



Onondaga Citizens League

Annual Report 2009-2010

Onondaga Citizens League Mission Statement

The Onondaga Citizens League fosters informed public discourse by identifying and studying critical community issues affecting Central New York, developing recommendations for action, and communicating study findings to interested and affected groups.

Visit our web site: onondagacitizensleague.org
E-mail: ocl@syr.edu Phone: 315-443-4846

Dear OCL Members:

This year, the Onondaga Citizens League marks a milestone. Our current report, "What Does It Mean to Be Green?" is the culmination of OCL's 30th study! After more than three decades, OCL reports are still being noticed. "Rethinking I-81," released last year, continues to be used as a resource. The signature event created with our 2006 Downtown Study, the Downtown Living Tour, is still thriving under the auspices of the Downtown Committee. OCL's "Strategic Government Consolidation" study continues to be relevant, as the need for better land use planning and collaboration among local governments is increasingly recognized.

OCL was founded on the belief that active citizen involvement is the foundation for good governance and sound public policies. And an effective citizenry requires a public that is well-informed, with an understanding of the many aspects of complex community issues. The goal of the Citizens League is to facilitate the ability of citizens to take an active role in civic life, collectively developing creative policy options that address important public concerns.

Our individual and organizational supporters, our board members, and our study committee participants all contribute to OCL's accomplishments, longevity and continued relevance. Thank you for helping us continue to shine a light on issues that matter to all of us.

Sincerely,



Anthony Malavenda
2010-2011 Board President



Sandra Barrett
Executive Vice President

OCL Study Reports

The annual study is the most important activity of the Citizens League. As each year's study gets underway, OCL board members and volunteers continue to work on communication of study findings and recommendations from past reports.

2009-10 Study: *What Does It Mean To Be Green?*

Board members **Jason Allers** and **David Holder** are co-chairs of the 2009-10 OCL study, which focuses on three fundamental questions about the environmental sustainability of Central New York:

- What defines a sustainable community or region?
- How does a commitment to principles of sustainability shape or transform public policy and, by extension, our community?
- How can we, as citizens, influence leaders to pursue those policies?

The Study Committee began meeting in May 2009 to plan the study sessions. Over the course of a year, the Study Committee hosted a series of public study sessions, forums, and panels featuring local and regional experts—scientists, scholars, municipal planners, transportation officials, and others working in areas relating to sustainability. Committee members also explored current research and studied the actions other cities, both here and abroad, have taken toward becoming sustainable communities.

With the help of Syracuse University Maxwell School students, Committee members also conducted surveys to get a picture of the common perceptions and values of citizens, students and public officials on our topic. The Study Committee's findings and recommendations grew out of this information-gathering process.

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To make the study process and research as accessible as possible, OCL created its own Facebook page, as well as the OCL Green Blog, in addition to continuing to link information on the OCL web site.

GreeningUSA chose the Onondaga Citizens League to receive one of five advocacy awards for excellence at the GreeningUSA annual meeting in May, recognizing the Study Committee's work. OCL released the study report in October 2010.

2008-09 OCL Report: *Rethinking I-81*

Since OCL's "*Rethinking I-81*" report was issued in June 2009, Study Committee members, including chair **Rebecca Livengood**, board member **Doug Sutherland**, and OCL member **Donna O'Mahony Rohde**, have given several presentations of the report findings. OCL recommended that urban boulevard options be given priority consideration in the ongoing NYSDOT planning process for the replacement of the current I-81 bridges through downtown Syracuse, which are nearing the end of their useful life. The report outlined the potential to improve our region's competitiveness in the new economy, stimulate employment growth and economic development, and create a healthier environment with a land use and mobility plan based on a boulevard option.

The report has been used as a resource for segments of two planned PBS-funded specials, including one on health and the built environment, and a WCNY-produced program on the I-81 corridor. It also has received attention from groups in other cities faced with obsolete elevated highways.

Annual Meeting

The OCL Annual Meeting was held on June 2, 2010, at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Board member **Donna DeSiato** chaired the **Nominating Committee**.

Board member Jason Allers of Agency Specialists Insurance Group was appointed to a second three-year term. New board members appointed to three-year terms commencing in September 2010 were:

Rev. Kevin Agee, Pastor, Hopps Memorial CME Church

Barbara Carranti, MS, RN, Clinical Assistant Professor, Le Moyne College

Elizabeth Dailey, Executive Director, Onondaga County Public Library

Lisa Daly, Program Manager/Internet Consultant

William Emm, CFO, Onondaga Community College

Karen Hanford, Hanford Pharmaceuticals

Michael Lemm, Village of Liverpool Police Department

Keynote speaker at the 2010 annual meeting was **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner**, who talked about the need for measures to protect the environment and address climate change. Mayor Miner said, "The keys to this new, greener future are our cities. Cities present environmental, economic and social opportunities for greater sustainability." The Mayor said the City is poised to be a leader in sustainability because of our committed civic and community leaders. The new Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, directed by Andrew Maxwell, who accompanied the mayor, will lead the charge to promote sustainable practices within city government and throughout the community.

On behalf of OCL, former OCL Board president Larry Bousquet presented the **2010 Levi L. Smith Civic Education Award** to **Darlene Kerr** and **Rob Simpson** for their "leadership and shared vision—for business, for economic development, and for the region." Darlene and Rob, as leaders, respectively, of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, combined their memberships and leadership to form a new organization, CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity, which Rob now heads.

"The selfless dedication to putting community above self-interest that was required to bring these organizations together should not be discounted," Larry said in his remarks. "Their willingness to put the weight of their organizations behind the strategic priorities of the community should be applauded for what the accomplishment represents and for the potential it embodies."

The Levi L. Smith Civic Education Award was named for the founder and former executive vice president of the Citizens League, and honors an outstanding citizen or organization that has contributed to the field and practice of civic education in Central New York. Recipients have demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, citizen education and involvement in public affairs.

2009-2010 Board of Directors

Jason Allers
 Sandra Barrett, *Executive Vice President*
 Carol Charles
 Betty DeFazio, *President*
 Donna DeSiato
 Hanah Ehrenreich
 Marion Ervin
 David Holder
 Heidi Holtz
 Virgil Hutchinson
 Stephen Kearney
 Karen Kitney, *Secretary*
 N. Thomas Letham
 Benjamin Lockwood
 Donald MacLaughlin
 Anthony Malavenda, *Vice President*
 Paul Predmore
 Grant Reeher
 Wendy Riccelli, *Treasurer*
 Kimberly Scott
 Addie Silvia
 Rhoda Smith
 Cynthia Stevenson
 Douglas Sutherland
 Merike Treier

Financial Statement—September 2009-August 2010

Revenue

Memberships.....	\$7,435
Corporate Contributions.....	1,550
Annual Meeting.....	3,961
Bank Interest.....	520
Total	\$13,466
Opening Fund Balance.....	\$47,957

Expenses

Printing and Postage.....	\$975
Professional Services.....	4,000
Annual Meeting.....	2,341
Supplies and Miscellaneous.....	2,909
Total	\$10,225
Net from Operations.....	\$3,241
Year-end Fund Balance.....	\$51,198