

Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study

Downtown Syracuse, 2025



Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study

Downtown Syracuse



The Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit, professional downtown management organization representing all property owners and tenants within the central business district. The Downtown Committee undertakes programs to improve Downtown's image, strengthen its economic base, increase its attractiveness, and assure that it's clean, safe and accessible.



CommunityScale

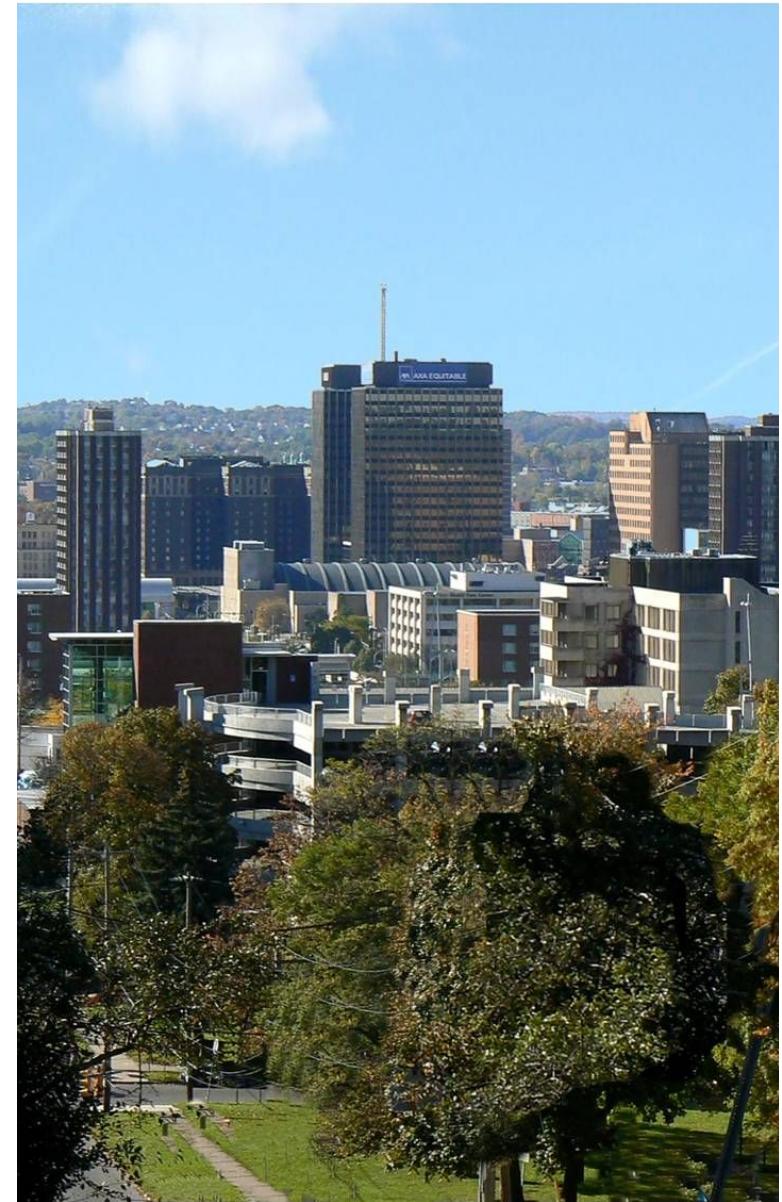
CommunityScale is an urban planning consultancy focused on helping communities across the country improve equity, economic mobility, and housing attainability. CommunityScale provides a range of services and analytics products designed to help our clients make more informed and targeted decisions around policy and investment, from development opportunity assessments to zoning reviews to housing needs assessments. The firm's clients include municipalities, counties, regional planning agencies, and developers located across the country.

June 10, 2025

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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The future of housing in Downtown Syracuse

About

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the Downtown Syracuse housing market, offering data-driven insights based on current conditions, demographic shifts, long-term trends, and economic factors like the Micron development and I-81 project. The study assessed housing availability, market demand across different segments (rental and condo), identified key opportunities for growth, and pinpointed existing gaps and challenges. The findings and recommendations presented herein are intended to inform a development strategy for the next 5-10 years, guiding stakeholders, including developers, policymakers, and employers, in efforts to expand and diversify housing options, attract investment, and enhance Downtown Syracuse as a desirable place to live.

Goals for this study

Assess Housing Needs and Demand – Analyze demographic trends, market conditions, and employment growth to quantify current and future housing needs.

Identify Housing Gaps and Opportunities – Pinpoint mismatches between supply and demand across income levels, housing types, and geographic submarkets.

Evaluate Market Readiness – Examine zoning, infrastructure, and economic factors influencing housing development potential in Downtown Syracuse.

Support Data-Driven Decision-Making – Deliver insights in a transparent, accessible format to inform policy discussions, community engagement, and future planning efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key indicators that tell Downtown's market story



176 Annual additional market potential for new units (rental and ownership) for the next 5 years

50% Residents who moved to Downtown from outside of Onondaga County (2019-2023)

62% Downtown growth from householders ages 25-44 (2023)

\$356,500 Median condo sales price in Downtown (2025) and \$278 median sales price per square foot

\$3.28 Average rental price per square foot for apartments in Downtown built since 2021 (2025)

\$1.74 Average rental price per square foot for all apartments in Downtown (2025)

95.9% Downtown's rental occupancy rate, above the 10-year average of 93% (2025, CoStar)

191 Additional Downtown housing demand from Micron-related population gains by 2030

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Frequently asked questions

What housing types are missing Downtown?

The deepest pools of demand and capture rate indicate that the most demanded housing types are rental apartments between \$1,500-\$2,000 that are studios or 1 beds, with some demand for 2 beds.

What amenities should be recommended to developers of housing units?

Residents and property managers report that requested amenities include mail storage and parcel room, bicycle storage room, roof deck with functional use, parking, fitness center, smaller units with natural light and eat-in kitchens that are easy to furnish.

How much more demand is there for specific types of housing and does this keep Downtown at a healthy occupancy rate?

Given this strong market demand and fast absorption rates, if 176 new units were delivered annually, Downtown should maintain a healthy vacancy rate of under 7%*.

How does the ReZone Syracuse initiative affect housing in Downtown?

The ReZone initiative, particularly the MX-5 zoning for Downtown, is highly favorable for housing development. It removes traditional constraints like maximum building heights, minimum lot sizes, and minimum parking requirements, offering flexibility for dense residential projects. It also mandates that new and substantially renovated multifamily projects with 20 or more units designate 10-12% of units as affordable (at 80% AMI).

Who is primarily moving to Downtown Syracuse?

Recent growth in Downtown has been largely driven by householders aged 25-44, who accounted for 62% of the growth since 2015. Notably, 50% of residents who moved to Downtown between 2019 and 2023 came from outside Onondaga County, indicating Downtown's appeal to newcomers to the region.

* Note: [Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies](#) identified 7.4 percent as the stable rental vacancy rate that is neither elevating or depressing rents.



Context Analysis

- Literature review
- Changing landscape and economic development
- Comparable communities



Establishing the context for Downtown's housing market potential and need

Downtown Syracuse's housing future is shaped by several critical factors, detailed further in the following sections:

- **Downtown's strategic importance in planning:** Regional and city plans consistently identify Downtown Syracuse as a vital center for growth, emphasizing mixed-use development and leveraging major investments to meet future housing needs.
- **ReZone's favorable regulatory framework:** The recent ReZone initiative builds on the flexible MX-5 zoning (no height/lot size limits), creating significant opportunities for dense residential development, albeit with a new 10-12% affordable housing requirement (at 80% AMI - \$104,100 in 2025) for larger projects.
- **Micron's major economic catalyst:** The upcoming Micron facility is projected to generate over 50,000 direct and indirect jobs regionally (9,005 direct by 2045), creating substantial new housing demand that Downtown is well-positioned to help absorb.
- **I-81's transformative infrastructure project (I-81):** Replacing the I-81 viaduct with the Community Grid will unlock approximately 18 acres of developable land and significantly improve connections to adjacent neighborhoods and institutions, enhancing Downtown's attractiveness for new housing investment.

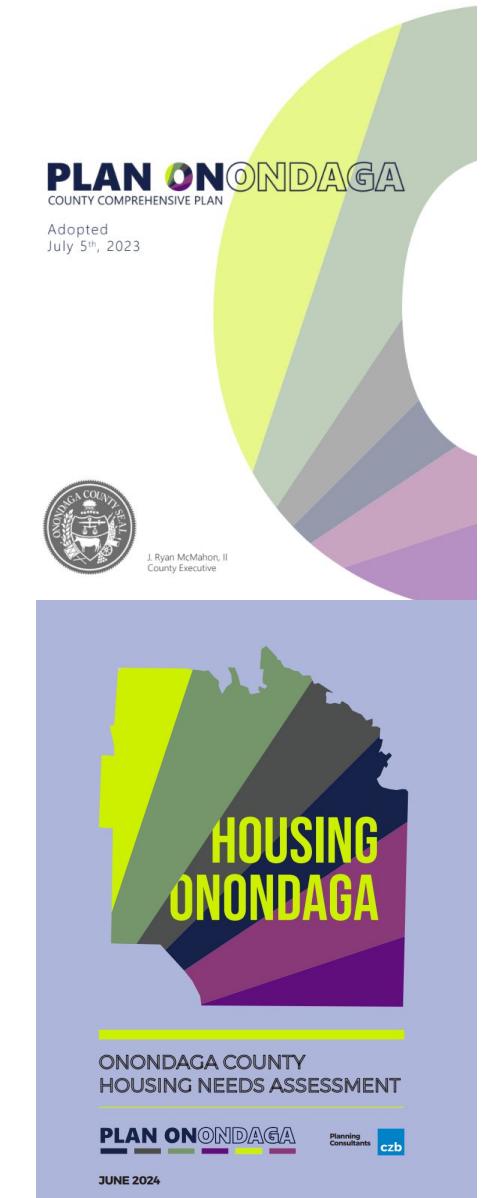


Downtown's position in regional and city planning

Recent comprehensive planning efforts by both the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, alongside multiple housing studies and a dedicated housing taskforce by CenterState CEO, consistently underscore the strategic importance of Downtown Syracuse for regional growth and vitality. These plans collectively recognize Downtown as a key hub for employment, culture, and increasingly, residential living.

- **Emphasis on mixed use and density:** Plans like the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan (2012-2040) and Plan Onondaga advocate for high-density, mixed-use development in Downtown, encouraging residential units above ground-floor commercial spaces to boost walkability and economic activity.
- **Leveraging major investments:** All plans highlight the transformative potential of the Micron investment and the I-81 viaduct removal. They see these projects as catalysts for increased housing demand and opportunities to strategically guide new development, particularly in and around Downtown, to accommodate workforce needs and reconnect the urban fabric. The County Housing Needs Assessment (2024) specifically anticipates 20,000-25,000 new households county-wide by 2040 due to Micron, positioning Downtown to capture a significant share with appropriate housing stock.
- **Focus on strong centers:** Plan Onondaga and the County Housing Needs Assessment emphasize directing investment towards established "strong centers," including Downtown Syracuse, to promote sustainable growth patterns and leverage existing infrastructure.

While regional and city plans provide a supportive framework and highlight Downtown's importance, this report creates a more specific, proactive strategy to fully capitalize on Downtown's unique opportunities and address its specific challenges, ensuring it effectively positions itself to absorb anticipated growth and enhance its role as a vibrant residential neighborhood.

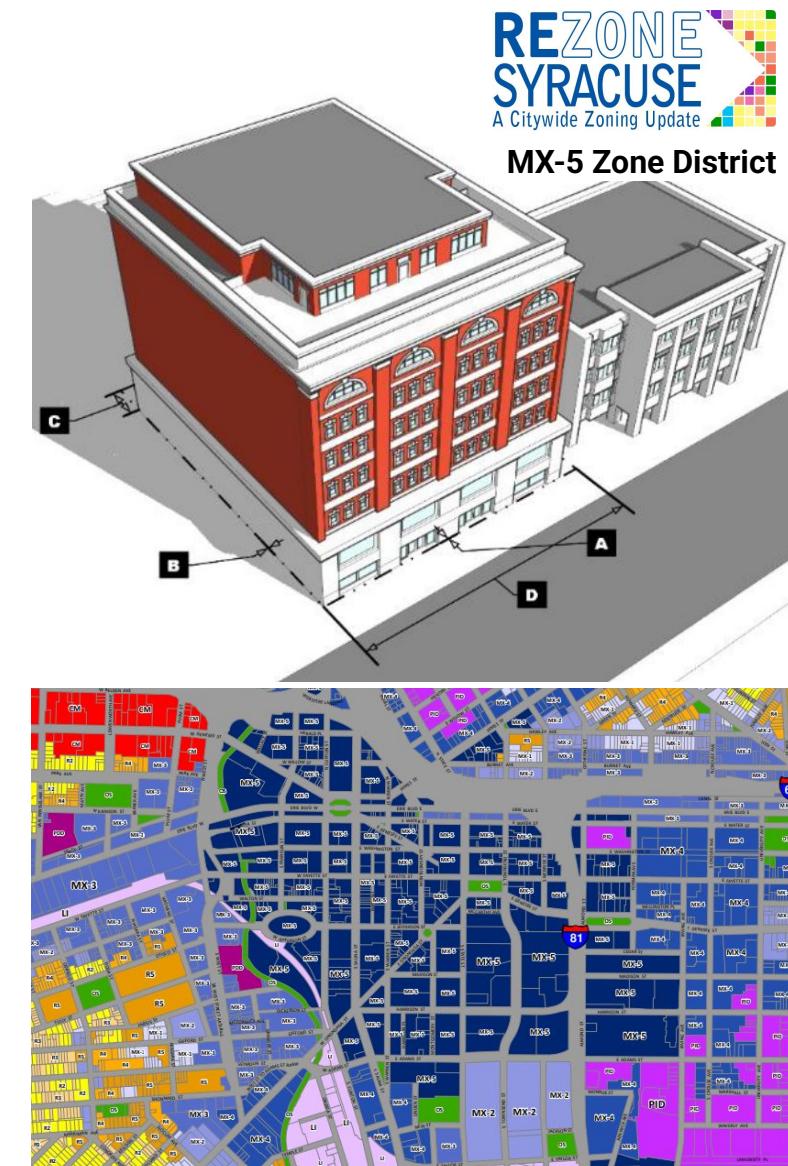


Downtown's new regulatory regime with ReZone

The ReZone Syracuse (2024) initiative represents a comprehensive overhaul of the city's outdated zoning laws. The new ordinance allows for denser, mixed-use development, expanding housing options in traditionally single-family neighborhoods, and implementing affordable housing requirements in large developments. Additionally, ReZone promotes and encourages residential units above commercial spaces.

ReZone is the most recent impactful planning step towards creating housing opportunities in Downtown, and because the rezoning is so recent it is yet to be seen how impactful the changes are. The MX-5 designation removes traditional constraints like maximum building heights, minimum lot sizes, and minimum parking requirements offering developers flexibility to pursue dense, high-rise residential projects that maximize land use. This permissive environment is crucial for accommodating future growth.

ReZone has an inclusionary zoning requirement: new and substantially renovated multifamily projects with 20 or more units must designate 10-12% of units as affordable to households earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), which was \$104,100 according to HUD in 2025.



Micron's impact on the Downtown housing market

The 2022 Economic Analysis for the Micron complex of chip plants outlines a massive economic transformation for Onondaga County, with significant implications for housing and workforce needs in Downtown Syracuse. The report projects that Micron's complex will generate 9,005 permanent direct jobs at the chip plants by 2045. The total number of additional jobs by 2055 is estimated to be 50,911 jobs statewide, with 44,943 in Central New York (9,005 permanent positions and 41,904 indirect and induced additional jobs).

The ripple effects of this employment boom will increase housing demand throughout the region, particularly in areas with proximity to Micron. The county's population is projected to grow by nearly 60,000 people during this period, further intensifying the need for additional housing supply.

Downtown Syracuse's role in absorbing this growth is twofold. First, Downtown is likely to have satellite offices and indirect and induced office jobs as a key employment hub. Second, Downtown offers a uniquely walkable and urban lifestyle within 15 miles of the fabrication facilities and as such will be a preferred location for future residents in that market.

This Housing Needs Assessment uses the 2022 report's Table 2.3 Population Impacts for Central New York to estimate the additional household needs per year for the next five years. With this approach, the analysis forecasts 12,041 additional units of housing demand in Onondaga & Cayuga Counties, translating to an average total demand of **191 housing units in Downtown annually**.



I-81 Grounding

The Community Grid design will reconnect neighborhoods that have been separated since the viaduct's construction. The project will upgrade a portion of Interstate 481, which would be re-designated as I-81, and construct the new Business Loop 81 along Almond Street to improve connections to Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

The project includes reconstruction of the Almond Street corridor with sidewalks, shared-use paths, and the potential for newly developable land. From the perspective of the Downtown, there are two first order impacts of the grounding. First, vacant land on the eastern side of Downtown will be more attractive for development without the nuisance of the viaduct. Second, the accessibility to and from University Hill to the east will be improved, opening Downtown as an improved option for staff and student housing.



Replacing the aging I-81 viaduct with a “community grid” will make the area safer and open up land for redevelopment.

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Comparative analysis

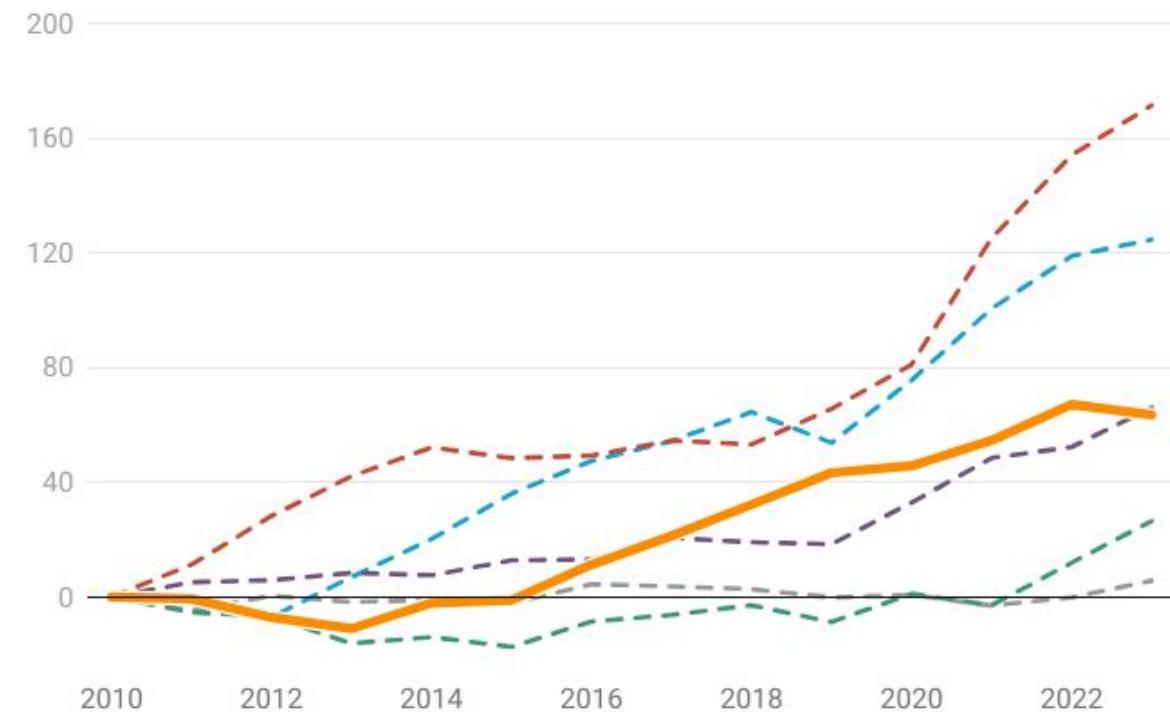
Household growth in Downtown Syracuse is moderate compared to both other neighborhoods in Syracuse and downtown areas in other upstate New York cities, with a 60% increase in households since 2010.

Downtown's growth reflects a resurgence in urban living and residential investment driven mostly by adaptive reuse.

Compared to peer downtowns, Downtown Syracuse's household growth is strong though outpaced by Downtown Buffalo, which grew by more than 170%.

Percent household growth since 2010

— Downtown Syracuse — Westcott / University Hill — Franklin Square / Lakefront
— Downtown Rochester — Tipperary Hill — Downtown Buffalo



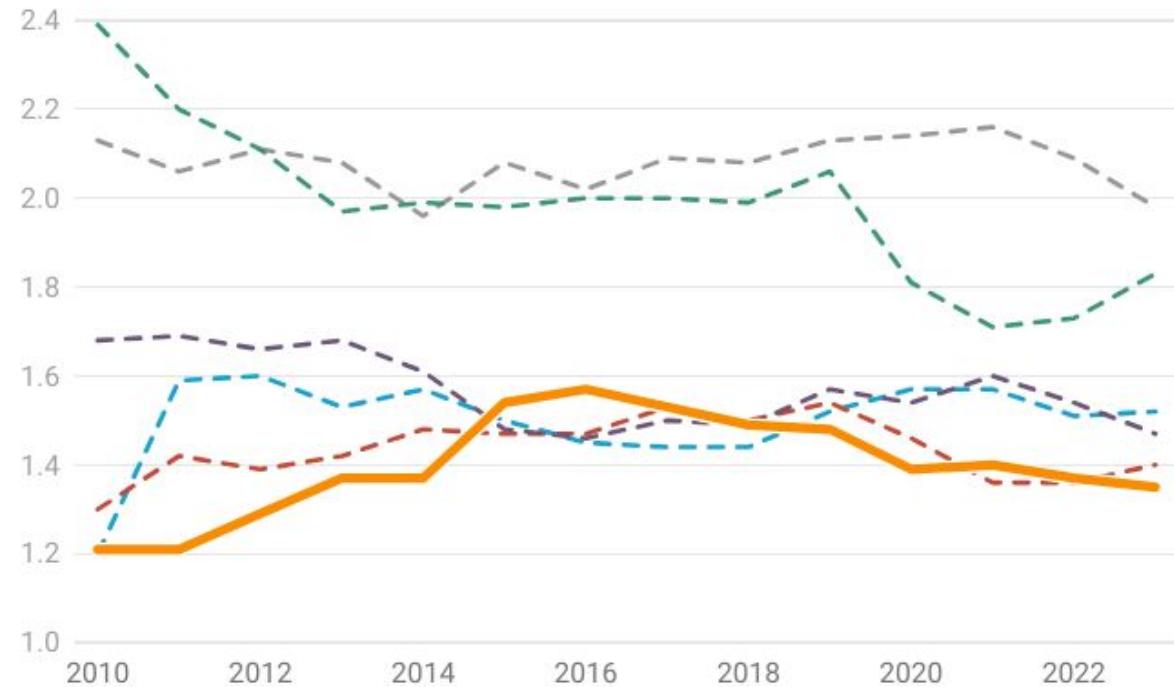
CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Comparative analysis

The average household size for households living in Downtown Syracuse is typically in line with other upstate New York downtown neighborhoods. However, Downtown Syracuse's average household size is significantly smaller than the average household size in other Syracuse neighborhoods that are less urban, particularly Tipperary Hill and Westcott / University Hill. These other neighborhoods typically have larger units and more family households.

Average household size

— Downtown Syracuse — Westcott / University Hill - - Franklin Square / Lakefront
— - - Downtown Rochester - - - Tipperary Hill - - - Downtown Buffalo



CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Comparative analysis

Median household income has more than tripled since 2010 in Downtown Syracuse, though it remains in the middle of the pack compared to other neighborhoods. Franklin Square / Lakefront and Tipperary Hill stand out as other neighborhoods in Syracuse with significantly higher median household incomes compared to Downtown Syracuse.

The dramatic spikes in Downtown's income levels are likely associated with the fact that the number of households has been increasing rapidly but from a low starting point, so there is a larger margin of error on the counts.

Despite these fluctuations, the overall trajectory since 2010 has been one of strong growth.

Inflation-adjusted median household income

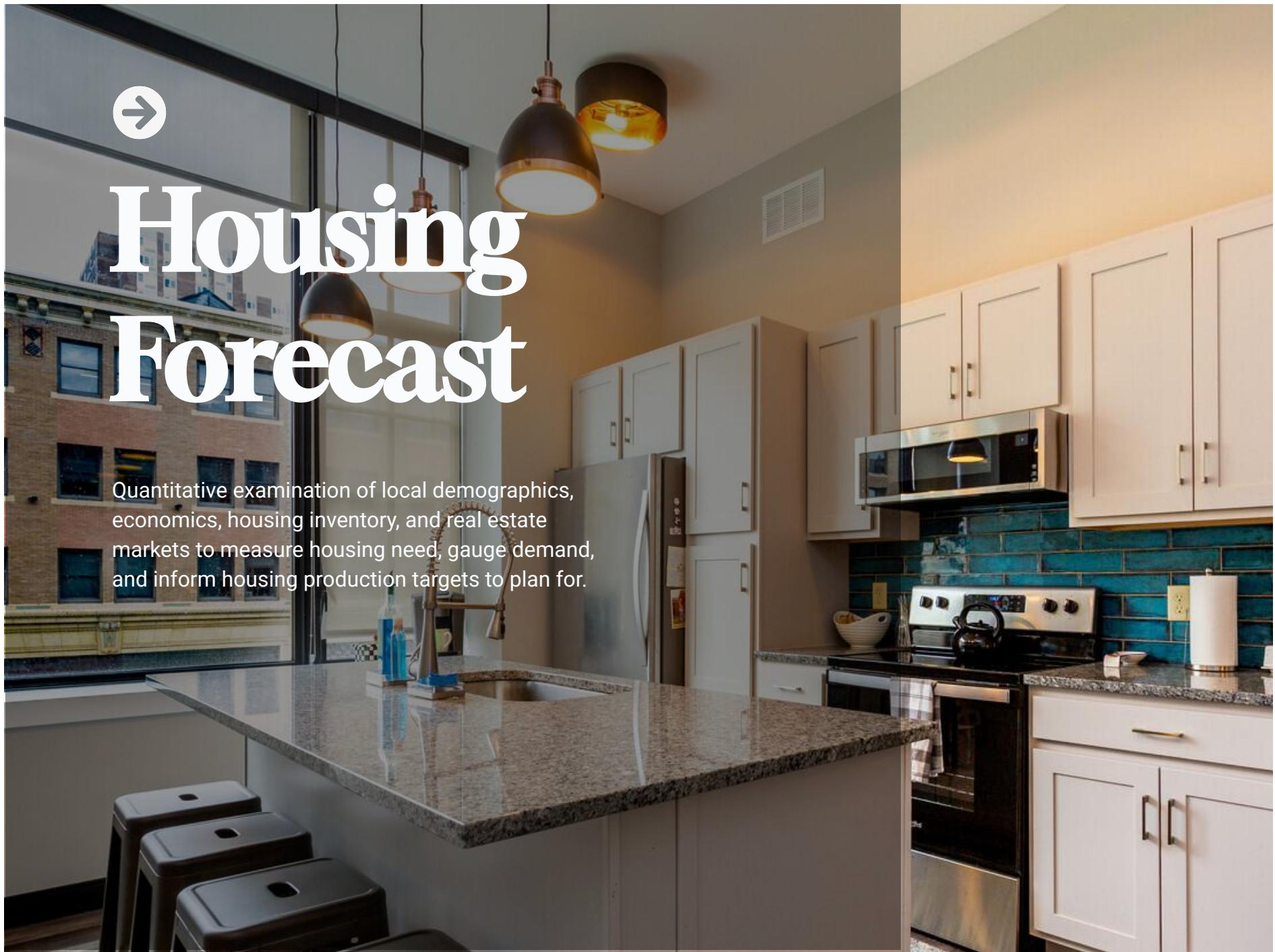
— Downtown Syracuse — Westcott / University Hill — Franklin Square / Lakefront
— Downtown Rochester — Tipperary Hill — Downtown Buffalo





Housing Forecast

Quantitative examination of local demographics, economics, housing inventory, and real estate markets to measure housing need, gauge demand, and inform housing production targets to plan for.



Methodology overview



>95%

Residential occupancy rate in Downtown Syracuse



64%

Growth in Downtown population since 2010



3,308

Downtown residents as of 2023



1,077

Completed housing units since 2015



589

Apartments under construction or in the pipeline



176

Annual market potential for new housing units in Downtown



59.3%

Residents under age 35



56.2%

Residents with a Bachelor's degree (or higher!)



\$1,382

Average rent for a one-bedroom apartment



\$1,889

Average rent for a two-bedroom apartment

The following analysis comprises the foundation of the Housing Needs Assessment by establishing Downtown Syracuse's current and projected housing needs, demand, and production target to underpin planning policies and strategies.

Housing needs

Determine housing needs of current residents by:

- Profiling household demographics and employment
- Measuring cost burden by income level
- Evaluating existing housing inventory
- Comparing need and supply to identify gaps

Housing demand

Estimate demand for housing over the next 10 years by:

- Establishing overall growth rate
- Analyzing demand drivers
- Quantifying demand by income level
- Integrating market trends and preferences

Production target

Set a production target to guide future housing policy and development by:

- Comparing need and demand
- Calibrating production scale and mix to feasibility constraints
- Detailing optimal housing mix

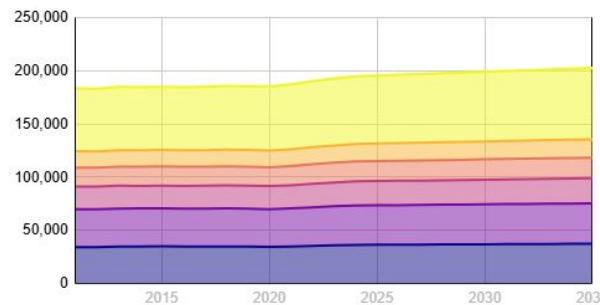
ANALYSIS: HOUSING NEEDS

Forecasted growth by household income

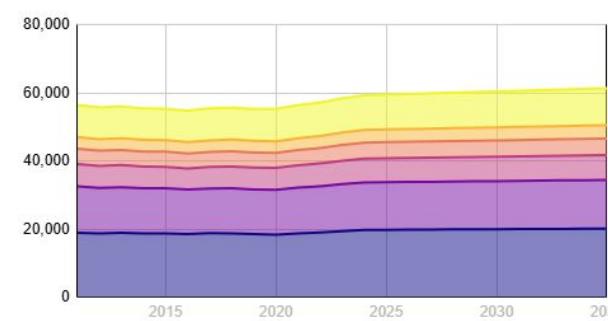
Forecast model of income trends based on 2010-2023 Census American Communities Survey data. Percentages are of Area Median Income (AMI). 100% is \$104,100 for Syracuse, NY MSA, including Onondaga County (2025).

>120% 100-120% 80-100% 60-80% 30-60% <30%

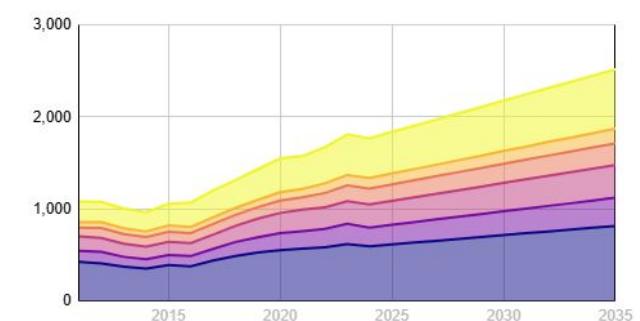
Onondaga County



Syracuse



Downtown Syracuse



The county

194K households

- Has added 9,000 households since 2020.
- As the County continues to grow, a portion of the next 5 years' growth could be attracted to live Downtown if the right units, amenities, and lifestyle are available.
- Largest share of >120% AMI households.

The city

60K households

- The citywide housing policy is mostly focused on stabilizing neighborhoods.
- Higher rates of poverty than the County.
- Relatively stable population.

Downtown

2K households in 2025 (estimated)

- Explosive growth since 2015, including adding higher income households.

ANALYSIS: HOUSING NEEDS

Demographic trends

The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMT) has a model of household and job growth for the region out to 2050.

For Downtown, the **forecasted growth in households is 63%**.

Jobs are forecasted to increase by 28%.

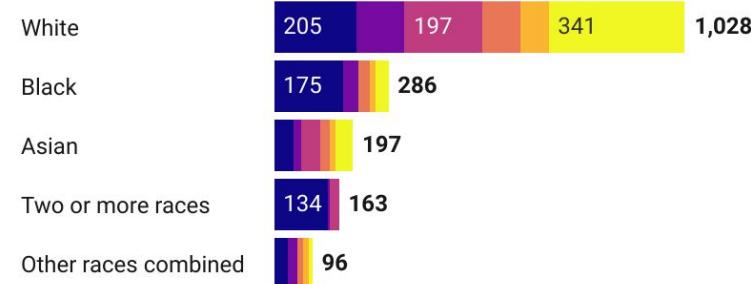
- Since 2019, **50% of residents who moved to Downtown Syracuse came from outside of Onondaga County**, so the analysis should also consider opportunities to attract more residents and investment from beyond Onondaga County.
- Downtown has had explosive growth since 2015, including adding higher income households. Since 2015, Downtown Syracuse's **growth has primarily been driven by heads of households ages 25-44 (62% of growth)**, followed by ages 45-64 (22% of growth).
- A household with the Area Median Income (AMI) of \$104,100 for [Syracuse, NY MSA](#) can afford to purchase a \$294,000 house given today's mortgage rates, property taxes, and other factors.
- Single-person households and seniors living alone are strong growth areas and could be targeted with new units that meet their needs and preferences.

Downtown households characteristics & income

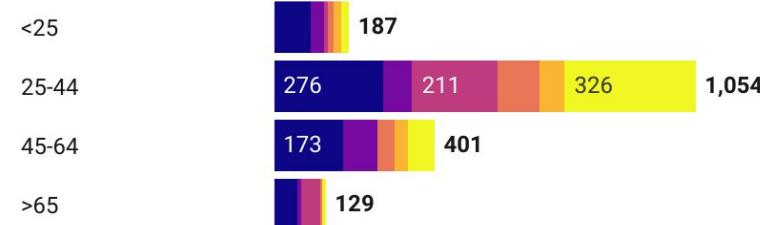
Downtown Syracuse ACS 2023 characteristics by percent of HUD median family income.

<30% 30-60% 60-80% 80-100% 100-120% >120%

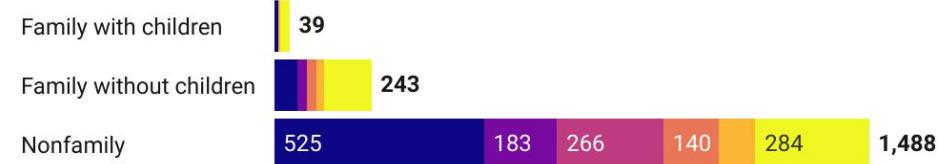
Race



Age of householder



Household type



ANALYSIS: HOUSING NEEDS

Family types in the City and Downtown

Source: 2015-2023 Census American Communities Survey. These charts show the extent of recent growth and what types of households have been the driving force behind the growth, which in Downtown has focused on smaller non-family households.

Syracuse family structure changes

2015 2023

Single person households



Adults living with nonrelative roommates



Seniors living alone



Families with children



Downtown family structure changes

2015 2023

Single person households



Adults living with nonrelative roommates



Seniors living alone

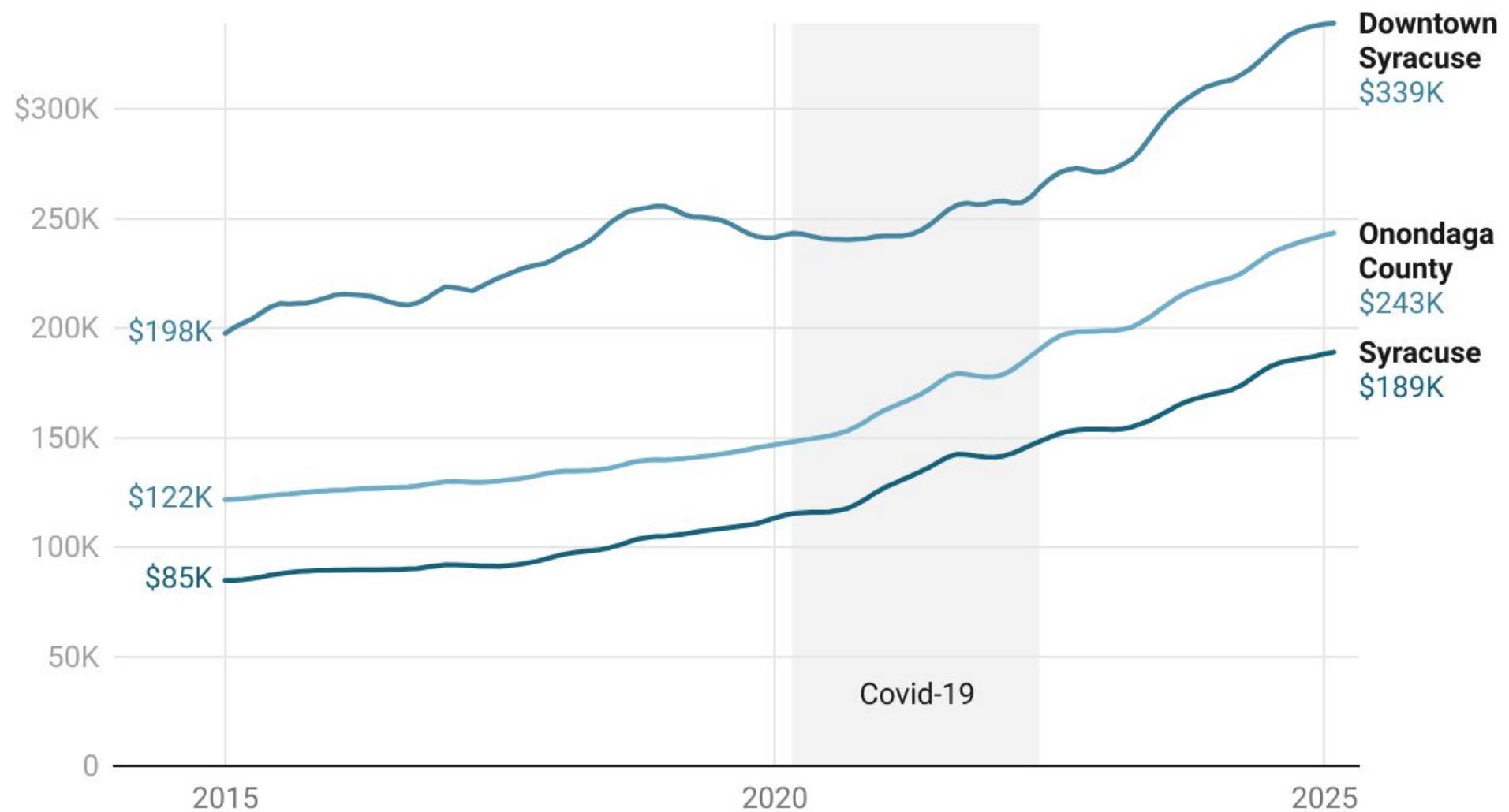


Families with children

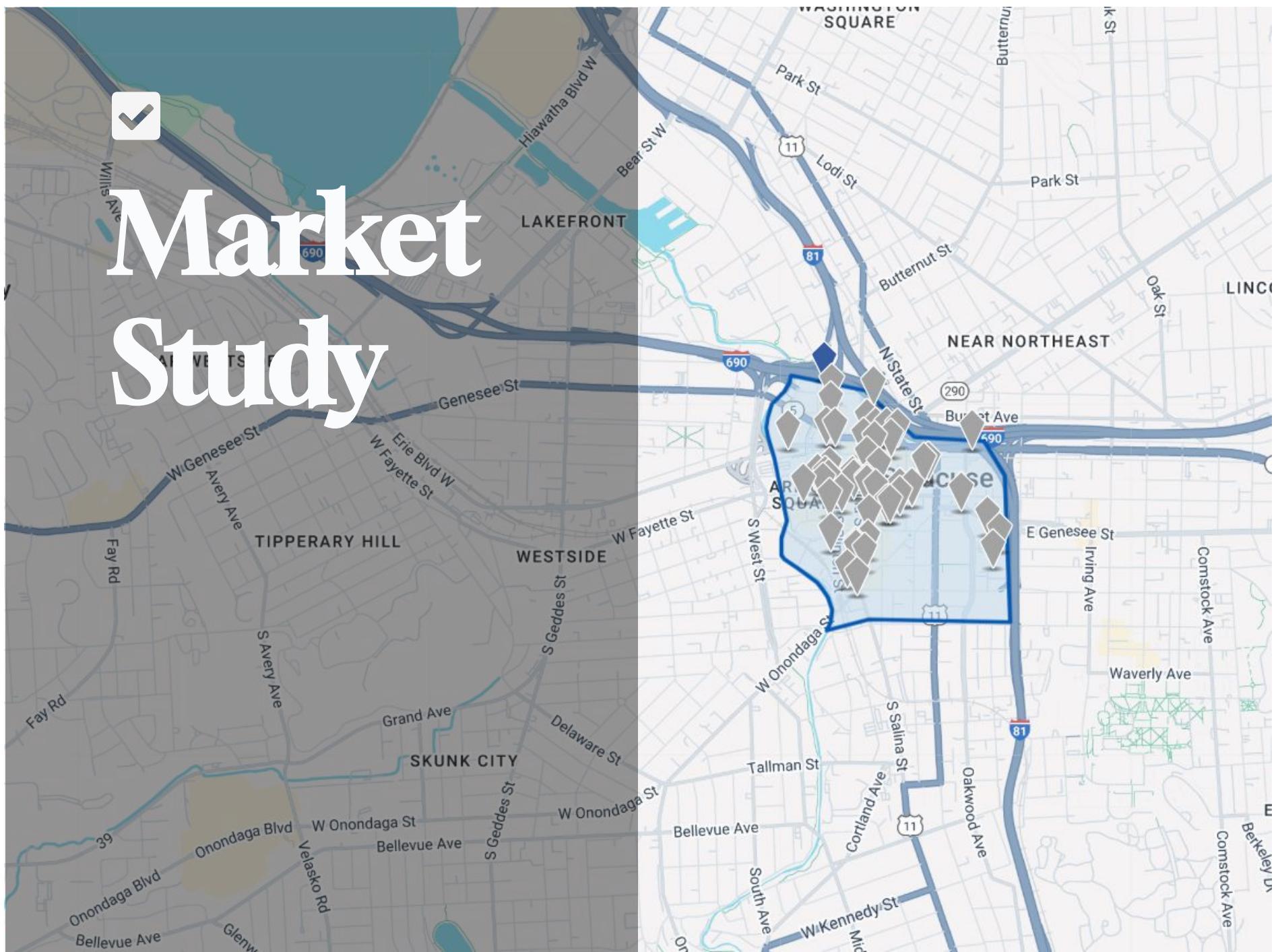


ANALYSIS: HOUSING NEEDS

Median home price



Market Study



Downtown's market readiness

Threats and weaknesses

- Most of the opportunities for renovation of historic Downtown buildings into residential uses have already been undertaken. Downtown should avoid policies that directly lead to the further conversion of remaining office uses to residential to remain a mixed-use district. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings has been prevalent, often utilizing tax credits, but **opportunities may be diminishing without more low-hanging fruit.**
- Cost is a hurdle for construction of new residential buildings (instead of adaptive reuse). Stakeholders reported per-unit construction costs between \$250K and \$300K per unit for rental apartments. Further skilled labor shortages may be caused by I-81 grounding, development on University Hill, and construction at Micron using the regional capacity.
- There are about 2,000 multifamily units currently going through permitting Citywide, of which 500 are in Downtown. While some of those are student housing, Downtown will be in competition with the Inner Harbor redevelopment and adjoining Franklin Square. These other neighborhoods may command top of the market rents for urban living, which is a relatively small overall portion of the market.
- Quality of life issues for Downtown, including perception of security, parking for residents, and neighborhood amenities impact the potential pool of residents.

Strengths and opportunities

- Downtown offers an urban lifestyle that is unique to the area, including walkability and the cultural amenities including Redhouse Arts Center and Landmark Theatre.
- **Rezone for Downtown is very permissive** and hasn't been fully explored. The zoning's new 10-12% inclusionary zoning requirement is generally seen as manageable because the rent discount is relatively close to market rate given the regional median income.
- The region is growing but not building enough housing, leading to the region's first ever housing shortage. According to CenterState CEO, the region needs around 3,000 homes a year but is only delivering 1,000 homes. **If housing can be built in Downtown, this regional shortage will bolster demand.**
- The City wants to see projects get built and has invested in a more predictable permitting process. There is also no pushback from the community regarding new buildings.
- Grounding I-81 will make vacant parcels in eastern Downtown more attractive with potential for new housing development.
- Employers are reporting housing demand beyond what is available on the market, more demand due to return-to-office, and culture among younger employees to want to be in the office.

Who visits Downtown and when?

Downtown Syracuse's mix of people shifts over the course of the week. Residents provide the most stable but smallest component. Their relative presence is highest on the quietest day for workers. Weekdays are balanced between business and leisure, Friday triggers a visitor surge, and the weekend is almost entirely leisure-driven.

Activity in Downtown Syracuse by day of the week

Location data from March 2024 to March 2025.

Residents Employees Visitors

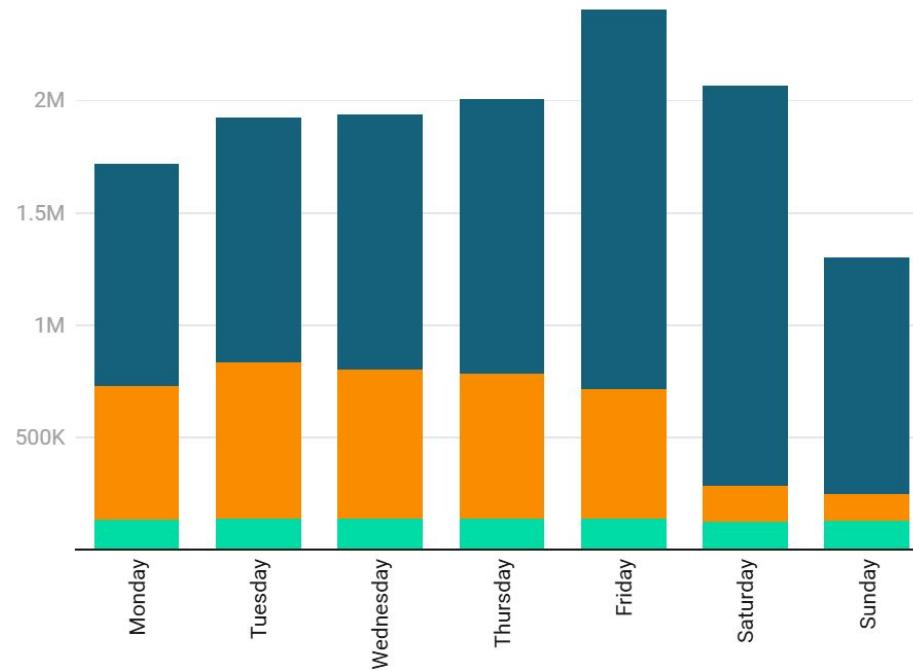


Chart: CommunityScale • Source: placer.ai • Created with Datawrapper

Data credit: Placer.ai analyzes statistical foot traffic data from mobile device location data. It is reasonable to assume that a visit is generally considered to be a period of time.

Hourly patterns trace a classic 24-hour downtown cycle. In the pre-dawn hours residents dominate, making up just over half of everyone Downtown. Between 6 and 9AM, the employee share rockets upward. After 5PM the composition flips again as visitors swell. Through the late evening and past midnight visitors gradually recede, residents reclaim a larger slice, and the cycle resets.

Activity in Downtown Syracuse by time of day

Location data from March 2024 to March 2025.

Residents Employees Visitors

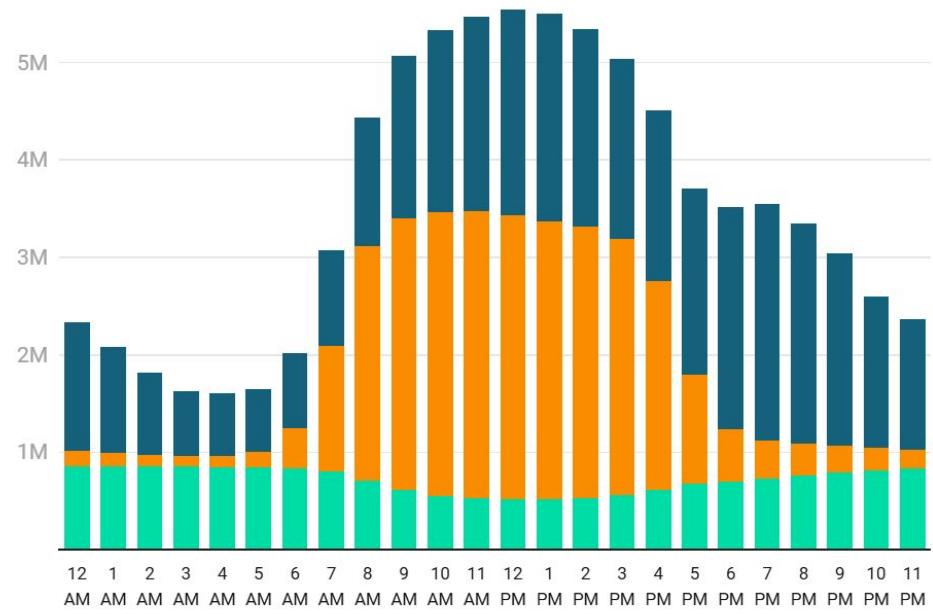


Chart: CommunityScale • Source: placer.ai • Created with Datawrapper

Midday is the busiest time of day, with the most visitors coming at 7PM.

Who is (and isn't) looking to live Downtown

Less likely future residents

- Syracuse University undergraduate students as purpose-built student housing is being built to accommodate the need.
- Upper income families that typically move to suburbs.
- Micron construction workers.
- Junior employees who cannot justify the rent premium in Downtown find cheaper alternatives in neighborhoods like Tipperary Hill, which may include living with roommates.

More likely future residents

- Graduate students.
- Medical residents at SUNY Upstate Medical University.
- Early- and mid-career professionals who work in the area, including executives, doctors, and professors at Syracuse University or the Hospital (although some go to the suburbs to have a family).
- Newcomers to the region who want to rent before buying.
- Downsizing seniors and retirees, who are currently about 10% of Downtown residents. If buildings were available that suited their needs - offering, for example, 2bed/2bath-units with a little more space and convenient parking - there could be even more demand.
- International students looking for a prestigious apartment or condo.
- Short-term housing (6-12 months) for relocating university staff.
- Short-term rental.

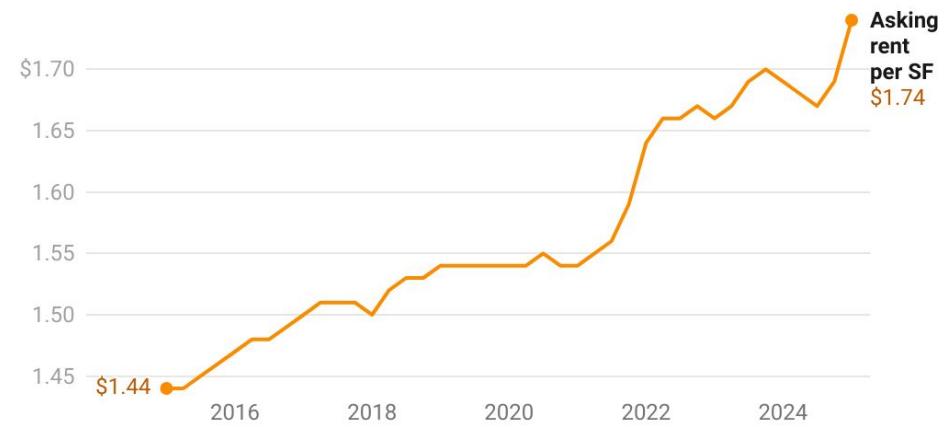
Apartment rental market by the numbers

Downtown currently has 3,024 multifamily units, with 699 added recently and 589 planned. While the average asking rent is \$1.74/sf, newer projects command significantly higher rates (\$2.18-\$4.35/sf), especially for smaller units, placing Downtown rents 15-75% above the broader Syracuse submarket and Metro area.

- The average asking rent per square foot across all Downtown units is \$1.74. Projects built since 2021 are achieving \$2.18-\$4.35 per square foot, especially among smaller units.
 - Average Studio Asking Rent: \$1,299
 - Average 1 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit: \$1,382
 - Average 2 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit: \$1,889
 - Average 3 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit: \$3,179
- Depending on the unit size and building amenities, Downtown units are renting for 15-75% more than average units in the broader City of Syracuse submarket and Metro Syracuse market.

Market asking rate per square foot

CoStar multifamily rent (51 properties), accessed May 2025



CoStar data as of May 2025 for the 51 multifamily rental properties in Downtown Syracuse. The market rate asking rent per square foot is an average of \$1.74. As shown, the growth in rent since 2015 has been strong. The 10-year average for monthly market rent per unit was \$1,503, and it is now \$1,681.

Apartment rental market by the numbers

The Downtown Syracuse rental market is experiencing high demand, particularly for 1-bedroom units and studios, leading to low vacancy rates. This tight rental market suggests there is pent-up demand for more apartments.

Despite this demand, renters are budget-conscious, showing resistance to higher price points, which has resulted in concessions. The optimal pricing appears to be between \$1,000-\$1,300 (around \$2.00/sf) for these smaller units, as 2-bedroom units priced at \$2,300 face pushback.

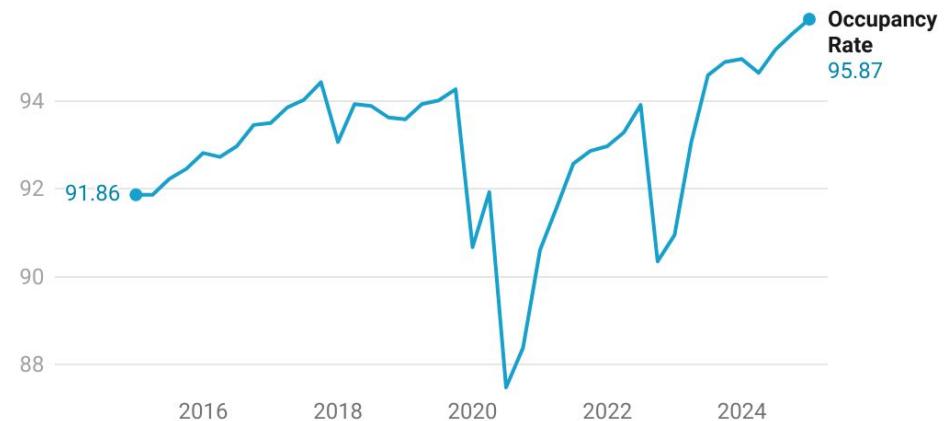
Nevertheless, Downtown Syracuse presents a significant opportunity for rental growth without risk of saturation, fueled by increasing regional demand and limited new construction.

Residents are price sensitive to a degree, but the following amenities may make the building more attractive and achieve higher rents:

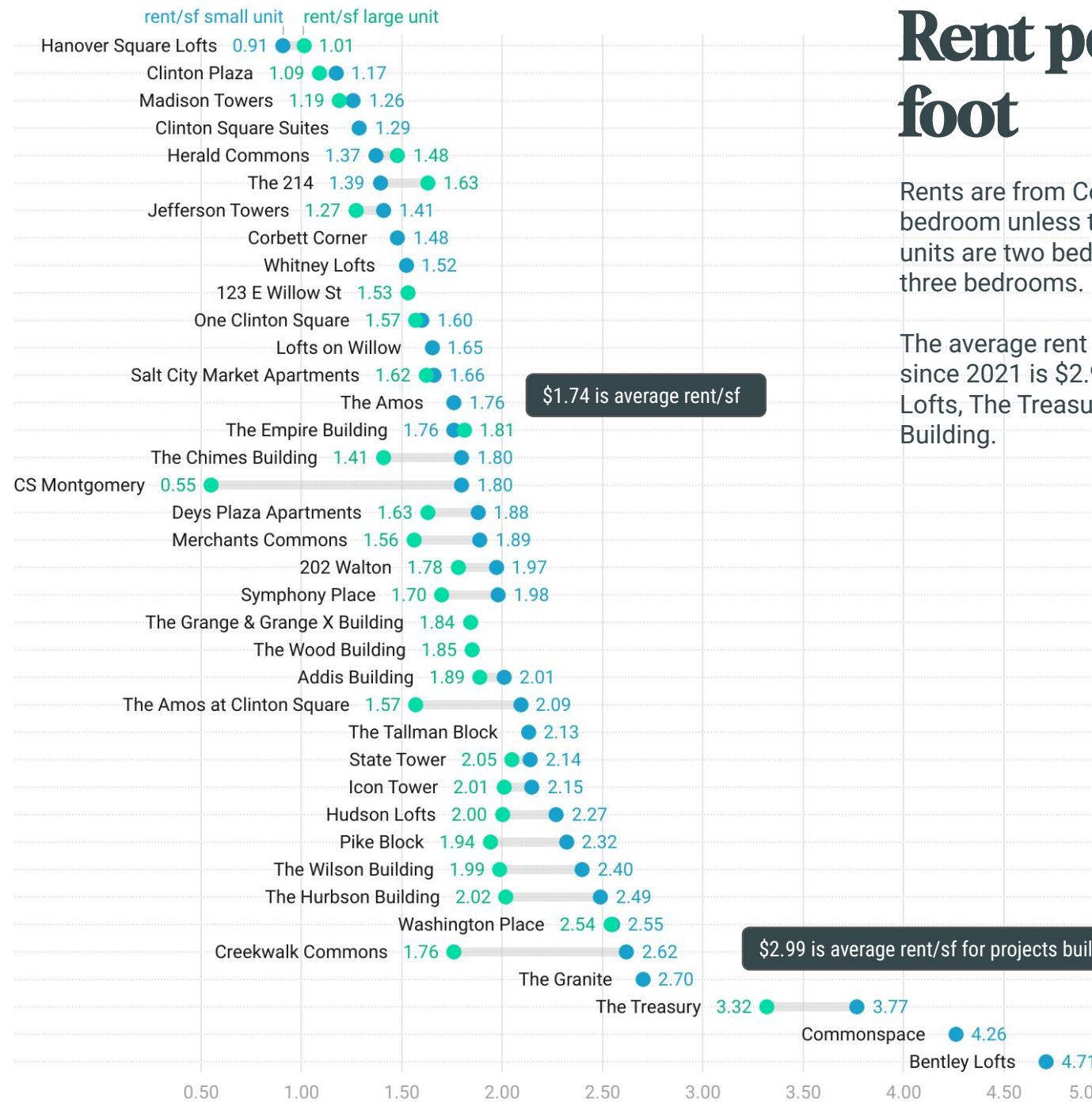
- Mail storage and parcel room
- Bicycle storage room
- Roof deck with functional use
- Parking
- Fitness center
- Smaller units with natural light and eat-in kitchens that are easy to furnish

Occupancy rate

CoStar multifamily occupancy rate (51 properties), accessed May 2025



CoStar data as of May 2025 for the 51 multifamily rental properties in Downtown Syracuse. Occupancy is at 95.9%, which is above the 10-year average of 93.1%. The market cap rate is 7.6%, which is above the 10-year average of 7.2%. Cap rate is the ratio of Net Operating Income (NOI) to property asset value, where a lower value represents a higher multiple for valuation. Lower mortgage rates typically bring down cap rates, so a lower mortgage rate environment is good for rental housing values.



Rent per square foot

Rents are from CoStar, 2025. Small units are one bedroom unless the property only has studios. Large units are two bedrooms unless the property only has three bedrooms.

The average rent for structures built or renovated since 2021 is \$2.99 per square foot, including Bentley Lofts, The Treasury, Corbett Corner, and Addis Building.

Recent projects



Condo ownership market

With historically high prices for single-family homes, purchasing a condo may be financially attractive for the part of the market that is looking for low maintenance urban and walkable living. With a Jefferson Clinton Commons condo (pictured) achieving a \$395/sf sales price and the City's new and permissive density regulations, condos may pencil out for a developer who can find reasonably-priced land in Downtown. While there is existing demand for condos, improvements to Downtown's livability could help support a "condo lifestyle" and increase the expected capture rate further.

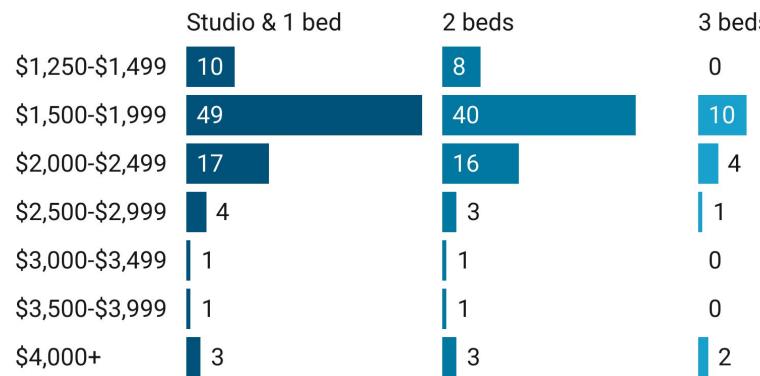


Property Address	Neighborhood	Built	Unit	Last sold	Price	Asking/SF
106 Montgomery St APT 3	Downtown	2004	1,946 sf, 2 beds, 3 baths	On market	\$699,000	\$359
211 W Jefferson St UNIT R-405, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	2009	1,672 sf, 2 beds, 2 baths	7/25/2024	\$600,000	\$359
133 Walton St APT 105, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	1994	1,240 sf, 2 beds, 2 baths	8/20/2024	\$356,500	\$288
133 Walton St APT 110, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	1994	1,160 sf, 2 beds, 2 baths	2/21/2025	\$330,000	\$284
526 Plum St #306, Syracuse, NY 13204	Franklin Square	1990	1,270 sf, 2 beds, 2 baths	3/7/2025	\$360,000	\$283
526 Plum St #104, Syracuse, NY 13204	Franklin Square	1990	1,649 sf, 2 beds, 3 baths	11/8/2024	\$459,000	\$278
108 W Jefferson St APT 605, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	1928	848 sf, 1 bed, 1 bath	4/30/2024	\$235,000	\$277
133 Walton St APT 124, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	1994	1,465 sf, 2 beds, 3 baths	8/29/2024	\$391,000	\$267
429 N Franklin St APT 110, Syracuse, NY 13202	Franklin Square	1996	2,169 sf, 2 beds, 3 baths	On market	\$537,500	\$248
108 W Jefferson St APT 708, Syracuse, NY 13202	Downtown	1928	1,609 sf, 3 beds, 2 baths	11/12/2024	\$289,900	\$180
377 W Onondaga St APT 209, Syracuse, NY 13202	Near West Side	1927	756 sf, 1 bed, 1 bath	10/4/2023	\$122,000	\$161

Market demand analysis results

Annual market potential for new housing units

The total market potential is **176 units per year** for combined renter (166 units) and ownership (10 units) by number of bedrooms and monthly rent or owners-equivalent rent. Annual demand for the next 5 years based on regional growth forecast, housing budgets, and Downtown's capture rates.



The total annual market potential of 176 units for the next five years is 30% above the best one-year growth of 136 households in 2022*. 176 units includes both market-rate and required affordable housing at 80% of AMI. About half of overall demand is for studios and one-bedroom units. This information can help policy makers, advocates, and developers target strategies in areas that have the most potential impact.

View the details of this approach in the [appendix](#):

1. Determine regional market area
2. Forecast regional household growth
3. Project recent movers, recent movers by bedroom preference, and recent movers by income distribution based on forecast of household types
4. Calculate expected housing budgets based on 85th percentile of willingness to pay for housing by household income and tenure
5. Forecast housing market demand for rental and sales units using marginal counts of household budget and bedroom preference
6. For sales market, calculate corresponding sales price from monthly housing expenditure
7. Estimate capture rates by bedroom count and cost based on absorption rates from recent new construction and local household share of regional market area.
8. Estimate local market demand by multiplying the capture rate with the regional market demand.

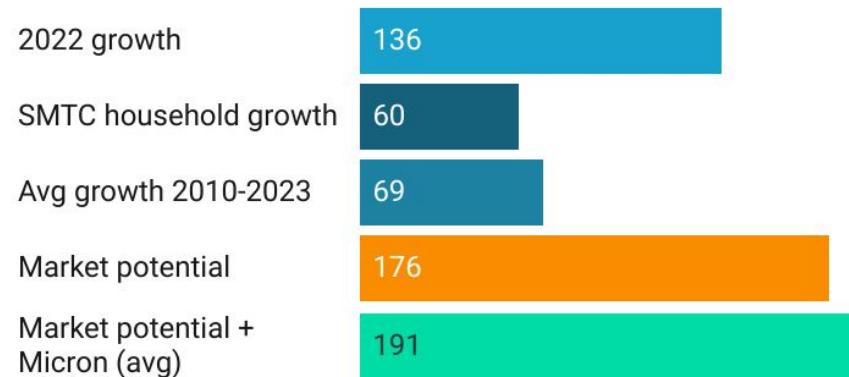
* Delivery of the 2022 units spiked multifamily vacancy from 6.5% (2022 Q2) to 9.6% (2022 Q4), but vacancy fell back to 4.9% (2023 Q3) within 9 months as those units were absorbed (CoStar)

Household growth and adjustments

Sources: Census ACS 2023 5-Year; CommunityScale, [Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies](#)

Annual growth comparison

Household growth per year

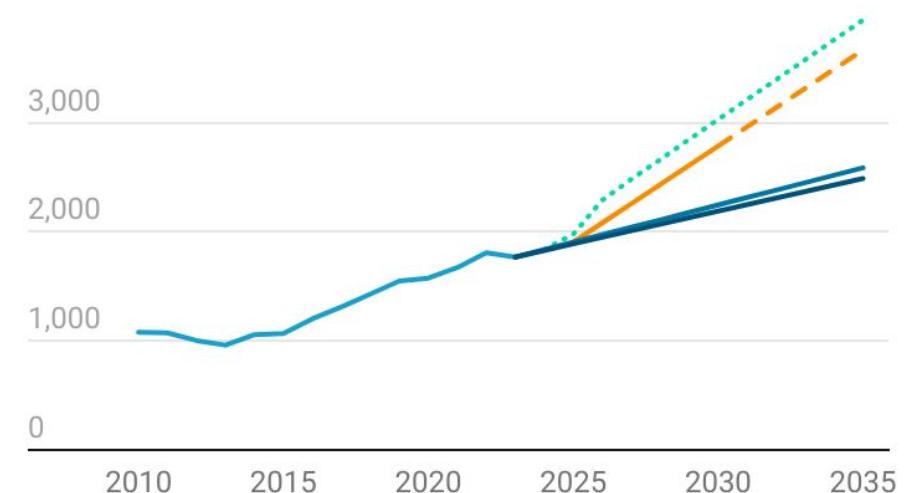


The market potential of 176 households per year is higher than the strongest growth since 2010, which was 136 households in 2022. In the chart at right, the rate of growth is also compared to the SMTC projection and the average growth rate since 2010. Given this strong market demand and fast absorption rates, 176 new units should maintain a healthy vacancy rate of under 7%.

The final line adds in the average additional households that would be anticipated as a result of the Micron project. The core assumption is based on the 2022 Economic Analysis for the Micron's population projection (Table 2.3). This additional population living in the regional market area is then converted to an expected number of households and similarly analyzed for housing preferences and capture rate.

Household growth scenarios

- Census
- SMTC
- Census slope
- Market potential
- Market potential extended
- Market potential with Micron





Recommendations



Downtown is a neighborhood

As residential becomes a larger share of Downtown's overall land use, it is important to reconceptualize Downtown as a neighborhood and to consider factors that would improve livability and quality of life as Downtown's main competitive advantage. According to a survey of employees working Downtown, the most attractive parts of living Downtown are walkability and short commutes. However, the drawbacks include perceived safety risks and lack of access to certain expected neighborhood amenities.

The following areas should be prioritized:

- **Grocery Store and Pharmacy:** Downtown residents have access to a Wegmans within a 10-minute drive, Syracuse Cooperative Market for smaller purchases, and DGX. Nevertheless, if Downtown is going to grow, a full-size supermarket and pharmacy would improve the neighborhood's attractiveness.
- **More than drinks after work:** Downtown should match the diverse lifestyle preferences of a younger workforce. Employer interviews reveal demand for fitness studios, late-night cafés, and other amenities that reflect the next generation's work-life rhythm alongside traditional bars and restaurants.
- **Dog-Friendly Downtown Initiative:** Given the repeated mentions of dog owners' needs, consider a public-private partnership to establish a dog park or other dog-friendly amenities in the Downtown area.



Recommendations for housing developers

There is a demonstrated market potential for an additional 176 units annually for the next five years, of which 166 are for rental and 10 are for ownership condo, covered on the next page. While there is less available “low-hanging fruit” from Historic Tax Credit-funded adaptive reuse, new construction on underutilized land is attractive, especially on the eastern side of Downtown as I-81 grounding improves the area’s attractiveness.

To capitalize on this strong demand and ensure rapid absorption of new units, developers should strategically align their projects with the specific housing types, sizes, price points, and amenities that resonate most with current and prospective Downtown residents.

- **Prioritize Smaller Units:** The deepest pools of demand are for studio and 1-bedroom rental apartments with some demand for 2-bedroom units.
- **Target Optimal Rental Rates:** The most demanded rental apartments fall between \$1,500-\$2,000 per month. While residents show price sensitivity, newly constructed units built since 2021 are achieving an average of \$3.28 per square foot.
- **Design for Livability:** Units should be designed to be easy to furnish, maximizing natural light and incorporating features like eat-in kitchens. Other desired amenities include secure mail storage and a dedicated parcel room, a bicycle storage room, a roof deck, and convenient parking options on-site or nearby.



Recommendations for condo development

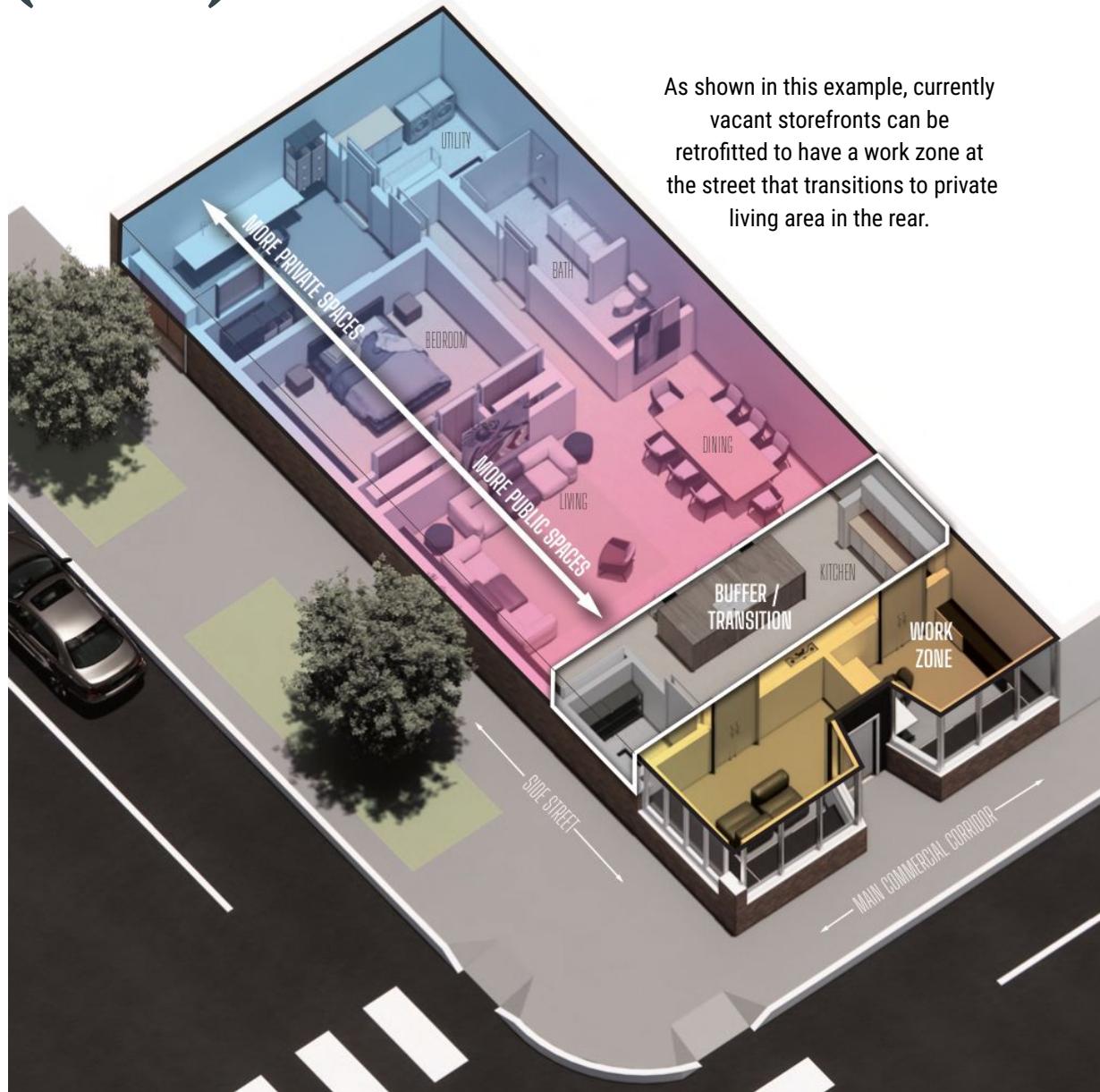
Although the for-sale condo segment is considerably smaller than Downtown's rental market, it can comfortably absorb roughly 10 new units per year over the next five years. Downtown's buyer pool is thinner because most recent movers are renters and many owner-occupants in the region still prefer larger 3- and 4-bedroom homes. Even so, past transactions show that purchasers will pay a premium for Downtown's walkable, job-proximate lifestyle: recent sales have reached \$359 per sq ft. At or near that price point, new construction can cover today's construction, land, and financing costs and still pencil, making a limited pipeline of well-designed condos financially viable.

The Downtown condo market niches primarily cater to professionals seeking urban convenience and downsizing seniors desiring a low-maintenance lifestyle, with potential interest from long-term or international graduate or medical students. To capture this niche, focus on compact 1- and 2-bedroom plans with flexible layouts that can double as work-from-home space.

A by-right mid-rise market rate condo development on a small parcel would take full advantage of MX-5's lack of height, density, or parking requirements and would be strategically positioned to meet Downtown's limited but reliable condo demand while maintaining healthy margins.



Allow ground-floor live/work in Downtown (MX-5)



As shown in this example, currently vacant storefronts can be retrofitted to have a work zone at the street that transitions to private living area in the rear.

Allow Dwelling, Live/Work in MX-5.

Currently, MX-5 does not allow ground-floor residential units, but with the provision that Live/Work has the residential in the back and a storefront in the front, it could improve the streetscape and introduce opportunities for much needed housing.

Commercial uses may include artist work and sales space, general office, personal services, and retail. The working space should be at least 400 square feet. The entrance should be clearly designated as a business entrance. The work portion of the business live/work unit should be regularly used for commercial activities and display space.

The residential portion of the live/work unit should be contiguous with the work space, with direct access between the two areas, and not as a separate stand-alone dwelling unit. The residential portion of the business live/work unit shouldn't need a separate street address from the work space.

Improve the experience of parking Downtown



Downtown has sufficient parking resources, but there is a perception that it is hard to park Downtown. Improvements should be made from the perspective of a Downtown visitor that removes the friction and intimidation of parking. Syracuse may want to consider attracting a valet service operator to meet potential demand.

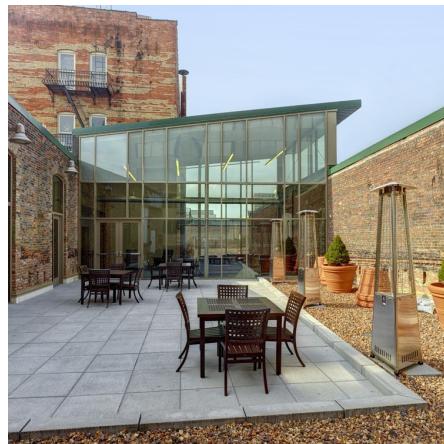
SMTG's (Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council) *Downtown Parking: Wayfinding and Signage Guide* recommends a district-wide rollout of standardized public-parking and bicycle-parking signage will solve one of the core perception problem: visitors and prospective residents believe parking is scarce when, in fact, more than 11,000 publicly available spaces and multiple under-utilized garages already exist. By making those assets visible, such as at the Trolley Lot, and City Center Garage, developers can confidently deliver new mixed-income projects under MX-5's zero-minimum-parking rules, lowering construction costs while preserving ground floors for active uses.

Coupling wayfinding with the Guide's proposed expansion of visible bike racks throughout Downtown will also support bicycle use for transportation.

Facilitate walkability and active lifestyles



Maintaining Downtown's competitive advantage



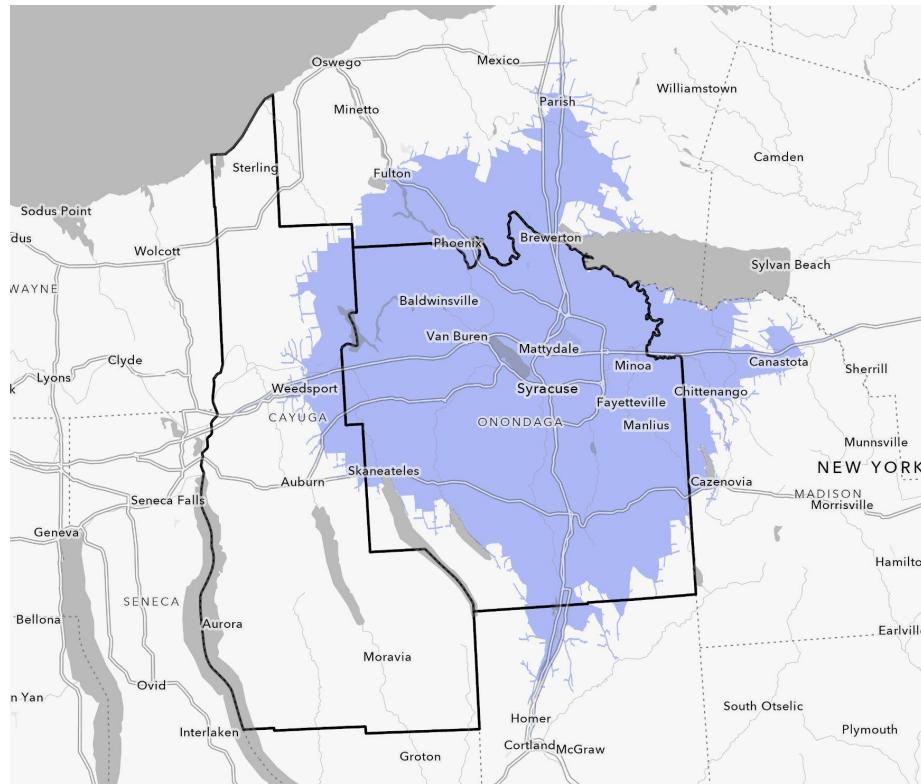
Downtown Syracuse's competitive advantage lies in pairing an authentic, walk-to-everything urban lifestyle with a regulatory environment that still welcomes new investment. To stay ahead of other neighborhoods and villages and capture the next wave of residents flowing from regional changes, Downtown must double-down on livability and protect its mixed-use character.

Actions to keep Downtown out in front

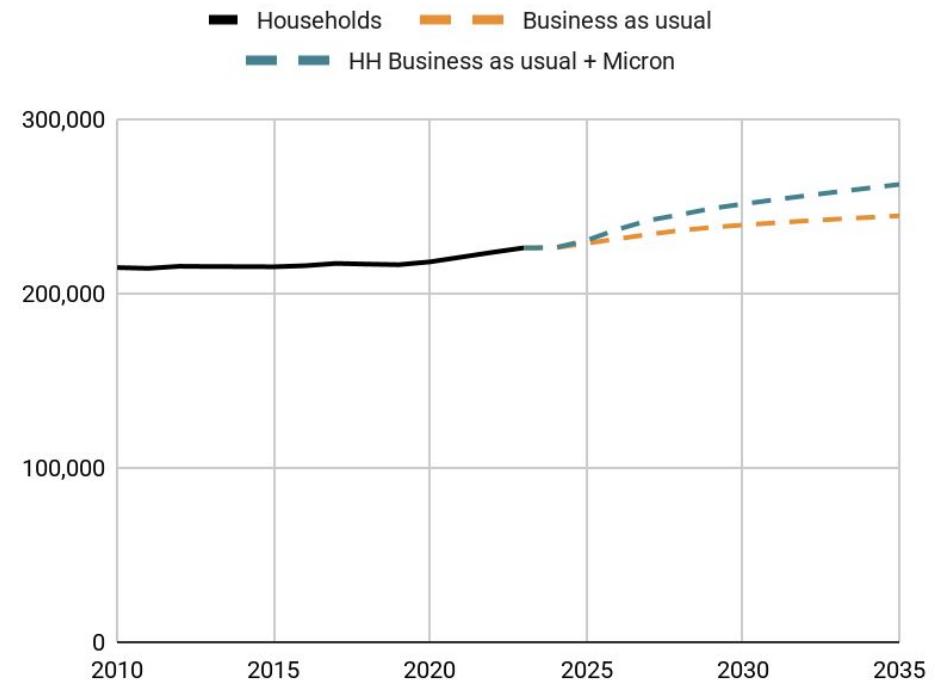
- **Preserve the mixed-use core.** Create new housing structures on underused lots rather than further office-to-residential conversions to ensure daytime employment and street-level vibrancy remain strong.
- **Exploit MX-5 flexibility.** Proactively market the height-, parking-, and lot-size-free zoning to national developers. Projects that meet the inclusionary affordable housing requirements should be fast-tracked through the City's new permitting process.
- **Prioritize quality-of-life infrastructure.** To expand Downtown's attractiveness and capture rate, a full-service grocery/pharmacy, a dog park, and fitness and late-night café options will appeal to young professionals.
- **Own the 15-minute commute story.** Walkability was the number one reason why Downtown resident survey respondents choose to live in the neighborhood. With I-81 grounding, the commute to University Hill will be even more pleasant.
- **Make parking effortless.** Implement SMTA's standardized wayfinding and signage guidance so visitors and prospective residents experience parking as "easy," reinforcing MX-5's zero-minimum-parking advantage.
- **Track and trumpet metrics on Downtown Stats.** Publish updates on occupancy, rent growth, and retail foot-traffic to reassure investors and adjust capture-rate assumptions in real time.

Appendix Market Study Methodology

Regional growth scenarios



Regional household growth scenarios



This map shows a 30-minute drive-shed from Downtown Syracuse and the statistical regional market area based on available Census data including Cayuga and Onondaga Counties. Almost all of Onondaga County is a 20-30 minute drive from Downtown, making it the de facto market area for analysis and the primary draw area from which to attract new residents to Downtown housing.

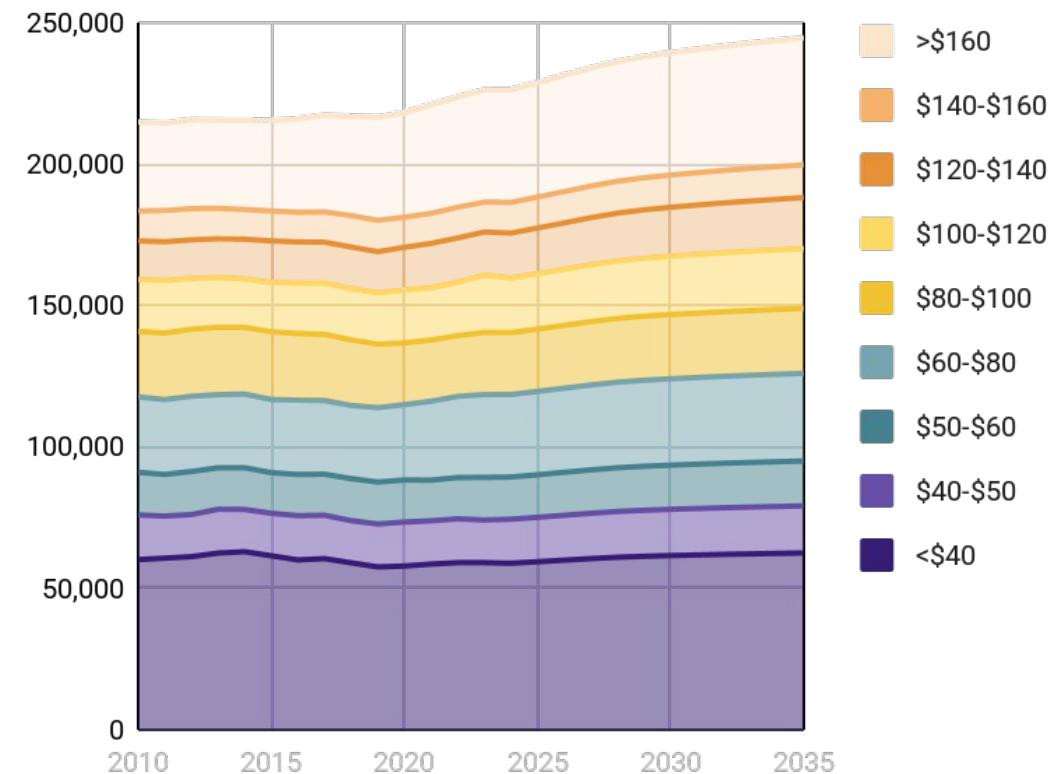
Based on Micron's Economic and Fiscal Impact Report, the Central New York region is estimated to grow by an additional 43,200 residents as a result of Micron's new manufacturing facility in Onondaga County. Assuming current average household sizes, we estimate this population influx would result in 18,000 new households in the regional market area.

Regional household growth forecast

This forecast overall household growth is based on demographic analysis. The overall growth is then distributed across the expected growth rate per income group relative to recent trends. This forecast is subject to uncertainty around net migration flowing in and out of the region as well as regional and national economic outlook. The household growth forecast assumes “business-as-usual” and does not incorporate household growth as a result of any major economic investments such as the new Micron manufacturing facility.

Household growth by household income (in thous.)

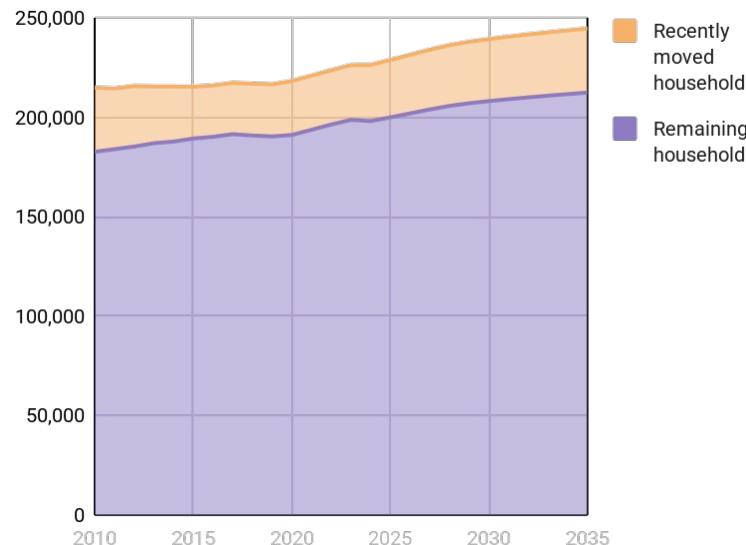
Model of income trends based on 2016-2023 Census data.



Regional households & recent movers forecast

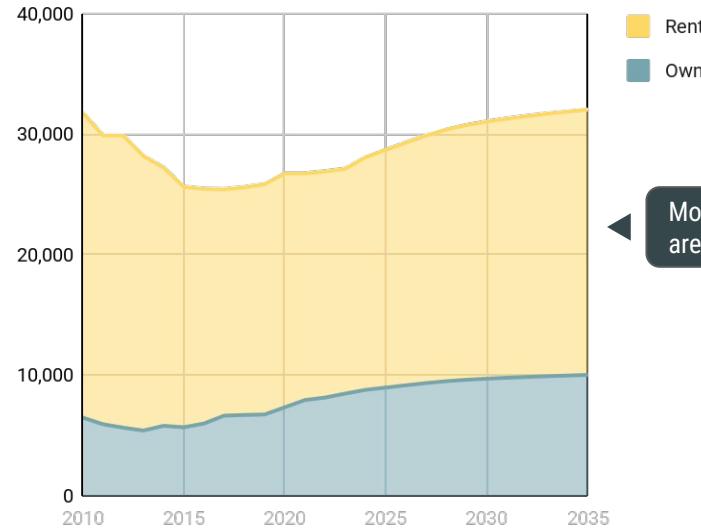
Household growth with recent movers

Model of recent mover trends based on 2016-2023 Census data.



Recent movers by tenure status

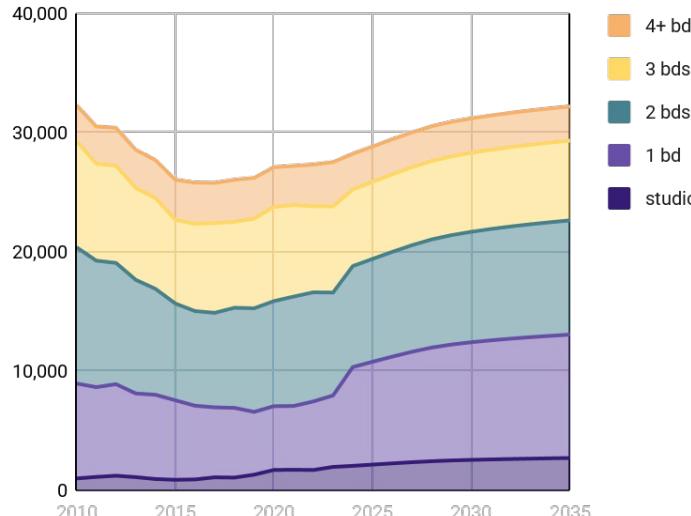
Model of recent mover trends based on 2016-2023 Census data.



Most recent movers are renters (70%).

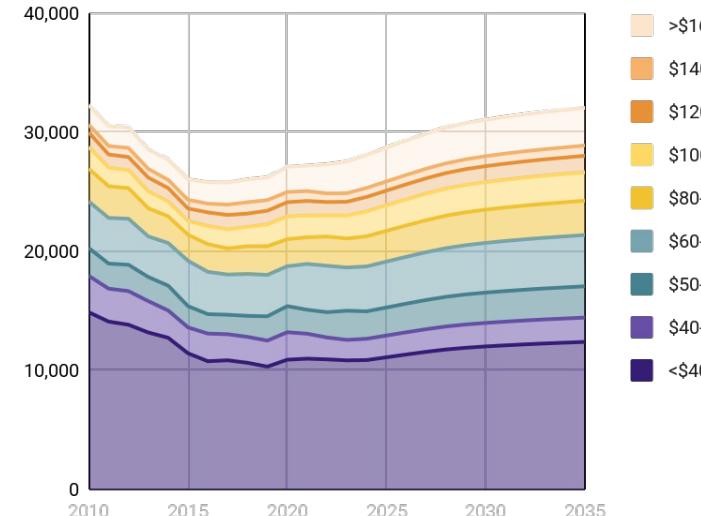
Recent movers by bedrooms

Model of recent mover trends based on 2016-2023 Census data.



Recent movers by household income (in thous.)

Model of income trends based on 2016-2023 Census data.



Recent movers tend to have lower income than non-movers. For the Micron calculations, additional growth is added within this category of recent movers.

Estimating willingness to pay by income and tenure

Distribution of rent-to-income ratio for select income groups (recent movers, renters only), 85th percentile

		<5%	5-10%	10-15%	15-20%	20-25%	25-30%	30-35%	35-40%	40-45%	45-50%	>50%
80% AMI	\$40,000-\$50,000	0.0%	0.7%	1.6%	10.0%	16.9%	25.0%	19.0%	12.7%	6.2%	2.7%	5.1%
120% AMI	\$80,000-\$100,000	0.8%	3.7%	28.2%	41.2%	13.6%	7.4%	2.4%	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	1.7%
high income	>\$160,000	16.1%	45.6%	27.7%	6.9%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%

This chart communicates what people would be willing to pay under best circumstances (top notch amenities, access, etc.) while still anchored by data from the Syracuse market.

Dynamic willingness to pay accounts for the fact that higher income groups spend less as a percentage of their income. This avoids overestimating demand at higher rents/housing costs per month.

The model does not limit rent-to-income ratio at 30% (i.e. after which households are typically considered cost-burdened) however households in the lowest three income brackets are not significantly driving demand for housing at market rates. By using the 85th percentile, we estimate demand for rents slightly above what people are currently paying.

85th percentile of monthly housing costs-to-income by tenure and income bins

Income Bins	Owners	Renters
< \$40,000	52.5%	52.5%
\$40,000-\$50,000	47.5%	37.5%
\$50,000-\$60,000	37.5%	32.5%
\$60,000-\$80,000	32.5%	27.5%
\$80,000-\$100,000	27.5%	22.5%
\$100,000-\$120,000	22.5%	22.5%
\$120,000-\$140,000	22.5%	17.5%
\$140,000-\$160,000	22.5%	17.5%

Converting projected household income to monthly housing costs by unit

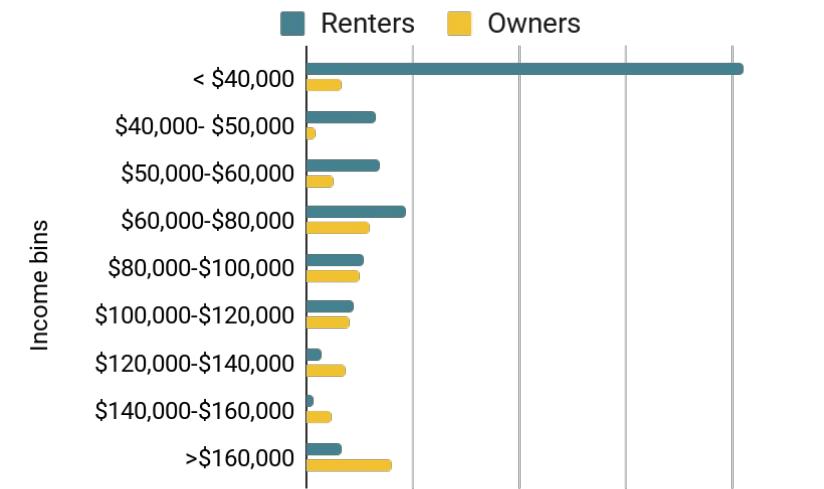
Using the projected household forecast for recent movers by income bins and the willingness to pay, we forecast the monthly housing budget for recent movers by tenure.

For renters, the monthly housing budget translates directly to rent. For owners, we estimate corresponding home sales prices based on current mortgage rates, local property tax rates, and average down payment and mortgage insurance rates.

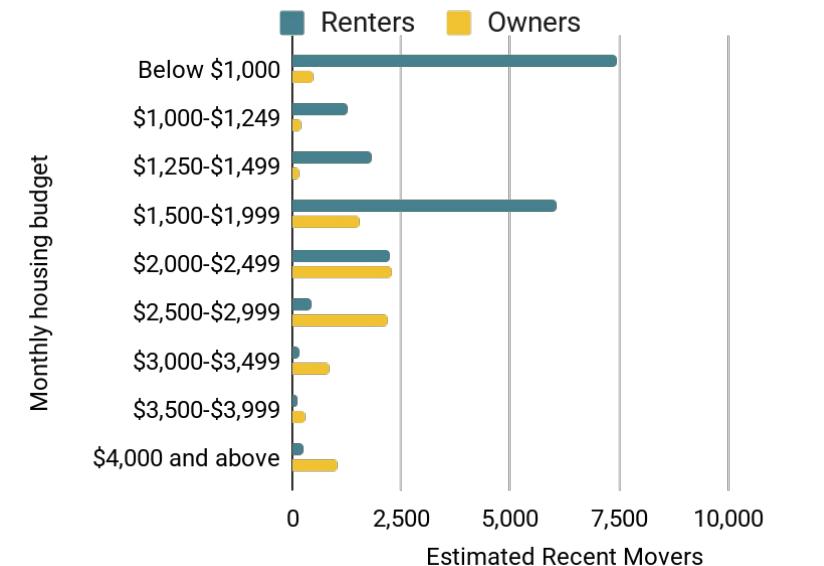
The estimated sales price range derived from the monthly expenditure is sensitive to changes in mortgage rates. If rates decline in the next five years, buyers could afford a higher sales price without increasing their monthly budget.

Monthly housing expenditure	Sales price, 6.8% mortgage	Sales price, 5.5% mortgage
Below \$1,000	<\$123,000	<\$137,000
\$1,000-\$1,249	\$123,000-\$154,000	\$137,000-\$172,000
\$1,250-\$1,499	\$154,000-\$185,000	\$172,000-\$206,000
\$1,500-\$1,999	\$185,000-\$246,000	\$206,000-\$274,000
\$2,000-\$2,499	\$246,000-\$308,000	\$274,000-\$343,000
\$2,500-\$2,999	\$308,000-\$370,000	\$343,000-\$412,000
\$3,000-\$3,499	\$370,000-\$431,000	\$412,000-\$480,000
\$3,500-\$3,999	\$431,000-\$493,000	\$480,000-\$549,000
\$4,000 and above	>\$493,000	>\$549,000

Projected Income Groups by Tenure



Projected Monthly Housing Costs by Tenure



Forecast of regional housing rental market

One-year demand for rental units in the market region

	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
Affordable at 80% AMI*	4840	2460	770	210
\$1,000-\$1,249	800	410	130	40
\$1,250-\$1,499	950	730	340	80
Market Rate Rental Prices	2760	2470	1210	310
\$2,000-\$2,499	820	970	460	70
\$2,500-\$2,999	180	190	100	20
Deepest Regional Market Pools**	50	50	30	10
\$3,000-\$3,499	40	40	20	0
\$3,500-\$3,999	70	80	60	10
\$4,000 and above				

Notes:

* 80% of 2025 HUD AMI \$104,100

** Rental cost distribution based on forecast of income distribution and assumes willingness to pay at 85th percentile for each income group; Bedroom distribution based on household type forecast

Establish the rental market capture rate

A capture rate estimates the ratio of the income-qualified households in a market area that could be captured annually within that range by a suitable home.

As a baseline, in the regional market, 2.6% of recent movers who are renters moved to Downtown Syracuse in 2023. According to CoStar, three-to-five star new properties (average and above average features and amenities) like The Treasury development had an estimated absorption rate of 4.4%.

Given what the market indicates, the conservative capture rates are presented in the table at right. Higher capture rates are expected in smaller units due to the Downtown amenities. The zero capture rates above the bolded line indicate that those rents are below market rate for Downtown and therefore the corresponding unit types at those prices are unlikely to be built.

On the next page, these capture rates are multiplied by the market demand pools to determine the annual Downtown rental market forecast.

Downtown Syracuse capture rate of regional rental market

	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
Below \$1,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$1,000-\$1,249	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$1,250-\$1,499	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$1,500-\$1,999	1.8%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%
\$2,000-\$2,499	1.8%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%
\$2,500-\$2,999	1.8%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%
\$3,000-\$3,499	2.2%	2.0%	0.8%	0.4%
\$3,500-\$3,999	2.2%	2.0%	0.8%	0.4%
\$4,000 and above	2.2%	2.0%	0.8%	0.4%

Downtown Syracuse Rental Market Forecast

For each unit size (by number of bedrooms) and monthly rent range, Downtown Syracuse rental market demand = Demand pools × Capture Rate. The 5-year potential absorption for market rate units is 830, of which 589 units are already planned. Micron's impact on overall housing demand is indicated in addition to the business-as-usual market demand represented in the detailed table.

	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds	Total
Below \$1,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$1,000-\$1,249	0	0	0	0	0
\$1,250-\$1,499	10	8	0	0	18
\$1,500-\$1,999	49	40	10	0	99
\$2,000-\$2,499	14	16	4	0	34
\$2,500-\$2,999	3	3	1	0	7
\$3,000-\$3,499	1	1	0	0	2
\$3,500-\$3,999	1	1	0	0	2
\$4,000 and above	2	2	0	0	4
Total annual demand	80	71	15	0	166
5-year cumulative demand for units at market rate	400	355	75	0	830
5-year 2025-2030 additional demand from Micron	93	83	17	0	193
5-year cumulative demand for units at market rate, with household growth from Micron	493	438	92	0	1023

Forecast of regional housing sales market

Estimated minimum sales price for new construction by bedroom count assuming low cost for land acquisition and reduced parking requirements.

	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
Typical size (sq. ft)	875	1350	1600	2400
Minimum sales price	\$288,800	\$445,500	\$528,000	\$792,000

One-year demand for units for sale in the market region

Home cost	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
<\$123,000	20	100	240	120
\$123,000-\$154,000	10	40	90	50
\$154,000-\$185,000	0	20	60	40
\$185,000-\$246,000	70	380	570	220
\$246,000-\$308,000	100	340	950	360
\$308,000-\$370,000	40	220	840	600
\$370,000-\$431,000	10	60	300	280
\$431,000-\$493,000	0	20	80	100
>\$493,000	20	60	210	430

Notes: Sales price distribution based on forecast of income distribution and assumes willingness to pay at 85th percentile for each income group; Bedroom distribution based on household type forecast

80% AMI

Market Rate
Rental Prices

Deepest
Regional Market
Pools

Establish the sales market capture rate in condos

In the regional market, 2.6% of recent movers who are renters moved to Downtown Syracuse in 2023, but only 0.02% of recent movers bought homes Downtown. The limited sales history is not evidence of limited demand, however.

Given the current market, conservative capture rates are presented in the table at right. Higher capture rates are expected in smaller units due to the Downtown's attractiveness to smaller households rather than families with children. The zero capture rates above the bolded line indicate that those sale prices are below market rate for Downtown and therefore the corresponding unit types at those prices are unlikely to be built.

On the next page, these capture rates are multiplied by the market demand pools to determine the annual Downtown condo for-sale market forecast.

Downtown Syracuse capture rate of regional sales market

	Studio/ 1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds +
<\$123,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$123,000-\$154,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$154,000-\$185,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$185,000-\$246,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$246,000-\$308,000	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$308,000-\$370,000	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$370,000-\$431,000	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$431,000-\$493,000	2.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
>\$493,000	2.5%	2.0%	1.0%	0.5%

Downtown Syracuse condo sales market forecast

For each unit size (by number of bedrooms) and sale price, Downtown Syracuse for-sale condo market demand = Demand pools × Capture Rate. The 5-year potential absorption for market rate units is 50. There are no planned condo projects on the horizon. Micron's impact on overall housing demand is indicated in addition to the business-as-usual market demand.

	Studio/1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds +	Total
<\$123,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$123,000-\$154,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$154,000-\$185,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$185,000-\$246,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$246,000-\$308,000	3	0	0	0	3
\$308,000-\$370,000	1	0	0	0	1
\$370,000-\$431,000	0	0	0	0	0
\$431,000-\$493,000	0	0	0	0	0
>\$493,000	1	1	2	2	6
Total annual demand	5	1	2	2	10
5-year cumulative demand for units at market rate	25	5	10	10	50
5-year 2025-2030 additional demand from Micron	6	1	2	2	12
5-year cumulative demand for units at market rate, with household growth from Micron	31	6	12	12	62

Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study

Downtown Syracuse, 2025



The cover image visualizes the relative share of housing by structure type in Downtown Syracuse (attached and two family, small apartment buildings, and apartment buildings with more than 50 units), the share of structures built since 2015 (blue buildings), and overall vacancy rates (darker windows).

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