversy and/or legal challenges.

Without a historic preservation department or staff person in local government, historic preservation is generally carried out by a local historic preservation not-for-profit organization, the local historical society, and/or a historic preservation commission.

Local Organizations Active in Historic Preservation

There are no historic preservation organizations in the City of Rome, although preservation falls within the mission of the Rome Historical Society to some degree. The City did have a historic and scenic preservation commission, but it has been disbanded by the current administration and its duties reassigned to the planning department, the Council's historic preservation committee, and ad hoc committees occasionally convened to facilitate certificate of approval appeals.

When implementing historic preservation as an economic development strategy, success often depends on the assistance of staff, consultants or community volunteers that are familiar with historic preservation practices, as well as others with backgrounds in real estate development, construction, architecture/design, engineering, landscape architecture and property management. Reliance on, or consultation with, professionals can mean the difference between rehabilitating buildings and neighborhoods in ways that maintain their architectural and historical integrity, and a renovation or rehabilitation project in which original façade elements, windows, doors etc. are modernized in ways that detract from and/or destroy significant historic building elements. The difference between these two building treatments is important; destruction or replacement of significant building elements can contribute to reduced property values and older neighborhoods that lack character, as well as increasing neighborhood deterioration as historic character is lost.



Heritage Tourism

The federal and state governments have been investing heavily since the mid-1990s to stimulate economic revitalization by strengthening New York State's resources and communities as heritage tourism destinations as well as ways to facilitate additional heritage tourism. Key components of this strategy have included the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's Canal Corridor Initiative; creation of the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor; creation of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Area; and creation of the Hudson River National Heritage Corridor; similar efforts are currently underway to expand heritage tourism capacity in the Northern Frontier as well as federal and state scenic byways programs.

Heritage tourism has been defined as "travel that allows visitors to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past." Many tourism studies have indicated that heritage tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the travel industry, and provides many benefits to travelers and communities. To be a successful heritage tourism destination, communities should follow the five principles of:

- Focusing on authenticity and quality of experience;
- Preserving and protecting historic resources;
- Making sites come alive to visitors;
- Finding a good fit between a community or region and tourism; and
- Collaboration.¹³

Tourism is among New York State's strongest economic sectors. Over the past decade or so, considerable federal, state and local funding has been devoted to enhancing and promoting the NYS Canal System and numerous heritage areas such as the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, which includes Rome.

The City of Rome, like many communities in New York State, is beginning to realize its tourism potential, assisted in part by its location within the nationally-designated Erie Canalway Heritage Corridor and the New York State-designated Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor as well as existence of two National Historic Landmarks associated with the American Revolution (Fort Stanwix and Oriskany Battlefield). The City of Rome is also situated along the Old Erie Canal State Park, a 36-mile linear park running from DeWitt to Rome. In addition, the National Park Service recently completed *The Northern Frontier Special Resource Study* to determine the feasibility of creating a Northern Frontier National Heritage Area.

Fort Stanwix, Rome's primary heritage tourism destination, attracts nearly 50,000 visitors annually. To provide better collections management, interpretation and educational offerings, the National Park Service will shortly begin construction of the Marinus Willet Collection Management and Heritage Education



Center. This facility will be an anchor and visitor welcome center within the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor, which has played a key role in its development. The center will include

¹³ This definition of heritage tourism and success principles is taken from materials developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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interpretive exhibits; a theater and audiovisual presentation; multi-purpose rooms for meetings and educational programs; a bookstore; and a climate-controlled museum collection storage for more than 400,000 artifacts held by the National Park Service. The project is a partnership between the National Park Service, the City of Rome, Oneida County, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of New York, the Oneida Nation, and the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor. A groundbreaking is planned for July 2002.

Similarly, during summer 2002, Fort Stanwix is collaborating with 20 other historical, community and tourism organizations that have joined together to promote numerous events in the Mohawk, Hudson and Champlain Valleys to commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War. Organized under the heading "The Northern Campaign – 3 Valleys to Freedom – Relive America's Victories of 1777," the New York-Vermont coalition intends to attract new and increased visitation at Fort Stanwix and the other sites. This effort is a manifestation National Park Service plans to improve collaborative programming and promotional efforts with Rome and the surrounding region. The "Northern Campaign" promotion shows that the battles of 1777 are known as the turning point of the American Revolution as well as a turning point in world history, as the battles in upstate New York became a source of inspiration for the French Revolution and the revolutions in South America. The target tourism market is families and adults interested in history and reenactments who live in major metropolitan areas of New York, New England and Quebec Province in Canada, as well as in surrounding rural communities where the events are taking place.

The National Park Service's recently completed *The Northern Frontier Special Resource Study* concluded that a number of current issues would make it difficult to establish a National Heritage Area, but found that considerable economic benefits would likely flow from increasing the National Park Service's management, development and interpretive role via Fort Stanwix, as well as creation of a regional New York State Heritage Area.

The Northern Frontier interpretive area includes the counties of Oswego, Onondaga, Madison, Montgomery, Otsego, Schoharie, and Schenectady as well as portions of Fulton, Oneida and Herkimer. It includes at least 147 interpretive sites related to the four themes, with 47 other sites within reasonable driving distance. Thirteen of the 147 sites are National Historic Landmarks. The central interpretive theme of the proposed regional heritage area would be the military actions of the Northern Frontier and their influence on the development of the United States. Other themes identified were the Iroquois Experience, Diversity of Cultures, and Geographic Opportunity.

Critical issues currently impeding potential development of a Northern Frontier National Heritage Area designation included:

- The need for greater public awareness of, and appreciation for, the region's cultural resources;
- The need to develop and increase local responsibility for resource stewardship;
- The need to deal with potential concerns of private property owners, who frequently are custodians of the project area's historic resources;
- The need to establish protections for heritage resources to ensure (in advance), that resources are promoted in ways that do not compromise their long-term protection;



- The need to upgrade incomplete inventories of cultural resources and ensure they are consistent with one another;
- The need for better coordination and operation among government agencies and not-for-profit organizations dedicated to planning, preserving, and promoting the region's natural and cultural resources; and
- The boundaries of the Northern Frontier Region overlap the boundaries of the existing New York State Mohawk Valley Heritage Area and the creation of the Northern Frontier heritage area could undermine MVHC's successes to establish and promote a distinctive identity.

A similar special resource study is being completed for Oriskany Battlefield. Both studies represent increasing regional efforts to reap the economic benefits of heritage tourism. To facilitate the City of Rome's participation in increasing regional heritage tourism efforts, it will be important to better protect, preserve, enhance and promote the City's older and historic building stock and cultural resources.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (ECNHC) was established by federal legislation on December 21, 2000. ECNHC covers 524 miles in Upstate New York, including four navigable waterways: Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca; sections of the first Erie Canal; and over 200 municipalities adjacent to the canals. A corridor management plan and related facilities are currently being developed and will promote expansion of interpretive facilities and capacity among corridor communities.¹⁴

The Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor (MVHC) was established by the New York State Legislature in 1994 to preserve, promote, and celebrate the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Mohawk Valley. MVHC was the first regional heritage corridor in the New York State Heritage Area Program, which includes seventeen diverse heritage areas across the state. The corridor stretches 130 miles from the Hudson River to Oneida Lake, is up to 70 miles wide, and includes 203 communities with 1.1 million residents across eight New York State counties and the Oneida Indian Nation. Major goals established in MVHC's 1997 management plan include building a regional image and identity; strengthening place through community revitalization, preservation and protection; and making and selling the tourism product.¹⁵

Recreational activities at the Old Erie Canal State Park include walking, canoeing, bicycling, picnicking, and snowmobiling. In May 1998, NYS OPRHP Commissioner Bernadette Castro designated the Old Erie Canal State Park as an historic park site to honor the cultural and historical features throughout the unique park area.

¹⁴ See *The Erie Canalway – A Special Resource Study of the New York State Canal System*, National Park Service, 1998.

¹⁵ See *Management Plan for the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor (as amended May 22, 1997)*. Mary Means & Associates, Inc. et. al. June 27, 1997.



Recreation

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- Rome has 20 park and recreational areas on 153.8 acres of land and provides a wide variety of activities for residents.
- The City recently completed a Parks Master Plan, which has resulted in the development of a 15 year action plan to improve the City's park and recreational areas.
- The Parks Master Plan identified needed improvements in almost all City parks.
- A Friends of the Park group has recently formed and has completed two projects at Franklyn's Field.
- The City has also implemented an Adopt a Park Clean-up project for which the City will provide materials to volunteers who help maintain the parks.
- Dyett Park is a large, undeveloped park that is currently closed to the public. The City would eventually like to develop a trail system within the park.

Public Recreation Facilities

The City of Rome maintains 20 park and recreational areas encompassing 153.8 acres. Of the 20 park areas, 12 are considered active parks, 7 are passive parks and one park is a nature area. Oversight and maintenance of these areas is the responsibility of the City of Rome Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Activities.

Six of the City's parks are considered mini-parks, and most of these are passive parks providing open space. Crescent Park (0.5 acres) has a small playground, basketball court, and a pavilion. Triangle Park (1.7 acres) has two small playgrounds and a small basketball court with a basket but no rim. Both parks are staffed during the summer. The remaining mini-parks are intended for passive use and are not staffed.

The City has eight neighborhood parks. All but Fort Stanwix Park offer a variety of amenities including playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer/sports fields, baseball/softball fields and open space. Pinti Field is the largest neighborhood park at 15.9 acres. In addition to the amenities listed above, this park has bike trails, a swimming pool and bathhouse, skateboard park, fitness trail and unpaved trails. All neighborhood parks are lighted, with the exception of Ridgewood Heights Park. Guyer Field, Gryziec Field and Pinti Field are all handicapped accessible neighborhood parks and include specialized play equipment.

Six recreational areas are considered regional and community parks. John F. Kennedy Civic Arena and Municipal Pool are located adjacent to each other on East Embargo and North Jay Streets. The 900-seat Arena is primarily used for ice hockey and figure skating between October and March. The Arena is used for Little League try-outs, indoor soccer, boys' lacrosse, and other special events between April and September. The pool is open from June through early September.

Dyett Park is the largest park in the City at 50 acres. It was donated to the City of Rome with the caveat that it would remain a nature area. However, it is not currently open to the public and has no programmed use. The City would like to create a hike/bike trail within the

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park and make the park accessible to the public. Parking would need to be resolved before any development took place. The City anticipates that project would be completed in the next 5 to 10 years.

Franklyn's Field is located on North James Street, Black River Boulevard, East Pine and East Locust Streets. It is the most utilized park in the City and is characterized as a community park because of its central location and high use.

Bellamy Harbor Park features a handicapped accessible promenade and fishing area. It is located off East Whitesboro Street and is designed to serve City residents, as well as, travelers along the Erie Canal. A second accessible fishing dock is located on the Barge Canal at the end of South Madison Street at Muck Road.

Haselton-Wright Park is located on Riverview Parkway North. The park offers a variety of amenities including two lighted men's softball fields, unpaved trails and a soccer/football field. It mainly serves the City of Rome and the surrounding communities.



Name/Park Type	Location	Facilities	Acreage
Bellamy Harbor Park <i>Community Park/Passive</i>	East Whitesboro Street	Picnic tables and shelter, open space	4.0
Liberty Plaza <i>Passive</i>	West Liberty Street and East Dominick Street	Open space	1.7
Crescent Park <i>Mini Park/Active</i>	South Crescent Street and Genesee Place	Playground, basketball court, pavilion, open space	0.5
Dyett Park <i>Special Use/Nature Area</i>	Turin Road	Undeveloped open space	50.0
Fort Stanwix Park <i>Neighborhood Park/Passive</i>	North James Street and North Washington Street	Open space	3.2
Franklyn's Field <i>Community Park/Active</i>	North James Street, Black River Blvd, East Pine and East Locust Streets	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, bike trail, outdoor ice skating rink	7.7
Gansevoort Park <i>Special Use/Passive</i>	North James Street	Open space	0.9
Gryziec Field <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	South James Street and Muck Road	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, picnic area, wading pool	4.6
Guyer Field <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	Laurel Street, Union Street, Kent Street, and Clinton Street	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, picnic area, wading pool	6.4
Haselton-Wright Park <i>Community Park/Active</i>	Riverview Parkway North	Soccer field, baseball/softball field, fitness trail	22.6
Kennedy Arena & Municipal Pool <i>Community Park/Active</i>	East Embargo and North Jay Streets	Ice rink, swimming pool	3.9
Liberty Gardens Park <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	North Levitt Street and Lenox Street	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, picnic area	4.9
North Glendale Park <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	Seville Drive and Glen Road	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field	5.0
Pinti Field <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	Sixth and Mohawk Streets	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, swimming pool, bike trail, picnic areas, skateboard park	15.9
Ridgewood Heights <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	Ridgewood Street, Roser Terrace and Bedford Street	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, unpaved trails	11.9
Steven's Field <i>Neighborhood Park/Active</i>	West Court, Frederick and Lucy Streets	Playground, basketball court, tennis court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, picnic areas, wading pool	4.9
Triangle Park <i>Mini Park/Active</i>	East Garden Street, Lincoln Avenue and McKinley Streets	Playground, open space	1.7
Veterans Memorial Park <i>Special Use/Passive</i>	North James Street	Open space	0.9
Vogel Park <i>Passive</i>	North George Street	Open space	2.6
Wiggins Park <i>Passive</i>	West Thomas Street, Lee Street and West Bloomfield Street	Open space	0.5

Source: City of Rome, New York Parks Master Plan 2001-2015

The Parks Master Plan also assessed the physical condition of the City's parks, with deficiencies identified. Most parks are in need of some improvement and are classified as being in poor or fair condition.

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Table 18: Park Conditions

Name	Condition	Improvement Opportunities (if any)
Bellamy Harbor Park	Fair	
Liberty Plaza	Poor	The Plaza's brick walkways are worn. Trees are in poor health.
Crescent Park	Poor	Outdated play areas, backstop, benches and other equipment
Dyett Park	Undeveloped	
Fort Stanwix Park	Poor	Lighting system should be upgraded. Worn sidewalks should be repaired or replaced. Worn benches should be removed. Diseased trees should be removed as well.
Franklyn's Field	Fair	Two play boosters are worn. Play equipment is outdated. One of the backstops should be replaced. Worn fencing should be repaired. Two of the tennis courts are beginning to crack and should be repaired or replaced. Tennis and basketball courts should be relined and resealed. Building needs repairs as well.
Gansevoort Park	Fair	Accent and security lighting is needed. Sidewalks are worn and need attention. Trees should be treated for disease with several needing removal. Turf needs repair in several locations.
Gryziec Field	Fair - Good	Minor repairs to equipment and modifications to improve visibility.
Guyer Field	Good	Vandalized play equipment needs repair. Benches should be replaced. An age-appropriate play booster should be added.
Haselton-Wright Park	Fair - Good	Park has limited visibility. Light and noise spillage is a problem.
Kennedy Arena & Municipal Pool	Poor - Fair	The Arena's refrigeration equipment, including piping, is aging and deteriorating rapidly. Pool and Pool House need repairs.
Liberty Gardens Park	Fair	
North Glendale Park	Poor	Play equipment is heavily worn. Multipurpose field is overgrown and would need to be razed and resurfaced to be usable.
Pinti Field	Fair - Good	Moderate repairs are needed to the fencing, parking lots and play equipment.
Ridgewood Heights	Fair	
Steven's Field	Fair-Good	Some equipment has been damaged by vandalism but is still usable.
Triangle Park	Fair	Basketball post and backboard are worn and should be removed. Play boosters need painting and repair.
Veterans Memorial Park	Fair	Monument lighting should be added. Sidewalks are worn and need attention. Trees need to be treated for disease with several needing removal. Turf needs repair in several locations.
Vogel Park	Fair - Poor	Walking path is worn and should be replaced. Better signage and landscaping is also needed.
Wiggins Park	Undeveloped	

Source: *City of Rome, New York Parks Master Plan 2001-2015; Rich Miller, Director*



Public Recreation Programs

In addition to operating and maintaining the park areas, the City provides a wide variety of recreational programs and special events throughout the year. The chart below summarizes programs currently offered.

Table 19: Municipal Recreation Programs/Special Events			
Activity	Season	Location	Target Population
Youth Hockey	Winter	JFK Civic Arena	Children 4 and older
Figure Skating & Skate lessons	Winter	JFK Civic Arena	Children 3 and older
Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony	Winter	Fort Stanwix National Monument	All ages
Coed Volleyball	Winter	Rome Free Academy Gyms	Adult
Boys' Baseball Clinic	Spring	Strough Junior High School	Youth 8-12
Girls' Softball Clinic	Spring	Franklyn's Field	Girls 8-13
City Hall Easter Egg Roll	Spring	City Hall	Children 3-9
Pitch, Hit & Run Competition	Spring	DeLutis Field, Griffiss Park	Youth 7-14
Fishing Derby	Spring	Guyer Field's Wood Creek	Youth
Hershey National Track and Field Meet	Spring	Rome Free Academy	Youth 9-14
Archery	Summer	Guyer Field	Children 4 and older
Arts & Crafts	Summer		Children 4 and older
Baseball	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Youth 5-15
Basketball	Summer		Boys
Baton	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Children 4 and older
Book Buddies	Summer	Jervis Public Library	Children 4 and older
Cheerleading	Summer		Girls
Drop-off Program	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Youth 7 and up
Fitness, Boys and Girls	Summer		Grades 6-12
The Garden Club	Summer	Liberty Gardens	Children living at Liberty Gardens
Soccer	Summer		Youth
Summer Lunch Program	Summer	Steven's Field, Franklyn's Field, Gryziec Field, Guyer Field & Pinti Field	Children 4 and older
Special Events	Summer	City Playgrounds	Children 4 and older
Swimming Instruction	Summer	Rome Free Academy and Tosti Pool	5 & older or 4 ½ & able to stand with head above water
Teens for Tots	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Children 3-5
Toddler/Preschool Program	Summer/ Winter	Guyer Field (summer) and Franklyn's Field (winter)	Child and parent
Summer Tennis Program	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Children 4 and older
Tennis League Play	Summer	Franklyn's Field	Children and Adult
Track and Field	Summer	School for the Deaf - 500 Turin Road	Youth
Mini Sports Camps	Summer	Various-Most at Rome Free Academy	Youth
Rome Sports Hall of Fame Soccer Camp	Summer		Youth
Summer Concerts on the Mall	Summer	The Mall	All ages
Men's and Women Softball League	Summer		Adult
Youth Soccer	Fall	Franklyn's Field and Griffiss Business & Technology Park	Grades 1-4
Punt, Pass and Kick	Fall	Rome Free Academy	Youth 8-15

Source: City of Rome Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Activities

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The majority of programs are offered only during the summer. Most of the programs are free to the general public, though the City charges fees for public skating, evening swim, Indoor Park, Skateboard Park, baseball/softball clinic and the summer drop-off programs. The City of Rome Summer Program provides more than 20 different activities ranging from arts and crafts to swimming. The Oneida County Summer Recreation Program is also available to youth between the ages of 9 and 15. The program provides a variety of recreational and education activities for free.

The drop-off program is an activity for children 7 years and older. For a fee, children can take part in any of the activities offered through the Recreation Department, as well as special events and field trips. The Summer Lunch Program run by the Rome City School District is free for children and is offered weekdays at the City playgrounds. Swimming lessons are also free to all Oneida County youth.

The mini-sports camps offer clinics in the following sports: lacrosse, girls' basketball, rollerblade hockey, girls' field hockey, in-line hockey, boys' baseball, girls' softball, and football.

The City also provides activities for senior citizens through the Senior Citizen Council. Programs focus on providing information to the elderly on health issues, fire protection, and entitlement programs among others. Recreation activities, including fitness classes, ballroom dancing, and aquatics, are offered at both the Ava Dorfman Senior Center and the South Rome Senior Center. The Ava Dorfman Senior Center, privately owned, is also a social model adult day care and site of the County's Office for the Aging, including nutrition program site.

Privately-Owned Recreation Facilities

The Boys & Girls Club of Rome provides youth between the ages of six and 18 with activities in education and career development; sports, fitness and recreation; cultural enrichment; citizen and leadership development; and health and life skills.

There are several privately owned golf/country clubs in Rome. The Rome Country Club features an 18-hole golf course, racquetball, and a health club with nautilus equipment. Mohawk Glen Golf Club is located at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park and has a 9-hole golf course. Teugega Country Club has an 18-hole golf course. Sleepy Hollow Country Club, located on Country Club Drive, is a semi-private 18-hole golf course.



The Rome Family YMCA offers a variety of recreational amenities and programs for residents. There are two gymnasiums, an indoor pool, heated therapy pool, racquetball courts, and fitness and weight equipment. The YMCA has school-age child care programs before and after school.

John Kost Memorial Complex is the home of the Rome Girls Softball League. The complex includes four softball fields, and one is lighted. The facility provides covered dugouts, spectator bleachers, a covered picnic pavilion, restrooms, and a fully supported snack bar.



Fort Rickey's Children's Discovery Zoo has exotic and native animals, petting zoo, an animal maternity ward, animal shows, and pony rides. The facility also has a new wild creature's playland, giant soft play area with ball crawl, tunnels, slides and a club house and a waterplay area with fountains, waterfalls, geysers and showers.

Peterpaul Recreation Park features go-kart rides, 'splash and crash' bumper boats, a batting range offering both baseball and underhand softball, and a large arcade room.

Scotty's Funland is a new mini-amusement park that has recently opened for business.

School Facilities

In 1999, the Rome City School District passed a Bond Referendum to build a new \$45.4M, 320,000 square feet, state of the art high school on 78 acres at the Griffis Business and Technology Park. The new Rome Free Academy is scheduled to open in September 2002.

The main gym will feature a pitching cage on the running track above the gym floor. The auxiliary gym will be 8,900 square feet, the same size as the district's largest existing gym now, at Strough Junior High School.

The swimming pool will be 9,386 square feet in size, compared to the existing RFA pool at 5,860 square feet. The eight lanes of the pool are exactly 25 yards in length, with an extra one inch for a timing attachment. A large arched window will be covered with a translucent panel to let light in. The pool will be "waveless," meaning that it will be designed to absorb waves created by swimmers.

A concession stand will be built on the outdoor playing fields. Additional playing fields may be added in the future, on vacant district-owned property between the new RFA and Bellamy Elementary School.

Recent Recreation Initiatives

The City of Rome recently completed a Parks Master Plan (2001-2015) that inventories existing parks and recreational facilities and identifies priorities for future growth. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the future development, rehabilitation and growth of the City's parks and recreation system. The Master Plan assessed park and recreation facility needs based on the National Recreation and Park Association (NPRA) standards and citizen input through park user surveys, public meetings and annual attendance figures and reports.

The Master Plan identifies the following as areas where Rome is lacking necessary facilities based on NRPA guidelines and assessed needs:

- A community/regional park that includes lighted athletic fields for Little League Baseball and men's/women's softball
- Linear park/open space/trails
- Community recreation center with indoor facilities for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and/or indoor courts for volleyball and basketball
- A mini-park or neighborhood park for the housing development off of Potter Road

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- A mini-park or neighborhood park for the neighborhoods off the eastern portion of Floyd Avenue.

The Plan further identified the following issues at existing park areas that fall below NRPA guidelines:

- North Glendale Park lacks necessary frontage and visibility for a neighborhood park.
- Light spillage from the tennis courts and setbacks at Franklyn's Field need to be addressed to minimize noise and disruption to neighborhood, particularly on the East Pine Street side.
- Gryziec Field has inadequate frontage and visibility.
- Fort Stanwix Park is not in compliance with NRPA guidelines, and the City to needs address crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) concepts.
- Setbacks need to be addressed at Crescent Park. Some of the smaller play pads and islands are within 25 feet of the street.
- All parks need to address various deficiencies that may exist.

The City identified four projects to be completed during Phase I (2001-2002). Proposed Phase I Projects include the following:

- Renovation of the James Street corridor of parks with the goals of establishing an urban linear park system; working with community groups to improve entryways; working with homeowners to develop "greenway" feel to street. Parks located within the corridor include Fort Stanwix Park, Gryziec Field, Franklyn's Field, Liberty Plaza/City Hall, and Gansevoort and Veteran's Memorial Parks.
- Creation of Community Park at current Bell Road sports complex. This 30-acre site is currently home to the American Little League, Rome Girls Softball and Rome Colts Pop Warner. The complex includes three regulation little league fields, two regulation softball fields, one athletic field, a small pavilion and a concession stand. The City would like to have four baseball fields with two lighted Little League fields, two lighted men's and women's softball fields (with moveable fence), two athletic fields with one lighted for multi-purpose use, one central playground with large play booster and ancillary play equipment; one basketball court and two parking lots.
- Elimination of North Glendale Park. The Park lacks street frontage and visibility and does not have a parking lot. Residents who attended public meetings during the park planning process identified it as a hazard and requested that it be closed. The park was closed during the summer of 2000 due to lack of use during previous summers. The park is in a secluded location and is a frequent spot for nighttime vandalism and drinking by minors.
- Creation of Friends of the Park organization. This organization would assist the Recreation Department with fund-raising, community awareness, advisory board, grant writing and other constituent-based park and recreational advocacies for all of the City's parks.

The community park project is currently on hold. The City hired an architect for the North James Street Corridor Project. Drawings for the project are nearly finished and work is slated to be completed by September 2002. More than 200 trees will be planted by the end of fall 2002. The elimination of the North Glendale Park is also on hold. The City is working with the local school group to rehabilitate and reopen the park. The City of Rome has formed the Friends of the Park group. The organization is working to incorporate as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. The Friends of the Park has already completed two service



projects, a park clean-up effort and tree planting at Franklyn's Field. The Group will meet again in the fall to plan for a third project.

The City has recently implemented an "Adopt a Park Clean-up Project". Interested groups can adopt a neighborhood park and the City will provide materials to help with the clean up.



Infrastructure

Issues, Opportunities and Constraints

- Sewer and water infrastructure is generally in good condition and has ample expansion capacity
- Streets are generally in good condition and have surplus capacity to serve future development
- The City and GLDC are negotiating the transfer of management of sewer, water and roads from GLDC to the City.
- Inexpensive water and sewer service are a tool to attract industries with high water demand
- The City has a rational service extension policy that encourages new development in the Outside District.

Water

The City of Rome's water system dates from the early 1900s and is generally in good condition. Most of the distribution pipes are cast and duct iron, with little lead or asbestos piping. The City budgets annually for regular repair and replacement of system components. The City enjoys an abundant supply of raw water, with a 1.4 billion gallon per day supply from the Great Lakes Watershed. The filtration system can produce approximately 65 million gallons per day or about a five-day supply at the current level of use, which is about 8 to 10 million gallons per day. The key limitation of the system is its distribution capacity. The system can move about 30 million gallons per day, about a three day supply.

Residents pay a flat rate for water and wastewater service, businesses are metered. Commercial rates vary by the amount of water used, but are relatively low compared to other communities, creating an attractive market opportunity for industries that require large amounts of water. Large new water users are required to purchase capacity from the plant in addition to paying the metered rate.

The entire Inside District has water service and much of the Outside District has service as well. Nearly all of the north and east side of the Outside District has water. Service extends to Tannery Road to the west and to the south along 233 as far as Bucks Road and the prison. The City cannot extend water service further south because the system does not provide adequate pressure. The City of Utica is considering an extension of its service to provide municipal water to the City of Rome south of Bucks Road.

Wastewater

The City's wastewater capacity is 15 million gallons per day and was recently expanded from 12 million gallons per day. The system currently treats between 7 and 10 million gallons per day, depending on the weather. During wet weather, stormwater incursions increase the total effluent. Site constraints limit further expansion of the wastewater treatment plant as do effluent discharge limits for the Mohawk River during low river flow periods. These limits apply even though the City's effluent is relatively clean, nearly meeting drinking water standards.

Interestingly, the City of Rome takes its water from the Great Lakes Watershed and discharges into the Hudson River watershed, the only community in the nation with that right. The City's wastewater system is relatively expensive to operate because it has to pump most of its sewage eastward against the natural slope of the land to the west. As with the water system, the wastewater and stormwater systems are in relatively good condition. Stormwater inflow and infiltration are issues, but largely under control. Most of the system is constructed of clay and iron pipe.

The Inside District is generally has sewers, but very little of the Outside District does. North Rome previously had its own community system. When that system was no longer practical, the City extended its lines to the area. Some service exists to the south, largely to serve the prison, and Griffiss Business and Technology Park is fully sewerred. As with the water system, the sewer system has capacity to expand.

Users pay a combined rate for water and sewer with sewer usage estimated to be the same as water usage. Residential users pay a flat rate of \$350 to \$400 annually. Commercial and industrial users pay \$0.60 to \$3.60 per 1,000 gallons. Rates are the same for the Inner and Outside Districts.

Water and Sewer Service Extensions

Water and wastewater system extensions are processed at the request of property owners. A successful application requires that property owners representing at least 51% of the assessable frontage that is not owned by the City sign a petition requesting the extension. The City assesses the cost of the proposed extension and meets with property owners in a set of public hearings that describe the process and the need for the extension.

In the Inside District, property owners are responsible for 25% of the cost of the extension, with the cost payable over a nine year period at 7% interest. The repayment obligation is attached to the property, so if the property is sold during the repayment period, the new owner is responsible for the cost. The City funds its portion of the improvements through bonding.

In the Outside District, property owners are responsible for 100% of the cost of the extension. In the past the City has required developers in the Outside District to pay 100% of the cost of the extension with future development along the extension reimbursing the original developer as growth continues along the new infrastructure alignment. This system was impractical, so the City has begun creating "improvement districts" around proposed infrastructure extensions. The City calculates likely development potential for the area and then spreads the cost recovery over the total potential development.

Future development can link into the system, paying its share of the extension. If the new development links into the system within one year of development it can amortize the cost over nine years at 7% interest. If not, it must pay the full cost, plus an inflation factor equal to the consumer price index at time of hook up. (CPI adjustments end after 10 years.)



Regional Access

Rome is in the heart of upstate New York, within a day's drive of 25% of the US-Canadian population. It has three exits off the New York State Thruway (I-90), and has easy access to Interstate 81, which runs north-south through Syracuse.

Since the recent elimination of commercial flights at Oneida County Airport, air service for the City of Rome is provided primarily by airports in Syracuse (49 miles away) and Albany (90 miles). Recent introduction of low-fare jet service at these two airports provides low-cost service for Rome travelers.

AMTRAK provides passenger rail service from Rome to Boston, Massachusetts, Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York, Chicago, Illinois, New York City and Toronto, Ontario, and the AMTRAK station was recently renovated, providing a focal point along the south side of the Mohawk and improving passenger amenities. CSX and New York Susquehanna & Western provide freight service. The Erie/Barge Canal is enjoying a revitalization that attracts pleasure and tour boats.

Streets

The City of Rome is crisscrossed by a number of state highways including Routes 26, 46 49, 69, 233 and 365. The City of Rome includes 172 miles of roads, both improved and unimproved. Streets and traffic signals are generally in good condition, and the City focuses enhancements on improved roads. Unimproved roads are those lacking subsurface drainage and curbing. Most are less than 22 feet wide. The City is limited in the amount of work it can do to unimproved roads. Repair and maintenance efforts are less effective due to the lack of subsurface drainage.

As with water and wastewater extensions, property owners can petition the City to have the road adjacent to their property improved. Owners of at least 51% of the assessable frontage must sign the petition in order for the City to improve the street. Property owners pay 25% of the cost of the improvement, regardless of whether the street is in the Inner or Outside District, and the City funds its portion of the improvements through bonding.

Traffic Volumes and System Operation

Overall, Rome's transportation system has more than adequate capacity for the current level of development and significant capacity for additional development. Consultation with the NYSDOT Region 2 Office indicates that the street system in Rome operates very well. This has been confirmed through observations and discussions with City staff and residents. The highest traffic volumes occur during the afternoon peak period, with measurable congestion in only a few locations. Key congestion locations include:

- Erie Boulevard at the Wal-Mart Supercenter, where the road narrows from four to two lanes
- Turin Street between Jervis and West Chestnut Streets
- Route 46 (Black River Boulevard/Rome-Westernville Road) between the Mohawk Acres Shopping Center and the northern City boundary

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A 1996 study completed by Harza Northeast as a part of the Griffiss Air Force Base redevelopment included substantial traffic modeling for future development at Griffiss Business and Technology Park. The study recommended several improvements that would be needed to support full redevelopment of Griffiss. The most significant of these is construction of a loop road through connection at Skyline Drive and Potter Road. The loop would permit direct access to the Griffiss property from the west without traveling through downtown. Other recommendations included reconfigurations of Erie and Black River Boulevards and the Route 26 and 365 interchanges.

Overall the City of Rome has significant system capacity. The City's good working relationship with NYSDOT provides Rome with access to considerable planning and financial resources to meet future capacity needs.

Parking¹⁶

Downtown Rome could support substantial new development without building additional parking facilities.

At a typical small-city downtown parking ratio of 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of development, Rome could support an additional 120,000 gross square footage of building space in the downtown core. This level of new development would bring the peak parking occupancy to 80%, a level at which most spaces are full, but users are still confident that they will find a space.

The Urban Renewal Plan waived parking requirements for individual parcels in the central business district, instead providing parking in public facilities. Through this policy, the City assumes responsibility for all parking functions, and private property owners are not obligated to furnish parking for their patrons. A further clause of the Urban Renewal Plan prohibits parking at building entrances. There are a few exceptions to this policy with several businesses providing their own patron parking. Parking in the central business district is operated by the Rome Parking Authority, a separate municipal entity created by special legislation in 1975.

The City's Department of Public Works provides a total of 1,644 parking spaces in garages, parking lots, and on street. Nearly 1,150, or 70% of the spaces, are located within the block defined by Erie Boulevard on the south, North George Street on the west, Liberty Street on the north and North James Street on the east. This block includes City Hall, Rome Savings Bank, the Rome Chamber of Commerce and a number of other businesses.

There is now free two-hour parking in non-metered lots. Monthly permit fees for the parking garage and non-metered lots is \$19 for full-time parking and \$14 for part-time. Parking meters are \$0.50 per hour with a limit of two hours at most meters. Revenues do not cover the cost of capital and operation. It is the City's policy to subsidize parking operations as a tool to attract new development to the central business district.

Parking demand in the downtown comes primarily from employees, shoppers and visitors to banks or other businesses. Fort Stanwix visitors provide additional seasonal demand. While the DPW has no formal occupancy data, observation reveals that parking is

¹⁶ The primary sources for parking data are The Rome CBD Master Plan, by EDAW, Inc. et al., January 1996 and the former Rome Parking Authority (duties now handled by DPW)



convenient and easy to find. Parking facilities are generally in fair to good condition, although directional and informational signage is limited, making the parking system somewhat confusing for first-time visitors.

Transit

Transit service is provided by Rome VIP, an independent department of the City created in 1965. The VIP transit system provides weekday service from 6:45 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. and Saturday service from 9:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. There is no service on Sundays or holidays. The transit fare is 50 cents. Dial-a-Ride service is available by appointment for customers with special needs. Taxis are also available 24 hours a day.

Regional intercity service is provided by Birnie Bus Service and the Utica-Rome Bus Company. Birnie provides service between Rome, Little Falls, Utica and Syracuse Monday through Saturday. The Utica-Rome Bus Company provides daily service between Rome and Utica. Other intrastate bus service is provided by Adirondack Trailways and Chenango Valley Bus Lines. Greyhound Bus Lines has intra- and interstate service from Utica.

Bicycle and Pedestrian System

The Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Oneida County, including the City of Rome, in 1994. A number of streets were designated as bicycle and pedestrian travel routes, including Gansevoort Avenue, Park Drive, Floyd Avenue, East Garden Street and Culverton Road. Route 49 is designated as a New York State Bike Route and is part of the New York State Bike Route 5 Project, which connects the Capital District to Western New York. The following map shows the existing routes.

Utilities

Gas and electric service is provided by Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation. Several nearby communities have local power systems, which charge lower rates than Niagara Mohawk. This creates a competitive disadvantage for the City of Rome in seeking industries with high electricity demands. Verizon Communications provides local phone service, and Time Warner Cable provides cable television and high-speed Internet access.

Griffiss Business and Technology Park enjoys a sophisticated telecommunications infrastructure as one of 12 NYNET nodes, upstate New York's high speed fiber optic communications corridor. The tech park also has a Fiber Optic Sonet Loop for T1 bandwidth transmissions and growing capacity of ADSL for high speed communications. The City of Rome in general has a good fiber optic network available for high speed communications.

Services at Griffiss Business and Technology Park

The City of Rome and Griffiss Local Development Corporation (GLDC) are currently negotiating the transfer of management of sewer, water and roads from GLDC to the City. This infrastructure transfer will be incorporated into a Final Agreement between the City and GLDC for provision of City services in response to the Memorandum of Understanding that was entered into by the City, GLDC, and Oneida County in 1999. The MOU also includes

Rome Comprehensive Plan

the police and fire services the City now provides for the Griffiss Business and Technology Park. Griffiss also has a steam plant and a separate utility company to run it.

GLDC has conducted an assessment of the location and condition of the current infrastructure. The assessment designates a public street system that it proposes that the City maintain. The City has used that information to prepare a proposal to GLDC describing lines it would take over. The City has already identified a critical service “spine” and has begun to upgrade water and sewer lines along that spine. GLDC is working to upgrade a number of the streets included in its proposed public street system.



Community Services

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The new high school scheduled to open in September 2002 is a state-of-the-art facility that will enhance the community's ability to attract businesses and employees.
- School drop out rates are significantly lower than statewide averages.
- Rome Memorial hospital provides a full range of medical services, offering a significant amenity for a small city.
- A low crime rate creates a safe environment for residents.

Government

Rome was incorporated in 1870. The current City Charter was adopted by Rome in 1960. The City has a strong mayor/council form of government.

The City of Rome elects the following positions as prescribed by its charter: a mayor, president of the common council, city clerk, city judge, a special city judge, a city councilor for each of the seven wards in the City, and a legislator for each legislator district in Rome.



Councilors and legislators serve two-year terms commencing on the first day of January succeeding the election. The mayor, president of the common council, and city clerk serve four-year terms.

The mayor also appoints one assessors, a corporation counsel, a city treasurer, a commissioner of public works, a commissioner of public safety, a commissioner of public welfare (if required), a recreation director, members of the planning board, a purchasing agent (the City currently exercises an option that allows them to contract with the County for such services), an examining board of plumbers (as provided by the General City Law), three civil service commissioners, and a secretary to the civil service commission. Other appointments may be made as provided by the City's charter or otherwise by law.

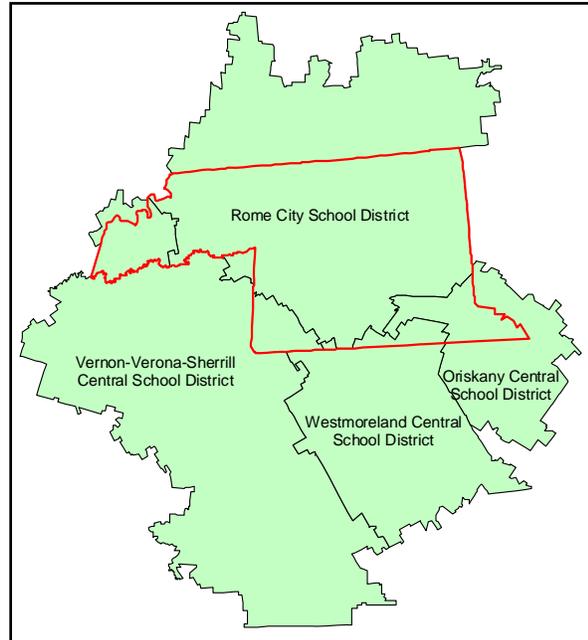
The City also is divided into two taxing districts, an Inner or Corporation Tax District and an Outside District.

Schools

The City of Rome is served by four separate school districts. The Rome City School District represents most of the City including the Inside District and southern portions in the towns of Lee and Western to the north. The Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Central School District serves residents in the west and southwest areas of the City. The Westmoreland Central School District serves a small portion of the City's south. The Oriskany Central School District covers the southeastern corner of the City.

Rome Comprehensive Plan

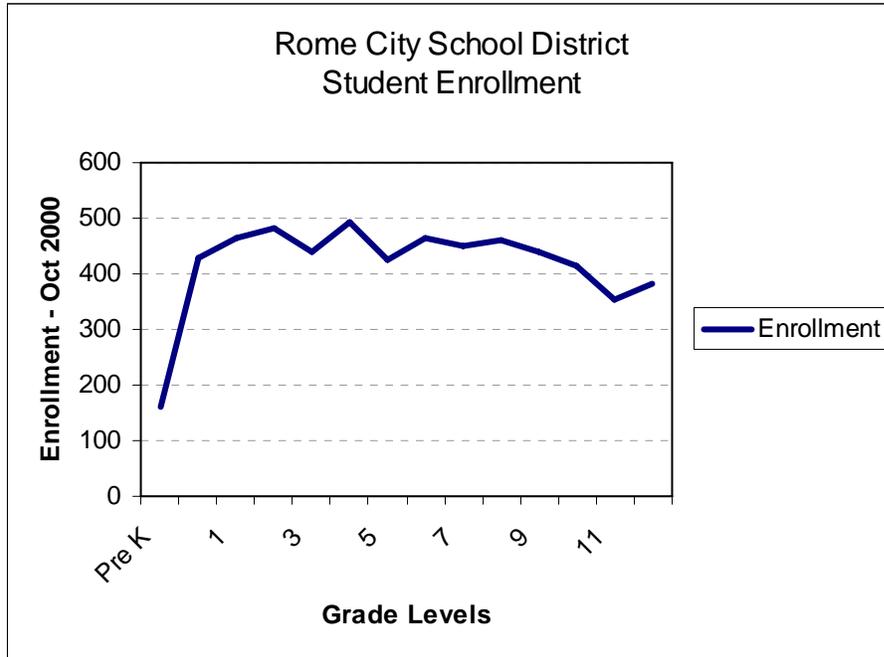
The Rome City School District had a total K-12 student enrollment of 6,038 students for 2000-01, according to the "NYS School District Report Card." The District employs 516 teachers, 81 other professionals, and 186 paraprofessionals.¹⁷ In 2000-01, 28.6% of the student body was eligible for free lunches, a decrease from previous years. The district's dropout rate has remained below the state wide average for the past three years reported. In 2000-01, the statewide dropout rate was 3.8% compared to the district's 2.6%. The school district spent more per student than the statewide average in 1999-00. The state spent \$11,040 compared the district's expenditure of \$11,188. The following chart shows student enrollment as of October 2000.



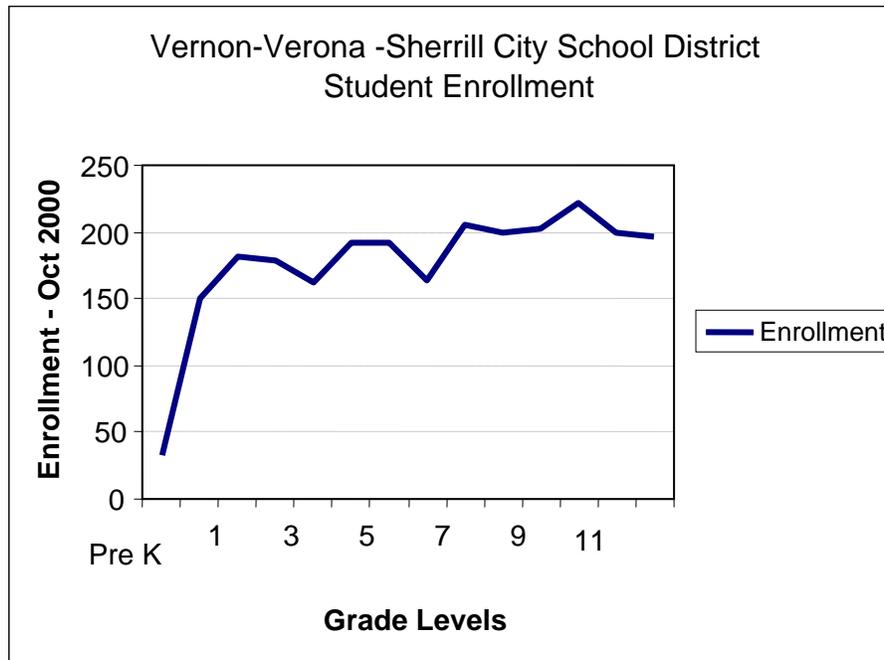
School districts serving the City of Rome

¹⁷ Some district-employed staff serve in more than one school. These shared people are included in counts reported here.



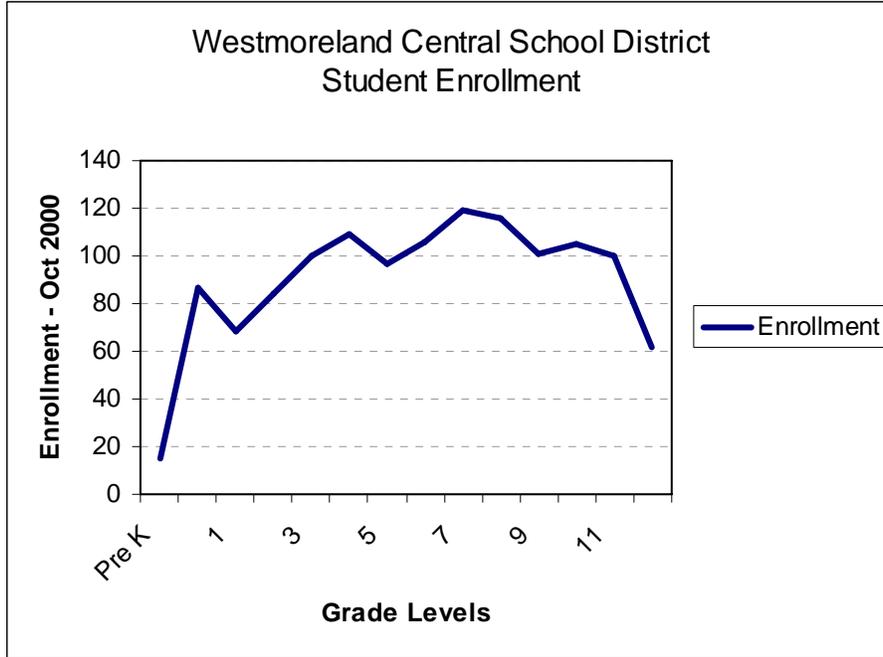


The Rome City School District plans to cut the ribbon on its new high school late this summer. The new Rome Free Academy replaces the almost 80-year old facility in the City. The state-of-the-art school’s design has become a model for high school educational design. Located at the site of the former Air Force Chapel at Griffiss, the new \$45.4 million facility features 330,000 square feet of space over 78 acres. The school will have 74 classrooms, 14 computer rooms, 3-4 computers per classroom, a 6,000+ square foot library and media center, a 14,750 square foot auditorium, and 8,400 square feet of cafeteria space. Rounding out the facility are 400 parking spaces, 19,600 square feet of gym space (the small gym at the new school is larger than the district’s current largest gym), a swimming pool of 9,490 square feet, a 7,700 feet indoor running track, and a track and field behind the school.

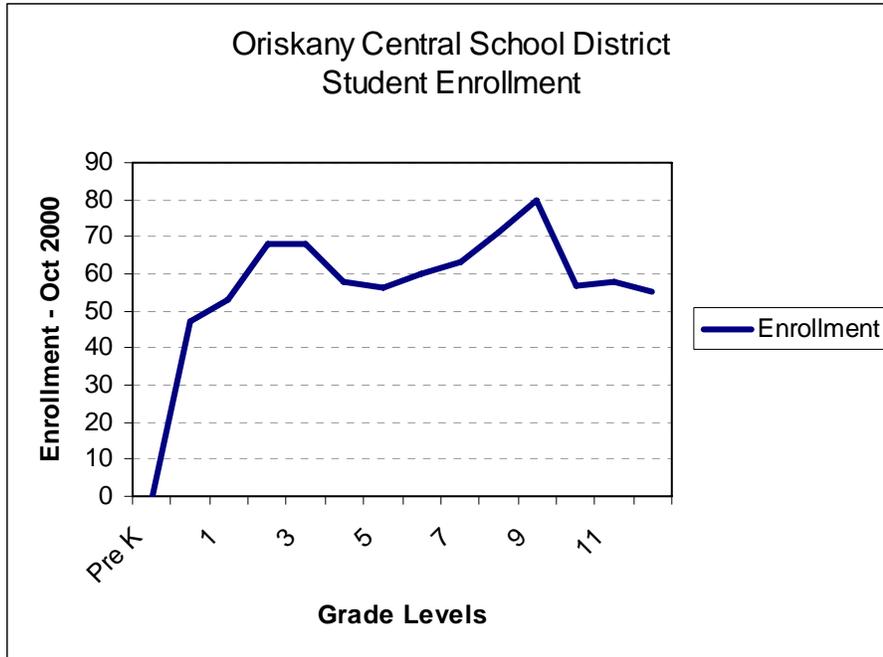


The Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Sherrill City School District had a total K-12 student enrollment of 2,445 students for 2000-01, according to the “NYS School District Report Card.” The District employs 180 teachers, 28 other professionals, and 33 paraprofessionals. In 2000-01, 20.9% pf the student body was eligible for free lunches, a decrease from previous years. The district’s dropout rate has remained below the state wide average for the past three years reported. In 2000-01, the statewide dropout rate was 3.8% compared to the district’s 1.5%. The school district spent less per student than the statewide average in 1999-00. The state spent \$11,040 compared the district’s expenditure of \$9,054. The following chart shows student enrollment as of October 2000.





The Westmoreland Central School District had a total K-12 student enrollment of 1,254 students for 2000-01, according to the “NYS School District Report Card.” The District employs 100 teachers, 15 other professionals, and 23 paraprofessionals. In 2000-01, 14.5% of the student body was eligible for free lunches, a slight increase from the prior year but still a decrease from two years prior. The district’s dropout rate has remained below the state wide average for the past three years reported. In 2000-01, the statewide dropout rate was 3.8% compared to the district’s 1.5%. The school district spent less per student than the statewide average in 1999-00. The state spent \$11,040 compared the district’s expenditure of \$8,585. The following table shows student enrollment as of October 2000.



The Oriskany Central School District had a total K-12 student enrollment of 794 students for 2000-01, according to the “NYS School District Report Card.” The District employs 69 teachers, 10 other professionals, and 11 paraprofessionals. In 2000-01, 11.2% of the student body was eligible for free lunches, a decrease from previous years. The district’s dropout rate has remained below the state wide average for the past three years reported. In 2000-01, the statewide dropout rate was 13.8% compared to the district’s 0% in 2000-01. The school district spent less per student than the statewide average in 1999-00. The state spent \$11,040 compared the district’s expenditure of \$10,301. The following chart shows student enrollment as of October 2000.



Higher Education

There are a number of higher education institutions within an hour drive of the City of Rome including: Mohawk Valley Community College with locations in Utica and Rome (enrollment 5,000+), Colgate University in Hamilton (enrollment 2,750), Hamilton College in Clinton (enrollment, 1,707), SUNY Institute of Technology in Utica (enrollment 2,600), Syracuse University in Syracuse (enrollment 12,460), Utica College of Syracuse University in Utica (enrollment 2,190), Munson Williams Proctor Institute of Utica in association with Pratt Institute (enrollment 160), Utica School of Commerce, SUNY Morrisville, and Herkimer County Community College.

Library

The Jervis Public Library was incorporated in 1894 “for the benefit and free use on equal terms of all people in the community.”¹⁸ Today, the library serves the City of Rome with a collection of 125,000 books for adults and children alike. The library has 340 periodical subscriptions, collections of video and audio cassettes, CD-ROMS, music CD’s, DVD, vinyl albums, and many more resources.

In 2001, the library circulated 306,609 items, up more than 6,500 from the previous year. Printed materials account for about 79% of the total circulation. 783 people came to the library daily from fifty towns, villages, and cities across Oneida County and the Mid York Library System for an annual total of 237,900 people.¹⁹ The library also handled more than 24,000 interlibrary loan requests in 2001. The library had an operating budget of \$1.3 million made up of municipal funding from the county and City, foundation grants, and other gifts to the library.²⁰

The library also offers space for public meetings, presentation, and speakers.

Health Services

The City of Rome is served by the Rome Memorial Hospital, Inc. on North James Street. Rome Memorial is a 211-bed, not-for-profit community health care facility that provides general medical/surgical, pediatric, intensive care, obstetric, long-term care, physical rehabilitation, and senior behavioral health care, and a number of outpatient services.

In 2001, according to the “2001-2002 Community Report” published by Rome Memorial, there were 5,726 inpatient discharges, 101,266 outpatient visits, 18,710 emergency room visits, and 578 births at the hospital. Approximately 150 physicians have admission privileges at Rome Memorial. Rome Memorial also participates with more than 100 insurance carriers. In 2001, Rome Memorial finished the year with income totaling more than \$1.6 million. This money is reinvested into new services, equipment and technology, and workforce.

¹⁸ http://www.jervislibrary.org/JPL_description.html

¹⁹ The Jervis Public Library is a member of the Mid-York Library System that augments the services provided by Jervis with those available through a consortium of libraries in Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison counties.

²⁰ Information taken from the “Jervis Public Library Director’s Report 2001”

Police Department

According to 1999 Crime and Justice Annual Report, the City of Rome had a sworn police force of 72 full-time officers and a fleet of 35 vehicles. Within the force, three were female and 69 were male officers. Nine civilian staff members held various clerical positions and brought the department's size to 81 employees.

Overall crime trends have declined in recent years. In Rome, crime declined between 1998 and 1999. The City saw fewer murders, rapes, thefts, and assaults. Only Motor Vehicle Theft increased, rising by 35% to 35 incidents. The Rome Police Department saw a total of 746 Part I Offenses in 1999²¹. The crime rate per 1,000 was 18.7, a decrease from 20.8 in the previous year from a total of 844 Part I Offenses reported or known to police. In all of Oneida County, Part I crimes and crime rates per 100,000 people decreased with the exception of murder. Oneida County had eight murders in 1999 (a rate of 3.5 per 100,000), compared to 6 in 1998 (2.6 per 100,000). The total statewide occurrences of Part I crimes decreased across the board in New York State in 1999.

Table 20: Part I Offenses Reported/Known to Police, City of Rome

Year	Murder	Negligent Manslaughter	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total	Crime Rate Per 1,000
1999	1	0	3	18	16	183	460	65	746	18.7
1998	1	0	7	25	17	245	501	48	844	20.8
% Change	0%	0%	(-57%)	(-28%)	(-6%)	(-25%)	(-8%)	35%	(-12%)	(-10%)

Source: 1999 Crime and Justice Annual Report, NYS DCJS

Fire

The Rome Fire Department is a professional department of 85 members. The fire department's coverage area is 72.5 square miles in size. Services provided by the department include:

- Basic Level Emergency Medical Services
- Vehicle Extrication
- High Angle and Water/Ice Rescue
- Trench & Structure Collapse Search & Rescue
- Hazard Preplanning
- Fire Cause Investigation and Arson Case Work
- Confined Space Rescue and Hazardous Materials Response
- Public Education - First Aid, CPR, Fire Prevention, etc.
- Automatic Alarm Monitoring
- Salvage & Property Conservation Work
- Juvenile Fire Setter Program
- Disaster Planning & Response
- High School Internship Program

²¹ Part I Offenses reported or known to police include murder, negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

