

Housing & Hotel Reuse Option Analysis

October 2025

INTRODUCTION

This Housing and Hotel Analysis aims to improve understanding of the current and projected gaps in the residential and tourist accommodations landscape in the City of Rome. This information supplements the ongoing Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Redevelopment Study for the 112 Columbus Street property, providing insights to the types of development that are needed in the community. Key Findings:

- Though projections indicate that the City of Rome's population will decline over the next five years, recent economic development project announcements, like the new Chobani plant, are likely to bring new residents and workers to the area that are not accounted for in official projections.
 - Development driven population increases would also increase the number of households in the City. As a result, demand for housing is also likely to increase.
- In the City, 42.7% of renters and 17.1% of homeowners are burdened by housing costs, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their annual household income on housing. This indicates that the rental market in particular is not sufficiently addressing the needs of residents.
 - According to Zillow data, the average rent in the City of Rome is \$1,250 when considering all housing types. A household would need to earn \$50,000 annually to not be cost-burdened by this level of rent. However, 42.3% of households in the City earn less than \$50,000 annually. This means that nearly half of the City's population would be cost-burdened by the average rental rate.
- While homes in Oneida County are more affordable than the State on average, they are not as accessible for many local residents: an annual household income of \$65,440 would be needed to afford the median home sale price in the County. The

majority (62.8%) of households in the City earn under \$75,000 annually and thus would struggle to afford the median home in the current market.

- Market vacancy (homes that are vacant due to being for rent or sale) is about 3.6% in the City. A healthy housing vacancy rate is generally considered to be about 5%. The City's vacancy rate therefore suggests a housing shortage.
- Small homes (400–1,000 sf) and tiny homes (<400 sf) could provide more attainable ownership and rental options for households earning under \$50,000 annually. Zoning and regulatory changes may be necessary to fully realize this potential.
- Hotel demand in the Utica-Rome market has stabilized since the pandemic, with occupancy, rates, and revenue showing steady growth. However, supply has been flat with no new hotels opening in Rome since 2014, though limited additions are underway regionally.

Recommendations

- To address housing affordability and supply gaps, the City should pursue a housing strategy that expands attainable housing options for households.
 - Small homes (400–1,000 sf) and tiny homes (<400 sf) represent a cost-effective and flexible solution that can increase ownership and rental opportunities. Realizing this potential will likely require zoning and regulatory updates to allow for smaller units, infill development, and alternative housing formats.
 - A pilot program for a small/tiny home development would demonstrate feasibility and generate momentum for broader implementation, as well as illuminate key obstacles to this type of housing that could be mitigated to improve future development processes.
 - While the intent of the current R-2 Residential zoning matches this use, the City should consider modifying the dimensional standards for this type of project. The current standards are suited to single- and two-family dwellings, but smaller lots and setbacks would maximize the opportunity for these smaller units.
- The City of Rome and surrounding MSA have limited hotel options. A strategic new hotel development would bring more visitors to key areas of the City and mitigate demand for Airbnbs and short-term rentals.
 - The 112 Columbus Avenue site is not ideal for a hotel due to its location within a neighborhood and just south of an industrial site. However, it does have reasonable proximity to the waterfront area and other recreational

resources. If a hotel were to be considered for the site, the most viable type would be an upper-midscale economy hotel that caters to business travelers, middle-income families, and perhaps traveling sports teams should an indoor sports complex also be developed in the City. This use would also not comply with existing zoning of the site, and as such would require a zoning adjustment or variance of some kind.

- The City of Rome does not currently have a higher-end boutique hotel—this type of hotel would be a good fit for a site in the waterfront area of the Erie Canal. This could be particularly viable if done in conjunction with a larger area redevelopment plan that provided additional visitor amenities in the waterfront area.

Data Note

Data included in the following analysis was sourced from the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau, Esri, Lightcast, and CoStar. This data includes estimates and projections that can be imperfect in nature. However, it paints a valuable picture of trends.

Market Area

The following sections cover three geographies: the City of Rome, Oneida County, and New York State.

Developments and Policies

The City of Rome is a beacon of revitalization in the State. Numerous significant economic development projects have come to fruition or been announced in recent years, both within the City and in the surrounding areas. These projects will bring new residents to the region, and a diverse range of housing that is affordable across all income levels will be needed to accommodate them.

As the City continues to attract investments, the housing and hotel markets will continue to feel stress from current and new demand. Below are brief overviews of current and upcoming demand drivers, as well as new and potential regulatory constraints in New York State that could exacerbate challenges related to housing and hotel development.

Demand Drivers

Chobani

In the spring of 2025, Chobani broke ground on a 1.4 million square foot dairy processing plant—a \$1.2 billion investment. The project is the largest investment in the history of U.S. natural food manufacturing. Located within the Triangle site at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park, the facility will be able to produce more than one billion pounds of dairy products annually, and it will bring more than 1,000 jobs to the City. The project will also significantly impact dairy farms and related employment in the state because Chobani expects to increase its current purchasing six-fold to six billion pounds of raw milk annually. The large number of new jobs that will result from the project will undoubtedly create new demand for housing and hotel accommodations, both within the City of Rome and in nearby communities.

Griffiss Business and Technology Park

Griffiss Business and Technology Park was established in 1995 on the footprint of a former Air Force Base, and portions of the base still function as a regional airport. The park spans 3,500 acres and is divided into seven different development districts, all with various available spaces for target industries of technology, manufacturing, aviation, office, education, and recreation. There are a number of developable parcels of varying sizes still available.

Micron

To meet the demand of the Micron semiconductor manufacturing facility being constructed in Clay, NY, component part and machinery manufacturing facilities are likely to establish themselves in the surrounding region including Oneida County. New supply-chain businesses would create new job opportunities in the City, thus creating a greater demand for housing and hotel accommodations. As Micron and supply-chain employees move to the region, they will need a range of housing options. These new households will also drive demand in other economic sectors, like retail, recreation, food service, education, etc., thus providing the basis for additional development across industries.. Further, other household members of Micron employees may seek employment opportunities in the other industries present in the City and surrounding area.

NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub

In addition to the Micron development, Oneida County and the City of Rome are well-located to take advantage of the NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub that will stretch from Buffalo to Syracuse. The Tech Hub “seeks to shift the trajectory of Upstate New York via the formation of a globally leading semiconductor cluster which designs and delivers semiconductor solutions for the region, the nation, and the world.”¹ While the official Tech Hub region does not include Rome, semiconductor and nanotechnology innovation already occurring in Rome positions the City as a potential connector between the Tech Hub and Albany where additional activity in the sector is also occurring. The resulting investments and supply chain development will open up new opportunities for the City to become a center for innovation, as well as house workers in the industry.

Regulatory Considerations

DEC Wetland Regulations

New wetland regulations went into effect January 1, 2025. These new regulations are expected to expand the acreage of wetlands regulated by the NYS DEC, and they also change the process for jurisdictional determination. Changes include requiring regulatory oversight of wetlands of any size that meet just one of eleven criteria, one of which includes

¹ NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub, U.S. Economic Development Administration. (n.d.). <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/regional-technology-and-innovation-hubs/2023/NY-SMART-I-Corridor-Tech-Hub>

being “located within or adjacent to an urban area, as defined and identified by the United States Census Bureau.”² This means that even a small wetland area on a parcel within the City, along with a 100-foot buffer, will now be subject to DEC oversight and regulation. Further, the process to obtain a jurisdictional determination may take longer and be more costly to developers than with prior practices. These changes could cause a shift in development practices and property owner expectations for assessments, as well as development timelines and construction costs. For example, it could shift developers to move away from infill development and density toward development of areas outside the urban area.

Building Codes

In 2025, the NYS Fire Prevention and Building Code Council considered a policy to require automatic fire sprinklers in new homes throughout the State. Following opposition from real estate and home-building groups, which cited the significant costs the mandate would add to already-expensive home construction, the Council did not pass the proposed mandate. Sprinkler systems can cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000, and construction of a new home already costs between \$400,000 and \$450,000.³ Additionally, sprinkler systems rely on public water infrastructure. Other costs that developers would contend with and likely pass on to the end consumer include permits for the sprinkler systems, on-site water storage, backflow preventers, switching and monitoring devices, and system maintenance and testing. The New York State Builders Association estimates that mandating automatic fire sprinklers in new homes will force a 3-5% increase in home purchase prices.⁴

While the proposed mandate for fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family homes was not approved by the Council, New York State adopted the International Codes set by the International Code Council, which mandates automatic fire sprinklers in all new townhomes on municipal water systems. Townhomes, which are often a crucial and missing housing type in many communities, will likely become more expensive to build, and will subsequently become more expensive for the end consumer.

² Express terms 6 NYCRR Part 664. (n.d.). <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/part664expressterms.pdf>

³ New York State Builders Association challenges proposed Fire Sprinkler mandate. NAHB. (n.d.). <https://www.nahb.org/blog/2024/10/new-york-state-builders-association-challenges-proposed-fire-sprinkler-mandate>

⁴ Housing & Feasibility of Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems Study. (2024). <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/advocacy/docs/top-priorities/codes/ATT-2-Intro-and-Exec-Summary.pdf?rev=c362eaba450344499d6b8b759b5e4bdf&hash=35678666091F4FBC12BB99C3024C0AE3>

Fossil Fuel Equipment

By 2026, any new housing development seven stories and under will not be permitted to have any fossil fuel equipment. In 2029, this regulation will extend to all new construction. While the policy will have a positive impact regarding climate change mitigation (assuming power is generated through “clean” methods), it will also make it more costly—at least initially—for developers to build new homes.⁵ Additionally, this policy may dictate whether and where there will be enough power on the grid to support housing development. It is important to reiterate that this regulation only applies to new construction and not renovations, repairs, or equipment replacements in existing buildings. Additionally, the bill exempts certain uses, including manufactured homes.⁶ In the long term, these energy changes will lead to cost savings for building owners. In the meantime, however, this policy represents another regulation that threatens to exacerbate existing challenges in new housing construction.

⁵ Residential & commercial new construction. NYSERDA. (n.d.). <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/New-Construction>

⁶ Urban Green Council. (2024, May 28). Decoding New York State's all-electric new buildings law. <https://www.urbangreencouncil.org/decoding-new-york-states-all-electric-new-buildings-law/>

Current Conditions

Demographic Overview

The population of the City of Rome decreased by 1,589 individuals or 4.7% since 2010, which is a slightly greater rate than in Oneida County. Over the next five years, the population is anticipated to stabilize with only a very slight decrease of 0.5% estimated, which is significantly less than in the County. However, these population projections likely do not account for economic development projects like Micron and Chobani that are expected to bring new jobs and residents to the City.

In contrast, the number of households in the City saw a slight increase since 2010, growing by 0.9%. The number of households in the City are anticipated to continue growing over the next five years, which in part can be attributed to shrinking household sizes. Fewer individuals constitute each household now, meaning that the number of households can increase despite decreases in population. Development-driven population growth will likely result in a greater number of households than represented here. Naturally, this will result in increased housing demand, which tiny and small homes can help to accommodate.

Demographic Fundamentals

POPULATION				
	2010	2024	Change	% Change
City of Rome	33,725	32,136	(1,589)	(4.7%)
Oneida County	234,878	226,008	(8,870)	(3.8%)
New York	19,378,097	19,924,635	546,538	2.8%
PROJECTED POPULATION				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	32,136	31,985	(151)	(0.5%)
Oneida County	226,008	222,532	(3,476)	(1.5%)
New York	19,924,635	19,836,746	(87,889)	(0.4%)
HOUSEHOLDS				
	2010	2024	Change	% Change
City of Rome	13,526	13,641	115	0.9%
Oneida County	93,028	94,069	1,041	1.1%
New York	7,317,754	7,705,781	388,027	5.3%
PROJECTED HOUSEHOLDS				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	13,641	13,830	189	1.4%
Oneida County	94,069	94,112	43	0.0%
New York	7,705,781	7,795,409	89,628	1.2%
HOUSEHOLD SIZE				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	2.22	2.18	(0.04)	(1.8%)
Oneida County	2.28	2.25	(0.03)	(1.3%)
New York	2.51	2.47	(0.04)	(1.6%)

Source: Esri

The median age in the City of Rome is 40.6, which is younger than the County but older than the State. The population is expected to continue aging in the next five years, increasing by just over a year in both the City of Rome and Oneida County. As the population ages and the senior cohort grows, demand for smaller, easier-to-maintain homes will increase.

The City of Rome has the lowest median home value of the geographies, at \$157,173. However, the median home value is expected to increase the most (by percent change) in the City compared to the County and State, at 15.5%.

Additionally, the City of Rome has the lowest median household income of the comparison geographies, at \$57,154. Over the next five years, it is expected to increase the least, by only \$4,604 or 8.1%.

The City's low median household income and median home value are consistent with trends for urban areas: higher-earning individuals and higher-value homes tend to be just outside of cities. That said, the median home value in the City is expected to increase at nearly double the rate of the median household income. In contrast, household income in the County and State are expected to keep pace with increasing home values in those regions.

Additionally, the actual dollar increase for the median home value in the City is expected to be greater than the dollar change for the County, despite home values being lower in the City. The bigger anticipated jump in home values matched with lower and slower growing incomes in the City could be problematic for City residents in the years to come, who may find that they are not able to afford the increased property taxes that can come along with increased home values.

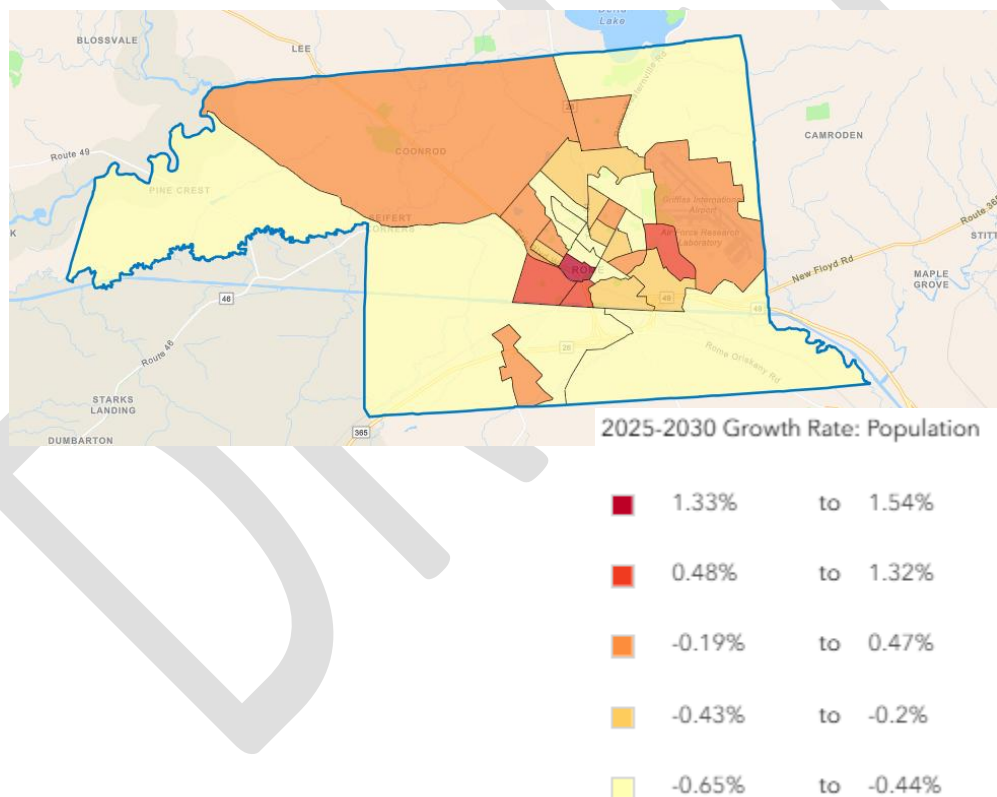
Demographic Fundamentals

MEDIAN AGE				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	40.6	41.7	1.1	2.7%
Oneida County	41.5	42.6	1.1	2.7%
New York	39.6	40.8	1.2	3.0%
MEDIAN HOME VALUE				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	\$157,173	\$181,526	\$24,353	15.5%
Oneida County	\$210,594	\$228,848	\$18,254	8.7%
New York	\$469,072	\$540,201	\$71,129	15.2%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
	2024	2029	Change	% Change
City of Rome	\$57,154	\$61,758	\$4,604	8.1%
Oneida County	\$63,736	\$70,094	\$6,358	10.0%
New York	\$83,109	\$95,658	\$12,549	15.1%

Source: Esri

The map below shows the annual projected population growth rate by Census block groups in the City (blue outline) from 2025 to 2030. The City is expected to see population growth downtown along the Erie Canal, as well as around the Griffiss Business and Technology Park. The City is expected to see modest population declines along the outskirts of its boundary.

While the population figures represented in the map may not account for local economic development projects that are anticipated to boost population, the map is helpful in showing the areas most likely to be impacted by an influx of residents and workers. New residents would likely concentrate in darker areas (higher population growth). Tiny and small homes may help accommodate population growth in high-growth areas.



Household Income Distribution

Compared to the other geographies, the City of Rome has the highest percentage of low-income (<\$25,000) earners, at 24.1%, and middle-income (\$50,000-\$100,000) earners, at 35.9%. It follows, then, that the City also has a lower share of high-income (>\$100,000) earners, at 21.9%.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
<\$15,000	14.5%	11.0%	10.4%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	9.6%	8.2%	6.3%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	7.3%	8.9%	6.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	10.9%	11.2%	8.9%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	20.5%	16.6%	13.9%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15.4%	12.7%	11.5%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	13.4%	17.3%	16.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	4.7%	8.7%	10.0%
\$200,000+	3.8%	5.5%	16.1%

Source: Esri

Housing Units

The majority of homes in the City of Rome are single-family detached (59.5%). About a fifth (17.8%) of housing units are multi-family (5+ units), which is a greater share than the County (11%) but less than the State (34.4%).

Most homes in the City (73.4%) were built prior to 1970, meaning that there is a higher likelihood that they were built with hazardous materials like lead and asbestos. This is the highest share of pre-1970 homes of the comparison geographies. Additionally, very few of the City's housing units have been constructed since 2010.

It is interesting to note that while Rome had higher percentages of housing units built in the 1940s and 1950s, the City began to lag behind the County in the construction of new units in the 1960s. This was exacerbated in the 1980s and continues to today. Sprawl may be one contributing factor to a lower number of homes built within the City. Recently, the high cost of building new homes and regulatory hurdles may have also contributed to the low

HOUSING UNITS BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
Total	15,380	105,285	8,494,452
1, detached	59.5%	63.4%	41.5%
1, attached	1.6%	2.0%	5.4%
2	12.2%	11.3%	9.9%
3 or 4	6.9%	6.9%	6.8%
5 to 9	3.6%	3.4%	5.2%
10 to 19	4.2%	1.9%	4.3%
20 to 49	2.3%	1.7%	8.4%
50 or more	7.7%	4.0%	16.5%
Mobile home	2.0%	5.4%	2.1%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Esri

HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
Built 2020 or later	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Built 2010 to 2019	2.9%	3.8%	4.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	1.3%	5.1%	6.2%
Built 1990 to 1999	2.9%	7.0%	6.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	7.9%	8.8%	7.6%
Built 1970 to 1979	11.5%	9.3%	9.8%
Built 1960 to 1969	9.4%	11.5%	12.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	22.5%	15.2%	14.4%
Built 1940 to 1949	11.1%	7.1%	7.8%
Built 1939 or earlier	30.4%	32.0%	30.9%

Source: Esri

number of units built since 2010. Tiny and small homes offer a potential path to increasing the number of new housing units built in the City of Rome, thus limiting sprawl and providing more housing opportunities in the urban area.

Housing Tenure

Nearly half of homes in the City of Rome are owner-occupied, at 47.7%, though the renter-occupied share is nearly equivalent, at 42.5%. About 9.8% of units are considered vacant. Of the vacant units, the most (51%) fall within the “Other” category, which includes housing units that are vacant due to foreclosure, legal proceedings, extended absence, personal/family reasons, are being prepared to rent or sell, or are being repaired. Another 10.8% of vacant units are considered seasonal or occasionally residences.

Only about a third of vacant units (about 539) are vacant due to being available for rent or sale, meaning the market vacancy is only about 3.6%. A housing market is generally considered healthy at a market vacancy of 5%, indicating a possible housing shortage. That said, the City has a higher market vacancy than the County and State, which are both at about 2.3%.

HOUSING TENURE, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
Owner-Occupied	47.7%	56.8%	45.8%
Renter-Occupied	42.5%	31.9%	43.6%
Vacant Units, Rate	9.8%	11.4%	10.6%
Total Housing Units	15,124	106,151	8,622,250

Source: Esri

VACANT UNITS, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
Total Vacant Units	1,654	10,924	889,929
For rent	20.3%	16.0%	16.0%
Rented, not occupied	0.7%	2.1%	4.4%
For sale only	12.3%	6.3%	5.8%
Sold, not occupied	4.9%	2.5%	4.3%
Seasonal/occasional	10.8%	31.4%	35.4%
For migrant workers	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Other	51.0%	41.7%	33.8%

Source: Esri

Cost-Burdened Households

The table below provides an overview of current households that are cost-burdened. A household is considered cost-burdened if its housing expenditures are more than 30% of the household income. This is further broken down by renter- vs. owner-occupied households. The City of Rome has a higher proportion of cost-burdened households at 29% than the County's 25%, but a lower proportion than the State's 36.9%. In the City, renters are significantly more likely to be cost-burdened compared to owner-occupied households, with 42.7% of renters versus only 17.1% of owners being cost-burdened. For both types of households, those in the City are slightly more likely to be cost-burdened than in the County, but less likely than in the State.

Cost-Burdened Households			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Total occupied households	13,859	94,361	7,668,956
Cost-burdened households (all occupied)	3,953	23,657	2,828,301
Percent of occupied households that are cost-burdened	28.5%	25.1%	36.9%
Total owner-occupied households	7,681	63,966	4,164,793
Cost-burdened owner-occupied households	1,316	10,906	1,122,228
Percent of owner-occupied households that are cost-burdened	17.1%	17.0%	26.9%
Total renter occupied households	6,178	30,395	3,504,163
Cost-burdened renter-occupied households	2,637	12,751	1,706,073
Percent of renter-occupied households that are cost-burdened	42.7%	42.0%	48.7%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, MRB Group

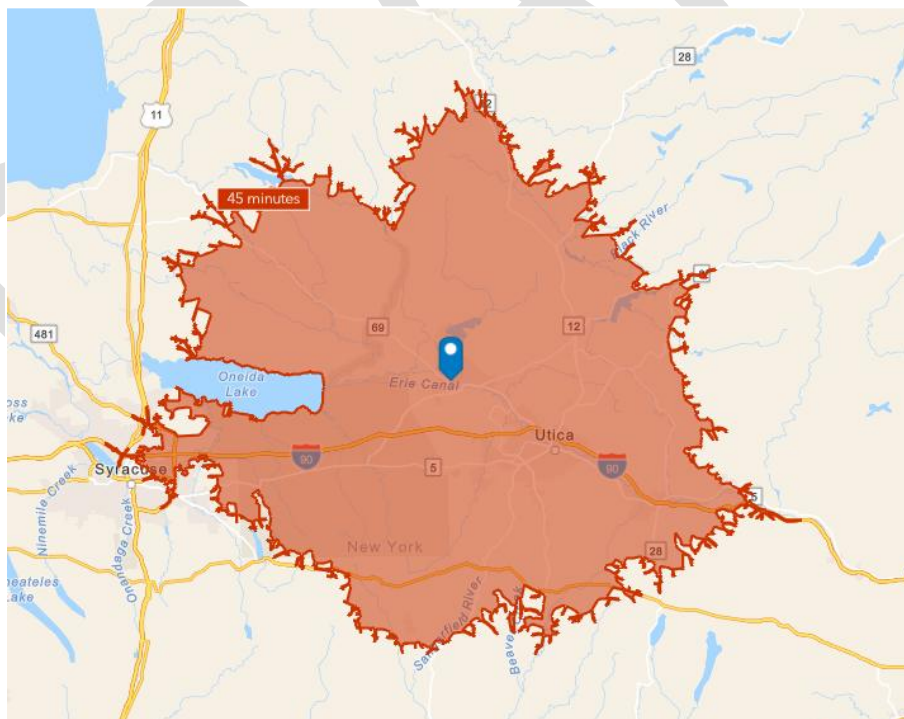
Occupations by Area Median Income

Area median income (AMI) is “the midpoint of a specific area’s income distribution.”

Oneida County’s AMI is based on the Utica-Rome metropolitan area, which may inflate the AMI compared to what it would be if it were based solely on households in Oneida County. Organizations and state and local governments use the AMI measure to dedicate funding for regulated “affordable housing” units—those units that are tied to federal and/or state funding and contractual agreements—and determine eligibility for unit occupancy.

For the purpose of this report, we will use the term “housing that is affordable” to refer to housing units that are priced such that a household will not be cost-burdened at a specific household income level. This term will not refer only to regulated affordable housing described above, but will be applied across income levels.

Below, types of occupations are listed in terms of their average annual wages and how that compares to AMI for a 2-person household in Oneida County. This will provide a picture of the categories of workers who may struggle to afford housing within each income bracket. Note that the geography used for this analysis was a 45-minute drive radius (pictured below) from the City of Rome, given the workforce commuting patterns.



45-Minute Drive Time from the City of Rome

About 11% of jobs in the 45-minute radius of the City pay under 50% of the two-person AMI of \$71,200, or less than \$35,600, with workers earning from about \$33,600 to \$35,200 annually. These jobs afford workers a maximum of \$890 per month for housing to avoid being cost-burdened and are concentrated in the following occupations:

- Personal Care and Service Occupations
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
- Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations

More specifically, housing that is affordable to individuals making less than 50% AMI would support single-earner households who are animal caretakers; recreation workers; food preparation workers; hosts and hostesses; farmworkers and laborers; agricultural workers; and more.

Jobs that pay between 50% and 80% (\$57,000) of the AMI make up the majority (57%) of jobs in the 45-minute radius and afford workers housing costs of about \$890 to \$1,425 each month. These include:

- Community and Social Service Occupations
- Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
- Construction and Extraction Occupations
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations
- Office and Administrative Support Occupations
- Production Occupations
- Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
- Military-only Occupations
- Healthcare Support Occupations
- Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
- Sales and Related Occupations

Housing that is affordable to individuals making between 50% and 80% of the AMI would support healthcare social workers; marriage and family therapists; floral, graphic, and interior designers; entertainers; photographers; personal care aides; medical assistants; landscapers; retail and salespersons; clerks; secretaries; carpenters; electricians; construction workers; computer technicians; mechanics; bus and truck drivers; and more.

Jobs that pay, on average, between 80% and 120% (\$85,440) of the AMI make up a quarter of jobs in the 45-minute radius and afford workers housing costs of about \$1,425 to \$2,140 per month. These occupations include:

- Computer and Mathematical Occupations
- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
- Legal Occupations
- Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
- Protective Service Occupations
- Educational Instruction and Library Occupations

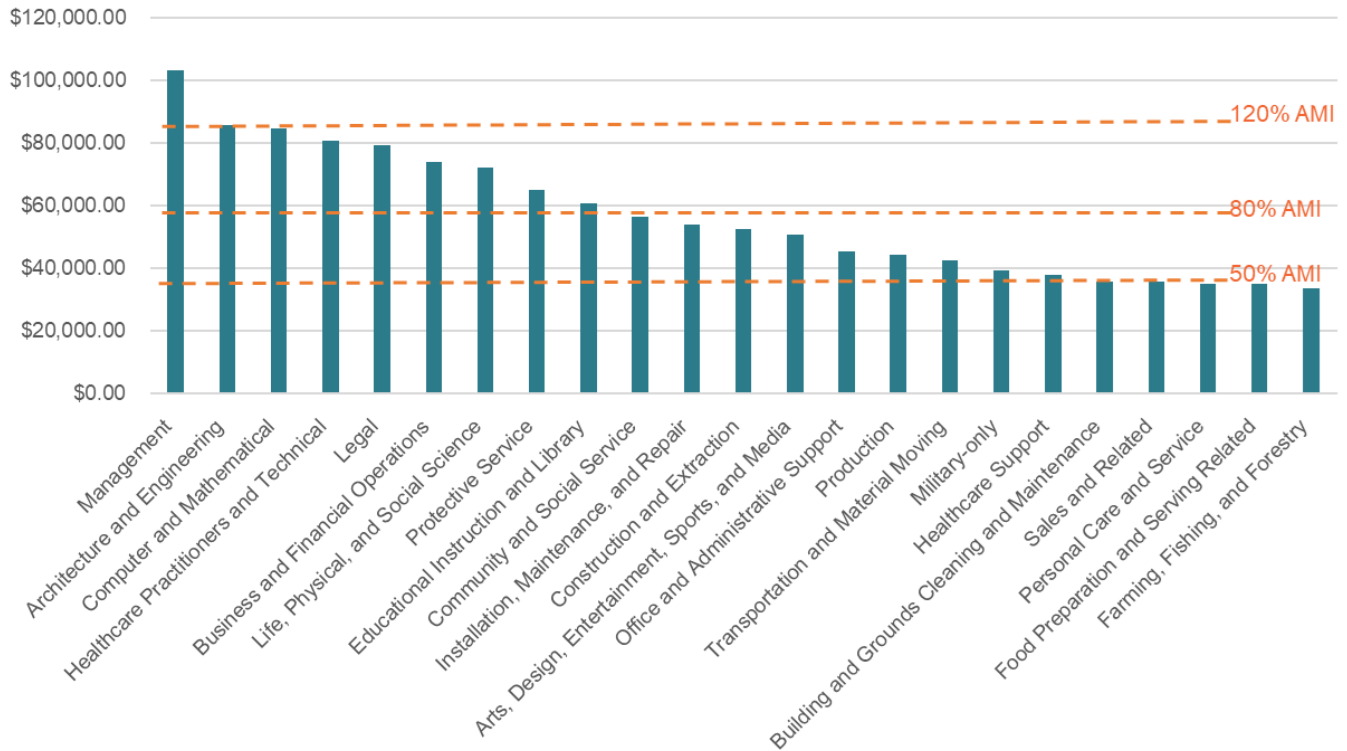
Housing that is affordable to individuals in this income range would support accountants; financial advisors; data scientists; environmental scientists; paralegals; teachers; doctors and surgeons; firefighters and more.

Jobs that pay above 120% of the AMI make up just 6.6% of jobs in the 45-minute radius and afford workers housing costs of about \$2,140 and up. These occupations include:

- Management Occupations
- Architecture and Engineering Occupations

The chart on the next page shows how the median annual earnings for different occupations compare to AMI.

Median Annual Earnings by Occupation, 2024 45-minute Drive Time Radius



Housing Tenure by Household Income

The table below shows occupied housing units by household income and tenure. The City of Rome has the smallest proportion of high-earning (\$100,000+ annual household income) households at 25%. The majority of these high-earning households, 81%, own their housing. However, this is a smaller share than in the County. This could be a matter of preference (e.g. someone attracted to a population center may be more likely to prefer renting) and/or could be due to housing market conditions (e.g. a lack of available single-family homes available for sale).

The largest share of households in the City are lower-income (less than \$50,000 annual household income). Two-thirds of these households rent, which is a much higher proportion than in the County but on-par with the State. This is indicative of a lack of single-family housing stock available within the budgets of these households. The same could be said for the next income bracket of households earning \$50,000 to \$99,999, which have smaller ownership shares than the County or State. Rental units that accommodate households at these income levels would expand offerings for those working in the arts, hospitality, and service occupations to both work and live in the City of Rome. Tiny and small homes offer another option for households in these income levels, should they desire homeownership.

Housing options for these income groups would help to increase density and contribute to improved quality of life and downtown vibrancy.

Housing Tenure by Household Income			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Total occupied housing units	13,859	94,361	7,668,956
<\$50,000	44.6%	36.6%	31.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	17.0%	17.0%	13.8%
\$75,000-\$99,999	13.8%	13.9%	11.4%
\$100,000+	24.7%	32.5%	43.3%
Owner-occupied housing units	7,681	63,966	4,164,793
<\$50,000	34.5%	46.9%	34.0%
\$50,000-\$74,999	58.6%	67.8%	49.6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	72.8%	76.6%	56.0%
\$100,000+	81.4%	87.5%	70.1%
Renter-occupied housing units	6,178	30,395	3,504,163
<\$50,000	65.5%	53.1%	66.0%
\$50,000-\$74,999	41.4%	32.2%	50.4%
\$75,000-\$99,999	27.2%	23.4%	44.0%
\$100,000+	18.6%	12.5%	29.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, MRB Group

Rental Unit Affordability

The data in the table to the right shows the median gross rents in 2024. These estimates are based on American Community Survey data collection and generally reflect rents in currently

occupied units rather than units on the market. As such, sometimes the figures do not reflect the reality of what those looking for rentals see in the market. However, this data is still useful for understanding general housing trends in each geography.

According to this data, the median gross rent in the City of Rome was \$867 in 2024. About 52.7% of reported renter-occupied housing units in the City had rents under \$900. The City's median gross rent is only affordable—below 30% of household income—for households earning at least \$34,680 annually. About 31.4% of households in the City earn below \$35,000 each year and thus would be burdened by median gross rental costs.

According to Zillow data, the average rent in the City of Rome is \$1,250 for all housing types.⁷ This would require an income of \$50,000 to avoid being cost burdened, and 42.3% of households in the City earn below that figure and could not afford this rent.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING, 2024			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	New York
Median Gross Rent	\$867	\$917	\$1,507
Household Income Threshold	\$34,680	\$36,680	\$60,280

Source: Esri; MRB Group

⁷ Zillow data is likely more current, and it is based on rental listings so is more indicative of what it would cost to look for a rental unit in the current market. Alternatively, the ACS data would include all rented units, including those that may be long-term renters with lower rent rates.

Home Ownership Affordability

The median home sale price in 2024 for Oneida County was \$210,000, just over half of the median sale price in the State. An annual household income of \$65,440 would be needed to afford the median sale price in the County. As mentioned elsewhere, the majority (62.8%) of households earn under \$75,000 annually, and thus would struggle to afford the median home in the County in the current market. While the County homes may be more affordable than the State, they are not as accessible for many local residents.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING, 2024		
	Oneida County	New York
Median Sale Price - 2024	\$210,000	\$415,000
10% Down Payment	\$21,000	\$41,500
Remaining Balance	\$189,000	\$373,500
Average Mortgage @7% for 30 Years	\$1,257	\$2,485
Estimated Additional Costs*	\$379	\$494
Estimated Monthly Mortgage Costs	\$1,636	\$2,979
Household Income Threshold	\$65,440	\$119,160

*Include Zillow estimated insurance, PMI, and taxes

Source: Esri; NYSAR 2024 Annual Report; Zillow Mortgage Calculator; MRB Group

Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value

As shown in the table to the right, the City of Rome has a much higher proportion of lower-value, owner-occupied homes compared to the County and NYS. Half (49.9%) of homes in the City are valued below \$125,000. There are few owner-occupied homes at higher values, with only 9.2% of units valued above \$300,000. This starkly contrasts with the proportion of high-value homes in the County and State, at 16.8% and 58.4%, respectively.

It should be noted that median home values are often not an accurate reflection of what home buyers are experiencing in the market. Values are more similar to assessments, which may lag behind the active market.

Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Value, 2023			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
<\$50,000	7.1%	7.2%	3.9%
\$50,000-\$79,999	10.6%	6.1%	3.2%
\$80,000-\$124,999	32.2%	19.6%	7.8%
\$125,000-\$199,999	27.2%	27.6%	13.2%
\$200,000-\$299,999	13.5%	22.5%	13.5%
\$300,000-\$399,999	4.0%	8.7%	9.9%
\$400,000+	5.2%	8.1%	48.5%

Source: Esri

Housing Construction

Housing affordability remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the City of Rome, particularly as rising construction costs continue to push new single-family homes out of reach for most households. In Oneida County, the median home size in 2024 was 1,648 square feet, up from a low of 1,590 in 2022.⁸ Traditional homes, even when modestly sized, require significant financial resources to build and purchase, limiting access primarily to high-income earners or those who qualify for heavily subsidized programs. To create a more attainable housing market that meets the needs of a diverse population, the City must explore alternatives that balance cost, livability, and compatibility with existing neighborhoods. Two promising strategies are the development of small homes (400–1,000 square feet) and tiny homes (under 400 square feet). While each option comes with its own set of benefits and challenges, both represent opportunities to expand housing choice, increase density, and support affordability goals in ways that traditional single-family construction cannot.

New Single-Family Construction Affordability

In New York, a new home costs somewhere between \$200 and \$350 per square foot to build and most market-rate homes range from 2,400 to 2,600 square feet.⁹ Multiplied out, this means it costs anywhere from \$480,000 to \$910,000 to build a new single-family home. Only the wealthiest households in the City would be able to bear this price tag. Even affordable home builders—those who use subsidies to get buyers into homes, like Home Headquarters in Syracuse, NY—struggle with the cost of construction. Home Headquarters spends, on average, \$375,000 to \$400,000 on ~1,600 square-foot single-family homes and sells them to income-qualified buyers at less than half this cost.¹⁰

On the other side of the market are home buyers. To afford a \$480,000 house without being cost-burdened, a household must earn about \$130,000 annually. Data suggests that only 8.5% of households in the City earn above \$150,000; the percentage earning above \$130,000 annually is likely only marginally higher. However, assuming that the City will see new, higher-income residents as a result of the various economic development projects

⁸ Housing inventory: Median home size in square feet in Oneida County, NY. FRED. (2025, September 11). <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEDSQUFEE36065>

⁹ Home construction cost per sf by state - home-cost: Accurate cost-to-build a house calculator. Home-Cost Accurate Estimates. (2025, July 29). <https://www.home-cost.com/cost-per-sf-by-state/>

¹⁰ Weiner, M. (2024, December 10). As housing costs soar, Builders balk at NY proposal to require fire sprinklers in new homes. [syracuse.com. https://www.syracuse.com/realestate-news/2024/12/as-housing-costs-soar-builders-balk-at-ny-proposal-to-require-fire-sprinklers-in-new-homes.html](https://www.syracuse.com/realestate-news/2024/12/as-housing-costs-soar-builders-balk-at-ny-proposal-to-require-fire-sprinklers-in-new-homes.html)

announced and in-progress throughout the City and broader region, the proportion of the City's population that can afford a newly built single-family home may also increase.

Small Homes (400-1,000 square feet)

As the City of Rome works to expand its housing stock and address affordability challenges, small homes present a flexible, cost-effective solution that balances livability with reduced construction expenses. Unlike tiny homes, which may face zoning or community acceptance challenges, small homes are generally more compatible with existing neighborhood patterns. They can be built as standalone infill units on standard lots, incorporated into pocket neighborhoods, or clustered on smaller parcels of land. This versatility helps increase housing density while still fitting into the existing character of Rome's neighborhoods.

While more expensive to build than tiny homes, small homes still require significantly less in materials, labor, and land than standard single-family homes. As a result, they are also much more environmentally sustainable, producing 36% less greenhouse gas emissions than standard homes.¹¹ Their size allows developers to offer lower purchase prices and rental rates, while also providing residents with the benefit of additional space and amenities that may not fit within a tiny home. This makes small homes an especially appealing option for couples, young families, and retirees who seek affordability without compromising basic functionality. Small homes directly target the "missing middle" in Rome's housing market. A 1,000 square foot home costs, on average, \$150,000 to construct.¹² According to the National Association of Home Builders, construction costs constitute about 64% of a home's sale price, meaning that the sale price of an average 1,000 square foot house would be about \$232,919.¹³ To afford this, an annual household income of \$70,000 would be needed to avoid being cost burdened. Roughly 40% of Rome's population earns above \$75,000 and would be able to afford this price. While a small home is still a prohibitive price for many residents, it is significantly more accessible than the standard, newly-constructed, 2,600 square foot market-rate home. As such, they create

¹¹ Encouraging development of smaller homes. USDN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit. (n.d.). <https://sustainableconsumption.usdn.org/initiatives-list/encouraging-development-of-smaller-homes>

¹² Average cost to build a tiny house. Element Homes. (n.d.). <https://www.construetelements.com/post/how-much-does-a-tiny-house-cost>

¹³ Lynch, E. (2025). Cost of Constructing a Home-2024. National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). <https://www.nahb.org/-/media/NAHB/news-and-economics/docs/housing-economics-plus/special-studies/2025/special-study-cost-of-constructing-a-home-2024-january-2025.pdf?rev=00a42a1ce63b4a22a4dba9bda8af954b>

attainable pathways to homeownership for first-time buyers and affordable rental options for households that cannot or do not wish to maintain larger homes. Their size aligns well with demographic trends such as smaller household sizes and aging populations, offering flexible options that suit a wide range of residents.

Tiny Homes (<400 square feet)

The tiny home movement has been lauded as one solution to the nation's cost of construction and housing crisis. The small size means that they require fewer materials and labor, and can be pre-fabricated or custom-built without breaking the bank. Tiny homes provide a scalable model to increase supply at a lower cost, particularly for young professionals, single adults, seniors, and small households who may not need or want larger traditional homes. By diversifying housing options, tiny homes can help stabilize the housing market and ensure that a broader range of residents can find suitable, affordable living arrangements within the City.

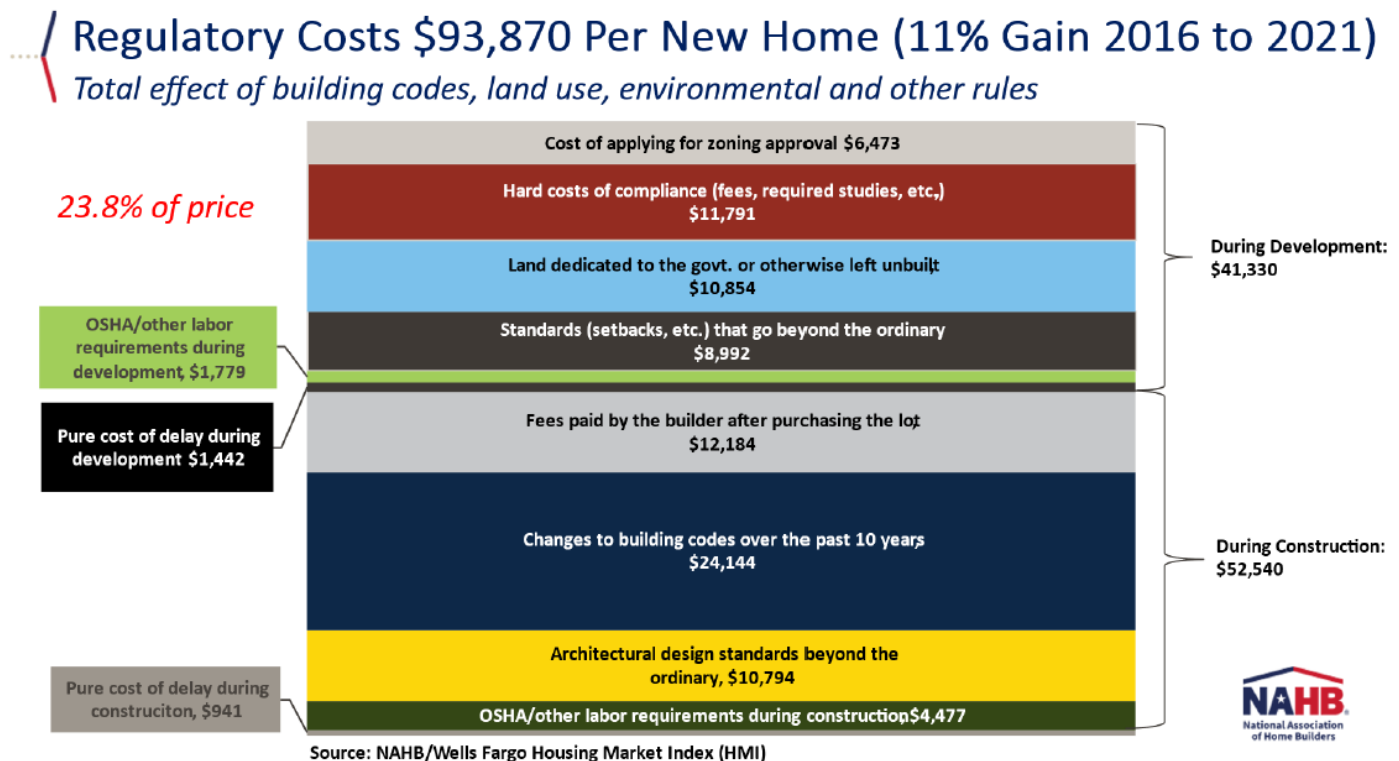
Because of their smaller size, tiny homes are well-suited for infill development on underutilized or vacant lots within Rome's established neighborhoods. This not only increases housing density without overwhelming existing infrastructure, but also revitalizes areas that may otherwise remain idle. Tiny homes can also be developed in clusters or cottage courts, fostering community while maintaining affordability. A "large" tiny home, understood to be 300-400 square feet, can cost anywhere from \$45,000 to \$150,000 depending on if it is prefabricated or custom built. On average, a 400 square foot tiny house costs \$60,000.¹⁴ As noted above, construction costs account for about 64% of sale prices, meaning that a 400 square foot tiny housing could sell for about \$93,000. To afford this without being cost burdened, a household would need to earn about \$37,000 annually. About 69% of households in the City earn above this income, and would be able to afford owning a tiny home.

Zoning and regulatory barriers are potential hurdles to implementing tiny homes in the City of Rome. Many local zoning codes establish minimum lot sizes, dwelling unit square footage requirements, and setback standards that tiny homes often cannot meet. Building codes may also require specific ceiling heights, stair dimensions, or utility connections that are difficult to incorporate into very small footprints. In addition, questions about

¹⁴ Average cost to build a tiny house. Element Homes. (n.d.). <https://www.constructelements.com/post/how-much-does-a-tiny-house-cost>

whether tiny homes should be classified as permanent residences, accessory dwelling units, or mobile/manufactured housing can complicate approvals. These regulatory hurdles not only slow down development but can also increase costs, limiting the affordability benefits tiny homes are intended to provide. Addressing these challenges will require thoughtful updates to local zoning ordinances and building codes to create clear pathways for the inclusion of tiny homes within the City’s housing strategy.

The image below shows the breakdown in regulatory costs associated with building a new home.



Underhoused Populations

Not every household looks the same. Some individuals live alone or with a spouse or partner, while others live with roommates, friends, or other family. For the purposes of this report, underhoused individuals refer to those who would be expected to be living alone or with a spouse or partner, but are instead living with others. To identify underhoused populations, this analysis compares the proportion of young adults (aged 18-34), working-age population (aged 35-64), and seniors (aged 65+) in the City of Rome living with others who are not a spouse or partner to proportions of the County and State. By applying the regional proportion to City populations, we can then estimate the number of individuals in these age groups expected to be living with others and compare that against the actual number of individuals. These numbers should be understood as showing general trends and patterns rather than absolute quantities of underhoused individuals.

This analysis, shown in the tables on the following page, estimates that young adults, working-age adults, and seniors are living with others at similar or lower levels than the State.

Underhoused Young Adults			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Total Population aged 18 and over in households	23,273	168,691	15,184,219
Individuals aged 18-34 in households	6,685	43,098	4,289,632
Percent of total that is aged 18-34	28.7%	25.5%	28.3%
Individuals aged 18-34 that are living with others (non-spouse/partner)	2,884	20,904	2,651,265
Individuals 18-34 expected to be living with others based on state average	3,242	26,637	n/a
Individuals 18-34 that are underhoused (difference between actual and expected)	(358)	(5,733)	n/a
Underhoused Working-Age Population			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Individuals aged 35-64 in households	10,939	83,572	7,552,704
Percent of total that is aged 35-64	47.0%	49.5%	49.7%
Individuals aged 35-64 living with others (non-spouse/partner)	2,390	14,427	1,840,056
Percent of individuals aged 35-64 living with a non-spouse/partner	21.8%	17.3%	24.4%
Individuals 35-64 expected to be living with others based on state average	2,665	20,361	n/a
Individuals 35-64 that are underhoused (difference between actual and expected)	(275)	(5,934)	n/a
Underhoused Seniors			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Individuals aged 65+ in households	5,649	42,021	3,341,883
Percent of total that is aged 65+	24.3%	24.9%	22.0%
Individuals aged 65+ living with others (non-spouse/partner)	665	4,563	673,191
Percent of individuals aged 65+ living with a non-spouse/partner	11.8%	10.9%	20.1%
Individuals 65+ expected to be living with others based on state average	1,138	8,465	n/a
Individuals 65+ that are underhoused (difference between actual and expected)	(473)	(3,902)	n/a

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, MRB Group

Future Needs

Anticipated Unit Need per 100 New Residents

Population projections are not set in stone. Any number of circumstances, such as the location of a new major employer—like Chobani—could lead to an influx (or exodus) of population that is not fully accounted for in current data. As such, it is worth assessing the housing need for potential new residents who are not captured in the current projections. We determined the anticipated percentage of householders by adding together the population that owned and rented, divided by the total number of individuals in that cohort (young adults, other working age, and senior age). We then multiply the percentage of anticipated householders by 100 (for 100 new residents), which is then multiplied by the share of renters and owners that currently exists for the applicable age group and geography. This yielded the number of single-family and rental units per 100 new residents in each cohort, as shown in the table below. For instance, an influx of 100 new working age individuals would necessitate approximately 38 single-family homes and 26 rental units in the City. This can be prorated to smaller numbers as well.

Anticipated Housing Need per 100 New Residents Given Current Tenure Trends, by Age						
		% Anticipated householders	% Owners	% Renters	Single-family units per 100	Rental units per 100
City of Rome	Young Adult	42.9%	30.7%	69.3%	13	30
	Working-Age	63.6%	59.0%	41.0%	38	26
	Senior	47.6%	66.8%	33.2%	32	16
Oneida County	Young Adult	38.4%	45.2%	54.8%	17	21
	Working-Age	58.8%	70.2%	29.8%	41	17
	Senior	52.3%	76.7%	23.3%	40	12
NYS	Young Adult	30.8%	26.5%	73.5%	8	23
	Working-Age	55.5%	57.3%	42.7%	32	24
	Senior	42.2%	65.5%	34.5%	28	15

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, MRB Group

Aging Population Housing Estimates

While the population is projected to decline overall, the City’s senior population is projected to increase 8.6% over the next 5 years. By 2029, it is anticipated that there will be 572 additional seniors in the City and 3,882 in the County as compared to current levels. This suggests a need to expand senior housing options, particularly because the City of Rome has many of the supporting services, like hospitals, that seniors (and senior housing developers) value being close to.

Age Cohort Projections						
		Child Population (under 18)	Young Adult Population (18-34)	Remainder Working-Age Population (35-64)	Senior Population (65+)	
City of Rome	2024	6,612	6,633	11,839	6,635	
	2029	6,161	6,457	11,715	7,207	
	Change	(451) -6.8%	(176) -2.7%	(124) -1.0%	572	8.6%
Oneida County	2024	43,331	48,389	83,104	48,403	
	2029	40,591	47,002	80,125	52,285	
	Change	(2,740) -6.3%	(1,387) -2.9%	(2,979) -3.6%	3,882	8.0%
New York State	2024	3,627,042	3,539,337	7,846,695	4,451,859	
	2029	3,491,923	3,376,623	7,745,980	4,710,329	
	Change	(135,119) -3.7%	(162,714) -4.6%	(100,715) -1.3%	258,470	5.8%

Source: Esri, MRB Group

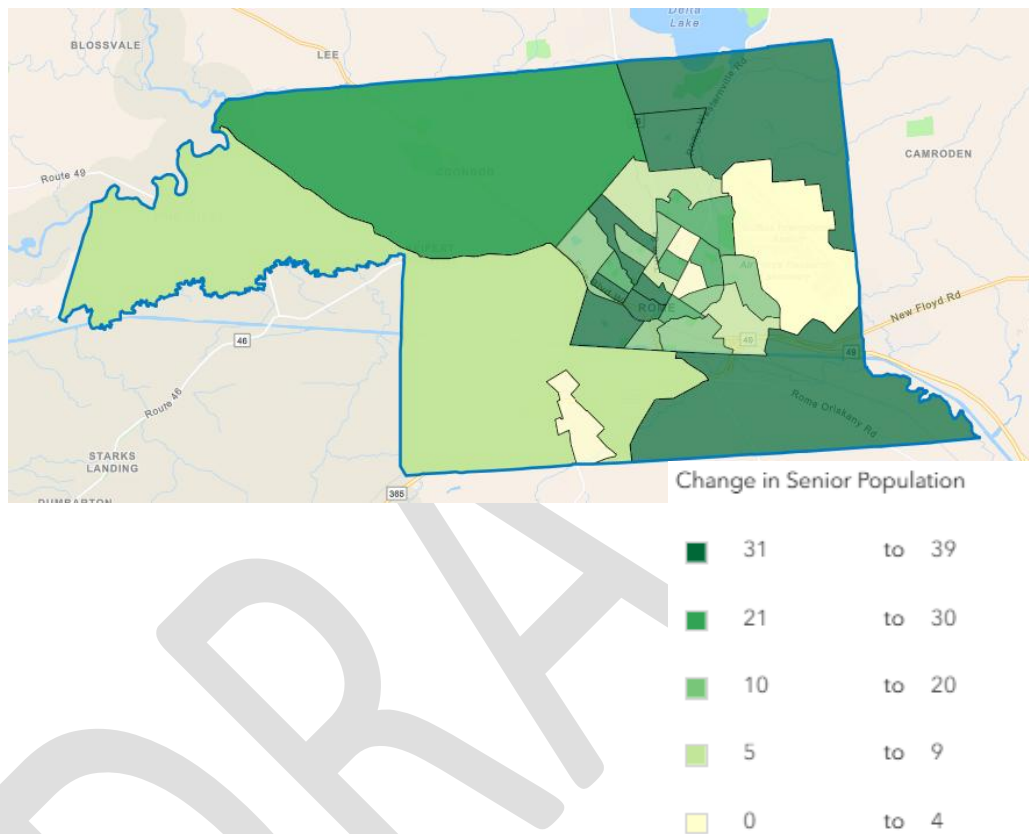
Assuming current trends among seniors, the City’s additional senior population will generate demand for 182 single-family units and 91 rental units. However, not all of this will be new demand, as some of these future seniors are likely to remain in homes they already occupy.

As individuals age, they become more susceptible to long-term injury and illness, aligning some of their housing needs with those of the disabled community. Improving accessible home options—whether it is dedicated senior housing, tiny or small homes, or inter-generational housing—benefits seniors as well as individuals with disabilities.

Anticipated Senior Housing Demand by 2029			
	City of Rome	Oneida County	NYS
Projected increase in 65+ population	572	3,882	258,470
Single-Family Units	182	1,557	71,516
Rental Units	91	474	37,617

Source: Esri, MRB Group

The map below shows the anticipated change in senior population (aged 65 and older) by block groups for 2025 compared to 2030. All block groups will see increases in the senior population, with the largest increases occurring in the northeast corner, southeast corner, and downtown along the Erie Canal.



Hotel Analysis

Hotel Market Area

The service area for a hotel project, and therefore the study area for this report, is expected to be the Utica-Rome MSA, including the City of Rome and the City of Utica. The study area encompasses two major industrial developments that create demand for temporary accommodations; the Griffiss Business and Technology Park, just outside of the City of Rome, and the Marcy Nanocenter development, located between Rome and Utica.

Key Takeaways

- Hotel demand recovered relatively quickly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2023, both supply and demand have remained fairly stable, with minor year-over-year declines in supply and little to no demand growth.
- However, other metrics like increasing occupancy rates, average daily rate, and revenue per available room suggest that hotel demand has increased since 2023. Compared to the jump in demand after the pandemic, these metrics show a picture of stable demand growth.
- No hotels have been added in the City of Rome since 2014. In the MSA, the most recent delivery was about 110 rooms in 2021, and about 250 rooms are currently under construction.

Existing Supply

Within the City of Rome, there are only two upper-midscale economy brand hotel chains, which are most likely to serve business travelers. Both of these hotels are located near or in the Griffiss Business and Technology Park.

Fairfield Inn & Suites – Rome, NY

- 90 Dart Circle, Rome, NY 13441
- Formerly Wingate by Wyndham
- 76 rooms
- Opened 2008, renovated in 2024
- Owned by Griffiss Hotel Group LLC
- Full market value of \$3.8 million
- \$190 to \$229 per night
- Fitness center, meeting and event space, pool



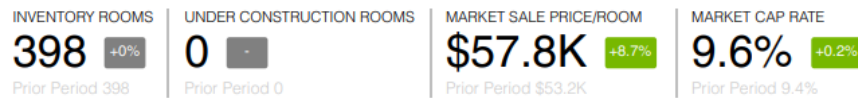
Hampton Inn

- 1352 Floyd Avenue, Rome, NY 13441
- 94 rooms
- Opened 2014
- Owned by Rome Hospitality Group LLC
- Full market value of \$4.4 million
- \$165 to \$230 per night
- Fitness center, indoor pool, pet-friendly rooms



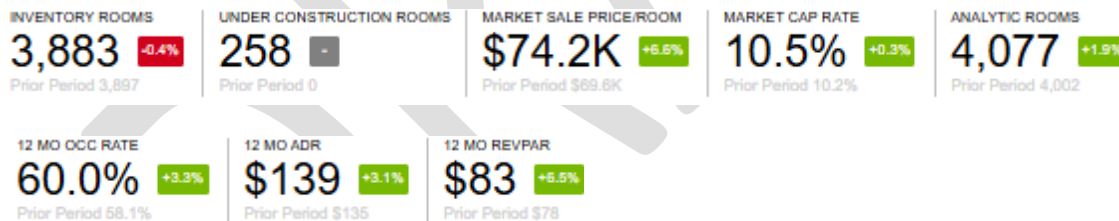
Supply, Demand, and Revenue for Hotel Rooms

The CoStar database captures hospitality data on hotels owned or branded by a national chain. The data below does not include short-term rentals or boutique hotels.



Above are key performance indicators from the CoStar data for the hospitality market in the City of Rome. The City of Rome has a limited inventory of hotels, according to CoStar. As of August 2025, ten existing hotels have an inventory of 398 rooms within the City boundaries. Only two of these ten hotels are classified as upper-midscale. The remaining eight are motels, bed and breakfasts, and economy hotels. Three hotels comprise 217 (55%) of these rooms, all located near the Griffis International Airport.¹⁵ There have been no additions to the market since 2014.¹⁶

Below are key performance indicators from the CoStar data for the hospitality market in the Rome-Utica MSA (the “MSA”) to illustrate how the City of Rome compares to the broader hotel market area.



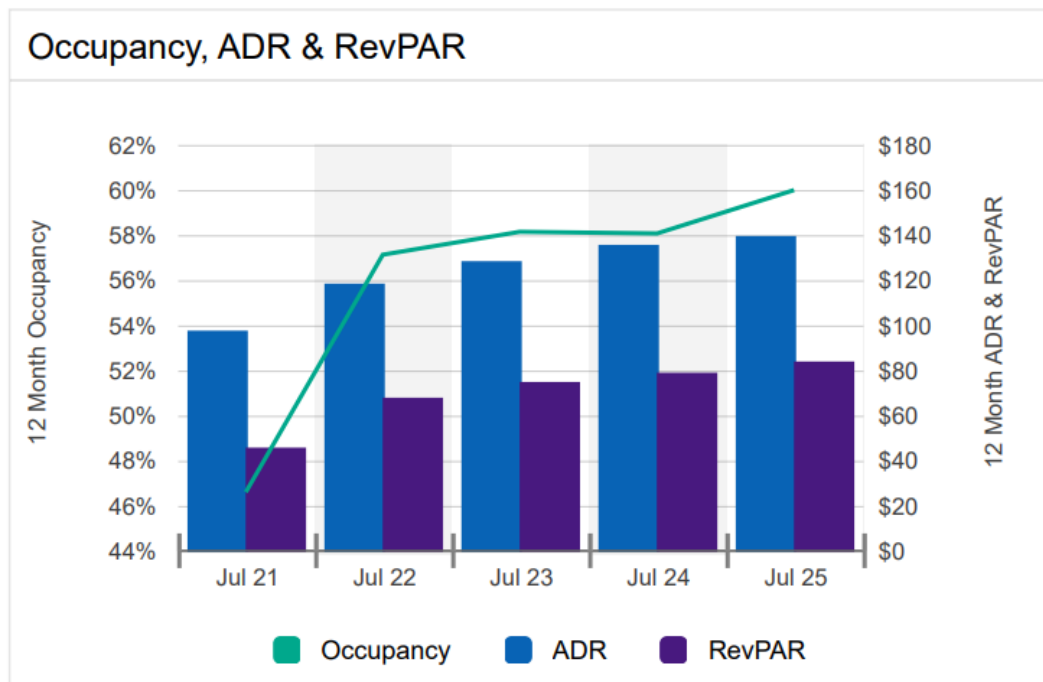
The MSA’s hospitality real estate market has recently shown improvements. CoStar’s data includes 3,883 existing rooms in the MSA, with 258 rooms under construction.¹⁷ The 12-month occupancy rate of 60% is up slightly from the prior period (+3.3%) and the 10-year average of 54.33%. The 1-month Average Daily Rate (ADR) is currently estimated at \$139, 3.1% higher than the prior period and the highest it has been in the past decade. This suggests that hotels have increased their occupancy rates while still charging more per

¹⁵ The Ramada Inn, the Hamton Inn, and the Fairfield Inn.

¹⁶ The Hampton Inn Rome on 1352 Floyd Ave was completed in 2014, adding 94 rooms near the Griffis International Airport. The most recent addition before that was the Fairfield Inn & Suites on 90 Dart Cir in 2008, also near the airport.

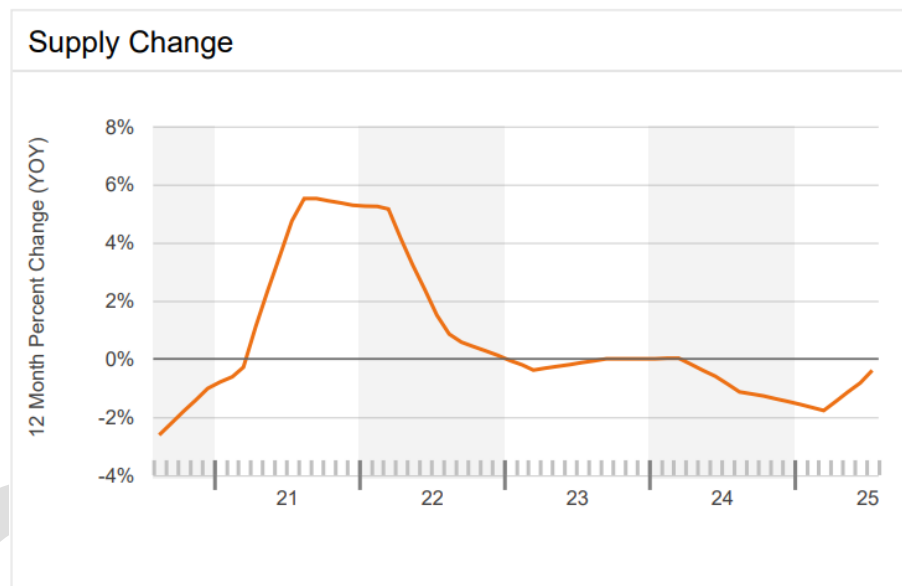
¹⁷ The rooms under construction are for the Turning Stone Resort in Verona. Construction on the property began in 2024.

room per night. Additionally, the 12-month Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) is \$83, 6.5% higher than the prior period and higher than the ten-year average of \$62.13.



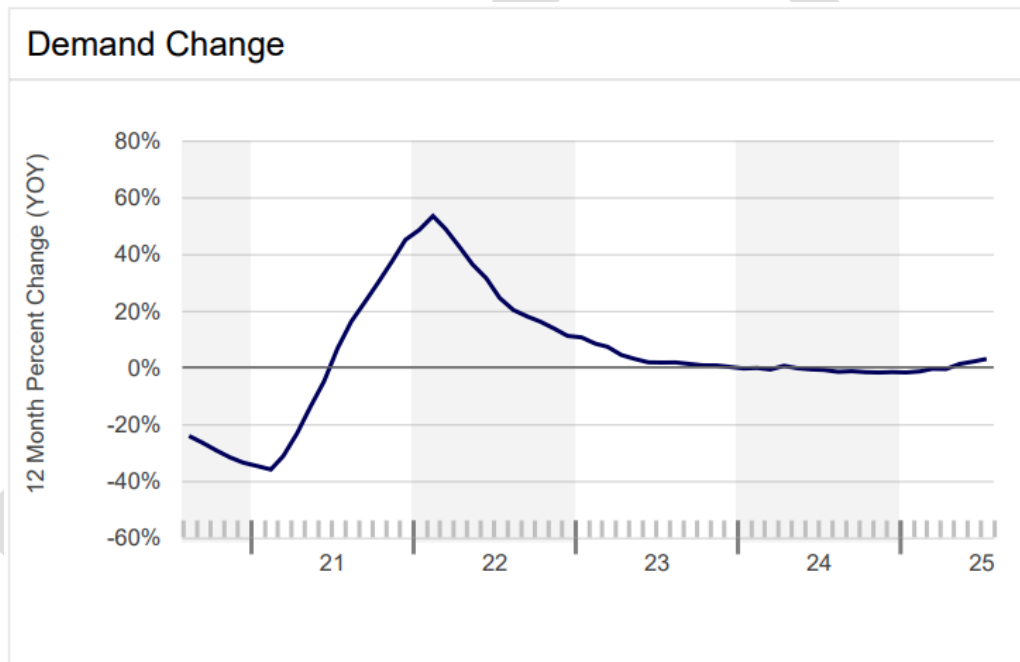
Hotel Supply

Hotel room supply in the Utica-Rome MSA has experienced notable fluctuations over the past several years. After a period of contraction in 2020, supply growth surged in 2021, peaking at nearly six percent year-over-year as new hotel projects entered the market. However, this momentum quickly tapered off, with growth steadily declining through 2022 and turning negative by early 2023. Since then, supply levels have remained relatively flat, with modest year-over-year declines persisting through 2024 before showing signs of stabilization and slight recovery in early 2025. This trend suggests that while the region saw a significant influx of new hotel rooms coming out of the pandemic, the pipeline has since cooled, leading to a more balanced or even tightening supply environment moving forward.



Hotel Demand

Hotel room demand in the Utica-Rome MSA has followed a sharp recovery-and-normalization cycle over the past several years. Demand plummeted in 2020, the first year of the pandemic, falling more than 40 percent year-over-year. Beginning in 2021, demand rebounded dramatically, surging by more than 50 percent as travel and lodging activity resumed. This growth spike peaked in early 2022 before steadily decreasing throughout the year, eventually stabilizing near zero percent year-over-year change by 2023. From 2023 through 2024, demand remained relatively flat, with only minor fluctuations, before showing early signs of modest positive growth heading into 2025. Overall, the data reflects an industry that endured severe disruption, staged a rapid recovery, and has since settled into a stable environment.



According to Rabbu.com, as of September 2025 there were 453 active Airbnb listings in Oneida County, 40 of which are in the City of Rome.¹⁸ This data only includes Airbnb listings, not all short-term rentals.

Of the 40 active listings in the City, the majority are one-bedroom units (57.2%). About 30% are two-bedroom units, and other rental sizes make up small percentages of the total listings.



Conclusion

The City of Rome faces a complex housing challenge: while economic development projects are poised to bring new residents and higher household incomes, the existing housing market lacks affordable and appropriately sized options to meet this demand. Traditional single-family construction is out of reach for most households, leaving a growing gap between what residents can afford and what the market currently supplies, though even that supply is limited. At the same time, an aging housing stock and regulatory barriers further constrain the availability of homes for workers, young families, and seniors who want to remain in or move to the community.

Against this backdrop, small and tiny homes represent a unique opportunity. Their lower construction costs, smaller footprints, and flexibility make them well-suited to Rome's needs. Small homes provide attainable options for the "missing middle," balancing affordability with livability and environmental sustainability. Tiny homes, though they may require thoughtful zoning and code updates, offer an even more cost-effective path to expand supply and revitalize underutilized lots in certain areas of the City. Together, these housing formats can diversify Rome's housing stock, strengthen neighborhood vitality, and ensure that a wider range of residents—including workers, first-time buyers, retirees, and young professionals—can live and thrive in the community. By embracing these innovative solutions, Rome has the opportunity to not only address its affordability gap but also to position itself as a leader in creative, sustainable housing development.

Key Findings

- While official projections show slight population declines, major economic development projects will likely bring new residents, especially around downtown and the Griffiss Business and Tech Park. Additionally, smaller household sizes will continue to push housing demand upward even without population growth.
- Seniors (aged 65+) are the fastest-growing cohort of the population, requiring more accessible, smaller, and supportive housing options.
- Median home values are projected to rise nearly twice as fast as household incomes in the City of Rome, worsening affordability challenges.
- Rome's housing stock is older than that in Oneida County or the State, with limited new construction contributing to a true market vacancy below the healthy threshold—signaling supply shortages.
- Over 40% of renters are cost-burdened, compared to 17% of homeowners, with market rents outpacing what many households can afford.

- Most local occupations pay wages that cannot support the cost of newly built single-family homes, underscoring the need for alternative housing models, like tiny and small homes.
- Tiny and small homes can expand attainable housing choices at lower price points, though zoning reforms may be needed to accommodate these housing developments.
- Rome's limited hotel supply, coupled with stabilizing regional demand and growing ADR, indicates potential for carefully scaled new lodging options.

Recommendations

The 112 Columbus Avenue site could be a viable testing ground to pilot the use of small homes (400–1,000 sf) and tiny homes (<400 sf) to expand attainable housing options. These types of units would provide ownership and equity building opportunities to households that could not otherwise afford to buy in the current market, downsizing options for seniors, and both ownership and rental options for young professionals. This also appears to comply with the general intent of the current zoning, which prioritizes single- and two-family dwellings, although there may need to be some adjustments or considerations for specific standards, such as minimum lot area, maximum lot coverage, and setbacks, to maximize the impact and opportunity.

The 112 Columbus Avenue site is not, however, ideal for a hotel development. This type of use does not comply with the current zoning, and could be disruptive to the local neighborhood. The industrial sight to the north is also not generally an attractive view for visitors. That said, the site does offer some benefits for visitors, such as proximity to recreational resources and the Erie Canal waterfront. If a hotel were to be considered for the site, an upper-midscale economy hotel seems to be the best fit in that it could cater to business travelers, middle-income vacationing families, and perhaps traveling sports teams should an indoor sports complex also be developed in the City. A site closer to the waterfront could be suitable for a luxury boutique hotel, as Rome does not currently have any high-end accommodations.