

# A Refreshing Future

## The Utica Industrial Corridor ReVITALization Plan

### What is the plan?

The City of Utica is in the process of developing a revitalization plan for the central industrial corridor. They are currently in the initial study phase. The program is funded through a New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program grant.

A brownfield is defined as any real property whose re-use or redevelopment may be complicated by the presence, either real or perceived, of some environmental condition or contaminant.

The New York State grant provides financial and technical expertise to communities, therefore enabling municipalities to revitalize valuable brownfield property once considered to be unusable.

### Where is Utica's Central Industrial Corridor?

The target area for Utica's program is the "Central Industrial Corridor," located adjacent to the Mohawk River and the Erie Canal. This area has a long history of past industrial uses, including manufactured gas plants, a coal-fired steam plant, a petroleum storage and distribution facility, and a tar products plant.

Four sub-areas, based on land use patterns, are included in this region:

- **Oriskany Street Corridor**
- **Baggs Square District**
- **Harbor District**
- **Broad Street Corridor**

### What can the plan do for Utica?

This study was one that was identified through the Utica

Master Plan process. The City will be incorporating planning that has been done through the Utica Master Plan and other redevelopment plans as this project is completed.



Using New York State resources, the revitalization plan affords an opportunity to conduct a complete study of all potential brownfield sites in the region. The ultimate goal of the plan is to restore the area's high level of historic interest, identify and properly utilize natural resources, and ensure architectural potential.

### What is the next step?

The initial study phase is in process. The outcome will be a preliminary description and analysis of the Central Industrial Corridor.

### Key project objectives include:

- **Identifying and providing a clear description and justification of a manageable study area and associated boundaries;**
- **Establishing a community participation process to begin identifying a common vision for the area, including goals and objectives;**
- **Identifying the multi-agency, private-sector, and other community partnerships necessary to inform the process and leverage assistance for revitalizing the community;**
- **Completing a preliminary analysis of the study area and preliminary recommendations to revitalize the area**

For additional information on the BOA program, please visit the NYS Department of State Web site at: [http://nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps\\_BOA.asp](http://nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps_BOA.asp) or contact Brian Thomas, City of Utica Director of Urban Planning, at 792-0181.

# Focus Areas



**Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study  
The Central Industrial Corridor  
Utica, NY**

**DRAFT Community Participation and Visioning Plan**

**Introduction**

*Public participation is a key element of any successful land use development strategy.*

This Community Participation and Visioning Plan is intended to help clarify the methods by which the public will be informed of and engaged in the Central Industrial Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Project. This plan is intended to clarify and define the responsibilities of the City of Utica Department of Urban and Economic Development, the Consulting Team and the project Steering Committee (collectively to be referred to as the Project Team) and explain critical project deliverables, including the Pre-Nomination Study. By doing so, all individuals involved will be provided with clear expectations regarding their ability to offer input and how that input will be processed by the Project Team.

In order to properly administer this plan it is important to review the stakeholders that will be involved and outline the potential roles they can play throughout the process. The first section of this document therefore includes a 'Summary of Those Involved.' This section is then followed by 'The Role of the Steering Committee,' which explains the tasks and responsibilities that they are charged with. Finally, the 'Community Participation and Visioning Process' provides an explanation of the public outreach process to be employed, including an outline pertaining to the recommended number of community meetings as well as the purpose of those meetings.

**Summary of Those Involved**

For the duration of this process, the Project Team will strive to interact with many different groups of people from a variety of backgrounds. These groups will likely include:

Elected Officials – These individuals perform a variety of tasks, including representing the community's interests, administering local statutes and receipt/ownership of all BOA products. Because of these factors it is important for elected officials to be actively engaged throughout the project. The type of elected officials involved may include (but are not limited to) the Mayor and members of the City of Utica Common Council.

Community Groups, Organizations and Non-Profits – Community groups, organizations, non-profits and related stakeholders serve many functions in the community. These groups can

be informal, such as neighborhood associations or formally recognized entities. Examples of groups that work in the City of Utica and the surrounding area that may have direct interest in this project include but are not limited to: Mohawk Valley Edge, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce, Madison Oneida BOCES and ARC Oneida-Lewis Chapter.

**Property and Business Owners** – The BOA planning process will include discussions regarding future land use and reuse policies and concepts. As a result, property and business owners (direct stakeholders) associated with lands preliminarily identified as brownfields, will be encouraged to actively participate in the planning process. As part of the outreach process, the direct stakeholders will be invited to meet with the Project Team to learn about the program and provide their ideas, recommendations, additional information about their property and to voice any concerns that they may have. The direct stakeholders will also contribute towards the vision statement and goals.

**General Public** – There are likely to be topics raised during the project requiring input from the community as a whole. In order to facilitate this communication process a specific number of meetings will be held to discuss the BOA project and the future of the site. The general public should be involved in the process so that they can gain information on the project and provide input and their ideas about a vision to local leaders and the Project Team.

### **Role of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee has been established to assist in the preparation of the Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study. The committee will serve in an advisory capacity to contribute, review and provide comment on documents prepared in association with the Pre-Nomination Study. The City of Utica will be responsible for arranging meetings.

The Steering Committee “kickoff meeting” is being held in order to explain the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program and the project’s intent and scope and to solicit initial input on a vision for the study area, including goals, objectives, opportunities and constraints. An initial meeting schedule will be reviewed and agreed upon. A summary of the tasks assigned to the Steering Committee is as follows:

Primary tasks of the Central Industrial Corridor BOA Steering Committee:

- > Designation of a Steering Committee Chairperson
- > Review and contribute to the draft Community Participation and Visioning Plan;
- > Provide oversight for the organization and scheduling of The Central Industrial Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area public workshops;

- > Establish a draft Vision Statement that will be presented to and reviewed by the community at public workshops;
- > Establish a narrative description of the proposed Brownfield Opportunity Area, and justification of the proposed geographic boundary.

Beyond completion of the above tasks, the Steering Committee will be responsible for assisting the City of Utica and their consultants with the following project elements:

- > Review the information gathered from the public workshops;
- > Review the draft Pre-Nomination Study (as completed by the Project Team);
- > Support public workshops so that the public can review and provide input on the completeness and accuracy of the draft Pre-Nomination Study;
- > Approve the draft Pre-Nomination Study after comments have been received by the public;

### **Community Participation and Visioning Process**

A vision statement, and a preliminary set of goals and objectives to be achieved relative to community redevelopment and revitalization, as shaped and expressed by the community will be established. Such goals and objectives shall, where practicable, reflect the principles of quality community development, as shaped and expressed by the Steering Committee, property owners and community.

### **Public Outreach**

Public involvement is considered to be a central component that will directly influence the outcome and success of the project. Communicating project goals to project stakeholders will therefore be an important consideration. This project will develop and utilize a variety of tools and methods in order to assure that all interested parties receive adequate notice of project events and important project benchmarks and are made aware of draft materials that require review.

The following tools and methods will be used in order to achieve this goal of excellent public involvement

**Communication and Outreach Tools** – It will be the goal of the Project Team to communicate project goals, concepts, ideas and other issues to stakeholders in a clear and effective manner. This can best be accomplished by utilizing an array of communication tools in order to facilitate the conveyance and discussion of the existing state and potential future

state(s) of the project study area. These communication methods will utilize a mix of graphic and narrative approaches.

Public Notification – The Project Team will discuss and develop adequate measures to provide all members of the public with adequate notice of project events and important benchmarks. This may include the creation of flyers for local distribution, email notifications, website postings, and press releases to be issued to local media (with an emphasis on media outlets that have a large local circulation).

### **Visioning Process**

The Project Team will be responsible for creating a Draft Community Vision Statement for the proposed BOA project area, including the goals and objectives for future redevelopment. The vision, goals and objectives will be guided in part by information from the property owners and public obtained during the initial meetings and the initial public workshop.

The vision, goals and objectives will also be guided by the significant amount of visioning work and analysis already conducted for the involved properties as part of the Master Plan, the Waterfront Access Plan, the North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan, the Gateway Historic Canal District Revitalization Plan, and the Utica Marsh Management Plan of July 1980. These reports, their vision statements and relevant goals and recommendations will serve as a good starting point. Our intent will be to utilize and modify as appropriate, the vision, goals and objectives from these previous reports. The vision and applicable goals and recommendations of these reports are provided below for reference.

### ***City of Utica Master Plan***

#### ***Vision Statement***

Utica is the place for people seeking a culturally rich, economically successful, and environmentally friendly place to live, visit, and conduct business. Our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, our places of work and play allow for opportunities for an even exchange between people and place; Utica is a community that invites all the people to utilize their unique qualities to emerge and define our City. Utica is the hub of regional collaboration, social diversity, and economic progress. Our City is ripe with potential, which we will maximize with extensive community input, emphasizing high-performance, sustainable economic redevelopment, and a healthy network of neighborhoods, parks, and waterfront renewal.

## **Goals**

### Infrastructure & Waterfront Development

Goal 8: Increase public awareness, public access and connectivity to the Historic Districts and Erie Canal/Mohawk River.

#### *Implementation Strategies:*

- > Create better access to the following districts and sub-districts:
  - > East and West Baggs Square (Lower Genesee Street Historic District)
  - > Gateway District – Whitesboro between Seneca and Potter
  - > Harbor Point and Inner Harbor
  - > Erie Canal – East of North Genesee Street
  - > Varick Street/Brewery District
- > Develop “Way Finding Signage” and visual links to direct residents and visitors to key areas around the City.
- > Explore opportunities to create improved connectivity across the Mohawk River.

GOAL 9: Develop the Waterfront and Inner Harbor as a mixed-use destination attraction for Utica that enhances the existing waters edge with public and private investment.

#### *Implementation Strategies:*

- > Implement consistent portions of Niagara Mohawk’s Harbor Point Plan.
- > Create public (or mixed public and commercial) uses at Harbor Point and Inner Harbor. One concept developed for Harbor Point is the relocation of Murnane Field facilities. This will allow the City to create a cluster of ball fields and host softball and baseball tournaments and open Murnane Fields for new future economic development opportunities. The concept at Harbor Point calls for the relocation of Donovan Stadium and creates an opportunity to attract an “A” baseball organization, develop a waterfront promenade, and include concession space, commercial/ retail space and the potential for a new hotel. The concept also improves the connection between the waterfront and Gateway District with a possible connection between Washington Street to Seneca Street.

### Parks, Recreation, Arts/Culture & Historic Preservation Goals from the Utica Master Plan

Goal 3: Develop use of the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River around Historic, Recreational, and Regional objectives to stimulate Economic Development.

#### *Implementation Strategies:*

- > Change the perception of safety and accessibility by making entrance points more inviting, clearly marked and signed, increasing use for family activity.
- > Include Utica police bike patrol (or volunteer patrols) on trails and launching areas on the river. i.e.: Barnes Ave.
- > Celebrate the Utica-Rome connection via the canal. The first shovel was dug in Rome and the first trip on the canal began in Utica. Mark these historic happenings at the sites.
- > Create an annual festival that celebrates the Sister Cities' connection with fun re-enactments, interactive children's play (Daymon Night's Secret Treasure,) races on the canal with four man "mule teams" pulling bateaus and similar events.
- > Relocate Murnane Field facilities to Harbor Point. This will allow the City to create a cluster of ball fields and to host softball and baseball tournaments. The plan also calls for a new Donovan Stadium; creating an opportunity to attract a Class "A" baseball organization, develop a waterfront promenade, with concession space, commercial/retail space and the potential for a new hotel. This also improves the connection between the waterfront and downtown with a connection between Washington Street to Seneca Street.

### **North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan**

The North Genesee Street corridor is envisioned as:

- > A fully-integrated multi-modal network that safely and efficiently transports people, goods and services
- > An attractive and accessible place to conduct business
- > A welcoming gateway into the City of Utica
- > A vital connector between the New York State Thruway, Mohawk River, and downtown Utica.

### **Goals from the North Genesee Street Corridor Management Plan**

- > Safety: Support safe bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the North Genesee Street corridor.



- > Visual Character: Enhance the visual character and identity of the North Genesee Street corridor.
- > Gateway: Create a sense of arrival into the City of Utica.
- > Pedestrian Amenities: To make walking and bicycling along the North Genesee Street corridor comfortable and convenient.
- > Way finding and Information Signage: To establish an informational and way finding system of signage that contributes to the overall appearance and consistency of the corridor.

### ***Gateway Historic Canal District Revitalization Plan***

Gateway Historic Canal District revitalization represents an opportunity for the City of Utica to establish totally unique and marketable land use opportunities. The initiative is intended to target strategic public investments that will “reuse and recycle” the land in this significant location adjacent to the Utica Central Business District. The development of this project also provides a significant connection between downtown and the waterfront. A number of the plan’s goals and objectives are relevant to this Waterfront Access Plan:

#### *Goal: Improve the marketability of urban land*

- > Establish a system of recreation space, including parks and walking trails that will add to the redevelopment potential of surrounding lands and buildings.

#### *Goal: Establish a circulation plan that facilitates economic growth*

- > Realign traffic patterns to establish a stronger physical connection with the Central Business District, Harbor Point, the Utica Marsh, the North Genesee Street corridor, and the rest of the city
- > Consider the future needs of pedestrians and cyclists as part of an overall multi-modal circulation plan
- > Establish a connection between the Gateway District and future waterfront development

#### *Goal: Promote local and regional tourism by building on the existing strengths of the Gateway District*

- > Explore design, development and funding opportunities for Erie Canal-related projects
- > Encourage linkages between the Erie Canal, Harbor Point and the Utica Marsh
- > Complete the off-road segment of the Erie Canalway Trail between Utica and Little Falls

### **Harbor Point Redevelopment Framework Plan**

There are significant opportunities at Harbor Point for improved recreational and leisure-time activities and expanded tourism opportunities for the residents of the City of Utica and the overall region, which will translate into an expansion of the local economy and increased municipal revenue. The area is recognized as an underutilized portion along the Mohawk River that can contribute to the revitalization of the urban core. Due to the area's location along the river and proximity to downtown and the regional transportation network, the area presents a unique opportunity to introduce activities and distinctive land uses, providing a unique recreational and commercial development experience along the Mohawk River and Erie Canal System. The Harbor Point Redevelopment Plan includes the integration of waterfront, recreational, cultural and commercial uses. The plan further recognizes that the connection of this land to Genesee Street and the city's marina is an opportunity to create a welcoming and cohesive entrance to the city.

### **Utica Marsh Management Plan of July 1980**

The Utica Marsh Management Plan encompasses over 200 acres of wetlands associated with the floodplain of the Mohawk River in the City of Utica and the Town of Marcy. The Utica Marsh Management Plan was developed by the NYSDEC with guidance and support of many organizations who were organized under the Utica Marsh Advisory Committee.

The Utica Marsh Management Plan has a number of goals and objectives that are compatible with this exercise to improve waterfront accessibility. Below are those most compatible with the BOA project:

- > To improve access to the Marsh in a manner consistent with conservation of the resource including links via the Barge canal Bikeway and the proposed connecting link from the City of Utica.
- > To provide access via the railroad maintenance road and communications with Conrail (now CSX). *The previous administration of Utica had suggested establishing a trolley connection from Union Station to the Marsh via the St. Lawrence Division track.*
- > To provide a bikeway link from the East-West canal Bikeway.
- > To provide connection points to the Natural Trail System (extensive in the western part of the marsh) to the lands east of the Route 12 Arterial or connections into the Harbor Point project area. The only connection would be via the Barge Canal Bikeway and the Harbor Lock gate.
- > To maintain the ecosystem in the Marsh.

## **Stakeholder and Public Meetings**

The formats outlined below are intended as a general framework from which to build upon through committee discussion.

### **Brownfield Property and Business Owner Meetings**

As previously stated, property and business owners (direct stakeholders) associated with lands preliminarily identified as brownfields, will be encouraged to actively participate in the planning process. The direct stakeholders will be invited to meet with the Project Team to learn about the process, provide ideas, recommendations, additional information about their property and to voice any concerns they may have. The landowners will also be asked to contribute to the development of the vision and goals.

Due to the number of involved properties preliminarily identified as brownfields, the Study Area will be divided into two sections and the Project Team will conduct two separate meetings. A list of the direct stakeholders will be shared with the Steering Committee during the kick-off meeting and will be asked for their comment and approval of the outreach process. Each direct stakeholder will be invited to the meeting by mail invitation. Follow-up phone calls may be made to ensure the direct stakeholders received the invite and to answer any initial questions they might have.

### **Public Workshop No. 1**

The first public workshop will be scheduled for July 27, 2011. The intent of this initial public “open house” will be to educate the public about the BOA program in general; and a more specific description of the Central Industrial Corridor BOA project including the project boundary. The workshop can take place in an “open house” format, providing the public with an opportunity to casually visit and discuss the project with members of the Project Team during early hours prior to a formal presentation.

The public will be solicited to provide input on subjects such as community goals and objectives and to discuss possible barriers and prospects regarding future uses. Upon completion of this initial meeting the Steering Committee will have public input regarding the overall project and will also have information to guide the draft vision statement.

## **Draft/Tentative Public Workshop No. 1 Schedule:**

### **4:00 – 6:00: Open House**

Materials (maps, charts, handouts, etc.) will be put on display and/or made available. The public is welcome to casually browse materials and interact with the Project Team. Team Members will be on-hand to answer questions and explain project goals and objectives and listen to/gather public input. The public will also be given the opportunity to submit questions regarding all aspects of the project.

### **6:30 – 7:00: Formal Presentation**

A formal presentation of key material, including the project goals, existing conditions, BOA geographic boundary, and draft vision statement/goals and objectives will be presented by Team Members. An exploration of alternative approaches to revitalization will be conducted. Instructions for upcoming Break-Out Sessions will be provided. Public Q&A will follow.

### **7:00 – 8:00: Breakout Sessions/Group Activities**

The public will be given an opportunity interact with staff at various stations in the workshop venue. Stations will be designed to generate discussion and pull information relevant to specific subject areas, such as vision statement, recreation, economy, housing, community character, etc. Dynamic tools and techniques will be developed and used to facilitate dialogue and public input.

### **8:00 – 8:30: Review and Conclusion**

A summary of the discussions that took place during the break-out sessions will be provided. The workshop will be concluded and next steps explained.

All information gathered during this workshop will be incorporated into the draft Pre-Nomination Study.

### **Final Public Forum: Presentation and Review of Findings (Discuss the degree to which we provide for public comment)**

A final public meeting will be held in early 2012 with the intention of presenting project findings, which will be in the form of the draft Pre-Nomination Study. The public will be given an opportunity to review and provide input on the completeness and accuracy of the draft Pre-Nomination Study during an established public review period. The public review period will be at least 21 days but shall not exceed 30 days. The draft Pre-Nomination Study will be posted online in advance of the scheduled date of the meeting and will be made available to the public in hard copy format upon request. The public will be urged to provide their input in

their preferred format: either in person at the public workshop or in writing before, during or after the public workshop, either through letter correspondence or electronically.

Public comments received will be considered and incorporated into the final draft Pre-Nomination Study, as necessary and appropriate. All final products will require Steering Committee approval before submission to the New York State Department of State, Office of Coastal, Local Government and Community Sustainability for final approval.

All public meetings will be advertised through one or more formats, including advance notice in selected local newspaper(s) and through a mix of other media, as necessary and appropriate



Utica Industrial Corridor  
 ReVITALization Plan  
 Brownfield Opportunity Area Program Pre-Nomination Study

**Summary Report**

Open House

July 27, 2011 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

<b>STEERING COMMITTEE</b>	<b>PRESENT (X)</b>
Fred Arcuri, Mohawk Valley EDGE	--
Nancy Burroughs, National Grid	--
Philip Casamento, Casa Imports	--
Mark DeSalvo, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School	<b>X</b>
Frank Elias, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce	--
Richard Evans, Pacemaker Steel & Piping	--
Tony Esposito, JetNet	--
Lucretia Hunt, Madison-Oneida BOCES	<b>X</b>
Karen Korotzer, The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter	--
Dominic Pavia, Pavia Real Estate Services	--
Jack Spaeth, City of Utica	--
<b>CITY OF UTICA/CONSULTANT TEAM</b>	
Brian Thomas, City of Utica	<b>X</b>
Matt Rogers, Saratoga Associates	<b>X</b>
Paul Romano, Shumaker Engineering	<b>X</b>
Bob Koslosky, Shumaker Engineering	<b>X</b>
Allison Damiano-DeTraglia, The Paige Group	<b>X</b>
Nancy Pattarini, The Paige Group	<b>X</b>

**Discussion Summary:**

There were a total of ten attendees at the open house, reporters from YNN and WKTV, two Steering Committee members, plus the consultant team.

Handouts about the plan were provided to all in attendance. A map of the full project area, as well as detailed maps of the specific areas were on display.

The consultant team presented a Power Point presentation about the program, then opened it up to questions.

The items that were discussed included:

- Clarification of the program and how it can benefit The City of Utica.
- The connection with the Utica Master Plan.
- Ability to partner/revitalize areas outside of the project area including Old Main.
- Ability to partner with Municipal Housing Authority/Mohawk Valley Community College at their training center.
- Interest in selling property in the area

**Next Steps:**

- Attendees were interested in staying connected to the project



Utica Industrial Corridor  
 ReVITALization Plan  
 Brownfield Opportunity Area Program Pre-Nomination Study

**Summary Report**

Property Owner Meetings  
 July 25, 2011 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm and 7:00pm – 8:30 pm

<b>STEERING COMMITTEE</b>	<b>PRESENT (X)</b>
Fred Arcuri, Mohawk Valley EDGE	--
Nancy Burroughs, National Grid	--
Philip Casamento, Casa Imports	--
Mark DeSalvo, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School	--
Frank Elias, Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce	<b>X</b>
Richard Evans, Pacemaker Steel & Piping	--
Tony Esposito, JetNet	--
Lucretia Hunt, Madison-Oneida BOCES	<b>X</b>
Karen Korotzer, The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter	--
Dominic Pavia, Pavia Real Estate Services	<b>X</b>
Jack Spaeth, City of Utica	--
<b>CITY OF UTICA/CONSULTANT TEAM</b>	
Brian Thomas, City of Utica	<b>X</b>
Matt Rogers, Saratoga Associates	<b>X</b>
Paul Romano, Shumaker Engineering	<b>X</b>
Bob Koslosky, Shumaker Engineering	<b>X</b>
Allison Damiano-DeTraglia, The Paige Group	<b>X</b>
Nancy Pattarini, The Paige Group	<b>X</b>



**Discussion Summary:**

At the first Property Owner Meeting, in addition to the consultant team, three Steering Committee members, three property owners and one City of Utica Council Member (Jerome McKinsey) were in attendance. One property owner attended the second session.

Handouts about the plan were provided to all in attendance. A map of the full project area, as well as detailed maps of the specific areas were on display.

The consultant team presented a Power Point presentation explaining the program for each of the sessions and then opened it up to questions.

The items that were discussed include:

- How the Program could benefit property owners, their neighborhoods and community. There was discussion from property owners that covered the following; “What is in it for me?” “Why would I want to be engaged in this process?” and “What will it mean for Utica when this plan is complete?”
- Clarification was requested that private involvement is voluntary, that this is not a clean-up program, and that this does not mean that every property within the area is a brownfield. It was clarified that this historically was the central industrial corridor, and to that point it has the highest concentration of brownfields/potential brownfields in the City.
- There were questions as to the status on the National Grid cleanup site and its impact on other properties in the area.
- The group discussed if they felt this program area would be viable for residential vs. industrial/commercial. The feeling was this was not an area for residential growth
- The need for infrastructure and beautification programs was discussed.
- The potential for growth around the Utica Aud was discussed.
- Two of the property owners in attendance were very much in favor of the program and were looking to sell their properties.
- Benefits of the program area were discussed including Utica being a gateway to the Adirondacks, waterfront access, NYS Thruway access, proximity to downtown.

**Next Steps:**

- Attendees were interested in staying connected to the project.