

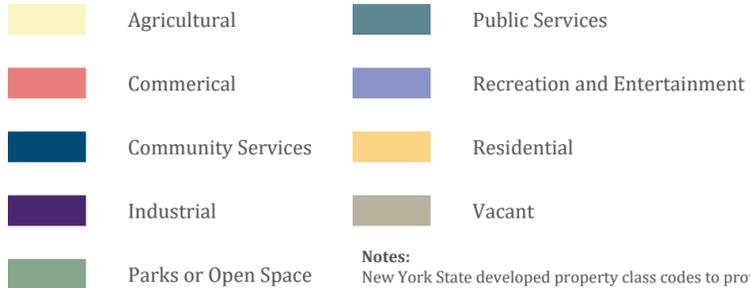
LAND USE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Land Use ————— 32

Blueways and Water Resources — 34

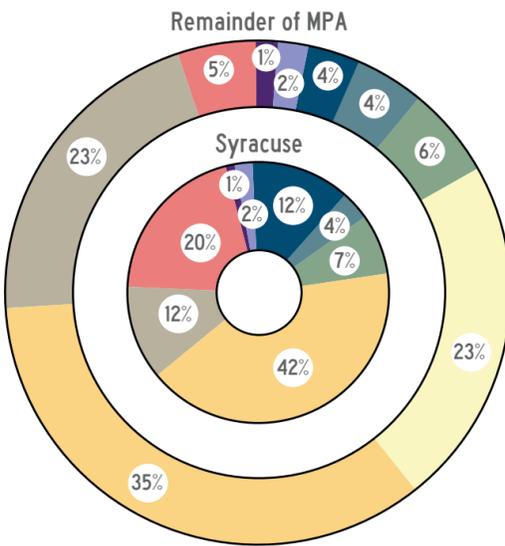
Residential use is the largest single land use (by area) in the region. Commercial uses are primarily situated along major transportation facilities.

Assessed Land Use

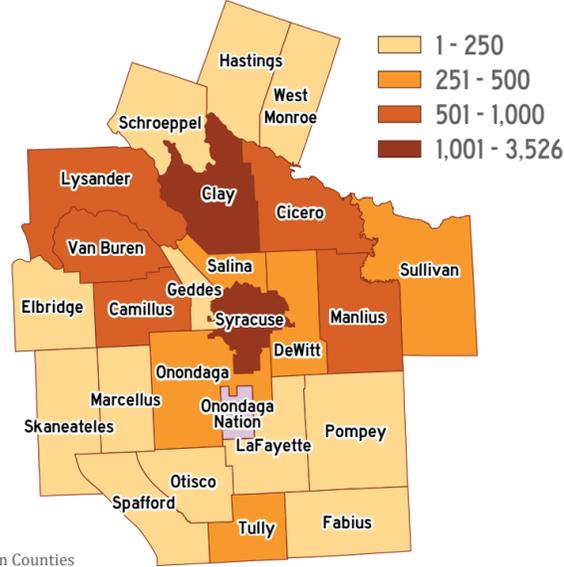


Notes: New York State developed property class codes to provide a statewide uniform classification system for assessment administration. Assessors assign a code to each property on an assessment roll. There are nine major categories, shown above. A property can be further described within these major classification categories.

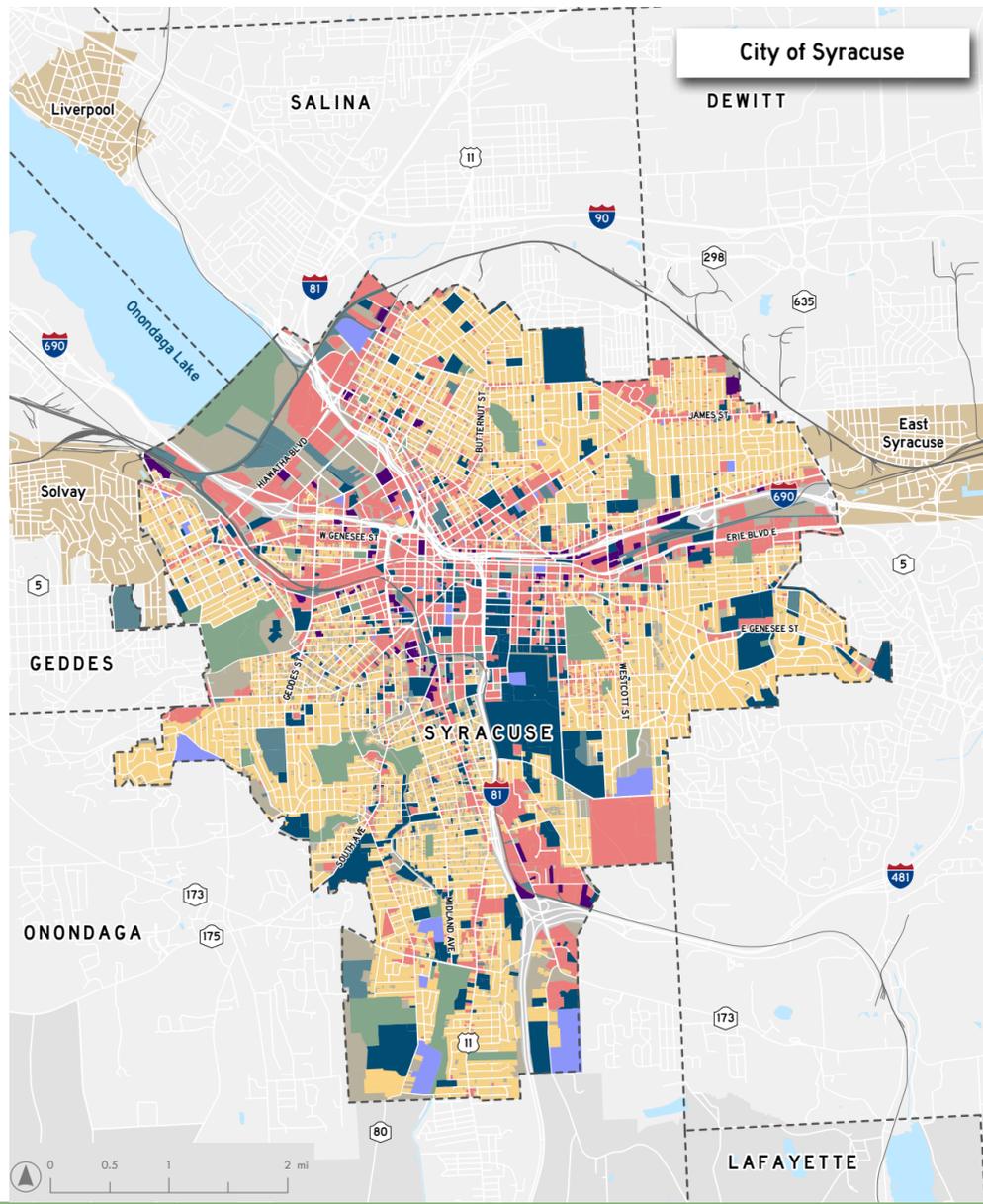
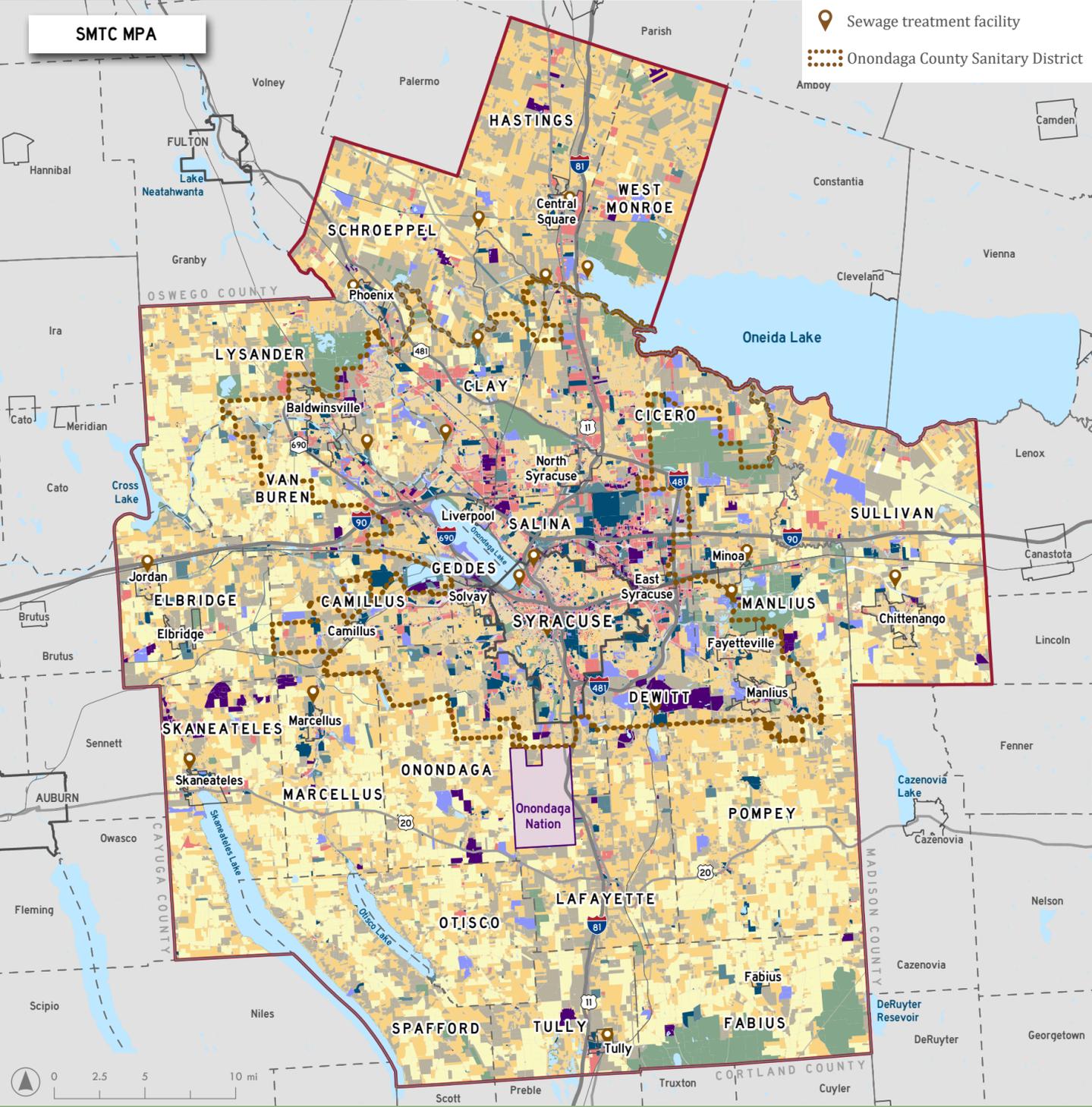
Percent of Total Land Area by Associated Land Use  
City of Syracuse and Remainder of MPA



New Residential Units Created by City/Town, 2011-2020



Data Sources: Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection, Onondaga, Oswego, and Madison Counties



These maps show existing land use as identified by town, village, and city assessors. Note that "land use" is distinct from "zoning." A zoning map reflects a community's zoning ordinance and represents the preferred uses for parcels, whether or not those uses are currently present. A land use map shows the actual use of that land.

Nearly 60 percent of the land outside of the City of Syracuse falls into two land use categories: residential and agricultural. Residential uses surround the City of Syracuse and radiate outward from it along major transportation corridors. In the eastern, western, and southern parts of the MPA, homes give way to farmland as one gets farther away from the City. North of the City, the transportation infrastructure and flat topography have facilitated residential development. The Town of Clay gained more new residential units than other suburban town between 2010 and 2020. The only other municipality to add over 1,000 new residential units during that period was the City of Syracuse.

The presence of sewers affects the type of development that is possible in our region. Denser residential development and many types of industrial uses are only possible within the existing sewer district.

Many community plans seek to preserve water resources and provide public waterfront access.



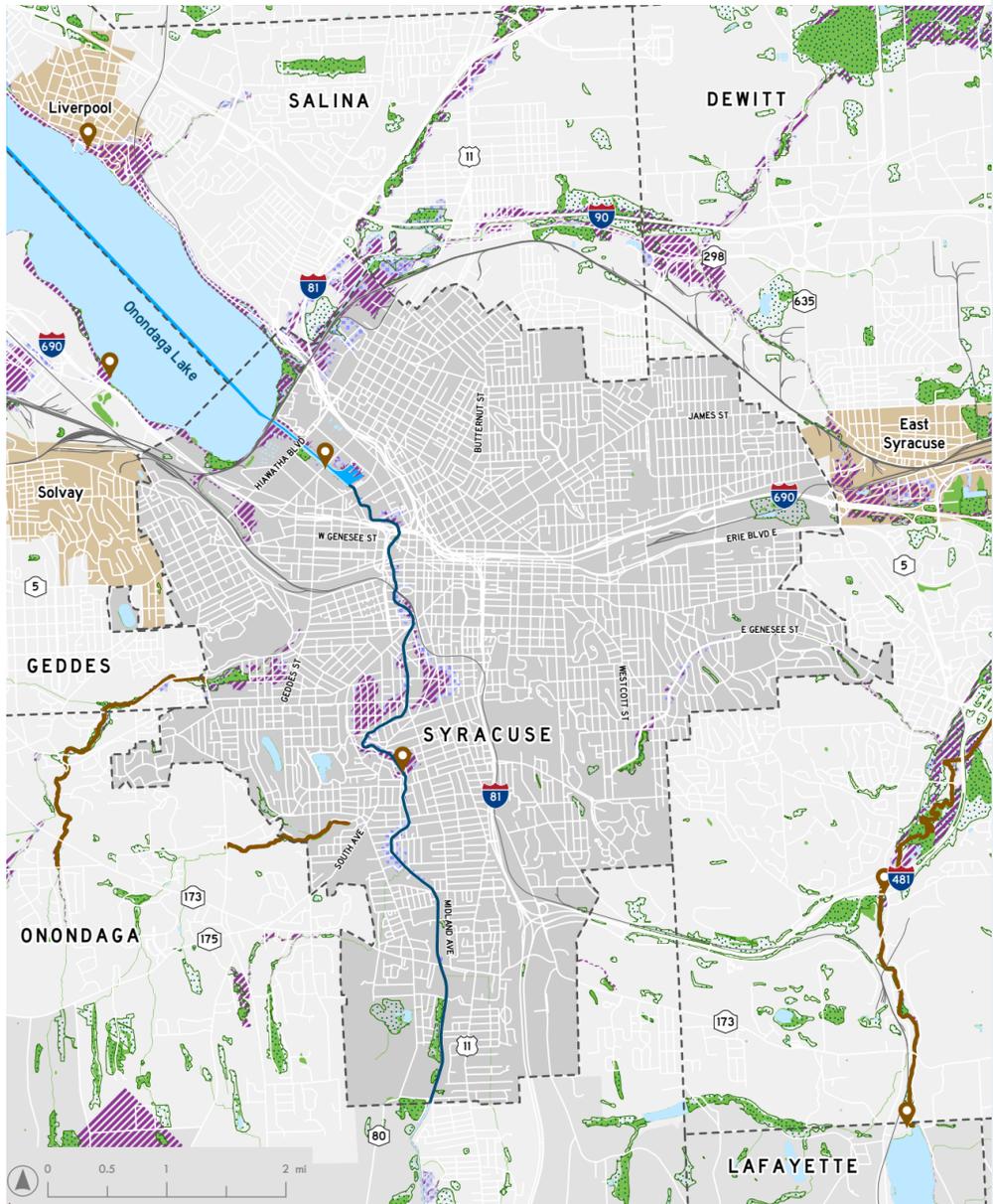
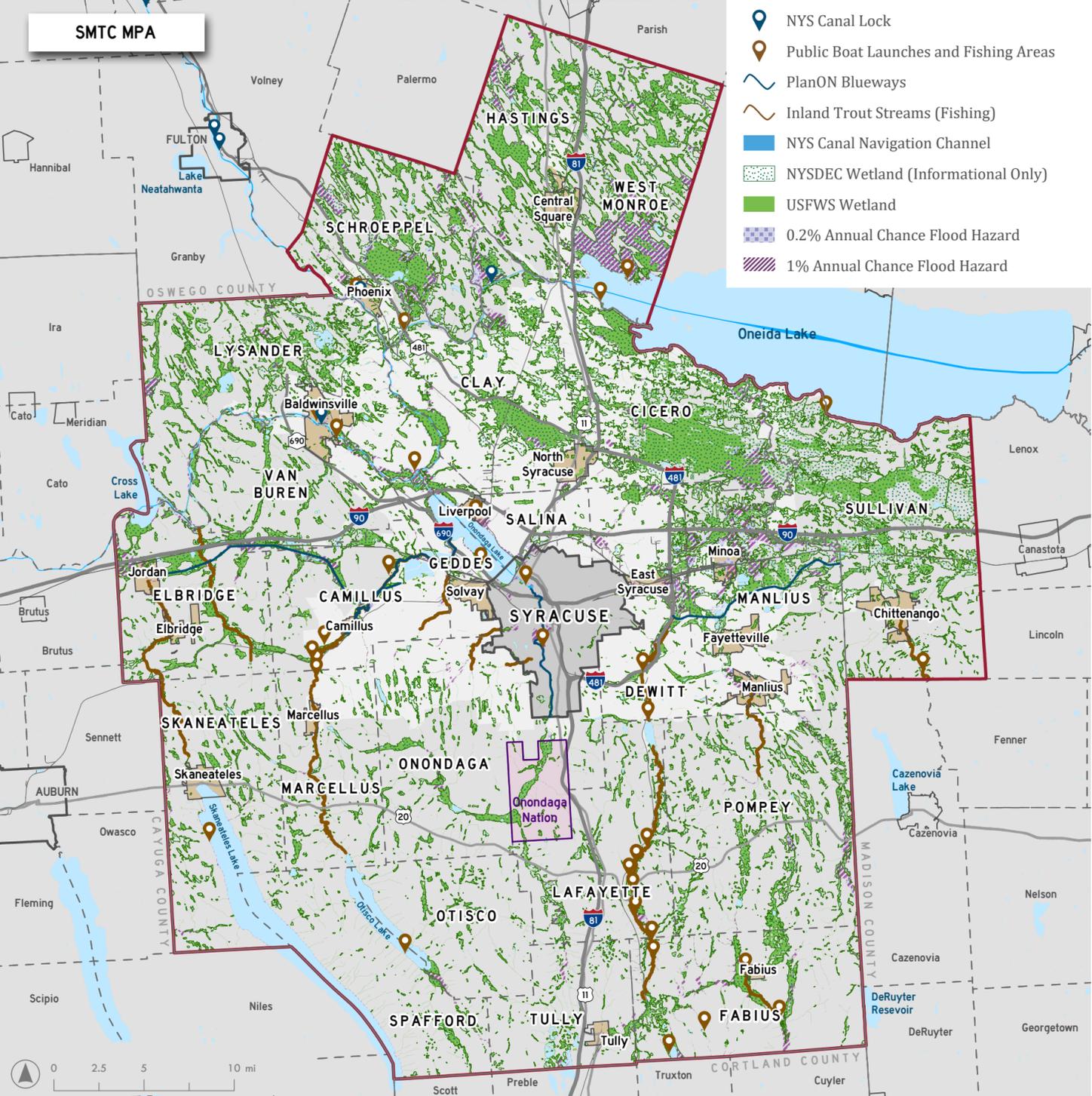
Above: Skaters enjoy Onondaga Lake Park.

Left: Using the boat launch on Onondaga Creek.



Far left: An aerial view of the boat launch on the west side of Onondaga Lake.

Data Sources: FEMA, NWI (National Wildlife Inventory), USFWS (US Fish and Wildlife Service), NYSDEC, Onondaga County, NYS Canal Corporation



The MPA has a vast array of water resources, including lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. These water resources fulfill many functions. Local trails often run adjacent to waterways and waterfronts may present opportunities for economic development. Onondaga County's Plan ON places a focus on blueways, navigable water bodies which create the opportunity for recreational water routes and provide ecological protection for aquatic and shoreline habitats through conservation and maintenance.

The MPA has hundreds of miles of navigable shoreline. Additionally, the numerous non-navigable creeks, streams, lakes, and ponds add to the open space network, and are important resources and recreational opportunities. There are several access points to these resources throughout the MPA, such as boat launches and fishing areas.

Wetlands provide flood and stormwater control, filter pollutants, and provide wildlife habitat. Floodplains also assist with these functions while providing a buffer between development and potentially-damaging floods. Protecting these natural resources is essential to maintaining the abundant, high-quality water that Central New Yorkers depend on for drinking and recreation. Encroachment of new development and increasing stormwater runoff created by impermeable surfaces, such as roads and parking facilities, can threaten our fragile water resources.

Waterways also continue to provide a transportation function. The Syracuse MPA is the crossroads for the N.Y.S. Canal System, which extends to ports such as New York City, Buffalo, and Oswego. Local waterways and locks associated with the system are highlighted in the accompanying map. Although the Canal System is mostly used for recreational purposes, some freight shipping by barge still occurs. Approximately 23,000 tons of freight moved across the canal in 2023.