

Ithaca, NY

Collegetown Urban Plan & Design Guidelines



Nelson\Nygaard led the transportation planning component of the Collegetown Urban Plan as a subconsultant to Goody Clancy. This neighborhood of Ithaca, NY serves as the gateway to Cornell University, but none of the key stakeholders — residents, local merchants, the City, abutting neighborhoods and Cornell itself — had stepped up to plan for the district's growth, resulting in a history of piecemeal development and neglected infrastructure that did not integrate well with the character of scenic Ithaca. In the wake of more incongruous construction, the community petitioned for a building moratorium and planning process to better guide the city's neglected orphan. Building off of a community vision statement, the Urban Plan was designed to resolve existing impediments in the built form, streetscape, zoning code, and parking management.

While parking problems were a clear operational issue to resolve for local businesses, Nelson\Nygaard soon determined that the City's attempts to regulate parking had actually contributed to much of the undesirable development plaguing Collegetown. High land values coupled with inflexible minimum parking requirements had created paved yards, excessive curb cuts, sterile parking decks, gaping driveway portals, and low ceiling heights to accommodate off-street parking per code. Meanwhile, traditional on-street management practices had resulted in a variety of regulations and pricing strate-

gies that were unresponsive to actual parking demand profiles, especially in the evenings when retail and performance space brought high demand.

Nelson\Nygaard recommended the development of a "Strategic Transportation System" that treated parking in the district as a valuable shared resource to be controlled by smart parking management practices on- and off-street. Central to unlocking development potential was a system of in-lieu payments and remote parking that enables higher-quality pedestrian-oriented development while providing resources for streetscape improvements. Coupled with new parking revenues, the System could afford needed sidewalk repairs, trash collection, bicycle parking and transit amenities.

Project Duration: 2007 - 2008

Total Budget: \$120,000

Nelson/Nygaard Budget: \$30,000

For more information:

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