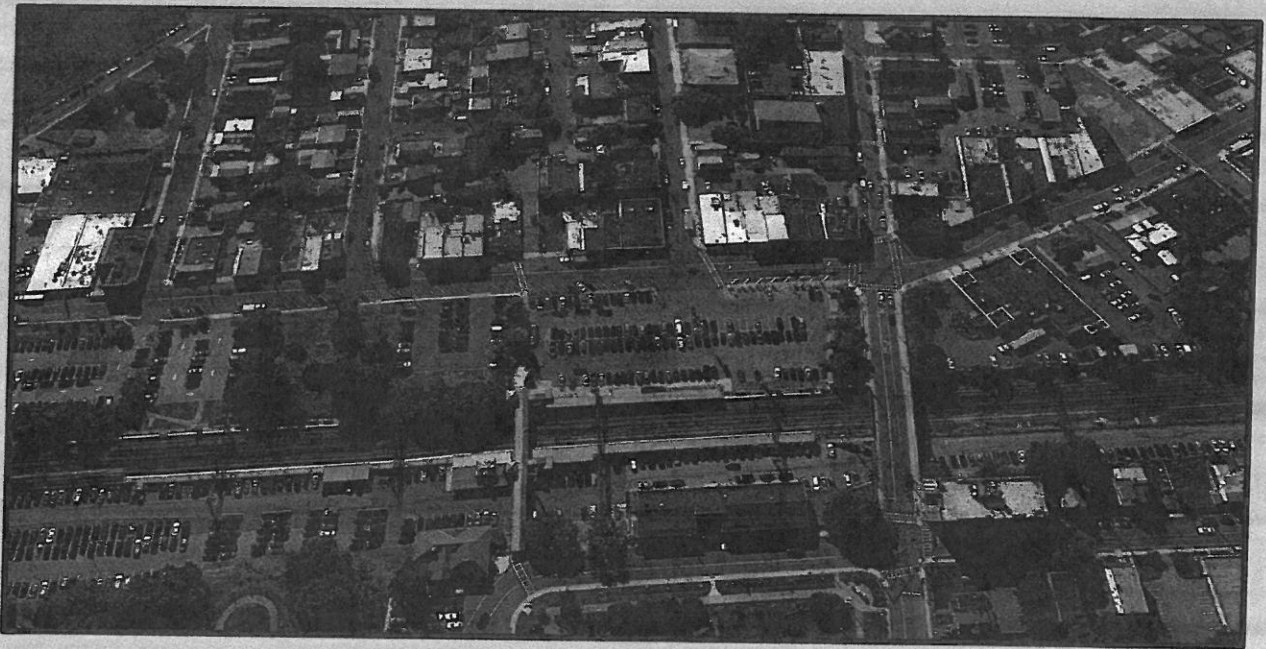


Proposal for  
Planning Consulting Services

**Town of Harrison**  
**Central Business District Planning Study**  
**and Build-Out Analysis**



June 28, 2018



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## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The recent approval of the Avalon/MTA project represents a turning point in the evolution of Downtown Harrison and has the potential to have a transformative impact on the Central Business District, and the Town as a whole. Consequently, there could be no better time to conduct a careful and deliberate evaluation of the CBD, and its capability to support this transformation.

Downtown Harrison remained virtually unchanged for many decades, with little reinvestment or revitalization. A photograph of the downtown from the 1950's would be indistinguishable from a photograph from the 2010's (with the lamentable loss of tailfins from the automobiles parked along Halstead Avenue). The condition of the downtown can be attributed to numerous factors, some of which are uniquely local (second generation property owners with less of a stake in the community) to regional and national trends (the "retail apocalypse"). Nevertheless, downtown Harrison remained "under the radar" for a long time.

That condition no longer applies. The Avalon/MTA development is a very high-profile project, which has concentrated the development community's attention on downtown Harrison. That attention has revealed an array of physical and economic attributes that make the downtown a very attractive location. Perhaps most notably, the area meets all the highly desirable characteristics of a "transit oriented" downtown.

The Town has successfully managed the initial wave of development proposals; including projects such as 550 Halstead Avenue (the former lumber yard site), where a recently completed 36 room apartment building now sits, as well as projects such as Saville Plaza on Calvert Street (approved for 24 apartment units), 241-247 Halstead Avenue (approved for 19 apartments), the Playhouse Lofts (nearing re-approval for a revised 36 unit mixed-use project) and Colonial Arms, recently approved for 18 apartment units. When these 133 units are added to the 143 units in the Avalon/MTA project, the total number of new dwelling units in the downtown, either approved (or about to be approved) or recently constructed, is 276 units.

Is this development just the beginning of much more intensive redevelopment efforts? Does it represent the end of a development cycle that has run its course? Do more opportunities exist, and perhaps most importantly, can downtown Harrison sustain further development, and if so, at what cost?

Assessing current traffic conditions, infrastructural limitations, physical design and architectural characteristics, emergency service capabilities, school capacities, among

other factors, is critically essential in order for the Town to be in an informed position to properly and responsibly manage what lies ahead.

## **II. 2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

Chapter 4 of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan is devoted to the Downtown Central Business District. This plan provides a generalized overview of the characteristics of the downtown, including land use, zoning, non-conforming and underutilized sites, urban form, aesthetics, traffic and parking.

The Comprehensive Plan produced a series of recommendations for the Downtown Central Business District; some very general, while other were quite specific. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented. The Comprehensive Plan also identified non-conforming, vacant and underutilized sites and identified short-term, and long-term development opportunities in the downtown. This essentially invited the development community to explore these sites and to seriously consider additional development.

Importantly, when the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, a full Generic Environmental Impact Statement was not prepared, so the potential impacts and implications of the levels of development envisioned in the Plan was never fully assessed.

The following scope of work will evaluate and assess the Downtown Central Business District in far greater detail than was done during the Comprehensive Plan process, and evaluate the potential impacts associated with development under current zoning, and as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **III. SCOPE OF WORK:**

### **1. Downtown Central Business District Boundary:**

While perceptually understood, the actual extent and physical boundary of the downtown has never been formally delineated. The first task of this exercise will be to logically and justifiably define the boundary of the CBD.

### **2. Parcel Inventory and Land Use Assessment:**

We currently lack an in-depth understanding of all of the characteristics of the properties located within the CBD. We gain that understanding *reactively* when development proposals are advanced, rather than *pre-emptively* prior to applications being submitted.

This task involves the compilation of a detailed inventory of every parcel in the CBD, including factors such as:

- Tax map designation
- Address
- Ownership status (public/quasi-public/private)
- Owner
- Owner address
- Property classification
- Land use
- Zoning
- Parcel size
- Assessed value
- Number of existing parking spaces
- Commercial tenants
- Number of residential apartments
- Building condition
- Exterior building materials
- Building structural system
- Building height

A matrix will be compiled containing this information, linked to a key map.

**3. Urban Form & Community Character:**

To gain a more precise understanding of the physical and architectural characteristics of the CBD, or its “urban form,” a Topology Study will be undertaken. This study is a block-by-block assessment of the physical characteristics of the built urban form – building mass and scale, setbacks and height, architectural elements and design themes – to define the specific traits that are characteristic of each sub area within the CBD.

**4. Demographic Analysis:**

The CBD is located with census tracts 84.03 and 84.04, which are divided among approximately 20 separate census blocks. Census data is available for each census block, including an array of population and household statistics. These data will be collected to provide a more granular understanding of the area’s population characteristics.

**5. Parking Inventory:**

Another element of the initial assessment of the CBD, will be a full inventory of all parking, including off-street parking spaces on private property, public

parking in municipal parking lots, and on-street parking. The provision of adequate parking is essential to the sustained success of the downtown.

**6. Traffic Impact Analysis:**

The CBD's traffic and transportation conditions will be evaluated, including:

- Identification of roadway classifications based on connectivity and functionality.
- Conduct existing condition roadway volume capacity analyses and Level-of-Service analysis at key intersections:
  - Halstead/Harrison Avenue
  - Halstead/Oakland & Osborn
  - Harrison Avenue/West Street
  - Harrison Avenue/Park Avenue
  - Harrison Avenue/Calvert Street
- Identify capacity constraints in the roadway system.
- Identify potential traffic impacts associated with alternative scenarios.
- Evaluate pedestrian and mass transit uses in the network.
- Identify traffic calming measures, and other traffic and transportation mitigation measures

**7. Infrastructure:**

The infrastructural network serving the CBD will be evaluated; including:

- Sewer
- Water
- Stormwater
- Natural Gas
- Telecommunications/Cable

**8. Municipal Services:**

An assessment of municipal services will be undertaken, which will include:

- Police
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Health Services
- Public Works
- Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling
- Parks & Recreation
- Schools

**9. Economic Conditions:**

An overview of the economic and market conditions of the CBD will be compiled from sources that may including CoStar, ESRI, Zillow, Trulia, existing market and research reports, other publicly available and proprietary sources, and local brokers and business community representative interviews.

**10. Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Resources:**

All identified historic buildings, archaeological and cultural resources will be identified and assessed. The NYS Historic Preservation Office and the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS) will be consulted, as well as local historical documentation.

**11. Build-Out Analysis:**

For the purposes of this study, three scenarios will be evaluated:

- As-of-Right Development Under Existing Zoning
- Development of Identified Underutilized Sites
- Increased Density Redevelopment Scenario

**a. As-of-Right Development Under Existing Zoning:**

Under this scenario, a build-out analysis will be conducted to determine if any additional development capacity exists on each parcel within the CBD, utilizing the existing applicable zoning regulations.

**b. Development of Identified Underutilized Sites:**

The Comprehensive Plan identified a number of non-conforming, vacant or underutilizes sites, where the potential for redevelopment was obvious and apparent. That list will be updated to reflect current conditions, and the build-out of each of these sites will be evaluated. Logical development assumptions would be incorporated into this scenario, such as assembling parcels, to properly evaluate this scenario.

**c. Increased Density Redevelopment Scenario:**

Under this scenario, the increased density provisions of the recently adopted TOD zone, and TOD zoning as developed throughout the region more generally, will be applied to create development scenarios reflecting more intensive levels of development.

These build-out analyses will define the extent of potential development, and the consequential impacts associated with each.

#### **IV. WORK PRODUCT:**

The results of this analysis will be presented in a detailed report, supplemented with appropriate maps, graphics, graphics, charts and graphs. The Planning Board suggested that a Generic Environmental Impact Statement may be an appropriate vehicle for this analysis. While a GEIS would include an identical technical analysis, the regulatory obligations associated with the preparation of a GEIS would result in an unnecessary impediment to the swift compilation of this analysis. As such, it is recommended that this work be undertaken as a “planning study.”

#### **V. PROJECT TEAM:**

Recognizing the importance of critically evaluating and understanding the traffic implications of future development in the CBD, Cleary Consulting with partner with Maser Engineering to undertake this study.

##### **Cleary Consulting:**

- Patrick Cleary, AICP, CEP, PP LEED AP, CNU-A
- Ian Bentley

##### **Maser Engineering**

- John Collins, PhD, P.E.
- Philip Adler, PhD., P.E.

#### **VI. PROJECT BUDGET & DELIVERABLES:**

Project budget and deliverables have been established to correspond to the proposal outlined above.

- Tasks 1, 4, 5, 7-10 - \$31,500
- Task 2 - Parcel Inventory - \$11,500
- Task 3 – Topology Study - \$9,750
- Task 6 – Traffic Impact Study – \$20,000
- Task 11 – Build-Out Analysis - \$17,000

**Total = \$89,750**

#### **VII. PROJECT SCHEDULE:**

It is projected that the full scope of this project can be completed in approximately 6 - 8 months.

**VIII. AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED:**

If this proposal is determined to be acceptable as submitted, authorization to proceed shall be indicated by executing the document in the appropriate location below and returning the document to Cleary Consulting for counter-signature.

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Ron Belmont  
Mayor

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Patrick Cleary, AICP, CEP, PP, LEED AP  
Cleary Consulting