Town of Tonawanda

Restoring Our Waterfront

Enhancing Tonawanda's Economy, Environment and Community

Healthy Niagara – Waterfront Land Use Plan Update

Public Meeting
October 10, 2012

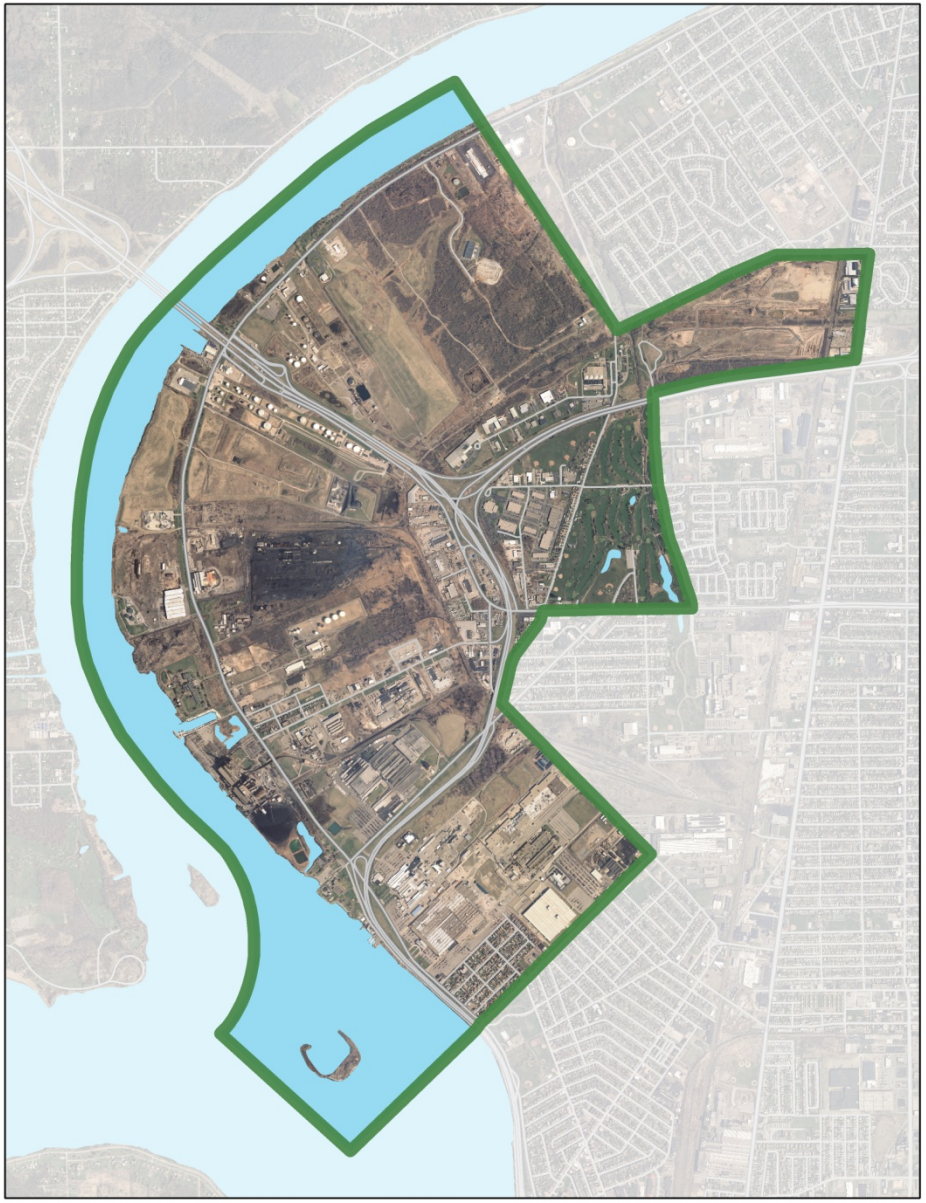
Clark Patterson Lee
DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

The Cecil Group
Planning and Design

FXM Associates
Economic Planning & Research

Today's Agenda

- Community Context and Existing Conditions
- Public Input and Ideas
- Vision and Goals
- Future Land Uses
- Target Area Recommendations



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Initial Public Input

Right now, Tonawanda's waterfront is:

- Unappreciated
- Empty
- Great natural resources
- Not really accessible
- Part nice/part bad
- Contaminated, Heavy industrial
- Diamond/emerald in the rough

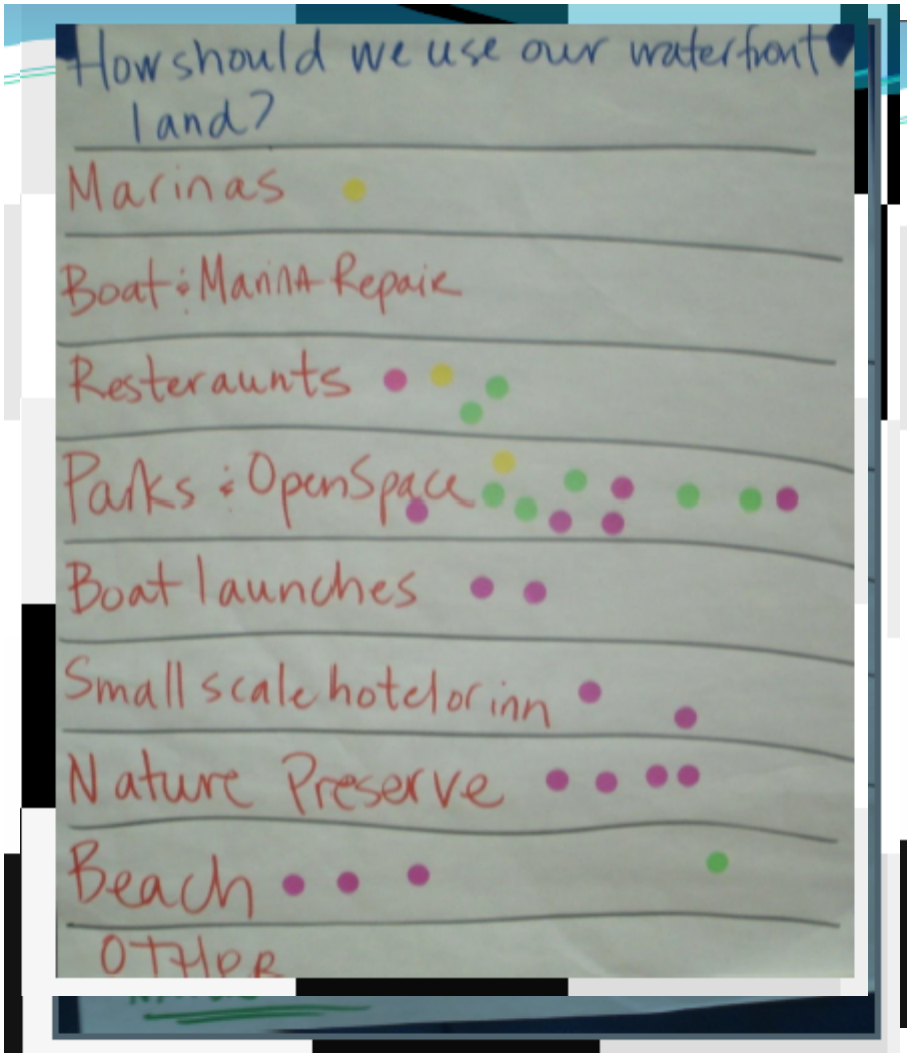
Initial Public Input

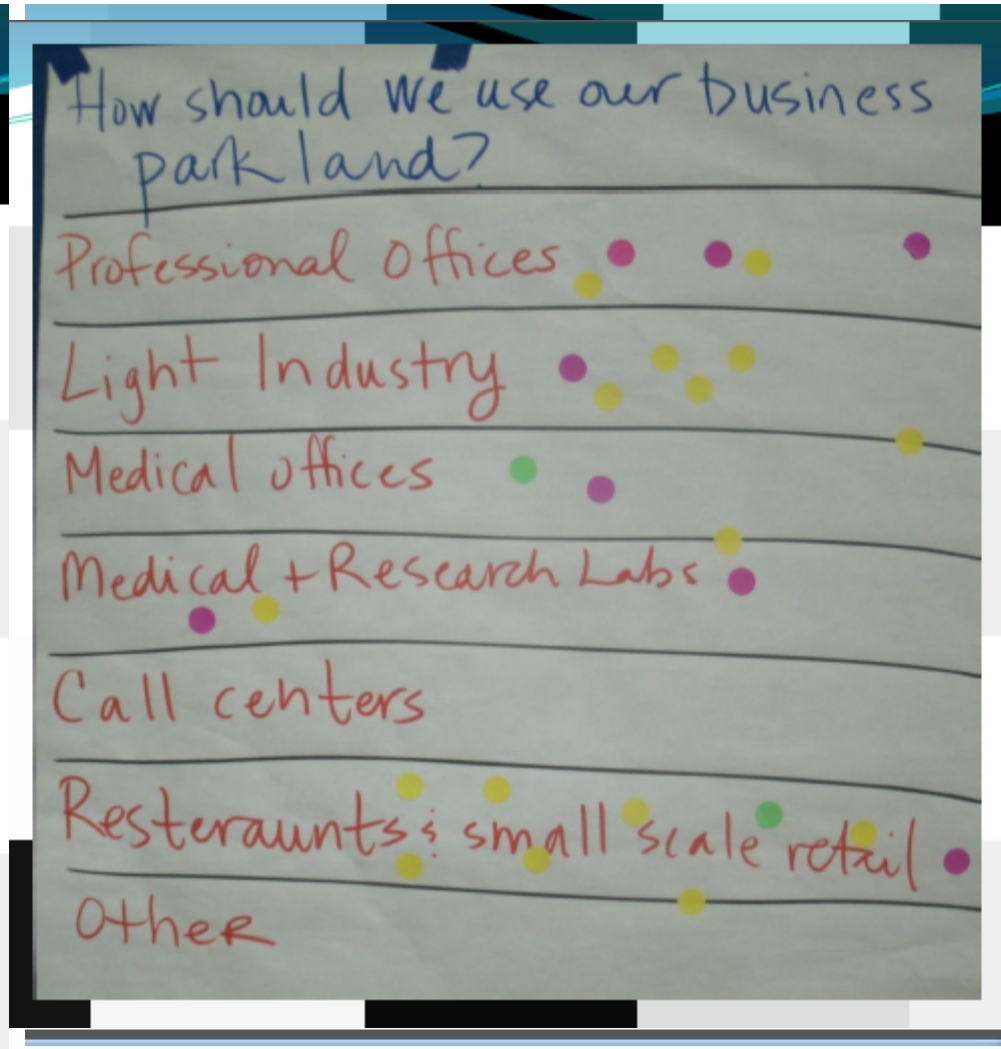
In the future, I envision it to be:

- Accessible
- Green
- Dynamic
- Multi-use
- Fun
- Healthy
- A leader/model
- Prosperous
- Heavy industrial
- Marry heavy industrial with waterfront access
- Innovative, World-class

Residents' Input

Residents' Input





Community Context

Four Erie County municipalities share the riverfront

Opportunity for expanded collaboration in the future

Regional consideration is key

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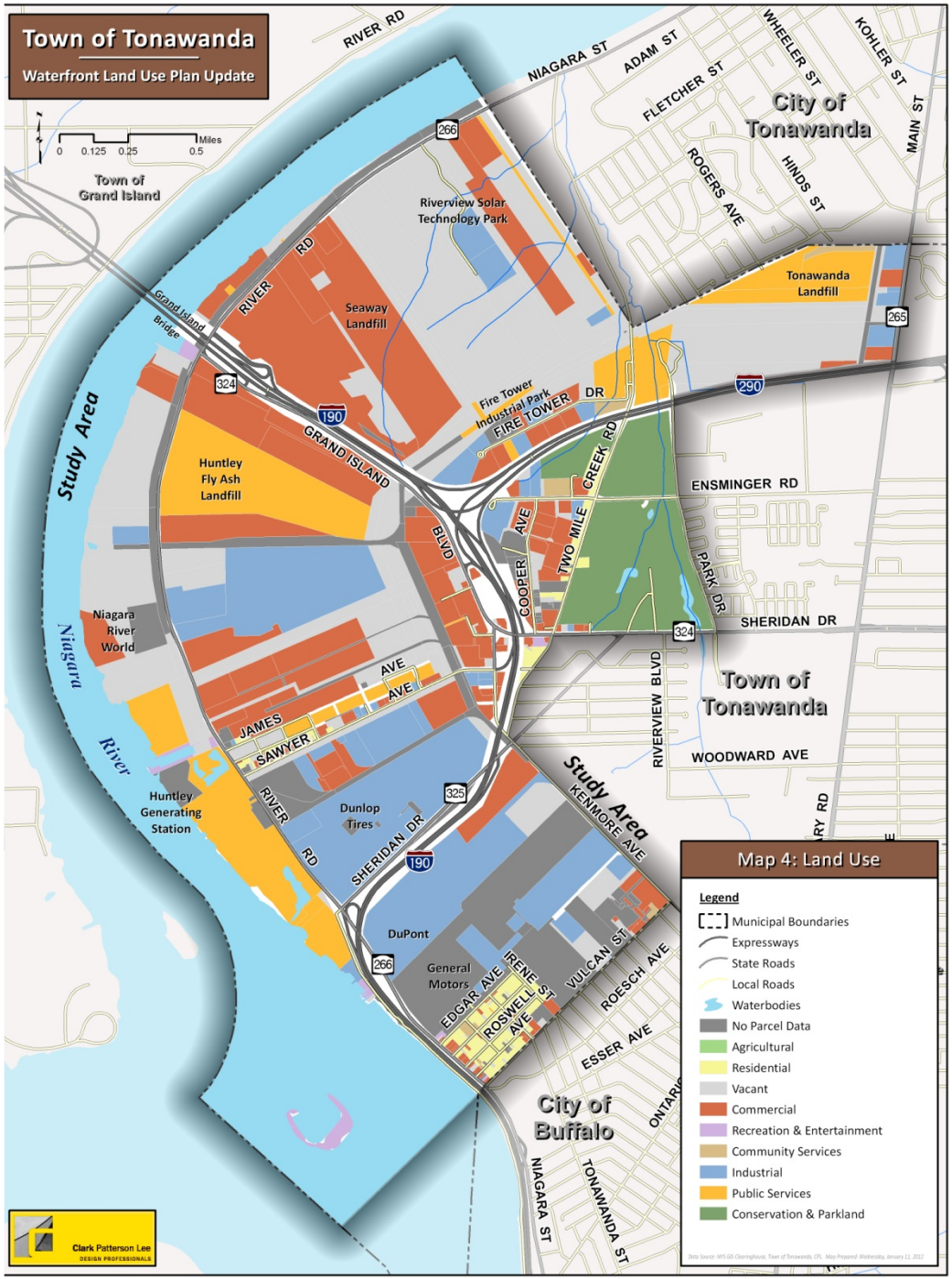
Current Land use

Commercial and Industrial Uses Dominate Landscape (43%)

Considerable acreage designated vacant or public service (36%)

Small pockets of residential (2%)



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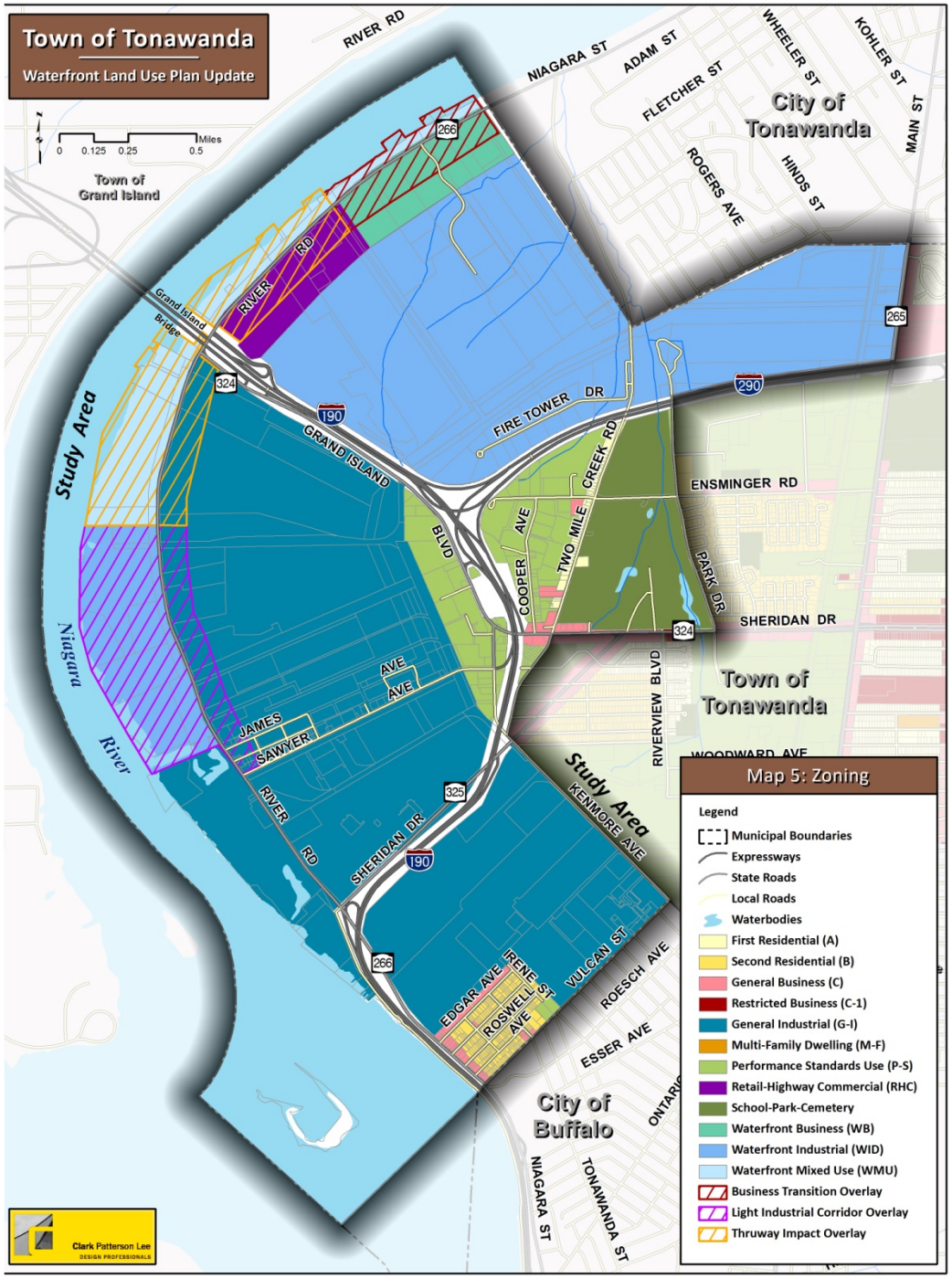
Current Zoning

Large swaths zoned for General Industrial

Various Overlays to distinguish special areas

Zoning tells the story of area's evolution over time



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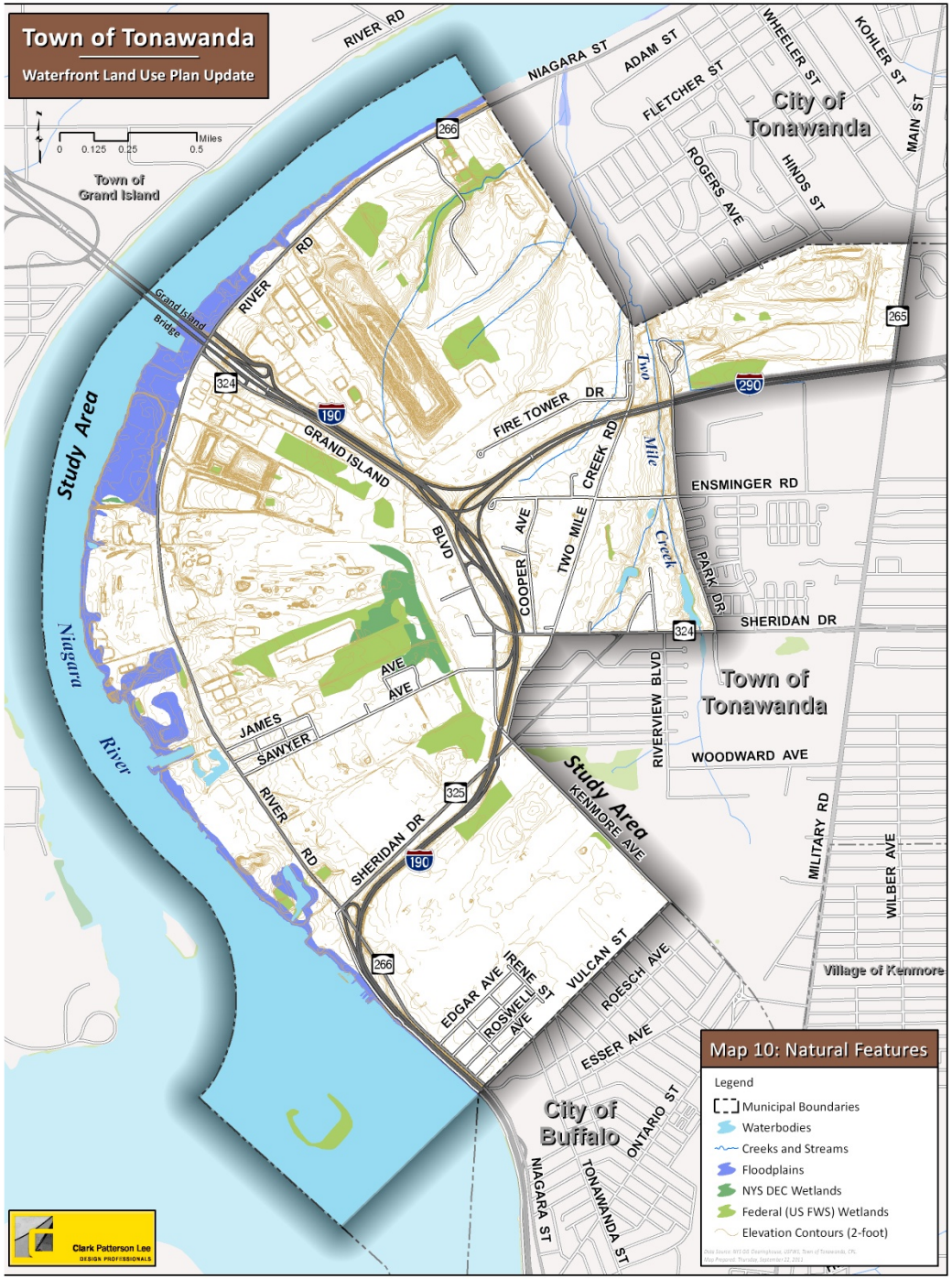
Natural Features

Limits to how and where future development should be located

Opportunities for habitat restoration and/or preservation



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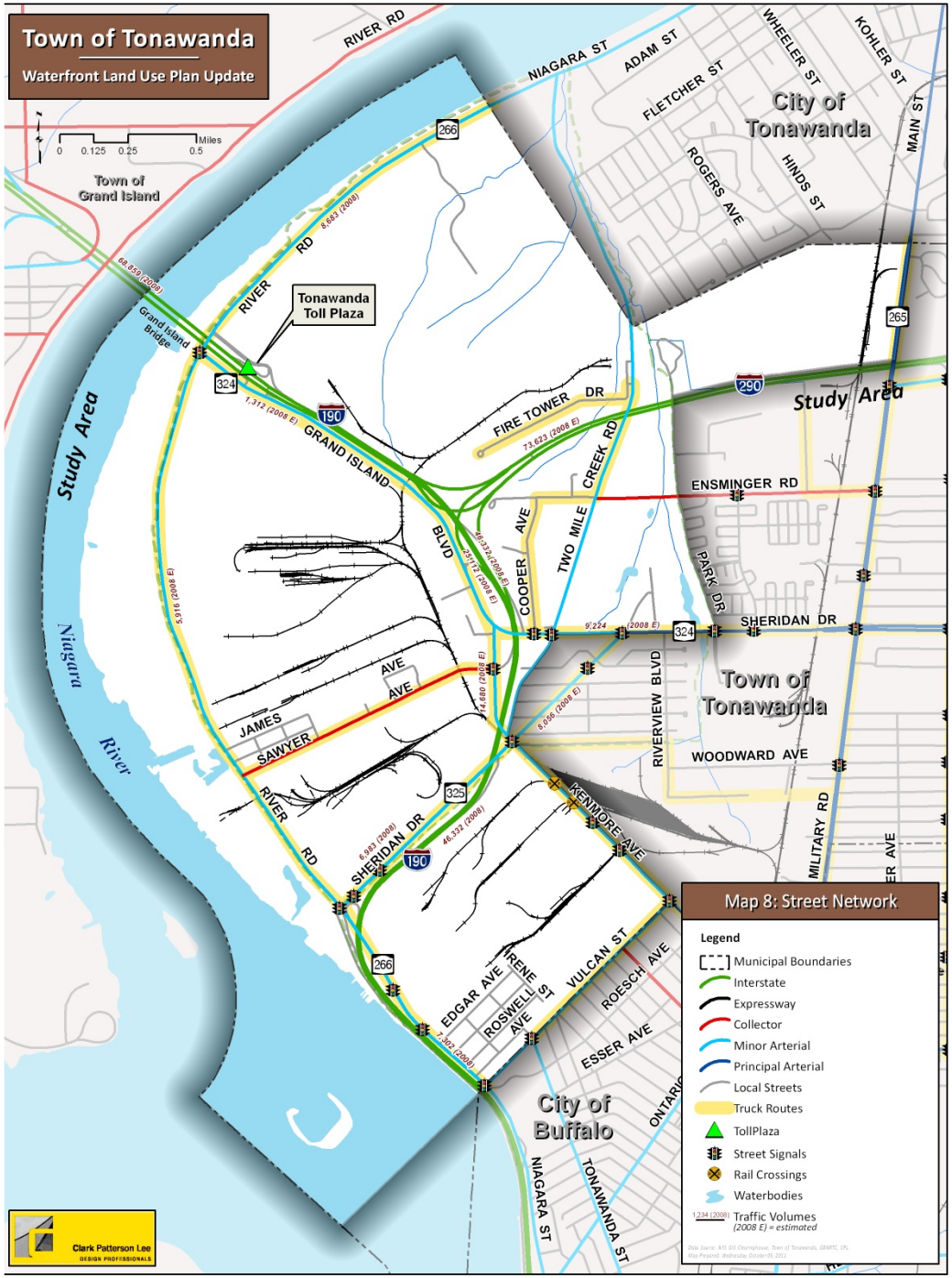
Physical Connectivity

Transportation hub (190, rail, and waterway)

Limited grid connections (large, contiguous parcels)

Limited multi-modal access through the area



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Community Resources

Diverse public amenities

Local and regional destinations

Enhancement opportunities and improved linkages

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Market Baseline: Demographics

Households within the Study Area:

have *lower* incomes;

have *less* education; and

are *more* transit dependent.

Based on Real Property data, 35 percent of study area housing is classified as 2-family, 3-family or multi-family.

Market Baseline: Jobs

8,500 jobs in the Study Area (10% of Tonawanda overall employment)*

Heavily concentrated in manufacturing industries

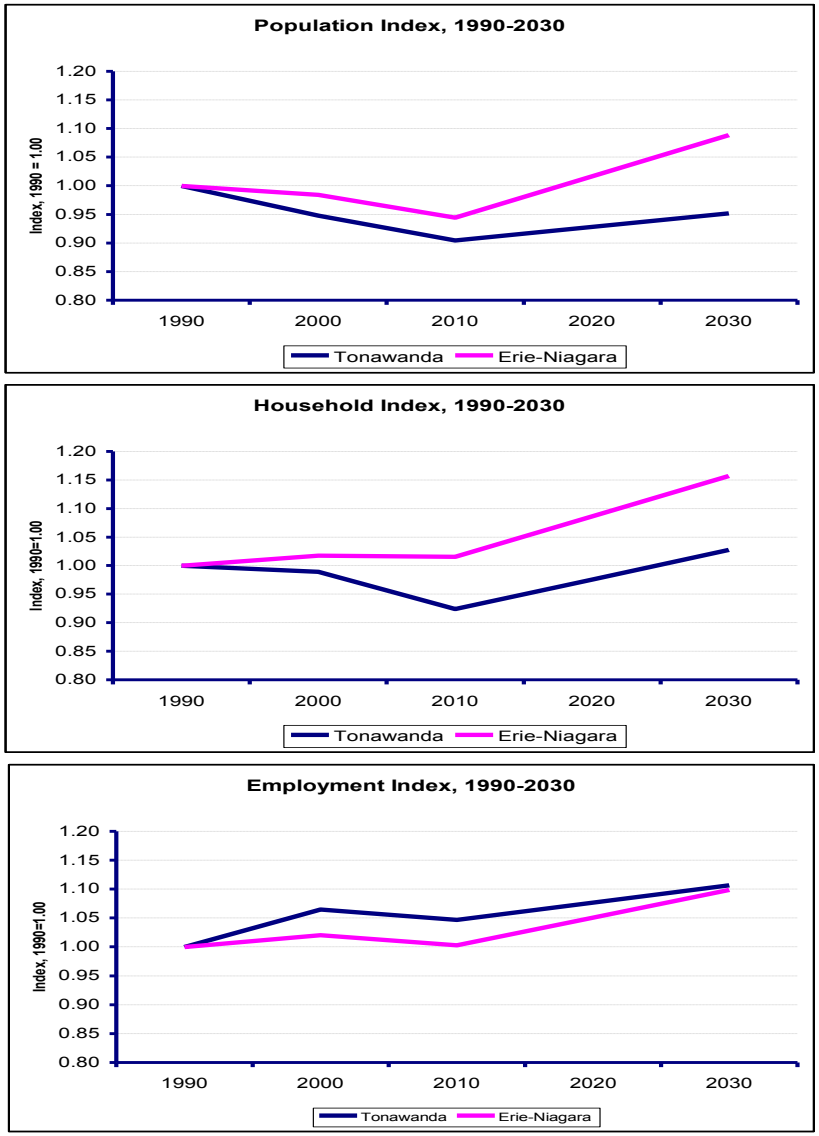
* FXM Associates data collection

Market Baseline: Trends

Historical declines in population and households have been greater in Tonawanda than Erie-Niagara Counties overall.

Employment growth has been relatively greater in the study area.

Figure Y. Growth Indices for Population, Households, and Total Employment, 1990-2030



Source: Greater Buffalo and Niagara Falls Regional Transportation Council, 2006, and FXM Associates

What's on the Horizon?

Vision

Goals

Strategies

Recommendations

Sub-Area Improvements

VISION

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Tonawanda's Vision for Its Waterfront

The Town of Tonawanda desires a highly valued waterfront district that encourages diverse activities and sustainable investment. Its waterfront area will attract water-dependent businesses, support existing industries, encourage passive and active recreation, allow for natural areas and open space, accommodate appropriately located residential development and balance the diverse uses located within the waterfront region.

The Town, along with community stakeholders, will continue to act as environmental stewards and ensure sustainable planning and design solutions are implemented by public and private partners. In this way the waterfront will improve as a key amenity that both enhances public access and fosters new investment.

GOALS

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Study Area Goals

- Waterfront
- Sustainability
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Development
- Community Design

Goal statements are included in the handout packet.

Waterfront

Key Strategies

- Increase public access to and views of the waterfront
- Encourage water-dependent uses and expanded passive recreation
- Relocate ill-suited development as opportunity and resources are available
- Engage regional partners to pursue joint initiatives (e.g. Niagara River Greenway)

Sustainability

Key Strategies

- Implement green building and site design standards
- Adaptive reuse of industrial and landfill sites
- Encourage and expand green technology businesses
- Expand connectivity to and through the study area

Environmental Stewardship

Key Strategies

- Continue and expand efforts to improve environmental and human health conditions at existing industrial facilities
- Encourage best practices for shoreline stabilization and restoration
- Work with state and federal partners to implement environmental remediation at known sites.

Economic Development

Key Strategies

- Support existing successful industrial and commercial enterprises in the study area
- Redevelop brownfields and encourage green industries (e.g. Riverview Solar Park)
- Invest in public improvements to improve the Town's "climate" for private investment.

Community Design

Key Strategies

- Implement greening and buffering strategies throughout the study area
- Utilize and enhance design standards to achieve better site and building designs
- Develop design themes to distinguish and connect attractions and destinations

FUTURE LAND USE

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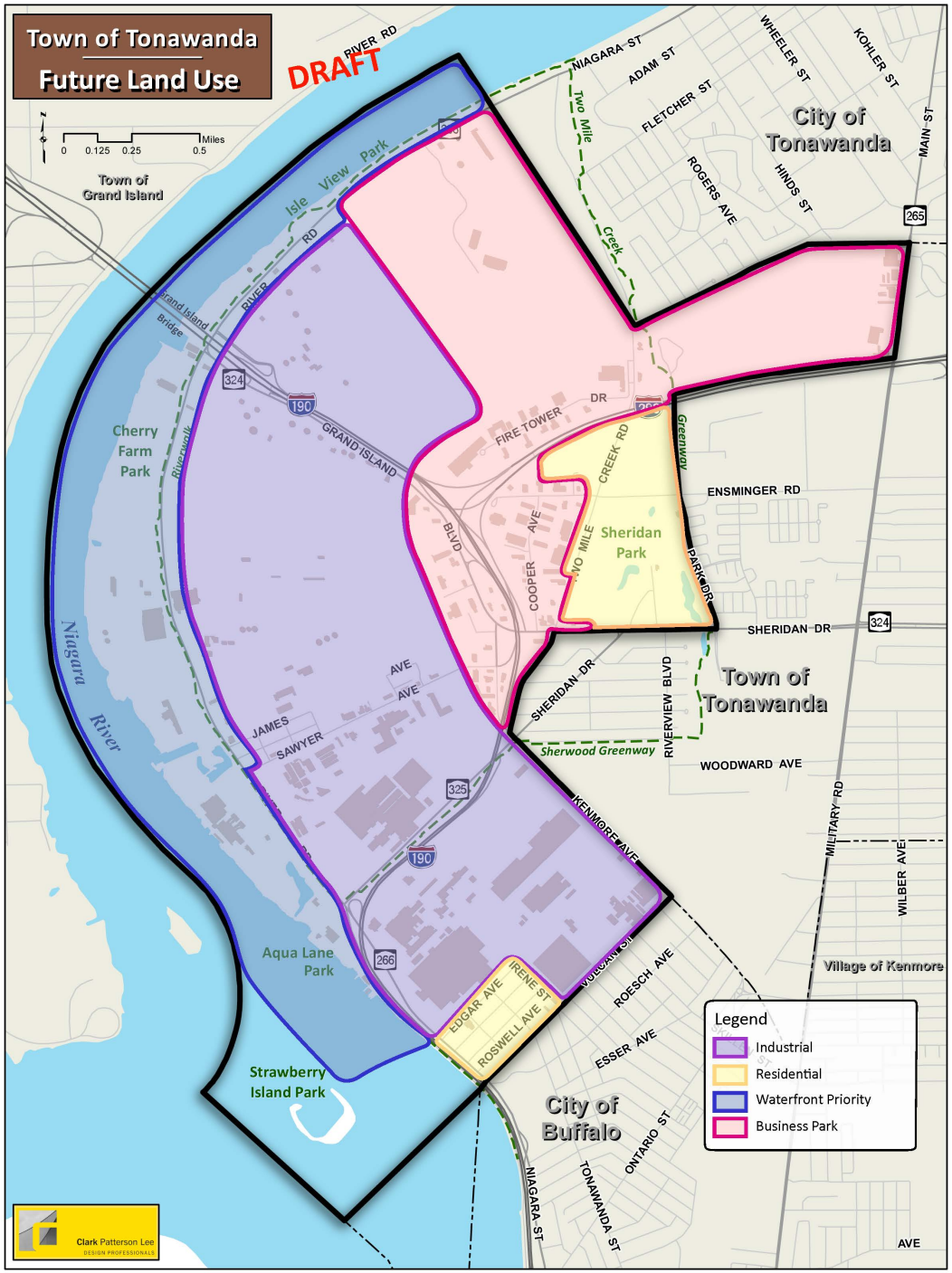
Future Land use

Distinguish the waterfront as a priority for redevelopment

Embrace the area's industrial roots and future with future focus on clean industry

Carefully locate residential development



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Proposed Land Uses by Category

Waterfront Priority: water dependent uses, water-supportive retail, restaurants and other entertainment venues; parks and open space

Industrial: large and small-scale industrial enterprises, with a focus on future development of green industries

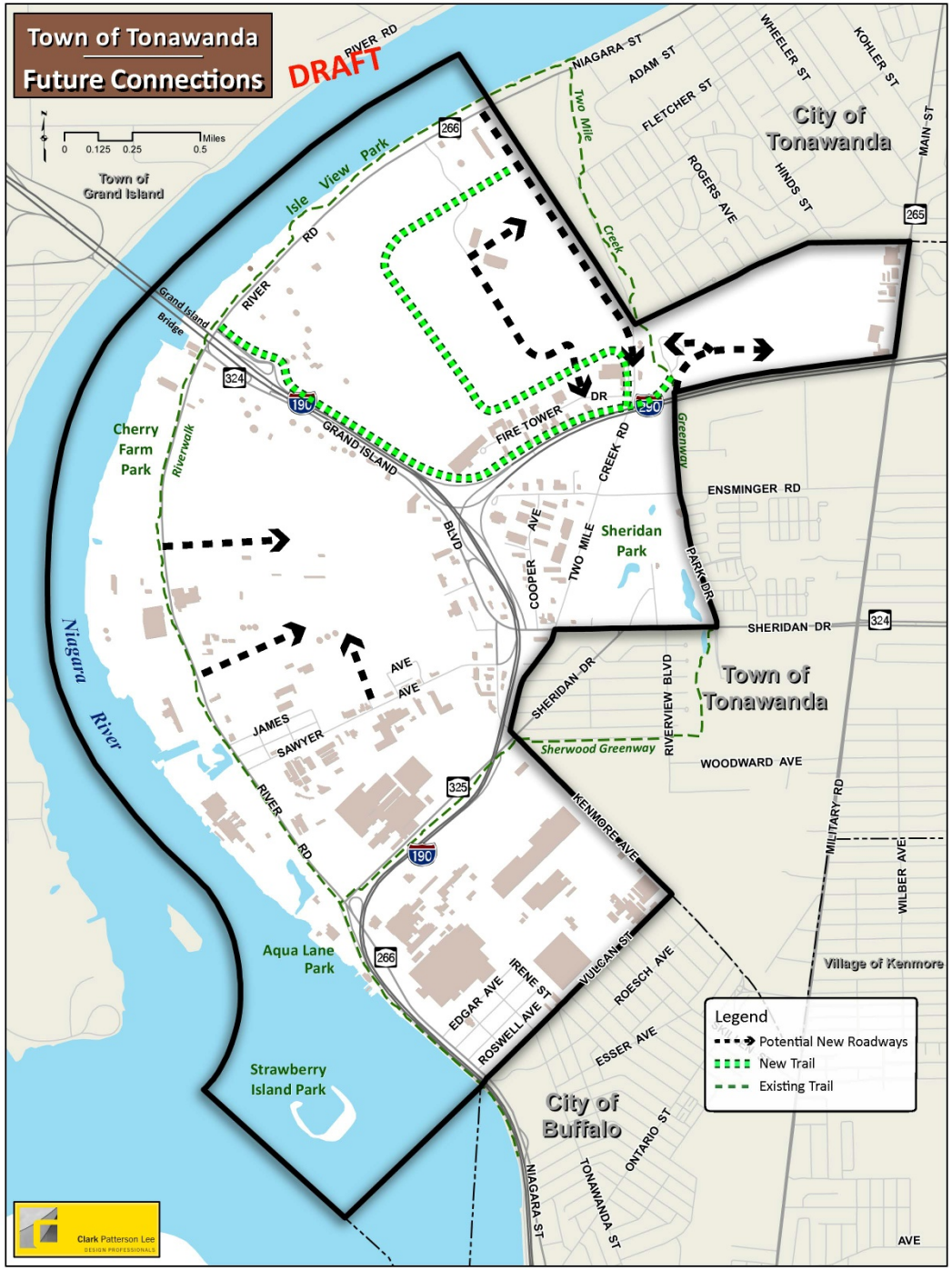
Business Park: a mix of commercial businesses and professional offices

Residential: Residences, parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, churches, schools, public facilities

Future Connections

Expand trail connectivity to and through the study area

Consider new roadway connections improve traffic flow and create more smaller development parcels



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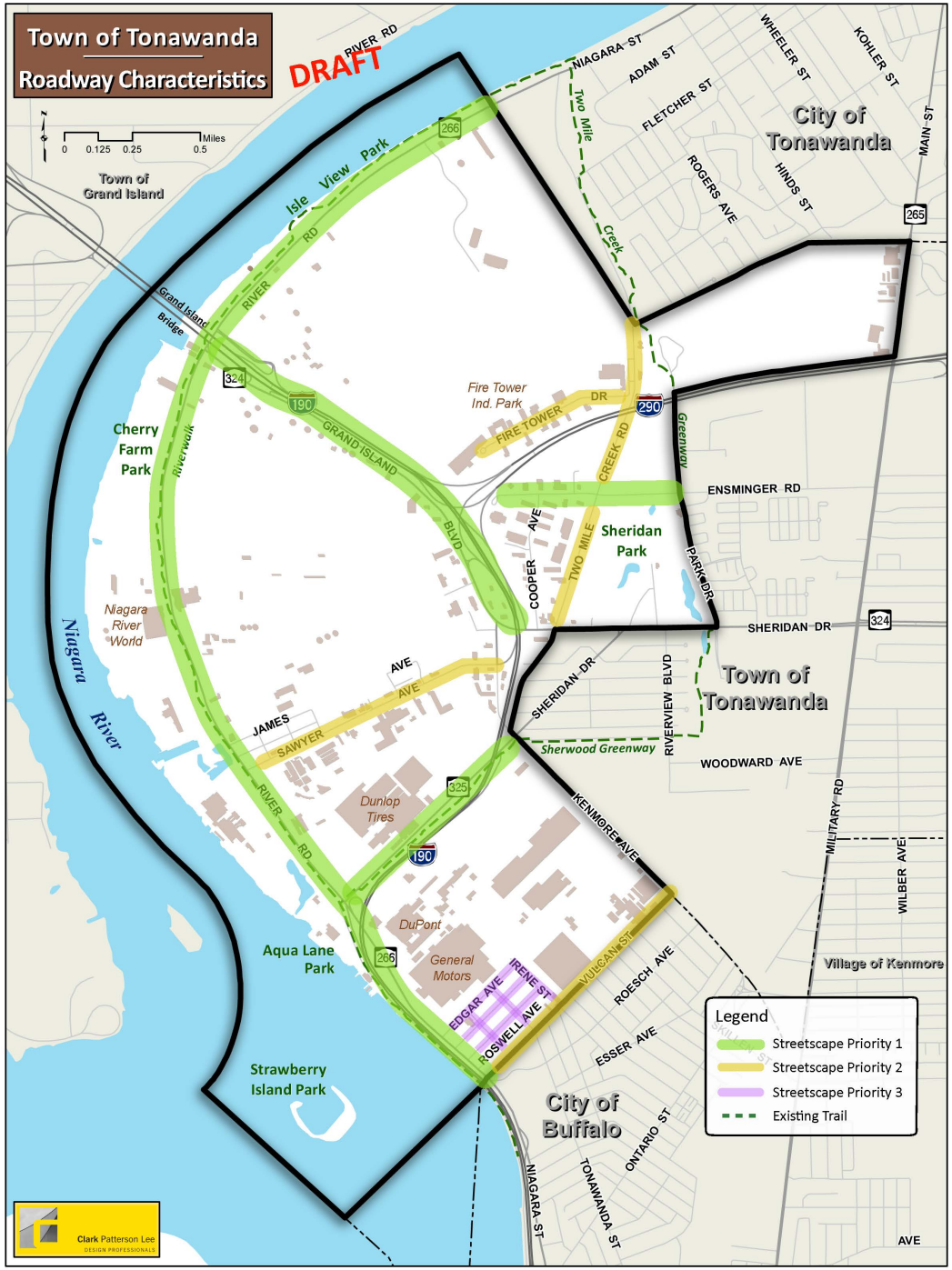
Future Streetscape

Prioritize streetscape improvements

Develop a hierarchy of streetscape types that guide the town's use of appropriate design elements



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A Closer Look at Future Land Uses

Approach

- Market Information
- General Land Use Districts
- Land Use Relationships
- Prototypes of Development
- Dimensional Standards
- Implications for Zoning

KEY PLAN

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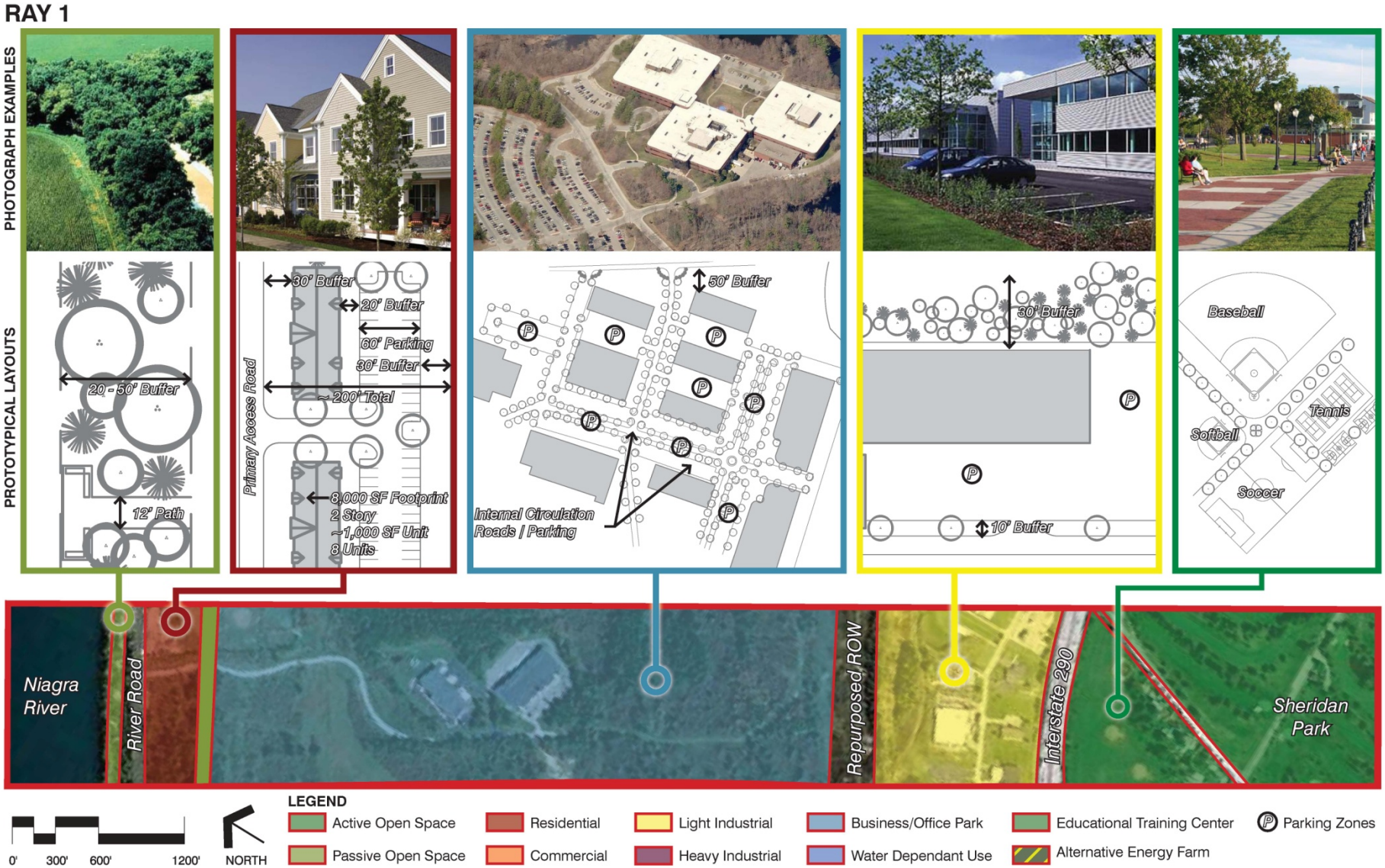

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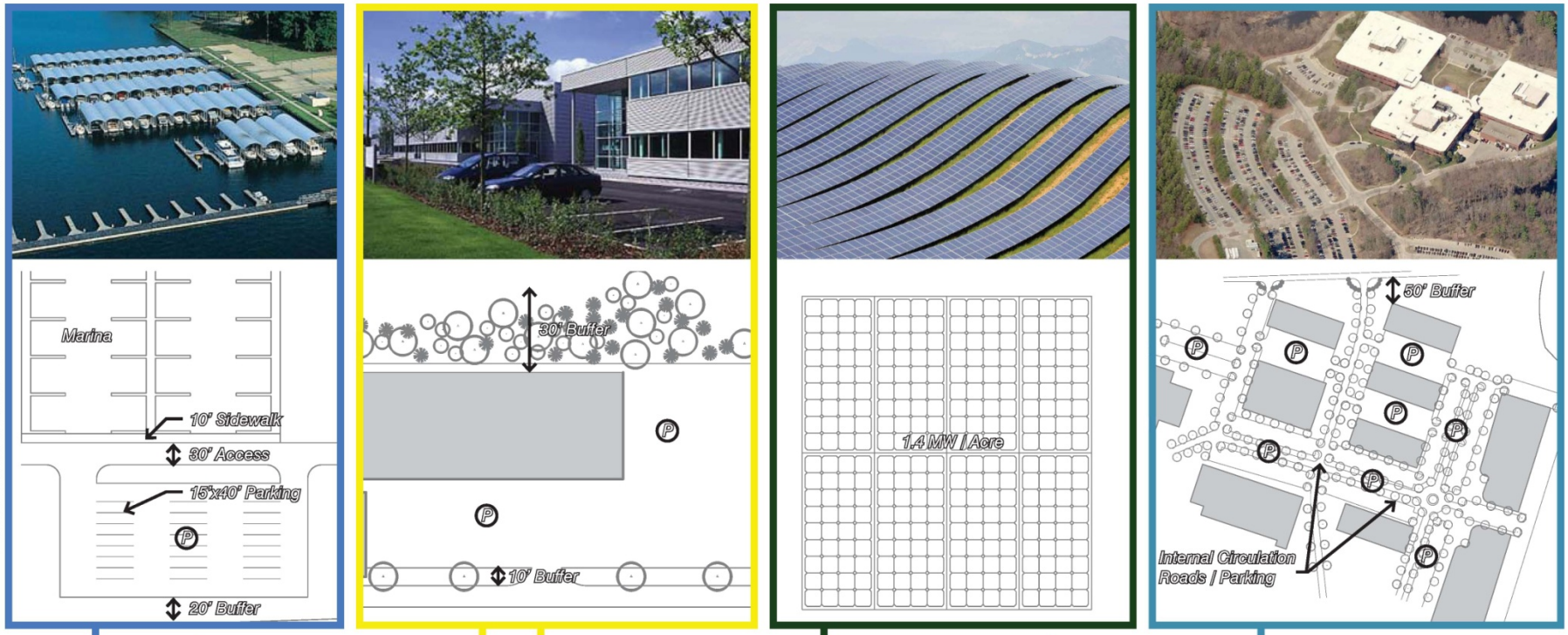
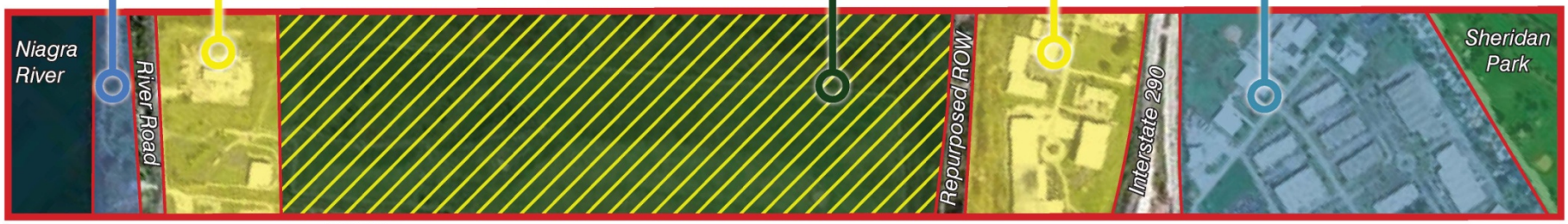
RAY 2

PHOTOGRAPH EXAMPLES

PROTOTYPICAL LAYOUTS





0' 300' 600' 1200'

NORTH

LEGEND

- Active Open Space
- Passive Open Space
- Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Business/Office Park
- Water Dependant Use
- Educational Training Center
- Alternative Energy Farm
- Parking Zones

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RAY 3

PHOTOGRAPH EXAMPLES

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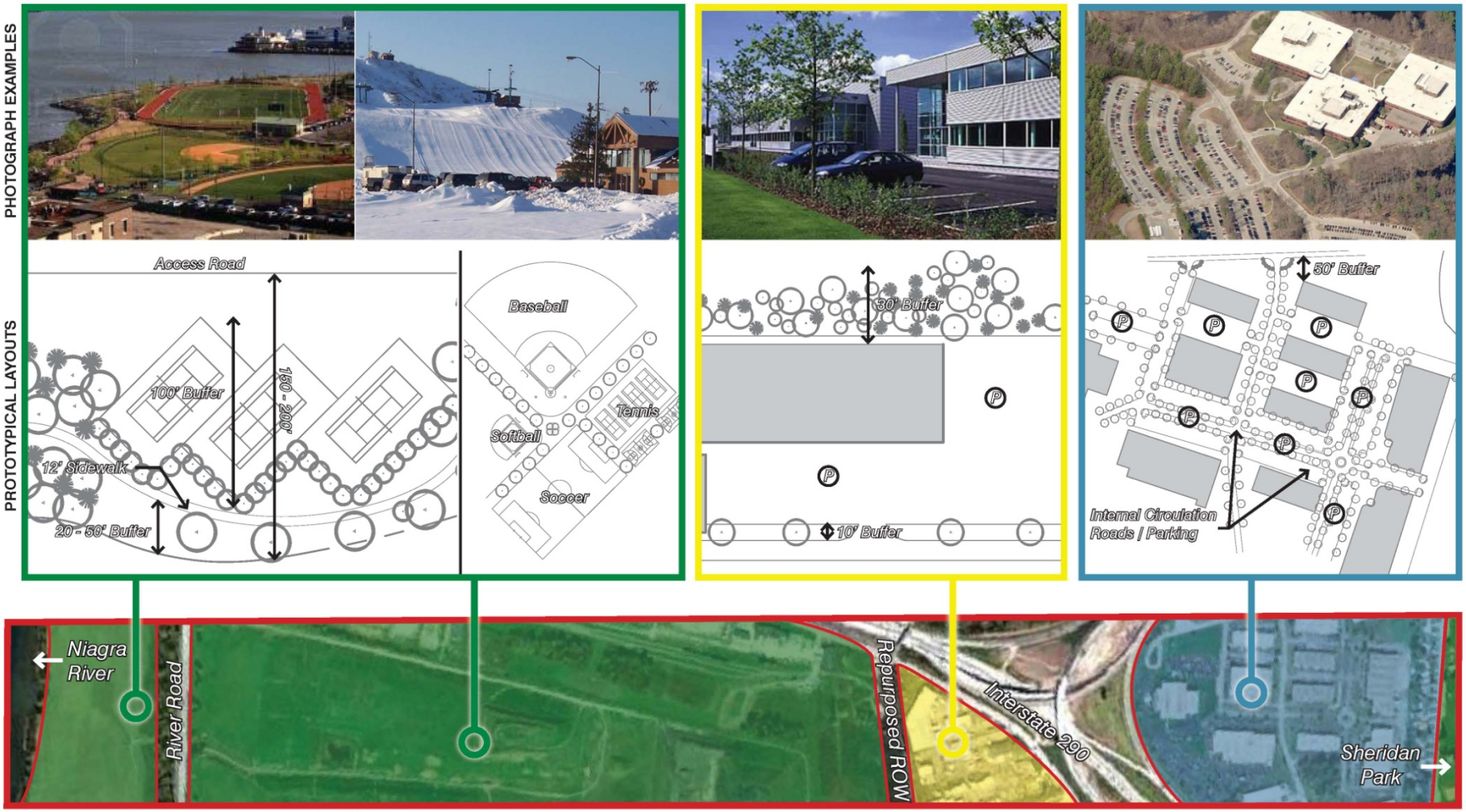

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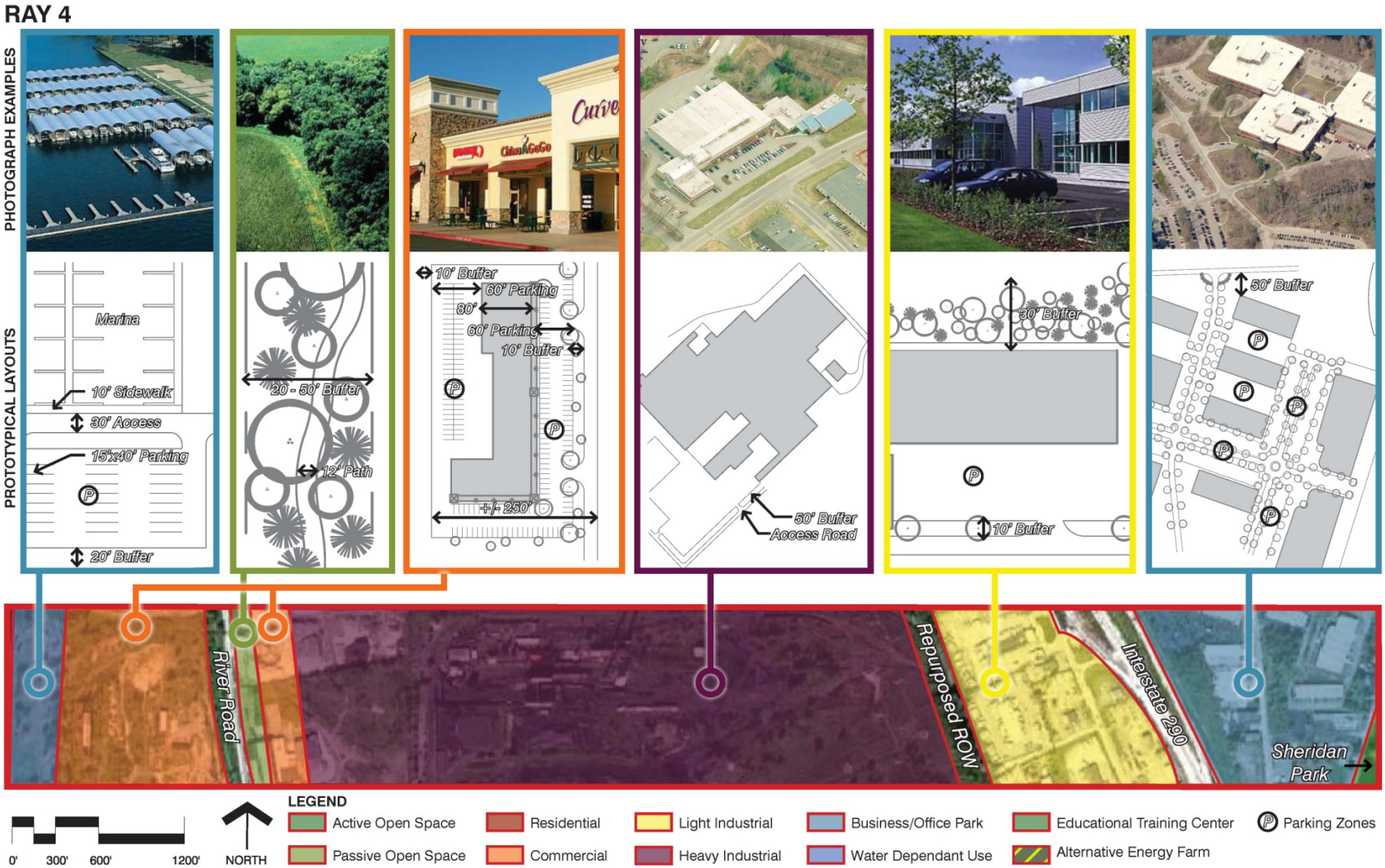

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RAY 5

PHOTOGRAPH EXAMPLES

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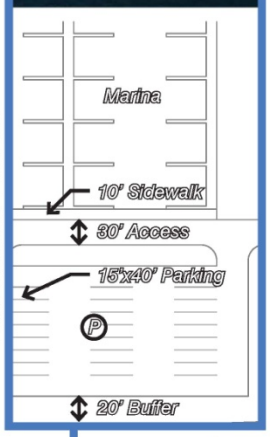

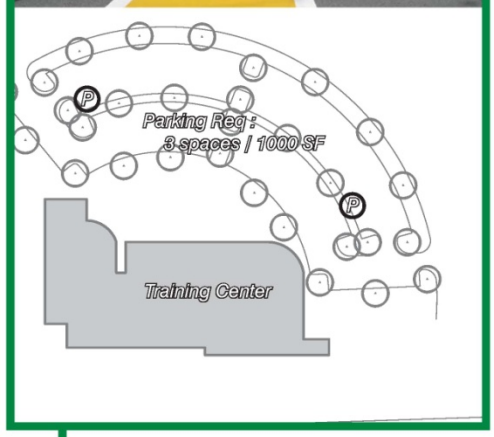

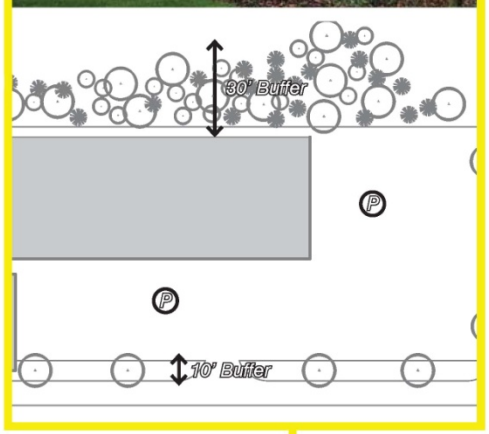

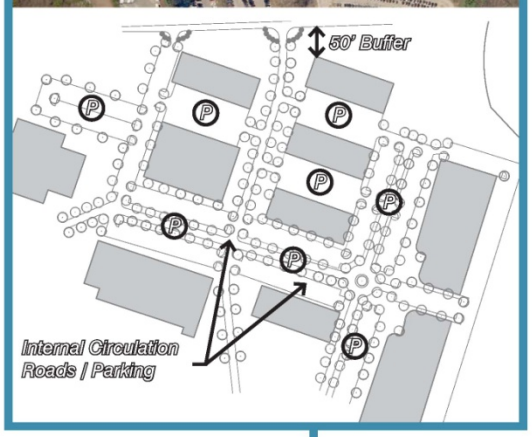

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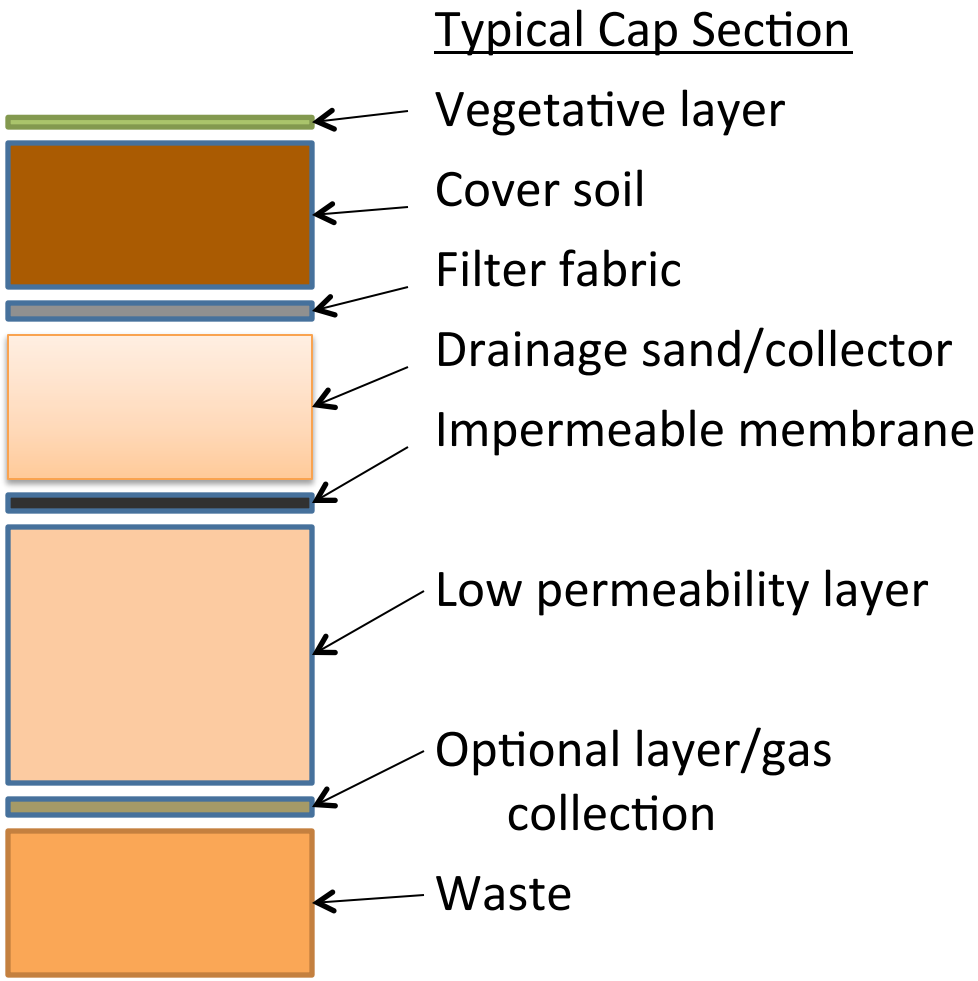
Target Area Ideas and Projects

- Landfill Reuse Strategies
- Building and Site Guidelines
- Street Styles
- Ways, Pathways, and Links
- Waterfront Parks

Landfill Reuse Strategies

Basic Reuse Criteria

- Maintain landfill cap
- Eliminate exposure to capped material
- Consider revenue producing uses to maintain landfill
- Consider repositioning footprint of waste to accommodate productive uses



Landfill Reuse Strategies

Reuse Strategies

- Consider revenue producing uses that have been successful in other locations (e.g. golf courses, ski hills, etc.)
- Consider RFP for private businesses to utilize tax credits, incentives, and depreciation deductions

Crystal Ridge Landfill Ski Slope

Greenfield Landfill Solar Farm

Landfill Reuse Strategies

Solar Energy Production

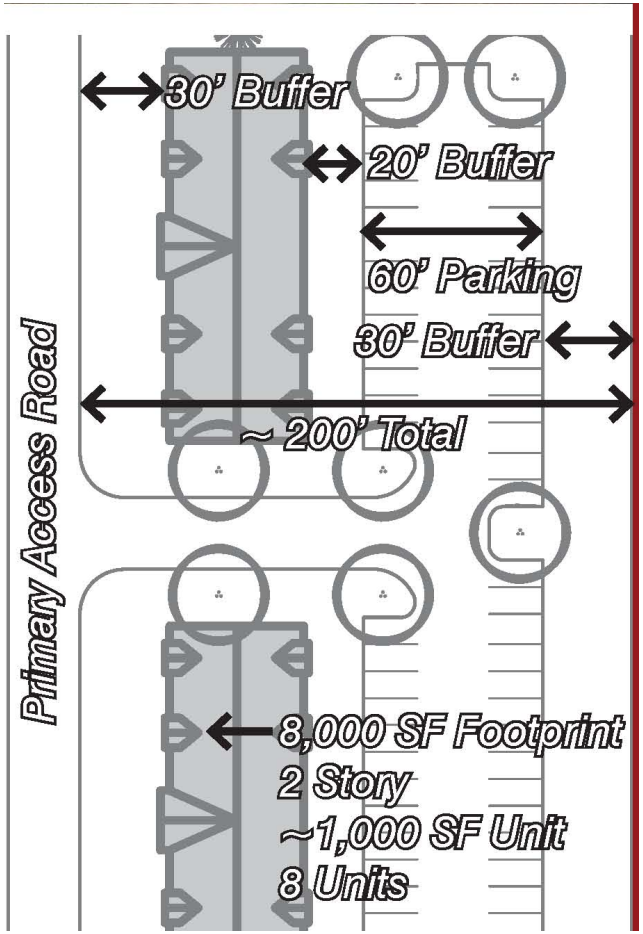
- Thin film technology is improving and requires less foundation to attach to landfill cap
- Based on DOE-recommended methodology, landfill could generate 1.4 MW of electrical energy per acre

Greenfield Landfill Solar Farm (constructed 2012)

Architectural and Site Guidelines

<u>Building and Site Guidelines</u>

- East of River Road; setbacks for typical uses with significant buffers added



Residential

Architectural and Site Guidelines

<u>Building and Site Guidelines</u>

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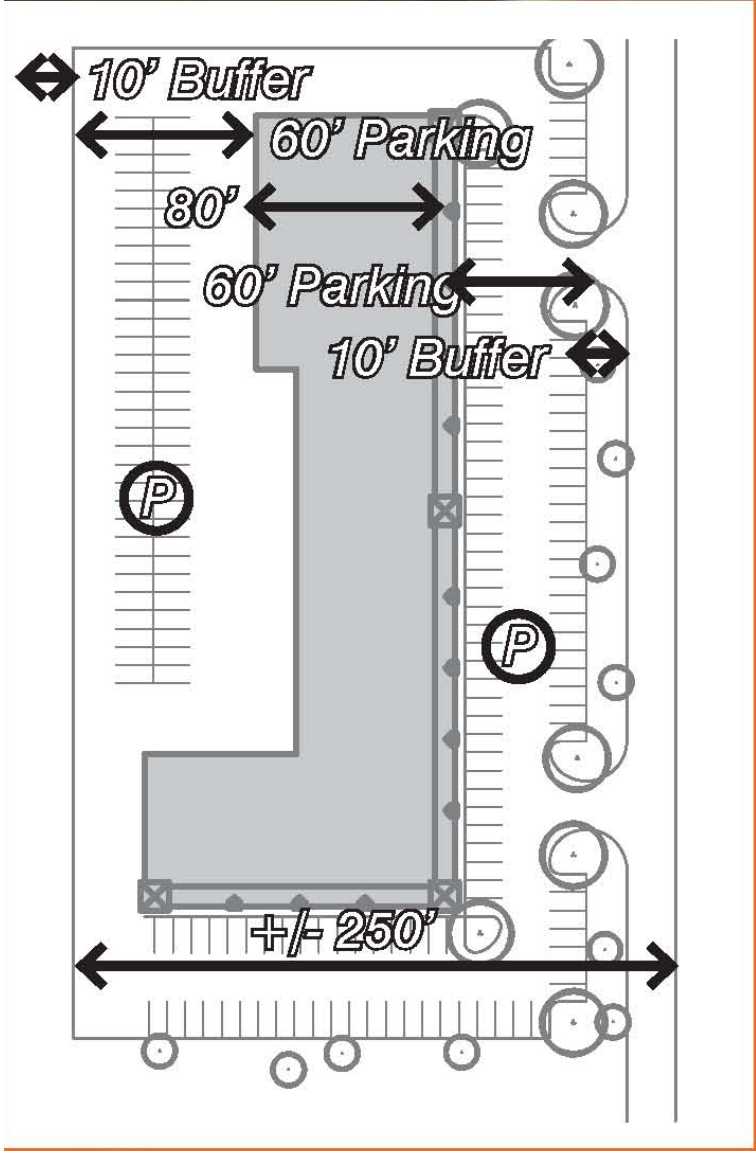


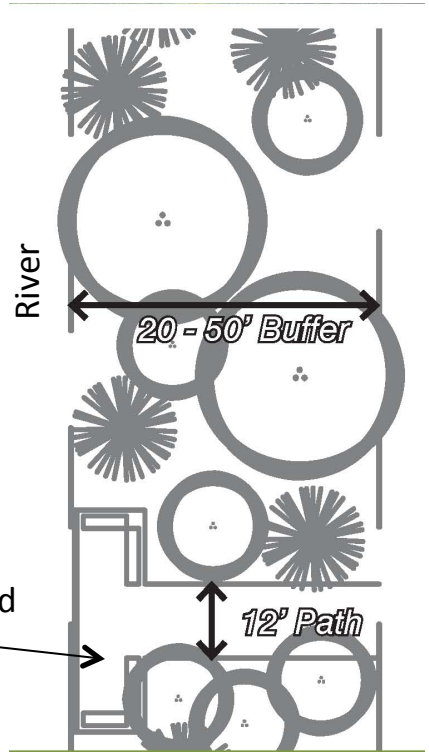
Commercial

Architectural and Site Guidelines

Building and Site Guidelines

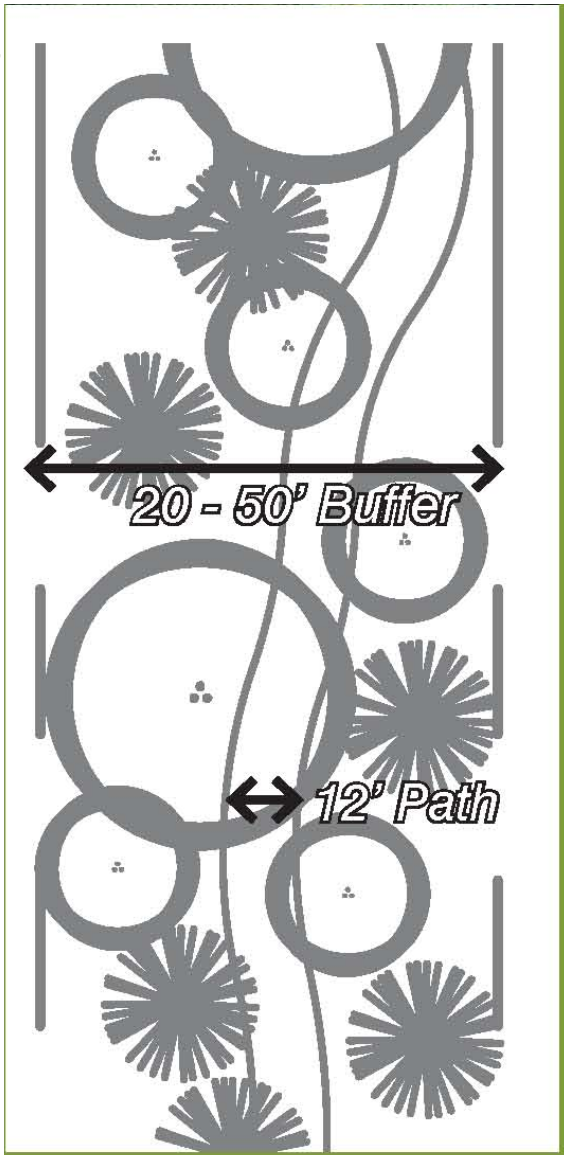
- West of River Road; setbacks from river pathway and water front

River buffer and access



Platform and seating

Pathway



Path Guidelines

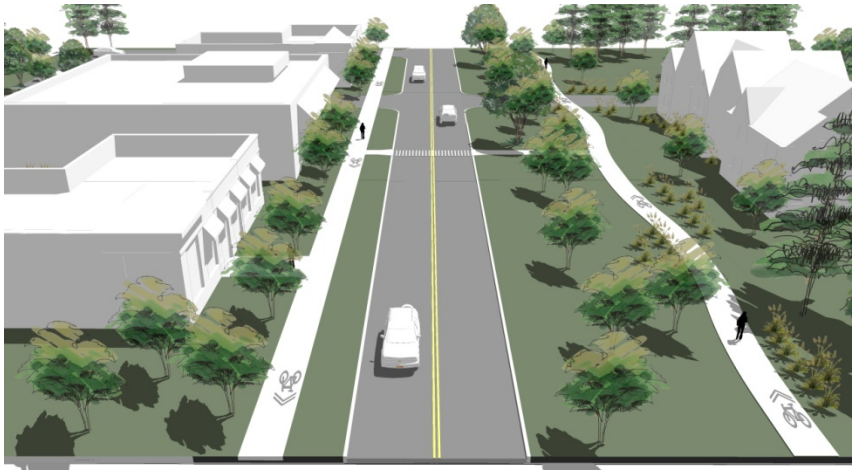
Paths

- Hardscape to reduce maintenance and allow bicycles
- Width of 12’ with striping to allow mixed walking and biking
- Separated walking and biking trails where area is available
- Permeable materials to manage stormwater

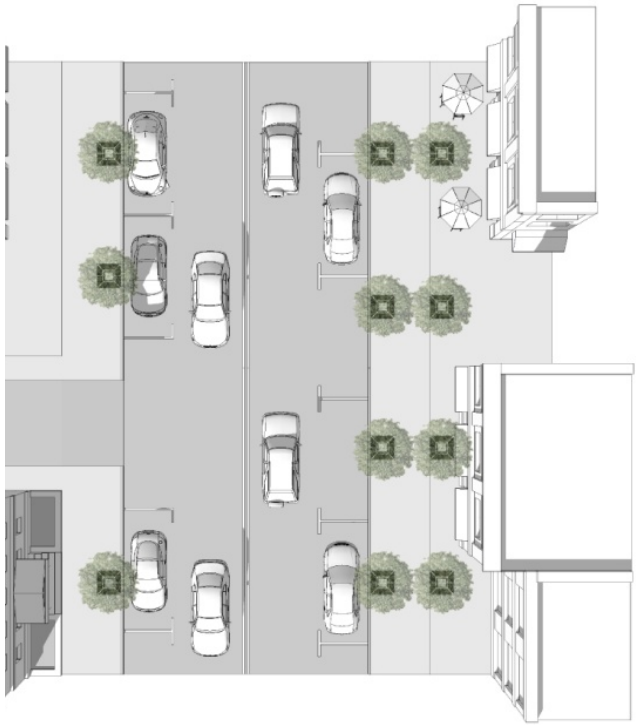
Street and Path Guidelines

<u>Style 1 Streets</u>

- Style 1; local arterials (e.g. River Road and Grand Island Blvd) with high rates of speed
  - Raised-curb separated,
  - 10’-12’wide walks ,
  - Tree buffers and grass medians where space



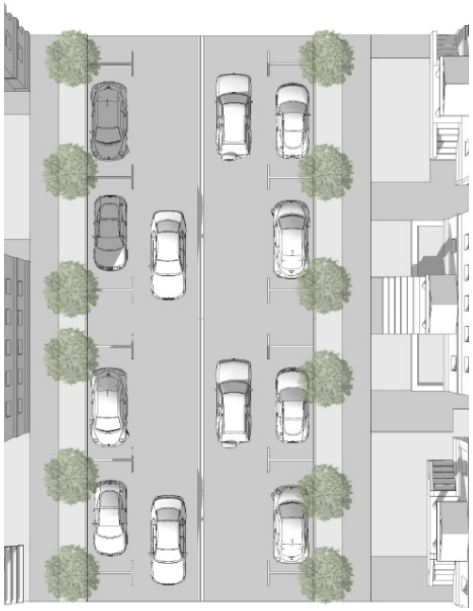
Street and Path Guidelines



<u>Style 2 Streets</u>

- Style 2: collectors with moderate speeds:
  - Raised curb separated,
  - 8’-10’wide walks ,
  - Tree and grass buffers where space allows

Street and Path Guidelines



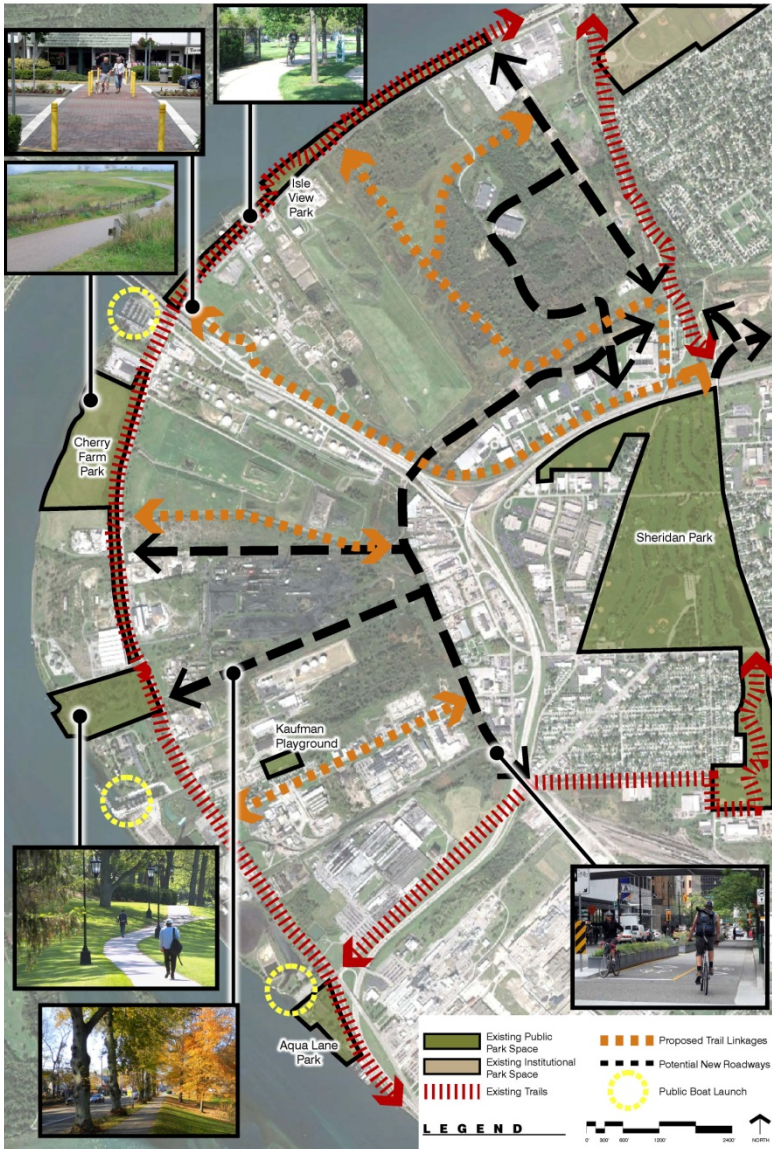
<u>Style 3 Streets</u>

- Style 3; local roads with lower speeds:
  - Rounded curbs,
  - 6’-8’ walks ,
  - Tree and grass buffers where space allows,
  - Parallel parking in front of commercial uses

Ways, Paths, Links

Approach

- Reuse or share RR ROW/Easements
  - First survey and determine ownership
- Build more intricate system of connections
  - Provide more cross-connections
- Create multiple-purpose and single-purpose ways as appropriate
  - Separate industrial traffic
  - Share modes of travel for non-truck traffic



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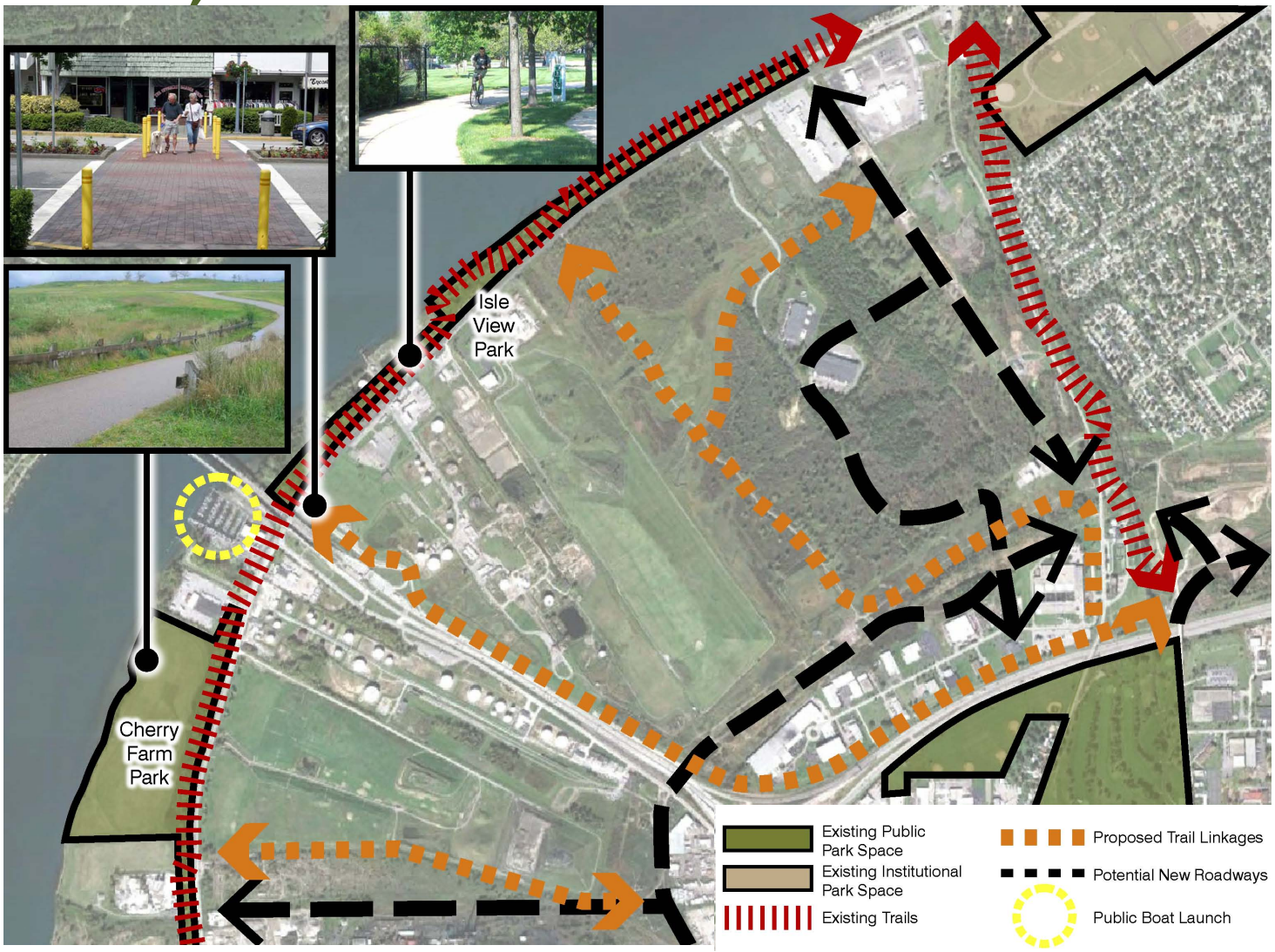
Ways, Paths, Links



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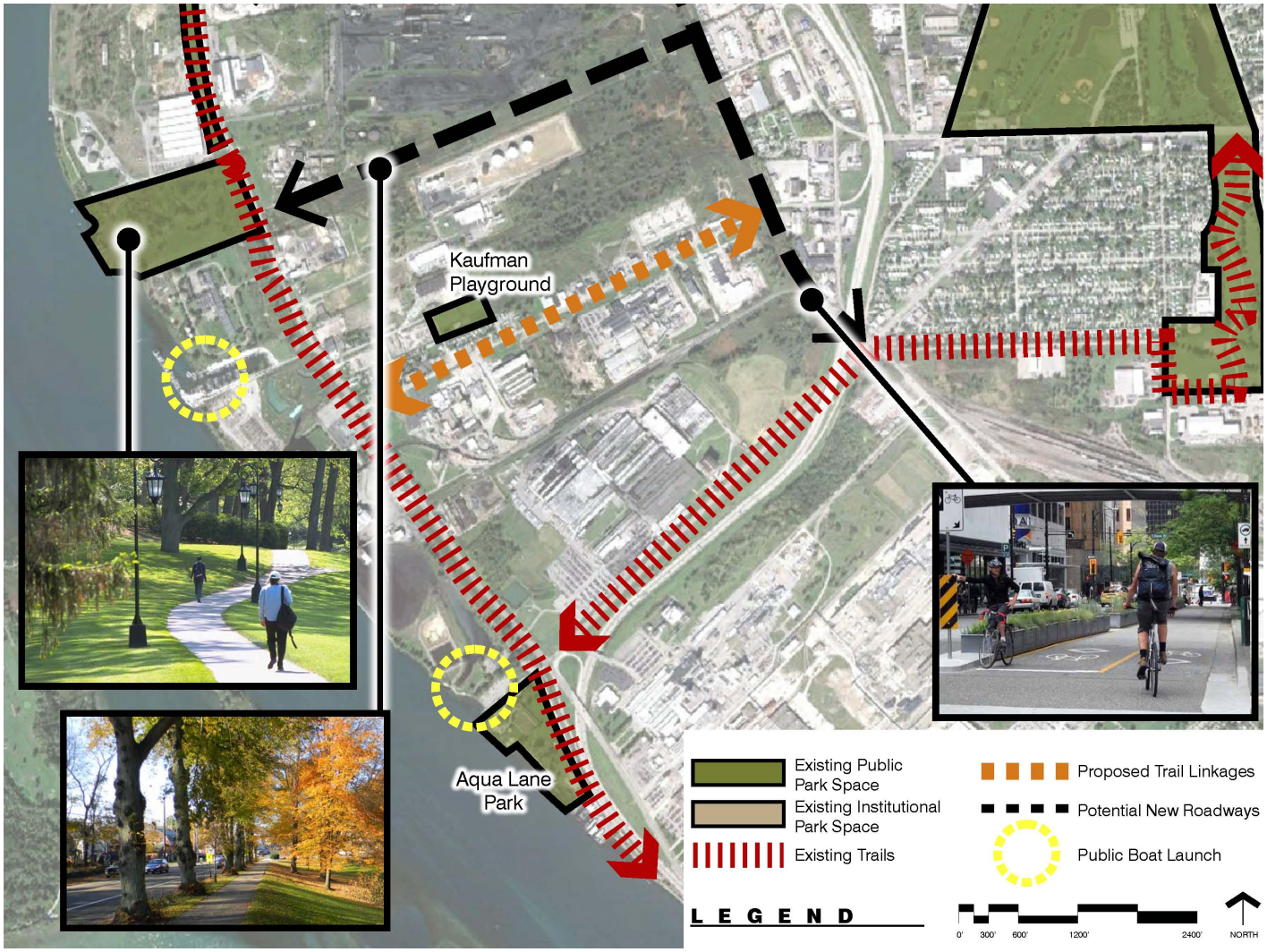
Ways, Paths, Links



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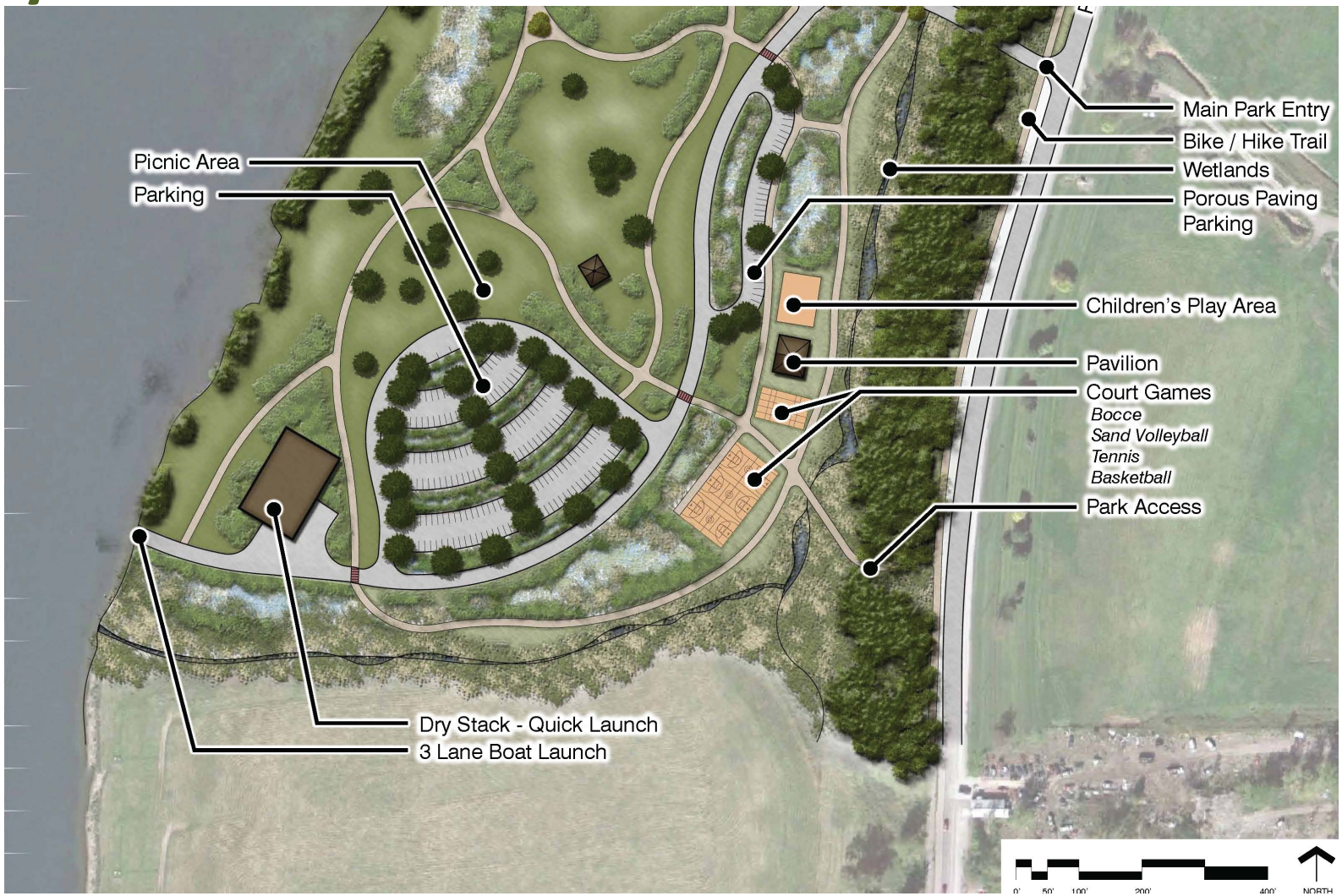
Cherry Farm Park

- Enhanced public access to, and views of the river
- Expanded trail connections and onsite loops
- Pavilions and recreational opportunities
- Native vegetation and bioswales

Cherry Farm Park

Cherry Farm Park



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Aqua Lane Park

- Enhanced landscaping and sustainable stormwater management strategies
- Enclosed pavilion/ lodge facility
- Improved trail amenities and signage
- Enhanced connections to Riverway Trail

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Study Area Greening Strategy

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.

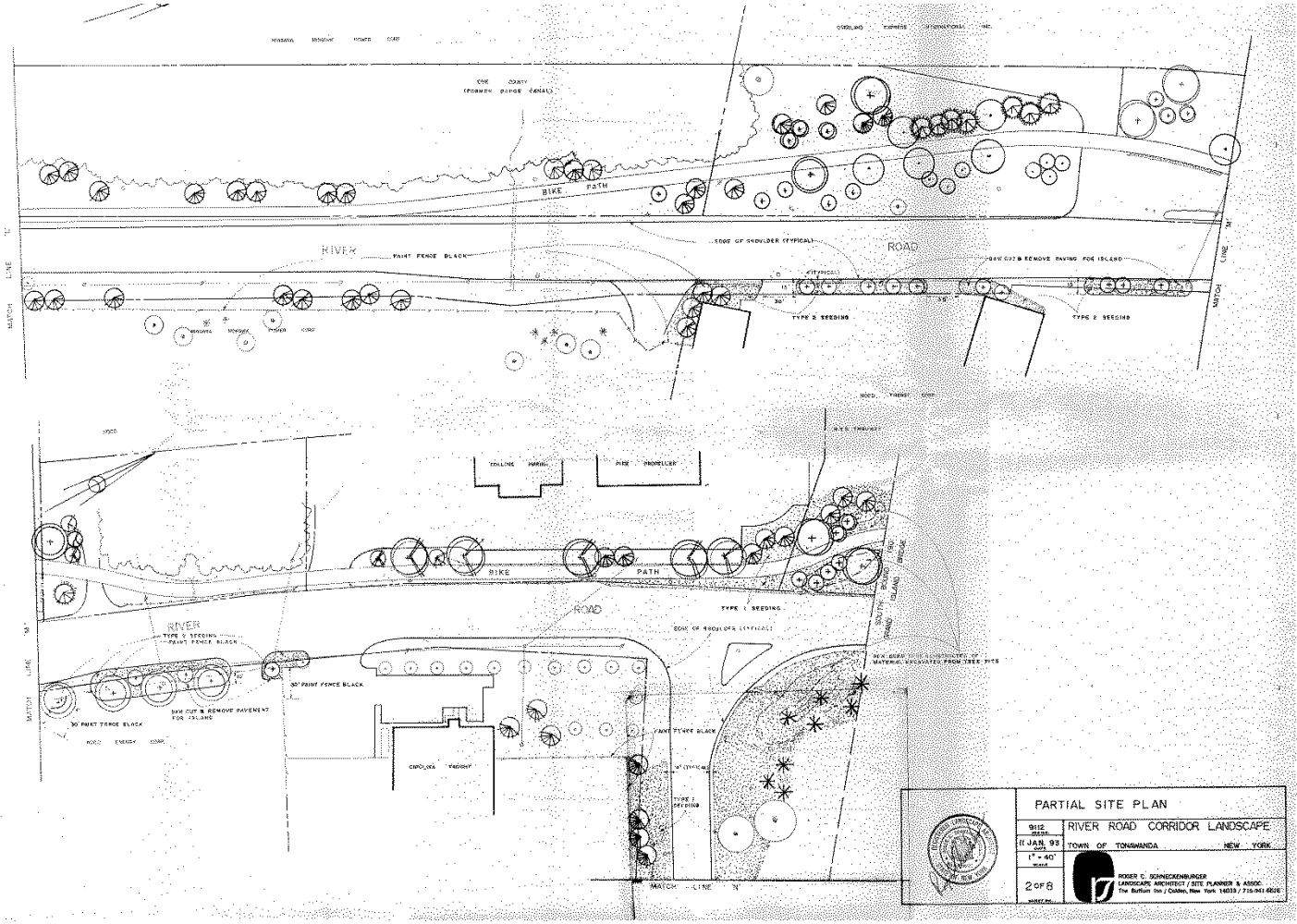
The next best time is now.

~Chinese Proverb

Study Area Greening Strategy

Street tree plantings in the Right-of-Way

Encourage private property owners to utilize berms and dense tree plantings



After the Plan is Complete, What's Next?

- Implement recommendations
- Solicit grant funding (e.g. Niagara River Greenway, EPA, NYSERDA, NYS CFA)
- Update comprehensive plan
- Modify zoning to promote the type of development and redevelopment outlined in the plan
- Continue and expand inter-agency and inter-municipal projects
- Continue community dialogue on a per project basis

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Restoring Our Waterfront

Enhancing Tonawanda's Economy, Environment and Community

Thank you!

Open House Next

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DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

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Planning and Design

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