

City of North Tonawanda, New York

BOA Step 3 Implementation Strategy | GEIS



2018

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Executive Summary

Nestled at the confluence of the Niagara River and the Erie Canal, North Tonawanda served as a hub for lumber production and distribution until the 1970s, earning the moniker the “Lumber City.” The city was once home to hundreds of manufacturing businesses, including the Ray Bennett Lumber Company, the Allan Herschell Company, and the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company. The City’s rich history is reflected along its streets and active waterfronts, where residents and visitors enjoy scenic views and recreational opportunities.

What is *NT Momentum*?

THE NORTH TONAWANDA MOMENTUM PROJECT will provide new opportunities for the community to live, work and play in a City that is rich with character and culture. The City of North Tonawanda and its development partners have a vision that will create a resurgence that extends from downtown to the waterfront. The implementation of the City’s redevelopment plans will ensure that North Tonawanda becomes a center for commerce and a destination that residents and visitors can enjoy.

The “*NT Momentum Plan*” was developed as a comprehensive revitalization plan and implementation strategy that reflects North Tonawanda’s unique history, assets, and location along the Niagara River and the Erie Canal. The planning process was led by the City of North Tonawanda and supported by a Project Advisory Committee, which included representatives from various local government agencies, community organizations, local business owners, state agencies—all with an expertise and interest in the revitalization of North Tonawanda.

The NT Momentum Study Area is an approximately 546-acre area located along the Niagara River and Erie Canal in the City of North Tonawanda, encompassing all of Tonawanda Island, the Little River and the majority of the City’s historic downtown core (Map 1). The Study Area is bounded on the south by the Erie Canal, on the west by the Niagara River, on the north by the City boundary, and on the east by River Road, Oliver Street, Ironton Street, and North Marion Street.

Project Background

Sponsored by the City of North Tonawanda, the project is also referred to as the “Tonawanda Island Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Step 3 Implementation Strategy” and was completed through the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, which is funded and overseen by the New York State Department of State (DOS), with technical support provided by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The BOA Program was developed in 2003 as the planning component of the NYS Superfund/Brownfield Law (GML Article 18-C, Section 970-r), providing municipalities and community-based organizations with financial and technical assistance to complete area-wide revitalization strategies for neighborhoods impacted by the presence of brownfields and environmental hazards. At the completion of the program, communities will be designated a BOA, increasing their competitive position for access to funding and incentives under the DEC Brownfield Cleanup Program, the Empire State Development Corporation’s economic development programs, and many other State and Federal assistance opportunities.

The NT Momentum Plan identifies redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities, particularly for the strategic redevelopment sites within the Study Area. Specific recommendations regarding the potential reuse and revitalization of key properties and areas include actions to modify land use patterns and zoning regulations, as well as the creation of programs that support the City’s economic development capabilities.

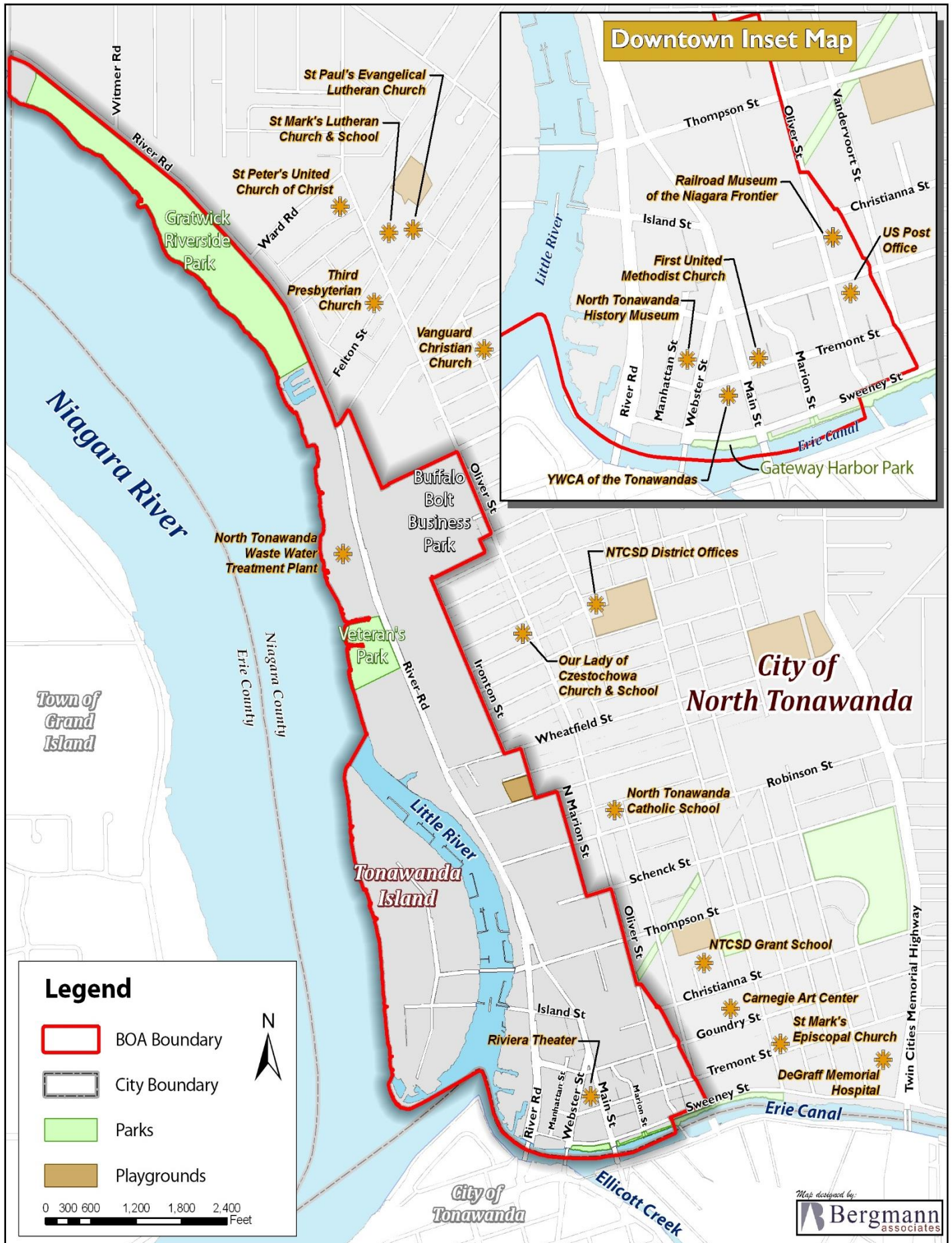
North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area

Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 1

Study Area Context



Community Vision

The BOA planning process was overseen by a Steering Committee that met regularly over the course of the project to provide feedback and guidance during plan development. In addition to the Steering Committee, a Zoning-specific subcommittee was formed to provide feedback for proposed modifications to the City's zoning code. Community members, stakeholders, and business owners participated in two public outreach events. The first public event was a project kick-off and open house held at the historic Riviera Theatre. The second public event was a mobile tour of the Study Area in which participants pedaled a bicycle trolley to designated stops that highlighted the redevelopment potential of Strategic Sites.

Community feedback was an essential component of the planning process and helped to build a common vision to guide future actions outlined in this Implementation Strategy.

Vision Statement for the North Tonawanda BOA:

...a vibrant mixed use district centered around the confluence of two waterfronts – the Erie Canal and the Niagara River. Residents can choose to live, work, or relax while taking advantage of abundant commercial opportunities, employment options, restaurants, and recreation assets, all of which capitalize on the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. Visitors come not only to enjoy the waterways, but to experience the multitude of land side cultural and recreational amenities offered at this “Gateway to the Erie Canal.”

BOA Principles:

The BOA principles listed below were developed by the community during the planning process to help guide decisions and future investments within the Study Area. Each of the principles is supported by strategic objectives drawn from input generated by the public, steering committee, project stakeholders, and City staff.

PRINCIPLE #1: MAKE THE WATERFRONT A DESTINATION

It is recommended that the City continue move forward with efforts to promote economic development along the Erie Canal, River Road and Tonawanda Island.

PRINCIPLE #2: OFFER A DYNAMIC URBAN EXPERIENCE

The City must set forth a design philosophy that instills a sense of pride in the community and translates to high quality streetscapes, public spaces, and new development projects.

PRINCIPLE #3: PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN LAND USE

The real benefit of having a variety of land uses is associated with creating a 24-hour city that supports the local tax base, provides jobs to residents, welcomes and responds to visitor needs, fosters small business development and provides options for residential living.

PRINCIPLE #4: IDENTIFY NEW USES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing infrastructure within the BOA study area should be viewed as an opportunity, not a hindrance for redevelopment.

PRINCIPLE #5: CELEBRATE OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

North Tonawanda needs to celebrate its history and the cultural resources it offers to ensure that those assets that are “uniquely” ours are shared with others.

PRINCIPLE #6: DESIGN FOR PEOPLE, NOT JUST CARS

A provision associated with creating successful urban and waterfront environments is the creation of high quality access and experiences within the public realm.

PRINCIPLE #7: ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP

The overarching purpose of the study is to further the clean-up of contaminated, blighted and underutilized sites in the BOA study area to better position them for future redevelopment and enhancement.

PRINCIPLE #8: WORK COLLECTIVELY AND COOPERATIVELY

The City will spearhead the creation of broad partnerships and collaborative agreements to bring a wide range of parties together, including state agencies, regional organizations, local property owners, local business owners, prospective investors and residents.

PRINCIPLE #9: IDENTIFY PROJECTS THAT BUILD MOMENTUM

Small projects can and should be completed quickly to show progress towards the next set of goals and maintain momentum in the quest to redevelop the BOA and City of North Tonawanda.

PRINCIPLE #10: DEFINE AND MARKET A UNIQUE IDENTITY

The identity and brand developed for the BOA and the City must address strongly-held community values, while also projecting a vision of the future. Once a brand is identified, marketing the BOA must be multi-faceted, targeting potential new businesses and developments through available monetary incentives.

NT Momentum Master Plan

The NT Momentum Plan recommends real estate development projects, infrastructure improvements, and policies that together will help North Tonawanda achieve the community’s goals for revitalization.

The heart of the Step 3 Implementation Strategy is the graphic BOA Plan, which portrays 34 projects, divided into three phases over a period of 25 years (Map 2). The BOA Plan prioritizes redevelopment recommendations for six Strategic Sites, which are highlighted in Site Profiles for marketing purposes. In addition, the BOA Plan includes recommended improvements to public infrastructure, such as parks, open space, trails, and streets.

The NT Momentum Plan Implementation Strategy stems from the Vision, Principles, and Strategic Objectives developed through years of planning and community engagement. The BOA Plan is intended to capitalize on the existing character, fabric and strengths of Downtown North Tonawanda and Tonawanda Island. It recommends development and infrastructure projects that represent a significant shift in the Study Area’s land use pattern to reflects changing demographics and market realities. These improvements are intended to facilitate North Tonawanda’s transformation from a waterfront industrial center to a vibrant, mixed-use destination known for its quality of life and visitor attractions.

Phase 1 (2015-2025)

1. Gratwick Riverside Park and Marina Improvements
2. Buffalo Bolt Business Park Redevelopment
3. North Island Residential and Park Development
4. Thompson Street Bridge Rehabilitation
5. Taylor Drive and Island Boulevard Construction
6. Tonawanda Island Promenade
7. Office Mixed-Use
8. Retail/Restaurant Mixed-Use and Little River Promenade
9. Downtown Structured Parking
10. Oliver Street Enhancements
11. New Pocket Park
12. Gateway Memorial Park
13. Hotel
14. Main Street Pedestrian Enhancements
15. Multi-Family Residential
16. Multi-Tenant Warehouse Facility

Phase 2 (2025-2030)

17. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 2
18. Tonawanda Island Internal Roads, Central Park, Mixed Use
19. River Road Reconstruction
20. Industrial Infill, Redevelopment, Access Management
21. Mixed-Use Redevelopment
22. Interpretive Rail Park and Museum
23. Thompson Street Improvements
24. Weatherbest Slip Redevelopment
25. Phase One Hotel and Restaurant
26. Residential
27. Multi-Family Residential

Phase 3 (2030 and Beyond)

28. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 3
29. Mixed-Use with Structured Parking
30. Townhomes and Oliver Street of Shoppes
31. Enhanced Oliver Street Gateway
32. Mixed-Use Housing and Municipal Parking lot
33. Manhattan Street Mixed-Use and Parking Structure
34. Office Park



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Six strategic sites have been identified through the BOA designation process. Strategic redevelopment sites include those parcels that have been determined to be of critical importance to the overall redevelopment of the BOA based on their environmental status, vacancy, or current underutilized status. Strategic Sites are listed below.

Site/Project 8: 150 Michigan Street - Retail/Restaurant Mixed Use and Little River Promenade.

The former Fire Training Facility publicly owned, and is located at a key gateway to Tonawanda Island. A proposed three-story structure is intended to have frontage along the Little River, Taylor Drive and Island Boulevard while providing internal parking hidden from street view. Proposed uses include upper-story residential, marine-centered retail, services and restaurants. The waterfront is proposed to include a new public access promenade that connects with Island Street.



Site/Project 13: 27/39 Main Street – Downtown Hotel.

This strategic site was selected for its location downtown, availability for redevelopment, frontage along the Canal, and vehicle access. This privately-owned 1.6-acre site is located in the heart of downtown North Tonawanda, near restaurants and shopping, and just steps from the Canal waterfront. The site currently holds a warehouse building and is available for redevelopment. The City completed a Market and Tourism Analysis and Hotel Feasibility, which concluded that there is demand for hotel accommodation in downtown North Tonawanda. The BOA Plan recommends a 4-5 story extended stay hotel on this site.



Site/Project 15: 600 River Road – Multi-family Residential.

The BOA Plan recommends multi-family residential on this site, located at 600 River Road. The City is currently reviewing a proposal for 102 residential units, made up of townhomes, apartments, and retail space along the Niagara River.



Site/Project 21: 235 River Road – Mixed Use Redevelopment.

The area bounded by Main Street, River Road, and Island Street is a Strategic Site and recommended to undergo redevelopment that provides a positive influence on the northern extent of downtown North Tonawanda. This location serves as a gateway to both downtown and Tonawanda Island, and is envisioned to be transformed into a mixed-use node with office and/or retail space on the ground floor, with upper-story residential units.



Site 25: 2 Bridge Street – Hotel and Restaurant.

Initial phases of this project would include multi-unit housing with ground floor commercial tenant space as well as a large centralized plaza along the waterfront on Tonawanda Island that can take advantage of River views. Later phases of development at this site would include the addition of a full-service hotel, the expansion of the residential mixed use structure, and the construction of multistory structured parking in place of surface parking. This development project will be the capstone investment on Tonawanda Island, and will provide a high quality public realm along the Niagara River.



Site 26: 2-17 Detroit Street – Residential or Hospitality.

The southern tip of Tonawanda Island offers views upstream along the Niagara River towards the south Grand Island Bridges. This location also functions as the gateway to the Erie Canal and offers maritime infrastructure for the docking and launching of boats. The views, location, and infrastructure make this a good location for accommodation and services catering to the boating community. The redevelopment of the southern tip of Tonawanda Island should provide high-end services and quality architecture that establishes a refined and appealing identity for the City and its waterfront.



Implementation

Other aspects of implementation include regulatory updates, marketing and branding. In addition to recommended infrastructure, public realm improvements and real estate redevelopment projects, implementation of the NT Momentum Plan will require updates to the City's zoning map and code language that will implement site and building design standards that promote smart growth and protect environmental and cultural resources. The zoning updates apply different districts to parcels within the BOA Study Area, primarily to districts that would restrict the types of uses that may be introduced within the BOA boundary, particularly in the historic downtown and along shorelines. In addition, the updates would improve the organization, structure, and flow of the zoning ordinance.

A marketing and branding campaign was developed for the NT Momentum Plan. The branding campaign includes a logo concept and tagline for the entire Study Area, as well as subareas within the boundary. As part of this effort, a marketing brochure was developed to describe the Study Area and illustrate the graphic NT Momentum Plan. The logo is designed so that the overall branding of the project can transition to become branding for the Study Area after the planning process is complete.

Descriptive marketing profiles were prepared for each of the Strategic Sites identified above. The profiles include descriptions of each site, including possible development concepts that fit within the land use recommendations of the NT Momentum Plan. They are intended to show potential options based on analysis of the sites and market demand. Each of the six sites will require additional investigation and detailed design in order to fully implement redevelopment projects.

WE WELCOME YOU.

WORK, LIVE AND PLAY, FROM DOWNTOWN TO THE WATERFRONT



There is a growing desire to be back "downtown." North Tonawanda is well positioned to benefit from an emerging nationwide preference for city living, walkable communities, and outdoor activities. Once complete, the North Tonawanda momentum project will provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to be a part of a vibrant, urban environment surrounded by scenic landscapes, trails, and natural waterways. North Tonawanda's downtown core has beautiful, historic buildings ready to be transformed into housing, restaurants, offices, and shops.



Waterfronts are natural destinations, offering scenic views and recreational opportunities. Regardless of the season, people enjoy being by the water; they just want a reason to be there. North Tonawanda is positioned at the confluence of two major waterways, the Erie Canal and the Niagara River, providing unique opportunities for redevelopment. The North Tonawanda momentum project will identify waterfront development projects that will provide a reason for both residents and visitors to spend time along the waterfront.



With historic buildings and scenic landscapes, the City of North Tonawanda offers the perfect canvas for unique residential development opportunities. After years of moving to the suburbs, residents are choosing to move back to urban neighborhoods that offer cultural diversity, entertainment and the ability to work where they play. The North Tonawanda momentum project plans for a variety of urban mixed-use developments, from downtown to the water's edge, offering current and future residents unique living opportunities.



State Environmental Quality Review Compliance & GEIS

As part of the NT Momentum Plan, a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) was completed. A GEIS is a type of EIS that is typically used to consider broad-based actions or related groups of actions that agencies may approve, fund, or directly undertake. The City of North Tonawanda determined that a GEIS is appropriate because the NT Momentum Plan is inherently conceptual in nature and includes a number of separate actions which, if considered singly, may have minor effects, but if considered together may have significant adverse environmental impacts.

The GEIS assesses potential environmental impacts and evaluates alternatives to the recommendations in the plan. A variety of potential impacts were evaluated, including socio-economic issues, land use, housing, open space and parks, historic and cultural resources, transportation systems, infrastructure, community facilities, natural resources, and environmental contamination.

Thresholds and criteria for future review are established to help ensure that future private development proceeds in accordance with the NT Momentum Plan. This could include supplemental EISs to reflect site-specific impacts that could not adequately be addressed. Preparation of a GEIS will facilitate the assessment of future development action by identifying thresholds and requirements that future development must meet.

1 Project Description & Boundary

1.1 Introduction to the BOA Program

The BOA Program was developed in 2003 as the planning component of the NYS Superfund/Brownfield Law (GML Article 18-C, Section 970-r), providing municipalities and community-based organizations with financial and technical assistance to complete area-wide revitalization strategies for neighborhoods impacted by the presence of brownfields and environmental hazards. At the completion of the program, communities will be designated a BOA, increasing their competitive position for access to funding and incentives under the DEC Brownfield Cleanup Program, the Empire State Development Corporation's economic development programs, and many other State and Federal assistance opportunities.

Brownfield sites are typically former industrial or commercial properties where operations may have resulted in environmental impairment. The DOS and DEC recognize the expansive detrimental impacts these sites have on their surrounding neighborhoods, and that brownfield impacts are not limited to individual sites or adjoining property. The marketability and viability of entire neighborhoods are impacted by the presence, or potential presence, of contaminated sites by negatively affecting the psychology of residents and potential investors. The negative psychological effects of brownfields can lead to disinvestment and blight radiating outward far beyond the impacted sites or immediate area. The BOA Program assists communities in identifying and analyzing sources of neighborhood distress, and provides the resources and capacity to develop and implement revitalization strategies. State and federal programs also exist, such as the DEC Environmental Restoration Program, the DEC Brownfield Cleanup Program, and the US Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfield Program. These programs focus on physical investigations and activities, further assisting local municipalities in dealing with brownfield properties and their impacts on communities.

1.2 Lead Project Sponsors

The City of North Tonawanda is the sponsoring municipality of the Tonawanda Island Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study, a program funded, administered, and overseen by the New York State Department of State (DOS), with technical support provided by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Lumber City Development Corporation (LCDC) is responsible for management of the project on behalf of the City. LCDC has been proactive and involved in a wide range of planning initiatives within the City and specifically within the BOA study area.

The City of North Tonawanda is also undertaking an update to its Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP), which shares a considerable area of overlap with the BOA. The LWRP seeks to provide guidance for future development along the City's waterfronts, and promotes best practice and specific policies relating to development within the marine environment. The LWRP process also provides access to implementation funds which can further leverage the overlap with the BOA study area. The LWRP is a State-funded program also administered by DOS, and together these two initiatives will provide the framework for revitalization within the waterfront and downtown portions of the City. These two efforts will build upon momentum and action started in 2006 with the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan and further supported in 2009 by the City's new Comprehensive Plan.

In an effort to ensure the continued involvement of the community throughout the planning process, the LCDC established a Joint Steering Committee representing a range of local stakeholders and key aspects of the BOA and LWRP projects. Steering Committee members provide a diverse background of interests, including economic development, recreation, water dependent activity, community character, cultural assets, and business interests.

THREE STEPS OF THE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAM:

<i>Phase 1: Pre-Nomination</i>	<i>Phase 2: Nomination</i>	<i>Phase 3: Implementation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary analysis of the community and potential brownfield sites • Identification of a study area • Establishment of partnerships with key stakeholders and initiation of public participation process • Initial identification and summarization of opportunities for renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive analysis of the study area and individual brownfield sites • Analysis of economic and market trends to assist in strategy development • Development of specific recommendations for the revitalization of strategic sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed individual site assessments, as required, to determine remediation strategies and needs • Creation of a detailed reuse and redevelopment strategy for strategic sites • Development of a marketing strategy for individual redevelopment sites

1.3 Proposed Action

The proposed action is the adoption of the Tonawanda Island BOA Step 3 Implementation Strategy. In 2010, the City of North Tonawanda completed a BOA Step 2 Nomination Study and subsequently was awarded a grant from the New York Department of State (NYS DOS) for a BOA Step 3 Implementation Strategy. This document includes the combined Step 2 and Step 3 reports, which were prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by the NYS DOS for the BOA program.

The BOA Plan describes a revitalization strategy for designated areas adversely impacted by vacant or underutilized sites, and the actual or perceived presence of brownfields. The Plan recommends general land use changes within the 546-acre Study Area and includes updates to the City's zoning code to support these land uses. The Plan also includes a 25-year time horizon, recommending development projects, capital improvements and a general phasing plan for redevelopment within the Study Area. The Plan envisions new residential and commercial development in excess of 200,000 square feet and 300 residential units, in addition to public realm and transportation infrastructure improvements.

1.4 Purpose and Need

The BOA Plan identifies redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities, particularly for the strategic redevelopment sites within the Study Area. Specific recommendations regarding the potential reuse and revitalization of key properties and areas include actions to modify land use patterns and zoning regulations, as well as the creation of programs that support the City's economic development capabilities.

1.5 BOA Boundary Description and Justification

1.5.1 Summary Description

The Tonawanda Island BOA Study Area is an approximately 546-acre area located along the Niagara River and Erie Canal in the City of North Tonawanda, encompassing all of Tonawanda Island, the Little River and the majority of the City's historic downtown core (Map 3). The BOA Study Area is bounded on the south by the Erie Canal, on the west by the Niagara River, on the north by the City boundary, and on the east by River Road, Oliver Street, Ironston Street, and North Marion Street. The primary organizing features of the study area include the Niagara River, the Erie Canal

and River Road. These elements define the project's study districts and establish a framework of interconnected commercial zones and recreational opportunities.

The logistical benefits of being located at the confluence of the Erie Canal and Niagara River, and adjacent to inexpensive power from Niagara Falls, created a spill-over of additional development along the River Road corridor, with industrial giants such as the Buffalo Bolt Company carving out significant areas of land for operations. Lands further north along the Niagara River were utilized for the dumping of industrial and municipal waste generated by the significant amount of industrial activity taking place in adjacent portions of the city.

Taken together, the BOA represents 546 acres of historic and current land uses mobilized for the processing, manufacturing, assembly, distribution and sales of goods and materials. This activity has been integral to the economic sustainability of the community, but has also left areas contaminated by chemicals and littered with underutilized or abandoned infrastructure.

Adjacent to these industrial areas are North Tonawanda's historic downtown and waterfronts, which will be at the center of the City's revitalization efforts. Capitalizing on the potential for recreation and tourism investment will allow the City to balance its inherent assets with its industrial past.

River Road and the adjacent waterfronts have long been the spine of activity on the west side of North Tonawanda, helping define the Brownfield Opportunity Area boundaries, and justifying the inclusion of these and adjacent lands in the planning and revitalization process.

1.5.2 Boundary Justification

NORTHERN BOUNDARY

The northern boundary of the BOA includes Gratwick Riverside Park and extends to the municipal boundary with the Town of Wheatfield. As an existing brownfield previously remediated under the DEC's Voluntary Cleanup Program, Gratwick Riverside Park is a logical inclusion within the BOA. The extension of the BOA, to include an adjacent parcel to the north, places the entire Niagara River waterfront within the boundary and provides a strong opportunity to tie waterfront redevelopment policies from the BOA with the concurrent LWRP planning project.

SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

The Erie Canal and Tonawanda Creek are the southern municipal boundary for the City, and are the most logical terminus of the study area. These waterfronts were historically utilized for commercial and industrial activities, and thus, are appropriate areas for inclusion within the BOA boundary.

WESTERN BOUNDARY

The Niagara River is North Tonawanda's western municipal boundary, and has historically been utilized for commercial, recreational, and industrial activities. The Niagara Riverfront contains several of the city's primary sites of environmental concern, including sites located on Tonawanda Island. These areas form the backbone of known and potential brownfield sites within the study area, and represent the impetus behind the BOA project.

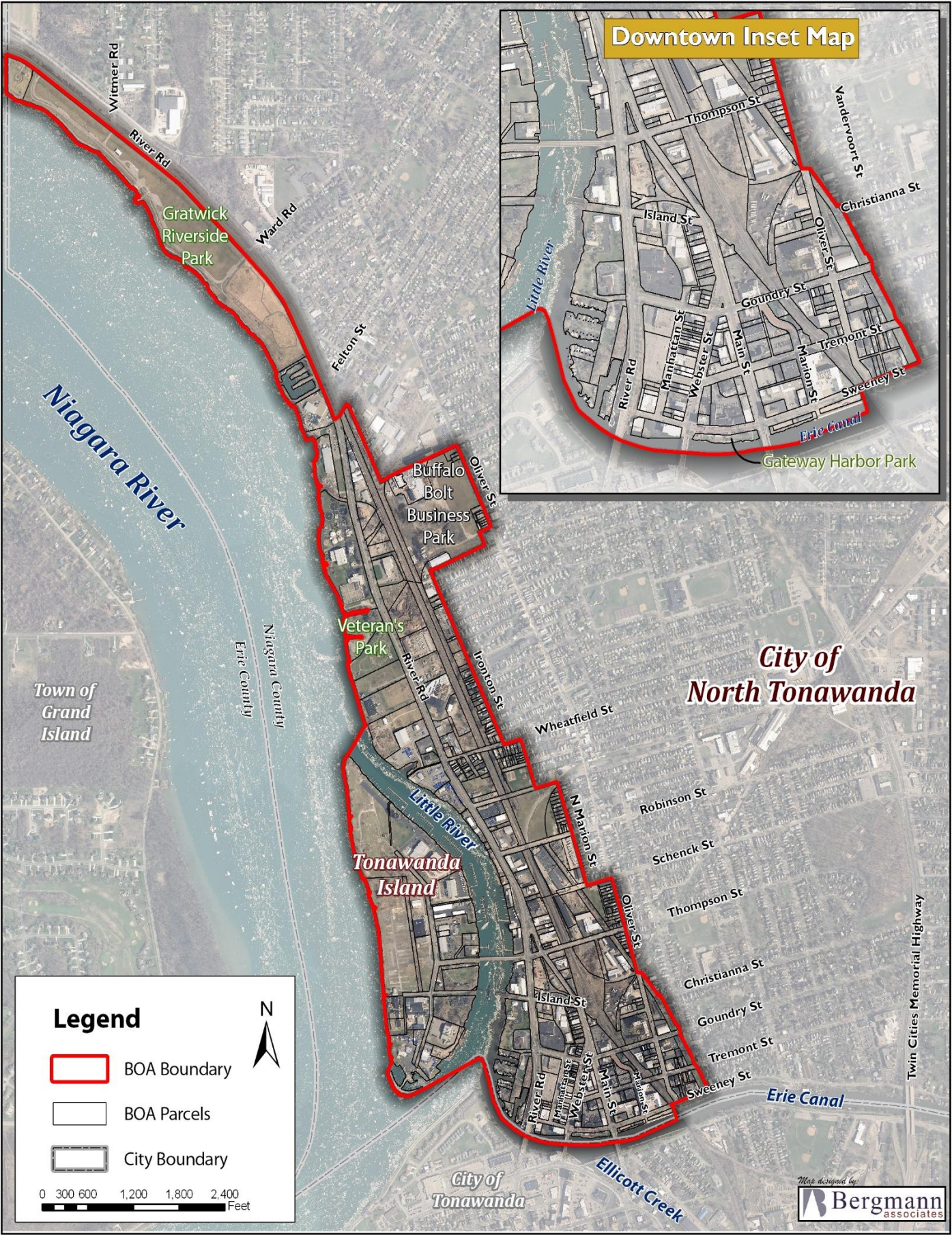
EASTERN BOUNDARY

Historically, nearly all of the industrial activity on the west side of the city took place within a narrow corridor defined by railroads and major thoroughfares. The eastern boundary of the BOA begins at the southern extent of the former railroad corridor that crossed Sweeney Street at Vandervoort Street. As this former rail line travels northwest, abutting industrial and commercial properties have been included within the BOA boundary to logical terminal points with city streets. The areas west of this boundary line continue to be utilized for commercial and industrial activities, and form the interface with the adjacent residential areas along Oliver Street.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the
NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 3 BOA Boundary



1.6 Related Planning Studies and Efforts

The BOA Plan is intended to coalesce previous planning and design efforts undertaken by the City and create a unified plan for key redevelopment sites within the community. The following section presents a brief summary of a number of significant applicable planning processes that have been reviewed, considered, and incorporated into the BOA Plan.

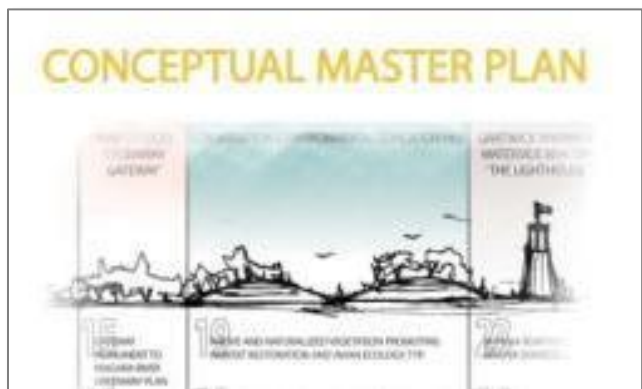
DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING PLAN (2009-2010)



Downtown Wayfinding Plan Cover.

In 2009, the City began developing a wayfinding strategy for downtown including the area bounded by Oliver Street, the Erie Canal, Thompson Street, and the Niagara River. The strategy includes both traditional elements such as gateway markers, directional signage, and interpretive/informational kiosks, and alternative wayfinding strategies such as symbology embedded into the streetscape and public art. A primary component of revitalization efforts within the BOA and LWRP documents will be to improve wayfinding throughout the downtown and waterfront areas. The City is in the process of finalizing the design character of the wayfinding scheme, with a branding and community identity component to be conducted in concert with the BOA and LWRP processes.

GRATWICK RIVERSIDE PARK MASTER PLAN (2008)



Gratwick Park Conceptual Master Plan cover.

The Master Plan for Gratwick Riverside Park strives to exemplify opportunities that can be realized through adherence to the objectives outlined in the Niagara River Greenway Plan. As a former industrial and landfill site, this park will serve to educate the public about ecological mitigation needed to promote the restoration of critical waterfront brownfields.

Engineering installations will demonstrate the innovative methods utilized to clean Great Lakes waters and soils and restore habitats. Additionally, the park will become a recreation destination for families and visitors to North Tonawanda and the Buffalo-Niagara region.

In 2010, the construction of an accessible fishing pier will commence implementation efforts, with funding from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Niagara River Greenway committees, which provide funding for the implementation of the Niagara River Greenway Plan discussed below. This master plan is a critical implementation step from the Comprehensive Plan process, provides additional site specific strategies to be adopted within the BOA, and is a model for environmental site remediation.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2007-2009)



Primary community gateways identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan for the City of North Tonawanda builds upon the 2006 Downtown Redevelopment Plan and provides an overall framework for future public and private investment and decision making throughout the City. The Plan seeks to organize and coordinate the collective investment by residents, businesses, colleges, churches, schools, volunteer organizations, and local government to shape the physical, social, and economic character of the community.

The Plan included specific policies regarding waterfront and economic development that provide detailed objectives and action items to be reviewed and incorporated into the BOA planning process. The Plan articulates an overall vision for the city which is to be utilized as a guide during the implementation of recommended actions.

Accomplishments since the plan was adopted include the initiation of both the BOA and LWRP projects, which were identified as important follow-on planning efforts for the community.

REVISIONING BROWNFIELDS REGIONAL STRATEGIC APPROACH (2007)

In 2000, the Niagara Region Brownfields Coalition was formed to collaboratively work towards revitalization of contaminated land within the Niagara Region and along its waterfronts through partnerships with local governments, business owners, and educational institutions. The Revisioning Plan outlines a regional approach to the redevelopment of some of region's most challenging yet promising properties.

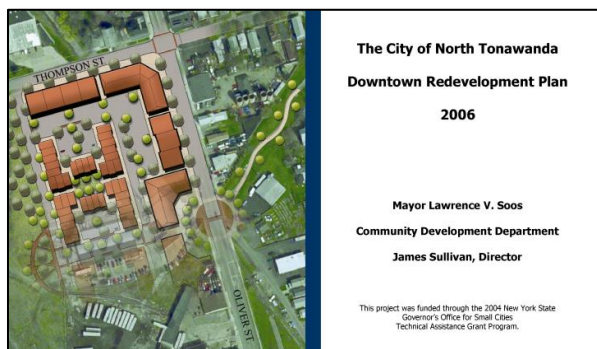
Within North Tonawanda, properties on Tonawanda Island were included for advanced consideration, including project visioning, the creation of concept site plans, and the development of a sample investment pro-forma to understand financial limitations associated with redevelopment. The plans for Tonawanda Island include a large public park at the northern tip of the island, which connects to a pedestrian plaza at the land of the Durkee Bridge with a waterfront promenade. Land uses include mixed-use commercial/retail, residential, and community buildings.

The recommendations for approximately \$270 million in investment include a series of implementation steps the City can take to accommodate for private development. The BOA Program will help facilitate these implementation steps through continued market research, environmental investigations, and the establishment of a design/brand identity.

NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY PLAN (2007)

The Niagara River Greenway Plan establishes a unified vision and a set of principles for the Niagara River Greenway. The BOA is entirely contained within the Greenway boundary, and acts as a local refinement plan to assist in the implementation of the Greenway. The Greenway Plan discusses several high priority "Implementation Concepts" which describe system-wide approaches and strategies for Greenway development. Among these concepts is the redevelopment of Gratwick Riverside Park within the BOA as a family-oriented tourism destination. Gratwick Riverside Park is a model for environmental remediation in North Tonawanda, and is a critical component of the City's public space system. The implementation of BOA recommendations along the waterfront will require close coordination with the Niagara River Greenway Commission, which has access to significant funding levels as part of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) relicensing agreements for hydropower at Niagara Falls.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006)



Downtown Redevelopment Plan cover.

elements for the redevelopment of these locations and the general revitalization of the study area. The recommendations made for these redevelopment areas will be promoted within the BOA Nomination Study (Step 2), and included within the study area's implementation strategy.

Successful implementation efforts resulting from the Plan include the City's NYS Main Street program, which has leveraged more than \$2 million in State funding for streetscape and façade improvements in the downtown core, which is included within the BOA boundary.

The North Tonawanda Downtown Redevelopment Plan focuses on defining a realistic vision for revitalization of the downtown and lower Oliver Street corridor areas of the City. The Plan's recommendations are based upon existing conditions within the study area, market data, input from local and visitor populations and community involvement.

The three key redevelopment opportunities presented within the Plan, (Downtown, Oliver/Thompson Street, and River Road/Main Street) are located within the BOA study area. The Plan provides the desired traits and

GATEWAY POINT FEASIBILITY STUDY (2002)



Preferred alternative rendering for Gateway Point.

The redevelopment of the Gateway Point site is considered to be a high priority action item within the BOA study area. This plan provides guidance and in-depth information regarding site constraints, limitations, and public opinion surrounding this highly controversial area of the BOA. Redevelopment and reinvestment within this area is encouraged to promote and enhance the City's primary water gateway.

In 2002, the City of North Tonawanda produced a redevelopment plan for the Weatherbest Slip and Wardell's Boatyard area. This plan seeks to build upon the momentum and success of the Gateway Harbor redevelopment that took place in 1999. The Gateway Point Feasibility Study explored the viability of the City acquiring and redeveloping private-property for public purposes, including the establishment of historical interpretive facilities, recreational facilities, and public access. In addition, the City sought to create a concept for recreation, retail, residential, restaurants, small-scale children's attractions, a visitor center and a museum.

LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (1988)

North Tonawanda's original LWRP produced in 1988 analyzed the City's waterfront resources broken down into five subareas. Land use recommendations and priority capital projects within each subarea were developed that would enhance the quality of life for residents, protect the fragile waterfront environment and habitats, and spur economic development activity and community growth. An update to the LWRP is being developed concurrently with the BOA Nomination Study to leverage funding resources and coordinate recommendations and proposed investments in the nearly identical project boundaries.

A number of projects proposed in the LWRP have been implemented, including the construction of docks along Sweeney Street and the remediation and reuse of Gratwick Riverside Park.

1.7 Environmental Review Process

In accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and its implementing regulations (6 NYCRR Part 617), the Common Council of the City of North Tonawanda, acting as Lead Agency in the adoption of the BOA Plan, has determined that the proposed action is a Type I action and that a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) is needed to evaluate areas of potential impacts resulting from recommendations in the BOA Plan.

This GEIS also assesses the potential impacts resulting from the adoption of zoning code updates for two areas in the City of North Tonawanda. As presented in this BOA, modifications of the zoning code are recommended to facilitate implementation of the BOA Plan.

1.7.1 Purpose of a GEIS

A GEIS is a type of EIS that is typically used to consider broad-based actions or related groups of actions that agencies may approve, fund, or directly undertake. The City has determined that a GEIS is appropriate because the BOA Plan is inherently conceptual in nature and includes a number of separate actions which, if considered singly, may have minor effects, but if considered together may have significant adverse environmental impacts. In addition, the BOA Plan would have wide application, potentially impacting future policies, and changes to land use and zoning.¹

While the major components of a GEIS are similar to a site-specific EIS, there are additional factors that should be considered in a GEIS:

- Hypothetical scenarios as alternatives that could occur under the proposed generic action, including evaluation of all reasonable alternatives that could achieve the objectives of the project sponsor.
- With respect to project phases, general or conceptual consideration of the potential cumulative impacts on the environment and the existing natural resource base of subsequent phases of a larger project or series of projects that may be developed in the future.
- Thresholds and conditions that would trigger the need for supplemental determinations of significance or site-specific EISs.
- A preliminary scope of the environmental issues which would need to be addressed in any supplemental EISs prepared after the original generic EIS.

1.7.2 Involved Agencies

Potentially involved agencies that were required to approve and/or adopt the BOA Plan include:

- City of North Tonawanda Common Council
- New York State Department of State

Potential future involved agencies that may have a permit, approval and/or funding role in the implementation of the BOA Plan include the following:

- City of North Tonawanda Common Council
- City of North Tonawanda Planning Board
- City of North Tonawanda Zoning Board of Appeals
- Lumber City Development Corporation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
- Niagara County Planning Board
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

¹ Department of Environmental Conservation, General Concepts for an EIS

- New York State Department of State

1.7.3 Review Procedures

Prior to completing the GEIS, the City must conduct a series of procedural steps in accordance with SEQRA regulations. These steps are described below.

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 2013, the City of North Tonawanda Common Council prepared a Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF), determined that the proposed adoption of the BOA Plan required a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), and issued a positive declaration of significance.

SCOPING

The City completed a scoping process, which had multiple objectives. These were:

- Eliminate non-significant and non-relevant issues.
- Identify the extent and quality of information needed.
- Identify the range of reasonable alternatives to be discussed.
- Provide an initial identification of mitigation measures.
- Provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the identification of impacts.

The two steps of the scoping process are described below:

- *Draft Scoping Document.* This document described the analyses and methods that were used to prepare the DGEIS. The scoping document was circulated to interested agencies and made available for public comment until October 27, 2015.
- *Final Scoping Document.* Following the close of the public comment period, the City prepared a final scoping document, which was used as a framework to prepare the Draft GEIS (Appendix B).

PREPARATION OF THE GEIS

The City completed the following steps in preparing the GEIS:

- *Draft Generic EIS.* This document was prepared in conformance with the final scoping document and SEQRA guidelines and filed, published and distributed in accordance with 6 NYCRR §617.12. A public hearing was held on September 23, 2015 to obtain public comments.
- *Final Generic EIS.* This document incorporated comments received on the draft GEIS and the City's response to all substantive comments. Upon acceptance of the Final Generic EIS, the document was made available to all interested parties and members of the public and was filed and published in accordance with 6 NYCRR §617.12.
- *Findings Statement.* Following a 10-day review period, the Common Council issued a Findings Statement to approve the adoption and implementation of the BOA Plan.

PUBLIC REVIEW

The preparation and review of the GEIS was designed to provide opportunities for involvement by interested agencies and the general public. This scoping document was made available for public review and comment. Completion of the draft GEIS triggered a 30-day formal public review period (from the date of the Notice of Completion). All substantive comments became part of the record and were included in the final GEIS.

1.7.4 Integrating the GEIS into the BOA Implementation Strategy (BOA Plan)

The GEIS was incorporated directly into this BOA Plan document, per the scope requirements set forth by the Department of State. The GEIS relies on data and analysis compiled for the BOA Plan, including existing conditions data (also referred to as “environmental setting”) and description of the proposed recommendations and master plan for the Study Area.

The table below illustrates where each component of the GEIS is located within this BOA document:

BOA Plan	GEIS Content
Section 1 Description of Project and Boundary	Description of Proposed Action
Section 2 Community Participation	Scoping meeting, public hearing (conducted simultaneously with hearing for BOA plan)
Section 3 Existing Conditions (Environmental Setting)	Description of the Environmental Setting
Section 4 Implementation Strategy	Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts Description of Mitigation Measures Description of Alternatives to the Proposed Action
Section 5 Compliance with SEQRA	Consistency with NYS CMP Coastal Policies Consistency with Heritage Area GEIS References Conditions for Future Actions

2 Community Participation

This section describes the community participation efforts undertaken by the City of North Tonawanda in support of the BOA Plan and Implementation Strategy. In addition, this section describes special participation efforts conducted in support of the State Environmental Quality Review Process.

2.1 Community Participation Plan

Community engagement and buy-in is imperative to the long-term successful implementation of the BOA Plan. Community members, landowners, stakeholders, officials, and regional organizations must have a vested interest in the success of the plan, and, most importantly, must become partners in its implementation.

At the onset of the planning process, a Community Involvement Plan was created that outlined the methods and techniques used to engage the community throughout the course of the BOA planning process. Similar to previous planning and design efforts undertaken by the City, a range of in-person opportunities for public involvement were identified, ranging from general informational public meetings to small group working sessions. In addition, regular electronic and internet communications afforded all interested persons the opportunity to offer their perspectives.

The Community Involvement Plan included the following methods for engaging the community, as seen in Appendix A:

- Regular steering committee meetings
- Project website
- Public meetings
- Public workshop
- Stakeholder meetings

2.2 Enlisting Partners

2.2.1 Project Oversight

The City of North Tonawanda is being represented throughout the planning process by the Lumber City Development Corporation (LCDC). The Lumber City Development Corporation is a not-for-profit corporation charged with facilitating and implementing economic development activities within North Tonawanda, including the administration of state and federal grant appropriations. The LCDC will be responsible for many of the identified local implementation efforts.

2.2.2 Consultation Methods and Techniques

Community participation throughout all phases of the project was conducted through numerous meetings and other opportunities. For the Step 2 Nomination Study planning process, a joint project Steering Committee was formed to help guide the BOA project and the update to the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. These two projects shared a Steering Committee to take advantage of inherent savings in time and resources, while leveraging the knowledge and applicability of public input to both plans. In addition to regularly scheduled Steering Committee meetings, a series of Public Meetings provided opportunities for broad community input, while several Stakeholder Meetings permitted focused discussion on important issues facing the community.

For the Step 3 Implementation Strategy planning process, a Steering Committee was formed specifically for the BOA project. In addition, a Sub Committee was formed to offer guidance and feedback on the zoning code updates specifically. The public engagement process is described in more detail below:

STEERING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee members were invited to participate by the LCDC and City staff. This committee included residents, representatives of the City Waterfront Commission, the City Environmental Commission, City staff, Chamber of Commerce, Niagara County; and staff members from state agencies. A complete listing of Steering Committee membership can be found in Appendix A. Steering Committee meetings were held at a regularly scheduled times to present information and gather feedback and input regarding project direction and visioning.

ZONING SUBCOMMITTEE

A subcommittee of the project Steering Committee was formed in order to discussed updates to the City's zoning code necessary for consistency with the recommendations in the BOA Plan. This committee met regularly throughout the planning process.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Two public events were held over the course of the Step 3 planning process. The purpose of each event was to share information and solicit feedback.

- **Open House:** On March 2, 2015, the City welcomed residents, business owners, investors, developers, and other stakeholders to the Riviera Theatre to showcase the project. The City hosted an informational open house about the project from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, followed by a formal presentation. Attendees were provided with background information about the project, as well as the opportunity to talk with members of the project team and view displays showing project information and graphics.
- **Experiential Workshop: Bike Trolley Pedal Tour:** On August 27, 2015, the City of North Tonawanda in conjunction with the Lumber City Development Corporation hosted a series of Bike Trolley Tours throughout North Tonawanda and Tonawanda Island. The tour made four stops at strategic redevelopment sites. The tour started at the Rivera Theatre. Along with the trolley tours, booths were set up throughout the city, including one booth in Gateway Park, where a Food Truck and Artisan Fair was taking place. At this booth, a number of residents and interested participants were able to inquire about the project and trolley rides.
- **GEIS Public Scoping Meeting.** A public scoping meeting was held specific to the GEIS on September 23, 2015. No comments were received on the scope.

2.3 Community Vision and Principles

2.3.1 Supporting the City's Vision

Over the last ten years, the City of North Tonawanda has completed several community planning and design initiatives that directly relate to revitalization and redevelopment efforts within the BOA study area. In 2009 the City adopted a Comprehensive Plan resulting in the development of a vision statement. This vision statement became the foundation for current BOA efforts. Some of the overarching principles of the Comprehensive Plan vision include:

- Identify sustainable use and redevelopment of the City's abundant waterfront resources;
- Undertake progressive planning in order to inform intelligent growth and revitalization of the City as a destination for families and visitors;
- Provide a safe, walkable, and accessible community; and
- Strive to retain and complement the small-city character and distinct culture of North Tonawanda.

2.3.2 A Vision for the BOA

As part of the BOA planning process, the community developed a vision specific to the BOA that identifies ways in which the study area may be enhanced and improved in the future. The vision statement captures important elements of the BOA, while recognizing that changes are necessary to realize the future potential of this area. This vision statement was then used to inform the Step 3 Implementation process.

Vision statement for the North Tonawanda BOA:

...a vibrant mixed use district centered around the confluence of two waterfronts – the Erie Canal and the Niagara River. Residents can choose to live, work, or relax while taking advantage of abundant commercial opportunities, employment options, restaurants, and recreation assets, all of which capitalize on the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. Visitors come not only to enjoy the waterways, but to experience the multitude of land side cultural and recreational amenities offered at this "Gateway to the Erie Canal."

2.3.3 BOA Principles and Strategic Objectives

The BOA principles listed below were developed by the community during the Step 2 planning process to help guide decisions and future investments within the Study Area. Each of the principles is supported by strategic objectives drawn from input generated by the public, steering committee, project stakeholders, and City staff.

These principles have remained an important guide for the community and decision makers and were adapted into a Strategic Framework during the Step 3 planning process. Many of the specific strategic objectives identified earlier in the planning process were completed during the Step 3 planning process.

PRINCIPLE #1: MAKE THE WATERFRONT A DESTINATION

Waterfronts are natural destinations, offering scenic views and recreation opportunities. They serve as a centerpiece and attraction for many types of development. Regardless of the season, people enjoy being near the water. It is recommended that the City continue move forward with efforts to promote economic development along the Erie Canal, River Road and Tonawanda Island.

Strategic objectives:

- Identify a land use plan for Tonawanda Island that encourages public use and enjoyment of the Little River and Niagara River frontages.
- Continue to foster investment in and around Gateway Harbor and the adjacent downtown area.
- Identify programming and businesses for the waterfront that provide a reason for both residents and visitors, to spend time and money.
- Identify sites along River Road that could be redeveloped to support the City as a waterfront destination.
- Continue to implement enhancements and identify programming for Gratwick Riverside Park as a regional recreational and open space attraction.
- Implement design guidelines for new waterfront development that accommodate public access and ensure a high quality public realm.

PRINCIPLE #2: OFFER A DYNAMIC URBAN EXPERIENCE

After many decades of development trends pulling families and businesses into suburban locations, the desire to be back “downtown” is re-emerging. The preference is to be close to goods, services and to live in a dynamic setting that offers a range of activities. The City of North Tonawanda is well situated to capitalize on this trend. The downtown core has retained a strong building stock, street grid and retains strong connections to both the Erie Canal and the Niagara River. The City must set forth a design philosophy that instills a sense of pride in the community and translates to high quality streetscapes, public spaces, and new development projects.

Strategic objectives:

- Attract small, niche businesses to the downtown providing a range of retail establishments that appeal to both residents and visitors.
- Support mixed uses in the downtown and waterfront areas in an effort to create a 24-hour downtown where people live, work, and play.
- Provide visitors with a range of dining options.
- Recognize boaters as an important segment of the downtown population during the summer months and consider strategies to draw them from the waterfront to downtown.
- Increase the frequency and quality of pedestrian and streetscape amenities, including signage.
- Implement façade design guidelines to ensure infill development enhances existing building character and retains the historic integrity.
- Treat gateways, roadways, and individual sites as “welcome” features to the community. Ensure their treatment is portraying how the BOA wants to be recognized.

PRINCIPLE #3: PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN LAND USE

The BOA study area has historically been home to a varied range of land uses, including industrial, commercial and residential. Design strategies and guidelines can help overcome potential land use conflicts. The real benefit of having a variety of land uses is associated with creating a 24-hour city that supports the local tax base, provides jobs to residents, welcomes and responds to visitor needs, fosters small business development and provides options for residential living.

Strategic objectives:

- Promote a range of land uses that support the long-term economic goals of the community.
- Support the build-out of the Buffalo Bolt Business Park for industrial and large-scale business development.
- Investigate the potential for a variety of land uses on Tonawanda Island that maintains existing businesses and capitalizes on the strategic location of the Island for water-enhanced uses, including residential, commercial, open space, and tourist facilities.
- Consider the most appropriate land uses for River Road, recognizing the land use patterns already in place. Identify land uses that support the vision of the city, including increased public access to the water.
- Continue to foster small business, office, and mixed use development in the downtown core.
- Support the development of a concentration of water-based uses along the Little River to create a true waterfront district.

PRINCIPLE #4: IDENTIFY NEW USES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The City's industrial heritage has significantly shaped infrastructure investments in utilities and transportation corridors. Today, much of the infrastructure in the BOA is oversized and underutilized. Accepting this infrastructure as an existing condition and identifying ways to better utilize infrastructure is be a priority for the City. The existing infrastructure should be viewed as an opportunity, not a hindrance for redevelopment.

Strategic objectives:

- Work with railroads to identify opportunities for rail enhancements, particularly at crossings and overpasses.
- Work with railroads to determine the feasibility of converting abandoned and unused railroad lands to public amenities, such as parks or trail corridors.
- Market the existing surplus of water and sewer capacity as a strategic advantage to attract new businesses and development.
- Implement streetscape enhancements along River Road that maintain traffic flow and volumes while reducing the negative blight and visual impacts associated with the corridor.
- Ensure that traffic signals throughout the BOA, and in adjacent neighborhoods, are not impeding the flow of traffic.

PRINCIPLE #5: CELEBRATE OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

The City's land use and development pattern are closely tied to its industrial and manufacturing based history. History and culture remain an important part of the community today whether considering the existing building stock, ties to the carousel, the farmers market, or the Erie Canal. However, acknowledging these ties is not enough if the City wants to stand out from other communities. North Tonawanda needs to celebrate its history and the cultural resources it offers to ensure that those assets that are "uniquely" ours are shared with others.

Strategic objectives:

- Create an interpretive program that is consistent throughout the BOA.
- Implement recommendations from the Wayfinding Plan to direct people to historic and cultural sites.
- Identify programming that focuses on various historically and culturally significant events within the city.
- Promote historic and cultural resources in marketing materials.
- Incorporate public art into the streetscape and in public gathering areas.

PRINCIPLE #6: DESIGN FOR PEOPLE, NOT JUST CARS

Apart from the downtown core with sidewalks and public gathering areas at Gateway Harbor, there are few areas in the BOA that are safe and attractive to pedestrians. This is particularly true on Tonawanda Island. Recognizing the value of facilitating pedestrian circulation, the City must consider pedestrian access to the same extent that it considers movement of cars and trucks. A provision associated with creating successful urban and waterfront environments is the creation of high quality access and experiences within the public realm.

Strategic objectives:

- Install sidewalks, bike lanes, or trails along the River Road corridor so pedestrians feel safe and welcome.
- Increase accessibility along and to the waterfront, particularly along the River Road corridor.
- Create strong connections, visually and physically, between the downtown, the Erie Canal and the Niagara River.
- Provide a contiguous network of trails and open spaces throughout the BOA.
- Design urban spaces such as walkways, streetscapes, and plazas with elements that engage residents and tourists.
- Ensure new development is designed to create a welcoming street presence that engages pedestrians with reduced front setbacks, transparent windows and a sidewalk presence.

PRINCIPLE #7: ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP

The negative perceptions often associated with the BOA study area are directly tied to the notion that many of the sites are contaminated, blighted and underutilized. The overarching purpose of the study is to further the clean-up of these sites to better position them for future redevelopment and enhancement. Remediation and enhancement of key sites will improve overall community health, increase property values, foster economic development opportunities, and instill a sense of pride.

Strategic objectives:

- Identify sites eligible for Site Assessment funding and pursue funding from the NYS Department of State.
- Work with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to identify environmentally sensitive sites and options for moving forward.
- Engage property owners in an effort to remediate and improve their sites.
- Identify strategic sites based on environmental and community planning criteria. Identify redevelopment scenarios for the sites based on current physical and market conditions.

PRINCIPLE #8: WORK COLLECTIVELY AND COOPERATIVELY

The long-term success of the BOA will not be realized by the efforts of one person or one organization alone. Coordination amongst public and private entities must guide the implementation of BOA recommendations. The City will spearhead the creation of broad partnerships and collaborative agreements to bring a wide range of parties together, including state agencies, regional organizations, local property owners, local business owners, prospective investors and residents.

Strategic objectives:

- Encourage local leadership to support investment in the BOA, particularly to the development of a stronger tourism industry.
- Engage local residents in implementation activities and local revitalization efforts.
- Organize working groups and committees around specific implementation projects or BOA-related tasks.

PRINCIPLE #9: IDENTIFY PROJECTS THAT BUILD MOMENTUM

The revitalization and redevelopment of the BOA study area will not happen overnight. The process will be long and will require the close coordination of public and private stakeholders. Small projects can and should be completed quickly to show progress towards the next set of goals and maintain momentum in the quest to redevelop the BOA and City of North Tonawanda.

Strategic objectives:

- Identify a multi-phased land use and project plan that shows potential progress in 2, 5, 10, and 20-year periods.
- Create a detailed implementation strategy that identifies short- and long-term projects.
- Identify early wins to build momentum.
- Coordinate efforts with local stakeholders and interested parties to begin implementation efforts immediately.
- Consider the long-term impacts of decision-making to avoid temporary short-term solutions.
- Report progress to the general public through updates to the project website that can be modified over time to reflect progression of the project from planning level to implementation.
- Coordinate with local media outlets to attract regular coverage about progress and advancement being made within the BOA.

PRINCIPLE #10: DEFINE AND MARKET A UNIQUE IDENTITY

The identity and brand developed for the BOA and the City must address strongly-held community values, while also projecting a vision of the future. Once a brand is identified, marketing the BOA must be multi-faceted, targeting potential new businesses and developments through available monetary incentives. It must appeal to business executives who are considering expansion and what a community can offer to employees, such as good schools and recreation options. Marketing must target boaters who travel the Niagara River and Erie Canal and are looking for a reason to stop and dock in North Tonawanda. Marketing must be directed to small business owners and regional residents that may visit the city by land for a day trip. Identifying strategies for overcoming the negative perceptions associated with study area, both locally and from afar, will be central to the marketing strategy.

Strategic objectives:

- Identify a specific “brand” for the study area that can be integrated into future marketing efforts and projects the community’s vision.
- Explore special events that promote the history, culture and heritage of the City and study area.
- Foster collaborations among local businesses and stakeholders to collectively market the study area.
- Work with regional tourism organizations to ensure destinations and events are featured in marketing materials.

3 Analysis of the BOA

This section includes a description of the environmental setting of the BOA, which satisfies both the requirements of the NYSDOS BOA Program and SEQRA. This section incorporates analyses completed since 2010 and has been augmented and/or updated, where necessary, with new information.

3.1 Historic Context

The City of North Tonawanda is a traditional small city located on the eastern banks of the Niagara River at the present day western terminus of the Erie Canal. The City of Buffalo lies approximately ten miles to the south, and residents can access the Canadian border 14 miles to the north in approximately 30 minutes. North Tonawanda is home to over 31,000 people covering 15 square miles, and is rich in natural, cultural and historic resources.

North Tonawanda has a storied history as a regional hub for manufacturing, industry and shipping/logistics throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. The connection of the Erie Canal with Tonawanda Creek and the Niagara River in 1825 spurred a tremendous amount of growth, allowing the then combined City of Tonawanda to become an important shipping and logistics location within North America between the Upper Great Lakes and the Hudson River. The study area was crisscrossed with numerous railroads, and industrial buildings and docks dotted the landscape throughout the BOA. In 1897, the City of North Tonawanda split off from Tonawanda, and began to forge its own unique identity within the region as the “Lumber City,” with its shores along the Niagara River a prime node in the shipment of lumber from Michigan and Canada to east coast markets.

At the turn of the 19th century, Niagara County began its rise as a focal point for industrial chemicals and other manufacturing processes that required significant amounts of electricity, which was provided at low-cost by hydroelectric power on the Niagara River. This permitted North Tonawanda to become an industrial powerhouse and created significant wealth within the community. Parallel to the rise of industrial activity was the decline of the lumber industry resulting from changes in the utilization of the Erie Canal. Commercial usage of the canal virtually ceased in 1959 due to the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway System. Yet, the city’s location remained an asset as manufacturing and chemical industries continued to utilize its excellent rail and roadway transport systems.



Downtown North Tonawanda circa 1927.

Beginning in the 1970’s, North Tonawanda’s economy began to feel the effects of global competition, leading to the slow decline of industry and manufacturing operations. These lost industries and residents left North Tonawanda to deal with issues associated with infrastructure, housing and environmental contamination. In particular, North Tonawanda’s waterfront was left underutilized with significant amounts of aging railroad and industrial infrastructure, along with areas of contamination.

For more than a decade, the City has embarked on a sustained effort to retire aging and obsolete infrastructure and clean-up contaminated sites. One of the largest efforts to date is the remediation of the former landfill and industrial disposal site that is now Gratwick Riverside Park, located at the northern end of the

Tonawanda Island BOA. The 53 acre site was remediated from 1999 to 2001, and has been identified as a gateway for tourism and recreation by the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

North Tonawanda has significant assets upon which it can build a strong and prosperous future. The city’s location along the Erie Canal and Niagara River remains its greatest economic asset with vessels located in North Tonawanda having access to the Great Lakes and the Hudson River. A primary goal of the BOA will be to promote North Tonawanda as a waterfront destination within New York State and the bi-national Niagara River corridor.

3.2 Economic Context

A comprehensive Market and Economic Trends Analysis was prepared in 2009 for the purpose of developing market-based recommendations for the Study Area during earlier phases of this project. The analysis explored regional and local demographic, economic and market trends and projections to identify ways in which these factors influence redevelopment of the BOA. Key findings from that analysis were used as a foundation to help identify appropriate and realistic redevelopment opportunities within the BOA. This analysis was updated in 2014 to reflect changes in demographics and market conditions.

3.2.1 Updated Demographic and Housing Market Trends

North Tonawanda and the Buffalo region have experienced changes in demographics and market conditions over the last five years. Some of these changes warranted updates to the Step 3 BOA Plan to ensure that the identified strategic redevelopment projects and overall implementation strategy is in line with demographic and housing market trends. Below is a summary of these updates.

Population

Key take-away: Population in the BOA is growing (in contrast to declining populations region-wide).

Population trends can help a community understand whether it is growing or declining—and at what rate. As seen in Figure 1, the population of the BOA Study Area experienced a slight increase in population between 2000 and 2015, from 922 residents to 931 (a change of almost one percent). By contrast, the City's population as-a-whole declined by about 7 percent over that same time period. Niagara County and the Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Statistical Area both declined by about 3 percent.

While the BOA's increase in population is relatively small in scale, it is important to note that this growth occurred in the context of significant population declines within the City and the surrounding region. This growth may be attributed to specific housing developments, such as the Remington Rand Loft redevelopment, completed in 2012.

Figure 1 Total Population

Area	2000	2010	2015	% Change (2000 - 2015)
North Tonawanda BOA	922	877	931	0.98%
City of North Tonawanda	33,262	31,568	30,821	-7.34%
Niagara County	219,846	216,469	213,012	-3.11%
Buffalo MSA	1,170,111	1,135,509	1,128,115	-3.59%

Source: ESRI, US Census

Racial Composition

Key take-away: The BOA is slightly more diverse than the City, but significantly less diverse than the region.

Tracking the diversity of a community is a useful way to understand the shifting demographics of race and ethnicity. The racial makeup of the BOA Study Area's population is 93 percent white and about 2 percent black. This distribution is similar to the City of North Tonawanda, but contrasts with the region (the MSA) which is approximately 80 percent white and 13% black. As the region and the nation become more diverse, so will the preferences and needs of the population. It will be important to consider how future policies can help meet the needs of a dynamic population and continue to attract talented and creative people.

Figure 2 Racial Make-up

Race/Ethnicity	BOA	City	Niagara County	Buffalo MSA
White Alone	93.2%	95.9%	87.6%	80.4%
Black Alone	1.8%	0.9%	7.1%	12.5%
American Indian Alone	1.0%	0.4%	1.1%	0.7%
Asian Alone	1.4%	0.9%	1.0%	2.7%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	0.8%	0.4%	0.6%	1.5%
Two or More Races	1.8%	1.6%	2.5%	2.2%
Hispanic Origin	3.5%	2.2%	2.8%	4.8%
Diversity Index	18.6	12.1	26.9	39.8

Source: ESRI, US Census

Age

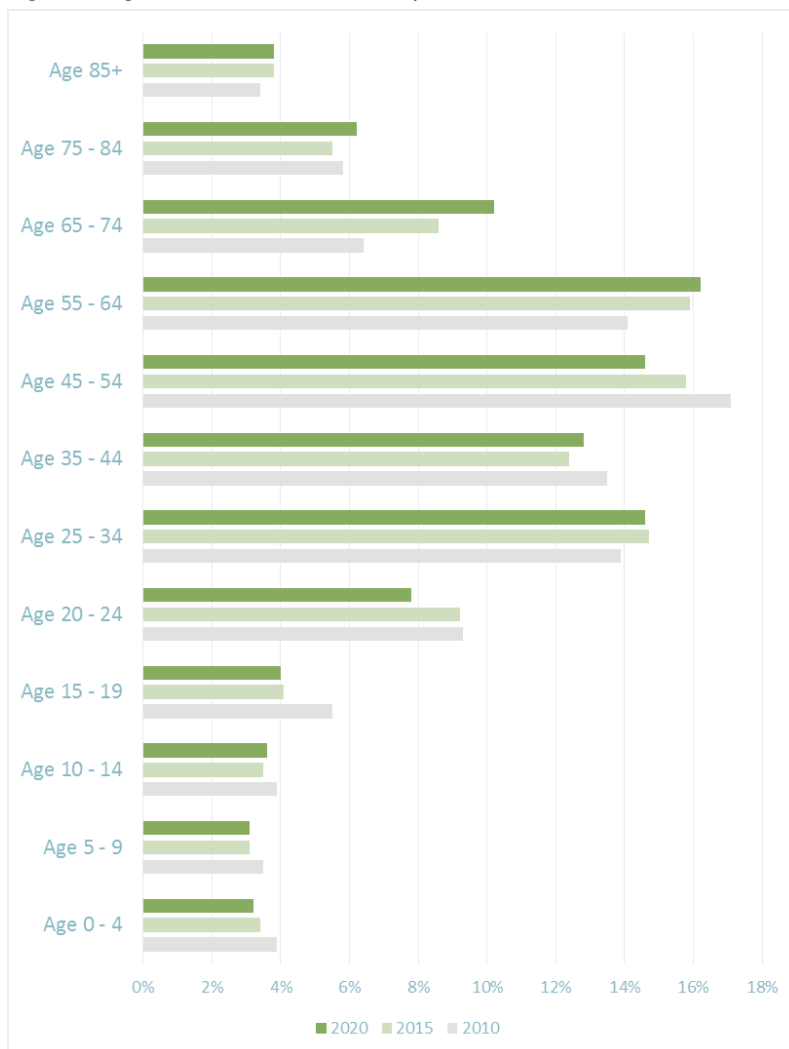
Key take-away: The BOA population is getting older.

The age characteristics of a community are important to consider when exploring potential future growth as well as allocating future resources and public services to best accommodate future residents. While the age distribution of residents in the BOA Study Area is similar to the City and the region, that distribution has shifted over time and is projected to continue changing. This change over time is an important consideration for the City as it continues to allocate future resources and public services within the BOA.

Figure 3 summarizes the age distribution for the BOA Study Area from 2010 to 2020. The age groups projected to see the most significant growth by 2020 are those over the age of 55, while the proportion of residents who are children and those in their prime working years is projected to decline. This is consistent with statewide and national trends, as the disproportionate growth of older age groups (known as "aging") is expected to continue into the future. By 2030, nearly 20 percent of the US population will be over 65 years old (which is similar to the current age profile of Florida). An aging population will require more services, different types of housing, and more transportation/mobility options.

Given its small scale, tight-knit downtown, and proximity to numerous waterfront amenities, the BOA Study Area is well positioned to accommodate a growing senior population. Likewise, the BOA Plan envisions residential projects well suited to older residents who may require smaller housing units with more amenities and closer proximity to retail, services, and amenities.

Figure 3 Age Distribution, BOA Study Area, 2010 – 2020



Source: ESRI, 2015

Educational Attainment

Key take-away: Compared to the region, the BOA contains a smaller proportion of college-educated residents.

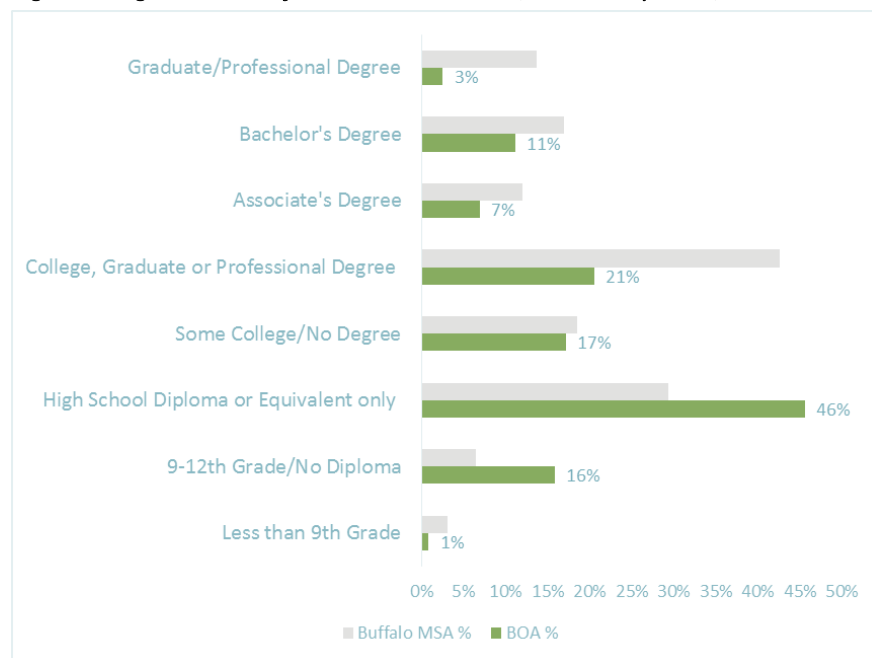
Information about a community's educational attainment may be used by decision makers, investors and developers to help estimate future demand for housing, retail, and services in the short- and long-term. Education is also closely related to income and the education level of a community is an important economic and health indicator in the following ways: (1) an educated population is an attractive feature to businesses looking for a qualified workforce, (2) a better educated population can more easily adapt to changing economic environments and employment needs, and (3) highly educated populations are healthier and live longer.²

Figure 4 shows the highest form of education attained by residents within the BOA Study Area in 2015, compared to the larger region (Buffalo MSA). The BOA lags behind the region in overall educational attainment. The proportion of

² Educational Attainment and Adult Mortality in the United States: A Systematic Analysis of Functional Form," Demography 49, no. 1 (2012)

residents with a college degree is roughly half that of the regional average. Likewise, the proportion of BOA residents with only a high school diploma is about 45%, compared to 29% region-wide.

Figure 4 Highest Form of Education Attained, BOA Study Area, 2015



Source: ESRI, 2015

Employment

Key take-away: Services, education and health care, are major drivers of private and public sector employment.

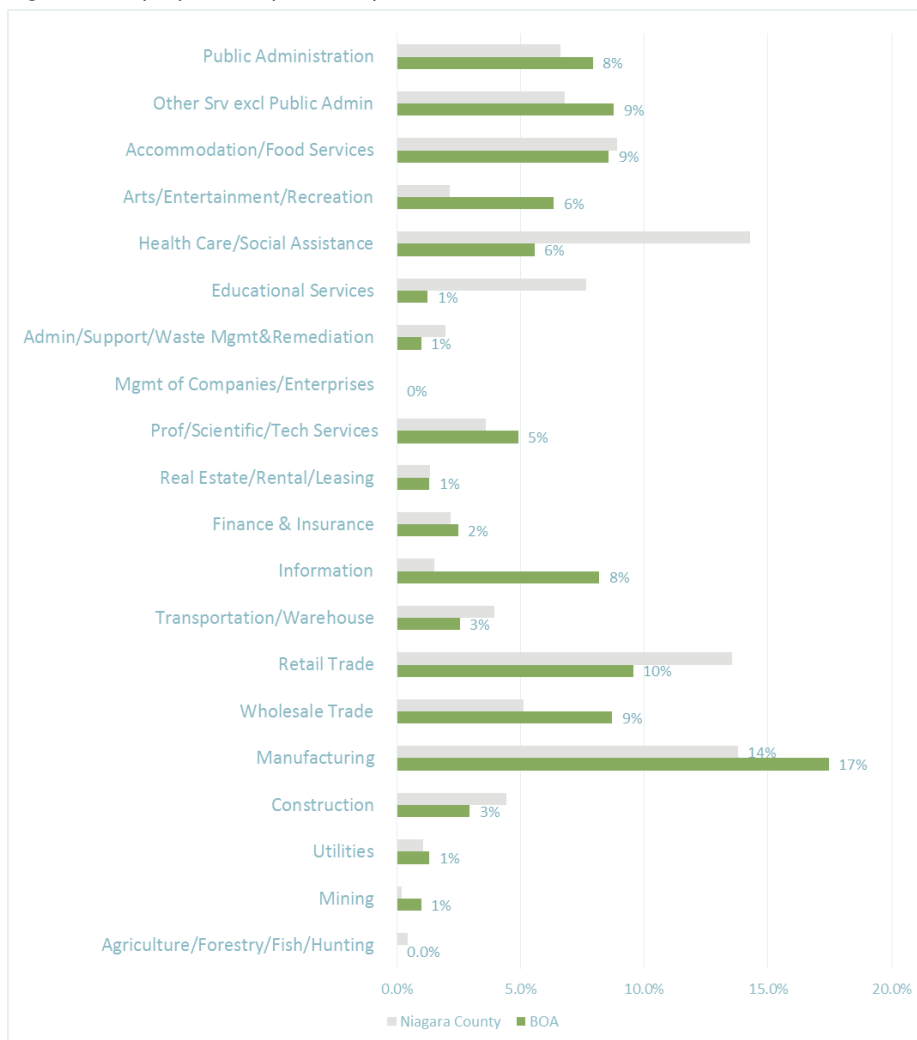
The success and viability of a community is often tied to population growth and the various types of employment opportunities available in an area. There were approximately 1,529 employees in the BOA Study Area in 2015. Manufacturing is the largest sector, accounting about 17 percent of all employment in the Study Area (compared to 14% region-wide).

The other industry sectors with large shares of employment in the BOA are Retail Trade, Services, Accommodation/Food Services, Wholesale Trade, and Arts/Entertainment/Recreation. This reflects the current character and make-up of North Tonawanda's business community, which includes a wide range of manufacturing, retail, restaurants, and tourist/recreation oriented businesses.

Key Take-away: Manufacturing accounts for a large portion of the jobs in the neighborhood, but the sector is projected to decline.

It is important to note while Manufacturing, makes up the largest share of employment, both in the BOA and North Tonawanda, it is a historically declining industry and is projected to continue declining. On the flip side, Health Care and Social Assistance is one of the fastest growing industries nationwide, and accounts for just 6 percent of jobs in the BOA, compared to 14-16 percent of total jobs in the region.

Figure 5 Employment by Industry, 2015



Source: ESRI, 2015

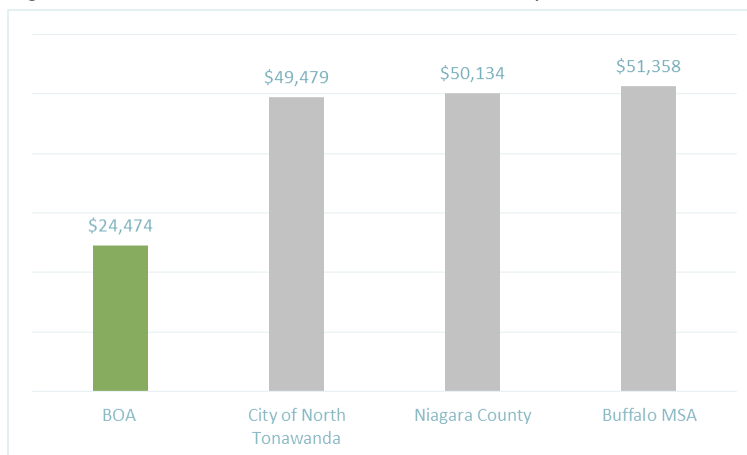
Income

Key take-away: Household income in the Study Area is lower than the City and the region.

Income is considered a key economic indicator, as changes in both personal and household income can reflect economic growth or decline in an area. Comparisons between the BOA and surrounding areas can also reveal the economic well-being of the community and whether the regional economy adequately supports residents.

At \$24,474, the median household income in the BOA Study Area is just under half the median for the City of North Tonawanda (49,479), as well as the County and the larger region (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Median Household Income, BOA Study Area, 2015



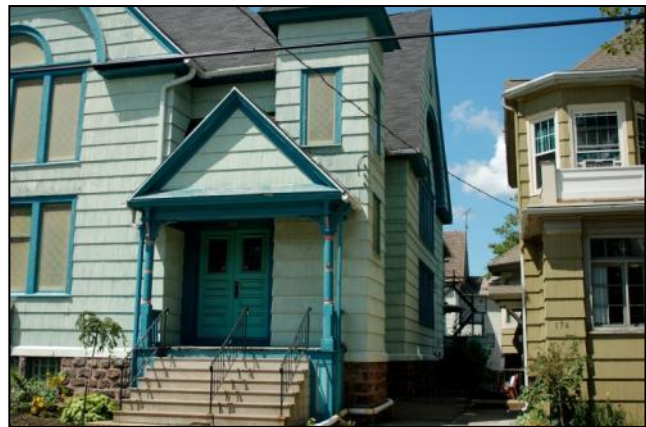
Source: ESRI, 2015

Housing Market

Camoin Associates was commissioned to conduct a housing analysis and needs assessment for the BOA Plan. The purpose of the analysis was to update previous analyses and identify the housing types that will be attractive over the next ten years and quantify the demand. The report also provides recommendations for a housing program to improve the City's existing housing stock. Camoin Associates relied on a variety of data sources and on interviews with local real estate experts to complete this analysis. The key findings are detailed below. The full report can be found in Appendix C.

Key take-away: Population growth will not drive housing demand.

Future housing needs in the city will be driven primarily by changes in housing preferences, the need to replace obsolete housing, and demand for specific lifestyle preferences (downtown living and waterfront recreation) rather than population growth. The population of the city is anticipated to remain stagnant -- however, given the right housing options, a new demographic segment could be attracted to live in the city. Young professionals and wealthy empty-nesters are the two target demographics whose housing needs should be considered with respect to the lifestyle preferences, respectively.



North Tonawanda has significant historic housing assets, such as the Victorian seen above.

Key take-away: There are relatively low vacancy rates in North Tonawanda.

The city has a relatively low housing vacancy rate relative to the metro area and other update cities. This indicates that there is may be unmet housing demand in the city. "For-sale" vacancy rates are higher than "For-rent" rates indicating a stronger demand for rental units.

Key take-away: High-end waterfront niche housing is needed.

There is potential demand for waterfront housing with a boating component. The waterfront area is already popular with boaters and new high end waterfront residential and marina development would be successful in attracting a wealthy and older demographic to the city. Many individuals in this demographic already have boats moored off Tonawanda Island and would likely be attracted to the convenience of easy access to recreational boating in addition to the lifestyle draw of being able to live on the river. Members of this demographic are typically empty nesters, are looking for upscale housing options and have less interest in ownership or home maintenance.

Key take-away: There is growing demand for downtown housing.

There is an opportunity to attract young professionals to live in the city but the ability to do so will depend on housing availability and types within walking distance to downtown. The recent development activity in downtown and presence of entertainment and shopping options are attractive to this demographic but modern apartments are needed to accommodate this group. While rents are still generally weak, the Remington Lofts project has successfully demonstrated that high end unit development with upper-tier rents can be feasible within the city. As investment continues to be made downtown, housing demand will increase but currently potential development sites are limited. North Tonawanda may be attractive to young professionals and millennials looking for downtown style living that are priced out of the downtown Buffalo market.

Key take-away: Modern rental units are needed.

A shift away from owner-occupied units towards rental units means new rental units will be needed to meet demand. It also means the potential for an oversupply of single-family homes and a need to convert a portion of the housing stock to multifamily units. The aging housing stock is unlikely to meet demand for housing with modern amenities and features currently in demand and desired by the target demographics. There is a need to modernize or redevelop the housing stock to adequately meet future needs. Relatively inexpensive homes in the city may attract investors to rehabilitate and convert existing structures.

Key take-away: Smaller units in are greater demand.

Changing housing preferences means that smaller units with fewer bedrooms with a high end fit and finish will be in greater demand. One and two-bedroom units are expected to be in the greatest demand. Location will ultimately be more important than square footage, especially with respect to the two target demographics.

Key take-away: High value units are feasible.

There will be demand for a limited number of high end rental and owner-occupied units in the area surrounding and including the city. There is expected to be a significant increase in regional demand for owner-occupied units over \$500,000. Select waterfront sites may be able to capture a portion of this demand through high end condominium and marina development. Similarly, upper-tier rents should be achievable at such sites.

3.2.2 Tourism Analysis

As part of the BOA Step 2 effort, the City conducted an analysis of the current tourism market and potential areas for growth. The analysis reviewed tourism related businesses, the potential for growth in the tourism industry in the City and the projected growth in tourism related jobs. The analysis included a combination of data pulled for the Trade Area (defined as Zip Codes: 14120, 14228, and 14150) and Niagara County. The information helped to identify if there was potential for tourism related development (hotel, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) to meet demand, and/or what efforts were necessary to generate additional demand.

EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Key take-away: The lack of hotel rooms and related tourist services is a disadvantage for the City and the BOA.

The City of North Tonawanda has steadily increased visitation to the Gateway Harbor district (Webster Street/historic downtown) and the City in general, including the BOA, in order to boost the local economy and drive more spending in the area. During the summer months there is significant activity along the waterfront, including concerts, boats docked along with canal and an increasing number of regional tourists looking to spend time in the Gateway Harbor district and enjoy their boat. For additional economic activity, and in order to increase spending at local businesses, the City would like to provide visitors with overnight options and resources for them to stay longer in the area. The effort to increase the number of days and nights spent in the City has been difficult due to the nonexistence of hotel rooms in the City. The lack of hotel rooms and tourism related services has been a disadvantage for the City of North Tonawanda and is making it virtually impossible to capture overnight spending from visitors to the Buffalo-Niagara region, one of the most heavily traveled tourist destinations in United States.

A quick internet search, similar to one a potential visitor might conduct, of hotel rooms in the City of North Tonawanda showed that there were no hotels within the downtown but that there is a wide variety of options in the surrounding towns, offering various amenities and price points. Even outside of direct proximity to the Falls, surrounding towns have hotel options for visitors looking to spend time in the Buffalo-Niagara region. For example, Niagara Falls Boulevard contains numerous hotels in the Town of Amherst (southeast of the Trade Area) and Niagara Falls (north of the Trade Area). The hotels in Amherst are close to the University at Buffalo campus, meeting the demand of parents and visitors to the campus and attracting people who are visiting the Falls but looking for a different experience than staying right in the City of Niagara Falls.

The City of North Tonawanda is doing what it can to develop opportunities and resources for visitors, including regular festivals, concerts and events throughout the summer as well as working to revitalize the Gateway Harbor district to appeal to and accommodate tourists. The revitalization of the Gateway Harbor district has been successful but full realization of the economic activity has been impossible without overnight stay options.

Although the City has been successful in generating tourism activity and regional entertainment during the summer months, it has been difficult to make it a year-round tourist destination. The seasonal nature of tourism in upstate New York presents challenges for many communities, and it is oftentimes necessary to find alternative attractions for the winter months. The City does have attractions other than the Canal and waterfront that it can market, including the Riviera Theater which offers a wide variety of performances that appeal to families and young adults, the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum, Carnegie Art Center, and the Ghostlight Theater. These alternative attractions do not themselves generate enough activity to warrant a new large hotel, but in combination with regional attractions they could bring more people into the area throughout the year.

REGIONAL TOURISM ACTIVITY

Key take-away: North Tonawanda should take advantage of its proximity to Niagara Falls.

The tourism industry has slowly become a more prominent source of employment for people throughout the United States, due to the increase in tourism activity in recent history. The increases in leisure time, wages and access to

affordable transportation have made the tourism industry expand to employ approximately 4% of the private sector workforce. While the tourism industry is expanding, it is important to compare it to other large national industry sectors, such as health care, which accounts for approximately 13% of employment.

For upstate New York, tourism has been identified as a possible supplement to economies that are facing a loss of employment in the manufacturing sector. The transition of employment from a manufacturing base to a tourism base can be difficult due to the seasonal nature of tourism businesses and the typically low wage jobs associated with the tourism industry. A balance of traditional economic development and the development of the tourism economy will provide the City with the best chance for a diversified economy.

The growth of employment within the New York State tourism industry has been slower than the growth of the same industry for the nation. However, the tourism industry in Niagara County has been steadily increasing at a rate faster than that of the increase in total employment. This industry base has become more important over the past decade for the County with an increase in tourism-based businesses and a decline in the manufacturing industry. Niagara Falls is one of the most well-known tourist destinations in the nation, and people come from all over to visit the Falls and experience the local culture and tourist resources that exist on both the United States and Canadian sides of the Falls. There has been a recent push to develop more attractions on the US side to compete with the shopping, casinos and museums available on the Canadian side which has been acquiring more and more of the market share over the years. Niagara County has also been actively developing tourist attractions, such as the Niagara County Wine Trail, which runs by the City of North Tonawanda, the redevelopment and branding of the Erie Canal Heritage Corridor, and Old Fort Niagara.

Finally, the City of North Tonawanda is located in an advantageous spot that is central to the City of Buffalo, the SUNY Buffalo campus, Niagara Falls, and the Erie Canal. There are three city docks located in the City of North Tonawanda making it a natural docking location for people traveling the Great Lakes, the Erie Canal or general boating on the Niagara River.

The Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reports that approximately 12 million people visit Niagara Falls each year (studies suggest that 6 million visit the United States side). If the City, which is only 10 miles from the Falls, is able to capture 0.5% of the US visitors they could have an additional 30,000 people coming to the City each year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM

Key take-away: There is potential in the development of a downtown hotel to capitalize on boaters and tourists visiting Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Communities Comprehensive Plan 2030 discusses the County's desire to increase tourism throughout the county, not just directly around the Falls. This push to connect resources will be vital to assisting the City and BOA in capturing some of the tourists. One of the goals identified in the plan was to "improve tourism and tourism-based business opportunities throughout the County". In order to accomplish this, the plan identified a recommendation to "support efforts to create physical linkages and link business information between Niagara County's communities that will help extend the stay of tourists, and thus spread economic wealth throughout the County". There is a concerted effort to increase tourism in Niagara County and the City of North Tonawanda is not able to capitalize on this effort due to its lack of hotel space.

In order to demonstrate the impact of a hotel project on the Trade Area, Camoin Associates prepared an economic impact analysis on a hypothetical 40 room hotel. The analysis assumed that the 40 room hotel charted \$115.00 a night and had a 60% average room occupancy rate per year.

The economic impact of a particular project is the sum of the direct and indirect impacts. The direct impacts are those directly related to the project or site in question (additional sales at the hotel). The indirect impacts are those which occur as the dollars from direct impacts cycle through the economy. For example, the spending by the hotel company

at local businesses generates new sales and need for employees. The new employees receive wages and in turn spend a portion of those dollars in the local economy for daily needs, housing and other expenses and a proportion of those dollars are again re-spent in the local economy. As those dollars continue to circulate, additional jobs and business activity are created. This effect is captured in the indirect impacts and is known as the multiplier effect.

<i>Annual sales - Hypothetical Hotel Development</i>	
Number of Hotel Rooms	40
Occupancy	60%
Occupied hotel rooms	24
Cost per night	\$115
Annual Sales	\$1,007,400

The economic impact of a 40 room hotel development would mean an additional \$1,390,212 sales, 21 new jobs and an additional \$479,000 in new wages for the Trade Area. In addition to the impact of the hotel itself, having visitors in the area overnight will increase spending at the local gas stations, retail stores, grocery and convenience stores, and local attractions. As this money is spent, it too will circulate throughout the economy generating additional jobs and business activity.

<i>Economic Impact of new hotel</i>			
	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sales	\$1,007,400	\$382,812	\$1,390,212
Jobs	16	5	21
Wages	\$330,345	\$148,655	\$479,000

The City must be creative, build on its local heritage and promote its unique assets when working to build the local tourism economy. Since the city lacks a supply of hotel rooms, there is potential in the development of a small hotel to begin to capitalize on tourists to the region who may be visiting Niagara Falls, the Niagara Gorge and other heritage and cultural amenities in the region.

If the City hopes to increase overnight stays and attract boaters from a further distance, meeting the needs of boaters will be important. For example, the City may want to consider attracting a small convenience store that the boaters could use to buy supplies. The City could work with local retailers to offer incentives to those visiting to come to the area by offering discounted tickets to shows at the Riviera when combined with a local restaurants.

SUMMARY

The future economy of North Tonawanda will not be driven by a single industry, but will grow and prosper through the provision of a safe, convenient, affordable and high quality atmosphere for a diverse range of residents and businesses. The existing supply of housing, services, employment and resources must be fully leveraged to adapt to changing factors, such as the age and income of the local population. Regional and national factors such as energy prices, the national economy, and large generational shifts should also be considered in the development of an economic strategy for the next 10 to 15 years.

Key take-away: Diverse Housing Options

Locally, regionally, and nationally, the shift of the baby-boomer generation into retirement is having a large impact upon demand for housing, social and recreational services, and consumer goods. A particular area impacted by this changing demographic group has been an increase in demand for luxury condominiums and high-end townhomes, as many of these empty-nest families seek a home with reduced maintenance needs. In many instances, this housing is located adjacent to or in association with homeowners associations which may provide social and recreational services, but may also include medical and transportation alternatives. Within the BOA, Tonawanda Island may be an appropriate location for this type of housing within a larger mixed use development.

A future economic trend associated with housing is the need for greater energy efficiency in new and existing homes. Western New Yorkers pay more for energy than the national average, which may be attributable to the cold winters experienced in the region. The increase in retirees and fixed-income senior households will increase the demand for weatherization assistance and energy efficient new construction practices.

Key take-away: Flexible Office & Industrial Space

In the business sector, demand is increasing for smaller, more flexible spaces that can meet the changing demands of growing companies. The expense of relocation and outfitting space can become a major deterrent to start-ups and small businesses. Therefore, opportunities exist to provide incubator and flexible industrial/office space.

While large scale manufacturing should not be a primary focus for development within the BOA, data for Niagara County suggests employment growth through 2020 in machine shops, clay product and refractory manufacturing, architectural and structural metals, and plastics and rubber manufacturing. Although these industries are experiencing growth, the City should be open to attracting any type of small industry to fill existing vacant space rather than focusing limited resources on one particular sector.

Key take-away: Family-Oriented Tourism

North Tonawanda is located in the middle of the Buffalo-Niagara Region, an area that receives an estimated eight million visitors annually. However, the City has struggled to consistently attract year-round visitation, in part due to a lack of programming and attractions during the months of November thru May. Although there are several historic and culturally oriented destinations within downtown, improved coordination is necessary to increase public visitation and awareness. National and regional trends indicate the desire for families with young and school-aged children to have easy, year-round access to family-oriented destinations. This remains another opportunity the City can capitalize upon.

Based upon an analysis of the BOA's retail and tourism markets, there is an underserved demand for full service restaurants and a lack of overnight accommodations within the City. The Erie Canal, Downtown, and the Niagara River are all resources potentially attractive to restaurateurs, and the development of these businesses within the BOA will contribute to a high quality experience for both residents and visitors.

By expanding the ability to attract visitors throughout the year, support services such as hotels, inns, and restaurants will gradually fill associated demand. When concentrated in a well-defined location, these services and activities may also attract an increased permanent population. Together, a modest tourism economy and a stable population base can create a mutually supportive economic environment.

3.3 Physical Context

The inventory and analysis component of the Nomination Study is intended to provide a greater understanding of the existing conditions, opportunities, and reuse potentials specific to the City of North Tonawanda BOA study area. The inventory and analysis is intended to lay the framework for specific recommendations for future land use and other implementation projects.

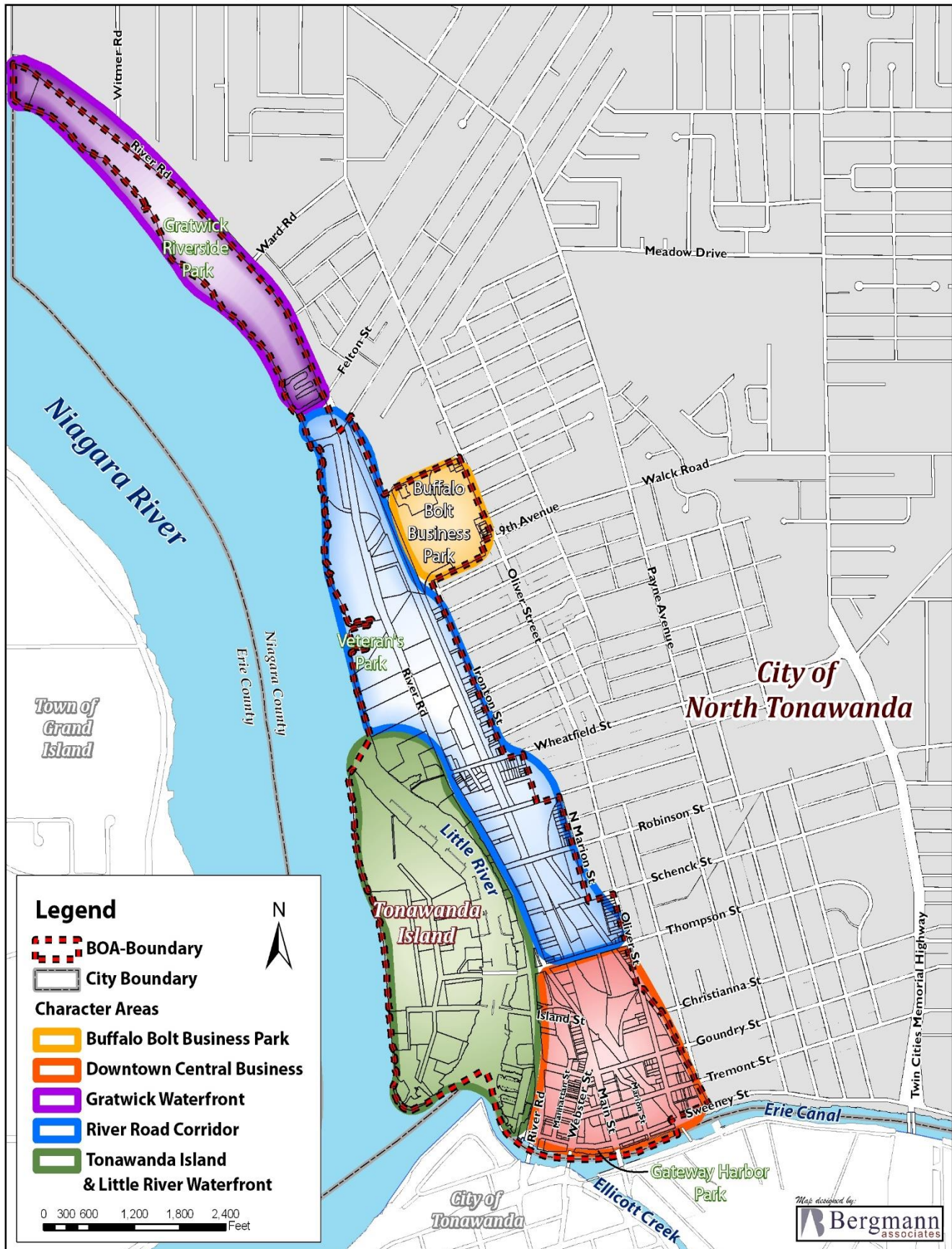
3.3.1 BOA Character Areas

The BOA Study Area was divided into five Character Areas (see Map 4), described in this section.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the
NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

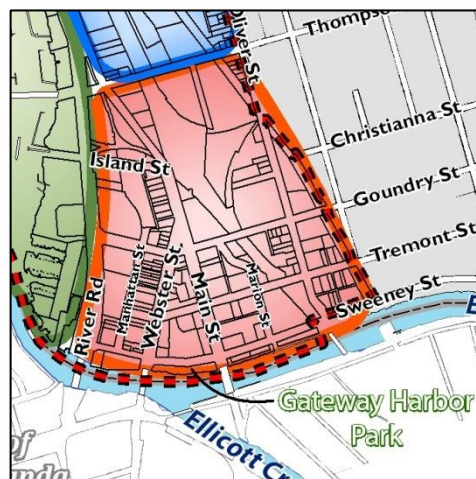
MAP 4 Character Areas



DOWNTOWN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The core of North Tonawanda's central business district is defined by Webster Street and Main Street. For the purposes of the BOA, the Downtown Central Business District Character Area includes properties bounded by River Road on the west, Thompson Street on the north, the former railroad and Oliver Street on the east, and the Erie Canal on the south. This encompasses the downtown core as well as adjacent areas that are impacted by, or can positively impact, the CBD.

In total, this character area includes approximately 97 acres of land, 69 of which are real property, with the remainder as street right-of-way. The expansion of the central business district beyond the Webster-Main Streets corridor includes areas of commercial activity that provide employment and services to the surrounding community. The inclusion of these adjacent areas will facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized properties.



The boundary of the Downtown Central Business Character Area is shown in red.



View of Webster Street looking south.

The core area is focused on Webster and Main Streets, and includes the quintessential "Main Street" urban form of buildings close to the street line, active storefronts, on-street parking, sidewalks, street lights and crosswalks. This portion of the city is extremely walkable, and is directly adjacent to Gateway Harbor of the Tonawanda's and the Erie Canal. Recent investments in this area include Gateway Harbor, the reconstruction of Main Street, and the on-going redevelopment of the former Remington Rand building into loft-style rental units and commercial space.

The area north of Goundry Street is a transitional space that contains significant commercial activity within a development pattern that spans many time periods. Areas of pre-WWII development are interspersed with more contemporary post-war suburban-style development. Additionally, the construction of River Road and the extension of Thompson Street across the Little River to Tonawanda Island rearranged circulation and future development patterns in this area.



The 'Teddy Bear' building, shown here prior to renovations, is located within the Downtown Central Business District.

The Oliver Street corridor, between the active and inactive rail lines, began as a neighborhood commercial district, and has since experienced sporadic redevelopment of more post-war style commercial establishments.

Land use within the Downtown Central Business Character Area is quite mixed, yet dominated by commercial businesses. Commercial land uses account for 59 percent of parcels, 74 percent of assessed value, and 69 percent of land area. See Table 1 below for a complete breakdown of land uses.

Table 1 Downtown Central Business Land Use

<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Unclassified	5	3.1%	2.0	2.9%
Residential	22	13.6%	2.8	4.0%
Vacant	23	14.2%	8.5	12.3%
Commercial	96	59.3%	47.6	68.9%
Recreation & Entertainment	5	3.1%	1.9	2.7%
Community Services	3	1.9%	1.7	2.4%
Industrial	5	3.1%	3.7	5.4%
Conservation & Parks	3	1.9%	1.0	1.4%
Totals	162	100%	69.1	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

Current zoning within this Character Area is General Commerce and Light Industrial. Light Industrial accounts for the largest portion of land area within the character area, and permits a wide range of commercial and industrial land uses, but excludes residences. A complete description of each zoning district can be found within the Inventory and Analysis Section of this report.

TONAWANDA ISLAND AND LITTLE RIVER

The Tonawanda Island and Little River character area includes all of Tonawanda Island and lands west of River Road with frontage along the Little River, including Weatherbest Slip and Wardell's Boat Yard.

The waterfront of the Little River, which separates Tonawanda Island from the main land, is more than 50 percent built-out with slips for more than 700 boats, including the anchor-shaped marina at the southern tip of Tonawanda Island. Additionally, approximately seven launches and/or repair lifts exist to service the numerous marinas in the Little River and surrounding area.



The Tonawanda Island and Little River Character Area is depicted in green.

The shoreline uses of the Little River are mixed-commercial / marine, with nearly all uses categorized as water-dependent or water-enhanced. The inactive rail swing bridge and the Durkee Bridge significantly impinge on navigation within the Little River channel, and these limitations will need to be considered as part of future recommendations.

The Weatherbest Slip, also known as Gateway Point, area is a collection of boat houses located west of River Road at the confluence of the Erie Canal and the Little River. This area includes over 25 boat house structures and slips/dockage space for more than 50 boats with the inclusion of Wardell's Boat Yard. This area currently lacks sufficient accessibility to improved roadways, is located in a floodplain, and has been the subject of public debate and discussion regarding the level of public access provided to waterfront portions of these lands that legally remain under public ownership. An inactive rail swing bridge is located adjacent to this area and is considered to be an impairment to water travel as well as a safety hazard.

Tonawanda Island is a tale of two waterfronts. The Little River waterfront, as discussed above, is largely a working marine environment, with nearly all waterside uses being water-dependent, including marinas, boat repair, and marine infrastructure businesses. The Niagara River shoreline on Tonawanda Island, in contrast, is vacant and underutilized, with a municipal water treatment facility and a restaurant.



View of the Little River looking north from the Durkee Bridge.



The "working waterfront" near the southern tip of Tonawanda Island.

As seen in Table 2, overall land use within the Tonawanda Island and Little River Waterfront character area is dominated by marine uses, which includes marinas, boat storage and repair, and marine infrastructure repair businesses. Marine uses account for 47 percent of assessed value and 50 percent of land area.

A significant industrial presence is located on Tonawanda Island, with the eight industrial properties accounting for 21 percent of assessed value. International Fiber and Taylor Devices both have large operations on the island, employing over 100 people each.

Table 2 Tonawanda Island & Little River Land Use

<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Unclassified	7	7.2%	0.0	0.0%
Residential	2	2.1%	0.0	0.0%
Vacant	49	50.5%	10.5	9.0%
Commercial	9	9.3%	23.6	20.4%
Recreation & Entertainment	16	16.5%	57.9	49.9%
Community Services	1	1.0%	3.0	2.5%
Industrial	8	8.2%	17.1	14.7%
Conservation & Parks	5	5.2%	3.9	3.4%
Totals	97	100%	116.0	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

Zoning in this character area is completely within the Waterfront District, which permits a variety of uses depending upon a property's location. Existing zoning limits residences to parcels without frontage on the water, permitting this type of development on just a handful of small parcels on Tonawanda Island. As residential has early on been identified as an integral part to the future vision of the BOA, modifications to existing land use regulations may become necessary.

RIVER ROAD CORRIDOR

The River Road Corridor character area is bounded by Thompson Street on the south, River Road and the Niagara River on the west, the City-owned marina on the north, and the former railroad, Ironton, Carruthers, N. Marion, and Oliver Streets on the east. As the largest character area within the BOA, the River Road Corridor is dominated and defined by transportation infrastructure.

The road corridor between the railroad line and the Niagara River has historically been a commercial and industrial district due to its proximity to both water and rail transport. In the late 1950's the Niagara Thruway (River Road) was completed, ushering in an era of increased reliance on cars and trucks, and a decreased reliance on rail travel. This ultimately left the City with underutilized rail infrastructure.

Land use within the River Road Corridor character area, as seen in Table 3, is dominated by commercial and vacant land uses, which occupy 65 percent of the land area and 53 percent of the assessed value. The 8 industrial parcels within the character area account for 23 percent of the assessed value on only 12 percent of the land.



The River Road Corridor is shown in blue.



A view of River Road and the railroad corridor.

The southern portion of the character area extends from Thompson Street north to Wheatfield Street, and is characterized by large commercial properties east of the rail line, and small commercial and industrial parcels along the east side of Main Street and River Road. The triangular area at the intersections of River Road, Thompson Street and Main Street is a potential signature location for a prominent gateway to the Downtown Central Business district.

The building stock along Main Street as it merges with River Road is mixed commercial in nature, with structures creating a saw-tooth street frontage as buildings have been removed and replaced over time. Some buildings have maintained their

historic relationship to the existing street right-of-way, although the edge of the roadway has moved away from the building faces. This has led to areas of right-of-way that are excessively paved, diminishing the boundary of public and private property. Sidewalks are found intermittently along the east side of the street, with parking lots and driveways limiting continuity. Robinson Street is the only street connection from the east through the railroad corridor, with no sidewalk connectivity along Robinson to North Marion Street. As such pedestrian movement and mobility is limited in this area with improvements and upgrades needed.

The portions of the Character Area north of Wheatfield Street were historically open areas with large, individual industrial operations, such as Tonawanda Iron, which had a significant operation on the east side of River Road just south of Veteran's Park. As a result, the urban form found along the Main Street portions is no longer present, and a more mixed commercial/industrial suburban-style development pattern has emerged. Land use in this part of the character area are more intense industrial, such as materials recycling, waste water treatment, chemical manufacturing, and others. Parcels in this area are much larger than southern portions of the corridor, and buildings are farther apart.

Table 3 River Road Corridor Land Use

<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Unclassified	1	0.6%	0.5	0.4%
Residential	71	42.3%	9.6	6.4%
Vacant	30	17.9%	29.2	19.4%
Commercial	54	32.1%	68.3	45.4%
Recreation & Entertainment	1	0.6%	1.9	1.3%
Community Services	8	4.8%	17.4	11.6%
Industrial	1	0.6%	14.2	9.4%
Conservation & Parks	2	1.2%	9.1	6.1%
Totals	168	100%	150.2	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

There is a general lack of connectivity between Oliver Street east of the corridor and River Road. The railroad line limits access to Wheatfield Street and Felton Street. The nearly one mile length of River Road between these intersections is subject to increased vehicular speeds which, when combined with the lack of sidewalks and extreme width of the corridor, create an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians.

Zoning for this corridor is a combination of Waterfront, Light Manufacturing and General Manufacturing. All lands west of River Road are zoned Waterfront, areas east of River Road and north of Wheatfield are zoned General Industrial, and lands east of River Road and south of Wheatfield are zoned Light Industrial. While the industrial nature of the uses along the corridor is appropriate, the visual aesthetic along the roadway is in need of aesthetic improvements as it serves as a major gateway to the city.

BUFFALO BOLT BUSINESS PARK

The Buffalo Bolt Business Park is the smallest character area which is focused around the 23.7 acre site which was utilized by Buffalo Bolt, Roblin Steel and others for manufacturing and industrial uses. After operations ceased on the site in 1986, the site fell into disrepair and was abandoned. In 1997, the City of North Tonawanda acquired the property, and in 2006 the City signed a consent agreement with the NYS DEC to remediate the property for conditional redevelopment. Approximately 10 acres of surrounding property is also included within the character area based on its inter-relationship to Buffalo Bolt and its current industrial-oriented land use.

The Buffalo Bolt Business Park character area is located north of downtown along Oliver Street's west side from 9th Avenue to East Avenue. The 33 acre area consists of 25 separate parcels, with 73 percent of the area currently classified as vacant, as noted in Table 4. There is a small cluster of commercial properties on the west side of Oliver Street that retain the original urban form and character. Armstrong Pumps currently operates a four acre facility in which it manufactures and ships products for use by commercial and industrial clients.



The boundary of the Buffalo Bolt Business Park Character Area is shown in orange.

A concept master plan and set of design standards were created to spur the redevelopment of the Buffalo Bolt Business Park. The master plan includes a mixture of light industrial, manufacturing, office and retail land uses, as well as the extension of 10th Avenue from Oliver Street west to River Road. Almost all of the character area is zoned General Industrial, except for the small parcels at the corner of Oliver and 9th Avenue which are zoned General Commerce.

Table 4 Buffalo Bolt Business Park Land Use

<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Unclassified	1	4%	1.9	5.7%
Residential	2	8%	0.2	0.5%
Vacant	13	52%	24.4	73.3%
Commercial	8	32%	2.8	8.5%
Industrial	1	4%	4.0	11.9%
Totals	25	100%	33.3	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

As part of remediation efforts on the Buffalo Bolt property, the NYS DEC has limited the 23.7 acre property to commercial and industrial uses. With a potential connection to River Road, these uses provide an opportunity for greater intensity commercial and industrial development, yet limits traffic impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The extension of 10th Avenue was completed in 2011 with the construction of an access road and roundabout to service eight newly created parcels from the original 23.7 acre Buffalo Bolt property. As of 2012, five of the eight parcels have been transferred to private interests for redevelopment, with the remaining three under agreement with neighboring Armstrong Pumps to facilitate future expansion.

GRATWICK WATERFRONT

The Gratwick Waterfront character area includes three parcels totaling 58 acres, 91 percent of which is within Gratwick Riverside Park (see Table 5), owned and operated by the City of North Tonawanda. The park is a remediated brownfield, with an environmental easement held by the DEC that precludes uses beyond open space and recreation. The character area also includes a City-owned marina south of Gratwick Park and a private vacant parcel to the north of the park. In total, this character area boasts 5,700 feet (1.1 mi) of shoreline along the Niagara River.

The Gratwick Waterfront differs from others within the BOA due to the fact it is not developed. Except for mounded earth forms at the southern end of the Park, there are clear views from River Road to the Niagara River throughout most of the character area.

Unlike portions of River Road to the south, this character area has greater connectivity with the residential neighborhoods to the east, with railroad crossing points at Felton Street, Ward Road, and Witmer Road. However, the existing characteristics of River Road at this location, the high speed of traffic, and the currently under-developed Gratwick Park result in limited pedestrian activity. Additionally, there are no sidewalks along River Road in this character area, nor are there striped crosswalks at the three intersections.

Gratwick Riverside Park has been identified as a major Niagara River corridor destination by the Niagara River Greenway Commission. The City of North Tonawanda recently developed a Master Plan for the future development of Gratwick Riverside Park. The plan, when implemented, will make the park a regional recreation destination for residents and visitors. The park is located within walking distance of a number of residential neighborhoods to the east side of the railroad tracks. Efforts should be made to provide enhanced connectivity to these residential areas to extend the usage of this park as a neighborhood and community destination.



The extent of the Gratwick Waterfront Character Area is shown in purple.

Table 5 Gratwick Waterfront Land Use

<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Vacant	1	33.3%	2.9	5.1%
Recreation	1	33.3%	2.4	4.1%
Conservation	1	33.3%	52.5	90.9%
Totals	3	100.0%	57.8	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

The City-owned marina south of Gratwick Riverside Park has been identified as having significant redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunity. The City is planning to prepare a feasibility study for the marina to determine how the site can once again become a viable, active water destination.

3.3.2 Existing Land Use

Understanding existing land use patterns is important when considering potential redevelopment scenarios for the Tonawanda Island BOA. Evaluating this information will assist in the identification of how proposed development can best fit into the existing urban fabric, and will indicate where zoning changes might be required to realize the shared vision for the BOA study area.

According to parcel data obtained from the City of North Tonawanda, the Tonawanda Island BOA comprises 446 parcels encompassing approximately 426 acres of land. Lands committed to public road rights-of-way and surface waters are not designated land uses. Within the Tonawanda Island BOA, public road rights-of-way and surface waters account for approximately 120 acres, or almost 22 percent of the entire study area.

Table 6 Existing Land Use

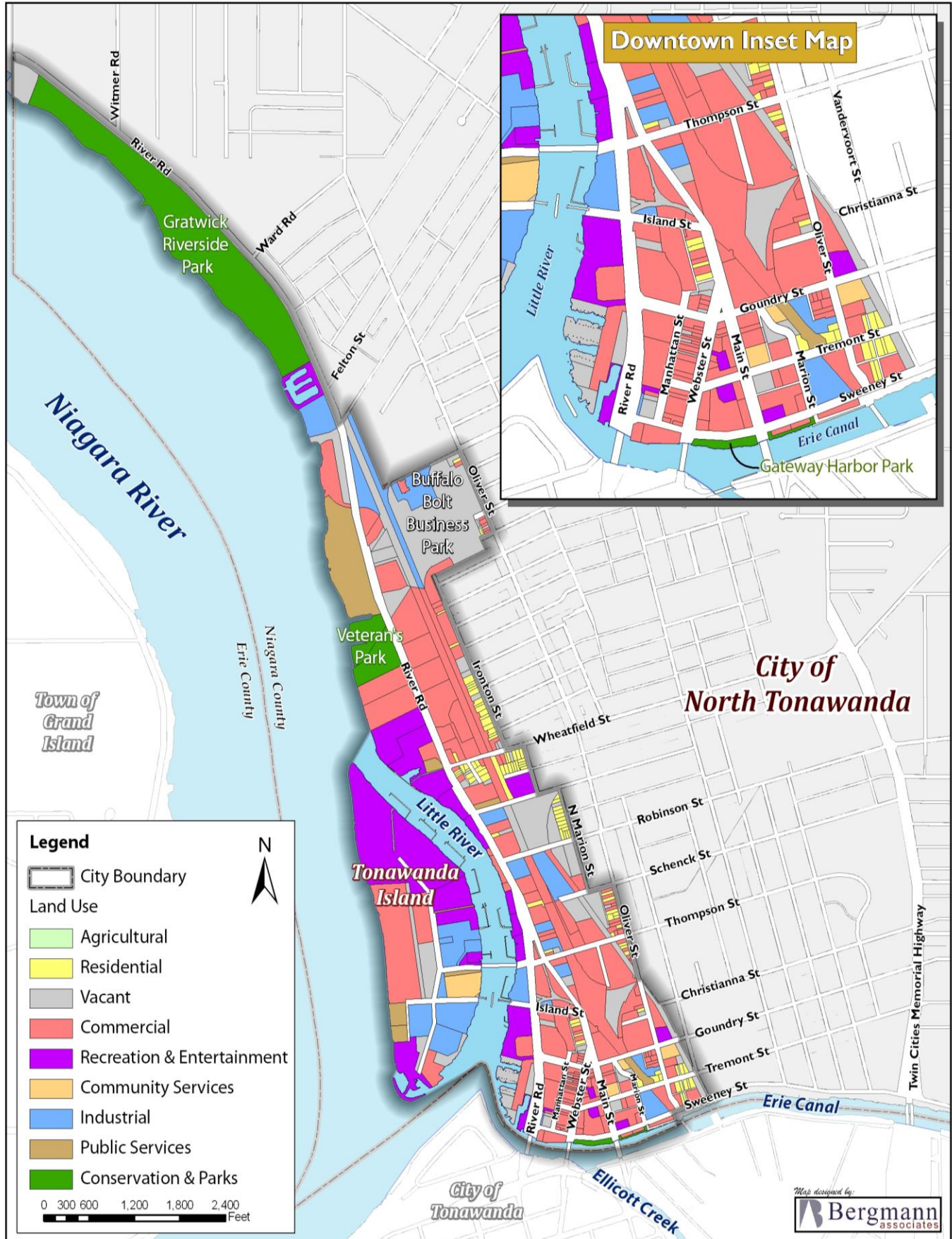
<i>Property Classification</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
Residential	95	23.6%	12.6	2.9%
Vacant	75	18.6%	76.4	18.1%
Commercial	169	41.9%	142.6	33.4%
Recreation & Entertainment	23	5.7%	64.1	15.0%
Community Services	4	1.0%	4.6	1.1%
Industrial	22	5.5%	42.2	10.1%
Public Services	9	2.2%	19.6	4.6%
Conservation & Parks	6	1.5%	62.6	14.7%
Totals	403	100%	424.5	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

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NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 5 Land Use



The Study Area has 403 parcels representing approximately 425 acres of land (see Table 6 and Map 5). The following section describes the land uses in the Study Area, organized according to categories defined by the New York State Office of Real Property Services.

The property classifications of greatest environmental concern within the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program are likely to be Commercial, Industrial, and Public Service. These classifications account for land uses such as auto dealers, gas stations, fuel storage and warehousing facilities, manufacturing and production facilities, and landfills and utility substations.



RESIDENTIAL

The largest area of residential land uses within the BOA is found in the Wheatfield/Ironton Street area. These properties are mostly multi-family rental properties, with some single-family and owner-occupied units. Numerous residential units are located in and around the central business district, primarily along Oliver Street and Webster Street. The 162-unit senior apartment complex at the corner of Oliver and Goundry makes downtown the largest collection of housing units in the BOA. The redevelopment of the Remington Rand manufacturing complex into upscale lofts added approximately 84 units within immediate proximity to downtown, further bolstering the downtown core as a growing residential presence within the City. There are several residential projects being considered or discussed in the BOA, including up-scale units along the Little River, on Tonawanda Island, and along the Weatherbest Slip gateway to the Erie Canal.



Multi-family building at the corner of Goundry and Manhattan Streets in the downtown core area.

COMMERCIAL

The BOA boundary includes 167 parcels classified as commercial properties, with 16 of these classified as apartment buildings. Commercial areas are found primarily in downtown along Webster and Main Streets, which creates the City's traditional urban feel. There are other pockets of commercial land located along Oliver Street and River Road. These areas are characterized by warehouses and multi-use buildings, most of which are between River Road and the CSX rail corridor.

Outside of Webster and Main Streets, the commercial character is rather diverse, and the urban character and form begins to break down with large areas of low-density development, particularly between Main and Oliver Streets north of Goundry Street.

INDUSTRIAL

Twenty-two parcels encompassing over 42 acres are classified as industrial uses within the BOA boundary. The majority of this land is located on Tonawanda Island, with a few individual sites scattered in the downtown area and within the Buffalo Bolt Business Park. All of the parcels are classified generally as manufacturing and processing, which includes high tech manufacturing and light and heavy industrial uses. Predominant activities include chemical and plastics manufacturing, along with warehousing and tool and die businesses. The largest industrial operators within the BOA are International Fiber Corporation, Armstrong Pumps, and Taylor Devices.

VACANT

Vacant lands represent 18 percent, or 76 acres, of the land area within the BOA study area. In addition to these 76, more than 40 acres of land on Tonawanda Island are currently sitting idle or vacant, with only small portions of these properties in active use. The amount of space available on Tonawanda Island represents significant redevelopment opportunities for the City to explore as part of the Brownfield Opportunity Area project. Aside from Tonawanda Island, the largest collection of Vacant land is within the Buffalo Bolt Business Park, which contains approximately 30 acres awaiting redevelopment. Numerous Vacant properties are scattered throughout the BOA, providing significant opportunities for small infill development projects.

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

There are currently 23 parcels classified as Recreation and Entertainment within the BOA. This land use classification includes facilities for assembly, amusement, and entertainment, along with marinas, sports facilities, camping grounds, and parks, and is typically reserved for properties under private ownership.

In the BOA Study Area, nearly all properties within this land use category are water-dependent businesses, such as marinas and marine repair. Recreation and Entertainment parcels are the third largest land use within the BOA, and are critical to the economy in North Tonawanda. Additional information on marine and recreational uses are detailed further in subsequent sections of this Inventory and Analysis.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Community Service category includes facilities for education, religious assembly, health services, government buildings and properties, and cultural facilities. There are only four parcels classified as Community Service in the BOA, which total approximately one percent of the Study Area. The properties under this land use classification include the former Fire Training facility on Tonawanda Island, the Columbia Hook and Ladder fire station, the First Methodist Episcopal Church, and the post office at the corner of Goundry and Oliver.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Public Services land uses are predominantly infrastructure and utility-related operations, such as communications, transportation, waste disposal, and energy. Six parcels within the Study Area are classified as Public Service, and include easement and transformer stations owned by Niagara Mohawk Corporation, City of North Tonawanda water and sewer treatment facilities, and Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority corridors.

CONSERVATION AND PARKS

This land use classification includes private and state-owned forest and hunting lands, public parks, and conservation and wild lands, with all state-owned lands along the canal included in this category. The Study Area contains six parcels within this category, the largest and most significant of which include Gratwick Riverside Park located in the northwest portion along the Niagara River. Other Parks within the BOA include Veteran's Park, Gateway Harbor Park, and Charles R. Fleischman Park, a pocket park formed at the intersection of Main, Goundry and Webster Streets. A more complete description of these community assets is included in Section 1.2.

3.3.3 Zoning Districts

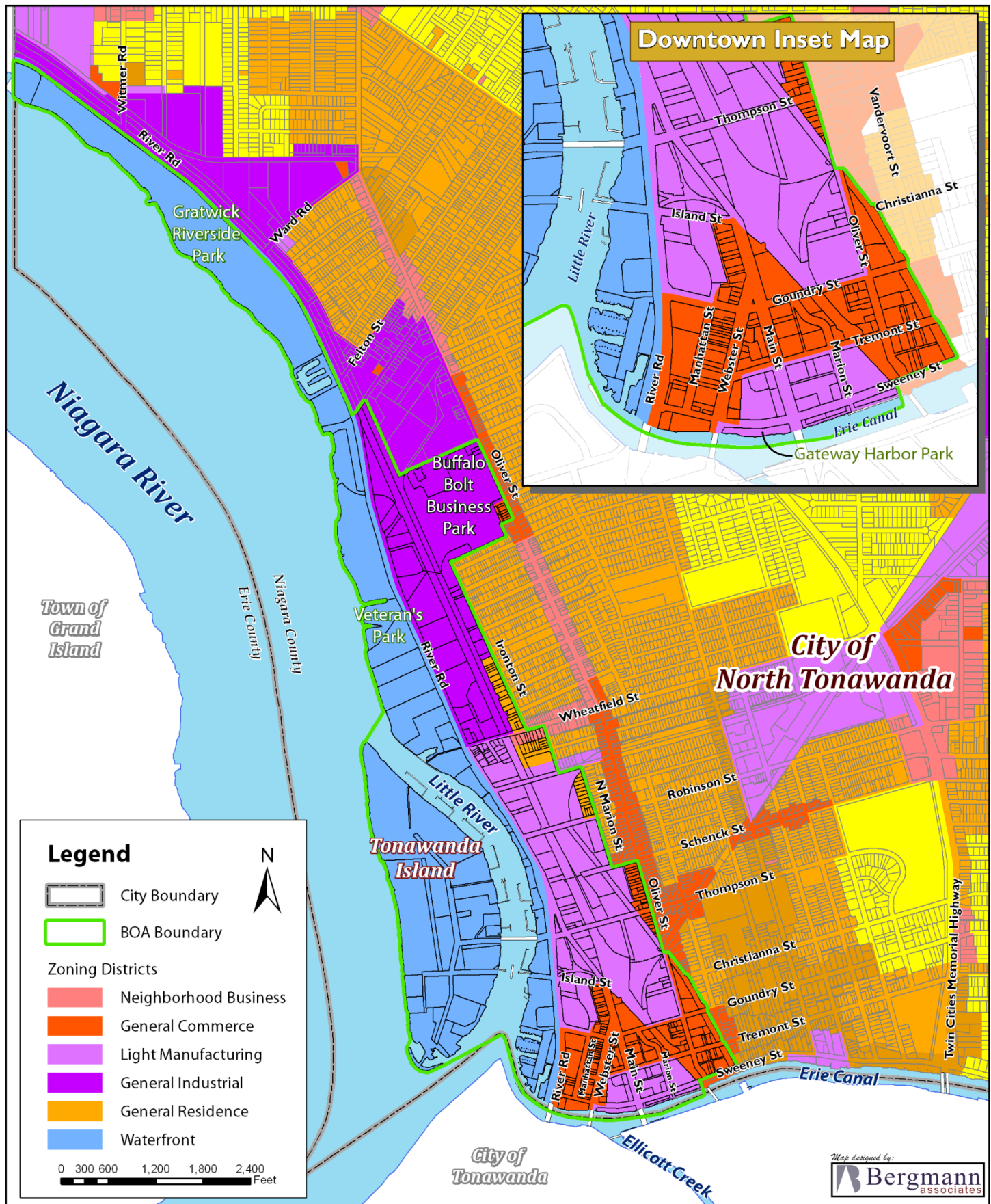
Map 6 depicts the city's zoning districts, with six districts present within the BOA study area. The Waterfront District encompasses all lands west of River Road along the Niagara River, but does not include lands along the Erie Canal. Industrial districts are located on the east side of River Road and within portions of downtown. Commercial districts are located within the downtown core and along Oliver Street. See Table 7 for a complete breakdown of zoning districts within the BOA.

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MAP 6

Existing Zoning



North Tonawanda’s zoning code is cumulative in nature, with residential districts having the most restrictions, and commercial and industrial districts being least restrictive. This code and map have evolved over several decades without a comprehensive update. The City’s attempts to accommodate the needs of property owners has resulted in a wide variety of districts and a considerable level of spot zoning, where individual parcels are singled-out for a specific zoning designation that is contrary to the surrounding land use pattern.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN’S FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

During the Comprehensive Plan process, several recommendations were made that would require changes to the existing zoning districts. The largest and most comprehensive of these changes relates to zoning for the waterfront and downtown areas of the city. The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Plan recommends expanding the waterfront mixed-use area to encompass both sides of River Road, and stretch along the Erie Canal to Payne Avenue. These changes would provide a continuous corridor of similar development types and standards throughout the city’s waterfront areas.

Table 7 Existing Zoning Districts in BOA

<i>Zoning District</i>	<i>Acres</i>	
	<i>Sum</i>	<i>% BOA</i>
General Commerce	31.6	7.4
General Industrial	84.4	19.8
General Residence	7.2	1.7
Light Manufacturing	85.6	20.1
Neighborhood Business	1.3	0.3
Waterfront District	214.4	50.7
Total	424.5	100%

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that future land uses within the downtown should focus on mixed-use, with industrial activity taking place north of Thompson Street. This mixed-use district would also include portions of Oliver Street within the BOA Study Area. The recommended changes would create a unified downtown district and provide continuity for future redevelopment projects. These changes would also assist in the formation of a cohesive brand identity and wayfinding structure that creates a unique sense of place within the downtown and waterfront areas.

A brief summary of each zoning district within the BOA can be found below.

WATERFRONT DISTRICT (WD)

The Waterfront District comprises 51 percent of the study area acreage and includes all lands west of River Road and all of Tonawanda Island. This district is largely intended to support marine-based and water-dependent activity along the waterfront. Limited opportunities for residential development exist, and only on property without frontage on a water body. Most uses identified in traditional mixed-use developments would not be permitted to have frontage on the water.

The overarching vision for the BOA is to create a destination on Tonawanda Island and to improve the Little River and River Road corridors. This vision includes the desire to incorporate uses enhanced by a location along the water, such as mixed-use commercial/retail and residential development. Recommendations for specific modifications to the City’s zoning code necessary to achieve the vision of the BOA Plan are identified in later sections of the BOA study.

GENERAL COMMERCE (C-1)

The General Commerce District covers seven percent of the BOA Study Area, and includes nearly all of the central business district and downtown portions of the city. The C-1 District allows residential uses, small-scale commercial uses, as well as more intense commercial uses such as dry-cleaning plants, bottling plants, warehousing, and trucking terminals. While they are needed within the city and region, additional development of these commercial uses within the downtown core would provide a sharp contrast to the desired urban form and uses in these locations.

GENERAL RESIDENCE (R-2)

The General Residence District covers only two percent of the BOA Study Area, and is limited to one small pocket of land along Wheatfield Street. This district allows for single-family and multi-family developments, including apartment complexes. However, development opportunities within this district are limiting for non-residential uses, which include private clubs, nursery schools, and hospitals.

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (C-2)

The Neighborhood Business Zoning District includes only one acre of land in the BOA at the intersection of Oliver and Thompson Streets. This district permits single-family, multi-family and apartment residential development along with retail and limited commercial and public services, such as banks, dentist and doctors' offices, and government buildings

The types of uses currently allowed within this zoning district may be applicable to a greater amount of land area within the BOA, including those areas defined as downtown mixed-use and waterfront mixed-use in the City's Future Land Use Plan.



This business along Oliver Street is a good example of what is allowed in the Neighborhood Business district.

LIGHT MANUFACTURING (M-1)

The Light Manufacturing District accounts for 20 percent of the BOA study area and is located within the downtown core, along Oliver Street, and east of River Road south of Wheatfield Street. The M-1 District is similar to the General Commercial (C-1) District, yet restricts residential uses and allows for more intense commercial and industrial activity.

While this zoning district is appropriate for many of the existing industrial and intense commercial activity occurring on the east side of River Road, it is not consistent with the vision for the BOA in the downtown area. Recommended considerations for modifying this zoning district are included later in this study.



This is an example of the building types currently permitted in the Light Manufacturing district.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (M-2)

The General Industrial District is the third largest zoning district within the BOA, covering 20 percent of the land area. Nearly all property on the east side of River Road north of Wheatfield Street is within this district, which permits heavy industry and manufacturing processes such as concrete mixing plants, slag piles, and metal ore refining.

Excluding Buffalo Bolt Business Park, the intensity of uses permitted within this zoning district generally conflict with the desires of the community for the River Road corridor. Recommendations for modifications to this district are identified in subsequent phases of the planning process.

3.3.4 Sites of Environmental Concern

A primary objective of the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area Program is to address blight in depressed communities that have been impacted by the presence, or perceived presence, of environmentally sensitive sites. The presence of these sites, or brownfields, has notable impacts on a community, including depreciation of property values and the discouragement of investment in surrounding properties.

Although redevelopment of brownfield properties may be complicated, community-led revitalization plans can facilitate preparation of such sites for “shovel-ready” redevelopment. Active reuse of brownfields recognizes the intrinsic relationship between environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. Brownfield redevelopment benefits both individual property owners and the surrounding community. Brownfield property developers are eligible for tax credits and other financial and technical assistance that makes these redevelopment projects financially feasible. The surrounding community benefits from a reduction in perceived contamination risk and the influx of investment.

Community benefits become extremely tangible as projects move forward – properties are cleaned up and become environmentally sustainable, they are redeveloped to support the local tax base, new development shows signs of progress, and new uses spur additional redevelopment on surrounding lands.

In North Tonawanda, the perception of contamination is very real. Within the BOA, a number of large sites have undergone remediation and a number of significant sites remain with active industrial uses or remnants of active industrial uses and potential contaminants. Of the 403 sites present within the BOA boundary, 61 were identified as potential brownfields based on preliminary database research, as identified on Map 7. Collectively, these sites comprise 17.9 percent of total BOA parcel area.

METHODOLOGY

Brownfields are often commercial or industrial properties where mismanagement or improper handling of hazardous chemicals may have jeopardized the environmental integrity and/or public health of the surrounding community. Sites that handle large amounts of hazardous materials are subject to increased regulations from the NYS DEC and EPA due to the increased potential for environmental contamination.

In order to better understand the environmental conditions and impacts within the BOA, a preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted for each of the known or potential brownfield sites to gain a better understanding of existing conditions. Facility and site information, maintained at the local, state and the federal level, was reviewed to identify preliminary site conditions. Information was obtained from five main sources, including the following:

- Spills Incident Database (NYS DEC)
- Remedial Site Database (NYS DEC)
- Bulk Storage Database (NYS DEC)
- Envirofacts Database (US EPA)
- Property Assessment Database (North Tonawanda)

Sites listed in any of the five databases often warrant further attention because of historic contamination at the site, or because the nature of the facility has the potential for environmental contamination is greatly increased. A visual site assessment of each site with an environmental history, identified through desktop research, was conducted between December 9 and December 14, 2009. The purpose of the site visits was to identify the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on the property that indicate an existing release, possible prior release, or the threat of future release onto the property.

Information gathered during the ESAs and site visits was downloaded to a database designed specifically for the North Tonawanda BOA project. An interactive Site Profile Form was generated for each brownfield site that links to an electronic database. The database will streamline the City's access to property specific information, as well as enable modification of information as conditions within the city change.

Consideration was given to:

1. Whether or not environmental contamination has occurred
2. The media impacted (i.e. soil or groundwater)
3. The potential for future environmental contamination to occur (i.e. presence and condition of petroleum or chemical bulk storage).

Community and planning factors relating to redevelopment potential were not taken into consideration during the preliminary assessment. The community will be given the opportunity to identify strategic sites other than those identified for environmental purposes during future public outreach efforts.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Potentially contaminated sites require invasive environmental evaluation in the form of a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine the presence and extent of contamination. Those sites which are recommended as possible candidates for a Phase II ESA are noted below. Funding to complete the Phase II ESA is available through the NYS BOA program for the City and property owners willing to participate in the assessment process.

Sites of Low Environmental Concern

Properties were identified as having low environmental concern if they appear in an environmental database but there is no reason to believe that the property was directly or significantly impacted. For example, if a property was discovered to have a documented spill event, yet no other information is available, the site is not anticipated to be a significant environmental concern in the BOA and is classified as low priority. Four parcels comprising 10.9 acres were classified as low priority in the BOA, the result of spill events associated with the property identified during the environmental database review. However, the actual extent of environmental impairment on these four sites is not known.

Of the four low priority sites in the BOA, two were indirectly impacted by spill events on adjacent property, and two were identified as having direct impacts from on-site spills.

- Two of the properties comprise Veterans Memorial Park, located at the north end of Tonawanda Harbor. Both properties had a history of environmental spills that occurred adjacent to the property, impacting the surface of the Niagara River. The NYS DEC attributed these events to adjacent properties, and the actual impact to the properties is unclear, though there is no suspected contamination on either property.
- The site located at 18 Dock Street is suspected to be associated with a spill reported in 1988 during which 15 gallons of petroleum was released into the Niagara River. Additionally a similar spill occurred the following year with an unknown volume of petroleum released into the Niagara River. Both spills were addressed and closed per the NYS DEC requirements.
- The property at 20 North Marion Street is associated with a reported spill in 1988 of an unknown substance that impacted area soil. The spill was closed shortly thereafter, indicating the spill was adequately addressed.

Sites of Moderate Environmental Concern

Properties were identified as being of moderate environmental concern if:

1. They were listed in an environmental database
2. There is unknown prior use but visual evidence of environmental impact (i.e. surface staining, abandoned drums, or evidence of debris or fill)
3. Groundwater wells were visible on the property.

Forty-five parcels within the BOA have been classified as being of moderate concern, with some of these sites being identified on multiple databases. These sites comprise a total of 75.6 acres, and are summarized below:

- Thirty-three of the sites are locations of spill events that had impacted soil or groundwater. All spill events for the listed sites have subsequently been closed, indicating they have adequately met NYS DEC cleanup requirements and contamination is most likely not a concern.
- Seventeen of the sites are listed as bulk storage facilities by the NYS DEC, indicating the facility has combined storage exceeding 1,100 gallons. The sites listed as bulk storage facilities primarily store petroleum based products (PBS), while a few also have on-site chemical bulk storage (CBS). Sites with bulk petroleum or chemical storage may warrant additional attention because the threat of environmental contamination is higher due to the volume of material being handled on-site. If storage tanks are not properly maintained, leaks or spills may occur, impacting the soil and possibly groundwater.
- Eight of the parcels are listed as Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators (CESQG). To qualify as a CESQG, a site must generate less than 220 pounds (27.5 gallons) of hazardous waste per month and store no more than 275 gallons of hazardous waste on-site. A CESQG may treat or dispose of the hazardous waste in an on-site facility, or ensure proper off-site disposal. Such facilities are subject to stringent federal requirements to ensure hazardous materials do not impact the surrounding environment on which they are produced, nor provide a threat to public health. A listing as a Small Hazardous Waste Generator does not indicate *actual* hazardous waste production, but provides the necessary certification to undertake these activities on-site. Hazardous wastes are those generated that are dangerous or potentially harmful to the health or environment as identified through EPA sampling and testing methods.

The sites described above all have historic or ongoing commercial or industrial activities that make them more susceptible to contamination. When the extent of potential contamination cannot be determined through visual and historic assessment, it may be necessary to conduct a Phase II ESA to determine whether or not such activities have impacted the property.

Some sites may be more likely to require additional environmental investigation and possibly remediation. However, it should be noted that further assessment and cleanup of these sites will be contingent on owner cooperation. Sites that are currently under public ownership and/or are currently vacant are more likely to move forward with a Phase II ESA, unless there is support and interest by a private property owner.

Sites of High Environmental Concern

Sites of high environmental concern located within the BOA include industrial sites with a known site history that:

1. Are a large quantity hazardous waste generator, or
2. Are an active petroleum or bulk storage facility not in compliance with regulations, or
3. Are an active spill event site, or
4. Are listed in the NYS DEC environmental remediation databases.

There are 11 sites within the BOA classified as a high environmental concern. Six of these sites are active spill sites or existing brownfields, and the remaining five sites require a Phase II ESA to identify whether or not contaminants are present. Many of these sites are characterized by rigorous industrial activity that has most likely compromised the environmental integrity of the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION PROGRAMS

The six active spill sites or existing brownfields are enrolled in existing DEC remediation programs. Enlistment in any of the DEC remediation programs is indicative of existing contamination that must be addressed through Phase II and Phase III ESAs. The current status of each site, as well as plans for site redevelopment, is discussed below.

Site 1: 101 East Avenue (Former Roblin Steel Site, now Buffalo Bolt Business Park) - Remediation complete

Buffalo Bolt operated the site from 1918 to 1961, followed by the Roblin Steel Company until 1987. The 23.7 acre former steel processing facility is located approximately 1,000 feet east of the Niagara River, in the northern portion of the study area. The site contained several above ground and underground storage tanks, which were removed as an interim remediation measure in 2000. Contaminants of concern at the site include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), metals, semi-volatile organic compounds, and volatile organic compounds. An environmental deed has been placed on the property which includes an environmental easement, groundwater use restrictions, and a land use restriction. In addition, a soil management plan was completed to guide future development efforts in the event that impacted soil is encountered during redevelopment. An approved operation and maintenance plan for the site's institutional controls and long-term groundwater monitoring is in place. The site was delisted from registry on January 5, 2009, indicating that remediation is complete. Long-term monitoring of the site will be required. The City is currently pursuing commercial and light industrial redevelopment on the property.

Site 2: 9 River Road (Gratwick Riverside Park) – Remediation complete

Gratwick Riverside Park is a 53 acre parcel located on the Niagara River. Between 1938 and 1968 the property was used as a municipal landfill until its closure. The City of North Tonawanda reopened the property for use as a public park in 1969. Since that time, the site has been identified to have groundwater contaminated with heavy metals, organics and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) requiring remediation. Engineering controls to the site include, but are not limited to, a soil cap, installation of a slurry wall between the landfill and Niagara River, and installation of a groundwater collection system. A deed restriction was placed on the property to restrict groundwater use and future land uses, limiting redevelopment opportunities. Today, the site is a public park with recreational access to the Niagara River.

Site 3: 815 River Road – Remediation complete

The 815 River Road site is a one acre parcel that was formerly owned by a company that leased and maintained school buses. The site contained several underground storage tanks. As an interim remediation measure, the City removed 14 underground storage tanks and associated petroleum contaminated soils, as well as approximately 7,700 tons of contaminated soil for disposal. A Site Management Plan is awaiting approval and an Environmental Easement has

been completed. The easement limits future redevelopment of the site to commercial uses. Future groundwater sampling and annual certification are required to ensure that the site is in compliance with its intended use.

Site 4: 184 Sweeney Street (Remington Rand Building) – Remediation underway

The Remington Rand site is located on 1.8 acres in the southern portion of the North Tonawanda BOA study area. The property is bordered by the Erie Canal to the south, an industrial rail line to the east, and commercial properties to the north and west. Historically, industrial and manufacturing processes took place on-site. An application was submitted for incorporation into the DEC Brownfield Cleanup Program to address existing petroleum, chlorinated solvents, semi-volatile organic compounds, metals, and PCB residual contamination. Remedial investigation commenced in April 2009 and the site was redeveloped in 2012 as a mixed-use residential and commercial development.

Site 5: 55 Schenck Street (Schreck's Scrapyard) – Remediation complete

The former site of Schreck's Scrapyard is a two acre site that was used as an iron and metal salvage yard. Constituents of concern at the site include metals, cyanide, volatile organic compounds, and PCBs. Approximately 50 to 60 drums were found buried onsite. As part of remediation, 7,000 gallons of contaminated liquids, 24 truckloads of contaminated soil, and 91 tons of hazardous soil were removed from the property. Remediation was completed in 1991 and required ongoing site maintenance and monitoring. The site was purchased in 2008 by Smurfit Stone Container Corporation for tractor trailer storage. The site owner is responsible for ongoing site maintenance and groundwater monitoring.

Site 6: 76 Robinson Street (Booth Oil Company)—Remediation complete

The Booth Oil site is located on a 2.5 acre parcel in an industrial and commercial portion of the study area. The site is bisected by industrial railroad tracks, and was formerly used to store and process waste oil. Much of the site was found to be saturated with spilled oil, and a sampling program was consequently initiated and completed in 1986. The soil, groundwater and former catch basins located on the site were found to contain elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, lead, and PCBs. The recommended remediation of the site included excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated materials. Remedial efforts have been completed, though the site requires long-term maintenance and monitoring. An environmental deed has been placed on the Conrail portion of the site, intended to restrict future development to specific uses. A similar deed has not been placed on the portion of property owned by Booth Oil Company. To date, the owner of the Booth Oil Company assumes long-term maintenance and monitoring responsibilities.

ACTIVE SPILL SITES

Two sites are identified as high priority due to listing as active spill event sites with unknown impact or in which groundwater was impacted. These sites remain active if the contamination from the spill has not yet been addressed. The two sites are described in further detail as follows.

68 Main Street:

This property appears to be a former garage and has an abandoned well to the south of the building. The well indicates that groundwater monitoring occurred on-site at a point in time. Spill records identify that an unknown substance associated with commercial and industrial activities was reported to be spilled on the property on July 16, 2009. To date, this spill remains active, indicating that the contaminants have not been addressed.

Next steps for this site should be to determine the type and extent of contaminant impact through a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, and to address contamination with an approved closure by the DEC. If the area of impact cannot be fully remediated, an environmental easement should be considered to restrict reuse potential to commercial or industrial uses. The site is currently identified for Motor Vehicle Service land use and is privately owned. Therefore, further assessment and cleanup will be contingent on owner cooperation.

105 Main Street:

A small plaza containing a bank, salon, physical therapy office, paint shop, and vacant office space is at this location. Site visits did not identify any existing hazards, however a spill was reported in September 2006 indicating release of an unknown volume of petroleum that impacted groundwater. To date, the site remains an active spill site indicating that groundwater contamination has not yet been addressed.

Next steps for this site should be to determine the area and extent of impact through a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment. Investigation should focus on petroleum related compounds and identify the extent of the contaminant plume. It may be necessary to implement a groundwater monitoring and sampling program, or to consider controls to contain and mitigate existing contamination or exposure. An environmental easement should be considered to restrict groundwater use and future land uses if determined to be a significant issue.

UNREGISTERED STORAGE TANKS

Two sites were identified as being of high environmental concern due to the presence of registered or unregistered above ground storage tanks, which were identified during site visits.

85 Main Street:

The site is currently owned by Mi-Ken Transmission. Site visits revealed two 275 gallon storage tanks on the property. Because the site was not listed in the DEC database, the tanks may not be meeting the State's appropriate operation and maintenance guidelines. As a result, there is greater risk for leaks or spills at this location.

If the site changes ownership or is to be redeveloped, a Phase II may be necessary to identify the extent of impact that past and current uses have had on the property.

93 East Avenue:

Niagara County currently owns the site, which has a history of spill events that have subsequently been closed. Site visits indicated that a 500 gallon aboveground storage tank is present on the site, but not in the NYS DEC registry. In addition, a large flammable cabinet was observed. The volume of materials onsite and the risk of ignition create several environmental hazards that pose a risk to the environment, health, and safety of those in the surrounding area. Visibility was limited during the site visits and it was not clear if additional tanks are being stored on site.

A Phase II Environmental Assessment is warranted to determine whether existing tanks are properly maintained or if improper storage is compromising the surrounding environment.

MULTIPLE LISTINGS

One site was identified as high environmental concern due to multiple listings in the databases. The site located at 369 River Road (Valkro, Inc.) is a chemical bulk storage facility that also has visible fuel tanks located throughout the property. In addition, the site is listed as a small hazardous waste generator. Hazardous waste is required to either be treated on-site, off-site, or arranged for off-site disposal. Waste characterized as "hazardous" requires disposal at

certified landfills. The only landfill in New York State certified to handle hazardous waste is located in Niagara Falls, NY. Additionally, the site has a spill event history, indicating the likelihood of contamination on the property.

Due to the numerous environmental hazards present on site, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment should be conducted to confirm whether or not activities resulted in significant contamination.

SUMMARY

Many of the 61 sites within the BOA that have been identified as sites of environmental concern warrant further investigation based on the uncertainty regarding historic use and potential contamination.

Future investigations as part of the BOA Program should identify whether or not contamination exists onsite through soil testing. Knowledge of the type of contamination present will inform property owners regarding the financial costs and timeframes associated with remediation, as will assist in the identification of targeted incentive programs, tax credits, or funding that might exist to assist with the process.

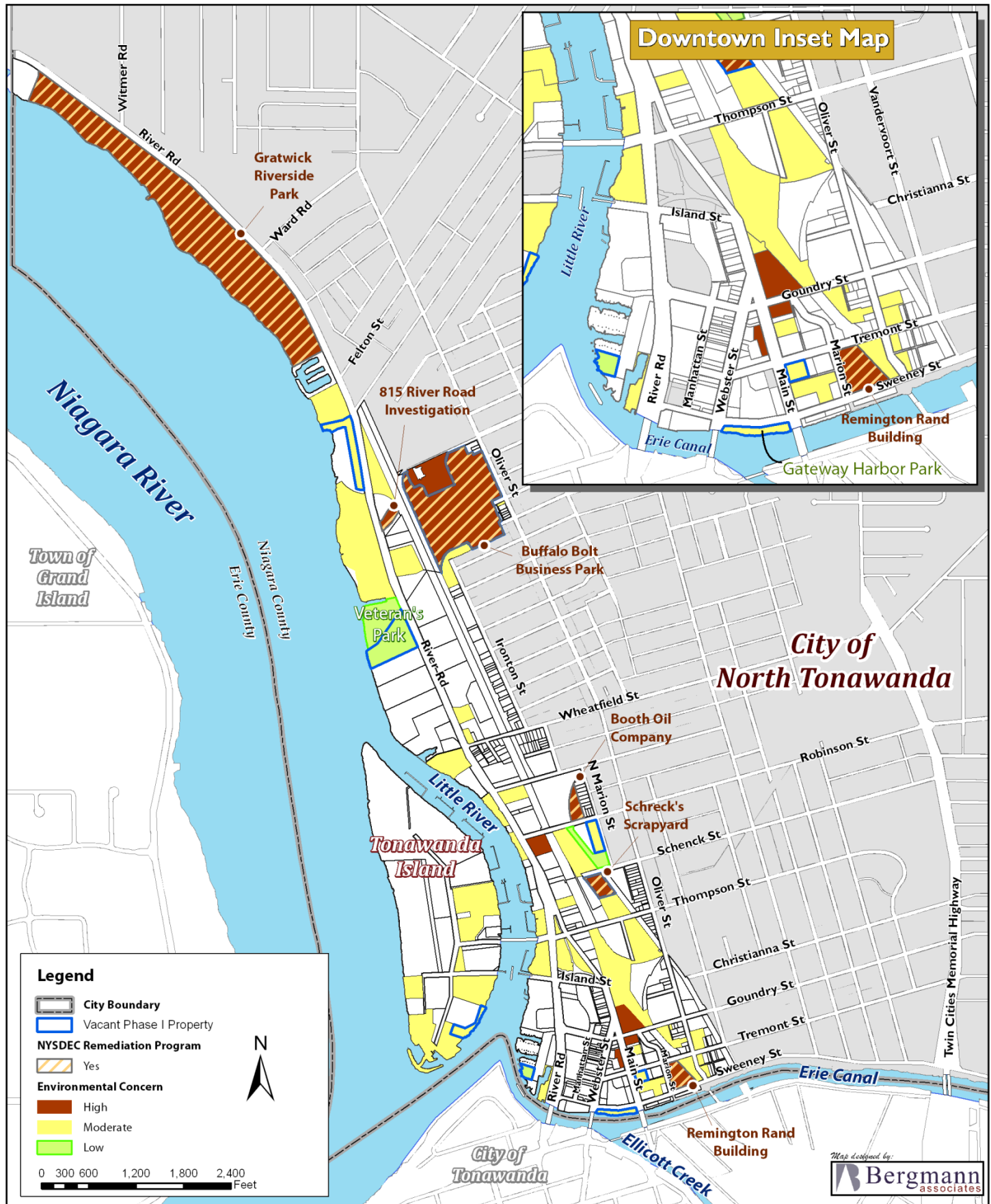
Information reviewed during this analysis is not comprehensive, and may require amendment as new information is obtained. Many of the properties within the BOA that were involved in DEC remediation programs have require long-term monitoring and maintenance of engineering controls, but are ready for redevelopment in accordance with any required environmental easements.

The current challenge the City faces involves overcoming the stigma associated with the industrial history and former contamination of brownfield sites in order to pursue redevelopment opportunities. Site specific strategies will need to be formed because of the presence of environmental easements, institutional controls, and deed restrictions that were placed necessarily on some of the contaminated properties. These strategies should be developed for previously remediated site, as well as other catalytic sites identified within the BOA Plan.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

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MAP 7 Sites of Environmental Concern



3.3.5 Vacant and Underutilized Sites

In total, there are approximately 102 parcels that have been identified as vacant or underutilized, totaling 149 acres, or 35 percent of the Study Area. These properties are located throughout the Study Area. Primary concentrations of vacant and underutilized sites are found on Tonawanda Island, at the site of the former Tonawanda Iron Works on River Road, at the Buffalo Bolt Business Park, and along North Main Street. Each of these sites is indicated on Map 8.

VACANT SITES IN THE BOA

According to data obtained from the New York State Office of Real Property Services, 74 vacant sites are located within the BOA boundary, eight of which are also identified as potential brownfields. Vacant sites are determined by real property classifications through the City's assessor, and include vacant commercial, residential, and industrial lands.

While vacant sites can have negative impacts on a neighborhood or study area, they also provide opportunities for new development. These sites, once confirmed to be free of environmental contamination, provide a clean slate to developers because they typically do not require extensive site preparation, potential demolition of existing structures, or retrofitting of existing buildings. Vacant properties should be viewed as key opportunities for redevelopment in the BOA. Property that is both vacant and occupying high-value locations are given priority in determining strategic sites for redevelopment and infill development within the study area.

Buffalo Bolt Business Park represents the largest contiguous area of vacant land within the Study Area. A redevelopment vision has been generated through a master planning process to create a business and industrial park that would include an extension of 10th Avenue to intersect with River Road. The potential for this business park as an employment generator would likely have positive spillover effects on the commercial and residential portions of the surrounding neighborhood.

Adjacent to Buffalo Bolt Industrial Park along River Road is a cluster of vacant and potential brownfield sites in the vicinity of the 815 River Road property. These lands are currently utilized for the storage of construction materials. Several of these properties are owned by the City, which would aid in the redevelopment process. An opportunity exists for these parcels to be redeveloped in concert with Buffalo Bolt to provide complementary and support uses that may not be appropriate along Oliver Street and within the surrounding residential neighborhood.

A large swath of land exists adjacent to the Booth Oil brownfield property which currently contains an infrequently utilized rail siding. To the north of this parcel is a small City park and playground area. Opportunities for the expansion of this neighborhood park to include useable portions of the vacant property should be investigated.

There are numerous opportunities for infill development on vacant land within the BOA. For instance, a small yet highly visible property is located at the corner of Goundry and Webster Streets. This location would be inviting for a multi-story mixed-use building with quality first-floor office space and market rate upper-story apartments.

UNDERUTILIZED SITES IN THE BOA

Underutilized sites are also identified based on field and site visits. Like vacant sites, these properties provide increased opportunity for reinvestment in the city. These sites may have existing uses, but those uses may not be considered the highest and best use for a given parcel when considering its strategic location or potential to serve as a catalytic site for redevelopment. Underutilized sites are identified as part of the planning process when considering opportunities for new project development. Twenty-eight sites have been identified as underutilized within the BOA, four of which are also suspected brownfields.

The largest grouping of contiguous underutilized parcels is on Tonawanda Island. These lands are comprised of the former International Paper site and the Jones Box Company, representing over 40 acres of redevelopment potential along the Niagara River waterfront. These parcels were included as a priority site in the recent Revisioning Brownfields

Regional Strategic Approach conducted by Niagara and Erie Counties and the cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Lockport, and North Tonawanda in 2007.

The Revisioning Brownfields report developed a conceptual site plan for Tonawanda Island that included a large public park at its northern tip and mixed-use commercial and townhouse/condominium residential land uses in the island's central portions. A large waterfront pedestrian plaza was planned as a central organizing feature that would be linked with the park to the north via a waterfront promenade. The preliminary vision developed during this project laid the foundation for the potential redevelopment of Tonawanda Island as a mixed-use destination with gathering spaces, waterfront accessibility, and the preservation of scenic quality.

An additional underutilized property located on Tonawanda Island is the former fire training facility near the landing of the Durkee Bridge. This property is largely vacant and sits at a highly prominent location at the entry to Tonawanda Island. Redevelopment opportunities should take advantage of its high visibility from the Durkee Bridge, its current public ownership, and its waterfront location. The redevelopment of this parcel has the potential to be an early implementation project for the City. Therefore, any project in this location should be of a high quality that sets a unique and lasting precedent for future development on the island.



Portions of Main Street north of the intersection with Goundry Street.

A large grouping of mainland parcels is located along River Road on the site of the former Tonawanda Iron Works. These properties have undergone various degrees of redevelopment, yet they do not fully leverage their location on the water with their proximity to downtown and Tonawanda Island. These parcels represent a significant opportunity for water-dependent and water-enhanced development adjacent to Tonawanda Harbor. The potential for a coordinated mixed-use development that encompasses multiple parcels should be investigated. Such a development should provide frontage along River Road, while providing continuous public access along the waterfront and a connection to Veteran's Park.

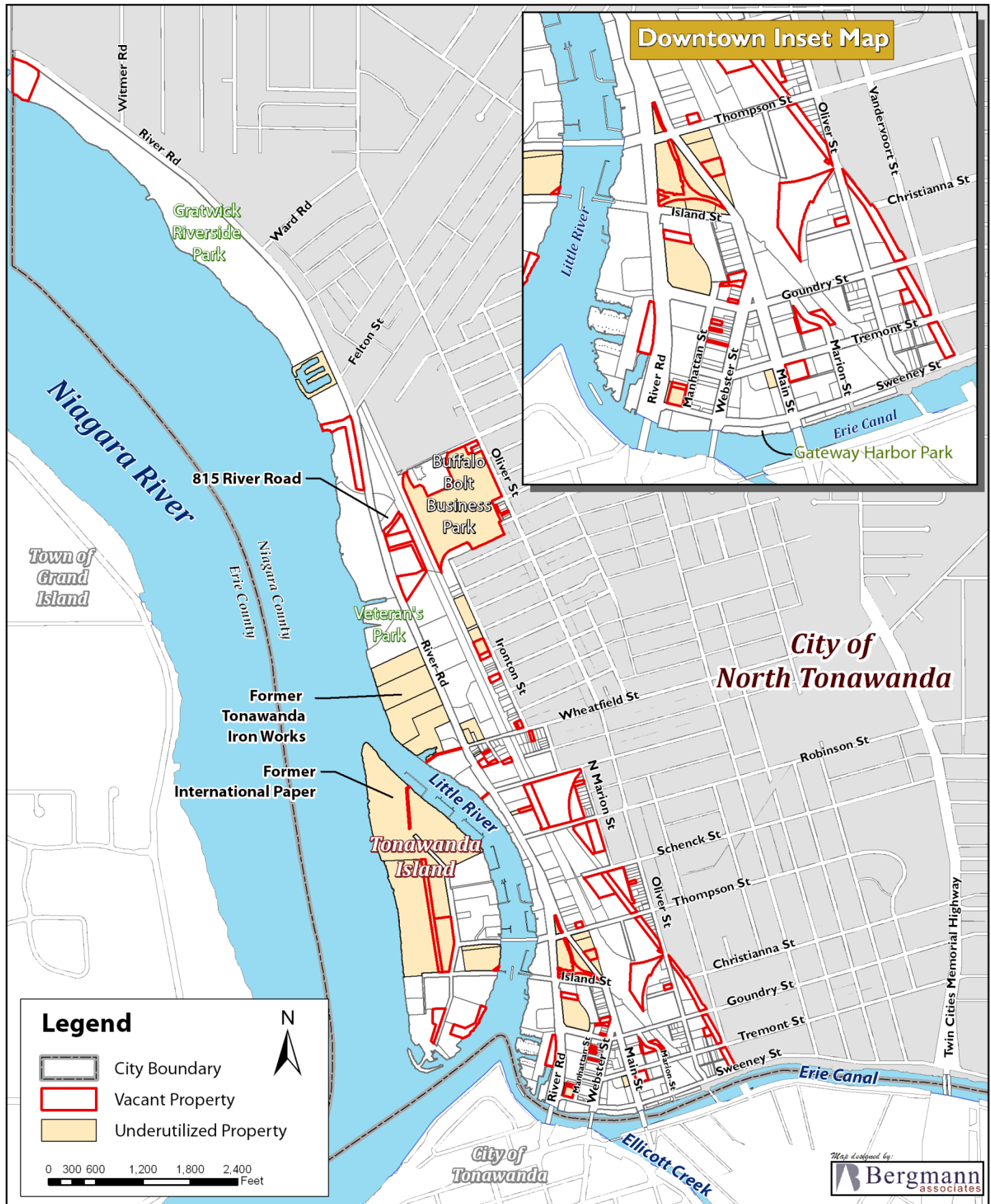
A smaller grouping of underutilized properties can be found between River Road and Main Street north of Island Street. The redevelopment of these parcels was conceptually investigated during the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which recommended mixed-use commercial, retail, and potentially upper story residential. These parcels occupy a highly visible location and gateway entrance into downtown from the north. The redevelopment of this gateway should be consistent with the findings of the City's Downtown Wayfinding Plan and the LWRP.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

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MAP 8

Vacant &
Underutilized Sites



3.3.6 Land and Water Ownership

Understanding property ownership and how it relates to future development opportunities along the riverfront and within the BOA is necessary when considering and identifying future projects and land uses. Specific projects may be more easily implemented and directed on lands owned by public entities. However, privately owned properties are equally important. Engaging property owners and working with them throughout the planning process is critical. If private property owners are involved in the process, they are more likely to willingly work toward an agreed upon vision, provide access easements, implement recommended design and site guidelines, sell property to investors interested in redeveloping, or redevelop the property themselves.

The City can help direct future development on private and publicly held lands through modifications to land use regulations and the development of design standards. Recommendations to land use regulations in the City will be prepared based on the creation of a final phasing and concept plan for the BOA study area.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 10 percent of the real property parcels within the BOA are under public ownership. A total of seven public entities own 42 parcels within the BOA, as shown in Table 8 and depicted on Map 9. The City of North Tonawanda is the largest public land holder both by number of parcels and total acreage. The City owns several vacant and/or underutilized properties, including the Buffalo Bolt Business Park, lands adjacent to 815 River Road, the former fire training facility on Tonawanda Island, and the marina facility adjacent to Gratwick Riverside Park. Public ownership of these parcels can potentially expedite redevelopment and reinvestment, while providing an enhanced level of public control over final development scenarios.

Table 8 Ownership by Public Entity

Public Entity	Parcels	Acres
City of North Tonawanda	29	106.2
City of Lockport Water Authority	1	0.7
Niagara County	2	6.9
Niagara County IDA	4	9.7
Niagara Frontier Transp. Authority	3	2.2
State of New York	2	1.0
United States Postal Service	1	0.8
Totals	42	127.5

Source: North Tonawanda Real Property Tax Service.

UNDERWATER OWNERSHIP

As defined in NYS Public Lands Law Article 6, underwater lands are those below the mean high water mark. In North Tonawanda, this includes land below the high water mark in the Niagara River and Erie Canal. The owner of property on adjacent “dry land” is referred to as the upland property owner.

New York State owns land under all navigable lakes, streams, and rivers, including the Niagara River, Little River, and Erie Canal. The State does sell, give, transfer and alienate certain parcels of the land beneath these waterbodies as a means to help upland property owners install wharfs, docks, or piers.

There are two State entities that control lands underwater in North Tonawanda. The NYS Canal Corporation has control of the underwater lands beneath the Erie Canal / Tonawanda Creek. At the Webster Street overpass the

jurisdiction changes to the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), following the Canal Corporation's Blue Line that bounds lands under its control.

According to OGS, there are no underwater land grants along the Niagara River or Erie Canal.

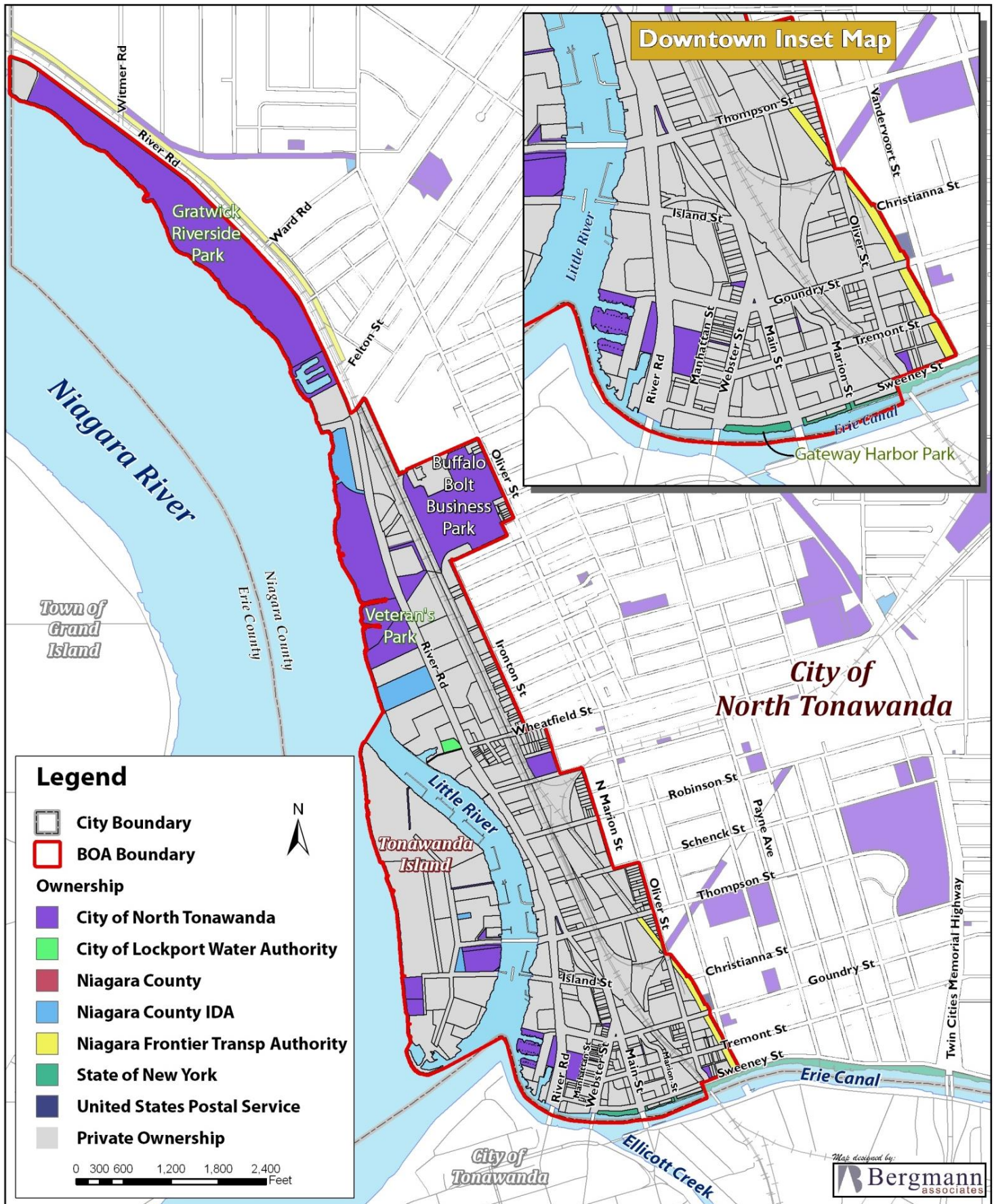
INACTIVE SWING BRIDGES

There are two abandoned swing bridges within the Study Area. The former owner of the bridges was a corporation which dissolved. The swing bridge assets were not passed to a subsequent owner. The City of North Tonawanda has avoided taking ownership due to potential liabilities associated with the failing structure. The second swing bridge located near the mouth of Tonawanda Creek is believed to be under private ownership.

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MAP 9 Land Ownership



3.3.7 Parks and Green Infrastructure

Parks and green infrastructure within the North Tonawanda BOA include public parks, trails, sidewalks, street amenities, boater facilities and public access to the waterfront. These recreational and non-motorized transportation resources are an important indicator of quality of life within a community. In North Tonawanda, the location of these resources along the waterfronts provides recreational and entertainment benefits for residents, but should also be used to spur associated economic development potential through a more defined tourism approach.

PARK FACILITIES

There is no shortage of park facilities along the city's waterfront or within the BOA. Rather than focus on creating more park facilities, the City should concentrate efforts on the enhancement and improvement of existing facilities to better meet the needs of users and create a unique experience for visitors. Existing park facilities are indicated on Map 10 and described below.

Gratwick Riverside Park, River Road



A conceptual rendering of a future fishing pier at Gratwick Riverside Park.

Connected to Veteran's Park via a riverfront trail, the park is home to a picnic pavilion, public boat launch, and an accessible fishing pier was completed in 2010. The Park was incorporated into the Niagara Greenway Plan as a gateway and primary destination element in the Buffalo-Niagara Region. A master plan for the development of the park was completed in 2009 in an effort to identify a phased approach for creating a regional destination. The master plan includes passive and active recreation areas, along with environmental

and habitat enhancements for interpretive and educational components. Several structures are proposed to add functionality, including a performance shell, a multi-story community meeting facility, and smaller shelters for daily rental.

The City of North Tonawanda attained full ownership of the property from Niagara Mohawk after the completion of remediation. Funding for master plan implementation will be sought from numerous sources, including the Niagara Greenway Commission, which is the recipient of pass-through funding from the New York Power Authority for the implementation of the Niagara Greenway Plan.

Veteran's Park (Fisherman's Park), River Road

Located along the Niagara River, this City Park offers three pavilions, a playground, public restrooms and World War II monuments to the U.S. Navy Seabees and the U.S. Marines. Anglers enjoy the Park's smaller shelter along the waterfront, where shoreline improvements provide access to deeper water for fishing. The park also includes two



Docking facilities and the waterfront promenade at Gateway Harbor.

former shipping slips which have collected extensive vegetation, silt and debris over time. The dredging of these slips would provide additional fish breeding habitat. Improved landscaping and signage at the park entrance and along River Road would enhance the appearance from the surrounding community, as well as the sense of enclosure when inside the park. Areas of additional landscaping with earthwork could provide small and intimate spaces in contrast to the park's currently open feeling.

Gateway Harbor Park

This harbor along the Erie Canal functions as the location for the Canal Fest of the Tonawandas held in July, along with weekly

events throughout the summer months. Construction of Gateway Harbor Park was completed in 1999 as one of seven Erie Canal Recreationway Harbors, serving as the present day terminus of the Erie Canal. The North Tonawanda side of the harbor includes docking facilities, power and water, a centralized covered pavilion, and is within walking distance to downtown North Tonawanda. Future projects within Gateway Harbor include additional power and water services, new sanitary pump-out facilities, an extension of docking facilities east of the Main Street bridge, and a harbormaster house with comfort facilities.

Heritage Park, Between Lincoln and Oliver Streets

This simple, passive park begins south of Thompson Street and connects Oliver Street and the BOA boundary to the Herschell Carousel Museum and Felton Field. The linear park offers benches for residents and visitors, and serves as an example of a rail trail that can be emulated throughout the BOA and adjacent areas to improve pedestrian connectivity.

Charles R. Fleishman Park

Charles R. Fleischman Park is formed by the intersections of Main, Webster and Goundry Streets, and is bounded on all sides by roadway. Access to this park is accommodated by crosswalks, and the center of the park includes planting beds and a brick paver walkway that terminates at a flag pole. The surrounding traffic pattern is complicated, with significant areas of pavement and vehicular movements making access to this space difficult. However, this park is located at a primary gateway to downtown; identifying ways to improve the use of the park, access, and its relationship to downtown is considered in subsequent portions of the BOA.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACCESS TO WATERFRONT

Situated along the Niagara River and Little River, the BOA enjoys a significant number of marinas, docking facilities and boat launches. The majority of this infrastructure is located along the Little River channel between the mainland and Tonawanda Island.

There are approximately 14 public and private marina facilities located within the BOA with space for over 700 boats, along with nine public and private launching sites. Private marina facilities within the Little River include the East Pier Marina, Bow and Stern Marina, Smith Boys Marina, the Niagara River Yacht Club, Winfield Marina, and the Island Street Boat Yard. Extensive permanent docking facilities have been constructed within the Little River, taking advantage of this narrow, yet protected natural harbor. The existing Durkee Bridge and the abandoned swing bridge are existing impediments to navigation, limiting the ability of tall and/or wide boats to traverse the entire channel.

Publicly-owned marina sites include active slips at Gateway Harbor and inactive, yet potentially reusable, slips at the former Niagara Yacht Club on River Road. A public boat launch site is located at Gratwick Riverside Park.

Pedestrian Crossings and Access



The existing railroad crossing on Ward Road does not accommodate pedestrians or bicyclists.

The primary obstacle to accessing the waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists is the River Road corridor, which is a four-lane highway with significant traffic flows and speed limits between 30 and 40 mph. Crossing River Road can be hazardous due to inferior or absent crosswalks, missing sidewalks, and the lack of pedestrian signalized intersections.

Another obstacle to access is the CSX railroad line which runs parallel and east of River Road, also dividing residential neighborhoods from the waterfront. Only six railroad crossings exist in a roughly three-mile span (see Map 10) north of Goundry Street. Underpasses exist downtown at Sweeney, Tremont, and Goundry, Streets,

which allow for uninterrupted pedestrian and vehicle flows in the east-west direction. However, the remainder of the BOA and City must navigate at-grade crossings spaced significantly apart.

For example, there are no crossings between Wheatfield and Felton Streets, a distance of nearly one mile. Between the northern most underpass at Goundry Street and the City boundary with the Town of Wheatfield there are only six opportunities to cross the railroad during a three mile span.

The infrequent crossings result in circuitous routes and longer travel times for pedestrians and cyclists to access the trail and waterfront parks, making them isolated and not well integrated into the city.



Crossing River Road on foot or by bicycle can be a daunting and dangerous task.

Some parks, however, have good pedestrian accessibility and connectivity. Gateway Harbor Park has the advantage of being close to downtown and is easily accessible by foot or bike. Heritage Park and Charles Fleishman Park are both centrally located within the BOA and surrounding residential neighborhoods. However, the adjacent transportation infrastructure continues to limit accessibility and use of these facilities.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

There are no official bike lanes in the city, although River Road is designated by the state as Bike Route 5, connecting to the City of Niagara Falls. A multi-use path connects Gratwick Riverside Park south to Goundry Street along the west side of River Road. This path is mostly contiguous, with some sporadic areas of conflict with entry drives and parking lots. An additional small section of multi-use path begins at Oliver Street along the boundary of the BOA and extends east along the canal to Payne Avenue.

Pedestrians in North Tonawanda and the BOA are served by an extensive sidewalk network which exists on the majority of City streets, though notable exceptions include the east side of River Road and all of Tonawanda Island. Pedestrian access to the waterfront within the BOA project boundary is minimal. Areas of accessibility can be found in the public parks, yet formalized access via piers and places for pedestrians to walk into the water are limited. The following provides a more in depth description of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the BOA.

Multi-Use Trail

A multi-use path runs along the west side of River Road, which begins at Gratwick Park and continues south along River Road. The trail is paved with asphalt and covers a width of approximately ten feet. It is separated from River Road by a grass buffer approximately four feet in width. The trail connects a regional bicycle route that runs from the Riverwalk in the City of Buffalo to the City of Niagara Falls, as well as a regional bicycle network that is being developed by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council. In addition, River Road is designated as part of New York State Bicycle Route #5, which runs east-west along the Erie Canal. The trail currently fails to complete these

connections, however, because it dead-ends at Goundry Street. The trail also lacks adequate identification and wayfinding signage to place it within the regional context.

The City has recently completed the Erie Canal Bike Path which runs along Sweeney Street from Payne Avenue to Mayors Park and has expressed interest in continuing the River Road multi-use trail from Goundry Street south under the River Road Bridge following Sweeney Street toward Gateway Harbor Park. Ownership issues currently prevent formalized access, making it worthwhile to explore alternatives such as directing through-travelers to cross River Road and enter the downtown business district along Goundry Street. Additional signage would assist in the continuation of a trail spur south along River Road into the City of Tonawanda.

The River Road multi-use trail is removed from the waterfront, except at Gratwick Riverside Park, although there are views to the waterfront from various points. The ownership of the properties between the trail and water is primarily private and many of the views to the waterfront are obscured by industrial uses. In addition, River Road itself is an obstacle to accessing the multi-use trail. The substantial traffic on River Road can be intimidating to pedestrians and cyclists, even with the multi-use trail in place.

A long-range plan for the multi-use trail could explore the option of moving the trail to the waterfront, where possible. This would entail negotiations with landowners as well as the possibility of the City acquiring more waterfront parcels. Routing the trail along the waterfront instead of along River Road would allow pedestrians increased views of the Niagara River, and would separate the trail from vehicular traffic on River Road, affording much greater safety and a more pleasant experience.

Erie Canal Kayak Launch and Bicycle Trail Extension

In 2016, the City completed improvements to the Erie Canal bicycle path at Niagara and Sweeney Streets. The project included a 6,000 foot bike path extension that connects Payne Avenue to Sweeney Street to the entrance of Mayor's Park. In addition, the project included construction of three roller-dock kayak launches.

Other Bicycle Routes

The City lacks formalized bike lanes and shared route signage. There is a great opportunity for a network of bicycle routes as well as designated bike lanes to safely connect various areas of the City with the waterfront parks and existing multi-use trail.

In addition to the River Road multi-use trail, Oliver Street has potential to act as a connector that would create a network of bicycle routes within the City. The street is more than 40 feet wide with two lanes of traffic and parallel parking on both sides, providing sufficient width to accommodate a bike lane. A bicycle lane on Oliver Street could help increase bicycle safety as cyclists travel from residential neighborhoods to the streets that cross the railroad line and lead to the waterfront and multi-use trail. Map 11 shows the relationship of the existing multi-use trail with a future potential bicycle network.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks in adjacent residential neighborhoods abruptly end at most crossings of the railroad line, including those at Thompson, Robinson, Wheatfield, Felton, Ward and Witmer Streets. Sidewalk access along River Road is provided solely along the east side of the corridor, and is at times sporadic with disconnected areas and a sudden terminus across from Veteran's Park. Sidewalks in the downtown business district core are generally adequate, with the largest concentration found along Oliver, Goundry, Tremont, Sweeney, Main, and Webster Streets.

Crossings

Within the BOA, the intersections of the six streets that cross River Road and the CSX railroad tracks are inadequate for pedestrians and cyclists. In nearly all instances, the pedestrian crossing zone is continuous from the east side of the railroad tracks through the west side of River Road. Throughout the BOA, this segment of the cross-streets is extremely pedestrian and bicyclist unfriendly, and includes Goundry, Thompson, Robinson, Wheatfield, Felton, Ward,

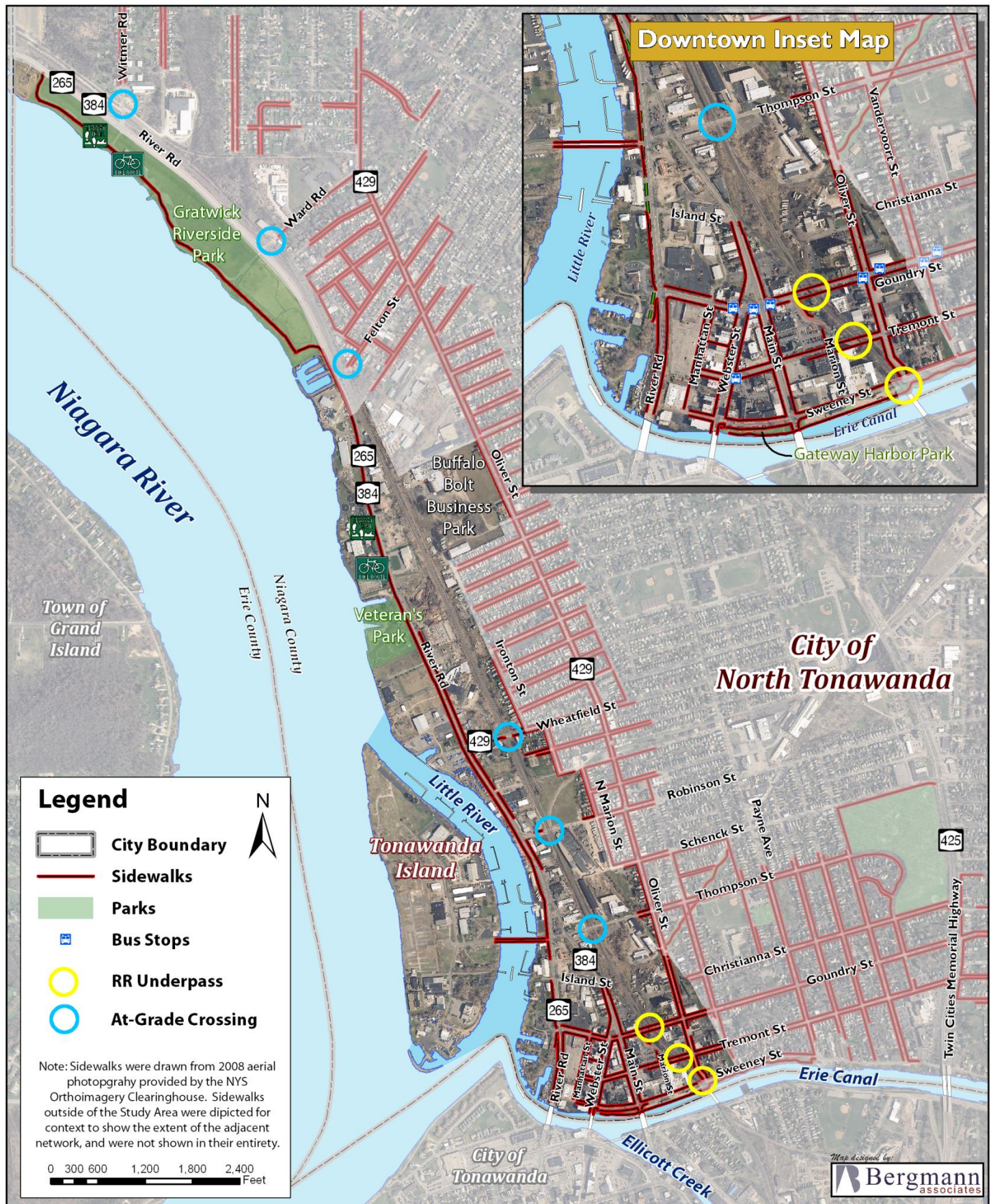
and Witmer Streets. Well marked crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signals are much needed at these intersections for pedestrian and cyclist safety. Planted medians and pedestrian refuge islands would further facilitate safety at intersections along River Road, while signaling to motorists that they are entering into a populated area.

Other intersections in the downtown area, such as at Goundry/Webster Streets and Goundry/Main Streets, are less heavily trafficked, yet could benefit from improved crosswalk markings and other attempts to calm traffic speeds as motorists travel through downtown.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 10 Pedestrian Circulation



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Street Trees/Plantings

Street trees and plantings are an important quality of life element in pedestrian-friendly cities, and a major green infrastructure component. Trees and plantings add seasonal character and variety; help define the structure of streets and parks; provide shade and visual buffering; uptake storm water; and improve air quality by absorbing pollution and releasing oxygen. The City of North Tonawanda has many streets lined with impressive tree canopy. However, within the BOA street trees are generally absent; this is most notable along streets connecting residential neighborhoods and along River Road.

Street tree representation in the downtown business district is sporadic - streets such as Webster and Tremont are more or less lined with trees, while Manhattan and Main Street have very few. The addition of street trees to the downtown core, especially along River Road, can begin to change the current industrial character of these corridors to a more pedestrian-oriented and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Trees and plantings are a critical component of the City's green infrastructure and can reduce the needs for storm water storage and conveyance through the use of bioretention areas. In addition, the presence of quality mature trees can have discernable positive impacts on real estate prices, while the cooling provided by their shade can reduce energy consumption in adjacent buildings. North Tonawanda should develop an enhanced tree planting strategy to improve the quality of life and redevelopment potential within the BOA.

Vacant or Open Green Spaces

There are numerous vacant or underutilized spaces within the BOA study area, many of which are currently available for redevelopment. For instance, Tonawanda Island has significant resources of underutilized land which may hold the potential for mixed use development, including residential units. In addition to these development areas, some underutilized lots can become open and green spaces available for public use. For example, the northern tip of the island is already park-like with open spaces and groves of trees. Portions of this area should be retained post redevelopment for public access, consisting of minimal amenities such as benches, a trail and bike path, and potentially shoreline restoration, habitat creation and environmental remediation activities that provide an attractive enhancement for residents. These open spaces can also double as part of the island's green infrastructure by treating and recharging storm water runoff and cleansing the air with groves of additional trees.

Thompson, Main, Island Streets Gateway

The multi-use trail, the Durkee Bridge to Tonawanda Island, River Road and Main Street all converge at a nodal intersection that creates a roughly trapezoidal shape (see Map 11). The property is available and has great potential to function as a primary gateway for downtown, as well as a trail head and information station. Development of this site either privately or publicly should incorporate safe crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to River Road from or to the multi-use trail and to downtown and Tonawanda Island. The potential to extend a green linkage from this site east along Thompson Street to Pine Woods Park would provide a central corridor from the interior residential neighborhoods to Tonawanda Island and the City's Niagara River waterfront.

Vacant Railroad Lines

North Tonawanda has a number of vacant and abandoned railroad corridors that have the potential to be turned into multi-use trails, further facilitating the creation of a 'green' transportation network. Heritage Park between Lincoln and Oliver streets is a good example of an abandoned railroad right-of-way redeveloped as public open space. The park's terminus at Oliver Street marks a convergence with another abandoned rail line that runs between the Erie Canal and Robinson Street. A trail along this path would extend from Gateway Harbor Park and Sweeney Street north through the terminus of Heritage Park and connect with a vacant, former brownfield (Booth Oil) adjacent to the Sommer Street playground. Future development should investigate the feasibility of redeveloping this vacant land as a public green space.

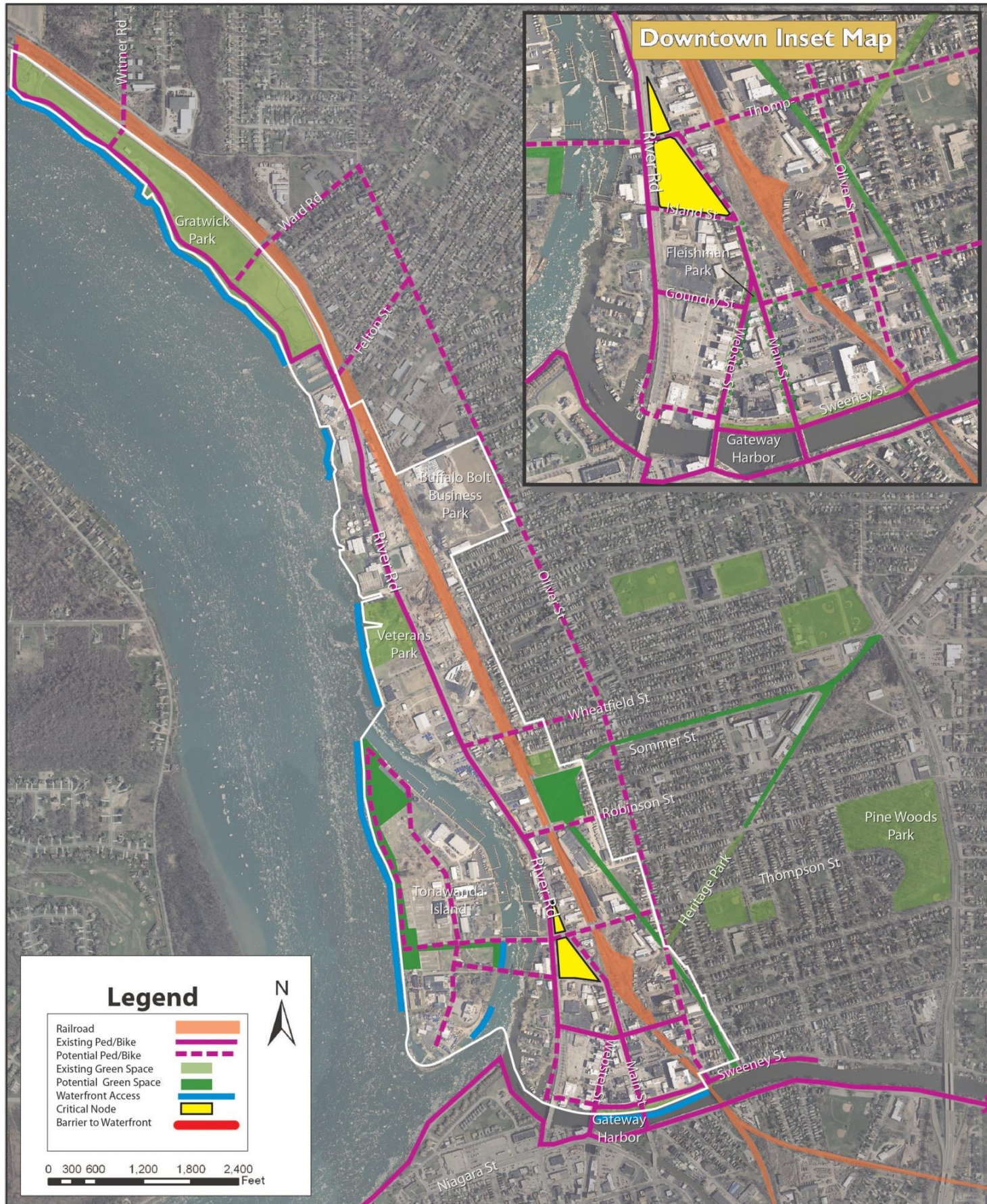
North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area

Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 11

Potential Bicycle & Pedestrian System



3.3.8 Historic and Cultural Resources

The city's cultural and industrial heritage forms a complementary foundation for tourism development, and plays an important role in solidifying the identity of the North Tonawanda community. Where possible, the cultural and historical resources should be leveraged as part of the City's marketing and promotion. Cultural and historic resources are identified on Map 12.

PROMOTING RESOURCES

The marketing of existing resources is already happening, with the City actively partnering with Niagara County and local arts and culture groups to prepare marketing and promotional materials that highlight the resources in the Niagara region.

The Arts & Culture Niagara brochure recognizes five historical and cultural destinations in the city, including Carnegie Arts Center, Carrousel Factory Museum, Riviera Theatre, History Museum and Lumber City History Center, and Starry Night Theatre.

Other promotional materials produced by individual sites, the City, and Niagara County also highlight these resources. However, creating itineraries and themed tours, hosting more special events, and marketing a multi-faceted experience for visitors could help promote greater visitation to these sites and other destinations. Linking these individual locations, and future developed sites within the BOA, will be an important element of its long-term success. A plan for marketing and promoting both these resources, and the BOA as a whole, to residents, visitors, and investors was completed as part of the Step 3 planning process (Appendix E).

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The City is designated as a Certified Local Government Program (CLG), which recognizes that the City supports and is committed to preservation activities at the local level. The program strengthens local preservation activities by assisting communities with their preservation goals through the development of an action plan. The CLG program is a nationwide initiative that directly links a community's preservation goals to state and federal preservation programs. Each State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administers the program through a variety of services designed to help communities protect, preserve, and celebrate their historic resources. In New York State, the SHPO is within the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

As part of North Tonawanda's CLG program, a historic district has been designated that includes downtown Manhattan, Webster and Main Streets, extending to the intersection of Main Street and River Road, and including Oliver Street from the Canal to Goundry Street. The City is currently investigating the expansion of the boundary into the historic neighborhoods to the east from Pinewoods Park and Christiana Street south to Sweeney Street.

Historic district walking tours, whether in a brochure or narrated format, can serve as an attraction for visitors interested in history and architecture. Designated districts are often safeguarded by design standards, and tend to be well maintained with a recognizable character associated with their architecture. These neighborhoods can also become a source of local pride and can result in increased opportunities for investment and enhancement of the public realm.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are five National Register sites located within North Tonawanda, one of which is located within the BOA and the others located just outside the project boundaries. There are also a number of additional historic resources of local significance that are not listed on the National Register. Many of these are included within the locally designated historic district.

The following is a brief description of resources within and adjacent to Study Area:

Riviera Theatre (within the BOA)

Built in 1926, the Riviera Theatre is one of the last remaining movie palaces in New York State that dates to the silent movie era, and is an excellent example of neighborhood theaters of the early 20th Century. The theater still houses an original Wurlitzer organ, and seats over 1,100 patrons. The Riviera Theatre is the anchor of Webster Street, and provides significant economic and historic benefits to North Tonawanda's downtown character. Regularly scheduled monthly organ concerts are complemented by a full regiment of concerts, movies, and live performances of opera and theater throughout the year.

Post Office (directly adjacent to the BOA)

The North Tonawanda post office, located at the corner of Goundry and Oliver Streets, is an excellent example of public building architecture dating from the early 20th Century. Constructed from 1912 to 1914, the building was one of the last Post Offices to be individually designed, with standardization taking place in 1915. The building is architecturally significant, and plays an important role as an anchor of the Oliver Street corridor.

Allan Herschell Carrousel Museum (adjacent to the BOA)

The Herschell Museum complex is an architecturally and historically significant property constructed between 1910 and 1915. It is believed to be one of two surviving manufacturing complexes which produced carved wooden carousels. This factory museum is a rare surviving link to the late 19th and early 20th century periods in which carousels and amusement parks were an important part of American culture. The museum currently functions as a significant educational and historical destination within the region.

Carnegie Art Center (outside the BOA)

Constructed in 1903 with funds provided by industrialist Andrew Carnegie's foundation, the building is a distinctive example of an early 20th century Carnegie Library, and a sophisticated example of civic architecture in the Neoclassical Style. The building ceased to function as a library in 1976, and has since been converted into the Carnegie Art Center operated by the Tonawanda's Council on the Arts. This building functions as a multi-disciplinary arts space and offers exhibitions of contemporary art, children's arts, dance and theater classes, and professional workshops for artists and organizations. The Art Center is a significant destination within the city for residents and visitors, and is located within a few blocks of both downtown and the Erie Canal.

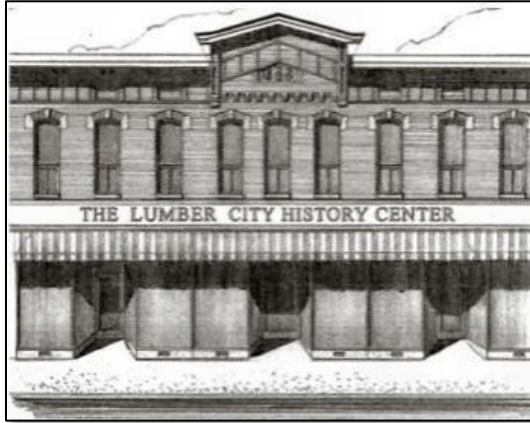
Former Railroad Switching Tower (in the BOA)

Located on Oliver Street opposite the Linear Park that leads to the Allan Herschell Carrousel Museum, this structure is one of a few remaining switching towers in New York State. Originally constructed to act as a lookout tower for the intersection of two railroads, the structure is now owned and managed by the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Society has plans for restoring the structure to permit interpretive exhibits. The tower is currently boarded up, yet receives regular maintenance from Society members.

CULTURAL RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

Many of North Tonawanda's historic resources, with the exception of the post office, also function as primary cultural resources within the city.

North Tonawanda History Museum



Conceptual rendering of future Lumber City History Center on Webster Street.

The North Tonawanda History Museum is located at 54 Webster Street, in the heart of downtown North Tonawanda and in the core of the BOA project boundary. This building houses the Lumber City History Center and a welcome center for visitors. The Lumber City History Center was developed as part of a resident-led effort to enhance the North Tonawanda History Museum. The history center is planned to provide educational, interpretive, and interactive exhibits on the history of North Tonawanda. Fund raising is ongoing for history center improvements, which will include an event hall and several exhibits that simulate life in historic North Tonawanda.

Ghostlight Theater

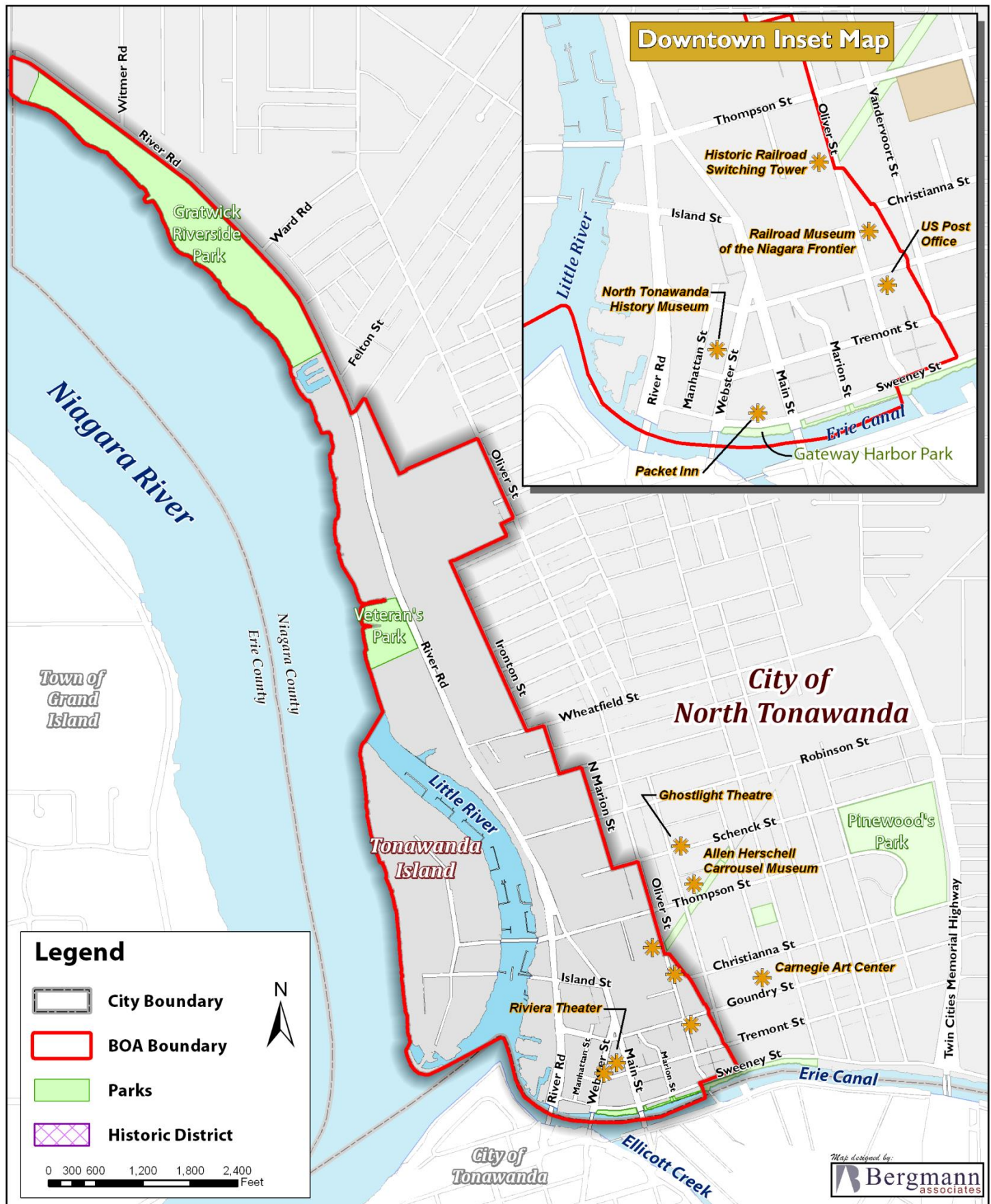
The Ghostlight Theater is host to the Ghostlight Theater Company, which is a celebrated arts and humanities organization founded in 1972. The theater is managed and operated by Starry Night Theater, Inc, a non-profit arts and education organization with the mission of protecting and preserving the Ghostlight Theatre Company and the Ghostlight Theatre. The Ghostlight is host to drama classes and numerous productions of on-stage theater and musicals. The theater is located just outside of the BOA on Schenck Street.

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

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MAP 12

Historic and
Cultural Resources



3.3.9 Transportation Systems

The city's transportation infrastructure has played a significant role in guiding the growth and development of the community. As a former logistical hub for shipping, the historic network of rails, roads and waterways has greatly impacted land use and community accessibility, particularly within the BOA. Turning the challenges posed by current and historic transportation infrastructure into opportunities is a significant goal in community revitalization efforts.

ROADWAYS

The City maintains a well-organized road network, with a traditional grid pattern street system that is compatible with its urban character, as shown on Map 13.

North Tonawanda's road network is owned and maintained at two municipal levels: State and City. State Roads include the Twin Cities Memorial Highway, Main Street and River Road. These State-owned and maintained streets provide primarily north-south connectivity. In most instances, travel into and out of the city follows these State-owned roadways. Access to downtown and the BOA project area primarily comes from River Road, with additional accessibility provided by the Webster Street and Main Street bridges that link downtown North Tonawanda with the Town of Tonawanda across the Erie Canal.

City streets carry all other vehicular traffic, providing arterial, collector and local level roadways that link together neighborhoods, commercial centers, municipal services and the larger transportation context. Oliver Street is the primary north-south city street linking the BOA to the remainder of city neighborhoods.

River Road is a major north/south corridor in the BOA. As part of the Step 3 planning process, a transportation analysis was completed for River Road. The purpose was to examine impacts of potential future development mitigation improvements, as well as potential aesthetic, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements. The complete analysis is included in Appendix F.

RAIL SERVICE

North Tonawanda was once a central rail hub for shipping lumber and steel. While the industries that supported this activity have diminished, relocated or closed completely, much of the rail infrastructure remains intact. The active infrastructure travels from south to north along the western side of the city, including much of the BOA study area. Inactive rail infrastructure remains within the BOA, and rail corridors, rights-of-way, easements, and bridges limit connectivity and the assembly of larger parcels for redevelopment.

Areas particularly impacted by rail infrastructure include the lands between Oliver Street and Main Street/River Road north of Goundry Street. The land use pattern in this area is directly tied to the existing infrastructure and the embankment for the railroad. Revitalization strategies for areas such as this will need to be cognizant of limitations imposed and opportunities provided by the proximity of active rail service.

Active rail service within the BOA is limited to a few commercial and industrial clients which are currently located on the west side of Oliver Street south of Wheatfield Street. Rail service to Tonawanda Island ceased in February 1996 due to an emergency order from the Federal Railroad Administration, which ordered the discontinuation of traffic across the Little River railroad swing bridge due to structural failure. Passenger service within North Tonawanda ceased in 1960, although Amtrak utilizes rails through North Tonawanda for service between Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

A second inactive swing bridge is located within Tonawanda Creek. This bridge has not been utilized for rail traffic since the construction of the River Road bridge and highway corridor in the 1970s. Both the Little River and Tonawanda Creek swing bridges limit water usage and navigability.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The city and BOA are served by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). The NFTA maintains five bus routes in North Tonawanda, as well as the Metrolink Shuttle, providing inter-county access between Niagara and Erie counties and the cities of Buffalo, North Tonawanda and Niagara Falls. The five bus routes enter the city from the south along River Road and Webster Street, and from the north along River Road and Ward Road, traversing State roads, City streets and neighborhoods throughout their scheduled routes. The largest hub of transit activity is located within the BOA boundary along Goundry Street, where service for four of the five routes meet. There are no bus stops along River Road, with bus service utilizing Oliver Street as the primary north-south service corridor. The lack of contiguous sidewalks along River Road combined with a lack of bus service creates a severe mobility limitation for individuals without cars. The City should investigate opportunities to provide access to key destinations along River Road, such as Veteran's Park, Gratwick Riverside Park, and primary employment centers.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

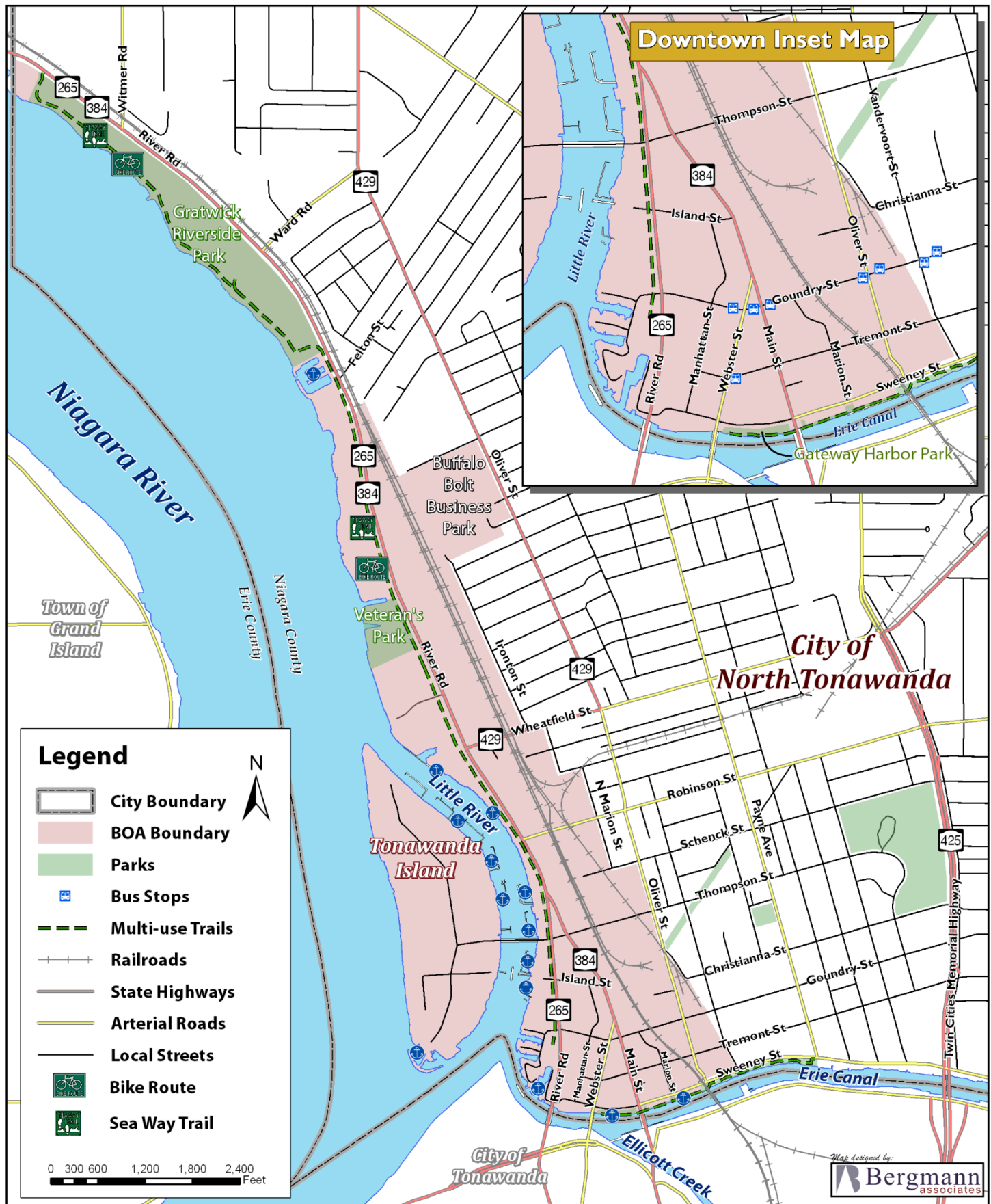
North Tonawanda offers a variety of water transportation alternatives, as it is located at the confluence of two significant waterways in the Erie Canal and the Niagara River. The majority of these boating alternatives are through private infrastructure, including marinas, launches, repair facilities, and dockage. Although the majority of the BOA's waterfront is along the Niagara River, most visiting boaters visit the Erie Canal.

Nearly all private commercial boating infrastructure is located in the Little River, which offers protection from the Niagara River and access significant land-based services. The largest collection of public facilities is located on the Erie Canal at Gateway Harbor Park. As the western terminus and a major destination along the Erie Canal, North Tonawanda strives to provide ample services for boaters, both local and transient. Gateway Harbor Park is in close proximity to downtown, providing convenient access to boater and tourist services. There are approximately 10 areas to dock watercraft on either permanent or seasonal infrastructure. The majority of these facilities are located in the Little River channel portion of the Niagara River between the mainland and Tonawanda Island. The Niagara River Cruises "Queen of Peace" excursion vessel operates from the eastern-most wall of Gateway Harbor in North Tonawanda.

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NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

MAP 13 Transportation System



3.3.10 Public Infrastructure

The ability of existing infrastructure to support additional demand is an important aspect to consider during community revitalization efforts. Upgrades to these infrastructure components is time consuming and very expensive. Prior knowledge of service and capacity limitations will help determine development phasing and financing strategies.

SANITARY SEWER AND WATER SUPPLY

Nearly the entire BOA is serviced with public sewer and water service, with the exception of the northern part of the Study Area along River Road at Gratwick Riverside Park. Large utility mains are located on the east side of the railroad along Riverview Avenue and service adjacent residential areas. However, service has not been extended west of River Road.

WATER AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT CAPACITY

The water treatment facility is located on Tonawanda Island and draws its water from the Niagara River. This plant has a capacity of 12 million gallons per day (MGD), yet the average draw is 3.6 MGD and the maximum draw is 5.3 MGD. Based on this data, the facility has significant remaining capacity for potable water treatment.

The City's existing waste water treatment plant is located along the Niagara River on River Road. This plant has a purported capacity of 14 MGD. Based upon the water supply figures, the waste water treatment plant should also have significant available capacity for treating waste.

3.3.11 Natural Resources

The natural characteristics of a community have a critical impact on overall land use patterns and on the choice between conservation and development alternatives. In some cases, these natural characteristics are limitations that will create impracticalities to development because of associated costs of land preparation, improvements, or construction. In other cases, critical and unique areas would be forever lost if development were to proceed unencumbered. In these instances, efforts must be made to protect valuable natural resources which still exist. Development can also highlight or enhance the utilization of natural resources, resulting in the best design alternative for the community and environment.

Like historic and cultural resources, natural resources can serve as a basis for education and interpretation, attracting both locals and visitors to the study area. As the BOA is further developed, opportunities for protection, education, and interpretation of unique resources will be thoroughly explored. Future improvements within Gratwick Riverside Park, for example, will include a large environmental education component that provides self-guided interpretive tours of the Niagara River Waterfront, locally-enhanced habitat, and the remediation of the site as a former brownfield.

Natural resource characteristics, as shown on Map 14, are considered in order to gain a better understanding of existing conditions within the BOA boundary and to identify parcels that may be better suited as development sites or as natural or improved open space.

WATERBODIES

There are several types of waterbodies within the BOA study area, including, streams, creeks, canals and rivers, with each type contributing to the environmental and/or economic health of the community.

Watersheds

A watershed is defined as the area of land that drains into a particular water body. The City of North Tonawanda drains into a primary watershed that contains one distinct sub-watershed. The Niagara River (Tonawanda Channel) watershed receives direct and channeled run-off from the northwestern portions of the city and the BOA. The river

is also the final outfall for the Tonawanda Creek sub-watershed, which gathers run-off from lands to the south and east, as well as the drainage from Bull Creek. The result is a high concentration level of potential pollutants within the Niagara River, which is an important recreational resource and fishery in the Niagara Region.

Erie Canal and Tonawanda Creek



The Erie Canal at Gateway Harbor.

The combined Erie Canal and Tonawanda Creek form the City's southeast boundary. The Canal flows from east to west into the Niagara River, and is a major navigable waterway connecting North Tonawanda with Lockport, Brockport, Rochester, and beyond. The Erie Canal functions as both a transport route, a visitor/tourist destination, and a heritage and cultural resource. The many facets and opportunities presented by the Erie Canal should continue to be leveraged for economic development and quality of life improvements.

The recent construction of the Gateway Harbor Park at the confluence of the Canal and Ellicott Creek provides dock space for recreational boaters traveling along the canal, and is a direct link between the downtown core and the Erie Canal waterfront. Due to their status as a navigable Water of the United States, the combined Erie Canal and Tonawanda Creek are under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Coast Guard, in addition to the NYS Canal Corporation.

Niagara and Little Rivers

The Niagara River is a major river in the northeastern United States, connecting Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, with the spectacular Niagara Falls in between. The Niagara River flows generally north past the City of North Tonawanda, meandering around Grand Island in what is called the Tonawanda Channel on its east side.

The river is a prime navigable waterway connecting the city with points west and east via Lake Erie, the Upper Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Welland Canal, accessible via the Welland River to the west in Ontario, Canada, provides a navigable route around Niagara Falls.

Tonawanda Island is located within the Niagara River, with the Little River serving as North Tonawanda's port for small commercial and local/transient recreational watercraft. The Little River channel flows between Tonawanda Island and the mainland, providing a safe harbor for watercraft during times of storm and wind.

Due to their status as a Navigable Water of the United States, the Niagara River and the Little Niagara River fall under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Coast Guard, in addition to the NYS Office of General Services.

WATER QUALITY

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has implemented several programs to monitor the waters of the state, assess the quality of these waters, conduct research to better define the nature of pollutants, sources and impacts on water quality, and develop management strategies to enhance and protect these waters.

The DEC Division of Water is responsible for the routine monitoring of trends in water quality, and identification of water quality problems. This monitoring effort is coordinated through the several active programs that provide varied findings across the spectrum of water resources. Several assessment and reporting programs are utilized to evaluate monitoring results and report on water quality.

Water quality monitoring and reporting done on both the Niagara River and Tonawanda Creek have found that these water bodies are impaired. This impairment has been well documented through numerous reports, which indicate that the presence of PCBs prevents the consumption of fish from these waters due to the ability for these contaminant to become concentrated within the animals. The water quality impairments to the Niagara River have been determined based upon historic and persistent modifications to habitat. Meanwhile the PCB levels within Tonawanda Creek have been identified as resulting from toxic spills or polluted sediments.

While the NYSDEC declares these water bodies to be impaired for fish consumption, the myriad of other recreational and economic opportunities remain viable options, including power boating, swimming, canoeing, kayaking and sport fishing.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

According to mapping developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), floodplains in the city are located along the Niagara River and the Erie Canal. Several low-lying areas along the eastern banks of the river and northern banks of the canal are located within the 100 year floodplain, the boundaries of which were last updated in 2010.

As seen in Map 14, approximately 40 acres of real property are within the 100 year floodplain, or about nine percent of the BOA project area. Areas most significantly impacted by the 100 year floodplain include the Weatherbest Slip area, eastern shores of Tonawanda Island, and the narrow portions of land between Sweeney Street and the Erie Canal. In addition, all of Tonawanda Island is within the 500-year flood hazard zone, which indicates a 0.2 percent chance of flooding each year.

Development within these designated areas will need to be in accordance with the City's Flood Hazard Area ordinance, which requires additional permitting and approval processes, and enhanced construction methods to ensure the health, safety and welfare of individuals and property within these zones. Additional insurance coverage may also be required by private lenders and the federal government.

WETLANDS

The NYSDEC regulates wetlands that are 12.4 acres (5 hectares) in size or greater. While there has been discussion of lowering the threshold for NYSDEC jurisdiction, no formal policy change has been adopted. Due to the amount of wetlands within the city, the administration should remain attentive to potential changes to NYSDEC jurisdictional determination thresholds for freshwater wetlands. Currently, none of the City's identified NYS DEC jurisdictional wetland resources are located within the BOA study area.

The City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan offers a fuller description of wetlands found throughout the city. The federal government claims jurisdiction over any wetland resource that is connected to a Navigable Water of the United States. According to available National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapping, there is one small wetland area located adjacent to Veteran's Park within the southern former shipping slip. Improvements to areas designated as NWI wetlands require extensive permitting and approvals by the Army Corp of Engineers to ensure the continued protection of these resources.

STEEP SLOPES

North Tonawanda is situated in the northwestern extents of the Lower Great Lakes Plain, an area of highly productive agricultural land south of the Canadian escarpment, and north of the Appalachian Mountains. The regional landscape that includes North Tonawanda is characterized by gently rolling terrain generally sloping to the west towards the Niagara River. The terrain on which North Tonawanda is situated is extremely flat, with changes in elevation of only 20 to 30 feet across the city.

The banks of the Niagara River and the Erie Canal offer the most significant elevation change, with some slopes approaching 10 to 15 feet. These areas, however, are mostly present in limited areas where no development potential exists, and is therefore not considered a limitation within the BOA. Throughout the Study Area, slopes can generally be categorized as flat, in the 0 to 5 percent range.

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

According to the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District, there are 14 mapped soils units present within the City of North Tonawanda, of which three are primarily located within the BOA boundary. The following is a brief description of the primary mapped soil units found within the BOA:

Ca = Canandaigua Silt Loam

This soil is very deep and very poorly drained. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. The parent material consists of silty and clayey glaciolacustrine deposits. Depth to the top of a seasonal high water table is 0 inches. Annual ponding is frequent and available water capacity is high. These are non-hydric soils, which means they do not typically result in the formation of wetlands. This soil category occupies a large majority of the BOA. While no inherent limitations are present for typical construction activities, larger structures requiring significant foundations will need to provide site specific investigations regarding soil conditions.

RaA = Raynham Silt Loam

This soil is very deep and somewhat poorly drained. Slopes range from 0 to 2 percent. The parent material consists of glaciolacustrine, eolian, or old alluvial deposits, comprised mainly of silt and very fine sand. Depth to the top of a seasonal high water table ranges from 6 to 18 inches. Available water capacity is high, and these are non-hydric soils, which means they do not typically result in the formation of wetlands. Development limitations are similar to Canandaigua silt loam.

Ua = Unsurveyed Area

Soil data not provided these areas, which primarily occur in areas of the urban core of North Tonawanda. It is unclear why the classification for these soils is not Urban Land (Ur); yet the presence of distinct soil types within this area is unlikely due to the great levels of historic development that has taken place in these areas.

The poor drainage and shallow water table of the soils found within the BOA complicates development activities, but is not overly limiting. It is not anticipated that soil conditions will restrict development, other than potentially impacting excavation for basements and other subgrade structures.

SURFACE GEOLOGY

An analysis of surface geology was conducted for the BOA because the type and location of underlying geologic materials can have important implications for development. Areas heavy in clay, for example, can prohibit some types of development due to engineering, compaction and permeability properties. Using data provided by the New York State Museum, it was determined that the study area is entirely comprised of lacustrine silt and clay. While this does not necessarily prohibit development, lacustrine materials increase potential land instability due to their high water storage capacity.

GROUNDWATER

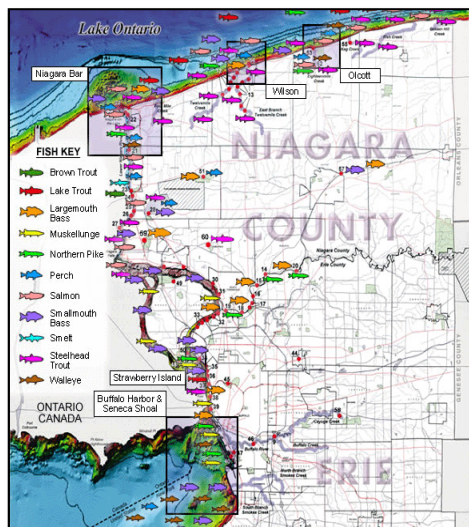
In terms of groundwater, it is important to understand the location and type of aquifers that underlie North Tonawanda. Generally, two types of aquifers exist –confined and unconfined aquifers. Confined aquifers are those groundwater storage areas sandwiched between two layers of impermeable materials (e.g., clay) and impede the flow of water into and out of the aquifer. Unconfined aquifers do not possess an upper confining layer and are instead

bounded by the water table. These types of aquifers, especially those located near the surface, are particularly vulnerable to contamination.³

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITATS

Since the North Tonawanda BOA is located within a heavily urbanized area, it lacks significant habitat for wildlife. Based on an analysis of land cover data, less than one percent of the study area comprises forested lands, less than two percent grass or shrub lands, and less than two percent wetland.

Given the limited amount of potential habitat, as well as the BOA's urban location, it is likely that only common species of urban wildlife (e.g., raccoons, opossums, crows) inhabit the study area.



Map of potential fisheries within the Niagara River.

The Niagara River provides cold water habitat for trout, bass, sturgeon, musky, walleye, pike and other species, and is a valuable fishery resource for future tourism-related business opportunities within the BOA study area. A well-known fishery is located at the former marina facility south of Gratwick Riverside Park. This location is a prime bass breeding area and is well-liked by local anglers. Future redevelopment efforts associated with this marina should consider this fishery and its ability to attract anglers from throughout the Niagara region.

The remediation of Gratwick Riverside Park introduced several revetment, or piles of stone, structures into the Niagara River. These revetments are serving a dual purpose as fish attraction structures. A new accessible fishing pier will be constructed in 2010 on top of one of these revetments to provide proper access for anglers. The accessible pier is the first of many improvements resulting from the recently completed Park Master Plan. Additional environmental and

habitat improvements recommended in the master plan include improved wetland areas along the shoreline, and the installation of old field habitat to promote the use of this site by birds. Environmental education stations are proposed to provide interpretive and self-guided visits to learn more about the Niagara River ecosystem.

Veteran's Park (formerly Fisherman's Park) is the former site of industrial shipping slips that have been dredged into the shoreline, and is another fishing destination within North Tonawanda. These slips offer easy access to water for fisherman. The City has been coordinating with the DEC on the dredging of these slips to clear out debris and provide deeper, cooler water to attract fish.

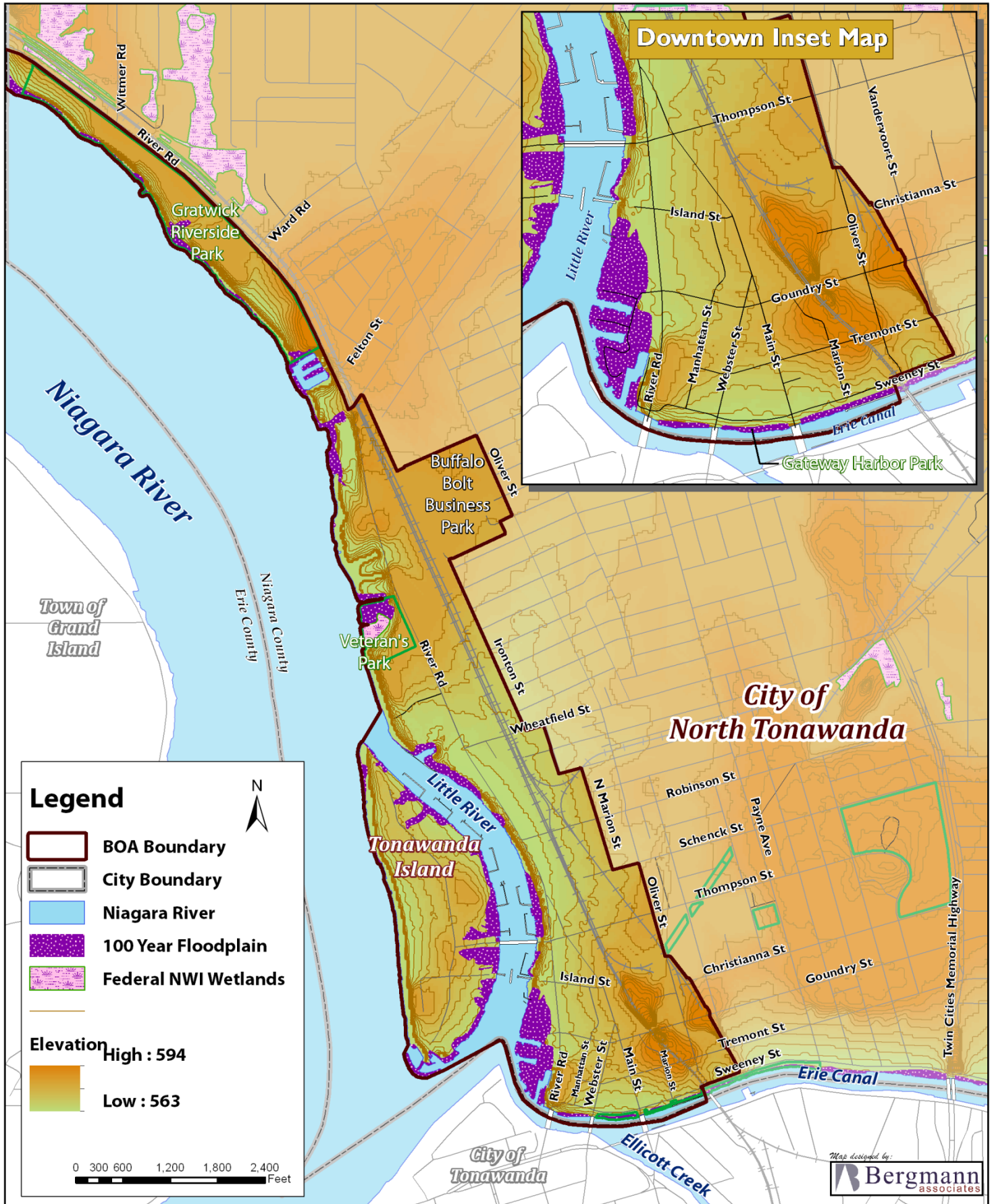
In October 2008, the NYS DEC Natural Heritage Program issued an environmental assessment for the City of North Tonawanda, and indicated a handful of rare or state-listed animals, plants, and natural communities. Of greatest importance in this listing is the identification of the Niagara River as a Waterfowl Winter Concentration Area. While the area of greatest potential for waterfowl attraction is south of North Tonawanda, activities such as dredging, filling, and bulkheading are a threat to the habitat. Further threats include discharges from combined sewer overflows and industrial sites. Development projects along the Niagara River and on Tonawanda Island need to be cognizant of these threats.

³ *Groundwater Primer*, Purdue University College of Engineering,, 1997
(<http://cobweb.ecn.purdue.edu/~epados/ground/src/confined2.htm>)

North Tonawanda Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

This effort was made possible with the guidance and financial assistance provided by the NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

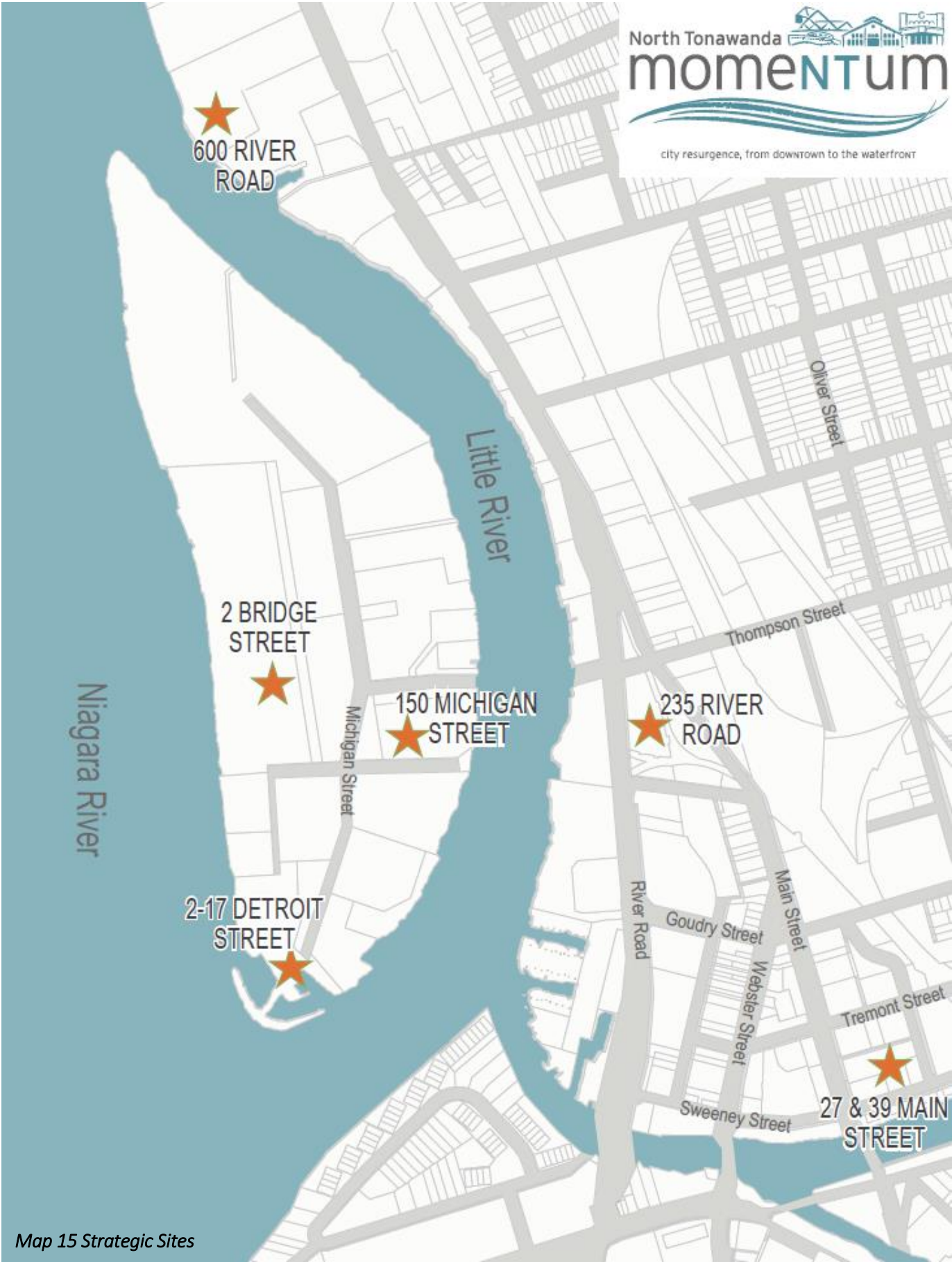
MAP 14 Natural Features



3.4 Strategic Sites

Six strategic sites have been identified through the BOA designation process. Strategic redevelopment sites include those parcels that have been determined to be of critical importance to the overall redevelopment of the BOA based on their environmental status, vacancy, or current underutilized status. Strategic Sites are listed below and illustrated in Map 15.

- **Site/Project 8: 150 Michigan Street - Retail/Restaurant Mixed Use and Little River Promenade.** This site was selected for its location, ownership status, availability for development, frontage along the Little River, and vehicle access. It is a publicly-owned 4.2-acre site, made up of two partially vacant parcels on Tonawanda Island at the west end of the Thompson Street Bridge. The site contains an existing structure that is used by the Fire Department for training purposes. The site is within convenient walking distance of Downtown North Tonawanda. Vehicle access is available from Taylor Drive and Bridge Street. . A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed.
- **Site/Project 13: 27/39 Main Street – Downtown Hotel.** This site was selected for its location downtown, availability for redevelopment, frontage along the Canal, and vehicle access. This privately-owned 1.6-acre site is located in the heart of downtown North Tonawanda, near restaurants and shopping, and just steps from the Canal waterfront. The site currently holds a warehouse building and is available. Vehicle access is provided from Sweeney Street, Main Street, Tremont Street, and Duluth Alley.
- **Site/Project 15: 600 River Road – Multi-family Residential.** This site was selected for its location along River Road, frontage on the Niagara River, availability for redevelopment, and vehicle access. The site is privately owned and is currently undergoing environmental remediation. This partially vacant 6-acre site is the former home of Niagara Iron Works. The property is located along the Niagara River, between Downtown and Gratwick Park.
- **Site/Project 21: 235 River Road – Mixed Use Redevelopment.** This site was selected for its location, size, and vehicle access. This 3.27-acre site is conveniently located between River Road and Main Street, with excellent access and close proximity to Tonawanda Island and Downtown North Tonawanda.
- **Site 25: 2 Bridge Street – Hotel and Restaurant.** This site was selected for its location on Tonawanda Island, size, availability for redevelopment, extensive frontage along the Niagara River, and vehicle access. This partially vacant 22-acre site is located on Tonawanda Island, just across the Thompson Street Bridge and within walking distance to Downtown North Tonawanda. The site offers extensive frontage along the Niagara River and is currently for sale.
- **Site 26: 2-17 Detroit Street – Residential or Hospitality.** This site was selected for its location on Tonawanda Island, size, availability for redevelopment, extensive frontage along the Niagara River. This 6-acre site is home to a marina facility and a restaurant. It is located on Tonawanda Island, just across the Thompson Street Bridge and within walking distance to Downtown North Tonawanda. This site offers dock facilities, river access, and extensive frontage along the Niagara River. This site is currently available.



Map 15 Strategic Sites

4 BOA Implementation Strategy & GEIS

The first sections of this report described the BOA planning process, the future vision and desired outcomes of revitalization, and existing conditions that will influence redevelopment. This section translates the community's vision into action. It describes the specific projects that emerged from the analysis of existing conditions and community's vision for revitalization.

The BOA Plan represents the culmination of multiple years of planning and includes recommendations made after extensive engagement and partnership with stakeholders, public agencies, business and property owners, and residents of North Tonawanda. The BOA Plan includes recommended development projects, parks, trails, and infrastructure improvements spread over a 20-year time frame.

This section is intended to satisfy requirements of the BOA Program for documentation of a Step 3 BOA Implementation Strategy as well as New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) requirements for a GEIS. Therefore, this section contains three key components; (1) a description of the BOA Plan Implementation Strategy and (2) a description of impacts, mitigation measures; and (3) description of alternatives.

4.1 Implementation Strategy

The BOA Plan Implementation Strategy stems from the Vision, Principles, and Strategic Objectives developed as part of the Step 2 Nomination Process and carried forward into the Step 3 planning process.

The BOA Plan is intended to capitalize on the existing character, fabric and strengths of Downtown North Tonawanda and Tonawanda Island. It recommends development and infrastructure projects that represent a significant shift in the Study Area's land use pattern to reflect changing demographics and market realities. These land use changes are intended to facilitate North Tonawanda's transformation from a waterfront industrial center to a vibrant, mixed-use destination known for its quality of life and visitor attractions.

To that end, the BOA Plan envisions new development, redevelopment of former industrial sites into mixed-use residential, commercial, and civic buildings providing open space, pedestrian amenities, and housing options for young professionals, seniors, and families. In addition, the Plan envisions redevelopment and enhancement of North Tonawanda's waterfront assets to create amenities that will attract residents and visitors alike. These projects are described in detail below.

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Phase 1 (2015-2025)

- 1. Gratwick Riverside Park and Marina Improvements
- 2. Buffalo Bolt Business Park Redevelopment
- 3. North Island Residential and Park Development
- 4. Thompson Street Bridge Rehabilitation
- 5. Taylor Drive and Island Boulevard Construction
- 6. Tonawanda Island Promenade
- 7. Office Mixed-Use
- 8. Retail/Restaurant Mixed-Use and Little River Promenade
- 9. Downtown Structured Parking
- 10. Oliver Street Enhancements
- 11. New Pocket Park
- 12. Gateway Memorial Park
- 13. Hotel
- 14. Main Street Pedestrian Enhancements
- 15. Multi-Family Residential
- 16. Multi-Tenant Warehouse Facility

Phase 2 (2025-2030)

- 17. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 2
- 18. Tonawanda Island Internal Roads, Central Park, Mixed Use
- 19. River Road Reconstruction
- 20. Industrial Infill, Redevelopment, Access Management
- 21. Mixed-Use Redevelopment
- 22. Interpretive Rail Park and Museum
- 23. Thompson Street Improvements
- 24. Weatherbest Slip Redevelopment
- 25. Phase One Hotel and Restaurant
- 26. Residential
- 27. Multi-Family Residential

Phase 3 (2030 and Beyond)

- 28. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 3
- 29. Mixed-Use with Structured Parking
- 30. Townhomes and Oliver Street of Shoppes
- 31. Enhanced Oliver Street Gateway
- 32. Mixed-Use Housing and Municipal Parking lot
- 33. Manhattan Street Mixed-Use and Parking Structure
- 34. Office Park



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4.1.1 Description of Future Land Uses and Recommended Redevelopment for all Sites

This section includes detailed descriptions of all sites identified in the BOA Plan. The site numbers correspond to Map 16, BOA Master Plan. This section also includes a description of end uses and illustration of design alternatives for the six Strategic Sites identified earlier in this report.

1. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 1

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$500,000 to \$1 million

Funding Sources: NYS LWRP, NYS EPF, NYS EFC, Niagara River Greenway

The Gratwick Riverside Park Master Plan was completed in 2009 and the first implementation action was the construction of an Accessible Fishing Pier in 2010 funded by Niagara River Greenway Commission. Additional Phase I improvements call for continued enhancements to increase the family-friendly atmosphere and recreational offerings within the park.

The continuation of Phase I improvements will require funding sources in addition to that available via the Niagara Greenway Commission. The City should investigate an application for a grant through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund's Parks Program and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, which would support projects such as the design and construction of restrooms and kitchen facilities at the existing shelter, or the construction of a children's natural playground. Additional funding will need to be sought for the design and installation of a sanitary force main to service the renovated pavilion, with potential funding available from the NYS EFC.

2. Buffalo Bolt Business Park Redevelopment

Private Development

Public Cost: \$2+ million (this public investment is complete, no further public investment is expected)

Funding Sources: various

The Buffalo Bolt Business Park Master Plan proposes 156,000 square feet of industrial, manufacturing, professional office and retail space within the Business Park's 24-acre boundary. Additional commercial/retail and services would be located along Oliver Street to service new employees and support the surrounding residences. It is anticipated that at full build-out, the Business Park could support approximately 400 employees and provide a significant boost to the neighborhood and local economies.

The development of the Business Park's roadway and utility infrastructure was completed, and the City has experienced early success in marketing the approximately eight shovel-ready sites. The continued marketing of remaining parcels should be targeted to ensure that future businesses are creating jobs.

In addition, streetscape improvements along Oliver Street should be completed to finalize the development of a high-quality business park, including the provision of enhanced lighting, paving materials, and landscaping. The City should coordinate with the Niagara Frontier Transit Authority on the development of a bus-stop within the park or along Oliver Street to improve the range of transportation alternatives for future park employees.

3. North Island Residential & Park Development

Private Development / Public Realm Improvement

The privately-owned northern tip of Tonawanda Island provides a significant opportunity for public access and open space that is coordinated with private residential development. The BOA Plan recommends small clusters of townhomes and condominiums set within a naturalized setting. The perimeter of the island should remain open to public access and enjoyment, including a focal point located at the northern-most point. The development should include direct access to private docks on the Little River, with slips potentially included in the sale of residential units.

The next step of the redevelopment process will include further coordination with property owners on their intentions to develop the property. An agreed upon framework for development should include the ability to perform a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment to ascertain environmental conditions, which would permit the City and property owner to seek funding and support for remediation activities from the NYS DEC Brownfield Cleanup Program.

4. Thompson Street Bridge Rehabilitation (Frederick B. Durkee Memorial Bridge)

In July 2015, the City completed a \$2.5 million restoration of the bridge to like new condition. The project involved complete rehabilitation of the structural deck and curbs, replacement of the pin and hanger plates, and addition of redundant structural supports. Repairs were also made to concrete abutments and piers.

5. Taylor Drive & Island Boulevard Construction

Infrastructure Investment

Public Cost: up to \$5 million

Funding Sources: US DOT STP, US DOT TIGER, NYS DOT TEP, US DOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

The roadway infrastructure on Tonawanda Island requires significant reinvestment prior to recommended private development activity. Michigan Street and Detroit Street are proposed to be redeveloped as Island Boulevard. The new tree-lined, two-lane roadway is anticipated to be funded by a combination of private money with state and federal subsidies. The project should include a central landscaped median and potentially a focal point gateway and new Taylor Drive intersection.

6. Tonawanda Island Promenade

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: up to \$1 million

Funding Sources: NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP, NYS Parks Recreational Trails

The provision of public access to the Niagara River waterfront should be of paramount importance during the initial implementation phase of the BOA Plan. The proposed promenade extends along the western shoreline, and should seek to connect the northern and southern tips of the island. Several enlarged gathering spaces or plazas provide the interface between private development and the public waterfront. These public realm improvements should be required as part of the redevelopment of Tonawanda Island, provided via a public/private partnership or other agreement.



The Battery Park Promenade in New York City offers an example of how to create a unique waterfront experience in a narrow corridor.

The development and implementation of this promenade will require several public and private sources of funding. The Niagara River Greenway Commission is a stable and flexible source of funding that can be utilized for public projects. In addition, NYS EPF funding via the NYS Parks Office and the NYS DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program can also be utilized to acquire property and develop public improvements.

7. Office Mixed Use

Private Development

The BOA Plan depicts a mixed-use office and retail structure located at the southwest corner of the enhanced intersection on Island Boulevard. This three-story building would include first floor retail and upper-story Class A office space that would bolster the daytime population on Tonawanda Island. The development of this project will require coordination between the City and private landowners, including land assembly alternatives and schematic design alternatives.

8. Retail/Restaurant Mixed-Use and Little River Promenade (Strategic Site)

Private Development / Public Realm Improvement

The former Fire Training Facility publicly owned, and is located at a key gateway to Tonawanda Island. A proposed three-story structure is intended to have frontage along the Little River, Taylor Drive and Island Boulevard while providing internal parking hidden from street view. Proposed uses include upper-story residential, marine-centered retail, services and restaurants. The waterfront is proposed to include a new public access promenade that connects with Island Street. In addition, the feasibility of transient and private boat docking along the Little River should be investigated to bolster the economic viability of the mixed-use project. Due to extensive historic fill on the site, the City should complete a geotechnical assessment of the property and a Phase 2 ESA to determine the potential buildable area. As part of the development process, the City should consider preparing and distributing a developer RFP to solicit proposals from qualified developers. The City should also consider development incentives to encourage private financing in support of Little River Promenade improvements.



The former Fire Training Facility is proposed to be redeveloped as multi-story retail, restaurant and office. The building would front on both Taylor Drive and the Little River along a new pedestrian promenade that offers outdoor dining and public space. View looking west across the Thompson Bridge to Tonawanda Island.



A view of proposed mixed-use development on Site #8, looking east towards downtown North Tonawanda. The recommended site design includes parking within the interior of the site. This configuration creates a more welcoming streetscape for pedestrians and bicycles.

9. Downtown Structured Parking

Infrastructure Investment

Public Cost: \$15 to \$20 million

Funding Sources: Private, Public Bond, NYS ESDC, TIF and/or PIF

As a prelude to future investments in downtown, the construction of structured parking will permit a significant increase in density while removing large surface parking lots. This project is located adjacent to the redeveloped Remington Lofts, which contains live-work residential units, office and retail space, and a restaurant. The proximity of a parking garage to this development will be critical to the success of on-going investments taking place in the neighborhood.



A parking structure with first floor retail space promotes street activity and masks the appearance of the structure within the neighborhood. Vertical and horizontal mixed use parking structures are becoming more commonplace, with many including retail, office and residential units.

As part of the implementation process, the City will need to begin discussions with adjacent property owners about the potential purchase or lease of property to building the parking structure. During negotiations, the City should consider the opportunity for shared-use arrangements to provide parking availability throughout the week, yet retain revenue generation capabilities. Parking stalls within the structure could also be set aside as part of an incentive zoning package for nearby properties.

10. Oliver Street Enhancements

Infrastructure Investment

Public Cost: \$400,000 to \$750,000

Funding Sources: NYS DEC Community Forestry; NYS EFC Green Innovations; Niagara River Greenway Commission, TIF and/or PIF



The narrowing of a roadway is an excellent opportunity to provide green infrastructure improvements to enhance the function and aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Oliver Street functions as a neighborhood commercial services hub on the west side of the City. The street's width provides ample opportunity for streetscape and mobility improvements, including the potential for a dedicated bike lane that extends north to Felton and Wards Streets and connects to the River Road multi-use path. Streetscape improvements should focus on curb bump-outs to reduce pedestrian travel distances and additional street-trees to enhance the aesthetic quality of this important neighborhood corridor.

Enhancements along Oliver Street should also include improvements to the tree canopy and the utilization of green infrastructure techniques to management storm water runoff.

Urban forestry and green infrastructure funding is available through the NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry Cost Share Grants, and the NYS EFC Green Innovations Grant Program. Niagara River Greenway Commission funding may also be eligible for use on infrastructure projects that would improve the water quality of the Erie Canal and the Niagara River.

11. New Pocket Park

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$200,000

Funding Sources: NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway, TIF and/or PIF

The development of a neighborhood scale pocket park in this location should focus on providing unique recreational elements not found in adjacent parks, such as a 'dog-park' or other themed program. Funding for the design and development of parks can be found through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund Parks Program, which can be utilized for the planning, design, construction and acquisition of land for parks. In addition, Niagara River Greenway funding has been successfully utilized at Gratwick Riverside Park, and is also available for improvements at this location.

12. Gateway Memorial Park

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$200,000 - \$500,000

Funding Sources: NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP, NYS DOT TEP, TIF and/or PIF

The intersection of Thompson Street, Main Street, and River Road creates a large triangular shaped parcel perfectly suited to become a primary gateway element that welcomes visitors to Downtown North Tonawanda. As the opportunity arises, the City should acquire this land to create a large gateway open space that will also provide travelers with wayfinding cues as they approach Downtown. The park should include high-quality landscaping, directional and gateway signage, and public art to denote entry into the core of the City.

Funding opportunities for this project include the NYS Environmental Protection Fund Parks Program and the Niagara River Greenway Commission standing committees. Funding for this project would also be available through the NYS DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. During the planning and design phase of improvements to River Road, the City should seek to require a portion of project funding be set aside for pedestrian and public art improvements at this location.

The City should also seek funding through the State Transportation Enhancements Program. This program provides expanded funding for pedestrian and aesthetic improvements in connection with state and federally funded highway and bridge projects.

13. Hotel (Strategic Site)

Private Development

This strategic site was selected for its location downtown, availability for redevelopment, frontage along the Canal, and vehicle access. This privately-owned 1.6-acre site is located in the heart of downtown North Tonawanda, near restaurants and shopping, and just steps from the Canal waterfront. The site currently holds a warehouse building and is available for redevelopment. The City completed Market Analysis and Tourism analysis and Hotel Feasibility, which concluded that there is demand for hotel accommodation in downtown North Tonawanda. The BOA Plan recommends a 4-5 story extended stay hotel on this site.



Illustration and design alternative for Site #13, a downtown hotel.

14. Main Street Pedestrian Enhancements

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$250,000 to \$400,000

Funding Source: NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Green Innovations Grant Program

Main Street recently underwent a major reconstruction, with the inclusion of new curbing, tree lawn, lighting and street trees. Additional recommended improvements to Main Street include the provision of curb bump-outs at primary intersections, wayfinding and interpretive signage, benches, and public art. The street offers opportunities for green infrastructure and storm water management techniques such as bio retention areas and rain gardens. This infrastructure would improve the function and aesthetics of the corridor, and provide it with a unique identity separate from Webster Street.

15. Multi-Family Residential (Strategic Site)

Private Development

The BOA Plan recommends multi-family residential on this site, located at 600 River Road. The City is currently reviewing a proposal for 102 residential units, made up of townhomes, apartments, and retail space along the Niagara River.



Illustration of recommended multi-family residential development at 600 River Road Site #15. This strategic site is located along River Road and the Little River, offering views of Tonawanda Island and the Niagara River. The City has received a development proposal for a mixed-use development, with 102 residential units and retail space.

16. Multi-Tenant Warehouse Facility

Private development

The City received a development application for a multi-tenant warehouse in 2015. The BOA Plan was updated to reflect future plans for the site.

17. Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 2

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$5 million

Funding Source: NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway, USFWS Boater Infrastructure Grants (BIG), NYS LWRP, TIF and/or PIF

The redevelopment of the inactive marina adjacent to Gratwick Riverside Park is to include public open space and a restaurant or banquet facility. The marina is to continue servicing transient boats, while retaining a portion of the marina as a fishery. Marina grounds will be redeveloped as open space during Phase I, with the addition of a focal element at the entrance to the basin and dockage improvements taking place in Phase II.

The City was recently awarded \$300,000 in Niagara River Greenway funding to undertake a series of improvements recommended by a Marina Redevelopment Feasibility Study. These improvements include:

- Rewiring electrical service to docks;
- Dock Reconstruction;
- Shoreline stabilization;
- Marina dredging and soils disposal;
- Boater welcoming signage and lighthouse reconstruction;
- Development of boater services at the reconstructed boathouse; and

18. Tonawanda Island Internal Roads, Central Park, Mixed-Use Buildings & Townhomes

Private Development / Public Realm Improvement / Infrastructure Investment

Public Cost: \$2 to \$4 million (incentives)

Funding Sources: NYS DEC Brownfield Clean Up Program, NYS ESDC, LCDC, NCIDA, TIF

The continued revitalization of Tonawanda Island includes additional mixed-use buildings with upper-story residences. Surface parking lots will be required as an interim land use prior to full-build out and the addition of structured parking in Phase III. The townhomes along the northern tip will reach full build-out at this stage, yet waterfront development is to be completed in future years.



Mixed-use development on Tonawanda Island, with a central focus on leveraging the Niagara River Promenade.

19. River Road Reconstruction

Infrastructure Reinvestment

Public Cost: \$23M (not including bridge widening)

Potential Funding: US DOT TIGER, US DOT STP, NYS DOT TEP, TIF

As part of this Step 3 planning process, a Traffic Capacity Analysis and Project Scoping Report were completed for the River Road corridor, which is a critical transportation link that would help support development within the Study Area. The results of the full build BOA traffic capacity analysis in Attachment 2 show that five lanes are needed on River Road south of Felton Street. Geometric improvements are also recommended at one or two intersections, depending on the future access to Tonawanda Island. Geometric improvements are recommended at both the Wheatfield Street and Thompson Street intersections on River Road if the existing bridge to Tonawanda Island is widened. The analysis also shows that north of Felton Street a road diet is feasible on River Road, modifying the roadway from five lanes to three lanes. The three lane alternative was proposed for analysis in an effort to calm traffic and help improve pedestrian access, specifically to areas along the Niagara River. Detailed results of the analysis and recommended improvements are described in Appendix F.

20. Industrial Infill Redevelopment & Access

Private Development

Existing industrial and recycling land uses along River Road are envisioned to transition to low-intensity industrial and manufacturing activity in a business park environment. The development of an internalized loop-road has the potential to reduce the number of curb-cuts along the roadway and improve corridor safety, while also increasing the buffer distance between industrial uses and the corridor.



Crossing River Road on foot or by bicycle can be a daunting and dangerous task.

21. Mixed-Use Redevelopment (Strategic Site)

Private Development

The area bounded by Main Street, River Road, and Island Street is a Strategic Site and recommended to undergo redevelopment that provides a positive influence on the northern extent of downtown North Tonawanda. This location serves as a gateway to both downtown and Tonawanda Island, and is envisioned to be transformed into a mixed-use node with office and/or retail space on the ground floor, with upper-story residential units.



Mixed-use development is proposed on Site #21. Its location along River Road and proximity to downtown North Tonawanda make it a strategic redevelopment opportunity, offering a chance to create a transition between Tonawanda Island and downtown.

22. Rail Park and Interpretive Center (Interpretive Rail Park and Museum)

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$500,000

Potential Funding: Private, NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway

The concept for this new recreational space includes the development of a flexible system of educational, recreational, interpretive and performance spaces located on converted rolling stock. Repurposed former rail cars take on new roles as play equipment, performance spaces, interpretive exhibits, retail and dining space and artist galleries. A new Rail Museum and Interpretive Center would relocate the Railroad Museum of the Niagara Frontier on Oliver Street, and include new exhibit space. This unique destination would celebrate the importance of rail development in the City's history, while serving to draw visitors from throughout the region.

This distinctive attraction would further the City's goal of providing family-oriented activities, and could also be targeted to those traveling to Niagara Falls. Rail Park admission revenue could be used to off-set museum and interpretive center operations costs, while corporate donations and advertising opportunities could also assist in funding exhibits.

23. Thompson Street Improvements

Infrastructure Investment

Public Cost: \$150,000

Funding Sources: US Federal Railroad Administration, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), NYS DOT STP, NYS DOT Transportation Enhancements Projects (TEP)

Thompson Street functions as the primary gateway corridor to Tonawanda Island from the east. This roadway segment requires significant pedestrian and aesthetic enhancements to improve connectivity and safety between Oliver Street and Main Street. Improvements should include sidewalks, landscape plantings, and enhanced crossing aids for pedestrians.



The above depicts a simulation of improvements at the railroad crossing at Ward Road, which is similar to Thompson Street. A series of these improvements should be made to all six at-grade crossings between downtown and the City boundary.

24. Weatherbest Slip Redevelopment

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$1 million

Funding Sources: NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP, NYS Parks Recreational Trails

The future of this area is envisioned to include public access to the waterfront, open space, and public amenities such as a community building and waterfront plaza. A proposed trail connection underneath the River Road Bridge to the canal and Sweeney Street should be investigated for feasibility. Such a trail connection would link Gratwick Riverside Park and Gateway Harbor Park with a continuous multi-use trail. The remainder of the area should continue to be accessible by boat and car, although the facility should not include significant parking accommodations. The primary use of this area should be for passive recreation and the enjoyment of the Erie Canal waterfront.

25. Hotel and Restaurant (Strategic Site)

Private Development

Public Cost: \$2 to \$6 million (incentives, tax credits)

Funding Sources: NYS DEC BCP, NYS ESDC

This project includes residential, hospitality, and restaurant uses. The Tourism Market Analysis completed in 2013 noted opportunities for North Tonawanda to attract water-based tourism activity by offering water-oriented amenities and accommodation. Initial phases of this project would include multi-unit housing along the waterfront on Tonawanda Island that can take advantage of River views. In the initial phase, this development is envisioned to provide high-end housing in a 4-plus story structure with the opportunity for expansion in future phases.



A phased development with residential uses, retail, and accommodation is recommended for Site #25, located on Tonawanda Island.

This initial phase of development would include portions of the Tonawanda Island Promenade, including a large centralized waterfront plaza at the center of the project under public control. Ground floor tenant space should be reserved for commercial uses, such as niche retail, restaurant and personal services such health and fitness. Phase I would utilize surface parking lots on the inland side of the island, with some covered surface parking possible to support above market rate housing. Future phases of this development would include the construction of multistory structured parking in place of surface parking, and additional uses including a full-service hotel.

The development process for this privately-held property will require significant coordination amongst public and private interests to determine the appropriate roles and responsibilities for each party. The City should seek authorization from property owners to complete a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine if the site includes potential environmental contamination. Any remediation efforts should be coordinated to receive tax incentives through the NYSDEC Brownfield Cleanup Program.

Later phases of development at this site would include an expansion of the hotel and residential mixed use structure. Together, these two buildings define the waterfront plaza and provide a high quality public realm along the Niagara River. This development project will be the capstone investment on Tonawanda Island, and will leverage all previous public and private investments.



A rendering of the recommended public promenade on Site #25 is adjacent to a multi-story mixed use development that takes advantage of high-quality river views.

26. Residential or Hospitality (Strategic Site)

Private Development / Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: Possible assistance with public access

Funding Sources: Private, USFWS Boater Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG), Niagara River Greenway

The southern tip of Tonawanda Island offers views upstream along the Niagara River towards the south Grand Island Bridges. This location also functions as the gateway to the Erie Canal and offers maritime infrastructure for the docking and launching of boats. The views, location, and infrastructure make this a good location for accommodation and services catering to the boating community. The redevelopment of the southern tip of Tonawanda Island should provide high-end services and quality architecture that establishes a refined and appealing identity for the City and its waterfront.

Significant coordination with the existing property owners will be required to ascertain current intentions for reinvestment or redevelopment of the property. The City should also seek an enhanced understanding about existing ownership/leasehold agreements between the owner and third parties for existing boat slips and dock space, and determine if these agreements will impact any subsequent sale or redevelopment of the property.



The recommended development at the southern end of Tonawanda Island (Site #26)) would provide boaters and visitors with much needed services, and would function as a gateway feature into the community for those arriving by water. View is looking west from Tonawanda Island towards the Niagara River.



A view of recommended residential/hospitality development on Site #26, looking northeast at Tonawanda Island.

27. Multi-Family Residential

Private Development

This site, located at 624 River Road is directly adjacent to a Strategic Site (Site #15, 600 River Road). Recommendations for this site are intended to capitalize on its prime location along the Little River, Fisherman's Park and location adjacent to 600 River Road (Site #15), which is a Strategic Site planned for future residential development. Future development of high-value waterfront housing should incorporate, where appropriate, ground floor uses that are focused on water-oriented uses and design. The waterfront should be, open to the public and include the provision for public access with the development of a waterside trail system.

28. Gratwick Riverside Park Phase 3

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$5-\$8 million

Funding Source: Niagara River Greenway, NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP

The continued redevelopment of Gratwick Riverside Park includes the relocation of the primary loop road away from the waterfront and the development of the waterfront promenade. Future phases of the Park's development also include the construction of the Gratwick Community Room and band shelter to provide a formalized venue for events and activities.

29. Mixed-Use with Structured Parking

Private Development

The completion of residential development on Tonawanda Island includes several infill projects on temporary parking lots constructed during previous phases. The structures are envisioned to be three to four stories, with lower-level parking and upper story residences.

30. Townhomes and Oliver Street of Shoppes

Private Development

The development of townhomes and enhanced commercial/retail services at the intersection of Oliver and Thompson Streets provides a strong anchor to the northeast corner of the Downtown Central Business District Character Area. Townhomes are proposed internal to the site, while mixed-use, multistory development flanks the street frontage and strengthens the urban form of the intersection. The redevelopment of this intersection is a central feature of the revitalization strategy for Oliver Street, and was included in the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

31. Enhanced Oliver Street Gateway

Public Realm Improvement

Public Cost: \$250,000 to \$650,000

Funding Sources: NYS Parks EPF, NYS DOT TEP

As part of the phased redevelopment of the Oliver Street corridor, a major gateway opportunity exists at the current terminus of the Heritage Park trail. The unique, mid-block gateway feature may include a raised table trail crossing, enhanced paving materials, aesthetic lighting, street trees, and potentially a public art structure that spans the corridor. In addition, the historic railroad switching tower sits directly adjacent to this area and should be utilized as part of the gateway. Public funding may be attainable via the NYS Parks EPF Historic Preservation program to restore the switching tower, which could leverage other funding sources to make gateway improvements feasible.

32. Mixed-Use Housing and Municipal Parking Lot

Private Development / Infrastructure Investment

Funding Source: NY Main Street

The area bounded by River Road, Backer Alley, Goundry Street, and Island Street is proposed to undergo a major transformation from industrial uses to a mixed residential/commercial node. The redevelopment of this block relocates surface parking from Manhattan Street, and bolsters the urban form of both Island Street and Goundry Street through mixed-use, multistory frontage development. Proposed uses include business services, office, retail, and upper story residential.

33. Manhattan Street Mixed-Use & Parking Structure

Private Development

Public Cost: \$15 to \$20 million

Funding Sources: NYS ESDC, Public Bond, TIF

This project includes the construction of a multistory parking structure and accessory mixed-use buildings along Manhattan Street. A direct connection from this development to Webster Street is envisioned, linking the City's historic core with an abundant supply of parking. Attached to the parking structure would be larger-tenant retail space and top-floor condominiums with views of the Niagara River. This development project would define Goundry Street as the primary gateway to downtown from River Road, and would strengthen the sense of arrival into the City from the south. Funding sources for this project will likely include significant private investment, though public monies will likely be required to make the parking structure feasibly. There is the potential to partially fund the parking structure through the presale of residential condominiums and long-term leasing arrangements with nearby anchor tenants and/or first floor retail tenants within the parking structure.

34. Office Park

Private Development

Existing Industrial uses along River Road are envisioned to transition to office and flex light industrial uses in a business park environment. This location will allow employers to capitalize on access from River Road, as well as proximity to Downtown North Tonawanda and new residential developments along the Little River.

35. Riviera Theatre

Private Development

In conjunction with, and as an outcome of the BOA Planning process, the Riviera Theatre was recently awarded \$1.2 million for the Riviera Theatre Expansion and Development Project, a \$6.1 million project that will provide a 23,000 square foot addition for a smaller performance space called the Black Box Theatre, new dressing rooms and rehearsal space, a new lobby, and new theater box office. The renovation will maintain the history of the existing theatre, in particular the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ.

4.1.2 Implementation Matrix

Moving the BOA Plan forward will require various funding sources to make these projects a reality. Each project is broken down in the list below with potential funding sources and cost estimates. Descriptions of the funding sources are detailed in Section 6.

Table 9 Development and Infrastructure Matrix

	Site/Project Name	Type	Process	Anticipated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
1	Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 1	Public Realm Improvement	Design Construction	\$500,000 to \$1 million	NYS LWRP, NYS EPF, NYS EFC, Niagara River Greenway
2	Buffalo Bolt Business Park Redevelopment	Private Development	Planning & Feasibility Environmental Investigation & Remediation Schematic Design Final Design Construction	Private Investment	TBD
3	North Island Residential & Park Development	Private Development / Public Realm Improvement	Planning & Feasibility Environmental Investigation & Remediation Schematic Design Final Design Construction	Private Investment	TBD
4	Thompson Street Bridge Rehabilitation	Infrastructure Investment	Design Construction	TBD	TBD
5	Taylor Drive and Island Boulevard Construction	Infrastructure Investment	Schematic Design Final Design Construction	Up to \$5 million	US DOT STP, US DOT TIGER, NYS DOT TEP, US DOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
6	Tonawanda Island Promenade	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design Final Design Public Construction Private Construction	Up to \$1 million	NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP, NYS Parks Recreational Trails

7	Office Mixed-Use	Private Development	Schematic Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Final Design		
			Construction		
8	Retail/Restaurant & Little River Promenade	Private Development / Public Realm Improvement	Planning & Feasibility	Private Investment	TBD
			Environmental Investigation & Remediation		
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
9	Downtown Structured Parking	Infrastructure Investment	Site Acquisition	\$15 to \$20 million	Private, Public Bond, NYS ESDC, TIF and/or PIF
			Design		
			Construction		
10	Oliver Street Enhancements	Infrastructure Investment	Schematic Design	\$400,000 to \$750,000	NYS DEC Community Forestry; NYS EFC Green Innovations; Niagara River Greenway Commission, TIF and/or PIF
			Final Design		
			Construction		
11	New Pocket Park	Public Realm Improvement	Site Acquisition	\$200,000	NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway, TIF and/or PIF
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
12	Gateway Memorial Park	Public Realm Improvement	Site Acquisition	\$200,000 to \$500,000	NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP, NYS DOT TEP, TIF and/or PIF
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
13	Hotel	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
14	Main Street Pedestrian Enhancements	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$250,000 to \$400,000	NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Green Innovations Grant Program
			Final Design		
			Construction		

15	Multi-Family Residential	Private Development	Design	Private investment	TBD
			Construction		
16	Multi-Tenant Warehouse Facility	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
17	Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 2	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$5 million	NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway, USFWS Boater Infrastructure Grants (BIG), NYS LWRP, TIF and/or PIF
			Final Design		
			Construction		
18	Tonawanda Island Internal Roads, Central Park, Mixed Use	Private Development / Public Realm Improvement / Infrastructure Investment	Planning & Feasibility	\$2 to \$4 million (incentives)	NYS DEC Brownfield Clean Up Program, NYS ESDC, LCDC, NCIDA, TIF
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
19	River Road Reconstruction	Infrastructure Reinvestment	Planning & Feasibility	\$23 million (not including bridge widening)	US DOT TIGER, US DOT STP, NYS DOT TEP, TIF
			Design		
			Construction		
20	Industrial Infill, Redevelopment, Access Management	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
21	Mixed-Use Redevelopment	Private Development	Schematic Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Final Design		
			Construction		
22	Interpretive Rail Park and Museum	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$500,000	Private, NYS Parks EPF, Niagara River Greenway
			Final Design		
			Construction		
23	Thompson Street Improvements	Infrastructure Investment	Design	\$150,000	US Federal Railroad Administration, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), NYS DOT STP, NYS DOT Transportation Enhancements Projects (TEP)
			Construction		
24	Weatherbest Slip Redevelopment	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$1 million	NYS Parks EPF and Recreational Trails, NYS LWRP
			Final Design		
			Construction		

25	Hotel and Restaurant	Private Development	Planning & Feasibility	Private Investment	TBD
			Environmental Investigation & Remediation		
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
26	Residential or Hospitality	Private Development / Public Realm Improvement	Planning & Feasibility	Private Investment	TBD
			Schematic Design		
			Final Design		
			Construction		
27	Multi-Family Residential	Private Development	Schematic Design	Private investment	TBD
			Final Design		
			Construction		
28	Gratwick Riverside Park Redevelopment Phase 3	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$5 to \$8 million	Niagara River Greenway, NYS Parks EPF, NYS LWRP
			Final Design		
			Construction		
29	Mixed-Use with Structured Parking	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
30	Townhomes and Oliver Street of Shoppes	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
31	Enhanced Oliver Street Gateway	Public Realm Improvement	Schematic Design	\$250,000 to \$650,000	NYS Parks EPF, NYS DOT TEP
			Final Design		
			Construction		
32	Mixed-Use Housing and Municipal Parking Lot	Private Development / Infrastructure Investment	Schematic Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Final Design		
			Construction		
33	Manhattan Street Mixed-Use and Parking Structure	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
34	Office Park	Private Development	Design	Private Investment	TBD
			Construction		
35	Riviera Theatre Expansion and Upgrades	Public/private investment	Schematic Design	Already Funded	TBD
			Final Design		
			Construction		

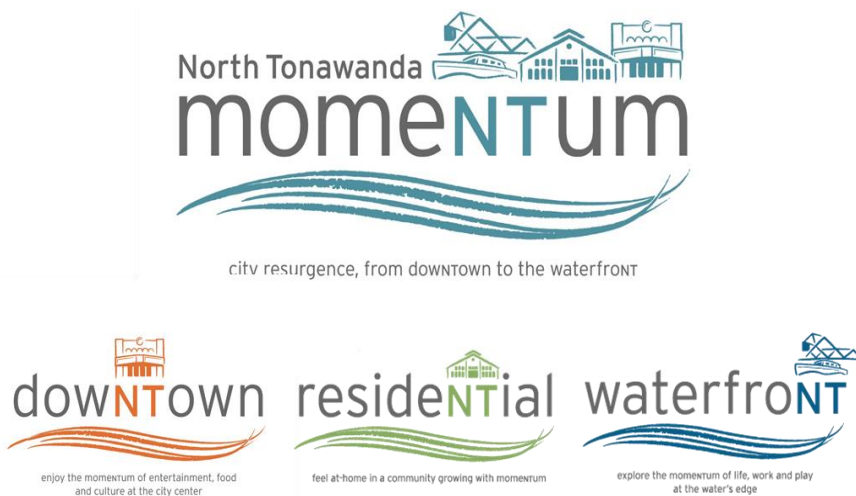
4.1.3 Other Implementation Actions

ZONING UPDATES

The BOA Plan recommends updates to the City's zoning map and code language that will implement site and building design standards that promote smart growth and protect environmental and cultural resources. As part of BOA Plan implementation, zoning code updates within the BOA include code language revisions for the Waterfront District as well as a form-based code for the Downtown Mixed-Use District. These updates apply different districts to parcels within the BOA Study Area, primarily to districts that would restrict the types of uses that may be introduced within the BOA boundary, particularly in the historic downtown and along shorelines. In addition, the updates would improve the organization, structure, and flow of the existing zoning ordinance. Updates to the Zoning Map and code language are included in Appendix G.

MARKETING AND BRANDING

A marketing and branding campaign was developed as part of this Step 3 planning process. The branding campaign includes a logo concept and tagline for the entire Study Area, as well as subareas within the boundary. As part of this effort, a marketing brochure was developed to describe the BOA Study Area and illustrate the graphic BOA Plan. The logo is designed so that the overall branding of the BOA project can transition to become branding for the Study Area after the BOA planning process is complete. The branding concept, logos, and brochure are included in Appendix E.



PROFILES OF STRATEGIC SITES FOR MARKETING PURPOSES

Descriptive marketing profiles were prepared for each of the Strategic Sites identified above. Site profiles are included in Appendix E. The profiles include descriptions of each site, including possible development concepts that fit within the land use recommendations of the BOA Plan. They do not represent a commitment to development or design, but are intended to show potential options based on analysis of the sites and market demand. Each of the six sites will require additional investigation and detailed design in order to fully implement redevelopment projects.



4.1.4 Local Management

Structure to Implement the Strategy

Management of the Tonawanda Island BOA Plan will be a complex undertaking because the implementation of the plan will span over a more than 20-year period and involve a wide variety of projects ranging from public infrastructure, transportation, and open spaces to large-scale private developments and individual properties. This will require active participation of the City of North Tonawanda, Niagara County, New York State, property owners, private developers, existing businesses, residents, community members, and other local organizations.

It is recommended that The Lumber City Development Corporation act as the leading entity managing the redevelopment of the BOA Study Area.

4.2 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts & Mitigation Measures

The BOA Plan was developed through years of planning and extensive public outreach conducted by the City of North Tonawanda. It represents the community's vision for the future and is expected to have a beneficial impact on the community over time. Adoption of the Plan and zoning code updates will have no *direct* impact on the physical environment of the community. It does not constitute approval of development activity, either private or public. However, the plan does envision significant new growth and development over the next 20 years. While adopting the plan is not a guarantee that any specific development project will occur, the intent of the plan is promote revitalization and therefore this section addresses the *indirect* impacts of the plan (i.e. redevelopment projects facilitated by the Plan and associated zoning updates).

The following sections describe potential significant impacts that may result from the action. The section is organized according to impact categories that were initially identified in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) Scoping Document (Appendix B).

4.2.1 Demographic/Socioeconomic Conditions and Housing

Implementation of the BOA Plan may result in new development that may impact the City's demographic and economic landscape.

The BOA Plan illustrates numerous opportunities for redevelopment of vacant sites for commercial, residential, hospitality, and mixed uses. These projects, if implemented, will bring increased vitality to the City and attract new residents, resulting in a potential population increase for the City of North Tonawanda. Potential negative impacts resulting from population increases such as increased housing prices, demand for municipal services, and traffic congestion will likely be mitigated by virtue of the project's long-term phasing plan. The development scenarios within the plan are phased over a period of 20 years; thus the growth will be incremental over time and will not result in a sudden increase in demand for housing, public services, and other amenities. The long-term impacts of this incremental growth in population are addressed in the transportation systems, infrastructure, and community services sections. Table 10 summarizes the total number of residents and employees that may be expected under a full build out scenario.

Table 10 Total Projected Residents and Jobs

Use	Total	Coefficient (sf/employee)	Short-term (5-10 years)			Mid-term (10-20 years)			Long-term (20+ years)		
			Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents	Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents	Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents
Residential	588 units	2.54	155.47	--	395	257		653	176	0	447
Office	367,951 sf	300	125,800	419		178,401	595		63,750	213	
Restaurant	79,050 sf	200	13,600	68		34,850	174		30,600	153	
Manufacturing	211,000 sf	2,000	151,000	76					60,000	30	
Warehouse	190,000 sf	5,000	15,000	3		20,000	4		155,000	31	
Retail	242,250 sf	500	50,150	100		130,050	260		62,050	124	
Total				666	395		1,033	653		551	447
Total @ Full Build Out											
Residents	1,495										
Employees	2,250										

*Source: Bergmann Associates, 2016

Coefficients: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition.

- Residential:** The BOA Plan envisions 588 new residential units, which equates to approximately 1,495 potential net new residents (based on average household size of 2.54). If constructed according to the phasing plan, the potential population growth would be phased in over the 20-year time period. The first phase accounts for 155 new units, or 26% of the potential new residents. The second phase accounts for 257 units, or 44% and the third phase accounts for 176 units, or 30% of the new potential population growth that can be attributed to the BOA Plan. (It is noted that new residential units may be filled by current residents who move from other homes in North Tonawanda. It is assumed that homes vacated by residents moving to would be occupied by other North Tonawanda residents or those from outside of North Tonawanda).
- Office:** If constructed according to the phasing plan, the potential growth in jobs would be phased over the 20-year time period. The total amount of office space envisioned in the BOA Plan is 367,951 sf and 1,227 employees. The first phase accounts for 125,800 square feet, equating to approximately 419 employees. The second phase accounts for 178,401 square feet, equating to approximately 595 employees. The third and final phase accounts for 63,750 sf of office space equating to 213 employees.
- Manufacturing:** If constructed according to the phasing plan the potential growth of jobs in the manufacturing sector would be 395 employees. The total amount of manufacturing space envisioned in the BOA Plan is 211,000 sf. The first phase accounts for 151,000 sf equating to 76 employees. The second phase does not have any manufacturing construction planned. The third and final phase has 60,000 sf of space planned equating to 30 employees. The BOA Plan envisions a total of 106 employees after the three phases have been completed.
- Warehouse:** The BOA Plan envisions a total of 38 employees within the warehouse sector of employment with 190,000 sf after the three construction phases have been completed. The conversion factor used to

equate the number of employees is 5,000 sf per employee. The first phase accounts for 15,000 sf of manufacturing space equating to 3 employees. The second phase accounts for 20,000 sf equating to 4 employees. The third phase has 155,000 sf equating to 31 employees. The three phases total 190,000 sf of space with 38 employees.

- **Restaurant:** The BOA Plan envisions a total of 395 employees after the full build out of restaurant space; with a total of 79,050 sf. The conversion factor used to reach the total number of employees is 200. Phase 1 has the amount of restaurant space being built at 13,600 sf with 68 employees. Phase 2 has 34,850 sf with 174 employees. The final phase has 30,600 sf with 153 employees.

4.2.2 Land Use and Zoning

The BOA Plan and proposed land use/zoning changes are consistent with the community's goals, as identified in this document, as well as the City's Comprehensive Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy. The proposed land use and zoning changes will allow for new development, most notably the introduction of mixed-use, residential and commercial uses within the BOA. In addition, the BOA Plan will result in changes to the City's existing zoning code, which may alter allowed uses and densities in certain zones located within the BOA boundary. The changes will implement site and building design standards that promote smart growth and protect environmental and cultural resources. The purpose of the land use and zoning changes is to manage growth as it occurs over time and to ensure that new development is built in a manner that enhances the built environment and is consistent with the community's goals.

These proposed land use and zoning changes do not create development directly, but they do help facilitate new development by modernizing, harmonizing and streamlining the City's regulations governing land use development. The potential impacts of new development include loss of natural resources and habitat, increased stormwater runoff, erosion and sedimentation, traffic increases, and new pressure on City infrastructure and services.

The BOA Plan recommends changing the zoning districts of approximately 141 acres of land within the BOA. Table 11 quantifies the total acres affected by proposed zoning changes within the BOA boundary. Changes will most significantly impact River Road and downtown North Tonawanda. The BOA Plan recommends changing the zoning of properties along River Road, from General Industrial to Waterfront District. Downtown North Tonawanda is currently zoned General Commerce (C-2) and Light Manufacturing (M-1). The BOA Plan recommends changing the zoning in most of downtown to a new district (Downtown Mixed-Use District) that is better able to accommodate a diversity of mixed-uses.

It is noted the existing zoning districts would permit a much wider range of heavy industrial uses within the historic downtown and along the waterfront than the proposed zoning changes. The proposed zoning changes would restrict the types of uses that may be introduced within the BOA boundary, particularly in the historic downtown and along shorelines. The restriction of uses along with the addition of rigorous design standards will likely constitute a reduction in the potential impacts of new development and could be considered as a mitigation measure in itself.

Figure 7 Proposed Zoning Changes

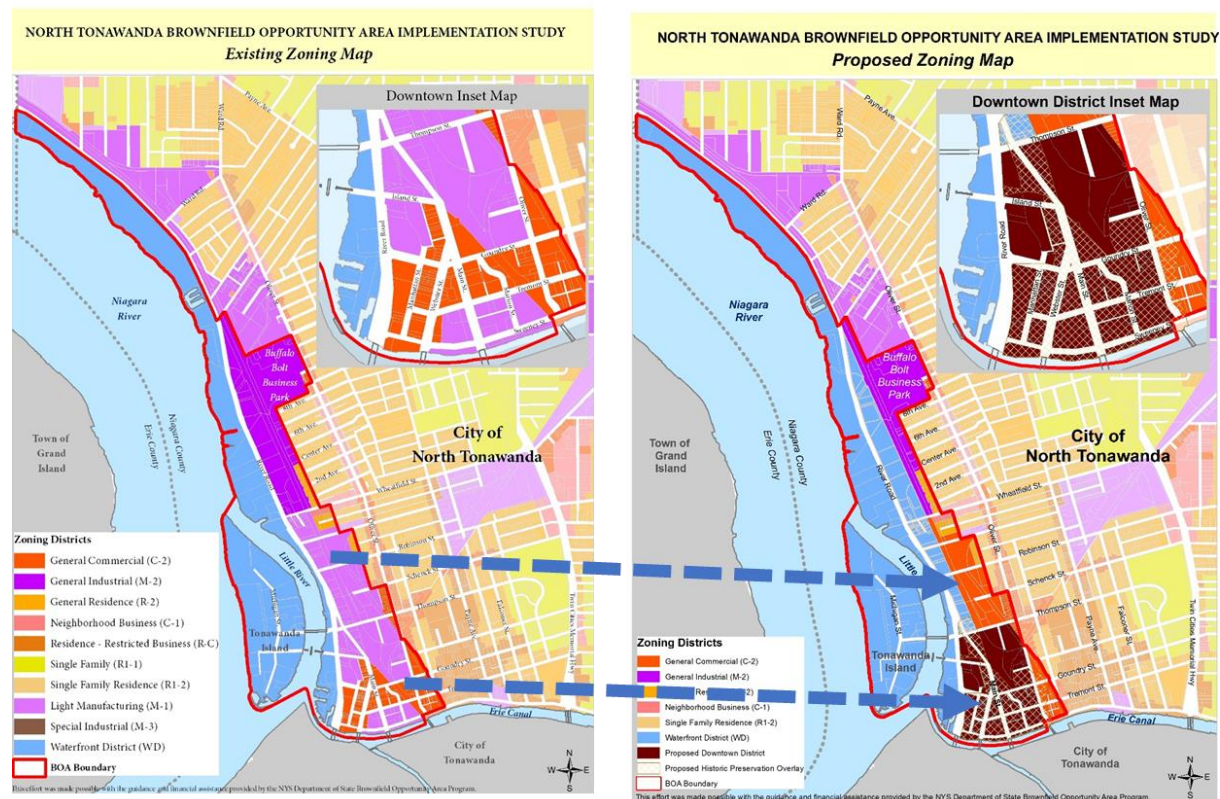


Table 11 Lands Affected by Proposed Zoning Changes

Existing	Acres		Proposed	Acres
Light Manufacturing (M-1)	87.3	Changed	General Commercial (C-1)	31.2
		Changed	Downtown District (DD)	42.6
		Changed	Waterfront District (WD)	15.7
General Industrial (M-2)	80.6	Changed	Waterfront District (WD)	31.4
General Commercial (C-1)	33.2	Changed	Downtown District (DD)	20.1
General Residence (R-2)	8.6	no change	General Residence (R-2)	n/a
Waterfront District (WD)	216.2	no change	Waterfront District (WD)	n/a
TOTAL	425.9		Total Acres Affected	140.9

**Source: City of North Tonawanda, Bergmann Associates 2016*

Note: Total acres excludes lands classified as right-of-way

4.2.3 Housing

The BOA Plan recommends the development of approximately 588 new residential units in the BOA. Of these new units, the majority is envisioned as apartments or condominiums included as part of mixed-use developments. The zoning code updates for the Downtown Mixed-Use District allows the implementation of recommended housing presented in the BOA Plan.

Apartments and condominium units generally attract young professionals and retirees who prefer a more urban lifestyle and access to amenities such as restaurants and retail stores. Apartments within downtown and mixed-use settings can cater to such preferences. Therefore the proposed development of these types of units may bring an increase of young adults and retirees into the area.

The proposed BOA Plan does not recommend demolition or displacement of any existing residential structures, and it is not expected that the plan will have negative impacts on the housing stock within the City. The addition of new housing units will likely serve to increase property values, thus also increasing associated tax revenues.

4.2.4 Open Space, Parks and Recreation, and Scenic Resources

The BOA Plan recommends implementation measures that will increase the amount of protected open space, parks, trails, shoreline access, and scenic resources, through zoning changes, and incentive zoning. Several recommendations for increased or improved public spaces are made within the BOA plan, as summarized below:

- **Gratwick Riverside Park.** The recommended improvements to Gratwick Park and the adjacent marina align with the Gratwick Riverside Park BOA Plan completed in 2009. Such recommendations include the addition of restroom and kitchen facilities, the construction of a children's natural playground, new public access trails to a picnic point, and other recreational opportunities within the park.
- **Tonawanda Island Open Space.** The development of public open space in conjunction with private residential development on the northern tip of Tonawanda Island is recommended by the BOA plan. Coordination between the City and the current private owners of the land must occur to agree upon a framework for such future development. Given this agreement, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment should be performed to determine the environmental conditions of the site.
- **Tonawanda Island Promenade and Public Plazas.** Increased public access to the Niagara River Waterfront is recommended within the BOA Plan through many initiatives. Included in these initiatives is a proposal for the development of a public promenade along the western shoreline of Tonawanda Island. In addition, several public plazas and open spaces are recommended to act as an interface between the public waterfront and the private development on the island. A public promenade is also proposed along the little river from Taylor Street to Bridge Street.
- **New Parks.** The BOA Plan proposes several new park spaces, including a pocket park south of the intersection of North Marion and Schenck Streets, as well as a park in the triangular lot formed by the intersection of Thompson Street, Main Street, and River Road. This park would serve as a gateway to the downtown district of North Tonawanda, and is recommended to include wayfinding signage, high-quality landscaping, and public art.
- **Multi-use space for educational, recreational, interpretive, and performance** purposes is recommended in the plan. This space would utilize existing rail cars for these purposes, and the Railroad Museum of the Niagara Frontier would be relocated to this area on Oliver Street.
- **Weatherbest Boat Slip.** The Plan calls for redevelopment of the Weatherbest Boat Slip in the southern area of the BOA for public open space. This area is envisioned to include a trail connection between Gratwick Riverside Park and Gateway Harbor Park, as well as amenities for passive recreation along the waterfront.
- **Improved Pedestrian Amenities.** In addition to the above, the Plan calls for improvement of pedestrian mobility through development of streetscape elements such as trees, street art, and curb bump-outs at intersections. These improvements, targeted specifically at Oliver Street and Main Street, would provide increased ease of access to the multitude of public spaces within the city for pedestrians.

Given the myriad recommendations for increased public and open spaces, no adverse impacts on the open space, parks and recreation, and scenic resources of the BOA and the City of North Tonawanda are foreseen.

4.2.5 Historic and Cultural Resources

A key principle of the BOA Plan and zoning code update is to “Celebrate our History and Culture” Several of the recommendations tied to this principle directly and indirectly support preservation of historic and cultural assets, including following:

- Capitalize on the Canal as an important historic, cultural, and recreational asset.
- Continue to identify historic buildings and structures and assist with their preservation and protection.
- Develop historic design guidelines for the downtown core to ensure existing historic fabric is preserved and protected.
- Conduct Phase IA and IB archeological resource assessments to improve the understanding of important archeological resources worthy of preservation and protection during BOA redevelopment activities.

The proposed BOA Plan and zoning code updates include numerous recommendations and implementation strategies intended to protect and enhance historic and cultural resources within the Study Area, including those relating to designated historic buildings and places. No adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources within the BOA are anticipated.

- **Riviera Theatre.** The Riviera Theatre is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In conjunction with, and as an outcome of, the BOA Planning process, the Riviera Theatre was recently awarded \$1.2 million for the Riviera Theatre Expansion and Development Project, a \$6.1 million project that will provide a 23,000 square foot addition for a smaller performance space called the Black Box Theatre, new dressing rooms and rehearsal space, a new lobby, and new theater box office. The renovation will maintain the history of the existing theatre, in particular the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ.
- **Remington Rand Mixed-Use Development.** Formerly known as the Herschell-Spillman Motor Company Complex. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located adjacent to the Erie Canal. This building was renovated and now contains loft apartments and retail/restaurant space. The BOA Plan does not include any changes to this building, thus there will be no impacts.
- **Downtown Historic District.** A significant portion of downtown North Tonawanda is designated a local historic district. This area includes much of Manhattan, Webster, and Main Streets. The zoning modifications proposed in the BOA Plan include a Historic Overlay District that identify clear standards and procedures to protect and enhance the historic character of the Study Area by addressing alterations to historic structures within the area and encouraging development that is harmonious with the existing historic character.
- **Former Railroad Switching Tower.** Located on Oliver Street opposite the Linear Park that leads to the Allan Herschell Carousel Museum, this structure is one of a few remaining switching towers in New York State. Originally constructed to act as a lookout tower for the intersection of two railroads, the structure is now owned and managed by the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Society has plans for restoring the structure to permit interpretive exhibits. The tower is currently boarded up, yet receives regular maintenance from Society members. The BOA Plan does not include any changes to this building, thus there will be no impacts.
- **North Tonawanda History Museum.** The North Tonawanda History Museum is located at 54 Webster Street, in the heart of Downtown and in the core of the BOA project boundary. This building houses the Lumber City History Center and a welcome center for visitors. The Lumber City History Center was developed as part of a resident-led effort to enhance the North Tonawanda History Museum. The history center is planned to provide educational, interpretive, and interactive exhibits on the history of North Tonawanda. Fund raising is ongoing for history center improvements, which will include an event hall and several exhibits that simulate life in historic North Tonawanda. The BOA Plan does not include any changes to this building, thus there will be no impacts.

- **Ghostlight Theater.** The Ghostlight Theater is host to the Ghostlight Theater Company, which is a celebrated arts and humanities organization founded in 1972. The theater is managed and operated by Starry Night Theater, Inc., a non-profit arts and education organization with the mission of protecting and preserving the Ghostlight Theatre Company and the Ghostlight Theatre. The Ghostlight is host to drama classes and numerous productions of on-stage theater and musicals. The theater is located just outside of the BOA on Schenck Street. The BOA Plan does not include any changes to this building; thus there will be no impacts.
- **Post Office (directly adjacent to the BOA).** The North Tonawanda post office, located at the corner of Goundry and Oliver Streets, is an excellent example of public building architecture dating from the early 20th Century. Constructed from 1912 to 1914, the building was one of the last Post Offices to be individually designed, with standardization taking place in 1915. The building is architecturally significant, and plays an important role as an anchor of the Oliver Street corridor. The BOA Plan does not include any recommended changes to this building; thus there will be no impacts.

4.2.6 Transportation Systems

This section describes the potential impacts on the existing transportation system that may result from the implementation of the BOA Plan. Since zoning code updates facilitate the implementation of the BOA Plan, the analysis encompasses these updates as well. As part of this Step 3 planning process, a Traffic Capacity Analysis and Project Scoping Report were completed for the River Road corridor, which is a critical transportation link that would help support development within the Study Area. Full build out of the Preferred Alternative may potentially generate traffic impacts that require mitigation.

The traffic analyses and evaluations were performed using standard traffic engineering methodologies in accordance with the 9th edition Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual 2012. Data used in the traffic analysis has been collected from field investigations, field visits, intersection traffic counts, BOA build-out concept plans, and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The sections below summarize the analysis of the River Road corridor as well as recommended mitigation measures.

TRAFFIC CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The purpose of the traffic analysis was to determine the impacts of development planned for the Study Area and determine if a road diet is feasible on River Road, modifying the roadway from five lanes to three lanes. The three lane alternative was proposed in an effort to reduce speeds and help improve pedestrian access, specifically to areas along the Niagara River including parkland. Future development in the BOA Study Area is expected to have an impact on the following corridors:

- River Road from Goundry Street to Witmer Road
- Main Street from River Road to Sweeney Street
- Webster Street from Goundry Street to Sweeney Street
- Oliver Street from Felton Street to Tremont Street

The future 2035 traffic volumes and level of service (LOS) were determined for two scenarios; (1) the full build-out of the Preferred Alternative and (2) the no-build scenario. The no-build scenario analyzes the impact on traffic should none of the developments described in the BOA Plan take place. The no build scenario was calculated by increasing the existing peak hour traffic volumes by 0.5% per year. The increase was done as a means of accounting for normal traffic growth and any developments taking place outside of the BOA boundary.

The full build conditions were calculated by adding the no build traffic to the traffic expected from the development sites identified in the Step 3 BOA Plan. The analysis calculated the expected traffic from the development by estimating the trip generation for each development site identified within the Step 3 BOA Plan and assigning the trips to the roadway system based on existing and expected travel patterns, both inside and outside of the study area. The latest

edition of the ITE Trip Generation Manual was used to determine the trip estimate for each development site identified within the Step 3 BOA Plan.

The results of the analysis revealed three major conclusions resulting from the full build out:

1. Traffic is expected to increase by 90% on River Road;
2. The level of service at three intersection on River Road and three intersections on Main Street are expected to decline; and
3. Congestion on the bridge to Tonawanda Island is expected to increase before the end of Phase One of the Preferred Alternative.

ALTERNATIVES

The Traffic Impact Analysis mitigation alternatives:

1. Mitigation Alternative 1: No action, which would leave River Road in its current configuration.
2. Mitigation Alternative 2: Three Lanes with a Raised Median North of Felton Street and Five Lanes South of Felton Street with Geometric Improvements based on one of two options for access to Tonawanda Island:
 - Alternative 2A – Three Lanes with a Raised Median North of Felton Street and Five Lanes with Geometric Improvements at Two Intersections based on Traffic Impacts of Widening the Existing Bridge to Tonawanda Island
 - Alternative 2B – Three Lanes with a Raised Median North of Felton Street and Five Lanes with Geometric Improvements at One Intersection based on Traffic Impacts of Constructing a Second Bridge to Tonawanda Island

Both Mitigation Alternatives 2A and Alternative 2B include streetscape enhancements which include improved sidewalks, landscaping, trees, well-marked crosswalks and pedestrian traffic signals to enhance pedestrian experience and safety. The signalized intersections located at rail crossings would also be enhanced to make stronger and safer connections between residential neighborhoods, the waterfront and the multi-use path along River Road for pedestrians and bikes.

The preferred alternative is Alternative 2A. A detailed description of the mitigation measures recommended to accommodate the Preferred Alternative (Full Build Scenario) is included in Appendix F.

4.2.7 Infrastructure

WATER/WASTEWATER

The zoning code updates will not have an impact on water or wastewater systems within the City. Based on the projected domestic water demand, the BOA Plan will also not have a significant adverse impact on the North Tonawanda public water/wastewater systems. For purposes of this review, the projected wastewater flow was calculated for land uses within the BOA Plan preferred alternative. The projected demand is based on different factors based on the type of use: (1) the square footage of future retail uses (2) the number and type of potential future residential units and (3) the number of potential future restaurant seats and (4) the number of future office and warehouse employees.

The water treatment facility is located on Tonawanda Island and draws its water from the Niagara River. This plant has a capacity of 12 million gallons per day (MGD), yet the average draw is 3.6 MGD and the maximum draw was 5.3 MGD. The City's existing waste water treatment plant is located along the Niagara River on River Road. This plant has a capacity of 14 MGD. Based upon the water supply figures, the waste water treatment plant should also have significant available capacity for treating waste.

The projected water demand created by full build out of the proposed BOA Plan would result in an average of 262,697 gallons per day, and a maximum peak of 525,395 gallons per day. Based on projected water demand and wastewater

flow, the proposed BOA Plan will not have a significant adverse impact on the North Tonawanda public water and waste water systems.

Some specific components of the existing water distribution system may have limitations due to pipe diameters and obsolescence (service life). Required upgrades and replacements to the water distribution system can occur parallel with public street improvements and individual development projects. All new utility facilities should be designed and built to required flood proofing standards and codes.

Table 12 Project Daily Water Demand

Proposed Land Use	Unit	Quantity	GPD per unit	Projected Daily Demand (GPD)
Office	Employees	1,227	15	18,398
Restaurant (seat)	Seats	1,976	35	69,169
Industrial (per person)	Employees	144	15	2,153
Retail	Square Feet	242,250	0.1	24,225
Single Family/Townhomes	Dwelling Units	188	300	56,400
Multi-family	Dwelling Units	400	130	52,054
Hotel (rooms)	Rooms	310	130	40,300
Total Average Daily Demand				262,697
Maximum Daily Demand (2x average)				525,395

Source: Bergmann Associates, New York State Design Standards for Intermediate Sized Wastewater Treatment Systems,

NYS DEC Division of Water

Note: GPD = Gallons Per Day

4.2.8 Community Facilities and Services

This section provides an analysis of the impacts the BOA Plan may have on demand for community facilities and services. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated resulting from the adoption of proposed zoning code updates.

SCHOOLS

The development of new housing units, and in particular the development of single-family homes (188), may bring an additional 100-150 school-aged children to the City. This may have the potential to create additional burden on the North Tonawanda City Schools. There are certain mitigating factors that will reduce or avoid negative impacts. New residents would pay local property taxes allocated to schools, which funds approximately 40% of the school district's budget. Federal and state aid covers the majority of the remaining budget. Both sources of funding would offset the costs of new students.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

The BOA Plan recommends increases in the total amount of open space and parks within the Study Area. Therefore, any population increase would be matched by an increase in the park space in the area, thus limiting the possibility of overuse of parks or public space is foreseen. Further, the addition of significant amounts of new parkland is a benefit to the community and is itself considered a mitigation strategy. Based on the above, the BOA Plan will not create any significant negative impacts to supply and function of parks, recreation, and open space.

POLICE, FIRE, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The slight increase in population described above may increase the demand for police, fire, and emergency services. However, two mitigating factors will limit any negative impacts: (1) the BOA Plan is proposed to be phased in over 20 years, thus any population gains will occur incrementally over time, with an average of 50 to 60 people per year. In addition, new residents will pay property and sales tax as well as other local fees that will offset the costs of providing such additional services.

4.2.9 Natural Resources

This section addresses the potential impacts of the BOA Plan and zoning code updates on habitat, wetlands, groundwater, flood plains and other designated resources. Implementation of the BOA Plan and zoning code updates may result in land use or other changes that would alter surface and/or groundwater resources, including habitat, wetlands, streams, floodplains, watersheds, and groundwater resources.

A key consideration in this analysis is that North Tonawanda is an urbanized city and most of the major sites within the Study Area are located on former industrial sites/potential brownfields. The types of proposed development within the BOA area have fewer environmental impacts, and in many cases may improve the overall quality and abundance of natural resources in the area by hastening environmental remediation, applying high quality zoning and design standards that create shoreline buffers and encouraging the use of green infrastructure techniques. In addition, the creation of new parks and green space as well as ecologically-sensitive landscaping will aid in restoration of the natural environment within the BOA. The zoning code updates recommended as an implementing strategy of the BOA Plan will preserve and protect open space, environmentally-sensitive vegetation, critical wildlife habitat, and scenic views of the Niagara River.

HABITAT

The Study Area is located within an urbanized area. However, throughout the plan, habitat restoration is encouraged within open and vacant spaces. Furthermore, the Niagara River acts as a host to many species of fish within the BOA area, and the BOA Plan recommends increasing fish habitats in the area through techniques such as dredging marinas and boat slips.

Congruent with the Gratwick Riverside Park Master Plan and the Niagara River Greenway Plan, the BOA Plan's recommendations for Gratwick Riverside Park include significant habitat restoration efforts for both fish and birds in the park. In addition, educational features will be implemented that highlight the process of habitat restoration within the area, and the Great Lakes Region as a whole.

NYSDEC recently designated North Tonawanda as a Waterfowl Winter Concentration Area. The habitat of such waterfowl can be threatened by dredging, filing, and bulkheading, as well as discharges from combined sewer overflows and industrial sites. Such impacts must be taken into account when entering the construction process of the recommended development projects along the waterfront in the BOA and appropriate mitigation measures implemented as part of such development activities.

Given the urbanized character of the BOA, as well as the plans to create and restore natural habitats, no significant adverse impacts to natural habitats are predicted.

WETLANDS

Currently, there is one designated wetland within the BOA. It is classified as a freshwater emergent wetland according to the National Wetland Inventory. The wetland is located within Fisherman's park and is 1.73 acres in size. The BOA Plan does not recommend any new development or alternation to Fisherman's Park, therefore no disturbance to wetlands within the BOA is anticipated.

FLOODPLAINS

Due to its adjacency to the Niagara River and the Erie Canal, several sites are located within Special Flood Hazard Area, or 100-year floodplains, as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The floodplain within the BOA covers portions of both the east and west coasts of Tonawanda Island, as well as the Weatherbest boat slip in the southern portion of the BOA.

The Niagara River is a large body of water and has a significant conveyance capacity. Therefore, future development in the BOA should not have a significant effect on the water surface level or risk of flooding on the River. Development within these areas of the BOA will be in accordance with the City's Flood Hazard Area ordinance which requires specific

construction methods and additional permitting to ensure that the development that occurs does not increase the risk of flooding and protects individuals and real property from the effects of flooding.

New development or redevelopment projects which involve soil disturbance of 1 or more acres will be subject to the requirements the New York State DEC SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities. These projects will be required to implement temporary erosion and sedimentation control measures as well as permanent stormwater management practices for runoff reduction, water quality treatment and regulation of discharge rate and volume. The SPDES General Permit may not apply to all BOA redevelopment projects.

WATERSHEDS

The BOA area is located in the Niagara River watershed, as well as the Tonawanda Creek sub-watershed which runs into the Niagara River watershed. New development or redevelopment projects which involve soil disturbance of 1 or more acres will be subject to the requirements the New York State DEC SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities. These projects will be required to implement temporary erosion and sedimentation control measures as well as permanent stormwater management practices for runoff reduction, water quality treatment and regulation of discharge rate and volume. The SPDES General Permit may not apply to all BOA redevelopment projects.

GROUNDWATER

Preliminary environmental site assessments on 33 sites in the BOA have shown that spills or releases of contaminants have impacted the soil or groundwater. Of those sites, 17 sites were noted as potentially having groundwater contamination due to the presence of chemical and/or petroleum storage tanks. Proposed development on these sites should be contingent on further examination of the possibility of groundwater contamination, most likely through a Phase II ESA.

4.2.10 Environmental Contamination

Within the Study Area, there are 61 sites that have been identified as potential brownfields. Properties were identified as having moderate environmental concerns on the site if they were found within an environmental database, there was visual evidence of environmental impact (such as surface staining or evidence of debris), or groundwater wells were visible on the property. The development of these sites is contingent on determining the appropriate environmental remediation required for the proposed redevelopment, as well as the obtainment of funding for such efforts.

Several sites were identified as likely to require Phase II Environmental Site Assessments. The sites that are currently publically owned or vacant are more likely to move forward with Phase II ESAs, as further assessment of privately owned sites would require cooperation with the current owners. The sites selected as potential recipients of Phase II ESAs are described below.

Table 13 Summary of Sites that May Require a Phase II Environmental Assessment

<i>Address</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Environmental Concern</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
63 Oliver Street	Private	Unregulated PBS tanks	Bulk storage tanks require a higher level of regulation due to the volume of contaminants. If a site is not in compliance with NYS DEC regulations, the threat for spills is higher.
161 Tremont Street	Private	Unregulated PBS and CESQG	If a site is not in compliance with NYS DEC regulations, the threat for leaks and spills is higher. Listing as a hazardous waste generator also indicates handling of waste not suitable for disposal in standard landfills.
210 Sweeney Street	City of North Tonawanda	Visual evidence of soil impacted by hydraulic oil	Visual staining indicates there was a release on the property. A Phase II may be required to determine the extent of contamination and need for remediation.
900 River Road	Private	Existing monitoring wells identified	Monitoring wells indicate that the presence of groundwater contamination is suspected. The site also has former spill events from which groundwater was impacted by chlorinated solvents. Groundwater provides a mobile medium for contamination, which can then travel offsite creating a plume.
871 River Road	Private	Unregulated PBS and CBS, chemical drums visible throughout the property	If a site is not in compliance with NYS DEC regulations, the threat for leaks and spills is higher.
830 River Road	City of North Tonawanda	CBS facility, CESQG	Due to the volume of chemicals and/or hazardous waste that may be handled at the site, there is an elevated potential for environmental contamination.
765 River Road	Private	CESQG	Listing as a hazardous waste generator also indicates handling of waste not suitable for direct disposal in standard landfills, which may have greater impact on public health or the environment if released.
555 River Road	Private	PBS facility and historic spill site	The site has a long history of spill events that have impacted area soil and groundwater. Additionally, the site is a petroleum bulk storage facility, indicating the potential for future spills to occur.
512 River Road	Private	PBS facility	The site is currently an active PBS facility and is slated for future residential waterfront development. It's possible that historic use of petroleum products have impacted the environmental integrity of the property.
87 Robinson Street	Private	Unregulated PBS facility	If a site is not in compliance with NYS DEC regulations, the threat for leaks and spills is higher.
51 Robinson Street	Private	CBS facility, unregulated PBS facility, historic spill site	The volume of chemicals and petroleum handled at the site increase the potential for contamination. Furthermore, the site has spill history that impacted area soil and groundwater. Groundwater increases contaminant mobility, facilitating travel off-site.
90 Taylor Drive	Private	Visible drums, CESQG	There is visual evidence of on-site storage of materials, possibly hazardous. In addition, the site is a small quantity hazardous waste generator, indicating it may handle materials not suitable for disposal in a standard landfill. These materials are generally more hazardous to the environment and public health, and have stringent disposal regulations.

4.2.11 Other Impacts

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are considered those that result from the incremental or increased impact of actions when the impacts of that action are added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from a single action or a number of individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

The analysis included in Section 4.3 describes potential impacts of full build-out (i.e., all three phases of the BOA Plan). By virtue of this approach, the potential cumulative impacts have been considered as part of this. Potential cumulative impacts created by other development not envisioned in the BOA Plan have not been identified.

ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

The BOA Plan was developed as a means to guide redevelopment of Strategic Sites in such a way that limits the potential negative impacts resulting from land use and development activities. The majority of the adverse impacts foreseen through the implementation of the recommended BOA redevelopment projects will be minimal and mitigated where possible. Additionally, the intent of the zoning code update is to clarify development type and density to guide future development that is aligned with the established community vision. Therefore, it is not foreseen that the North Tonawanda BOA Plan will result in significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

Development that takes place after the adoption of this BOA Plan, GEIS, and zoning code updates will still be subject to the SEQRA process on a site-specific basis. Environmental review of future actions may be necessary. This BOA Plan and GEIS is intended to be a resource to facilitate the review under SEQRA of future development actions.

4.2.12 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The implementation of the North Tonawanda BOA Plan will entail the use of human, material, energy, natural, and financial resources, many of which cannot be retrieved once used. However, the potential benefits will outweigh the cost of such resources. Said irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are described below.

Human Resources

Human labor will be necessary to implement the recommended projects within the BOA Plan. This entails design and engineering, permitting, financial analysis, construction, operation and many other forms of labor. Additionally, human resources will be needed to ensure proposed development is in conformance with the zoning code updates. This use of resources is irreversible, however it will result in an overall benefit, as the expenditure of such resources creates or supports jobs within the community.

Material Consumption

Physical building materials such as gravel, concrete and lumber will be required for construction of new buildings, enhancements to streetscapes, development of new parks and other recommended projects. These materials will be irretrievable once used, but they will play an integral role in the revitalization of the BOA. No material consumption is anticipated resulting from the adoption of the proposed zoning code updates.

Natural Resources

A minimal amount of natural space may be compromised with the development of parking lots for new structures. All six of the Strategic Sites identified have been developed in the past and are no longer in a natural state, thus not creating a loss of natural resources. Similarly, some sites identified in the BOA Plan that were previously developed are proposed to be redeveloped as vegetated parks and open space, thus provided a net addition of natural resources. It is not anticipated that implementation of the BOA Plan will result in significant negative environmental impacts to the existing natural resources within the BOA. Additionally, the zoning code updates encourage the infill development and protection of open space and natural resources where possible.

Financial Resources

Financial assets from the State of New York, the City of North Tonawanda, private landowners and other entities will be used in the implementation of the BOA Plan. Expenditures will be necessary for the acquisition of land, professional services such as engineering and architectural services, construction labor, finance services, environmental remediation and many other goods and services. This initial use of financial resources will be irreversible, but will leverage additional economic opportunities that are expected to surpass the initial investment.

GROWTH-INDUCED IMPACTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE

Implementation of the BOA Plan is intended to catalyze redevelopment of mixed-use, commercial, residential, and light industrial uses, thus inducing growth. The purpose of the BOA program is to identify and facilitate redevelopment on brownfields, vacant, abandoned, or underutilized sites. This plan includes six strategic sites on which development is intended to act as a catalyst for future revitalization efforts. The direct and secondary growth impacts of the proposed BOA Plan and zoning code updates will have numerous benefits, including job growth and indirect spending at local businesses, increased tax revenues, new business generation, and improvements in public safety.

4.3 Description of Alternatives

This section describes an evaluation of alternatives to the proposed BOA Plan. Alternatives considered include the following:

NO ACTION

The no-action alternative would be to not implement any of the components of the BOA Plan or zoning code updates. The City of North Tonawanda would be left as it currently is.

The no-action alternative is considered a baseline for assessing the relative impacts and benefits of the proposed action. The discussion of this alternative is intended to describe and evaluate the adverse and/or beneficial impacts that are likely to occur on the site and in the community in the absence of the Proposed Action.

This alternative would preclude the Preferred Alternative. Under this scenario, coordinated redevelopment of the BOA is less likely to occur. Strategic Sites would be more likely to remain vacant and underutilized. The visual conditions and setting would remain the same. Existing brownfields would be less likely to be remediated, meaning the benefits of environmental remediation would not be experienced by the community. The economic benefits anticipated from revitalization activities are less likely. Additionally, development within the downtown and waterfront will not encourage smart growth principles.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO

The Alternative Scenario is the City of North Tonawanda's Step 2 BOA Nomination Study BOA Plan, which was completed in 2014. It is different from the preferred alternative in size and scale, the feasibility and compatibility of projects, and does not proposed changes to the current zoning ordinance. The Step 2 Nomination Study BOA Plan was divided into three phases, spanning over 20 years. The Step 2 Nomination Study BOA Plan identified 31 projects located within the BOA boundary. The projects range from public waterfront access, the improvement of public space, and the development of mixed-use nodes. The projects described in the Step 2 Nomination Study BOA Plan were evaluated and in some cases modified, resulting in the Preferred Alternative, which is the Step 3 BOA Plan and zoning code updates.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (PROPOSED ACTION)

The Step 3 BOA Plan is the preferred alternative for revitalization of the BOA Study Area. This preferred alternative is based, in part, on the Step 2 BOA Nomination Study Maser Plan, but includes a few key modifications (summarized below). The preferred alternative incorporates land use changes and zoning modifications that better respond to existing market realities than the previously developed Step 2 BOA Plan. In addition, the preferred alternative recommends transportation improvements that better address potential traffic impacts than previously

recommended transportation improvements. The preferred alternative is described in detail in Section 4.1, BOA Plan Projects and Phasing. Potential impacts have been identified and assessed in Section 4.2, along with mitigation measures where appropriate.

Modifications to the Alternative Scenario

The following projects and recommendations were modified from the Alternative Scenario. The resulting plan became the Step 3 BOA Plan, referred to as the Preferred Scenario.

Downtown Structured Parking. The Alternative Scenario placed a parking structure downtown at the corner of Tremont and Marion Streets. For the Preferred Alternative, structured parking was moved to a site across Tremont Street to better capitalize on proximity to the recommended downtown hotel.

512 River Road (formerly Site #2). The Alternative Scenario proposed residential development on this site. That alternative would be less responsive to the current market conditions, which would not support residential development on this site in addition to other adjacent properties. This site has been replaced with the adjacent site, known as 600 River Road.

600 River Road. The Alternative Scenario did not include this site. Since completion of the Step 2 BOA Nomination Study, the City of North Tonawanda has received proposals to develop multi-family residential units on this site. Thus, 600 River Road has been added to the BOA Plan (i.e., the Preferred Alternative) in place of the adjacent site, known as 512 River Road. At present, there are no plans anticipated for 512 River Road.

High Density Residential Site #15 is located near the corner of Marion and Robinson Streets. The Alternative Scenario recommended this site for high density residential. This alternative would be less compatible with surrounding uses and less responsive to the market than the Preferred Alternative, which proposes a multi-tenant warehouse on this site.

Downtown Mixed-Use Site #13 is located near the corner of Sweeney and Main Streets. The Alternative Scenario recommended this site for mixed-use development. The Alternative Scenario would be less responsive to the downtown market than the Preferred Alternative. The City completed a hotel feasibility analysis in 2014 concluding that the downtown market is well-positioned for a hotel.

Zoning Code Updates. This alternative includes zoning code modifications determined necessary to implement the preferred alternative. The zoning code modifications involve two parts; a downtown form-based code and waterfront zoning code revisions. All zoning modifications are included as Appendix H.

5 Compliance with SEQRA

5.1 Consistency with NYS CMP Coastal Policies

Consistency review is the decision-making process through which proposed actions and activities are determined to be consistent or inconsistent with the coastal policies of the New York State Coastal Management Program or approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (LWRPs).

All LWRPs include a local consistency review law which is used to ensure that the actions of the community are consistent with the policies, uses and projects described in the LWRP. Communities with approved LWRPs conduct consistency reviews as part of their local decision-making on applications for development proposals.

During the SEQRA review for these activities, the potential impact(s) to coastal or inland waterway resources must be given equal weight with other environmental considerations in the determination of significance. If a positive declaration is issued, the EIS must address the potential impact(s) of the proposed action on coastal or inland waterway resources.

5.2 Conditions for Future Actions (Thresholds for Future Review)

Thresholds and conditions for future review are established to help ensure that private development proceeds in accordance with the BOA Plan and zoning code updates. This may include conditions for supplemental EIS's to reflect site-specific impacts that cannot adequately be addressed at this time:

REDEVELOPMENT, LAND USE & ZONING

The BOA Plan establishes preferred land use patterns, recommended development projects, and zoning revisions to facilitate redevelopment. The analysis of impacts and mitigation measures is based on the amount and intensity of development proposed in the BOA Plan (summarized below). Future development proposals should demonstrate consistency with land uses identified in the BOA Plan and the scale/intensity thresholds established for each timeframe below.

Figure 8 Scale and Intensity Thresholds for Future Development

Use	Total	Coefficient (sf/employee)	Short-term (5-10 years)			Mid-term (10-20 years)			Long-term (20+ years)		
			Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents	Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents	Total units/sq ft	Employees	Residents
Residential	588 units	2.54	155.47	--	395	257		653	176	0	447
Office	367,951 sf	300	125,800	419		178,401	595		63,750	213	
Restaurant	79,050 sf	200	13,600	68		34,850	174		30,600	153	
Manufacturing	211,000 sf	2,000	151,000	76					60,000	30	
Warehouse	190,000 sf	5,000	15,000	3		20,000	4		155,000	31	
Retail	242,250 sf	500	50,150	100		130,050	260		62,050	124	
Total				666	395		1,033	653		551	447
Total @ Full Build Out											
Residents	1,495										
Employees	2,250										

If future project-specific proposals for the redevelopment within the BOA Study Area does not meet the requirements of the revised zoning code, or if they exceed the intensity of development proposed in the BOA Plan, then the proposed development may not have been adequately considered in this assessment, and a new project-specific SEQRA assessment should be undertaken.

Future projects should be substantially consistent with the North Tonawanda Comprehensive Plan and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan. If future project-specific proposals for the redevelopment of the Strategic Sites are substantially inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, then the proposed development may not have been adequately considered in this assessment, and a new project-specific SEQRA assessment should be undertaken.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Proposed development projects should not be located within a designated State or Federal wetland or within a 100' buffer of a State wetland. Projects should be designed to avoid the wetland to the maximum extent possible or minimize the footprint; if not, wetland mitigation would most likely be required. Future project-specific proposals that impact wetlands to the extent that require permitting or mitigation may not have been adequately considered in this assessment, and a new project-specific SEQRA assessment should be undertaken.

Future proposed development should comply with all shoreline regulations set forth in the North Tonawanda Zoning Code Waterfront District (WD), which establishes setbacks and other performance standards intended to protect shoreline natural resources.

OPEN SPACE & PARKS

It is anticipated that implementation/full build-out of the BOA Plan will require improvements to publicly owned lands and/or dedication of privately owned lands for parkland use. The potential purchase of lands by the City or dedication of lands by private parties will require legislative approvals and costs not addressed in this document. These actions may be subject to further review under SEQRA.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

As project-specific proposals are made for the redevelopment of the Strategic Sites, a more complete assessment of their potential impact to the transportation systems will need to be completed.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water: Individual projects that require public infrastructure improvements to deliver adequate water supply to the site to support the project should be subject to further review under SEQRA.

Wastewater: Individual projects that generate wastewater of a volume, rate, or composition that exceed the capabilities of the local Municipal sanitary sewer system and/or Publicly Owned Treatment Works should be subject to further review under SEQRA.

Stormwater: Individual projects which involve soil disturbance of 1 or more acres will be subject to the Federal, State and local requirements for stormwater discharges and should be subject to further review under SEQRA. Eligibility under the SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities may not be applicable to all BOA redevelopment projects. If not, then projects may require an individual SPDES permit, as well as other Federal, State and local permits.

VISUAL IMPACTS

Individual projects should be assessed for their potential visual impacts. The visual impact assessment should include a viewshed analysis to determine where the new development will be visible from and line-of-sight diagrams to facilitate an assessment of their level of impact.

6 Funding

Funding for BOA Plan initiatives will come from a host of public and private resources. Timing and levels of investment will be predicated on numerous issues beyond the control of City staff, including the disposition of State and Federal budgets and the regional and national economic outlook. In addition, the availability of financing and the costs of investment will also dictate the extent and timing with of private sector involvement. The City will be required to marshal a consistent level of public dollars in the beginning stages of implementation in an effort to reduce private sector risk and lure investment.

Many projects discussed will require additional investigations for financial feasibility and design alternatives. Spending for these pre-development initiatives will be dependent upon public financing and grants. These monies serve to reduce up front risk and investment by private developers. Grant funding sources are constantly changing, with available monies becoming increasingly competitive as the State and Federal governments continue to decrease spending. The City should maximize their competitive position by leveraging the planning process and community commitment outlined in the BOA Nomination Study.

The following is a brief overview of key funding programs in existence as of 2016.

6.1 State of New York Grant Programs

There are a multitude of grant opportunities available through state and federal agencies. Figure 9 describes the most relevant grant opportunities available to help fund projects identified in this plan.

6.1.1 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

The New York State CFA consolidates over 30 programs available through 12 state agencies, acting as a single point of entry for access to funding. The CFA replaces multiple applications for funding with a single, annual application for economic development resources. Applications are coordinated through the Regional Economic Development Councils and grant resources are available for projects that align the Regional Economic Development Plan. Some of the resources described in this section are included in the CFA. Specific funding sources and programs can change from year to year and should be monitored. In future years, some programs may be phased out while other new programs are added.

6.1.2 State of New York Tax Credit and Loan Programs

Economic incentives and inducements are important tools used within New York State to help businesses grow, reduce business costs, and reward job creation. The State offers a variety of incentive programs and consolidates nearly all of its significant programs under the administration of Empire State Development Corporation. Some of these programs benefit businesses directly while others are allocated to local and regional economic development entities so that they may fund projects that directly address community visions and needs, under State guidance. Figure 10 includes a summary of these programs.

Figure 9 State of New York Grant Programs

Agency	Grant Name	Description
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	Climate Smart Communities Program	<p>The Climate Smart Communities Environmental Protection Fund grant program will enable communities across the state to put climate plans into action. The program matches state resources with community commitments to bring local and regional plans to fruition. The competition for grant funding will reward foresight and innovation in climate protection and showcase the ingenuity of many communities. There is a total of \$11 million available in the 2016 CFA round.</p> <p>Eligible Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate protection implementation projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Construction of natural resiliency measures (green infrastructure, flood mitigation, streambank stabilization) ○ Relocation or retrofit of climate-vulnerable facilities ○ Conservation or restoration of riparian areas ○ Reduction of risk ○ Clean transportation (on or off road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, construction of safe routes for non-drivers, and implementation of transit improvements) ○ Reduction or recycling of food waste • Climate Smart Communities Certification Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Certification Action 3.11 - Right-size the local government fleet. ○ Certification Action 6.17 - Develop a natural resource inventory. ○ Certification Action 7.1 - Conduct a vulnerability assessment. ○ Certification Action 7.3 - Review existing community plans and projects to identify climate adaptation strategies and policies or projects that may decrease vulnerability. ○ Certification Action 7.4 - Develop climate adaptation strategies. ○ Certification Action 7.6 - Update the multi-hazard mitigation plan to address changing conditions and identify specific strategies to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards.
New York State Department of State	Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) –	<p>The NYSDOS administers LWRP funding which can be utilized for waterfront improvement projects in conjunction with an approved LWRP document. Funds can be utilized for planning, design and capital improvements, including the preparation of design and construction documentation for infrastructure and shoreline improvement projects, as well as trails and parks</p>

NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC)	Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)	<p>The Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) supports projects across New York State that utilize unique stormwater infrastructure design and create cutting-edge green technologies. Eligible projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeable pavements • Bioretention/bioswales • Green roofs and green walls • Stormwater street trees • Construction or restoration of wetlands, floodplains, or riparian buffers • Stream daylighting • Downspout disconnection • Stormwater harvesting and reuse
NYSERDA	Cleaner, Greener Communities Program (CGCP) Implementation Grants for Planning Initiatives	<p>The New York Cleaner, Greener Communities Program empowers regions to create more sustainable communities by funding smart growth practices. The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan (FLRSP) was developed through a partnership among public and private experts across a wide range of fields. The FLRSP recommends implementation projects that significantly improve the economic and environmental health of the region.</p> <p>Eligible projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive planning, zoning amendments, predevelopment technical assistance for projects, or other innovative planning-related initiatives. These initiatives will prepare a community, region, or project for a more sustainable and resilient future; thereby creating indirect community benefit and carbon reductions.
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation (OPRHP)	Municipal Grants Program (parks, historic properties, heritage areas)	<p>A matching grant program for the acquisition, development and planning of parks and recreational facilities to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Funds may be awarded to municipalities or not-for-profits with an ownership interest, for indoor or outdoor projects and must reflect the priorities established in the NY Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).</p>
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant	<p>The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program provides funds for hazard mitigation planning and projects on an annual basis. The PDM program is available to local governments. It was put in place to reduce overall risk to people and structures, while at the same time, also reducing reliance on federal funding if an actual disaster were to occur.</p>
Empire State Development	Economic Development Purposes Grants	<p>Funding is available for economic development initiatives and projects that create or retain jobs, generate increased economic activity and improve the economic and social viability and vitality of local communities. Examples of ways the funds can be used include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring or leasing land or buildings, machinery, equipment • Acquiring existing business or assets • Demolition and environmental remediation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New construction, renovation, or leasehold improvement • Acquiring furniture and fixtures • Planning and feasibility studies • Site and infrastructure development • Marketing and advertising <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For-profit and not-for-profit businesses • Business Improvement Districts and Local Development Corporations • Public benefit corporations, including industrial development agencies • Economic development organizations • Research and academic institutions; incubators • Technology parks • Municipalities, counties, and regional planning councils • Tourist attractions; community facilities
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Figure 10 State of New York Tax Credit and Loan Programs

Type	Name	Description
Tax Credit	Brownfield Redevelopment Tax Credit (ESD)	<p>Encourages cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites by offering several types of tax credits to companies that complete cleanup programs under the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) authorized in 2003. The amount of the credit is equal to a percentage of certain eligible costs incurred. Credits can be used against the New York State corporate franchise tax and certain personal income taxes (including shareholders of New York "S" corporations and beneficiaries of estates and trusts). Tax credits are offered to companies for undertaking activities in several areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Site Preparation and Onsite Remediation Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers site preparation and onsite groundwater cleanup costs; and remediation, demolition, excavation, fencing, security and other capital costs to make the site usable for redevelopment. Excludes site acquisition costs • Sites are eligible for 22% to 50% of the cost of remediation, based on the level of cleanup 2. Tangible Property Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers costs of buildings and improvements, including structural components of buildings, that are placed into service within 10 years after a Certificate of Completion is issued for the site cleanup • Credits range from 10% to 24% of eligible costs (1) subject to caps, (2) depending on the level of site cleanup achieved, and (3) the specific State tax law/article under which the company pays taxes. • Manufacturing projects are capped at \$45,000,000 or 6 times the site preparation and onsite groundwater remediation costs, whichever is less • Nonmanufacturing projects are capped at \$35,000,000 or 3 times the site preparation and onsite groundwater remediation costs, whichever is less 3. Real Property Tax Credits [These were eliminated]

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit for a portion of real property taxes for a qualified remediated site • Amount determined by a formula based on number of employees on the site, up to \$10,000 per employee <p>4. Remediation insurance Credits [eliminated]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit for premiums paid for environmental remediation insurance • Capped at the lesser of 50% of cost of the premiums, or \$30,000 <p>Eligible sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites must be eligible for the Brownfield Cleanup Program. Companies must first enter into a brownfield site cleanup agreement (BCA) with the Department of Environmental Conservation, submit a cleanup plan, obtain plan approval, complete the approved cleanup program, and obtain a Certificate of Completion. <p>Non-eligible sites: [changes here too]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class I or Class II hazardous waste disposal sites, and sites that are listed on the National Priorities List (Superfund) • Sites that were subject to cleanup under another regulatory program, as these were excluded from the BCP
Tax Credits	Excelsior Jobs Program (ESD)	<p>Provides tax credits for strategic businesses that make a substantial commitment to growth, either in employment or through investing significant capital in a NY facility in a targeted strategic industry. Companies that meet and maintain the established jobs and investment thresholds may qualify for four new fully-refundable tax credits. The credit is claimed over a 10-year period. Program costs are capped at \$500 million annually.</p> <p>1. Excelsior Jobs Tax Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A credit equal to 6.85% of wages for new jobs <p>2. Excelsior Investment Tax Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A credit equal to 2% of qualified investments <p>3. Excelsior Research and Development Tax Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A credit equal to 50% of the federal research and development credit, capped at 3% of research expenditures in NY State <p>4. Excelsior Real Property Tax Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available only to firms locating in certain distressed areas equal to 50% of eligible real property taxes in year 1, decreasing 5% in each successive year • Also available to firms in targeted industries that meet higher employment and investment thresholds (defined as "Regionally Significant Projects") <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted (strategic) industries include: scientific R&D, software development, agriculture, manufacturing, financial services, back office, distribution, other (as approved) • The Job growth track comprises 75% of the program
Tax Credits	New York State Historic Properties Tax Credit	<p>Administered by NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Division for Historic Preservation, in conjunction with the Federal Historic Tax Credit Program.</p> <p>Credits are available for residential homeowners, and for commercial (income producing) properties.</p>

		<p>1. Commercial Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State credit is used in conjunction with the federal tax credit. Owners can use both, each providing 20% tax credits for qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QRE) as defined by the US Internal Revenue Service. Together, these offset up to 40% of the QRE, with the state credit capped at \$5 million. • Any individual or company may apply for the credits. • Any commercial, office, industrial or rental residential building qualifies if it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as contributing building in a historic district so listed, or is eligible for inclusion on the registers ○ Has an approved Federal Tax Credit Part 1 certification provided by the National Park Service • Most interior and exterior work is eligible for the credit • New additions and site work do not qualify for the credit • Can be used in conjunction with grants for housing or façade work. • Unused credits will become refundable for projects placed in service on or after 2015 <p>2. Homeowner Properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides credits equal to 20% of qualified expenses, up to a credit value of \$50,000. • Landscaping, fencing, additions, garage work or other work outside the historic building generally do not qualify <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner-occupied residential structure • Listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, or a contributing building in a historic district so listed • Located in a Federal Census Tract that is at or below the State's family median income level • Homeowner must be a NY State taxpayer and the owner of a qualified historic home • Project must have qualifying rehabilitation costs that exceed \$5,000 • 5% of the total must be spent on exterior work • Work must meet the standards for rehabilitation adopted by the National Park Service • State Historic Preservation Officer must approve work before it begins <p>3. Non-historic buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936 are eligible for a 10% federal tax credit for rehabilitation expenses • The review process is less formal, but the following criteria will apply:
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It must be rehabilitated for non-residential use ○ At least 50% of existing walls must remain in place as external walls ○ At least 75% of existing external walls must remain as exterior or interior walls ○ At least 75% of the internal structural framework must remain in place
Tax Credits	New Markets Tax Credits (ESD)	<p>The NMTC program subsidizes long-term capital investment, through interest-only loans at below-market rates, to foster job creation and community development in “Low-Income Communities” statewide. Funds are an allocation of federal New Markets Tax Credits under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than \$10 million will be devoted to a single borrower • A portion of the loan may be forgiven at maturity <p>Borrowed funds may be applied to capital expenditures for the operating company, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate loans for acquisition, new construction, major rehabilitation • Machinery and equipment loans <p>Borrowed funds may be applied to real estate developments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial and commercial developments • Office and retail developments • Mixed-use developments including a residential component in limited circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding is not available for real estate developments containing residential development that is “for sale”, in which the residential rental income will exceed 80% of gross rental income, or in which Low-Income Housing Tax Credits are used <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <p>Borrower project must be located in a census tract that meets one of the following tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty rate: at least 20%, or • Median family income: at/below 80% of the region • Additional preference is given to borrowers in non-metro counties, and certain areas with particularly difficult conditions, termed “distressed” area <p>Preference will be given to projects meeting the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total development costs: between \$5 million and \$25 million • Job creation/retention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating companies: at least 1 permanent job per \$38,000 of total investment ○ Real estate developments: at least 1 permanent job per 350 sq. ft. developed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project readiness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 75% of project financing has been identified ○ If bank debt is involved, the lender has prior experience with NMTC financing • Other NY State involvement: the State is providing other forms of assistance that may be used to leverage the NMTC financing
Loans	Economic Development Fund (ESD)	<p>Provides general financial assistance for projects that create or retain jobs, or increase business activity in the State. Funds are available for construction, expansion, and rehabilitation of facilities; acquisition of machinery & equipment; working capital; and training full-time permanent employees. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of real estate • Demolition • Construction (incl. planning and design), renovation • Site and infrastructure • Machinery, equipment • Training • Feasibility planning; soft costs <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private businesses involved in industrial activity, manufacturing, warehousing/distribution • Research and development, high technology, service and other non-retail commercial enterprises • Not-for-profits • Municipalities, Local Development Corporations, Industrial Development Agencies <p>Examples of projects that are <u>not</u> eligible include: residential, casino, legal, medical, and nursing services.</p>
Loans	Manufacturing Assistance Program (ESD)	<p>Provides financial assistance for manufacturers to improve their operations through investing in capital projects that enhance productivity and competitiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds are capped at \$1,000,000. Award amount is determined by the magnitude of the improvements and their overall benefit to the company, the amount of private investment leveraged, and the economic impact of the manufacturer within its regional economy • Must be used for machinery, equipment and necessary building modifications • Company must demonstrate at least 20% improvement over baseline operations • Minimum of 85% of company workforce must be retained for 5 years <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <p>A minimum investment of \$1 million is required. Manufacturers must employ 50 to 1,000 workers and export at least 30% of their production beyond the immediate region, or supply at least 30% of</p>

		<p>their production to a prime manufacturer that exports beyond the region. Examples of eligible projects include those that are designed to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased production output; Improved process efficiency • Improvements in quality control • New product line • Resource conservation and/or pollution prevention • Revenue enhancements, cost reductions <p>Projects in which there are reductions in employee benefits and wages are <u>not</u> eligible.</p>
Loans	Job Development Authority Direct Loan Program (ESD)	<p>This is a state-guaranteed bond financing program that provides loan assistance to cover a portion of the cost of acquiring and renovating existing buildings, or constructing new buildings (Real Estate projects) including the “soft costs”, or for purchasing machinery and equipment (M&E projects) including the ‘soft costs’ (delivery, installation, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most cases, JDA loans can be for up to 40% of Real Estate projects or M&E projects • Loans up to 60% for projects located in Empire zones or economically distressed areas • The combination of a bank loan and a JDA loan cannot exceed 90% financing • JDA Real Estate loan is normally a second mortgage loan • M&E loans are secured by a first lien, co-equal with the bank’s lien on the M&E <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities used for manufacturing, distribution/warehousing, and selected services • Retail facilities involving customer visits to the business are <u>not</u> eligible <p>Working capital is <u>not</u> eligible</p>
Loans	Micro Enterprise Loan Fund (ESD)	<p>ESD has capitalized 3 revolving loan funds for financing small loans to NY State certified minority and women-owned businesses (MWBs) through locally based administering micro-lending corporations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan amount up to \$7,000 • Funds to be used for acquisition or improvement of real property and purchase of machinery and equipment • Interest rates are determined by the administering micro-lending corporation • Maximum loan term is 24 months <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant must be a small and high-risk, for-profit business • Must be a NY State certified MWBE • Annual gross revenue cannot exceed \$100,000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New start-ups must demonstrate entrepreneurial or other business training <p>Examples of expenses that are <u>not</u> eligible for program funds include: debt refinancing, residential construction or renovation, payment of taxes, projects of newspapers, broadcasting, medical facilities, libraries, community centers, or public infrastructure.</p>
Loans	Minority and Women Owned Businesses Programs (multiple) (ESD)	<p>Minority and Women Owned Business Development and Lending Program</p> <p>The program provides financial assistance to MWBEs as well as projects that assist the development of entrepreneurship among minority persons and women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lending in conjunction with local, community and regionally-based entities Lending for certified government contractors and eligible contractors Incubator assistance Technical assistance <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certified minority and/or women-owned business enterprises Banking organizations Technical assistance providers Incubator sponsors Municipalities, Authorities and Agencies Administering corporations <p>Minority and Women Owned Business Revolving Loan Trust Fund Program</p> <p>The program provides financial and technical assistance to MWBEs that are unable to access traditional financial services, to allow them to grow and flourish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working capital loans capped at \$35,000 Fixed asset loans capped at \$50,000 Assistance with completing loan applications Mentorship and peer group programs Credit Union services (some locations)
Loans	Small Business Revolving Loan Fund (ESD)	<p>small businesses, targeting those that have had difficulty accessing regular credit markets. It supports additional small business lending statewide, through 20 community development financial institutions and other community-based lending organizations serving regions of the State.</p> <p>Funds from the program used to finance an applicant loan cannot exceed 50% of the principal amount, and cannot exceed \$125,000.</p> <p>Loans are generally categorized as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro-Loans: principal amount less than or equal to \$25,000 Regular Loans: principal amount greater than \$25,000

Loans	New York State Linked Deposit Program (ESD)	<p>LDP is an interest rate subsidy program developed in 1993 to encourage and assist small businesses in NY State to make investments and undertake projects what will contribute to improving their performance and competitiveness. Eligible businesses can obtain commercial loans at subsidized interest rates from authorized commercial banks, savings banks, savings and loans, farm credit institutions or the NY Business Development Corp. The lenders are compensated with a deposit of NY State funds.</p> <p>Interest rate subsidy can be 2% or 3%, depending on the type of business and location</p>
Loans	Capital Access Program (ESD)	<p>The program provides matching funds to financial institutions for loan loss reserves as incentive to increase small business lending, to companies that otherwise find it difficult to obtain regular or sufficient bank financing. Partner financial institutions will enter into a CAP lender agreement with Empire State Development before enrolling a participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan capped at \$500,000 • Can be used with other term loans or lines of credit • Financing for working capital • Technology or facility upgrades • Business startups, expansions <p><u>Eligibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small business, independently owned, employ fewer than 100 workers

Public – Private Financing Success Story REMINGTON LOFTS

Construction on the Remington Lofts, a \$30 million renovation of the former Remington Rand building on Sweeney Street, began in 2008. Four years in the making, the project converted vacant, four-story canalside typewriter factory into 81 loft apartments, work studios, a restaurant, fitness facility, conference center and rooftop atrium.

The 1.8-acre parcel includes an approximately 175,000 square-foot four-story building, and a single-story, 14,000 square-foot brick building that was formerly the Buffalo-Niagara Electric Railway powerhouse. The site has been associated with commercial/industrial use dating back to the 1880s, including lumber storage, shingle manufacturing, the manufacture of carousels and amusement park rides, as well as the manufacture of typewriters. Most recently, the complex was occupied by various commercial tenants including a chemical company, building contractors, and cabinetry makers. The occupancy by the Herschell-Spillman Co. has made the site eligible for Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, valued at up to \$7.5 million, a key element in financing the project.

Public funding for the \$30 million project came from at least eight different local, state and federal channels. A new agreement between the Governor and the state Legislature in 2009 paved the way for the use of the NYS Brownfield Cleanup Program, which provided tax credits equivalent to \$1.8 million. Approximately \$1 million from the Restore New York grant program, coupled with matching funds from a community development grant assisted with demolition and reconstruction. The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York and NY Main Street provided \$981,000 for site improvements and public space enhancements along the canal and street. The Niagara County Industrial Development Agency put together a 14-year Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes (PILOT) agreement for property tax abatement on the improvements.

This project is a model of public/private financing for the redevelopment of a former brownfield, with public benefits leveraged upon private investment to bring about the revitalization of a major community landmark. As part of on-going implementation of the BOA, LWRP and the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Lumber City Development Corporation will play a major role facilitating and procuring similar funding strategies for projects throughout North Tonawanda.

6.1.3 Development Incentive Programs

The presence of incentive districts or economic development zones can improve the likelihood of redevelopment by offering assistance to potential investors. New York State provides several programs that offer enhanced financing and tax credits to developers of brownfield properties. The State's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) laws are another vehicle through which project financing could occur to spur redevelopment. Additionally, the Lumber City Development Corporation (LCDC) offers low-interest financing for business activities in North Tonawanda for justifiable business uses including, but not limited to, financing of fixed assets, inventory, and working capital. The LCDC offers flexible rates, terms, and conditions on loans of at least \$25,000.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used to support redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. TIF utilizes projected future gains in property tax revenue to cover principal and interest costs incurred through public borrowing. Although seldom utilized in New York State, a recent push to amend TIF laws was initiated in 2012 to broaden their use for economic development purposes.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Business Improvement District (BID) is an organization formed to provide enhanced services for the benefit of all district members. BID members pay an additional tax, and proceeds are used for services that benefit from economies of scale, such as advertising, streetscape improvements, security, and maintenance. The City of North Tonawanda does not currently have a formally recognized Business Improvement District. However, the Downtown Merchants Association of North Tonawanda is a dues-paying member organization involved with community activities that promote the historic downtown area, and could be a starting point for the establishment of a Business Improvement District. The benefits of a formal BID include enhanced fund raising capabilities via service fees, the ability to bond for capital projects, and the ability to apply for larger grant opportunities.



The above image was taken in September 2010 of the rehabilitation and renovation of the former Remington Rand

7 Appendices

(Submitted Under Separate Cover)

- A. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MEETING SUMMARIES**
- B. FINAL GEIS SCOPING DOCUMENT**
- C. HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
- D. MARKET ANALYSIS AND TOURISM MARKET ANALYSIS**
- E. MARKETING AND BRANDING MATERIALS**

- F. RIVER ROAD PROJECT SCOPING REPORT & TRAFFIC CAPACITY ANALYSIS**
- G. NORTH TONAWANDA CODE ARTICLE 103: ZONING ORDINANCE (UPDATES)**
- H. DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE FORM BASED CODE**
- I. FINANCIAL PROFORMA – RIVIERA THEATRE**