

SECTION IV PROPOSED LAND AND WATER USES AND PROJECTS

A. Proposed Land and Water Uses

A key component of Whitehall's Waterfront Revitalization Program consists of the proposed land and water uses and proposed projects. The Inventory and Analysis of waterfront conditions (Section II) along with the applicable State and local policies (Section III) provide the basis for this component. Methods and techniques to implement these proposals, including amendments to the Village's Zoning Ordinance, are detailed in Section V.

The implementation of the LWRP represents a concrete step in the Village's efforts to rebuild the local economy by enhancing waterfront opportunities for redevelopment and new development. The type and quality of future development in the waterfront area determine the level of this effort's long-term success. There is a great deal of momentum to take this process forward due to the improvements made by the NYS Canal Corporation over the last few years. The new boat launch, picnic pavilions, docking facilities and other public facilities make Whitehall a destination stop along the Canal and a true northern gateway into Lake Champlain. The new improvements signify the commitment of a significant amount of public investment. The Canal Corporation is dedicated to marketing both the Erie and Champlain Canal systems as significant tourist destinations and will promote appropriate businesses to specific sites along the Champlain Canal, especially Whitehall and Waterford since they are the gateways for the Champlain Canal.

1. Introduction

This section identifies three primary land use type areas: those that are stable (or well-established uses that are not likely to change substantially in the future), redevelopment opportunity areas which represent areas for which a variety of uses would be acceptable and encouraged, and the third category includes areas within the waterfront where important natural or manmade resources are found.

2. Areas of Predominantly Stable Land Use Areas

The most stable categories of land use occupy the majority of the land use pattern within the Village of Whitehall. It incorporates the residential neighborhoods on the west side of Route 22, the business district along Broadway (Route 22), and the open space lands and low density residential shoreline that characterize the east side of South Bay. There are also no dramatic changes in land use anticipated in the residential areas of the Village on the east side of the Champlain Canal. In general, these areas are not subject to any foreseeable changes in land use types and patterns or other factors which could significantly alter the character of the Village. All of the proposed land uses are compatible with the long established Village development patterns.

The business district along Broadway (Rt. 22) includes numerous residential properties. This area, in general, is in need of improvement to the structures and

to the public facilities. This area, therefore, while stable in terms of land use, could be targeted for comprehensive improvement actions. It is, therefore, concluded as an area suitable for redevelopment.

3. Areas Suitable for Development, Redevelopment and Enhancement

The areas of the Village suitable for development, redevelopment, and enhancement are the land areas adjacent to and just beyond the Champlain Canal. There is also a large parcel that is located along Route 4/22 adjacent to the railroad that is suitable for redevelopment. In addition, Broadway (Rt.22), particularly the area north of where Route 4 splits from Route 22, is an area that should be targeted for comprehensive public and private redevelopment measures.

EB Metals

The EB Metals site is also an underutilized manufacturing facility and has the potential for reuse as a significant industrial or manufacturing operations that could have a major impact on the Village economy.

Cooke's Island

Cooke's Island is an undeveloped, largely forested island just north of Lock 12 on the Champlain Canal. The island divides the canal from the west shore of Whitehall. The shallow waters between the island and the west shore provide excellent habitat for birds and other wildlife. This property was historically used as a place to dump the canal spoils during dredging operations. Today, it has potential for significant recreational uses.

Railroad Property

The Village will work with Washington County Local Economic Development Corporation and the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce to market the vacant property belonging to the railroad. It has the best potential as an industrial site since it is located adjacent to the rail line along Route 22. It could also be well utilized as a commercial site, such as a mini-mall.

Triangle Point

Positive impacts from the planned Canalway Trail's interconnectivity include increasing the potential of being able to market Triangle Point, the peninsula property to a developer for the development of a waterfront motel and Recreational Vehicle complex. This is an ideal site from the standpoint that it has excellent exposure to the Route 4 corridor and to the Champlain Canal. The Village recognizes that this is the location where commercial development has the best chance of success and would want to market the site with local economic development specialists to gain the greatest exposure to waterfront resources. Site improvements should include docking, launching for non-motorized boats and a dedicated snowmobile access site.

4. Sensitive Development Areas

Sensitive development areas are places that need special attention due to the presence of wetlands, hazardous waste sites, contains endangered species or habitats, or is at high risk for erosion. These areas have been identified in Section II of the LWRP and include the lands around Wood Creek, South Bay and the Champlain Canal where wetlands exist (see Section II. J and Maps 9a and 9b, “Water Resources.” These lands are proposed to be retained as open space.

Sensitive development areas also include areas with high scenic value. These areas are identified in Section II. J and in Maps 11a and 11b, “Scenic Resources.” It is particularly important to preserve the integrity of the viewshed looking from Skene Manor and from South Bay and the hills surrounding South Bay. Proposed buildings and other obstructions to these views should be carefully considered during the review process and mitigated to the greatest extent possible while continuing to support growth and improvement to private property owners.

Sensitive development areas also include contaminated areas. There is one such site in the Village- a two-acre vacant site located just south of the E.B. Metals Facility on Route 4 was classified in 1990 by DEC as a Class 2 site where hazardous waste presents a significant threat to the public health or the environment. A remedial investigation/feasibility study has been conducted to evaluate the alternatives for addressing the significant threats. A hazardous waste site exists within 500 feet of the Champlain Canal. The Poultney Street Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site (ID#558019) requires remediation including excavation and removal of contaminated sub-surface soils, groundwater monitoring, and institutional controls before any new development can occur on the site.

B. Proposed Water Uses/Harbor Management Plan

Water uses in and along the Champlain Canal in Whitehall will continue to be devoted to docking, boat rental opportunities, opportunities for both hand-launch and trailered boats, fishing access, and the provision of a variety of marina services. A business new to the waterfront is the public rental of large luxury boats for touring (Blue Heron). These are fully equipped boats marketed towards the downstate customers looking for an unusual experience north through the Canal and into Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence River, south to Albany and west through the Erie Canal System, or south along the Hudson River to the New York City region. The LWRP encourages providing support services for Blue Heron, such as overnight accommodations, restaurants, and recreational supply stores. Additional water oriented businesses that are desired include small tour boats, such as the one presently operating out of Schuylerville, exposure of Canal resources for the fast growing industry of canoeing and kayaking accomplished by the development of a dedicated small public boat launch just north of Lock 12. In addition, fishing access for the wheelchair-accessible should be provided in South Bay.

As previously described in Section I - Waterfront Revitalization Area Boundary and Section II - Inventory and Analysis, the Champlain Canal flows through the Village,

and its artificial land-cut channel is included within the Waterfront Revitalization Area. The Champlain Canal is part of the State Canal System and is owned and maintained by the New York State Canal Corporation. Consistent with boating activities throughout the Canal System, long-term water uses appropriate for the Champlain Canal within Whitehall include recreational and, to a lesser extent, commercial boating.

A key recommendation set forth in the statewide Canal Revitalization Program was the establishment of harbor centers and service ports at existing urban and village centers along the length of the Canal System which would provide an array of pedestrian and boater public services aimed at revitalizing the System as a major recreation resource. In this regard, Whitehall was identified to serve as one of seven (7) major Canal System harbor centers, and the NYS Canal Corporation subsequently invested over \$2.5 million for completion of extensive harbor improvements within the Village, including the following:

- 30 ft. wide boat launch, together with vehicular parking;
- 350 linear ft. of floating docks;
- park benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks;
- kiosks and directional signage;
- bulkhead repairs at Skenesborough Park;
- a gateway gazebo into the harbor area; and
- a 1,800 sq. ft. picnic shelter and 2,000 sq. ft. recreational structure at Skenesborough Park.

While the Village works in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation and other state agencies to develop public access and boater enhancements, jurisdiction for use of the Canal and shoreline rests with New York State. In this regard, the Canal Corporation maintains the navigation channel and canal infrastructure. In addition, rules and regulations adopted pursuant to NYS Canal Law (21 NYCRR Sub-chapter D, Parts 150-156) and design standards enforced by the Canal Corporation serve as the definitive controls governing use of the Canal. Key provisions set forth in the rules and regulations are as follows:

- Navigation season -beginning from April 5th - May 20th to November 15-20;
- Size of boats -up to 300 ft. long and 43.5 ft. wide;
- Maximum boat speed -6 mph along land-cut canal segments (such as Whitehall) and dependent on local conditions along canalized rivers and lakes.

The Canal Corporation regulates occupancy of Canal Corporation lands adjacent to the Canal System through the issuance of revocable permits. The Canal Corporation also enforces guidelines governing the construction of docks along the Canal System, set forth in Standards for Docks on the Canal System. Key provisions of those standards are as follows:

Applicable to residential/non-commercial docks accommodating four or fewer boats with a maximum dock length of 100 ft. (commercial and larger docks analyzed on a case-by-case basis;

- Docks shall have a minimum offset of 24 ft. (for land-cut canal sections) or 50 ft. (for canalized waterbodies) from navigation channels;
- Docks shall be constructed parallel to the shore in land-cut areas and be at least 50 ft. from navigation aids;
- Docks shall not interfere with Canal navigation
- Dock designs shall be approved by the Canal Corporation;
- Boat slips must incorporate acceptable provisions for shoreline protection;
- One dock per property owner is permitted;
- Docks shall not restrict access across Canal lands;
- Docks shall be set back at least 10 ft. from adjacent property lines; and
- Excavated slips shall be no larger than 1,000 sq. ft.

The complete text of the dock standards is attached as Appendix D.

C. Proposed Public and Private Projects

1. Introduction

As part of the LWRP, the Village of Whitehall recommends several large projects and a series of small inter-related projects that are designed to expand the opportunities provided by the waterfront improvements funded and recently funded by the Canal Corporation. Proposed projects and generalized uses can be found on [Map 12 “Proposed Projects.”](#) The recommendations not only provide more public access to the waterfront, but also link local, regional and national trail systems and direct commerce to the downtown Village Business District to strengthen the local economy. The LWRP utilizes its rich historical resources to link and market them riding the current trend to build national heritage tourism. The LWRP includes a number of initiatives that are based on creating a visitor base that can support a diversity of new businesses. The “Gateway” group suggested a number of initiatives that have been incorporated into the LWRP.

2. Proposed Public Projects

Extend Canalway Trail

Extend the existing trail to the south to correspond with the Town of Fort Ann’s plan to connect the Canalway Trail to Whitehall and the larger scheme to create one byway from Waterford to Canada. Potential obstacles to a continuous path are the many stream and wetland crossings that will be necessary along the canal route south. Permitting and bridge construction will tend to increase the cost of the project.

The Village of Whitehall also proposes to extend the Canalway Trail north beyond Lock 12 Road to a site to be known as the future nature and arts center. From this site, the trail continues over a pedestrian bridge onto Cooke’s Island. This route also has water obstacles that must be overcome. There are bridges that are no longer operational for vehicles but may be acceptable for pedestrian use. These should be investigated for use along the trail and to connect over to Cooke’s Island.

Ultimately, the destination for the trail north should be the old Route 9 spur along Route 22 where the wheelchair-accessible fishing site is planned on South Bay. One of the ways to avoid the wetlands would be to secure easements along the Niagara Mohawk right-of-way.

The Trail should be equipped with benches, lighting and other amenities that are part of the present pedestrian walkway at the site at South Bay.

Wood Creek Pedestrian Bridge and Trail

In order to provide the greatest amount of public pedestrian access to the waterfront, the Village is proposing that the trail on the east side of the Saunders Street Bridge running south along the Canal be extended to Route 4 and merge with the existing sidewalk as recommended in the Urban Cultural Park Redevelopment Plan. At the point at which the path intersects with the south end of the ball fields, it would cross over to the peninsula via a pedestrian bridge across Wood Creek. The trail would continue along the northern perimeter of the peninsula and the west side until it reaches the sidewalk along Route 4. It would then link up to the proposed path along the fuel tank property and form a fully linked walking trail from virtually any location along the Canal. Recommended improvements for the part of the trail where docking is offered includes adding picnic tables, grills and small covered pavilions. Some sections of the proposed path will require securing some kind of easements since much of this land is privately owned. Additionally, a trail marker should be placed at the entrance to the existing trail from the Village up Skene Mountain.

Cooke's Island

The Village (with the Town of Whitehall) proposes to purchase or lease Cooke's Island from the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and develop it into a public day-use primitive recreation area. Presently, negotiations are continuing with ACOE on ownership and compatible land uses for the island. Cooke's Island was recently used by the ACOE to dispose of dredging spoils from the Champlain Canal. Cooke's Island presently has no public access and is essentially vacant with a few scattered abandoned ice shanties. Only pedestrians and bicycles (emergency vehicle access would be incorporated into the plan) would have future access to the island. Such a bridge is envisioned to connect Lower Main Street to Cooke's Island. The Canalway Trail would continue on Cooke's Island where it would make a complete loop linking picnic and canal viewing sites. Cooke's Island is a prime area for viewing wildlife because of the excellent wetland habitat on the west side of the island and across the canal as well. A bird watching trail should be developed with the cooperation and guidance of the Nature Conservancy or Lake Champlain Basin Conservancy. Picnic sites should be developed along with docking areas north of Cooke's Island along east side of the Canal at the base of Austin Hill.

A formal canoe/kayak access point would be established on the island at the most reasonable point along the east side of the island. The entire area has very strong potential for the development of small-craft boating. An association who

promotes this activity should establish a formal canoe/kayak route with recommended stopovers. The southwest side of Cooke's Island is presently too shallow for the passage of non-motorized boats. This must be corrected so that kayakers can completely circle the island and enjoy the total experience of viewing wildlife from the water. Dredging of this area is recommended, however, there are archaeological and cost issues to resolve before this project can go forward.

Wheelchair-Accessible Fishing Access Site

The Village seeks to provide greater access to the waterfront to persons with disabilities. As such, the Village proposes to develop the Old Route 22 road into a recreational facility with opportunities for people with disabilities, including picnicking, fishing and nature viewing. This site is located on South Bay, Lake Champlain, a coveted fishing resource. The site would be equipped with restrooms for use by people with disabilities. Toilets, sinks, mirrors, water fountains, towel and soap dispensers, and grab bars should be installed at wheelchair level. All access points should be marked by appropriate signage. An additional feature to the site is a designated non-motorized public access point.

The site should have the following access features:

- a) Picnic pads: 20' x 20' hard surface areas, usually concrete, with picnic tables, barbecue grills and water spigots at wheelchair level.
- b) Fishing areas: accessible platforms or piers with safety rails.
- c) Nature viewing: wood or hard surface walkways, ramps and observation platforms, all equipped with safety rails.

Marina Pump-Out Facility

The Village identified the need to provide public access to a marina pump-out facility in the Village of Whitehall. The closest pump-out facility is roughly 35 miles in either direction. Providing these services would benefit the community because they could be marketed to boaters on the Canal and attract their attention directly to Whitehall. The pump-out facility would be located at the municipal wastewater treatment facility south of Lock 12 on the west side of the canal off North Main Street. Services will accommodate virtually any size boat and will be offered for a fee to offset the costs of constructing the hookups and dock.

Economic Development Plan

The Village of Whitehall has recently completed a Community Development and Tourism Strategy with financing from the Lake Champlain Byways Program. The "Gateway Partnership" intends to utilize public and private partnerships to develop unique approaches to economic development and planning, tourism development, community beautification, community pride, arts and cultural development, youth and recreation issues, and industrial development. The

Village recognizes the good works of this group and proposes to develop a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that takes Gateway Partnership's work to the next level. The following ideas were developed from the LWRP and should be incorporated into this Economic Development Plan.

- a) Market a sports-oriented retail outfitter; develop a market for canoe and kayak rentals complete with lessons and tours of the Champlain Canal, South Bay and Lake Champlain; link this potential business with kayak clubs out of Vermont and market for inclusion of South Bay and the Canal into regional touring plan books and maps and on the Internet.
- b) Promote the Canal area as a "Water Gateway" by placing banners or flagging along the waterfront; create a plan for the water gateway and the three land gateways into the Village of Whitehall; place interpretive signage along the Canal in view of passing boats.
- c) Create an incentive plan to attract businesses to fill the abandoned and underutilized buildings in the community; market the area as an artist colony to bolster reuse of the existing downtown structures.
- d) Develop a map that highlights the museum, historical markers and area landmarks; get other regional maps to highlight this information so that it links up with other exhibits; establish new harbor partnerships with the waterfront redevelopment activities at Waterford and at Schuylerville; work with area museums to exchange cultural exhibits and shared activities; establish a tourist connection with Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain by providing access by boat.
- e) Encourage the Americade motorcycle rally to include Whitehall in their recommended tours.
- f) Locate one or more boats from the 1700's era to dock for the summer and provide tours; develop a working 1776 shipyard as a destination activity for tourists; look for other opportunities to host special boats.
- g) Support ideas that promote the Adirondack and Rutland train network.
- h) Expand upon the present Winterfest activities to develop a long-term winter recreational use plan for the canal.
- i) Promote local business interest in a dinner theater/tour boat.
- j) Identify and provide the necessary support services that are needed for the Blue Heron and other boat operators on the Canal; encourage the business community to respond.
- k) Provide a designated location and promote historical re-enactments as public events.

- l) Establish an overall Canal Waterfront Cultural District identity using an integrated program of signage, landscaping and streetscape design.

Water Resources Management Plan

The Village will provide for the permanent protection of the wetlands around Cooke's Island, improve stormwater runoff and control stream and canal bank erosion, provide for the protection from floods, and protect the community's water supply by developing a Water Resources Management Plan. Such plan should, at a minimum, include the following recommendations:

- a) Facilitate the sale of the wetlands to the Nature Conservancy.
- b) Provide for stormwater infrastructure improvements that separate out stormwater runoff from sanitary wastewater throughout the Village.
- c) Correct the stormwater runoff and bank erosion problem along the south side of Route 4 at Wood Creek.
- d) Develop a watershed management plan for the community's water supply (Pine Lake).
- e) Develop a flood management plan for the waterfront area. This should include policy that directs the release or impounding of water at Lock 12.

Recreational Development Plan

The Village will respond to recreational issues that have come forth as a result of the LWRP planning process by developing a Long-range Recreational Development Plan. The following recommendations represent future ideas to incorporate in this plan:

- a) Advocate a more regular presence of safety patrol on the Champlain Canal; post appropriate signage at boater level so that boaters are aware of the navigation rules in the Canal.
- b) Work with DEC to develop a monitoring and management plan for the control of non-native aquatic vegetation and the general fishery of South Bay
- c) Work with DEC to develop a network of marked hiking and snowmobile trails on the West Mountain.
- d) Promote accessibility and service at existing marinas that will accommodate the larger boats in the Canal system.
- e) Enlarge the planned community indoor recreational center to accommodate a greater variety of activities.

3. Proposed Private Projects

Oil Tanks

This is privately-owned, 1.4 acre site, located at a principal entrance to Skenesborough Park and the Central Business District, is no longer being used for its original purpose and is for sale. Because of its past use as a petroleum storage facility, there are likely significant costs related to the clean-up of the property. The Village, in consultation with the NYS Department of Conservation, will explore potential environmental assessment and remediation opportunities that may be available. Long-term plans for the site include use as a lodging facility or use as a public park. This land is an essential link in terms of extending the Canalway Trail.

Railroad Property

The Village will work with Washington County Local Economic Development Corporation and the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce to market the vacant property belonging to the railroad. It has the best potential as an industrial site since it is located adjacent to the rail line along Route 22. It could also be well utilized as a commercial site such as a mini-mall.

Nature and Arts Center

The Arts and Recreation Commission of Whitehall are proposing Cooke's Island as a Recreation/Arts Center Project. In 1999, the Commission applied for a grant through the Lake Champlain Basin Program for \$4,295 to legally accept this donated property, assess and clean up the property, and begin to develop the property as a nature and historic education center.

Public Launch for Non-Motorized Boats

A dedicated launch site for small boats such as canoes and kayaks should be available at Whitehall Marina just north and west of Lock 12. This area is being improved under other funding sources. A small boat storage rack should also be provided at this site to allow for boaters to secure their property while temporarily pulled up to the site.