

Elmira, New York: Neighborhood, District and Place



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Introduction

The Elmira of my youth was a *big place*, a city of endless discoveries. Coming home from *St. Patrick's School*, on Park Place, my friends and I traversed neighborhood streets, alleyways and lanes. We hop-scotched different routes, and every afternoon we would frequent soda shops, five and dimes and corner delis. Sometimes a basketball or football scrimmage attracted us to *Arnot Park*, *Washington School* or *St. Casmir's* field. On weekends, the downtown equally consumed our roaming hours: a movie at the *Colonial*, *Capital* or *Elmira*, an ice cream at *Newberry's* and a scan of the new stuff at the *Science Center* – we each had a chemistry set.

Back at my mom and dad's store, *Cappy's*, the lunch counter was constantly buzzing with a *St. Patrick's* church crowd, mid-shift workers from *Moore's Business Forms* and regular neighborhood customers lining up for newspapers, Kodak Film or a cherry phosphate. My friend Henry and I would walk some of the adjacent doors on Main Street, visiting *Roy Russell's Diner*, *Karl's Bakery* and *Schmidt's Grocery*. In those days, Elmira offered kids like us a stream of continual pleasures, from the *Sear's* escalators to the toy floor at *Iszard's*, to one of my favorite spots, *Lou's Variety* on Hoffman Street.

As years went by, my teenage rites of passage were accompanied by dramatic changes in Elmira's character. By the time I was browsing denims in the basement of *People's Place*, the tempo and spirit of Elmira was drifting away. There was less movement, destinations declined and empty storefronts increased. Several big plants and factories closed. The streets where my friends lived grew quiet, almost desolate. The flow of generations living in the same neighborhoods, working in local factories and sipping phosphates at *Cappy's* diminished. People sold their homes and left, in a steady flight, for better jobs, a warm retirement and, sadly, an escape to a more fulfilling life.

The Mall became the home of our downtown, and the flood of '72 carried away much of the hope and the will to bring back any lasting evidence of the city we so dearly loved and defended. Poverty grew in many more areas of the city. The number of nursing homes and assisted living residences

climbed. Food and clothing relief centers became a common fixture and more folks lined up at soup kitchens to supplement their daily survival. As Elmira's population continued to fall, the long-time residents spoke with words most likely heard at a wake: "*Elmira was a wonderful town. What happened? I remember hanging out there, but now it's gone. Elmira was so good to me. Things sure have changed.*" The tenor of these voices revealed a harsh truth and a desperate need for answers.

The fabric of the Elmira I was born into was faded and torn. The feeling that "we belonged" to a city, a district or a neighborhood had lost its power and significance. Elmira was adrift, without focus. It gradually dulled to a location of sour statistics. No longer *a place* of connection and community, Elmira became a city without a soul.

However, as I write this, four decades later, my home town has begun a journey to rediscover itself as a vital and important city. Elmira is pursuing new ideas and creating plans for revival and recovery with a trajectory of possibility and purpose. A new Elmira history is at hand.

Momentum is slowly building toward the realization that we can move forward, we can reclaim our destiny, reviving the magnetic pulse of our home. Our city's rebirth will be a continuous community journey. Trials and setbacks will occur but with vigilant and united effort, I have confidence that the city will accomplish a profound transformation of lasting significance. The time for change is now. This document is part of that change.

The content that follows outlines an exciting urban process of naming and describing areas and locales in Elmira that are significant in purpose, history and potential. With the 2016 - 2019 revitalization efforts in process, the need to highlight, describe and announce the city's neighborhoods, districts and places becomes an essential and uplifting project. Three key documents associated with Elmira's current redevelopment – *Plan Elmira*, *The Downtown Revitalization Initiative* and *Elmira's Creation Economy* – all emphasize the importance of district identification.

Knowing *the where* and *the what* of our urban settings enables us to identify with Elmira and enhance our relationships to the community. As stated in *Plan Elmira*:

Neighborhoods create and form communities. They often create the background story of people's lives and are meaningful to those who live there. They have an identity that people can relate to.... This identity connects people to place and with it comes community pride (Plan Elmira 24).

In this essay, I advocate for a process of action and engagement that converts the names of our city locales into vibrant places tied to our culture, history and aspirations. *Elmira's Creation Economy* stresses the importance of placemaking in urban planning:

The intent of placemaking work is to remove barriers that inhibit and discourage urban and residential vitality, to awaken the collaborative spirit among stakeholders, to unite citizens with common goals and interests and to unearth the true character and voice of neighborhoods and districts (Elmira's Creation Economy 10).

In considering the Elmira areas of *neighborhood*, *district* and *place*, I define neighborhood as primarily residential, *district*, a mixture of business, industry, green space and local history and *place*, being a smaller but distinct urban footprint. These three signifiers are fluid and often shared. They are not meant to be static descriptors.

There also is an identifier of “new” to denote a neighborhood, district or place that has, until now, not been recognized. Giving names to the familiar locales in Elmira is incorporated with others that are known but not named. The designated new and emergent areas have the potential to become a vibrant neighborhood, district or place. *

This work contains the input of my own experience in Elmira, along with the ideas of other friends and community members who share in its vision and purpose. The outcomes of this process have the potential to elevate the perception of Elmira from the construct of a failed city, whose greatest days are past, to a new reality of an evolving urban *attractor city*, containing mosaics of connected neighborhoods, districts and places alive with diverse expression, art, culture, history and creative power. Such awareness will enable us to see Elmira no longer through the narrow lens of scarcity but through the expansive lens of abundance. The simplicity of *knowing* the true nature of Elmira will help to give us the energy to evolve, prosper and

sustain this great city, so that the seventh generation hence will remember us with the words: “They did good work.”

The analysis and commentary includes a diverse collection of names, identifiers and descriptions. The narrative sections amplify the principles and reasoning behind why the building, presence and function of these city wide places need continual attention, affirmation and imaginative effort. It proclaims the places we currently acknowledge and the spaces that contain the seeds of becoming great places. *Spaces to Places* is the design, plan and movement that will help to redefine Elmira’s urban landscape. It will clarify the meaning of what Elmira actually represents, erase divisions and misconceptions and give us a clearer picture of our significance as a future dynamic city. I begin, then, with the names and descriptions of the many treasured areas arrayed in our home town, a place called Elmira, New York.

*The *Google Earth Map* of Elmira in Appendix 2 contains markers for the following designations:

Blue = Neighborhood

Green = District

Pink = Place

Yellow Dot = New

Neighborhood, District, Place

The Elmira Correctional Facility (ECF): Bancroft Road, Upper Hoffman Street, Oakwood Avenue

The opportunity for expanded integration of this historic place into Elmira's cultural and educational community is significant. Founded in 1876, *ECF* has been a tremendous influence on Elmira's identity. Mark Twain held readings with prisoners at the facility during his *Quarry Farm* summers. Both as an institution and as usable land, the *Elmira Correctional Facility* has the potential for civic engagement at many unexplored levels. Alternative interpretations and understanding of *ECF* will take devoted time and effort. The outcome could initiate new perceptions of ECF for our city. An analysis of this possible evolution is presented in *Elmira's Creation Economy*, pp. 14-15. A. New

Woodlawn Cemetery: West Hill Road, Bancroft Road, Davis Street, Mary Street

Perhaps the most history enriched land in the city, *Woodlawn Cemetery* represents the unfolding chronicle of Elmira. Established in 1858, from the burial site of Jervis Langdon to the National Cemetery, it contains boundless stories and portraits of how our city was born, developed and provided for Elmira's generational success. B.

Woodlawn Court: Davis Street, Noble Street and Warnick Street

Directly across from the *National Cemetery*, *Woodlawn Court* encloses a large housing community (formerly *Hathorn Court*) that has experienced several demographic transitions since its origin as a destination for veterans in 1943. This housing landmark continues to evolve as a diverse neighborhood for all ages with a central playground and a *Frontline Community and Youth Center*. *Woodlawn Court* is also adjacent to the *John W. Jones Museum* and the *Vietnam Veterans Museum*. B1.

Arnot Common: Roe Avenue, Ogden Avenue, Walnut Street, Hart Street

This district contains the original medical service footprint of *Arnot Ogden Medical Center* (founded 1888), as well as other outpatient clinics. Within its boundaries is a small, secluded Memorial Park. Its residential border includes eateries and retail shops. C.

Eldridge Park: College Avenue, Woodlawn Avenue and Grand Central Avenue

A central place for play and social communing in Elmira since 1926, the revived amusement park continues to serve as Elmira's outdoor entertainment capital. The park is beautifully maintained and evolved by the *Eldridge Park Carousel Preservation Society*. D.

Brick Pond: Matthew Street, Sullivan Street, Lake Street, Pattison Street

A neighborhood district centered with a unique pond ecosystem, this section of Elmira contains the diverse attributes of established residences, light industry, service agencies and natural beauty. With remediation, the pond itself could be a place for social and recreational activities. It was the original site of the *Weyer Bauman Brick Works*. E.

McKinnon Park: Sullivan Street, Lake Street and Thurston Street

This expansive playground has served the Northeast Elmira community for generations. Both a hub for social engagement and sporting events, it is a center for neighborhood vitality and youth development. *McKinnon* contains the only city-owned football field. F.

Elmira College: The EC College footprint and adjacent neighborhoods from Clinton Street to Washington Avenue and Davis Street to Magee Street
The campus grounds continue to hold a majestic setting of magnificent architecture dating back to its 1855 founding. *Elmira College* is steadily evolving as a true partner with Elmira's resurgent city life. The neighborhoods surrounding the *College* contain an attractive assemblage of places from restaurants and parks to inviting walking routes and historic churches. The proposed gateway from Second Street to EC is in progress. G.

Prospect Hill: The rise at the intersection of Park Place and Washington Avenue centers this district extending north to Roe Avenue, East to McGee Street and West to Washington Avenue.

The name dates back to a time in Elmira when this land had "high value" to prospective developers. With historic campus settings, established residences and a variety of food and retail establishments, *Prospect Hill* is an outstanding model of mixed-use development. H. New

Flatiron Green: Park Place and Main Street from Clinton Street to Third Street

The geographical center of Elmira now evolves into a transformed public green space leading from St. Patrick's Church and walkway (including a possible piazza on Clinton Street). Updated pedestrian crossing amenities and an aesthetic roundabout island at Third Street will enhance the project.

I. New

Wisner Park: Church Street, Gray Street, Divided by Main Street

The central public activity park in Elmira, *Wisner* holds in its tree-canopied expanse a rich trove of Elmira history and social culture. It runs adjacent to three historic churches of high distinction: *The Park Congregational Church*, the *First Baptist Church* and *Trinity Episcopal Church*. The home of annual summer markets, bandstand performances and fund raising community gatherings, this is a place that proudly continues our city's rich traditions. II.

Historic Clinton: Clinton Street, Third Street, College Avenue (near Walnut Street)

A burgeoning neighborhood with continuous street upgrades and property enhancements, this section of Elmira continues the unified city effort to modernize our residential settings, while retaining historic streets and homes. J.

Strathmont: Hoffman Street, Garden Road, Drive B to border

With the Strathmont Mansion as its centerpiece, this "hill over Hoffman" includes some of Elmira's most lavish mid-twentieth century dwellings. Its history contains the generations of many prominent Elmira families. K.

Grove Park: Walnut Street, Fourth Street, Grove Street

Once known as "Hoffman's Grove," the land was established as a park by the city in 1886. Frederick Douglass gave a speech here celebrating emancipation in 1880. The original community pavilion built in 1900 was replaced after a fire in 2010. This historically-significant block of land is a playground for both youth and adults with bocce, horseshoe and basketball areas. An attractive stock of family residences and apartments surrounds *Grove Park*. L.

Hilliard Station: Fifth Street, Main Street, Railroad Avenue, Third Street

This district holds the original *Hilliard* Corporate Offices, the Hilco filter production plant and the restored Erie Railroad passenger depot enhanced by the original bricks of Railroad Avenue. The area showcases a model template of preservation, manufacturing and urban design working together in dramatic fashion. M.

The Yard: There are two sections of this district running vertical through Elmira's center, from Woodlawn Avenue to Second Street and between Clemens Center Parkway, Railroad Avenue and Magee Street. Besides *Shulman* and *Kaplan* scrap recycling businesses and *Chemung County Transit*, the primary occupant is *Norfolk Southern Railroad*, the current owner of the *Erie/Lackawanna* rail lines. The area contains the old switching yard, a portion of the roundhouse and vestiges of the *Rolling Mills* rail line factory dating back to 1859. Also present are several acres of unused land. A collaborative arrangement with Norfolk Southern could allow for the city to use this strategic land for walking and biking trails, a botanical garden and a regional train museum, highlighting the importance of rail transportation for passengers and cargo during Elmira's preeminence as an industrial and entertainment capital. N&N1. New

Rectify North: Sullivan Street, Lake Street, William Street, East Washington Avenue

The word "rectify" means "to improve" or "to make right." This neighborhood has a rich historic culture and character that has been in serious decline over the years. It has high potential for innovative revitalization techniques using hybrid mixed-use zoning methods and Land Bank resourcing. Community gardens, small urban farms, public transportation amenities, mobile markets, skate parks, artist studios and galleries, public gathering places, complete street features, community action centers and intergenerational supportive housing are just some of the possibilities that can uplift and reward the *Rectify* neighborhood. O. New

Rectify South: Franklin Street, Hudson Street, Main Street, Walnut Street

Echoing similarities to *Rectify North*, this district contains the relics of abandonment, economic distress, blight and social decline. Its evolution has taken initial form with the *Chemung Crossing* housing project at the corner of South Main Street and Henry Street. It is center-pieced by the historic *Miller Block* and Townhouse building. The *Southside Community Center* currently supports social and educational programs that provide direction

and uplift to the district's families and youth. Continuous upgrades, property rehabs, appropriate demolition, green spaces and other initiatives like those stated above will be key elements toward this area's renewal and sustained vitality. O1. New

The Connection: Second Street, State Street (Clemens Center Parkway), Fifth Street, William Street

A district holding *Community Arts of Elmira* and adjacent properties: *Ernie Davis Park*, the *Economic Opportunity Program (EOP)*, *Libertad Elmira* (in process), the *Salvation Army*, *Meals on Wheels* and *Finn Academy* (with the former Ernie Davis School Building), this locale announces a new vision for Elmira. *The Connection* represents community-invested organizations comprising a district that is growing through a time of urban uplift, utilizing tools for mission-driven engagement and renewal. To make, to learn, to invent, to discover and to reshape the boundaries that will expand and redefine life opportunities: These are the energizing forces that make this area of Elmira so bright with the promise of creative enterprise. P. New

The Art Factory Consortium: Baldwin Street, Washington Avenue, Clinton Street, Lake Street

The footprint here is comprised of many abandoned and underutilized industrial, manufacturing, and storage buildings. They have the location and design now to become the seed spaces for artists, innovators, nuvo manufacturers and creative entrepreneurs of all disciplines. Extending the purpose and programs of *The Connection* entities, this district of promising places will showcase another dimension of *Elmira's Creation Economy*. A potential collective of agencies and enterprises will use collaborative partnerships and synergy networks to advance a new urban business model. *The Art Factory Consortium* will establish links with our education, health, and neighborhood entities to enable a thriving, sustainable city. P1. New

The Elmira Civic Historic District: Lake Street from Church Street to Water Street

Perhaps the most concentrated area of civic historic structures in the region, this *District* contains some of Elmira's finest edifices. A small sampling includes: the *Court House*, *Hazlett Building*, *Arnot Art Museum*, *Chemung County Historical Society*, the former *Steele Memorial Library* building, *City Hall*, *Elmira City Club*, and the *Lake Street Presbyterian Church*, as well as the *YWCA*, which was originally set in the former *Rathbone House*. One day, the *District* could include the *Pratt House*, now the home of

Community Arts of Elmira. Other *District* expansions are under consideration. In addition, the *District* is scheduled for mixed-use renovations from 118 – 126 Lake Street between Water Street and Market Street. Additional upgrades may include the conversion of the *Lake Street Bridge* into a pedestrian walkway, which would enhance the development and branding of Elmira’s *Creative Corridor* from *Brand Park* to the *Elmira Correctional Facility*. P2.

The Near Westside Historic District: West First Street, Grove Street, Water Street, College Avenue

This is a large neighborhood district holding some of Elmira’s finest historic homes. It is advanced and defined by the *Near Westside Neighborhood Association*. Through grants and other funding sources, the *NWNA* develops longevity and historic designation to Elmira’s urban canvas. The district also includes the *Old Second Street Cemetery*. Q.

Legacy: Davis Street from West Second Street to Gray Street

A section of the Near Westside containing significant places in our city’s timeline, *Legacy* includes *Horgan’s Tavern*, the *Booth Education Center*, *Coca-Cola Bottling Company Works* (mindfully restored by current tenants, *IBEW Local 139*), *Near Westside Historic District* building and *Grace Episcopal Church*. Q1. New

The Lift: College Avenue from West First to Water Street

This stretch of city blocks contains diverse businesses and urban essentials: *Building Block Nursery School*, *Patrick’s Pub*, *Pepper Pot Café*, *Mustico Law*, *MG Insurance*, *Hugg Accounting Service*, *Community Bank*, *Los Panchos*, *Knapp’s Music* and a fleet of auto service stations such as *Mavis*, *Goodyear* and *Dave’s*. Close to residences and downtown, this area exemplifies a wonderfully-blended, mixed use district.

Need a lift? Q2. New

Hoffman Hive: Hoffman Street from Church Street to Water Street

An historic row of classic businesses, this section of the city has served Elmira for over one hundred years. The blocks include a pharmacy, an optometrist, florist, tavern, restaurant, funeral home, dry cleaner, convenient mart and gas station. These places provide a charming character to this attractive district on Elmira’s Westside. R. New

WAM: At the corners of Water and Main extending north and west

This is a recently designated “Commercial Historic District.” It is anchored by the Werdenberg building, where a new project, *Envision Elmira*, includes four second-floor studio apartments and two street-level commercial spaces. *WAM* is a district that has remarkable potential to be a centerpiece attraction for downtown. S.

South Main: Main Street from the Chemung River to Pennsylvania Avenue

This is *the* downtown street of the Southside holding shops, eateries, pharmacies and markets that include *Tops*, *Gerould’s*, *Anne’s Pancakes*, *Floral Fantasy* and *Second Edition’s Bookshop*. It continues to evolve with the construction of the *Chemung Crossing* housing and apartment complex at the historic *Miller Block*. S1.

Riverfront Park: Southside of Water Street between Lake Street and Main Street

A rolling green public space landscaped with fountains, brick paths, trees, benches and tables. *Riverfront Park* is scheduled to include a river wall boardwalk for walking, biking and viewing the pleasant vistas over the Chemung. T.

WLGB: Water Street, Lake Street, Gray Street, Baldwin Street

A classic two-block section of downtown holding several historic buildings dating back to Elmira’s street car era. Plans are now underway for business expansions and upper story apartments (mixed-use buildings). Among its many features, the district holds landmark and contemporary eateries such as *M&M Hots* and *Turtle Leaf Café*. U. New

Provident: East Church Street, East Water Street, Sullivan Street, Madison Avenue

A multi-block section of the Eastside anchored by the *Saint Joseph’s Hospital* campus with *Saint Peter and Paul’s Church*, the *First United Church of Christ*, the *Community Kitchen*, *Bragg Towers*, the *Chemung County Nursing Facility*, *Elmira Psychiatric Center*, *Heritage Park* and *Eastgate Housing*. A vibrant neighborhood district, *Provident* (“to care for”) gives profound evidence to some of Elmira’s greatest attributes and aspirations: Ministry, healing, community and equity. Representing both our history and culture, *Provident* advocates for the city’s future well-being, as it uplifts the lives of people who are most in need. This is a prime area

for new place amenities, such as social gathering spots, eateries and entertainment offerings. V. New

Grove Landing: Entrance at the end of Grove Street to the Chemung River
The primary urban access point for enjoying the Chemung with boat launch and picnic pavilion, this place in nature gives residents and visitors a safe and easy way to discover, explore and absorb Elmira's most bountiful and visible natural resource. W.

Foster Pond: Winser Avenue, Foster Avenue and Chemung River
An old-time skating, recreation and rendezvous spot, *Foster Pond* is now more closely identified with the land adjacent to the original *Civil War Prison Camp*. This area is being dramatically expanded to include a restored Civil War Camp barracks, museum, recreated camp structures and artifacts. It is fast becoming a regionally-recognized tourist attraction with strong potential for on site tours, seminars and collaborative events. W.

Hygeia Shore: Both sides of the South Main Street at Chemung Street and Ferris Street
With appropriate structural amenities, this open riverbank landing holds the potential for social and performance events on the Chemung. X. New

Howell's Pier: High south shoreline between Lake Street and Clemens Center Parkway.
Similar to *Hygeia Shore*, this is another grand Chemung River green slope that calls for community activity and river appreciation. X1. New

Brand Park & Maple Avenue Historic District: Maple Avenue, Robinson Street, Sly Street, Horner Street, Riverside Avenue
Brand Park is a legendary Elmira district and neighborhood that provides a place for public gatherings, performances (with a bandstand for summer time concerts), walking and solitude. The adjacent residences on Maple Avenue present some of the finest Victorian homes in the Northeast. Y.

Riverside: Liberty Street, Robinson Street, Chemung River
This is a continuation of *Brand Park* and the Chemung levee green space. Once called "The Buttonwoods" because of its giant Sycamore trees, it includes *Riverside School* and the remains of the historic *Brand Park Pool*. Riverside's southeast terrain also showcases Elmira's treasured multi-generational *Janowski's Farms*. Y1.

Miller's Pond: Parkside Drive, Overland Drive, East Miller Street, Erie Street

A wonderfully-secluded neighborhood encircling a tranquil waterway that includes a public park with extended lawn and recreation amenities, this is a hidden gem in the panorama of Elmira's scenic settings. It is also the site of Elmira's first settler, Abraham Miller. Lieutenant Miller, who served the Continental Army, built a cabin at the vicinity of the pond in the 1790s. Miller's Pond contains the distinctive attributes of neighborhood, district and place. Z.

Dunn Field: Fair Street, Luce Street, Chemung River

Since 1939, this baseball stadium has been home to the *Elmira Pioneers* and has witnessed the play of some of baseball's legends, including Babe Ruth. The potential to incorporate the *Dunn Field* land with the neighborhood and the river could result in an expanded recreational and sporting district. ZZ.

The Green Belt: From Warren Street to Jones Island bordered by Sullivan Street and Route 86.

With attributes similar to *The Yard*, this district has huge potential for both Agrihood and Solar Farm footprints. Holding numerous open field areas, the *Green Belt* opens up innovative methods to push a self-sustaining model for Elmira. Locally-grown farm products, including industrial hemp production, and Elmira generated power will have dramatic long-term positive outcomes for residents, entrepreneurs and emerging transformative industries. This type of land use could ignite the spread of other urban and energy farm settings throughout the city. 3. New

This list of Elmira *Neighborhoods Districts and Places* is not meant to be all inclusive. Certainly, other small and large sectors of the city that have significant urban attributes, location and history will also be recognized. This outline begins a process of description and selection based on criteria that fits with *the present and the possible* realities of Elmira. The naming, understanding and appreciation of our city's distinctive landscape will be an ongoing activity, an integral part of Elmira's flourishing evolution.

Commentary

In the background of this presentation, there stands a looming “How?” The word *revitalization* appears as a giant touchstone in our current urban conversation about Elmira’s turnaround. This narrative covers some of the broader brush strokes, enabling certain districts and neighborhoods to become whole again. The larger canvas of our city’s restoration continually will move forward and evolve with innovative ideas and new models of city life pursued, presented and practiced. The process itself will be cause for celebration.

Crucial to finding strategies for success in this project will be a community wide call to end false perceptions and damaging concepts about Elmira and the people who live here. When confronted with moments of change and new ideas to uplift our city, a tired, baseless, pathetic response often emerges. A judgment is cast upon the city that brands Elmira as too poor, uneducated, crime-ridden, blighted, “a prison town,” drug infested and beyond a restoration. It is the voice of lost promise, of drained hope and an unquenchable longing for days gone by.

We must lift this lingering fog of despair. Our conversations must no longer entertain the disturbing pulse of negativity, the cowardly predictions of failure. The change and renewal that our city is now attempting needs our attention, support and presence. Whoever is contributing their time, talent or resources toward constructive, creative and forward outcomes should be accepted, applauded and given due recognition for their collaborative efforts.

As I have stated above, the success of this project, or any other movement to improve our quality of life in Elmira, will be determined by the process itself, a process that is community based with leadership that enthusiastically embraces the inclusion of all residents. Our decision making must be moved by fairness and equity. Actions that are defined by best and just practices will transform the sad, cynical voices into an affirming chorus of support. Defeatism and cynicism will continue to fade as the true spirit of the city grows anew. The districts, neighborhoods and places of Elmira will evolve. The worn, tired story line will vanish and the hurrahs of history will appear on our banners once again.

Additional project phases will involve conversation, planning and events centered on the condition of our neighborhoods, districts and places, as well

as the quality of life for our residents. A crucial imprint of urban vitality is represented in *the where*, but that is a meaningless factor without involvement and engagement with *the people of Elmira*. How we live, work and play in Elmira's different locales is what truly defines our civic identity. Just as vital, developing a greater connection with the environments and communities that comprise our home, Elmira, will help to enrich and uplift us, together.

A model for this level of community engagement is *EvolvElmira*. A proposed outline of the process appears in Appendix III. It is meant to be an initial step toward the establishment of an organization with permanent standing that enables a united multi-sector presence to assist and guide Elmira's future as a center for urban economic vibrancy and a force for catalytic change in the county and the region.

EvolvElmira also will promote and confirm an essential truth for our city: We need a strong, local, inclusive and equitable system of leadership and decision making to confront issues, make enlightened, transformative choices and, through creative and innovative ideas, implement sustainable solutions. As we proceed through the twenty first century, the necessity of such a course of action is clear beyond measure.

Elmira's Corridors and Connectors

Streets, Walkways and Trails

The grid of Elmira's corridors and connectors is essential to uniting the communal patchwork of culture, heritage and diversity within our districts and neighborhoods. They are not just tarred areas for the convenience of cars. They hold in their environs our city's character, history, attributes and failings. They are the streets of our youth, the havens of our homes, the places we most identify with where we started: "We lived on Walnut Street." We continue to travel them – the seams in these stories of Elmira's multi-layered tapestry.

Northside Corridors (north/south)

Hoffman Street
Walnut Street
Davis Street
College Avenue
Main Street
Clemens Parkway
Lake Street
Madison Avenue
Sullivan Street
Bancroft Road

Northside Connectors (east/west)

Woodlawn Avenue/Thurston Street
Washington Avenue
Clinton Street
Fifth Street
Second Street
Church Street
Gray Street
Grove Street*

*runs north/south

Southside Corridors

South Walnut Street/ Broadway
South Main Street
Clemens Parkway
Pennsylvania Avenue
Maple Avenue

Southside Connectors

Hudson Street
Mount Zoar
South Avenue/Home Street
Miller Street

Areas specifically designed for walking, hiking, and biking are invaluable to giving us a better sense that we live in a magnificent part of the world: A majestic valley filled with the artifacts of Elmira's birth; a serene yet powerful river running through the city, rolling forward the stories of our Native American ancestors, nourishing us with wonder and celebration. We are rich in these amazing places, these gifts of nature and our forebearers.

The Lackawanna Rail Trail: The main Elmira section runs from Eldridge Park to Water Street and will eventually connect east to Lowman. On the footprint of the old Lackawanna Rail line, it is a magnificent trail is welcoming to for walkers, bikers and hikers.

The Chemung River: The green areas that parallel the Chemung, including an assorted stretch of levees, provide endless hours of true nature experiences. On both sides of the river, access to these areas is easy and, with moderate river depth, quite safe. Hiking, bird watching, picnics, biking, jogging, writing, painting and photography find a perfect environment on these riverbank trail ways. The *Friends of the Chemung River Watershed* is a local group of advocates, promoters and conservators for this magnificent waterway.

The Promenade: Once a dark, dirty and gray railroad viaduct, this redeveloped connector between Second Street and Water Street now serves Elmira as a potential public gathering, performance, festival and market place. A summer concert series is currently held here, and the revitalized *Clemens Square* area will energize this connector to add further art programs and events.

The Lake Street Pedestrian Bridge: A planned conversion to a pedestrian walkway will create a social and artistic transformation to this gateway along Lake Street (see *Plan Elmira*, the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative* and *Elmira's Creation Economy*). The bridge will emphasize and enhance the importance of public space in Elmira, as well as give new appreciation for the natural beauty of the Chemung River and the historic character of Lake Street, with its growing identity as *Elmira's Creative Corridor*.

Spaces to Places

Directly aligned with district and neighborhood identification and evolution, a resurgent Elmira vigorously will attend to filling and growing these areas with an abundance of vital, essential and needed *places*. Places, from the smallest café to the multi-tiered market, from the local fiber kiosk to the welder maker space. These places of many sizes, themes and function will bring uplift and purpose to our city as they emanate in a loud, colorful and blended voice: “This is Elmira.”

The placemaking component of urban planning can be considered, in its essence, an art. With the city’s districts and neighborhoods as the unfinished canvas, placemaking can add the shading, color, texture, strokes and mediums to complete the artistic work. In the construction of such creations, community members engage in understanding and visioning what kind of place is needed for a certain area and how it might be presented to fulfill the expression of our city. This process repeated over the terrain of the city continually completes itself and expresses the totality of Elmira, New York to the region and the world.

The community energy and engagement involved in the placemaking process will have lasting rewards in giving us a deeper understanding about who we are as citizens in an urban environment and what the cultures and lifestyles of our neighborhoods value and aspire to: “What kind of business, what type of restaurant does this block call out for? Does our neighborhood have nearby access to fresh food? Can we find a space for artists, performers or dance classes? Is there a park nearby? Are the transit stops protected from the elements? Is my neighborhood walkable with lighting and benches? Can I ride a bike safely?” These types of decisions are crucial to the survival and stability of individuals and families that inhabit the districts and neighborhoods of Elmira.

Considerations of local ownership, diversity and need can shape and define our city streets. Their character, completeness and chances for long term utility are essential features for *complete street* recognition. Reigniting and growing Elmira’s “City Life” will take wisdom and resources. It will require a collective confidence that new, experimental and innovative ideas need exposure, implementation and a chance to succeed. These concerns will bring forth answers, and the answers will bring forth change and this change will make Elmira a better place to live, work and succeed.

Currently, new Elmira places are opening. The *Federal Building* on Church Street is home to new tenants: *Mattresses by Appointment*, *Triple Talent Academy* and *J&B Bulldog Barbecue Café* (a pointed example of mixed-use retail and performance space). The Capriotti Building at 110 – 120 Main Street currently holds *Remedy Staffing* service and a *Community Arts of Elmira* downtown gallery. Future plans for this structure call for more commercial tenants and eighteen upper floor market rate apartments. *Culligan's/Chemung Spring Water* soon will occupy the former *Williams Honda* auto dealership on East Water Street. The *Yunis Building* on East Church Street holds a new wellness and chiropractic office. The newly refurbished Gray Stone Apartments on West Water Street is also home to *The Finger Lakes House*, an eclectic wine tasting bistro. These are hopeful, early signs of our city's placemaking energy and fulfillment.

A lively, community-centered *Spaces to Places* campaign can instill urban vibrancy, further enhance complete streets and produce a magical street life throughout Elmira. No longer contained in the memory of a gloried past, a new Elmira can now evolve from our imagination to a present day reality. Once the placemaking momentum begins to converge into an integral urban plan, an Elmira “Third Place” movement will explode in a city wide renaissance of places.

Within the districts and neighborhoods that have been mentioned, imagine potential **Spaces** throughout Elmira that could be utilized or created to accommodate the following **Places**. Consider what places are already present in each area and what areas could best accommodate new places because of need, demographics or venue. The names given (bold italics) to the list of places and activities here are for accent and attribution to particular themes. The following is a mere sampling of the exciting possibilities that can exist from our engagement in this process.

Eatery, Restaurant, Diner, Café...

Food trucks and kiosks are gaining in popularity throughout the country. **Lunch Time** could serve a corner that has people moving from their employment quarters between 11am and 2pm. Other possible names: **Nosh**, **Wheel Meal** and **Kitchenette**. Local Food could serve up at **Harvest**, **Home Grown** and **Elmira**. Diner culture is changing to provide more creative and healthy choices. From **Over Easy** to **Meet and Veg** to **Sandwich Club**, these diners could provide us with eclectic eating and gathering spots. Old time deli's such as **Delight** and **Dressed** would add spark and culture to any neighborhood.

Elmira has been known for its grand restaurants such as **Pierce's**, **Moretti's**, **Lib's**, **The Palms** and many others. Adding more diverse places to our present mix of eating establishments will continue the tradition of "The Elmira dining experience." A step into the big city and European texture of urban eating places would be exciting and smart for new regional dining attractors. A trattoria called **Mangia!**, an osteria called **Gabanadina**, and an appetizer bar branded **Antipasto**; these are only some of the many styles of eateries that could plant exotic, international flare to Elmira's future late night feasting.

Continuing with this theme, think of a bistro on Main Street called **Cassoulet**, and an assortment of tapas bars in different districts: **Taste**, **Bocos**, **Recipe** and **Apps** – each with a global character but a place branded with Elmira's own signature style. This cascade of new places could continue over our entire district map: A fish and chips take out tavern, **Cod to Go**, Thai and Asian cuisine places – **Lemon Grass** and **Ping Pa**. Why not bring back the **Polynesian Room**?

Diverse Dining could become an Elmira signature draw for the region. African cuisine at a club called **Peri-Peri** or a café, **Sadza**. Southern-style offerings at **Succotash** or a jazz bar called **Greens**. International choices could be the highlight at a community restaurant: **Four Directions** or **Global Café**, and for Indian fast food: **Curry in a Hurry**.

Cafés and coffeehouses can provide any district with a social atmosphere that is special, warm and homey. They are constant attractions to all ages from millennials to seniors. **Buzz Bar**, **Coffee Table** and **Sixty's** would be

cool and conversational community places. How about a tea bar? ***Tastea*** would be a great addition to Elmira's diverse canvas.

A small bakery, confectioner, patisserie or chocolatier: all have great accent for attracting those who just need something sweet. ***Nani's*** for the old Italy touch; ***Cake, Oh Fudge!*** and ***Crème Puff*** are possible tempting Elmira brands. For the chocolate connoisseur: ***The Chocolate Bar***. An ice creamery, ***Swirl***, would definitely hit the spot.

To complement Elmira's nightlife, a city-wide collection of new street happenings could add a creative dimension to how we socialize, entertain and perform after hours. Brew Pubs, Wine Bars, Night Clubs and Lounges are lively additions to neighborhood energy and culture. A craft beer club named ***Hoppin'*** and a Cocktail Lounge, ***Mixer***, would serve up a cool street life vibe. Bars and taverns celebrating Elmira's rich sports heritage called ***Hometown*** and ***Goal*** would elevate our family and community bonds. The local wine culture could be themed up at ***Vineyard*** and ***Pairing***. For the after theatre and movie scene, ***Balcony***, ***Stage Left*** or ***Loge*** could make their premier. A night spot connected to our glider capital preeminence would be called ***Soar***. Elmira's train heritage could light up ***The Round House***. Music and jazz venue clubs like ***Juke Box***, ***Combo***, ***Cabaray***, ***Ebony***, and ***Top Hat*** would herald the new tempo of Elmira near and far.

Market Places

A common assumption in the current changing consumer environment is that small city retail places and traditional "brick and mortar" downtown shopping models are fast becoming historical artifacts. This has led to an over-exuberance for the suburban shopping model. It includes various configurations of gargantuan cement blocks corporately owned and controlled, stuffed with mass-produced brand items that have no connection to a sustainable local economy. This discussion will not pursue why this type of consumption environment is disastrous for cities like Elmira. Suffice it to say that there are, indeed, ways to create small city buying and selling market experiences that work for the benefit of the people who live, work, play *and shop* in our local community. The key, of course, is *local*. With

that simple ingredient, our visions for a vibrant and successful Elmira can become an everyday reality.

In towns and cities across the country and around the world people are finding that the pleasures and delights of a satisfying market experience do not have to include the words “big” and “highway exit or “online.” The new buzz words associated with urban retail include “local,” “event,” “experience,” “inclusion,” “authentic,” “happening,” “community” and “engagement.” With the dynamics of placemaking, we can add “art,” “culture” and “diversity.” This mix of energetic forces is what now moves the creation of places in cities. Elmira can be such a city. With vision, creative design, forward planning and a deep connection to local culture, our market experience can be both sustainable and exciting. Consider these potential market places:

Creations from our local makers and artisans could fill shops and co-ops called *Off Lines*, *Made Here*, and *Objects of Desire*. An old time variety store with accessible price points will hang the simple yet identifiable shingle, *Five and Ten*. A hardware supply shop called *Tools* and small repair shops, *ReStore* and *Square Circle*, would give new life to the banged and broken. Antiques and notions could attract adventuresome resellers at *This & That* and *Cosas Pequeñas (Little Things)*. How about a swap shop called *Give and Take*? Used goods would be recycled at *Second Hand*. A music store in *Prospect Hill* called *B Sharp* or *Middle C* could sit next to a cozy book shop called *Turn the Page*. These types of stores can exist on our district streets, neighborhoods and revitalized downtown spaces. For an expanding locavore economy of urban farms and community gardens, centers such as *Green Space*, *Home Grown*, *Whole Life Market* and *CitiCrop* will provide large and small outlets for neighborhood food distribution networks.

Life Style Places

How we live and enjoy our time in Elmira can be supported mutually and promoted with businesses that know us, are attuned to our needs and supply the accoutrements that keep our lives active, adventurous and together with friends and family. Whether it is leisure, outdoor life, recreation, travel or wellness, places that encourage our encounters with nature and enhance our

well-being can be some of the city's most vital assets. The types of places that follow are indicative of how Elmira's lifestyle culture can present and promote its various dimensions. Consider these possibilities and match them to an appropriate activity or setting: ***Trail Mix, The 10k, Walk and Talk, Marathon Café, Water Wing, Current, Flow, Body & Soul, Pathfinders, Be Here Now, Watershed Bakery*** and ***Peddler Hill***.

Elmira is also endowed with a strong animal advocate network. Complementing this affinity to identity and place could be a drop-in and rescue clinic for our four legged and winged friends: ***Great and Small***. The bonding of place names to the themes and character of our districts and neighborhoods can connect a singular spot and function to the broader message of Elmira's identity and brand.

Elmira's cultural heritage and its abundance of multigenerational residents call out for creative expression on an individual and communal scale. People need outlets for their interests and their need to be together. An authentic placemaking effort will provide for and fill this need. Our many spaces can provide for stimulating environments of learning, doing, making and playing.

Consider these possible places of interaction and fun. For games both traditional and virtual you can visit ***Full House, Game Room*** and ***Dimensions***. Try your cue at the local pool hall, ***Snookers***. Hosting a national chess tournament location in Elmira would be a tremendous regional draw. It could be held at ***The Castle*** or ***Checkmates***. Bocce courts could be placed in city parks and an outdoor tavern area: ***Pallino***. Elmira could be home for the *Bocce Regional Games* attracting many participants to this popular traditional game. How about a small duckpin bowling alley, ***Spare Time***? Transforming basketball courts into Invitational Tournament locations with ample seating, food trucks and music will become attractions and accelerators in fostering neighborhood unity and identity. This same model could be used for ***Skate Spot*** venues throughout the city.

Elmira has a thriving textile maker's culture. Locations for quilting, knitting, weaving and sewing would be lively centers of creation, community and fun: "Let's go to ***Café Quilt*** or ***Wooly's***." "How about coffee at ***Darn It!***" "Take me to ***The Yarn*** and later we can sew at ***Loose Ends***." This process of locating, naming and celebrating is how Elmira's empty spaces will grow into thriving city places.

The Arts

The most important component of an *Elmira Placemaking Initiative* is the arts. It is no longer a question on whether or not the artistic enterprise can be a force in driving local economies. It is happening now, everywhere. Our city already has proven through countless art events, performances, projects and venues what it means to create and sustain a thriving arts culture. To continue on this trajectory and to enable art as a permanent presence in *Elmira's Creation Economy*, it is essential that we develop and design more areas throughout the city that support galleries, maker spaces, studios, training and performance stages and art education environments for all ages. Elmira has a variety of empty spaces to accommodate this effort. *The Art Factory Consortium* District (see page 5) could fit with interior and industrial innovators and designers. The warehouse and loft construction of these structures is ideal for large canvas painters, sculptures, installation artists and builders.

There are many variations that district and neighborhood art places promote to define creative purpose and function. Our city could readily showcase a vibrant mix of places devoted to artistic enhancement and communal interaction. A video and virtual reality lab called ***Clouds*** and a makers co-op called ***Make It!*** would be attractors to a wide swath of millennials with high tech savvy. Art galleries such as ***Emerge, Baldwin Collective, Oil & Water*** and ***Paint Elmira*** could easily transform street front spaces into places of color, commotion and crowds. A pottery and ceramics shop, ***Cup or Bowl?*** could offer classes, exhibits and a cooperative market. Art studios for one or more creators could generate a new buzz about Elmira's expanding opportunities for handcraft occupations. Places like ***Evolver, Art House*** and ***Post, Post, Post!*** would be mentoring and showcase places for both seasoned and apprentice artists. Neighborhoods with a deep need for rehab and recovery would be well served with incremental upgrades toward the building of an ***Art Block***, a ***Creation Home*** and ***Street Studio*** apartments. These new places would reimagine residential living throughout our city's more neglected neighborhoods.

Other art forms and expressions would find a home for community engagement and commerce at a variety of street level establishments. Writing, poetry and slam events would open nightly at ***Once Upon, Couplets, Say It, Write On*** and ***Speakeasy***. Theatrical revue and improv night spots like ***Laugh out Loud, To Be*** and ***Stella's Room*** can give districts

an historic connection to the Elmira entertainment scene of years past when burlesque and vaudeville reigned on Water and Lake. To these places we can add one small movie house: the ***Hal Roach Theatre***.

Places designed for student interests and their creative visions will bring an extension of Elmira's college and school identities into the city's urban settings. Our ever-changing youth culture will find a home in café's, coffee houses and cyber spots like ***Combination, The Study Hall, Student Lounge, Class, Text Me*** and for cyber snacking, ***Megabites***.

Public Space

Our *Spaces to Places* project is equally invested with Elmira's outside environment. The outdoors is in continual relationship with our interior places and work. The connection between these realms must be understood as a continuum, with mutuality and respect for their corresponding design and function. Our vibrant urban culture and activity are equally defined and shared by both the inside *and* the outside. Elmira's corridors and connectors make these linkages accessible. They accent the importance of an urban design that weaves an underlying theme through the eclectic variations of place.

Public space can be a natural environment for our city's distinctive identity. Art and artist platforms will find immediate connections to the energy of the open air. Outdoor space throughout Elmira can be home to a ***Creation Park***, and an ***Art Lot*** for dance, hip hop and skate board events. Performance and spontaneous improvisational productions are perfectly suited for these places that can expose local talent and gifts to the eyes and ears of the community. These arenas are also home to the multi-dimensional expressions brought to life through *community built public art projects*. Buildings, walls, fire hydrants, utility boxes, planters, viaducts and other urban structural canvases already have begun to bring new perceptions and highlights to Elmira, too often over whelmed by the grinding haze of tar, metal and concrete.

The *Public Art Commission*, established in 2017, is serving the city-owned public art spaces in collaboration with both private and municipal entities. *Community Arts of Elmira* (CAE) is currently developing a centerpiece

public art project for two- and three-dimensional work, *Elmira Infinite Canvas*. This endeavor will be a perpetual movement for the continual enhancement and projection of Elmira's public space. It will reimagine our urban landscape and unify the public art experience into the very fabric of our city life while building a new urban identity.

An emerging example of this project is currently underway on the *Community Arts of Elmira* campus at Second Street and Lake Street. CAE has managed the demolition of two vacant properties on East Second Street and is preparing the space for historic landscaping. Additionally, adjacent land is now the site of a *Public Art Wall* for an ongoing community mural exposition. A performance space will surround the wall as a spontaneous creation stage and a meditative labyrinth will flow east from the stage. This eclectic plan clearly demonstrates how Elmira's unused public spaces can be utilized to ignite neighborhoods and districts with a higher purpose and new creative identity.

Piazzas, closed public streets and parklets are borrowings from older European urban models that are now being reincorporated into towns and cities needing to diminish the dominance and imprints of automobiles. Reintegrating spaces once exclusively used for cars can redefine our city's function for people, bicycles and public transit. Multi purpose transit kiosks are essential for the protection, comfort and dignity of riders. Buses and shuttles of various kinds will become essential features of travel, as connections to Elmira's urban network of evolving districts, neighborhoods and places become a permanent feature of our city's urban design. The primary form of human movement is walking. Elmira's connectors, corridors, sidewalks and pathways need to be designed in accordance with the safety and dignity of all citizens. Our walking experience must be adorned with lighting, benches and protected shelters. In a city of places, pedestrian safety and comfort are essential assets for urban vitality to succeed.

In tandem with these plans, there must also be dramatic improvements with bicycle accommodation. Bike lanes, bike stations and bike share kiosks must grow and become an everyday part of how we navigate city travel routes. This will happen in conjunction with other urban design strategies to reduce structures that continually trap us into landscapes defined by cars, parking lots, tar and mammoth garages. These fixtures, for so long imprinted on our urban psyches, are not just visually toxic but are not really

a constructive aspect of city planning in the twenty first century. They are replicas of obsolescence, duplicating the outdated and unsustainable models of a bygone era. Certainly, our innovative city landscape of new places, of bold economic pursuits and multi-level sustainability will accommodate the automobile, but it must equally acknowledge the presence of human movement and activity with adequate resources, enthusiasm and equity.

A vision of resurrecting and reanimating Elmira's spaces with productive, innovative, work-inspired, creative and life-enhancing places is a necessary step for the city's long-term survival. It is, however, only a piece of a bigger picture. With both a declining and aging population base, something else is needed for vitality and growth to accommodate a vibrant civic and social infrastructure.

Elmira's Creation Economy points to that "something else." By announcing our city as a place where everyone is welcomed and supported, where everyone is given a chance to succeed, where everyone is respected and affirmed and where everyone is acknowledged as a creator who can "make it" in Elmira, New York – this massive sustainable urban energy movement will keep people here and bring people here. Elmira must present itself as a new model for living a life of fulfillment and fun *in the city*.

A final but paramount piece to this goal is the need for *designation*. The announcing of Elmira's neighborhoods, districts and places – their history culture and notable features – through directional signage, historical markers, accessible maps and digital applications – is an essential ingredient toward fulfilling the destiny of this great city. This strategy will produce a defined significance to each component of our urban character and their connection to Elmira's total story.

With such a mission, our city will fulfill its rightful destiny as a significant place to live, work, play *and create* for this generation and generations to follow. Our barren blocks and hollowed houses will shine with places filled with life stories of achievement and success. People will be thankful to be here. *Districts* will buzz with creative energy. *Neighborhoods* will glow with pride and shared identity. Elmira's *places* will multiply. There will be more building. The entropy of scarcity will diminish; shared prosperity will spread to all city sectors. The entire community will be involved in such a moment, all working together in Elmira, for Elmira, *the place to be*.

Summary

No single narrative can possibly capture the total dimensions and complexities of Elmira's physical, historic and cultural landscape. I have attempted here to present ideas that give possible direction and purpose to the process of Elmira's potential evolution. Our city's development must include the totality of Elmira. This process of fusing our life-enhancing elements with Elmira's identity and character will determine and define our destiny as a dynamic twenty first century city. The vital connections we share in community will grow and sustain Elmira.

In *Elmira's Creation Economy*, I presented ideas and projects centered on advancing the condition of Elmira through the interaction of forces that proclaim from all city sectors: *Every person, from infant to elder, is a creator*. The content of this paper, *Elmira: Neighborhood, District and Place*, constructs the environment, *the place*, for this urban spirit. Elmira's new found *power of place* will provide the energy points to display and connect our extraordinary new trajectory to the world.

To be successful in this journey, to uplift and announce Elmira, we need to be whole: Whole in who we are and whole in the united effort we make toward a sustainable future. Understanding our *complete city* will be essential for true accomplishment. I am confident that the tools presented in this document will assist new efforts in progress toward the revitalization of Elmira. Our city needs us and we need our city. I can't think of a more powerful reason to succeed.

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Appendix I

District Names of Elmira's Past*

The naming of district, neighborhood and place is marked in Elmira's history with different accents and intentions. In some instances names and boundaries were used as points for division and discrimination. Other names provided areas with description and distinction. The list below is a partial representation of our historic naming methods.

Frog Hollow: East of Madison Avenue, South of Harper Street, North of Church St. Apparently, this district was so named due to a section of swamp that contained serious frog congestion.

Pigeon Point: Intersection of Lake Street and Oak Street
Named after the thousands of pigeons who called this spot home.

Pickaway: Land east of South Walnut Street
A very stony land that is now the site of St. Peter and Paul's Cemetery.

Slab Town: Lake Street, Clinton Street, State Street, Lackawanna Railroad
The historic, cultural, commercial and spiritual center of African-American life in Elmira for over one-hundred years. What remained of this district was completely leveled in the 1950s to make way for the low-income housing development, *Jones Court*. A new structure, *Libertad Elmira*, will soon renovate this abandoned housing project through historic designation for affordable mixed-use housing.

The Buttonwoods: Land east of Brand Park to Riverside
This green expanse was so named because of its swath of Sycamore trees.

Carr's Corners: Currently called "Five Corners," this spot is the intersection of four roads near Woodlawn Cemetery: West Hill Road, Hoffman Street, Bancroft Road and Hillcrest Road.

The following were designated areas of Elmira land defined (in some cases with derogatory names) by their concentration of particular immigrant populations. When some immigrants first arrived, they had restrictions on traveling outside their neighborhood.

The Italian Patch: Railroad Avenue, Magee Street, North Main Street

The Irish Patch: Near the old Rolling Mills factory at East Washington Avenue

The Welsh and English Patch: Southside at South Main and Miller Street

Germantown: Madison Avenue and East Church Street

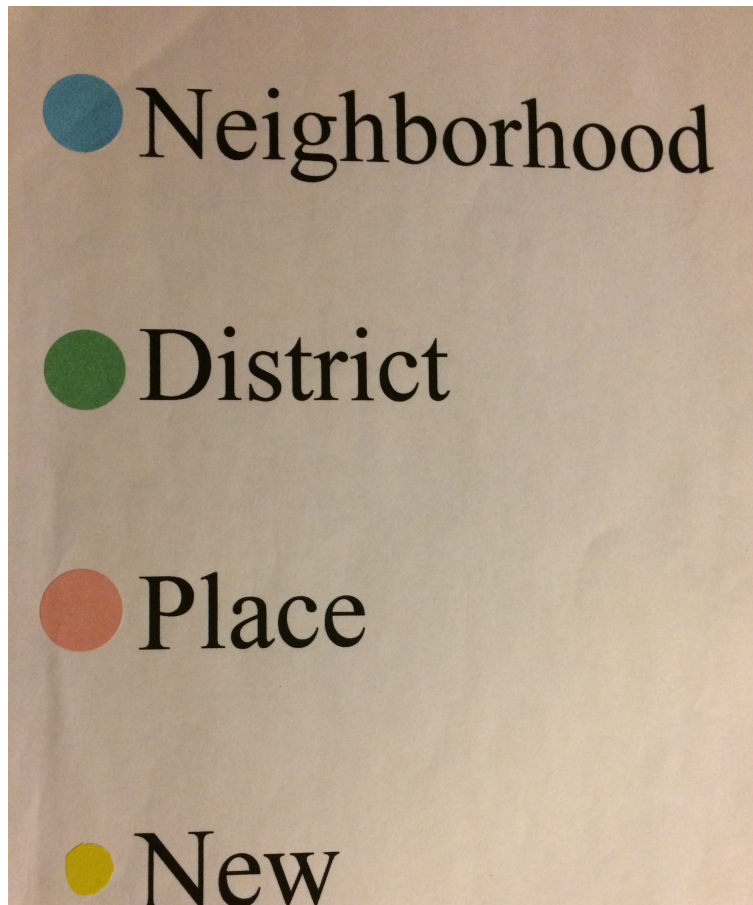
Jewtown: Bragg Towers Area

Polandertown: College Avenue to Roe Avenue, Washington Avenue to Bancroft Road

*Certain details were selected from information found at *Chemung County Historical Society* (website) and *Chemung County History, Elmira, New York* - Elmira City Historian Diane Janowski (website).

Appendix II

Color Codes for Neighborhood, District and Place



Appendix II

Google Map of Elmira with Designated Areas



Appendix III

EvolvElmira / Working Paper / Three Components:

I. Establish the *Elmira Vision to Voice Collective* (EV2VC)

Composition of EV2VC Process:

Community members and civic leaders who have been involved and engaged with the directional themes, visions and plans contained in *Plan Elmira*, *Elmira's Downtown Revitalization Initiative*, *Elmira's Creation Economy* and *Elmira: Neighborhood, District and Place*. The primary mission of this group will be to:

- 1) Assimilate and prioritize the content of these documents and strategies.
- 2) Transform the above process into community programs and projects to eventually be incorporated with the work of ECC and ERA.

II. Establish the *Elmira Community Congress* (ECC)

Composition of ECC process:

- 1) Leadership Teams for each Elmira Council District containing one Elmira City Council member, one Chemung County Legislator of that same district and two district resident representatives. (See Council/Legislative Districts)
- 2) District teams chosen by district resident representatives, no less than five and no more than nine.
- 3) Formation of *Neighborhood Councils* whose composition will be determined by neighborhood residents. The number of neighborhood councils will grow according to location and need. There will be no maximum number.
- 4) Mission, purpose, vision statement and by-laws of ECC will occur when the process dictates.

III. Establish the *Elmira Resource Alliance* (ERA)

Composition of ERA process:

- 1) A partnership including representatives from local industry, corporations, financial institutions, philanthropic organizations, private entities, nonprofit agencies and local government.
- 2) Initial steps before action will be to establish guidelines and principles relating to the building, strengthening and revitalizing the core assets of Elmira. Resources additionally will attend to assist the seeding and growth of local entrepreneurial enterprises.
- 3) The primary structure of ERA will be a 501©3 tax exempt, private, non-profit corporation. Membership on the Board of Directors will include representatives noted above and Elmira stakeholders.