

NORTH END NEIGHBORHOODS REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK

Geneva, New York

October 2013 (FINAL)



NORTH END NEIGHBORHOODS BOA

Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

The New York Department of State provides grants to local governments to help them create revitalization strategies for neighborhoods and areas that are affected by brownfields (properties with real or perceived contamination) or economic distress.

The City of Geneva is pursuing a BOA designation for the North End neighborhoods that would allow the City to access state implementation funds.

Related City Initiatives

Housing Study & Neighborhood Initiatives

In 2008, Geneva's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives launched a city-wide approach toward revitalization based on strategic neighborhood initiatives and investments. The City's work builds on the recommendations outlined in a 2008 housing and neighborhood study prepared by czb, llc. Specific housing revitalization strategies and recommendations for the North End neighborhoods are well aligned with the revitalization goals for the North End neighborhoods BOA and help to inform the area-wide planning approach.

Waterfront Revitalization Plans

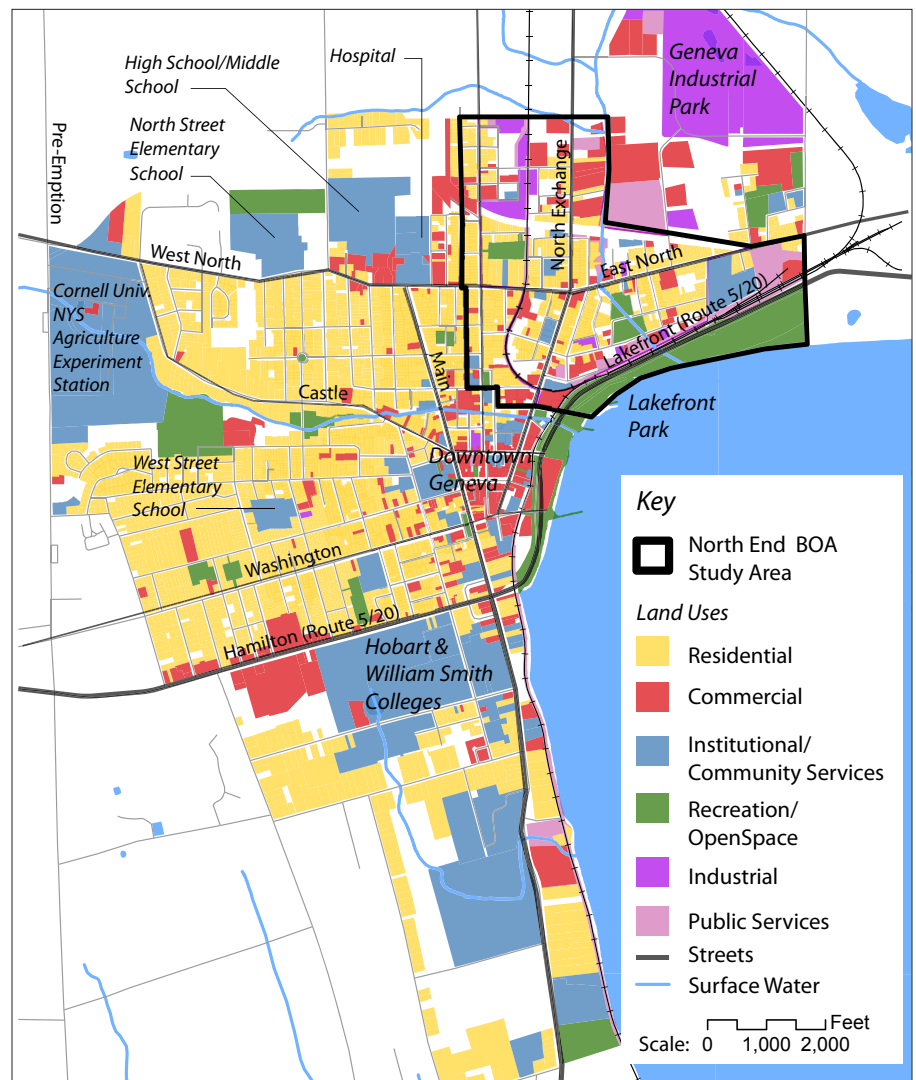
The City of Geneva has undertaken a range of planning efforts focused on the revitalization of the City's waterfront and downtown areas. The 1997 Master Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) established the groundwork for subsequent visioning sessions and targeted revitalization efforts. The outcome of these efforts, the 2012 Waterfront Infrastructure Feasibility Study, outlines concrete actions to improve the waterfront and strengthen connections to downtown. The North End BOA process recognizes the need to build on the waterfront revitalization recommendations and enhance connections between the waterfront and the North End neighborhoods.

OVERVIEW

In 2012, the City of Geneva, New York initiated a planning process for the City's North End neighborhoods. The City secured funding from the New York Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program to complete a Pre-Nomination Study that can help to guide and coordinate future neighborhood revitalization initiatives in the North End neighborhoods, with particular emphasis on the area's brownfield properties. The City's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives is leading the North End neighborhoods BOA process with support from an advisory committee and a consultant team (Skeo Solutions, Investment Consulting Associates, Sustainable Strategies 2050).

During fall 2012, the consultant team analyzed existing conditions throughout the North End neighborhoods and gathered information about properties and areas potentially impacted by contamination. On January 29, 2013, the City's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives and the consultant team convened stakeholder discussions and a community meeting to gather community feedback on the existing conditions and develop a vision and set of revitalization strategies for the North End neighborhoods.

CONTEXT



GOALS

The purpose of the North End BOA process is to develop a vision and action plan for the North End neighborhoods that:

- Identifies catalyst zones and properties.
- Identifies infrastructure improvements.
- Addresses challenges and builds on local assets.
- Outlines strategies in a unified concept plan.
- Builds community capacity for implementation.

APPROACH

The North End neighborhoods BOA process utilizes a neighborhood or area-wide planning approach to ensure that targeted revitalization, development concepts and investments take into account the needs of neighborhood residents along with market considerations and physical conditions. The area-wide approach focuses on high-impact strategies across the following revitalization themes:

- Economic Development.
- Neighborhood Quality of Life.
- Open Space and Connectivity.



Community stakeholders discuss potential economic development strategies (left); community members evaluate existing conditions in the study area (bottom left); young neighborhood residents share their ideas for the North End neighborhoods (bottom right)



DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The outcome of the North End Neighborhoods BOA Pre-Nomination Study is summarized in this document. The document contains several sections:

- 4 North End BOA Study Area
- 6 Proposed Revitalization Strategies
- 8 Economic Development
- 10 Neighborhood Quality of Life
- 12 Open Space and Connectivity
- 14 Priority Brownfield Sites
- 16 Recommendations and Near-Term Actions

PLANNING PROCESS

The City's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives is developing the North End Neighborhoods Pre-Nomination Study through a six-month planning process. The process began with the assembly of an advisory committee composed of city staff, neighborhood residents and community partners. Through close coordination with businesses, residents, city officials and community partners, the Office of Neighborhood Initiatives and the consultant team designed a collaborative approach to engage community stakeholders in the three-step process outlined below.

Assessment (October 2-3, 2012)

An initial advisory committee meeting and series of stakeholder conversations identified project goals, neighborhood assets and challenges.

Strategy Development (January 29, 2013)

Working session with the advisory group, stakeholder focus group discussions and a community meeting provided an overview of existing conditions and small group discussions for citizens to help develop and refine revitalization strategies for the North End neighborhoods.

Action (April 18, 2013)

Strategic planning workshop with advisory committee prioritized near-term actions to inform future BOA activities, economic development and neighborhood revitalization initiatives.

Implementation

Recommendations from the planning process form the basis of the City's Pre-Nomination Study and application to enroll a 430-acre portion of the North End neighborhoods in the New York Department of State BOA program. In addition, these recommendations provide a framework that can guide neighborhood actions, City initiatives and help to coordinate funding, investment and implementation of an area-wide revitalization strategy for the North End neighborhoods.

NORTH END NEIGHBORHOODS

BOA STUDY AREA

The Study Area for the North End Neighborhoods BOA includes portions of four Geneva neighborhoods: East Lakeview, Upper North, Historic North and City Central.

The 430-acre Study Area extends from the City's northern boundary to the Seneca Lake shoreline and generally from Genesee Street to the City's eastern boundary.

History

The North End neighborhoods have historically functioned as a mixture of one and two family homes, small businesses and manufacturing facilities. The area's access to rail lines and proximity to the Erie Canalway once supported a thriving network of small manufacturing businesses. Economic shifts in central and western New York have seen the decline of small businesses and a reduction in the viability of traditional manufacturing. Today, the North End neighborhoods encompass a wide range of uses and are home to diverse ethnic groups with strong cultural heritage.

Demographic Characteristics

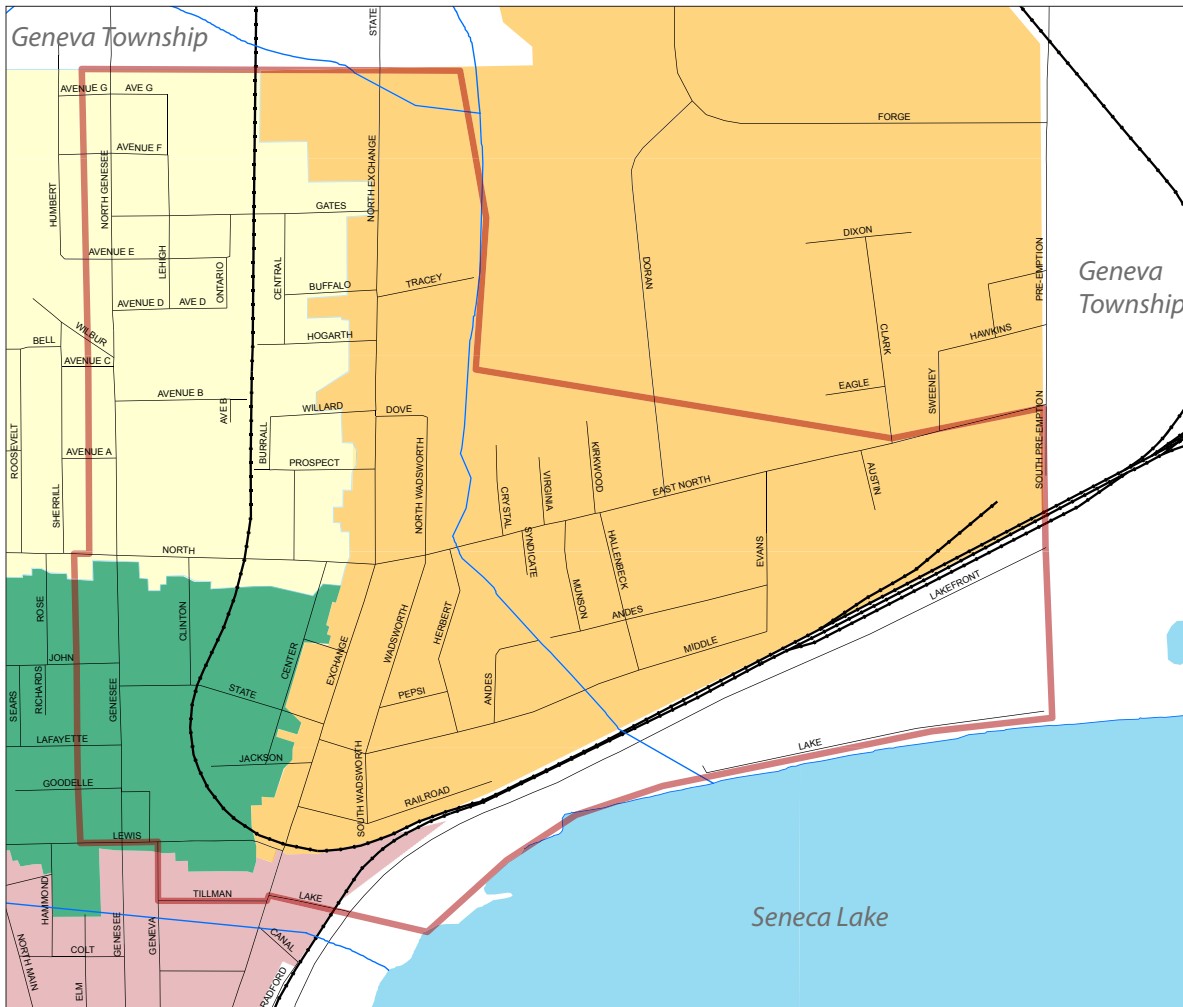
The 2010 population of the Study Area was approximately 2,200, compared to a city-wide population of 13,261. Additional selected demographic characteristics for the Study Area are listed below.

- 2,112 housing units (25% vacancy).
- Median Household Income \$30,240.
- 18% African-American.
- 75% White.
- 25% Hispanic/Latino.

Analysis of demographic, education and police data for the North End neighborhoods indicates that the area faces the following social and economic disadvantages when compared to the City of Geneva as a whole.

- Lower median household incomes.
- Lower levels of educational attainment.
- Higher rates of vacant housing.
- Perception of higher crime rates.

STUDY AREA MAP



Key

North End BOA

Proposed BOA Boundary (~430 acres)

Geneva Neighborhoods

- Upper North
- Historic North
- East Lakeview
- City Central

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Use Challenges

Stakeholder discussions and analysis of existing conditions identified the following neighborhood challenges.

- The creek and rail lines cut off circulation resulting in isolated neighborhood pockets.
- Scattered industrial uses, utilities and vacant parcels fragment the neighborhoods.
- Commercial uses are dispersed and many function as storage or warehouse space.
- The North End lacks a neighborhood center of activity and services.
- Poorly-regulated multifamily conversions compromise housing quality and neighborhood pride.

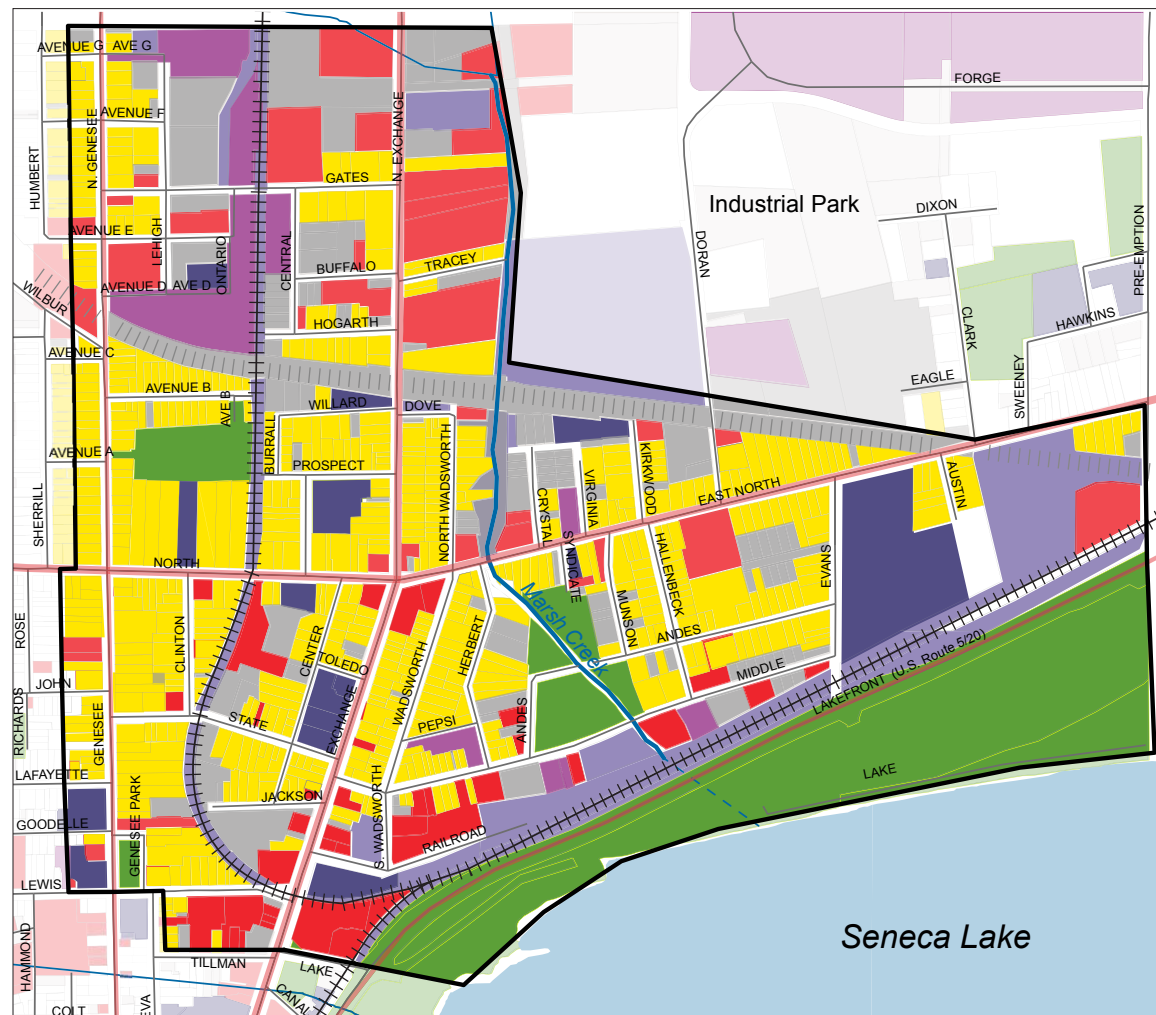
Land Use Assets

Participants felt that strategies can build on the following neighborhood assets:

- Strong cultural heritage.
- Stable residential pockets.
- Exchange Street entrance corridor.
- Active manufacturing core.
- Significant public land and open space.
- Proximity to waterfront.



EXISTING LAND USE



Existing Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Community Services (city services, churches, civic uses)
- Public Services (utilities, rights-of-way)
- Recreation
- Conservation/Open Space
- Vacant

Other Features

- Arterial Streets
- Collector Streets
- Railroad
- Elevated Rail Line (inactive)
- Parcels
- Surface Water
- North End BOA Study Area

Note: This map is for planning purposes only; all boundaries and locations are approximate. Land use designations derived from City of Geneva 2010 parcel and tax assessors data; uses generalized based on use codes field (i.e., 200 - Residential, 300 - Vacant, 400 - Commercial, 500 - Recreation, 600 - Community Services, 700 - Industrial, 800 - Public Services, 900 - Open Space.)



A VISION FOR THE NORTH END NEIGHBORHOODS

While Geneva's North End neighborhoods face a range of social, economic and land use challenges, the community has an opportunity to build on the residents' pride in the neighborhood, strong culture and valuable assets.

This set of redevelopment strategies integrates key themes, strategic opportunities and priorities identified during advisory committee, stakeholder and community discussions.



Sections on the following pages provide more detailed strategies and recommendations for the following revitalization themes:

- Economic Development
- Neighborhood Quality of Life
- Open Space and Connectivity




Revitalization Themes

Specific priorities are listed below by revitalization theme and shown in corresponding colors on the map to the right

Support Economic Development

-  Strengthen manufacturing and innovation hub
-  Promote neighborhood commercial center

Improve Neighborhood Quality of Life

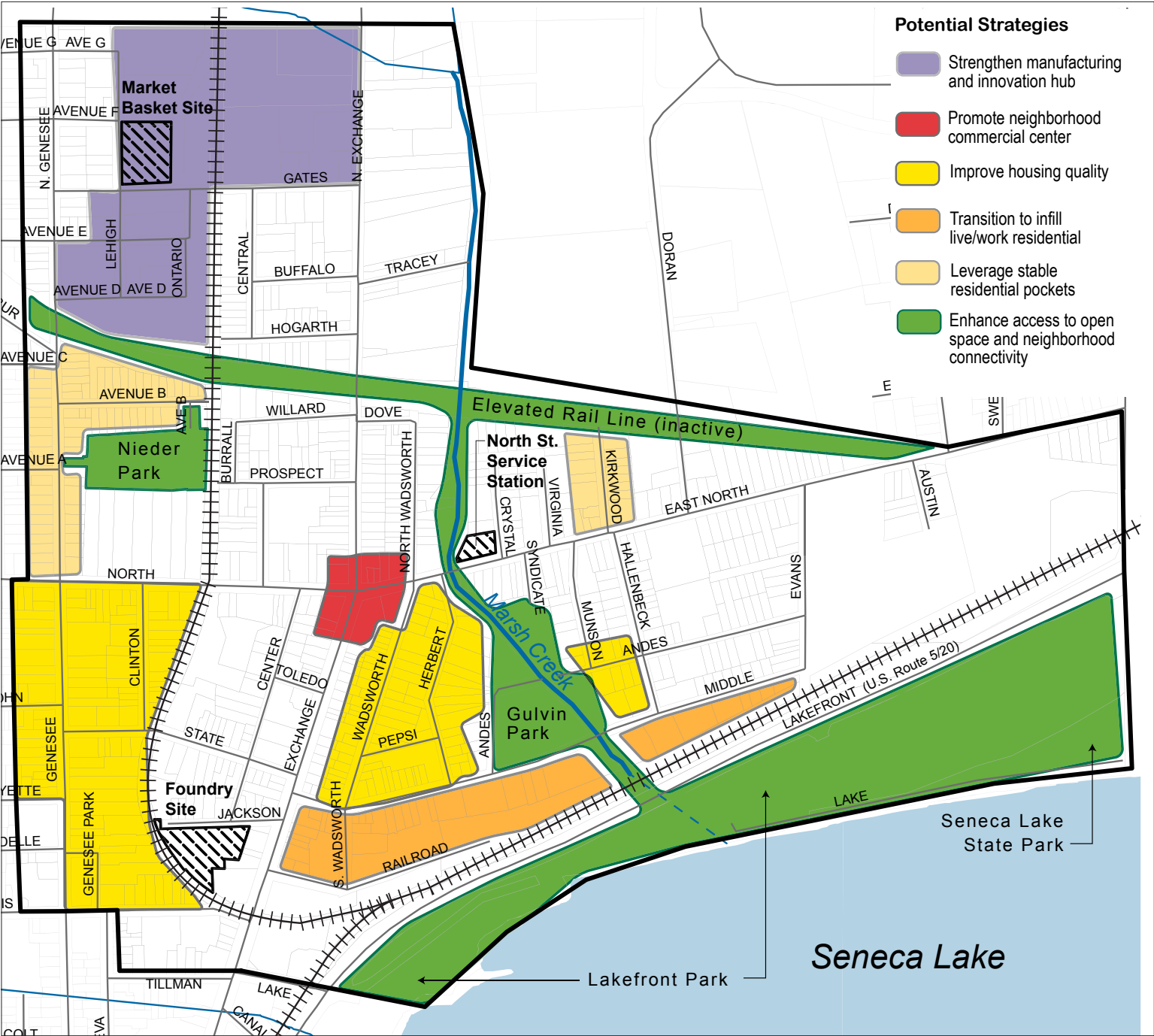
-  Improve housing quality
-  Leverage stable residential pockets to build pride and investment
-  Transition vacant property to infill live/work residential

Enhance Access to Open Space and Neighborhood Connectivity

-  Connect open space network to creek, lake, downtown and regional trails

Photos below from left to right: Exchange Street corridor, Marsh Creek, elevated rail line, vacant building at intersection of North and Exchange Streets, Torrey Park neighborhood.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Trends

Economic analyses evaluated trends in employment and economic sectors for the City of Geneva, Ontario County and comparable cities in New York State. The key findings and general market strategies are summarized below; site-specific economic development recommendations are presented in the photos and map to the right.

Employment

From 2001 to 2011 Ontario County lost 1,083 manufacturing jobs. However, the County gained significantly in professional and business services, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality, accounting for over 1,000 new jobs in each of the three sectors. Employment associated with professional and business services in Ontario County has increased 36% since 2001.

Strong Economic Sectors

Ontario County has attracted or retained significantly more jobs in the following sectors than might have been predicted by examining national or state trends:

- Professional and Business Services
- Manufacturing
- Trade Transportation and Utilities
- Leisure and Hospitality

Potential Market Strategies

Geneva's economic strengths provide a foundation for the following potential market strategies:

- Intensify efforts to attract and retain new businesses.
- Collaborate with Greater Rochester Enterprise.
- Encourage local businesses to find and attract new partners.
- Encourage and foster small local manufacturing and production activities.
- Enhance job training outcomes with strong ties to business demand.
- Consider rezoning options to increase certainty in development review process.
- Leverage and improve connection to Wine Trail and local food cluster.



Railroad underpass at Gates Avenue



Market Basket Site

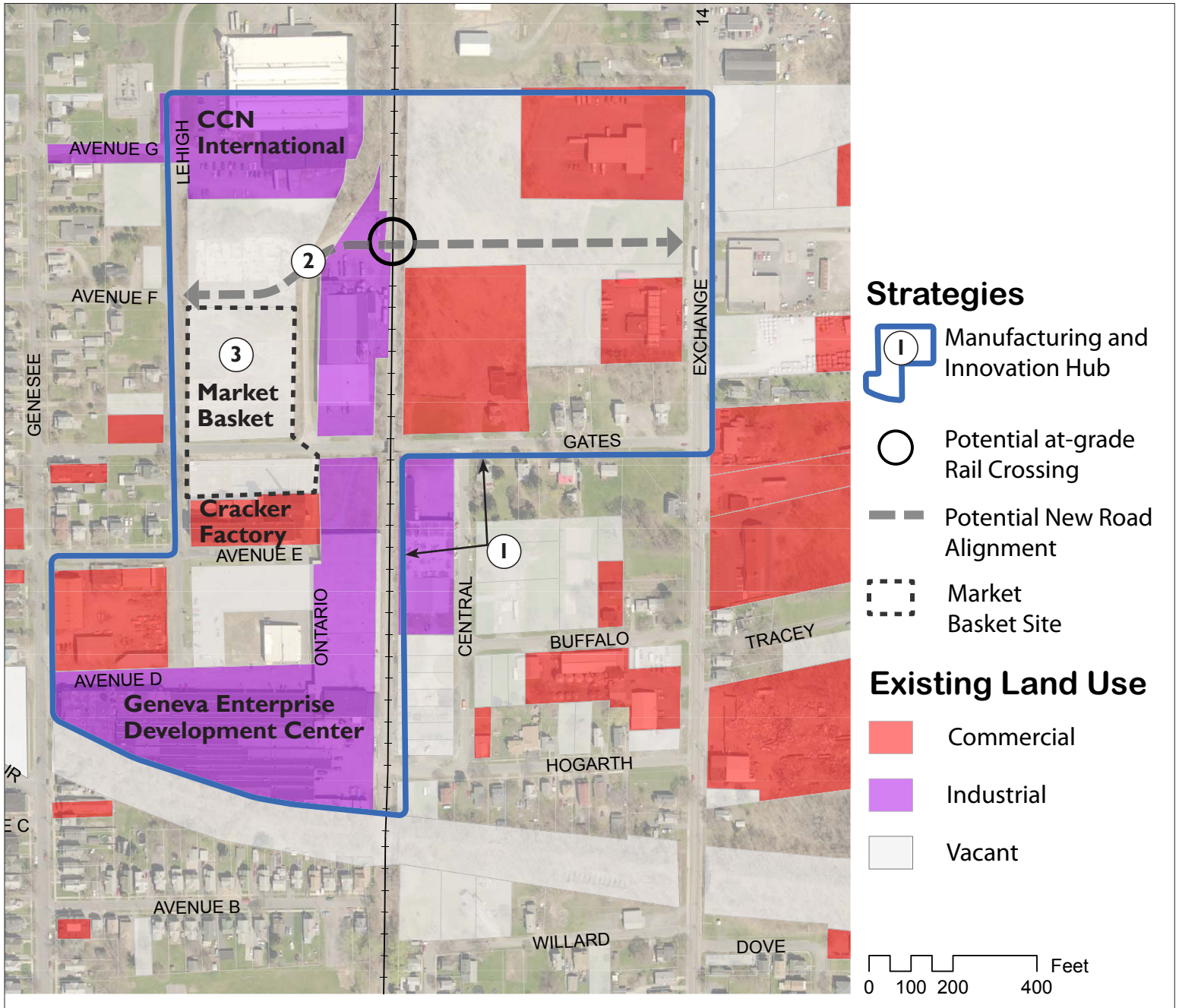


Geneva Enterprise Development Center



1 Promote Manufacturing and Innovation Hub

- Focus efforts to attract and retain a cluster of small scale, light industrial manufacturing businesses and supporting uses in northwest portion of Study Area.
- Leverage Geneva Enterprise Development Center to expand entrepreneurship and business incubation.
- Engage local businesses and educational institutions in workforce development, job training and capacity-building.
- Foster regional collaboration with Greater Rochester Enterprise to promote the Manufacturing and Innovation Hub.



2 Create New Road Alignment

- Establish new east-west circulation connecting Lehigh and Exchange Streets.
- Consider a new road alignment, with an at-grade rail crossing, that traverses vacant City-owned property north of the Market Basket site and privately owned vacant property east of rail.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvements and road alignment with CCN International's plans to expand its furniture manufacturing facility.

3 Re-Position Market Basket

- Prepare site for reuse through site closure, removal of fence, re-grading and formal indication that site is ready for reuse.
- Evaluate potential uses such as expansion of adjacent manufacturing operations, partial use of the property for new road alignment to enhance circulation, and redevelopment as commercial, manufacturing or business incubation space.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Opportunities & Principles

- Pursue housing revitalization strategies to improve quality of housing in areas prone to poorly managed rental properties.
- Create a network of local neighborhood associations to help build pride and ensure minimum standards for property maintenance.
- Transition under-utilized commercial space and vacant property to infill live/work residential.
- Provide structured activities for teenagers.
- Establish centrally located commercial services that provide groceries and basic amenities for residents.
- Improve streetscape infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety and access and build neighborhood pride.



Structures on Wadsworth Street (top) and Avenue B (right) show varied housing quality; commercial buildings on Exchange Street (middle) and Middle Street (bottom).

I Improve Quality of Housing

Participant discussions and previous housing studies identify specific actions to improve the quality of housing in the North End neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Action

- Residents create neighborhood associations to establish minimum property maintenance standards, promote neighborhood awareness and build neighborhood pride.
- Beginning at the block level, residents form core groups with “block captains” assigned to different streets to establish the organizational structure for neighborhood associations.

Leverage Stable Residential Areas

- Build neighborhood pride and ensure sustained investment through increased frequency of neighborhood gatherings to promote the neighborhoods’ cultural heritage.
- Residents pursue community-driven marketing of for-sale homes to friends and relatives and to employees at the nearby employment centers (colleges, downtown and hospital).

Historic District

- Leverage Genesee Park historic district designation to improve housing on Genesee Street corridor.

Code Enforcement

- Target code enforcement activities to address chronic mismanagement of rental properties on Genesee, Clinton, Wadsworth and Andes streets.

Targeted Demolition

- Follow up code enforcement with targeted acquisition and demolition of strategic properties.
- Develop plan for maintaining and repositioning the resulting vacant lots.

Streetscape Improvements

- Work with residents to invest in sidewalk and curb improvements and new street lighting in areas targeted for code enforcement to create a sense of pride and ownership.



2 Transition to Infill Live/Work

Participants noted that views of the lake from East Lakeview are a valuable asset for the neighborhood. Clusters of certain vacant and under-utilized properties on Middle Street may offer opportunities for market rate live/work-type housing that takes advantage of potential lake views and the area's proximity to downtown.

Evaluation

- Coordinate with local businesses, property owners and real estate professionals to identify vacant land and structures on Middle Street with potential for redevelopment.
- Evaluate environmental conditions at priority properties.

Repositioning

- Identify clusters of properties with potential to accommodate infill live/work housing.
- Determine potential steps to facilitate reuse (ownership transfer options, market potential, developer interest).

3 Expand Access to Services

Participant discussions highlighted a lack of basic services and activities for teenagers in the North End neighborhoods.

Gateway and Neighborhood Commercial Center

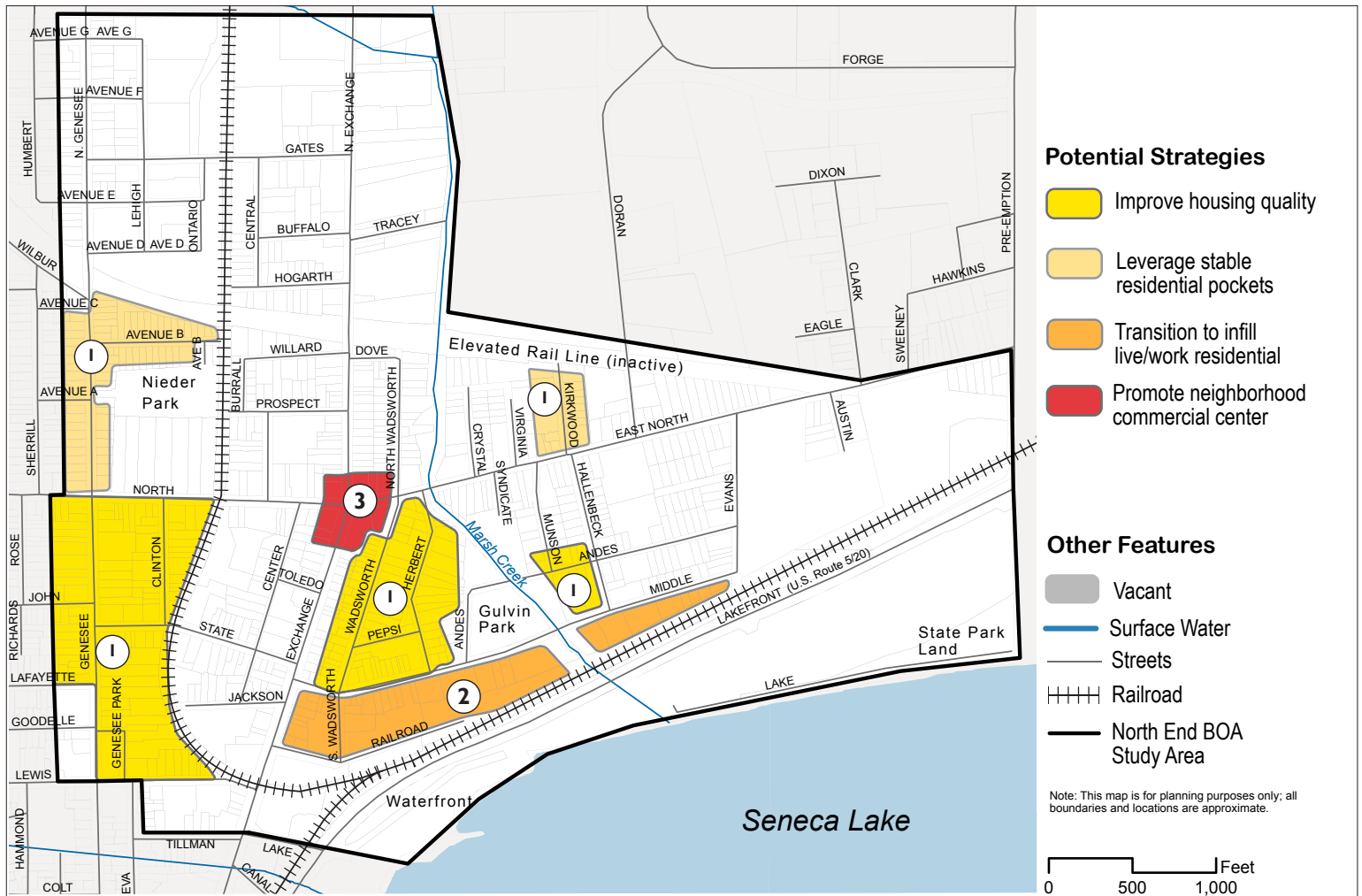
- Celebrate neighborhood culture and pride through investments in streetscape infrastructure and public art.
- Redevelop strategic vacant properties near intersection of North and Exchange Streets; market intersection as neighborhood commercial center.

Access to Community Centers

- Coordinate with youth organizations to create new opportunities to serve teens in the evening (6-9 pm).
- Coordinate with transit authorities to provide safe transportation from North End neighborhoods to youth centers on Pre-Emption and at Geneva's Community Center.

Neighborhood Grocery

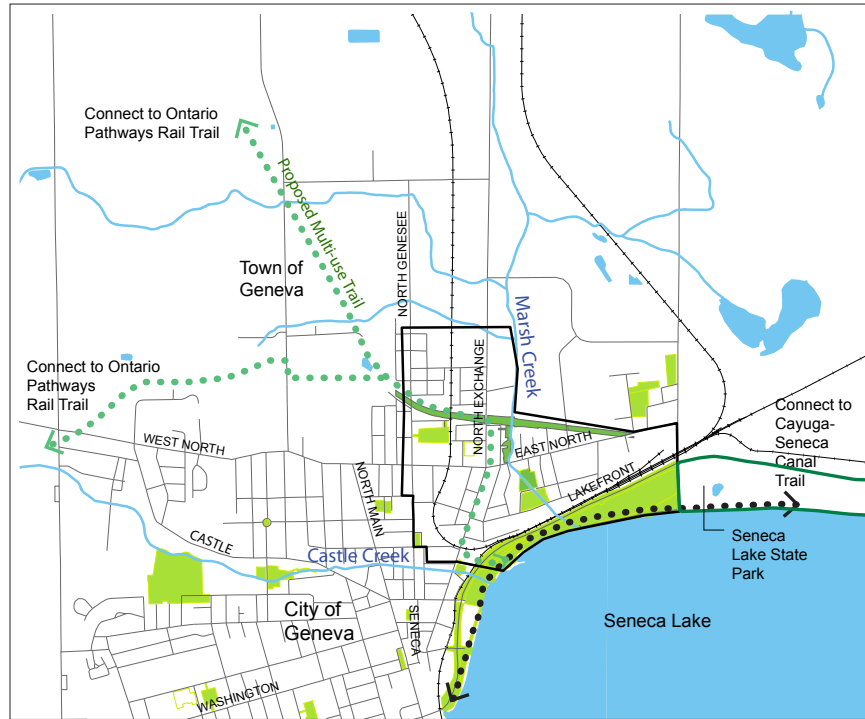
- Establish mobile food market at intersection of North and Exchange Streets to test market for a grocery store.
- Evaluate options to reuse vacant properties for a neighborhood market.



OPEN SPACE & CONNECTIVITY

Opportunities & Principles

- Increase programming at existing parks.
- Utilize Marsh Creek and abandoned rail line to create a network of greenway trails.
- Connect North End neighborhoods to planned trails.
- Increase access to waterfront.
- Develop park at former Foundry site.
- Establish safe pedestrian crossings at busy intersections and rail lines.



1 New Programming at Parks

Participants noted that the existing parks in the North End neighborhood are underutilized due to lack of programming.

- Consider improvements at Nieder Park to define the space, increase connections to adjacent neighborhoods and address stormwater drainage issues.
- Pursue physical or programmatic improvements at Gulvin Park that incorporate watershed education elements, taking advantage of the park's proximity to Marsh Creek.

2 Multi-use Park at the Foundry

A local artist and entrepreneur has proposed an integrated sculpture park and skateboard park for the Foundry site on Jackson Street. Participants identified the following considerations to help refine a recreational reuse concept for the Foundry site (See page 14-13 for additional information regarding the status of the Foundry site).

- Skateboarding park concept offers recreation alternatives for young people.
- Consider additional amenities such as walking trails, lighting, seating, pavilion and grilling area.
- Establish a formal pedestrian connection between Jackson Street and Genesee Street by utilizing a rail crossing and pathway to form an integrated open space system that addresses safety concerns and responds to pedestrian route preferences.
- Preserve open space for residences crowded by commercial properties on Jackson and Exchange Streets.



Basketball court at Gulvin Park (top); Foundry site (bottom).

3 North End Greenways

Participants identified the following strategies to create a network of greenways utilizing Marsh Creek and abandoned rail lines to reconnect the North End neighborhoods with the city and waterfront.

- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing trails and bikeways, such as Ontario Pathways to the west and Canalway to the east.
- Extend the proposed Town Trail from the Geneva Community Center to Lehigh Valley Station and eastward along abandoned elevated rail line.
- Establish greenway trail on publicly owned land adjacent to Marsh Creek.
- Evaluate feasibility of infrastructure improvements needed to support an interconnected greenway system (constructing new bridges along the elevated rail line; evaluating potential trail routing, flood plain and green infrastructure considerations along Marsh Creek).
- Identify potential pedestrian connections from the North End neighborhoods across Route 5/20 and rail line to the waterfront.

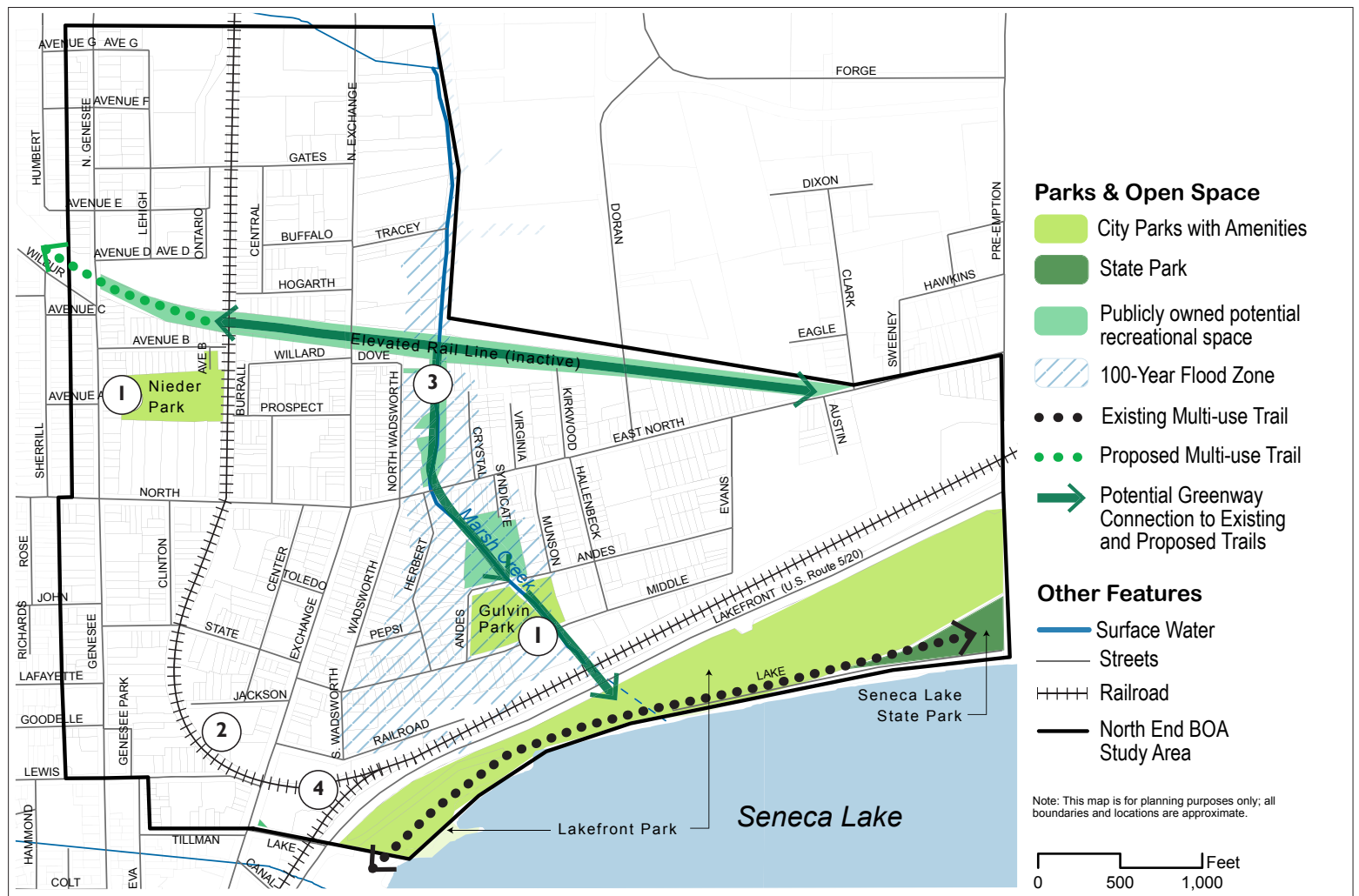


Marsh Creek and tunnel under the inactive elevated rail line.

4 Rail Infrastructure

Discussions identified long-term opportunities to address significant access barriers in and around the North End neighborhoods.

- Plans for abandonment of sections along the Finger Lakes Railroad line envision rerouting rail traffic away from residential areas and the waterfront (10-15 years).
- Rail infrastructure changes coupled with safe pedestrian and bicycle access across Route 5/20 could enhance pedestrian and auto access to downtown and the waterfront from the North End neighborhoods.

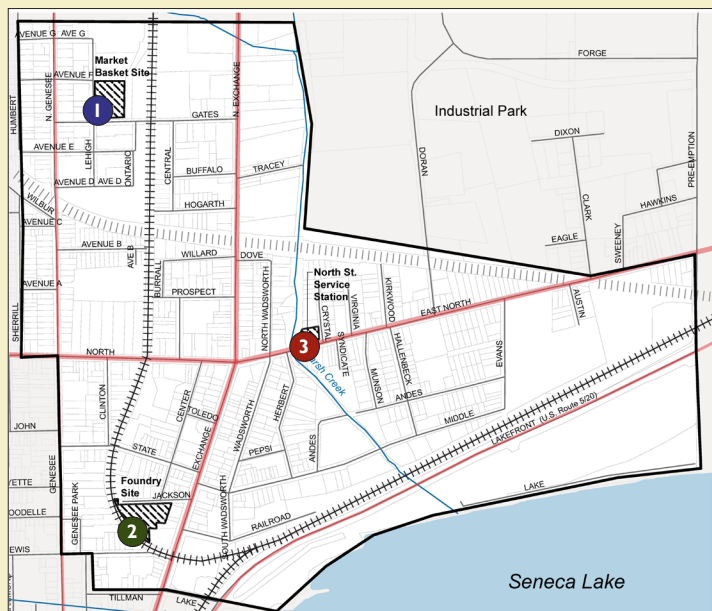


TRANSFORMING LIABILITIES INTO COMMUNITY ASSETS

Site-Specific Analysis

The consultant team has compiled information on the status of three known brownfield sites, prioritized by the City of Geneva for consideration as part of the North End Neighborhoods BOA Pre-Nomination Study. Site snapshots summarize the following considerations based on the best information available to date from New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) and the City of Geneva.

- Site History - former site operations and sources of contamination.
- Site Status - completed or planned cleanup actions and land use restrictions placed on properties to protect public health and the environment.
- Potential Future Land Uses - relevant reuse goals specific to the three sites based on stakeholder discussions and previous proposals.
- Steps to Facilitate Reuse - regulatory, administrative and implementation activities to support desired future uses.



Priority Brownfield Sites

1 Market Basket (63 Gates Avenue)

Owner: City of Geneva
 Parcels: 90.15-4-67; 90.20-1-11
 Size: 2.5 acres

History

Former razor and glass manufacturer and later warehousing, storage and distribution facility; site operations led to soil and ground water contamination.

Status

- Response actions have been implemented through the NYDEC Environmental Restoration Program (ERP).
- On-site structures were demolished in 2002; soil excavation and removal was conducted in 2008-09 based on a 2005 Record of Decision; ground water monitoring is ongoing.
- A Site Management Plan and Final Engineering Report have been completed.
- Land use restrictions include limitations on single-family residential and ground water use as well as soil management during construction activities.

Potential Uses

- Commercial/industrial uses such as food cluster commerce, business incubator to support emerging innovation hub.

Steps to Facilitate Reuse

- Proactively engage NYDEC to approve site closure documents (expected in 2013).
- Evaluate all covenants/restrictions and their impact on site reuse.
- Develop a site preparation, regrading and fence removal plan to make the site shovel ready.
- Start preliminary marketing of the site to targeted users.



Market Basket Site

2 Foundry (23 Jackson Street)

Owner: City of Geneva
Parcels: 104.8-1-34
Size: 2 acres

History

Former iron foundry active until 1990s; foundry operations led to contamination of structures and off-site soils.

Status

- Site enrolled in ERP program in 2000; City completed demolition, asbestos abatement, removal of hazardous materials in 2005.
- Site investigations revealed minor sub-slab soil contamination (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, and phenols) and off-site lead contamination at residential and commercial properties.
- Off-site soil sampling is planned for spring/summer of 2013.
- Anticipated use restrictions will likely limit future use to commercial/industrial activities and require a soil management plan during construction activities.

Potential Uses

- Recreational uses are anticipated with potential for construction of trails, light structures and a skateboard park.

Steps to Facilitate Reuse

- Discuss site closure requirements with NYDEC.
- Determine (in consultation with NYDEC) if risk assessment may be needed to ensure site conditions are protective of recreational/other intended uses.
- Determine response actions, if any, for off-site properties based on sampling results.
- Develop a plan to complete slab demolition and removal and prepare site for reuse.



Foundry Site

3 Service Station (53 North Street)

Owner: Privately owned
Parcels: 90.84-1-56
Size: 0.5 acre

History

Former gas station and convenience store known as Joe's Service Station. Several spills caused release of gasoline at the site from 1992-2008.

Status

- NYDEC addressed leaking underground storage tanks in 2011 associated with a spill.
- Tanks were removed and 3,800 tons of contaminated soil were excavated and disposed of in an off-site landfill.
- Contaminated soil remains around building foundations.
- NYDEC has placed a lien on the property for unrecovered response costs.

Potential Uses

- Discussions with property owner are needed to determine owner's interest in property and potential uses.
- Community reuse goals include recreation-based commerce, open space and neighborhood market.

Steps to Facilitate Reuse

- Discuss timeline for closure of the spill with NYDEC.
- Discuss settlement of cost-recovery lien with NYDEC.
- Discuss reuse alternatives for the site with property owner.



North Street Service Station

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

The North End Neighborhoods Pre-Nomination Study and accompanying revitalization framework offer a strategic approach to area-wide revitalization that can inform the City's BOA application, as well as capital improvements, neighborhood initiatives, programming and site-specific redevelopment efforts.

The project's advisory committee and community members have prioritized potential strategies and identified the near-term actions listed below to advance economic development, improve neighborhood quality of life and enhance open space and transportation connections in the North End Neighborhoods.

Economic Development

- Advocate for efficient regulatory closure of Market Basket site and prepare property for marketing and reuse.
- Amend zoning map and code in North End neighborhoods to increase certainty in development process.
- Promote Manufacturing and Innovation Hub at Gates Avenue and Lehigh Street.

Neighborhood Quality of Life

- Improve streetscape and pedestrian amenities on strategic residential blocks to build sense of pride.
- Develop neighborhood commercial center at North and Exchange.
- Develop plan for selective demolition, property maintenance and reuse.

Open Space and Connectivity

- Evaluate long-term options for safe pedestrian and bike crossing at 5/20.
- Develop recreational reuse framework and concept plan for Foundry site.
- Enhance recreation programming at Nieder Park and Gulvin Park.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Sage Gerling, Office of Neighborhood Initiatives
- Collette Barnard, Office of Neighborhood Initiatives
- Marty Davis, Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center
- Matt Horn, City Manager
- John Greco, Ward 6 City Council Representative

Advisory Committee

- Rick Bley, Geneva Industrial Development Authority
- John Brennan, Geneva Development Services/Code Enforcement
- Lisa Cleckner, Hobart & William Smith Finger Lakes Institute
- Paul Cosentino, Geneva Department of Public Works
- Lt. Eric Heieck, Geneva Police Department
- Dave Linger, Geneva Local Development Corporation
- Brandon Phillips, Cracker Factory

Community Partners

- Residents and churches of North End neighborhoods
- Hobart & William Smith Colleges
- Geneva Local Development Corporation
- Geneva Industrial Development Agency
- Greater Rochester Enterprise
- NeighborWorks Rochester
- The Smith Opera House

State Agencies

- Julie Sweet, New York Department of State - Brownfield Opportunity Area Program
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation

Consulting Team

- Skeo Solutions
- Investment Consulting Associates - North America
- Sustainable Strategies 2050



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