



Restoring Our Waterfront

Enhancing Tonawanda's Economy, Environment and Community

Healthy Niagara – Waterfront Land Use Plan Update

Town Board Presentation
March 10, 2014



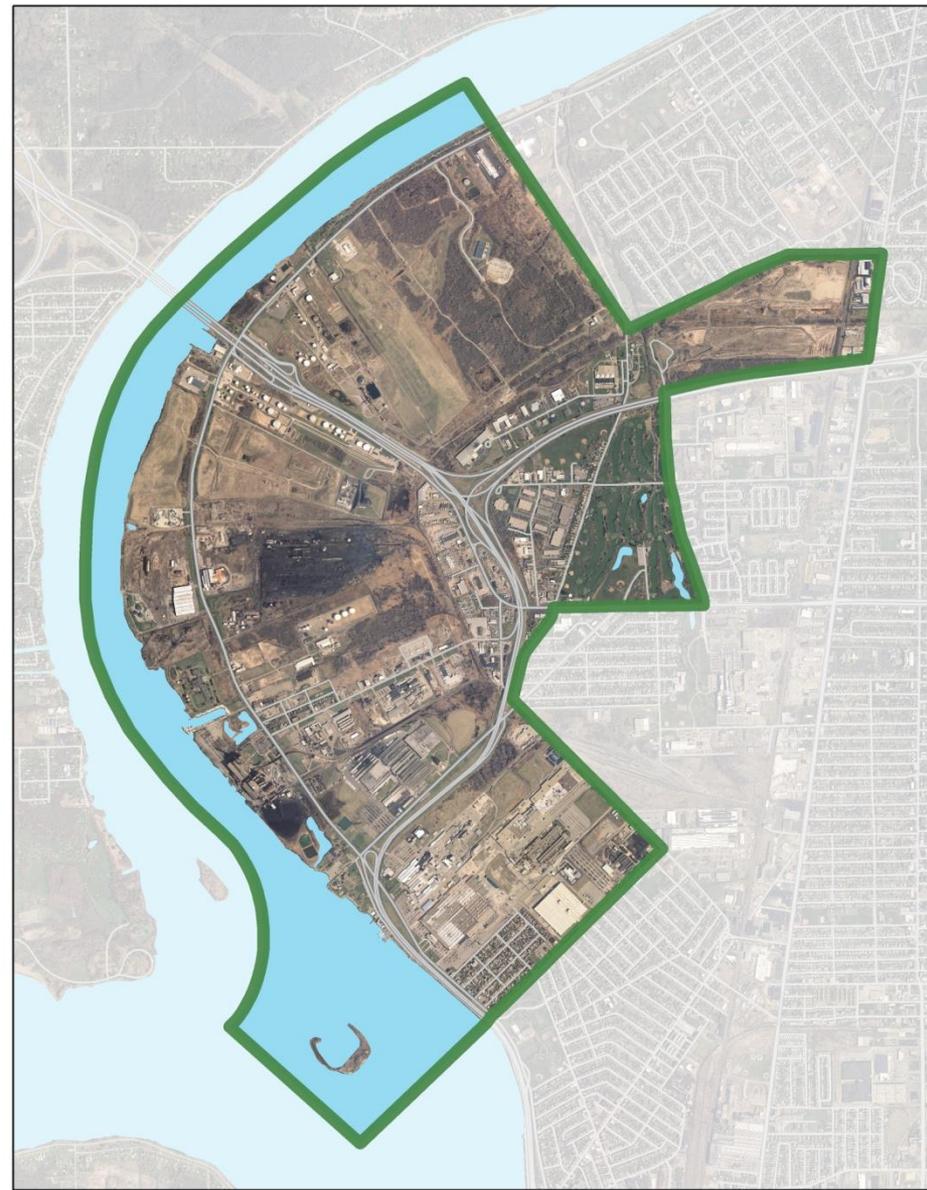
Clark Patterson Lee
DESIGN PROFESSIONALS



FXM Associates
Economic Planning & Research

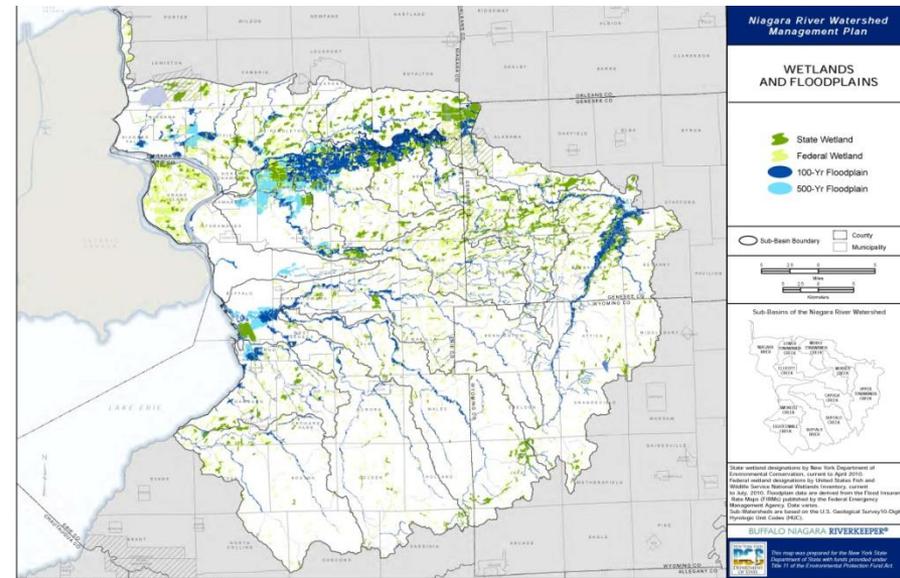
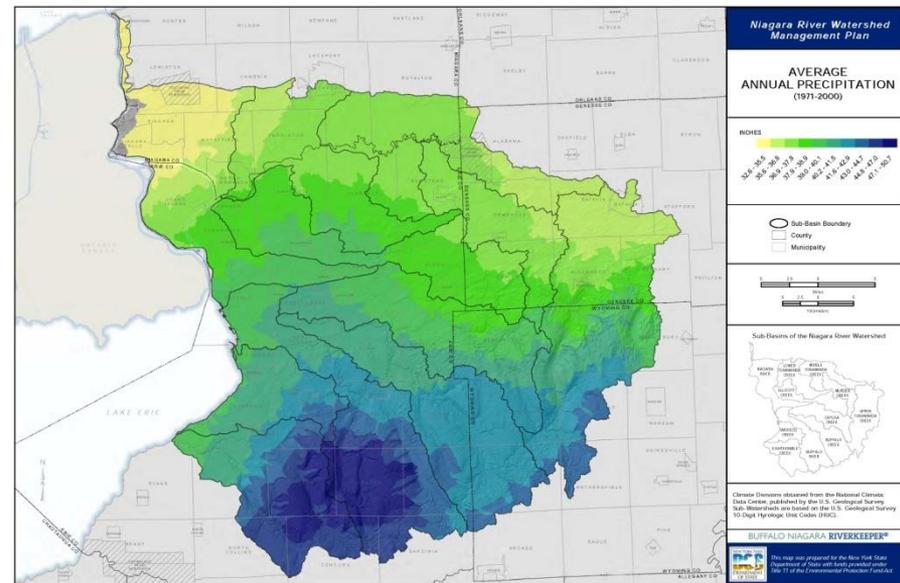
Today's Agenda

- Brief Background
- Final Plan Development
- Key Highlights

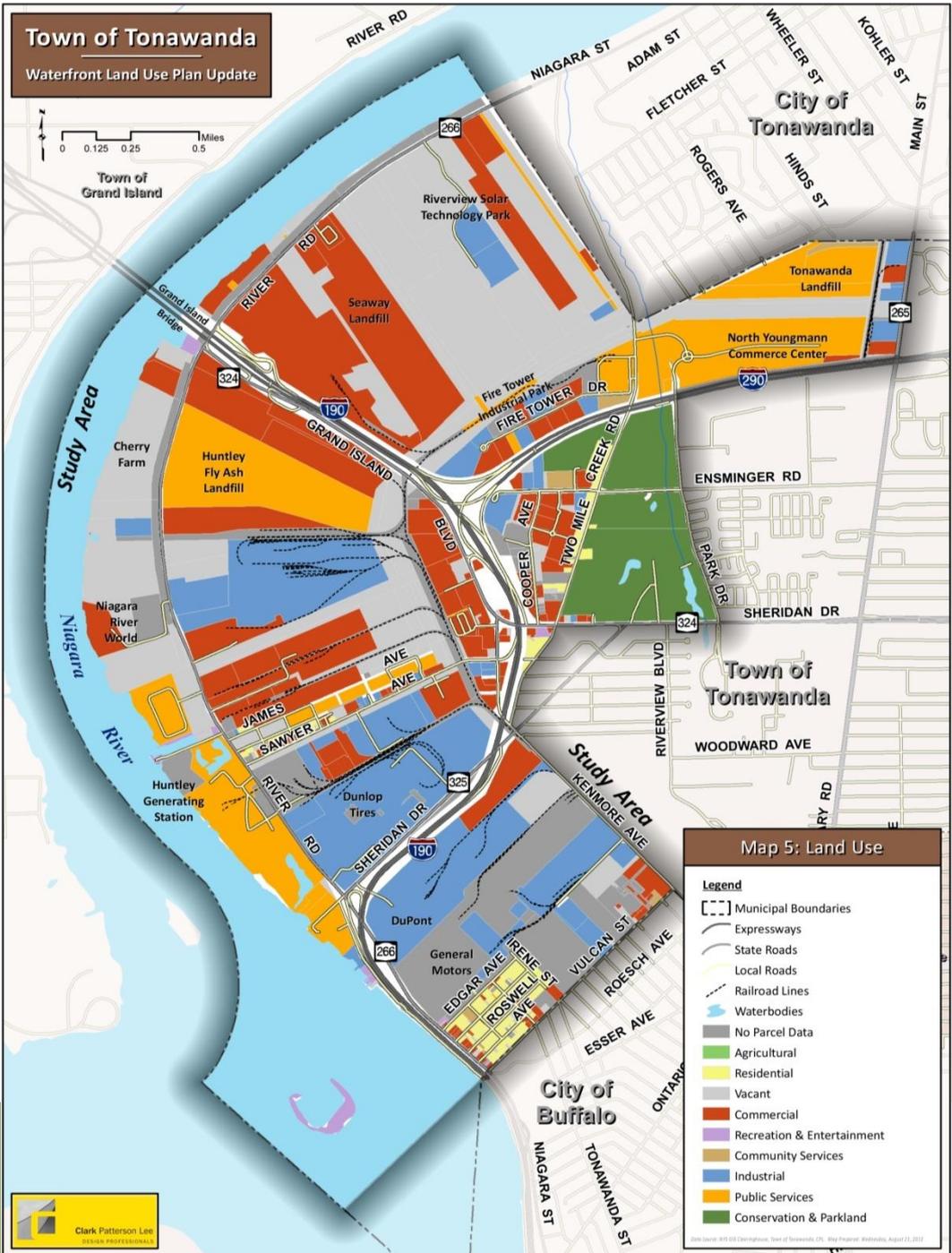


Brief Background

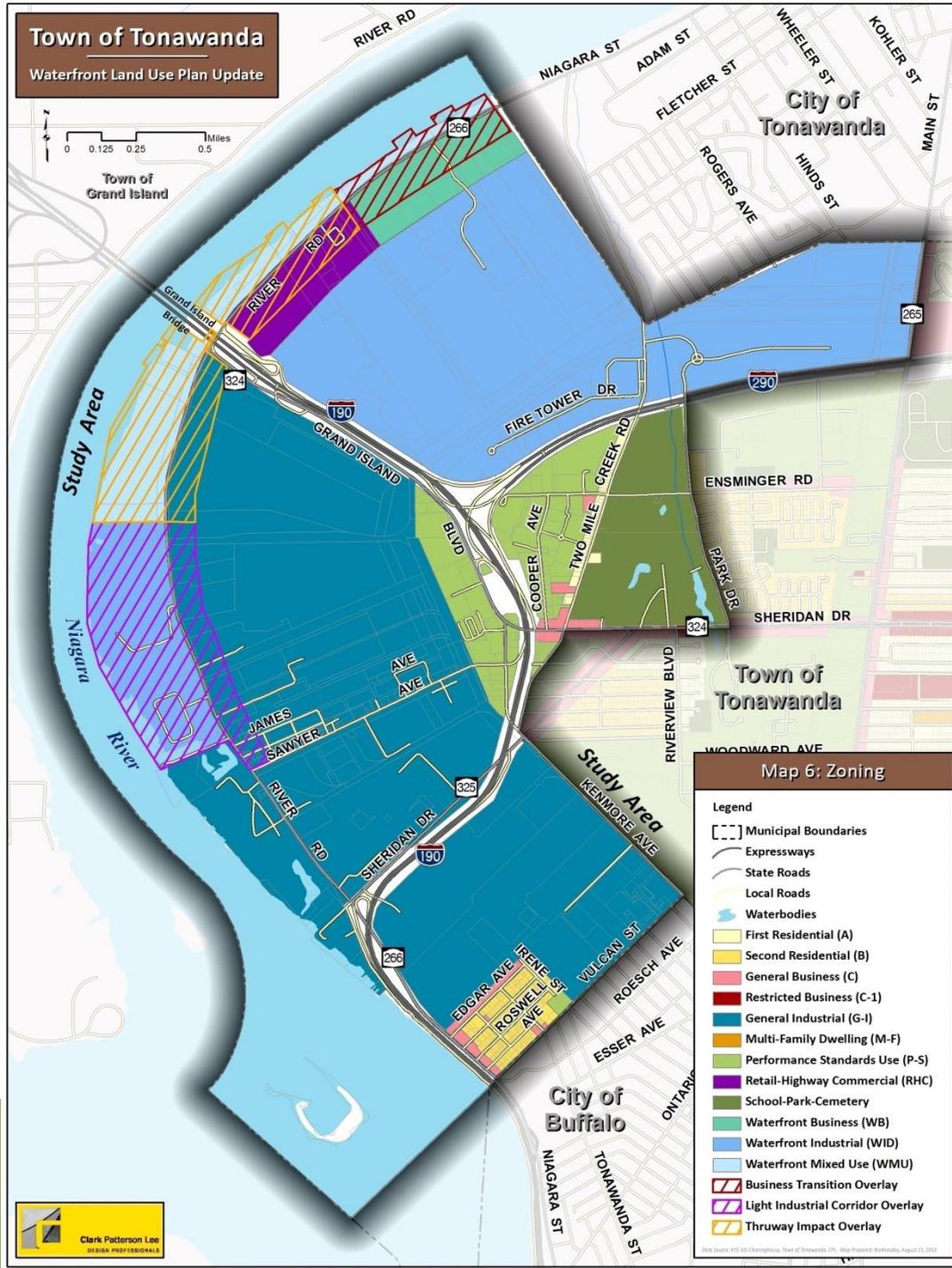
- 2010 Environmental Protection Fund grant
- Healthy Niagara-Strategic Watershed Management Planning
- Partnership with Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper & Erie County
- Various components: Watershed Report/Plan, **Waterfront Land Use Plan update**, Two-Mile Creek stabilization



Current Land use

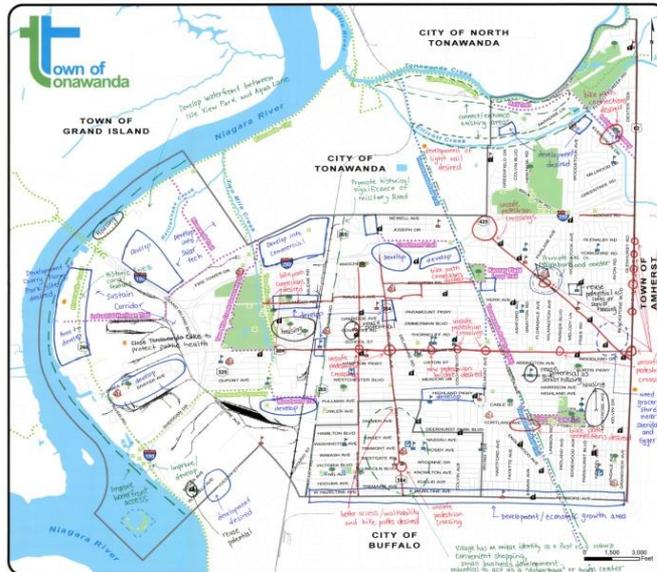


Current Zoning



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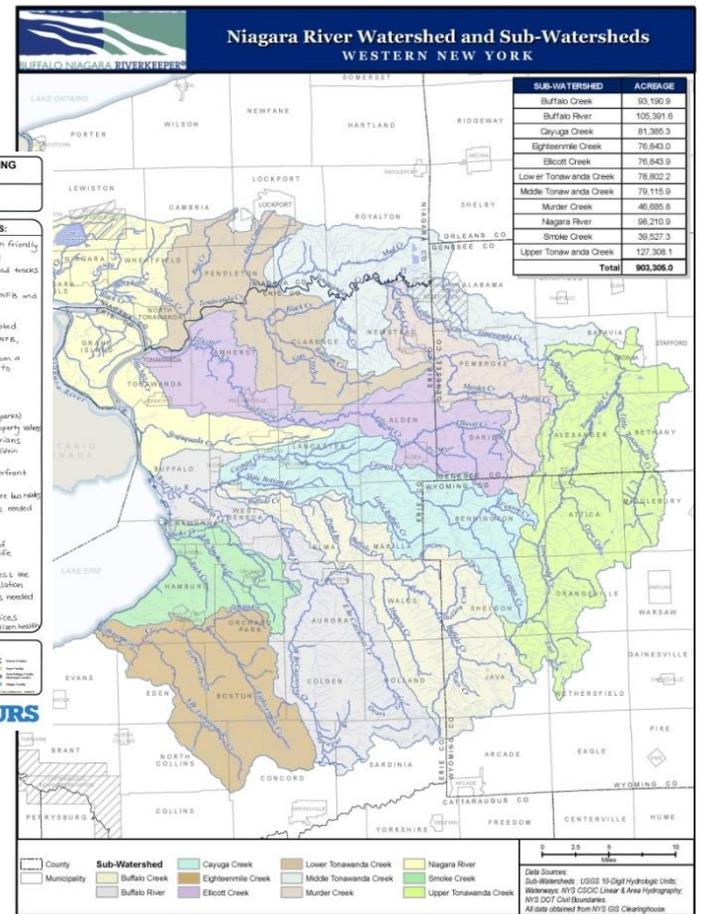
Concurrent Initiatives



**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
NOVEMBER 26, 2013
TOWN OF TONAWANDA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

GROUP ISSUES AND COMMENTS:

- Intersections need to be more pedestrian friendly
- Need to connect trails to Riverwalk Trail
- Light rail should be used on old railroad tracks
- Streets need to be more walkable
- It is unsafe to cross Sheridan Drive w/ NFB and all other businesses
- more pedestrian bridges are needed
- Complete streets policy should be adopted
- safety is a concern on Sheridan Drive, NFB, Calvin Blvd
- Town needs to be "walkable" not just from a recreational standpoint but also as a way to access services/shops/restaurants
- Informal development is a priority
- create better waterfront access
- many of the existing amenities (i.e., trails, parks) contribute to cities health and create property value
- Bingham Eggs needs to be safer for pedestrians
- more development is needed in the town
- Industrial wood siding
- address services (i.e., grocery stores)
- Economic development on the waterfront
- Better access to public transportation and more bus routes
- Some removal of bus stops and sidewalks needed
- More use of solar panels
- There should be better mixing of land uses
- The Town needs to focus on the importance of neighborlyhoods and improving quality of life
- Connectivity - public needs to connect
- "aging in place" - the Town needs to address the needs of a growing senior citizen population
- A sidewalk improvement fund/program is needed
- Address infrastructure needs
- Bring new life and revival to Town SERVICES
- Build "New townships" - include and support citizen health



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Tonawanda's Vision for Its Waterfront

“The Town of Tonawanda desires a highly valued waterfront that encourages ***diverse activities*** and sustainable investment. The waterfront area will attract water-focused 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.”



Study Area Goals



Waterfront



Sustainability



Environmental Stewardship



Economic Development



Community Design



Waterfront Action Items

Strategies (summarized from Chapter 2)

1. Increase public access to and views of the waterfront.
2. Encourage water-dependent uses and expanded passive recreation along the water's edge.
3. Relocate ill-suited development as opportunity and resources are available.
4. Engage regional partners to pursue joint initiatives.



Various opportunities are available for increasing public lands and access along the River, with the most prominent being Cherry Farm. The primary obstacle to overcome with this action item is transferring the land from private to public hands. More detail on Cherry Farm specifically is found at the end of this chapter. © Bing Maps

WF-1. Expand public lands along waterfront

Timeframe: Medium-Long
Stakeholders: Town Board, TTDC, private landowners, Trust for Public Land
Estimated Costs: Dependent on market value
Funding Sources: CFA, NRG

Action
 Achieved/
 Underway

Detail: Several significant parcels located along the waterfront have been identified as potential/future public parks, including Cherry Farm and Riverfront. The Town has initiated talks with outside sources regarding partnerships and avenues for converting these lands from public to private. Continue to actively pursue developing these lands into public resources with direct access to the waterfront. Conceptual development plans and other details are provided at the end of this chapter.

WF-2. Trail interconnections

Timeframe: Short-Medium
Stakeholders: Planning, Town Board
Estimated Costs: Unknown
Funding Sources: Private, NRG, EPF

Action
 Achieved/
 Underway

Detail: Trail spurs in the form of loops, vantage points, connecting boardwalks or other means of public access should be incorporated into the development of all properties immediately adjacent to the river. Where any public or private development is located adjacent to the

Landfills as Green Energy?

Although often considered the antithesis of sustainability, landfills offer opportunities to be retrofitted for renewable energy. The EPA's RE-Powering America's Land Initiative (2011) partners the agency and the U.S. Dept. of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in evaluating the feasibility of siting renewable energy facilities on brownfields, Superfund sites and former landfill or mining sites. Several sites throughout the country, including the Bethlehem Steel Winds site in Lackawanna, NY (below), have successfully been reused for renewable energy generation. While development on landfills present several challenges (e.g. settlement, landfill caps, regulations, etc.), potential remedies and opportunities are being evaluated and designed to make redevelopment of these areas possible.

Sources: U.S. EPA - RE-Powering America's Lands (<http://www.epa.gov/oswercpa/>), Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information (<http://www.clu-in.org/>) and "Solar Power Installations on Closed Landfills: Technical and Regulatory Considerations" - U.S. EPA, Sept. 2009.



Steel winds site viewed from Lake Erie © New York Times

CFA - Consolidated Funding Application, NYSERDA - NYS Energy and Research Dev. Authority, GBNRTC UPWP - Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council Unified Planning Work Plan, TAP - Transportation Alternatives Program/MAP-21

manufacturing technology development and on-site power applications and building research & development programs.

S-4. Continue to explore "green" alternatives for redevelopment of closed landfills.

Timeframe: Short - Medium
Stakeholders: TTDC, Planning, Town Board, Private landowners
Estimated Costs: None
Funding Sources: CFA, NYSERDA

Action
 Achieved/
 Underway

Detail: The intent to redevelop Cherry Farm from a former landfill to the recreational park is a good adaptive reuse for the community. There already has been some interest generated for the other landfills by outside agencies (e.g. EPA) and creative redevelopment options should be explored with an emphasis on green strategies such as solar arrays, wind energy generation, additional recreational amenities or other green pursuits. As a champion for successful redevelopment, the Town can become an integral liaison, resource, and provide support between interested agencies and the private companies that own the landfills. Additional examples, case studies and information on landfill redevelopment is found in Appendix E.

WF-3. Expand trail network

Timeframe: Short - Medium
Stakeholders: Planning Board, GBNRTC, Erie Co, Parks Dept.
Estimated Costs: \$20,000-\$40,000
Funding Sources: GBNRTC UPWP, CFA, TAP

Action
 Achieved/
 Underway

Detail: This plan identifies several key locations for future trail connections and loops within the study area as well as one significant east-west trail connection. Although these locations are identified, further work is required to determine their feasibility. The Town should work with Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) to develop a formal trails masterplan for the Town with special focus on trails and loops connecting to the Riverwalk Trail. The trail master plan would explore

NRGC - Niagara River Greenway Commission, EPF - Environmental Protection Fund, CFA - Consolidated Funding Application



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ES-4. Identify preferred shoreline stabilization methods

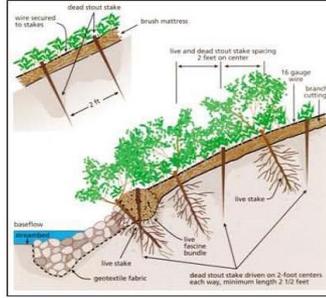
Action
Achieved/
Underway



Timeframe: Short
Stakeholders: Planning Board, BNRK
Estimated Costs: None to \$10,000
Funding Sources: Local budget

Detail: Shoreline erosion contributes to decreased water quality and property loss, among other impacts. Where new development is proposed adjacent to the River and shoreline stabilization is identified as an issue, the use of bioengineering techniques should be the primary recommendation as part of development review. The Town should incorporate reference to bioengineering techniques into the site plan review process as well as identifying examples in design standards to ensure its use. The use of rip-rap and retaining walls should be discouraged and replaced where feasible.

Bioengineering is a combination of structural components and plant material to produce a dense stand of vegetation that serves as a “living system” to protect streambanks and shorelines. This technique works to stabilize many, but not all, erosion problems. One challenge in bioengineering is protecting the bank from erosion until the vegetation becomes established, which could take one to two years. There are a number of structural components available to provide temporary protection while the plant growth becomes established.



Shoreline stabilization techniques such as this brush mattress are being encouraged over revetment walls and bulkheads for not only erosion control purposes, but also to increase natural habitat and filter runoff. © Linden LAND Group

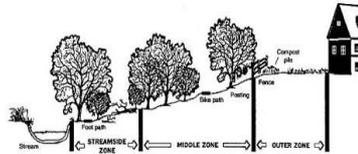
ES-5. Enhance shoreline setbacks

Action
Achieved/
Underway



Timeframe: Short
Stakeholders: Planning Board, BNRK
Estimated Costs: None
Funding Sources: None

Detail: Currently, the Town requires a 50 foot buffer (setback) from the high water mark only along Two Mile Creek and Rattlesnake Creek within the Waterfront Business (WB) and Waterfront Industrial (WID) districts. In coordination with the recommendations from the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, this buffer should be expanded or further enhanced to preserve water quality.



This illustration shows a typical three-zone urban stream buffer zone referenced in many storm water publications. The first zone (25') is very restricted and protects the physical integrity of the water. The second (50-100') is restricted and provides distance between development and the water. The outer (25') is unrestricted but typically allows low intensity uses. Adapted from/© Storm water Central/Center for Watershed Protection.

representations provides a clearer direction for both the approving Board and the applicant and the document would be directly referenced in the site plan approval process.

CD-2. Equal aesthetic treatment for waterfront properties

Action
Achieved/
Underway



Timeframe: Short
Stakeholders: Planning Board
Estimated Costs: None (if done with design standards)
Funding Sources: Local budget

Detail: Properties between the Niagara River and River Road are in a unique position in that they essentially have double frontages, with both needing equal design emphasis to improve the appearance of the waterfront corridor. Development in this area should include architectural details for both water facing and road facing facades. For development on the east side of River Road, road frontage facades would have primary architectural emphasis. The specific architectural details for each façade would be outlined in the design standards mentioned previously.

CD-3. Revise landscape plan regulations.

Action
Achieved/
Underway



Timeframe: Short
Stakeholders: Planning Board
Estimated Costs: None (if done with zoning updates)
Funding Sources: Local budget

Detail: The current landscape plan regulations are included within each separate district. While this does provide a “one-stop shop” for determining requirements within a specific district, providing a single section related to landscaping, buffering and screening (included fences) would help to streamline the code and establish greater uniformity throughout the Town and especially the waterfront area. Specific requirements for landscaping in the waterfront area should include, but not be limited to:

- Use of native species in landscaping materials

Improving waterfront visibility

Design standards can be used to improve not only views of the waterfront, but also other key viewpoints throughout the Town. For the waterfront specifically, this can be achieved through the following:

- Smaller building footprints to open up views
- Grouping of structures
- Strategic siting to create interactions with the waterfront
- Higher amounts of windows
- Large walls without windows, service areas, and utilities should not be located on water-oriented facades.
- Maximum heights of 3 stories or 50 feet for residential or 2 stories for commercial
- Include interior landscaping and trees, but not excessive amounts that fully obscure waterfront views.

Cherry Farm



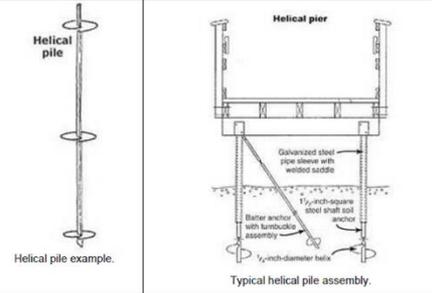
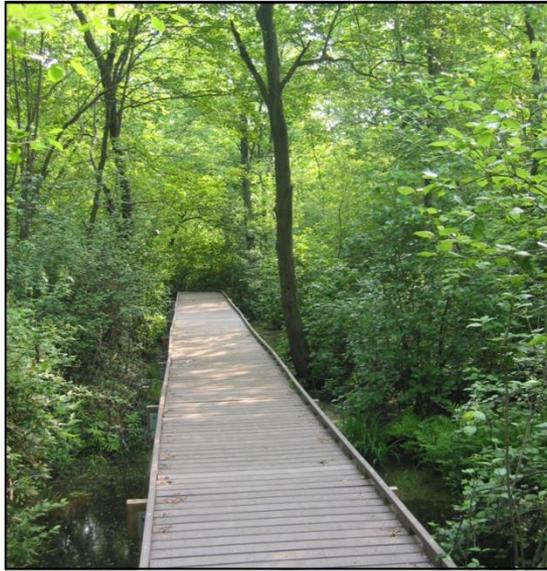
Aqua Lane Park



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Riverfront Park



East-West Trail



Sheridan Park



Thank You!



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