



About Syracuse, NY



Search for Homes in this Area

From Salt City to Emerald City

Every autumn, yellow ginkgo trees and towering orange oaks paint a dappled tapestry across Syracuse, a city set at the mouth of Onondaga Lake in Central New York. The foliage gives way to heavy snowfall in the winter, diverse blooms in the spring and a lush landscape of green in the summer. Danny Liedka, President and CEO of Visit Syracuse, says the four distinct seasons are a main draw for residents. "It's something you don't experience anywhere else in the country," he says, adding that the seasons are also the reason Syracuse offers such a variety of things to do. "There is something for everyone, and for each season: It's a foodie's destination, there's a great underground music scene, the arts are incredible and there are all kinds of things to do when it comes to outdoor recreation." Anchored by the bustling [Downtown Syracuse](#), the city blends its creative atmosphere with an active community, offering diverse cultural attractions alongside beautifully preserved state parks and outdoor recreation options just outside the Finger Lakes Region. "Downtown is the central focus, but there are so many unique neighborhoods across the county that make the area interesting," Liedka says. The city center's vibrant shopping, dining and arts-focused feel contrasts with the collegiate vibe of Eastside, where Syracuse University has its main campus, or residential suburbs like Onondaga Hill and Liverpool.

Established in 1820, Syracuse got its official name from the Sicilian coastal town of the same name (Siracusa in Italian), but it is known to locals by a few others. Salt collected from the salt springs on Onondaga Lake and shipped out from the area earned its Salt City nickname, while the city's location on the Erie Canal made it a major crossroads of the time. The city would ultimately earn the nickname The Emerald City as a result as it became a gateway for shipping and trade. Today, the city stays true to its legacy, showing a promising future for manufacturing, healthcare and technology. The fourth largest city in New York State, Syracuse has been designated a Smart City, receiving \$200,000 in partnership with Technology Companies to test, validate and recommend solutions developed for these testbed municipalities. Furthermore, chip manufacturer Micron is set to break ground for a new plant in Clay on the city outskirts. "With Micron we're going to see our population increase by at least a quarter of a million people," Liedka says. "It's transformational for the city for the largest microchip manufacturer in the world to have their headquarters be here in Syracuse." Syracuse native and Real Estate Associate Broker Susan Li says Syracuse has put a lot of effort into reinventing and revitalizing its downtown district, especially through converting buildings to residences and infusing the community with more arts and cultural events, resulting in economic growth. "Taxes are higher, but you know where it's going - schools, infrastructure and culture," she says. "I like the positive changes because I grew up here. The city's outlook is very optimistic."



Anchored by the bustling Downtown Syracuse, the city has a creative atmosphere.



Come explore the underground music scene at The Sound Garden in Syracuse.

Fast-paced market for homeowners

These economic changes are drawing in new residents, whether for direct employment with the companies headquartered in Syracuse or general relocation due to the economic climate. Syracuse's median single-family home price is \$242,200—up 13% from 2023—and homes generally spend 38 days on the market. In his Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative, Mayor Ben Walsh has committed to constructing 2,500 new housing units before the end of his term in 2025. Other initiatives include building 270 single-family homes and duplex-style townhomes on the former Lafayette Country Club.

Residential streets and thoroughfares are also well-kept, especially in the winter. As a city with some of

the nation's heaviest snowfall, Syracuse plows its streets regularly. "The town and city are top-notch when it comes to plowing," says Realtor Lori Harrington of Howard Hannah Real Estate Services. "You look out the window and there's six inches, and an hour later and it's gone because they've already plowed. You never have to worry about getting to work or getting the kids to school." She adds that while homebuyers should be prepared to pay higher taxes, they will see the benefits. "The first thing I have to talk about when I'm selling to people who aren't from here is the taxes are high," she says. "But I also tell them our taxes go through a lot of our town and county for that reason."



Syracuse's median single-family home price is \$242,200— up 13% from 2023. In Syracuse, homes generally spend 38 days on the market.

Building community through arts, events and cultural attractions

While much of Syracuse's diversity can be experienced through its varied food scenes and events that take place throughout the city, Downtown Syracuse acts as the community's cultural epicenter. The district is heavy-laden with shops, restaurants, art galleries and cultural attractions peppered in between its modern high-rises and historic art deco and gothic buildings. Entertainment is all around, especially within the arts. World-renowned museums include the Everson Museum of Art and The Museum of Science and Technology. "Music and the arts are a big part of the community here," Liedka says. "We have a whole Broadway series, from The Lion King to Wicked, and our underground music scene won't be underground for long with the attention it's getting." The stage of the historic Landmark Theater comes alive with plays and musicals, while other venues like The Oncenter Civic Center Theaters host a plethora of concerts, performances and other events.

Other attractions include the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the recently completed Empower FCU Amphitheater at Lakeview. The open-air venue seats up to 17,500 concertgoers just outside the New York State Fairgrounds, where the New York State Fair takes place annually. While cultural events such as the Polish Festival and Irish Festival celebrate the city's diverse community, others display the area's talents. The Syracuse Jazz Festival is one of the city's major festivals. "We have the largest free jazz festival in the Northeast here, which brings in really top-shelf talent," Liedka says. "Some people come as far as Canada." The Lafayette Apple Festival attracts residents of all ages for seasonal autumn activities revolving around local apple harvests. Vendors across the city and surrounding areas gather every weekend to sell their produce and handmade items at the Central New York Regional Market, an extensive farmers market located on Syracuse's Northside. "The regional market is investing millions into the city's diversity," Liedka says. "It brings people together." While small boutiques and locally-owned stores dot the city's many neighborhoods, shoppers can also visit Destiny USA, the recently expanded six-story shopping and entertainment complex on Onondaga Lake's shores.



The Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse often features artwork by local artists.



The MOST, or Museum of Science and Technology, is a popular children's museum in Syracuse.

Recreation for all seasons

Sitting on Onondaga Lake, Syracuse has over 1,000 acres of parks and green spaces for outdoor activities. Elmwood Park features breathtaking bridges and natural stone staircases that accent the Furnace Brook stream. Franklin Square Park features colorful, flourishing trees, bright pink tulips during warmer months, and a decorative fountain that makes a memorable backdrop. "The nature in and around the city is amazing," says Green. "I highly recommend the nature walks and waterfalls throughout Onondaga Lake Park. It takes my breath every time." While the winter may impede outdoor enjoyment, Clinton Square makes the most of it, hosting ice skating from November to March and festivals during the spring and summer. Harrington says new residents of Syracuse are surprised by how much recreation is available just a short drive away. "There are so many things you can do outside of Syracuse, whether it's skiing in the Adirondacks or swimming in a lake or golfing," she says. "If you live here, you have to enjoy going outside and doing things." Though levels have significantly improved in the last few years, Onondaga Lake's pollution is still prevalent, so swimming is not recommended but boating remains popular.





Elmwood Park in Syracuse features breathtaking bridges and natural stone staircases.



Franklin Square Park in Syracuse features colorful, flourishing trees.

Interstate 81 Viaduct Project is underway

Syracuse residents have interstate access right at their fingertips, with Interstate 81 running north and south through the city and I-690 running east and west. Interstate 481 sits at the city's eastern edge, connecting with the New York State Thruway, which offers a straight shot ride between Western New York and the Capital District, running from Buffalo to Albany. Located off I-81 by State Route 11, the Syracuse Hancock International Airport serves as both a civil and military airport and a hub for Piedmont Airlines.

The \$2.25 billion I-81 Viaduct Project is now in its beginning stages, officially breaking ground in July 2023. The reconstruction of I-81 and I-481 will establish a community grid to reconnect the city's downtown neighborhoods. The project also aims to connect I-690 with hospitals, educational facilities and employment centers on University Hill. Other aspects of the project include developing 13 miles of new and reconstructed sidewalks, two miles of bike paths and a 1-mile cycle track, all along Almond Street.

Highly rated public schools and nationally ranked universities

The Syracuse City School District serves the city's students from pre-kindergarten through high school, with programs ranging from college preparatory to performing arts to specialized STEAM academics. Nottingham High School, with a B-minus rating on Niche, has produced such notable alumni as NFL player Dorsey Levens, author John Berendt and former acting Surgeon General of the United States Steven K. Galson. The A-minus-rated Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central — locally referred to as ITC — focuses on career and technical education.

Syracuse is home to four four-year institutions of higher learning, with its namesake, Syracuse University, being the most notable. Enrolling nearly 23,000 students between its undergraduate and graduate programs, the university has produced some of the greatest notable names of this era, including sports greats Carmelo Anthony and Jim Brown, entertainment innovators Vanessa Williams and Dick Clark, and political heavy-hitters Governor Kathy Hochul and President Joe Biden. Syracuse holds an A-minus rating on Niche. With the smaller schools, the State University of New York College of Environmental Sciences has a Niche grade of B-plus and Le Moyne College has an overall score of B. The smallest of the bunch, SUNY Upstate Medical University was founded in 1834 and is the 15th oldest medical school in the country.



Nottingham High in Syracuse has produced such notable alumni like NFL player Dorsey Levens.



The A- rated Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central focuses on technical education.

In-house police at Syracuse Hancock

Syracuse's crime rate has steadily declined over the last couple of decades. The city has violent and property crime rates lower than the national figures. According to FBI data, violent crime incidents decreased by almost 10% in 2022. The creation of the Syracuse Hancock International Airport's in-house Airport Authority Police Department has also allowed the Syracuse Police Department to maintain its focus on the city while the airport now has its own in-house police department.

Incoming investments make a change

Syracuse is experiencing a significant economic pivot, turning around some of the city's struggling neighborhoods and transforming the gateway to downtown. A recent \$50 million investment has opened the first building on the JMA Wireless 5G manufacturing campus on the South Side, creating over 200 jobs. The new \$22.5 million Syracuse Community Health Center (SCHC) officially opened on South Salina Street in December 2023, just one block from its old home. Salina 1st — a new housing and commercial development property — will soon begin construction across the street from SCHC, and the former Central High School is being converted into a STEAM school that will serve students across the county. An \$85 million aquarium is being developed next to Destiny USA, and Micron is set to plant its roots right on the outskirts of Syracuse with a \$100 billion commitment.





A \$50 billion investment opened the JMA Wireless 5G manufacturing campus in Syracuse.



The Syracuse Community Health Center officially opened in December 2023.



Written By

Christina von Claparede-Crola



Photography Contributed By

Greg Dunbar



Video By

David Strayer

Was this overview helpful?  
