



We are 40 Below

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## Our Purpose and Pledge

We are 40 Below.

We are artists, lawyers, doctors and entrepreneurs. We are professionals, entertainers and activists. We wear blue collars, white collars or no collars at all. We work day shifts and night shifts or make our own hours. We are 40 Below and we call Central Upstate New York home.

We are under 40 and over 40 – we're all young at heart. We are creative, energetic and eager. We make no excuses for the past and take responsibility for our future. We are united in our common purpose:

- To make Central Upstate New York a more vibrant place to live, work, learn and play;
- To restore pride and hope to our communities;
- To spark a cultural renaissance that will put us on the "creative" map;
- To harness the collective strength of our communities to make positive change.

We have a highly-skilled workforce and a highly-educated populous. We have more bright, young, college students than almost any other part of the country. We have short commute times, a low cost of living and we make no apologies for our winters.

We have boundless recreational opportunities. We have forests, mountains, lakes and open space. We have a vibrant nightlife. We have high arts and street arts and everything in between. We have a history of inclusiveness, but are neither as diverse nor as tolerant as we would like. We are committed to improving.

We love where we live and we are resilient, but we are tired of watching success pass us by. We are from different backgrounds, with different goals, and we will work where our visions intersect. There is strength in numbers and in unity of purpose. We are committed. We are passionate. We will prevail.

We are ready to take this oath: "We the people of Central Upstate New York swear allegiance to ourselves and our community. Together, we will leave this region better than we found it. We will recognize our differences and focus on our commonalities. We will address our region's shortcomings and infuse our vision into the public debate. We will put our time, energy and resources into our dreams. We will shape the reality of our own future, starting today."

We are 40 Below, and we call Central Upstate New York home.

## Introduction

On November 12, 2004, more than 630 young professionals, artists, entrepreneurs and citizens came together for what became the largest young professionals' summit in our nation's history. Fire codes were the only thing keeping the crowd from exceeding 1,000. Every panel discussion was standing room only.

Dozens of individuals and community organizations including the Metropolitan Development Association, ThINC, CNY EDGE, Syracuse University, LeMoyne College, The Post-Standard, Leadership Greater Syracuse and many more developed, hosted and sponsored the half-day event. Late on a Friday afternoon hundreds of participants sat together in a town-hall meeting and expressed their creative visions for the future. Business leaders, congressmen and mayors – more than 30 elected officials in all – came, listened and absorbed the discussion.

More than 5,000 individual ideas – ranging from the obvious to the imaginative, from the practical to the wildly optimistic – were generated and catalogued. All shared a common theme –improving the quality of life in the region.

Where was this ground-breaking event? Not in Boston or San Francisco, not Cincinnati or Philadelphia, but rather in Syracuse, New York – the heart of Central Upstate. Where lakes, mountains and streams abound. Where your mortgage payment can be half of an urban-dweller's rent. Where your daily commute is shorter than a city sandwich line. Where the air is clean, the snow is deep and your voice can be heard over the silent cacophony of our non-existent traffic jams.

So what does the sound of 630 young and creative minds sound like? It sounds like progress. Action. Cooperation. Rebirth. Revitalization. It sounds like a movement that is gaining steam by the moment.

Who are these optimistic crusaders? We are none other than 40 Below. Here's what those of us who attended the summit look like:

- Average age – 31
- 97% college educated
- 61% attended undergraduate or graduate school in region
- 61% raised in the region
- 19% of attendees from outside Onondaga County
- 55% of attendees Female

We are a diverse lot and we embrace that diversity. We seek it out. We crave it. It will help our region thrive.

Who are we? We are a new generation of leaders. What follows is our history and vision.

## How to Read This Report

Each of our five sections starts with direct quotes generated from the hundreds of surveys filled out at the 40 Below Summit's Town Hall Meeting. These ideas are the foundation on which this report and vision are built.

In addition to sharing a small fraction of the ideas in the participants' own words, we've summarized the essence and spirit of what was said.

At the end of each chapter is a Priority Action – one concrete step that we can take toward achieving our potential and realizing our dreams. These actions represent only a small portion of the ideas generated at 40 Below. But they offer a clear and compelling avenue for 40 Belowers to begin our mission.

At the end of the report in Appendix I, the Priority Action items are brought together in one place for easy referencing. Appendix II offers many more recommendations from the summit that 40 Below supports and hopes are championed and achieved.

Implementing the Priority Actions, as well as hosting another regional summit, is our mission for 2005 – the mission of 40 Below.

## Community and Infrastructure Development *Revitalization. Transportation. Sustainability. Livability. Natural Resources.*

### Why we **LOVE** our region!

"We're at the crossroads of New York State" "Celebrate our four seasons" "Hiking in the Adirondacks!" "Excellent commutes" "Access to Canada" "Real estate is reasonably priced" "Armory/Clinton/Hanover/Franklin Square prove it can be done!" "Destiny USA – Bring it on!" "Friendly people"

### The thorns in our side...

"Onondaga lake needs to be cleaned up!" "Cost of air travel" "Lack of public transportation that's reliable and fun" "Unable to live and work downtown without a car" "SPRAWL!" "Poor aesthetics of our gateways" "Neighborhood deterioration" "Lack of gathering places and non-alcoholic venues" "Lack of green space in our cities" "The biggest, best idea you have is a mall?"

### Ideas and vision

"Tear down the I-81 psychological barrier and connect SU with downtown!" "Increase awareness of our natural resources – attract people with eco-tourism" "Clean up the lake. Whatever it takes" "Free public transportation downtown" "Make public transportation cool – develop park and rides" "Take a risk that gets noticed" "Improve appearance of gateways" "Develop a spatial task force to work on the adaptive re-use of abandoned buildings" "Make sure the city is alive every night, not just on weekends" "Turn abandoned buildings into lofts" "Invest in our downtowns. Mandate first-floor retail space. Develop walkable corridors. Build new spaces such as jazz clubs and rock climbing walls"



## Overview

We are 40 Below.

Our region has a tremendous asset in its historic buildings. But whether it's in Syracuse or Watertown, too many of our downtown buildings remain vacant. Our urban cores are being eroded by neglect, poor access and sprawl.

The dozens of vacant buildings have enormous potential for redevelopment. We crave new and unique spaces to relax and express ourselves, and these buildings should be our theaters, coffee houses, jazz clubs and showrooms for public art. They should be our homes and workspaces. Let's put our assets to use, get these properties back on the tax rolls and create active environments for us to congregate, socialize and dream.

Our downtowns will only be as strong as they are accessible. Public transportation must be improved. It should be cheap, green and easy to access. It should be safe, colorful and fun.

We must plan for and invest in sustainability. We must prevent sprawl from consuming our most precious resources. Our mountains, lakes and green spaces set us apart. But we'll be going nowhere quick if we pave it over. The best way to solve our parking problems is to get cars off the streets. Get people on buses. Make downtown Auburn, Ithaca, Utica, Watertown and Syracuse places to live as well as work. Connect our center cities and just watch what we catch in our web.

Most importantly, let's take pride in our region. Let's keep our neighborhoods, cities and suburbs clean and safe. Let's spruce up our gateways and create a warm, welcoming feel.

Don't forget to clean up Onondaga Lake, and clean it right. It can be a centerpiece for the region. Build a bike path around it. Make it safe for swimming, fishing and families. While we're at it, let's make all our roads more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

And let's embrace winter. Dance in the snow. Laugh at the rain. Revel in those glorious, sunshine-filled days. Partake in the great outdoors and the natural bounty that surrounds us.

## Priority Action

### *Adaptive Re-Use Task Force*

40 Below will work to pool the energy and resources of our region's young professionals and artists to play an active role in the redevelopment of our urban cores. A task force should be developed to plan and develop new and unique spaces in our downtowns – congregation points for us to interact with a diverse cross-section of our peers. The task force should be charged with physically changing the downtown landscapes by designing, developing, investing, marketing and frequenting our very own building – a music venue, a coffee house, a small movie theater, incubator space for young entrepreneurs, live-work space for artists, a bookstore or all of the above. The task force should seek to identify new and creative uses for vacant and under-used spaces and work to turn concept into reality.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Develop a comprehensive list of end-uses that appeal to 40 Belowers (live-work space, jazz clubs, etc.);
- Develop a list of criteria upon which any redevelopment project should be evaluated (sustainability, safety, location, accessibility, etc.);
- Identify vacant spaces throughout the region that might be suitable for the proposed redevelopment uses;
- Solicit input and assistance from existing developers and determine what resources would be needed to proceed;
- Develop a short and long-term implementation plan to ensure the project's success; and,
- Secure funds and community support to needed to meet the goal.

Through the work of this task force, 40 Below will play an active, leadership role in the development of physical spaces that appeal to a younger demographic. It is our hope within one year of issuing this report, 40 Below will have played a direct role in getting at least one redevelopment project off the ground.

## Business and Workforce Development

*Knowledge. Innovation. Enterprise. Capital. Jobs.*

### Why we LOVE our Region!

"We have a low cost of living and doing business"  
"We have a large pool of young talent" "CNY is in close proximity to several commerce and trade areas" "CNY has an abundance of high-quality colleges and universities"

### Thorns in our side...

"We need to attract more employers" "Lack of quality, creative positions offering young people opportunity to make a difference" "There are no/few incentives for small business start-ups" "There is a disconnect between universities and the business community" "The city schools are struggling" "We need to educate our youth about what is available to them here"

### Ideas and vision

"Capitalize on our low cost of living and doing business. Big cities can outsource to us" "Grow small businesses, with a focus on urban renewal. Develop a river walk downtown" "Become a Mecca for agri-tourism, organic farming and fine dining inspired by the freshest regional ingredients" "Market our city to outside business, job seekers and local students – highlighting the high quality of life, low cost of living, arts and recreational opportunities. Go out and sell our region!" "Develop organized assistance for entrepreneurs" "Entice the community to support local businesses" "Connect SU to downtown by creating green space between the Center of Excellence and the center of downtown" "Use vacant property as low-rent storefronts to help young entrepreneurs get started"



## Overview

We are 40 Below.

We see nothing but potential for our region. We see ourselves on the verge of an economic transformation. We see a growing high-tech sector and an increasing understanding of the important role that creativity plays in economic growth. We crave the higher paying and more rewarding jobs the Central Upstate economy can create.

While our economy is moving in the right direction, there are still too many roadblocks for businesses striving to grow. State and local taxes are too high, energy rates are oppressive and an endless stream of regulations put local companies at a competitive disadvantage.

Our ability to succeed and prevail depends on our ability to innovate and adapt. Our region's colleges and universities are centers of research and invention that are nearly unparalleled in the nation. They are also uniquely poised to educate and train the workforce that is required to grow the industries of today and tomorrow.

These institutions don't just generate technology, they generate young and creative minds – the kinds of individuals that this region must retain. Recent efforts to reach these student populations are a step in the right direction. In fact, a study conducted by a group of students at Syracuse University suggests that up to 50 percent of the 130,000 college students in our region could be lured to stay in the area.

But they won't stay without a reason. We need to build stronger connections between our colleges and universities and local business. Companies must make greater efforts to recruit on regional campuses. Businesses must be aggressive in marketing to students. Our communities must welcome these young people with open arms.

Why is this so important? Because young people are prime candidates to start new businesses, and it's a well-known fact that nearly 80 percent of net job growth nationwide comes from small business. A vibrant entrepreneurial and small business climate is a vital component of a diverse and healthy economy.

A lack of funding and support for businesses has always held our region back and it is time to push past these obstacles. Local business leaders, university officials, philanthropists and others must work together to bring more seed and venture capital to Central Upstate. All levels of government must make it a priority to improve the business climate by reducing taxes and investing in effective business development programs that address the needs of small and growing companies. We must embrace and empower those members of our communities who represent the brightest hope for our region's economy – the innovator, the entrepreneur and the small business owner.

## Priority Action

### *Business Training Scholarships for Young Entrepreneurs*

40 Below will secure funds to provide scholarships to current and prospective young entrepreneurs to attend existing entrepreneurial training programs throughout the region such as Syracuse University's Entrepreneur's Bootcamp. Through this program, 40 Below will ensure that young people who want to start a business are empowered with the knowledge and tools to make that dream a reality.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify qualified entrepreneurial training programs throughout region;
- Secure funds to provide scholarships for entrepreneurs under 40 to attend these training programs;
- Solicit applications from interested entrepreneurs;
- Develop selection criteria;
- Make scholarship awards; and,
- Provide additional support to prospective entrepreneurs through mentoring or other programming.

Through the work of this task force, it is the goal of 40 Below to have made it possible for 25 or more young entrepreneurs and artists to have attended qualified training programs during the year immediately following the issuing of this report.

## Marketing and Communications

*Perception. Lifestyle. Attitude. Identity. Awareness.*

### Why we LOVE our region!

"This community has a quality of life that is greater than in 99 percent of the world" "CNY has affordable housing, minimal traffic and is located within a short drive to many great places to visit (Adirondacks and Finger Lakes)" "Great place to raise a family" "Low cost of living" "Syracuse has the cleanest air out of any major metropolitan area in the United States" "Eager, talented pool of educated young people interested in improving CNY"

### Thorns in our side...

"Negative attitude" "I think media/people concentrate on the negative things in the region rather than continually reinforcing all off the good programs/businesses" "A big obstacle is how Syracuse is perceived in the minds of young people. Syracuse needs an identity" "Lack of advertising" "No centralized website or publication to tell people what there is to do and where" "Weather" "No jobs...we can't keep young, talented people here with \$7 per hour jobs"

### Ideas and vision

"Launch a fierce PR campaign portraying Syracuse and CNY as an ideal place to begin a career...will reverse the negative connotation associated with Syracuse and convince new graduates to stay – many want to, but don't think they can" "Become known as a progressive city" "Create pride" "Reduce negative media" "Set Syracuse apart, find something that makes Syracuse a great place – there are so many things – highlight those and market them and remind people of why they should be proud to live in Syracuse" "Website – more central site to find EVERYTHING there is to do here (one site vs. 101). Include other counties and cities besides Syracuse" "Figure out a way to take existing YP groups and make them more than social clubs. Happy hours are great, but must be balanced with real opportunities to get engaged in community and economic development. This opportunity is what sets CNY apart from NYC and Boston. Embrace it and capitalize on it" "Set impossible goals and overachieve. Think big, then double your expectations. Make every citizen an ambassador"



## Overview

We are 40 Below.

We have a low cost of living, short commute times and affordable real estate. We have great institutions of higher education and companies that are leading the world in the development of radar systems, medical devices and in other high-tech fields. We have the cleanest air of any major metropolitan area in the nation. We have trees and lakes and open space that makes our region a veritable recreational wonderland. You can't get these things in Boston. You don't see green in Phoenix. So why the long faces around Central Upstate New York?

Many of us thrive on what Central Upstate has to offer. Many have chosen to call this place home for these very reasons. But too many residents seem to dwell on the negatives and breed powerful misconceptions that hinder progress. There are no jobs. There's too much snow. Nothing happens fast enough. Bah humbug!

This self-inflicted inferiority complex is holding us back. Just like high taxes and state regulations, a bad attitude is nothing more than a drain on resources. It diverts precious energy from the task at hand – improving our communities and building on the strengths we do have.

This negativity gets in the way of cooperation too. Looking at life as though the glass were half-empty only creates a sense of futile frustration. It almost dares our community leaders to cast blame on one another instead of joining hands to forge common solutions.

We must embrace what our region has to offer. We must shout it from the mountaintop. But before we can, we must believe in ourselves.

There is a tendency to think that things are better elsewhere; that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. But the fence has nothing to do with it. The grass is greenest where it's watered, cared for and tended to.

By reintroducing our own communities to what is great about Central Upstate, we will instill a new sense of pride in our region based on the things that make us unique, make us competitive and make us thrive. Together, we can forge an identity for Central Upstate that will not only excite current residents but will make the rest of the state, and the nation as a whole, stop and take notice.

## Priority Action

*Create an Information Clearinghouse and Leverage Other Marketing Tools*

40 Below will work toward the creation and promotion of a website to connect Central Upstaters to each other and provide them comprehensive information about events, activities and opportunities in their neighborhoods and throughout the region. This clearinghouse should be easy to access, easy to use, comprehensive and highly visible throughout the region. It's very existence should help people feel better about their community as they learn of the sheer quantity and quality of experiences the area offers.

The site, which should be developed in cooperation with dozens of regional partners, will be one part of a multi-media marketing effort to foster a positive, dynamic, regional identity. Other initiatives will include support of efforts – such as the guerilla marketing campaign started by SyracuseProps – that bring attention to our region's endless attributes.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify all existing sources of information – as well as gaps in that information – on activities, events and other items of interest to the 40 Below demographic;
- Identify partners willing to assist in creating and marketing a comprehensive events web site;
- Work with SyracuseProps to develop a comprehensive list of pervasive negative stereotypes of our region;
- Based on existing SyracuseProps initiatives, develop marketing slogans and multi-media tools to address and combat these stereotypes;
- Identify creative, low-cost ways to spread these messages throughout the region and beyond;
- Develop a plan for the most effective way to accomplish the task force's goals; and
- Secure funds and the community support necessary for the successful implementation of these programs.

Within one year of issuing this report, it is the goal of 40 Below to have catalyzed the creation of a comprehensive, region-wide information clearinghouse on events and activities as well as expand the SyracuseProps guerilla marketing concept to the entire region.

## Leadership

*Involvement. Philanthropy. Energy.  
Cooperation. Progress.*

### Why we **LOVE** our region!

“Opportunity to participate, volunteer, arts” “The commitment of area residents to improve the quality of life” “The fact that anywhere I go I find people smiling at me, being friendly” “The fact that there is so much interest from young people to influence change” “40 Below attempting to make change happen” “40 Below Summit – great start” “The quality of human service organizations” “Decision makers and organizations care and want us to stay” “Essential NY Initiative” “SU – Nancy Cantor and her vision of exploring the soul of Syracuse and bringing a connection with creative arts.” “Small enough city where individuals can make a difference”

### Thorns in our side...

“Unengaged youth without opportunities to contribute” “Taxes” “City and county government do not work collaboratively” “Competition between communities rather than building a strong economic foundation” “Multiple jurisdictions/duplication of services” “Too much regulation” “Old boys club” “Lack of diversified leadership” “Continuous delays in passing state budget each year” “Lacking action-oriented leadership” “Political staleness. To the parties: bring young people along” “Traditionalists that do not want change” “Crime”

### Ideas and vision

“Work with companies so their employees can take time off to volunteer and not be penalized for it” “Create community action boards that have budgets and support from local governments and would be made up of young leaders” “Give/offer companies a recognition day or incentive for allowing their young workers to volunteer once a year to clean up local parks and natural resources” “Develop a formal young professional’s group to lobby state and local leaders on important regional issues” “Host monthly forums with community leaders to hear from young people” “Create more community exchange programs where young people (high school, college and older) from suburbs and the city get together to trade experiences and ideas for strengthening their communities” “Encourage more young people to run for elected office” “Build more community beautification projects”



## Overview

We are 40 Below.

We are a new crop of leaders with fresh energy and a diversity of ideas and we are taking a seat at the decision-making table. We are committed and united in our purpose to help shape the future of Central Upstate New York.

The region is positioned for positive change and a new wave of thinking is quickly taking form. The Essential New York Initiative is bringing regional stakeholders together to work collaboratively to transform our economy. Syracuse University is making historic investments in downtown Syracuse. 40 Below has created a sense that the area's young talent is coming together to push the region toward a brighter future. These and other interconnected efforts are pushing Central Upstate toward a more cooperative and creative future.

We believe that this spirit of collaboration should permeate all local institutions. Cooperation must be the rule and not the exception. All levels of government must work hand in hand. Businesses, not-for-profits and academia must increase their emphasis on the coordination of services to enhance the quality of life for our region. Cooperation must be more than a means to an end, but rather should itself be a meaningful goal that we pursue with fervor.

We will not settle for half-measures or failed leadership. We will not endorse uncoordinated efforts. And we will not accept anything less than a substantive role in the creation and implementation of a regional vision.

We have passion. We have growing numbers. We have distinct ideas for our region. We are the "creative class" and we should shoulder the responsibility of growing our numbers. Our voice will be represented in the public debate. Our voice will be a catalyst for progressive change.

The chicken-and-egg debate is over. It starts with us. The 40 Below Summit has empowered us and left us longing for new avenues through which we can weave ourselves into the civic fabric of our communities.

Where leadership exists, we will support it. Where it does not, we will provide it. In both cases, we will do it together, tied by a common thread – our willingness to make the impossible possible and find solutions to complex problems.

Our desire to make this region the best it can be is a goal that everyone shares – one that we can rally around. But we will not wait to be invited, nor will we wait for others to answer the call. We will lay out our vision and mobilize ourselves to bring in a new era for Central Upstate New York.

## Priority Action

### *40 Below Board Position Effort*

40 Below will work to ensure that the voice of young professionals, artists and entrepreneurs are represented on decision-making bodies across Central Upstate New York. We will work with not-for-profit organizations, planning and review boards and governmental committees across the region to reserve a place at these decision-making tables for those under 40. So far, more than 50 not-for-profit organizations from across the region have already set aside 65 board positions for young professionals who are interested in becoming engaged in the community. Connections are already being made. 40 Below will continue to work to open doors for young, energetic and civic-minded individuals to play active and substantive roles within these community organizations.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify regional not-for-profits boards and other decision-making bodies upon which 40 Belowers might serve;
- Launch an aggressive outreach campaign with partners across the region to promote this initiative and encourage wide-spread regional participation among boards and civic-minded young professionals;
- Actively work to pair interested volunteers with organizations that fit with their interests and expertise;
- Create or identify programs that will prepare new board members for their responsibilities and educate existing board members on how best to utilize young and energetic voices; and,
- Secure the funds and community support necessary for the successful implementation of this program.

It is our goal of 40 Below to have more than 200 such positions set aside for, and filled by, 40 Belowers within one year of the release of this report.

## Arts, Culture, Nightlife & Recreation

*Diversity. Venues. Vibrancy. Visibility. Value.*

### Why we LOVE our region!

"Blossoming arts community – they have good ideas and are hopeful for the future" "Appreciation of Native American communities" "Great non-profits!" "Diverse population. In class, race, religion and political views" "I love all the festivals!" "No shortage of space and talent in the area" "Building development and renovation in downtown Syracuse" "Centrality between big cities" "Armory Square entertainment district" "Diverse offering of entertainment for the size of the city" "New immigrants are staying in CNY in greater numbers" "Lots of recreational and arts opportunities" "We have an infrastructure of interesting historic architecture and rich history"

### Thorns in our side...

"More funding for non-profits" "Lack of acceptance of people of other races, sexual orientation, socio-economic status" "Segregation/Integration of our ethnic communities - we are more polarized than any community I have ever lived in." "No funding for the arts" "No good music venues for regional bands" "Not enough cultural activities that would appeal to younger people" "Skateboarding is not a crime—treat young people with respect" "Hard to meet people socially—seems like only social life is at the bars" "Image of Syracuse of being not cultural" "A city/area with low self-esteem" "Conservative atmosphere" "Fear of taking risks/negative thinking" "Lack of regional identity" "A lot of talent leaving the area" "Cleanliness of the city...the aesthetics and lack of 'welcome w/open arms' feeling."

### Ideas and vision

"We need discounted rent for empty spaces intended for artists & small businesses" "Empty buildings should be filled with creative individuals, artists, local businesses" "Bring youth into decision-making/politics" "Community events that draw together diverse crowds and not just certain ethnic groups" "If you are not already, please fund ThINC, Red House, etc. Keep them alive, they can't do it on their own." "More public art" "More public spaces - parks, promenades, plazas with musicians, artists, vendors" "Build the nation's largest year round indoor/outdoor climbing wall on the side of the State Tower Building. Seriously. Or at least invite climbers from all over the world to Syracuse for a weekend and allow them to do it! You'll get national press and be seen as a cutting edge, risk taking community." "Create an annual music festival that attracts well-known bands from across the country" "Expand bar and club hours until 4 a.m." "Performance/public art in abandoned spaces. Contests, mural painting"



## Overview

We are 40 Below.

We are creative professionals and members of the “super-creative core” that will drive the new economy. We share a common creative ethos that emphasizes individuality, creativity, difference and self-expression. We are working toward building a creative community that recognizes that art and culture are vital not only to our region’s livability, but also to the preparedness of its work force.

We understand that art-infused education is critical to producing the next generation of leaders and workers for the knowledge-based economy. Today, the demand for creativity has created a talent arms race in which our region must be competitive. The arts are an essential component of that strategy.

We believe that public art can create a sense of identity for neighborhoods and entire communities. Installing public art can help create a unique place, a destination, a focal point for activity, a meeting place and a landmark. Public art is also a process where we can invite artists to share their vision and creativity and to surprise us with their own definition of what is possible.

We desire to live in a city whose leadership has an inspired vision for manifesting the culture coveted by creative people. From growing a consortium of private companies, universities and government agencies that will revolutionize the design and construction of the downtown cityscape, to attractive signage and residential streets, to building climbing walls and skate parks within the central business district.

We want new and creative venues to express ourselves. We desire a 24-hour entertainment district that welcomes a wide variety of people and offers diverse experiences. We need affordable housing for emerging artists and entrepreneurs. We must inspire creatives and entrepreneurs to work together and take risks and we must cultivate audiences who are ready to embrace them.

We also see art as a vital tool in our efforts to bring together people of different backgrounds and cultures and increase our understanding and acceptance of our differences and perspectives. Through investments in diverse arts and cultural activities, we believe that we can foster a community that is not just inclusive but open, welcoming and affirming for people of all cultures.

Therefore, we must increase support for the arts at every level. But we must also recognize that ours is a region that is far more culturally and artistically advanced than many realize. Our failure to aggressively market and fully appreciate what we already have is a symptom with an easy cure. We must make it easier to find and take advantage of our cultural and recreational gems. We must promote what we have through a unified channel that is as unique, fun

and “cool” as our many great assets.

We have all of the ingredients for success. We just need to make it happen! Central Upstate New York is primed for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century cultural renaissance and the time to focus on major arts and cultural initiatives is now.

## Priority Action

### *Carry Out a Major Downtown Public Arts Project*

40 Below will lead the effort to initiate or identify a quality public arts project that works to create a sense of identity for Syracuse’s newly minted Downtown Cultural District.

We want creative, stylish, modern, unique and challenging public art installations in our city centers that help us evolve the cores of our region into bright, interesting and distinctive destinations. We will start in Syracuse, but are eager to identify partners and champions for similar efforts throughout Central Upstate.

Our goal is to choose a project that highlights the city as a focal point of activity and to make that project a reality and a success.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this campaign;
- Learn the laws and intricacies of placing public art in Syracuse;
- Identify existing local public art initiatives;
- Research and evaluate quality public arts proposals and entertain new ideas from our working group;
- Select a project to adopt;
- Devise a plan to accomplish the execute the project; and,
- Secure the money and community support needed to accomplish the goal.

It is our goal to have successfully identified and completed a major public art installation in Syracuse and in other cities around the region within one year of the release of this report.

## Appendix I

### 40 Below Priority Action Items

#### 1) *Adaptive Re-Use Task Force*

40 Below will work to pool the energy and resources of our region's young professionals and artists to play an active role in the redevelopment of our urban cores. A task force should be developed to plan and develop new and unique spaces in our downtowns – congregation points for us to interact with a diverse cross-section of our peers. The task force should be charged with physically changing the downtown landscapes by designing, developing, investing, marketing and frequenting our very own building – a music venue, a coffee house, a small movie theater, incubator space for young entrepreneurs, live-work space for artists, a bookstore or all of the above. The task force should seek to identify new and creative uses for vacant and under-used spaces and work to turn concept into reality.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Develop a comprehensive list of end-uses that appeal to 40 Belowers (live-work space, jazz clubs, etc.);
- Develop a list of criteria upon which any redevelopment project should be evaluated (sustainability, safety, location, accessibility, etc.);
- Identify vacant spaces throughout the region that might be suitable for the proposed redevelopment uses;
- Solicit input and assistance from existing developers and determine what resources would be needed to proceed;
- Develop a short and long-term implementation plan to ensure the project's success; and,
- Secure funds and community support to needed to meet the goal.

Through the work of this task force, 40 Below will play an active, leadership role in the development of physical spaces that appeal to a younger demographic. It is our hope within one year of issuing this report, 40 Below will have played a direct role in getting at least one redevelopment project off the ground.

#### 2) *Business Training Scholarships for Young Entrepreneurs*

40 Below will secure funds to provide scholarships to current and prospective young entrepreneurs to attend existing entrepreneurial training programs throughout the region such as Syracuse University's Entrepreneur's Bootcamp. Through this program, 40 Below will ensure that young people who want to start a business are empowered with the knowledge and tools to make that dream a reality. To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify qualified entrepreneurial training programs throughout region;
- Secure funds to provide up to 25 scholarships for entrepreneurs under 40;
- Solicit applications from interested entrepreneurs;
- Develop selection criteria;
- Make scholarship awards; and,
- Provide additional support to prospective entrepreneurs through mentoring or other programming.

Through the work of this task force, it is the goal of 40 Below to have made it possible for 25 or more young entrepreneurs and artists to have attended qualified training programs during the year immediately following the issuing of this report.

### 3) Create an Information Clearinghouse and Leverage Other Marketing Tools

40 Below will work toward the creation and promotion of a website to connect Central Upstaters to each other and provide them comprehensive information about events, activities and opportunities in their neighborhoods and throughout the region. This clearinghouse should be easy to access, easy to use, comprehensive and highly visible throughout the region. It's very existence should help people feel better about their community as they learn of the sheer quantity and quality of experiences the area offers.

The site, which should be developed in cooperation with dozens of regional partners, will be one part of a multi-media marketing effort to foster a positive, dynamic, regional identity. Other initiatives will include support of efforts – such as the guerilla marketing campaign started by SyracuseProps – that bring attention to our region's endless attributes.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify all existing sources of information – as well as gaps in that information – on activities, events and other items of interest to the 40 Below demographic;
- Identify partners willing to assist in creating and marketing a comprehensive events web site;
- Work with SyracuseProps to develop a comprehensive list of pervasive negative stereotypes of our region;
- Based on existing SyracuseProps initiatives, develop marketing slogans and multi-media tools to address and combat these stereotypes;
- Identify creative, low-cost ways to spread these messages throughout the region and beyond;
- Develop a plan for the most effective way to accomplish the task force's goals; and
- Secure funds and the community support necessary for the successful implementation of these programs.

Within one year of issuing this report, it is the goal of 40 Below to have catalyzed the creation of a comprehensive, region-wide information clearinghouse on events and activities as well as expand the SyracuseProps guerilla marketing concept to the entire region.

### 4) 40 Below Board Position Effort

40 Below will work to ensure that the voice of young professionals, artists and entrepreneurs are represented on decision-making bodies across Central Upstate New York. We will work with not-for-profit organizations, planning and review boards and governmental committees across the region to reserve a place at these decision-making tables for those under 40. So far, more than 50 not-for-profit organizations from across the region have already set aside 65 board positions for young professionals who are interested in becoming engaged in the community. Connections are already being made. 40 Below will continue to work to open doors for young, energetic and civic-minded individuals to play active and substantive roles within these community organizations.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this project;
- Identify regional not-for-profits boards and other decision-making bodies upon which 40 Belowers might serve;
- Launch an aggressive outreach campaign with partners across the region to promote this initiative and encourage wide-spread regional participation among boards and civic-minded young professionals;
- Actively work to pair interested volunteers with organizations that fit with their interests and expertise;
- Create or identify programs that will prepare new board members for their responsibilities and educate existing board members on how best to utilize young and energetic voices; and,
- Secure the funds and community support necessary for the successful implementation of this program.

It is our goal of 40 Below to have more than 200 such positions set aside for, and filled by, 40 Belowers within one year of the release of this report.

### 5) *Carry Out a Major Downtown Public Arts Project*

40 Below will lead the effort to initiate or identify a quality public arts project that works to create a sense of identity for Syracuse's newly minted Downtown Cultural District.

We want creative, stylish, modern, unique and challenging public art installations in our city centers that help us evolve the cores of our region into bright, interesting and distinctive destinations. We will start in Syracuse, but are eager to identify partners and champions for similar efforts throughout Central Upstate.

Our goal is to choose a project that highlights the city as a focal point of activity and to make that project a reality and a success.

To accomplish this goal, 40 Below will:

- Create a task force of interested volunteers and community leaders to champion this campaign;
- Learn the laws and intricacies of placing public art in Syracuse;
- Identify existing local public art initiatives;
- Research and evaluate quality public arts proposals and entertain new ideas from our working group;
- Select a project to adopt;
- Devise a plan to accomplish the execute the project; and,
- Secure the money and community support needed to accomplish the goal.

It is our goal to have successfully identified and completed a major public art installation in Syracuse and in other cities around the region within one year of the release of this report.

## Appendix II

### Other Actions Supported By 40 Below

In writing this report, 40 Below organizers set out to produce an action agenda that the group itself – along with the help of the entire under-40 demographic and supportive community leaders of all ages – could begin to implement immediately. As a result, we limited ourselves to five ambitious but achievable “Priority Action” items to focus on.

That leaves scores of recommendations from the 40 Below Summit that also deserve attention. Some of them are items related to 40 Below itself and include:

**Host a second 40 below Summit in 2005.** There is no doubt that the original 40 Below Summit was a resounding success. We must build on that effort and host a second summit that is as timely, energetic and fun as the first.

**Update and improve the 40 Below website** so that it may serve as a useful tool for people looking to get involved in 40 Below initiatives or those who are interested in learning more about these programs.

**Form a 40 Below Executive Alliance** consisting of a diverse group of regional young professionals, artists and entrepreneurs who will serve as the primary implementation vehicle for 40 Below projects.

**Grow the 40 Below mailing list to 2,000 people.** We’re close to 1,000 already and we’ll offer a \$100 prize to the person who signs up the most new names for our mailing list during the course of the next 12 months.

Other key recommendations, although endorsed heartily by 40 Below, may be more effectively handled by other organizations, businesses, governments or quasi-governmental bodies, community groups and/or individual Central Upstaters. Some of those items include:

**Grow the PIE (Philanthropy. Involvement. Empowerment.) project** – is a way for young professionals to leverage their giving dollars to have the greatest impact – to include community foundations that serve areas in Central Upstate beyond Onondaga and Madison counties.

**Develop a task force to recruit some major outdoor recreation competitions** to the region. Bring the X-Games to the Mohawk Valley. Get the Gorge Games to Ithaca. The proposed kayaking park in the heart of downtown Auburn is exactly the type of thing we want to see happen. This region was built for adventure racing. If established races won’t come, we should build our own. One keystone event can be the foundation for a more vibrant eco-tourism industry.

**Establish permanent and aesthetically inviting outdoor music venues** in places such as Clinton Square and the Everson courtyard. Then fill those venues with festivals and concerts. Building on events already in Syracuse, we should add new ones, such as an All Nations Festival that uses dance, music and art to celebrate our diversity.

**Color the city!** Launch a public art program and fill our cities with murals, creative lighting, installations and sculpture.

**Round up interested entrepreneurs and investors** and put together a comprehensive tour of available buildings in the downtowns throughout our region. Arrange to get inside many of our historic buildings so that they can see, first hand, the potential that exists in our building stock. Allow the public to participate too. These spaces need to be seen, not boarded up. They need to be showcased if they are ever going to be redeveloped.

**Create a print and online directory of all local businesses and what they offer.** Use this to promote local businesses and get people to choose local.

**Create a print and online directory of resources for people looking to start a business** or enhance their own job skills. This could include training programs, jobs (promoted to local schools) and internship programs.

**Bring venture capitalists to Central Upstate** and pool local money for use by start-up businesses. Consider dedicating a small percentage of sales-tax proceeds to start-up businesses.

**Create bike paths and walkways** connecting the areas colleges and universities to the region’s city centers. Whether they be from LeMoyne or SUNY Canton, they should be well lit, well marked and well patrolled.

**Launch a regional lifestyle magazine** that focuses on the rich recreational and cultural opportunities throughout the region and celebrates our unique way of life.

**Develop a Syracuse Nightlife District** that doesn’t close with the bars but rather remains vibrant after 2 a.m. with cafes, diners, dance clubs and after-hours lounges.

**Make public transportation user-friendly.** This includes the development of a Centro-wide map (which does not currently exist), the reinvigoration of OnTrack or the building of a light-rail system, and the creation and promotion of more park-and-ride sites. Let’s start by creating and promoting convenient, safe and affordable transportation that links our colleges and universities with the region’s city centers.

**Encourage other institutions to follow Syracuse University's lead into our city centers.** Colgate, actually, did this first to the great benefit of its students and the village of Hamilton. Let's encourage and support these investments across the region. How about a hospitality school, maybe in conjunction with Onondaga Community College, in the Hotel Syracuse?

**Have the area's universities and local companies team up** to match seniors and graduate students with available jobs and undergraduates with internships.

**Develop a central calendar of all regional job fairs** and encourage local businesses to attend, particularly those on college campuses.

**Apply some elbow grease to the Gateway projects** around Syracuse. Redesign and develop the I-81 median just outside of Syracuse (North and South). Raise the funds for a beautiful new sign that welcomes people to our community. Buy flowers and find volunteers to plant them in the Spring.

**Encourage 40 Belowers to run for office** and provide training to those who are interested.

**Create an emerging entrepreneurs' club** so existing and prospective small business owners can work together on marketing, raising capital, finding affordable space and luring skilled workers.

**Welcome new faces to our community.** We need to embrace diversity and new faces and enhance the newcomers' views of their new city. Once we have established a central point of information, website or organization, we can simply incorporate welcome packets to our marketing plan and direct newcomers to where they want to go.

The final word is this: any idea that improves the quality of life in Central Upstate is a worthwhile endeavor.

## Appendix III

### 40 Below Executive Alliance

Name	Organization
Patrick Ahern	Metlife Financial Services
Taylor Atseff	The Post-Standard
Jessica Crawford	Syracuse University
Julius Edwards	Hilbrook Detention Center
Michael Frame	MDA
David Greenfield	UBS Financial
Mark Lent	CNY Sparc
Niles Leuthold	ThINC
Greg Munno	The Post Standard
Jennifer Owens	The Community Foundation
Lisa Raposo	SUNY Training Center
Jake Roberts	ThINC
Meg Sherman	Contemporary Personnel Staffing
Robert Simpson	MDA
Leroy Thomas	Alt. Digital Entertainment
Nichole Wenderlich	Catholic Charities
Daniel Young	MDA



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Cornell University	Syracuse Opera
Crouse Hospital	Syracuse Parks & Recreation
Dolphin Technology	Syracuse Stage
Excellus BlueCross BlueShield	Syracuse Symphony Orchestra
Heuber-Breuer Construction	Syracuse University
Holy Shirt	Syracuse University Athletics
Hopko Designs	The Everson Museum
KeyBank	The Penn Traffic Company
Knowledge Systems & Research	The Post-Standard
LeMoyne College	Time Warner Cable
Metropolitan Development Association	Visual Technologies
NEXTEL	

## Contact Us

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### Credit

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