

Section II Inventory and Analysis

A Local and Regional Context

From west to east, the canal enters the Town of Pittsford just to the west of the turning basin at Lock 32. The canal traverses the western portion of the town, and enters the village's jurisdiction as it flows under the Monroe Avenue Bridge. The canal bisects the Main Street and Schoen Place districts, and exits the village approximately halfway between the State Street and Mitchell Road bridges. The canal exits the town along the eastern border, approximately one-half mile west of Bushnell's Basin and the Marsh Road Bridge.

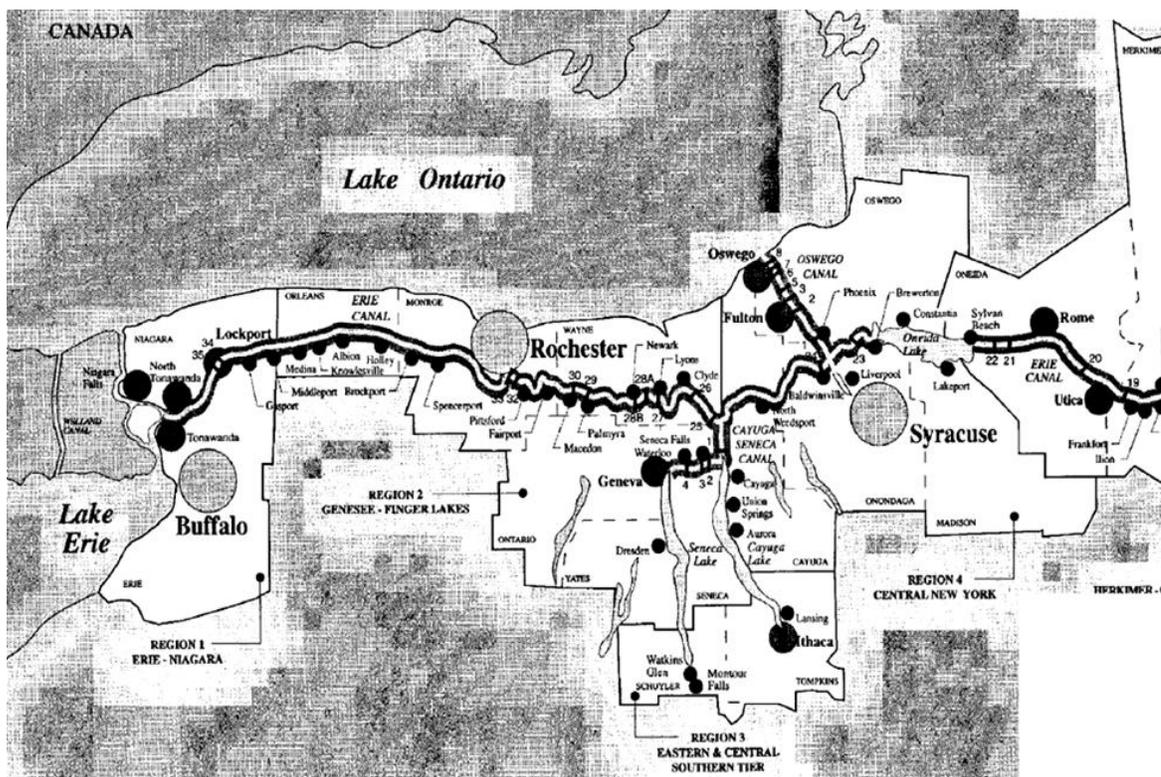
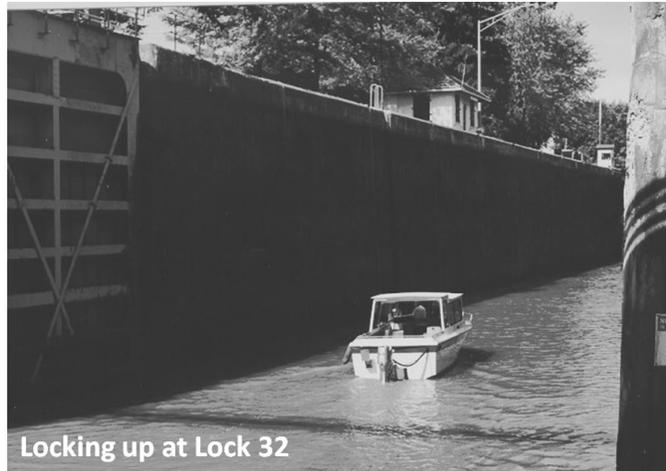


Image of Erie Canal from Syracuse to Buffalo, illustrating Pittsford's place on the canal and its relationship to the region. Map from the Draft New York State Canal Recreationway Plan, New York State Canal Recreationway Commission, and Beyer Blinder Belle Consortium, July 1995.

Pittsford was founded in 1789 by brothers Simon and Israel Stone. The original center of the settlement was located one mile south of the Main Street four corners. In 1811 the village center migrated from the mile post area to its present location in anticipation of the construction of the canal and the State's east-west road. The village, incorporated in



1827, grew as the local economy was stimulated by canal traffic. During the second half of the 1800's, canal traffic through Pittsford averaged 250 boats a week, a figure exceeded in the peak, fall shipping season. In the mid to late 1800's (the Auburn and Rochester railroad was built through Pittsford in 1842), passenger rail lines greatly reduced passenger traffic on the canal, resulting in the canal being used mainly for freight transport. The canal was significantly rebuilt when it was enlarged in 1910-1912 to support bulk shipping. Pittsford served as a major fueling station for canal boats during the first half of the 20th century. However, the increased use and higher speed of train further reduced the canal's use as a freight transportation conduit. The canal experienced a resurgence of freight use during WWII, due to the canal's ability to ship grain at a lower cost per ton than the railroads.

From the 1960's to the present, canal freight shipments have dropped sharply. Today, it is rare to see any bulk cargo shipped on the canal. In 1975 the Port of Pittsford Park opened across the canal from Schoen Place. Recently the Village of Pittsford received a grant to build a bulkhead across from the Newcomb Oil Company to permit refueling of canal craft. This facility has increased Pittsford's attraction as a place to stop when traveling through by boat. The canal has three engineering structures of significance in the Town of Pittsford. These are Lock 32, Lock 62, and the Great Embankment. Lock 32 is located just west of Clover Street (NYS



route 65) near its intersection with Jefferson Road (NYS route 252). The lock is 44.5 feet wide and 300 feet long and has a depth of 12 feet over the sill. This

lock represents a 25 foot change in elevation. Lock 32 was originally built between 1910 and 1912 when the canal was redone to accommodate motorized traffic.

Approximately 8,000 boats pass through this lock in a season. (This number includes each lock-up or down of the three local tour boats.) The stretch of state owned land north of the lock serves as a multiple use park, featuring picnic tables, a jungle gym, a car top boat launch and a wooded area. This park serves as a major access point to the canal for recreational users.

Lock 62, described in greater detail in the historic resources and assets part found in Appendix A, is located behind the Wegmans Complex on Monroe Avenue. The Great Embankment, which is also described in Appendix A, was a major engineering feat at the time of its construction.



B Existing Land Use and Ownership Patterns

The land within several feet of both the north and south shores of the canal is owned by the State of New York throughout the corridor. The total holdings exceed 300 acres of canal front property. The largest sections of state holdings are at the west end of the corridor the areas around Locks 32 and 62 and the east end of the corridor near Knickerbocker Road. With the exception of the stretch of canal in front of the NYSDOT facility mentioned earlier, the Erie Canal Heritage Trail runs all the way across the town and village along the northern shore of the canal. This trail, which is on the state's land, utilizes what was once the towpath walked by horses and mules pulling canal boats. The heritage trail is now used for many recreational activities including: walking, jogging, biking, rollerblading, fishing, outdoor canal side dining, and feeding the large resident duck population; a very popular activity at Schoen Place with both adults and children. A survey of residents conducted for the preparation of the town's comprehensive plan noted that the canal trail was the "favorite place" among Pittsford residents. The trail can be accessed from several points in Pittsford. The park at Lock 32 is a very popular access point. The parking lot at this lock is often filled past capacity. Cars frequently line Clover Street near this lock due to insufficient off-street parking.

The trail is accessible from French Road via the trail extension going to Lock 62 and from the Monroe Avenue extension, near Central Music, where the trail can be picked up east bound under Monroe Avenue and west bound off of Brook

Road, a neighboring side street. In the village center the trail can be accessed behind the Depot and Village Department of Public Works garage and also anywhere along Schoen Place. Schoen Place is a very popular access point, leading to parking headaches, particularly on summer weekends. At the east end of the town the trail is accessible at the Town of Pittsford Great Embankment Park as well as from several neighborhood trail connections.

Description of land use patterns is most easily accomplished by dividing the canal into the six sections naturally created by the five road bridges that cross the canal in the town and village. These bridges are Clover Street (NYS Route 65), Monroe Avenue (NYS Route 31), North Main Street (NYS Route 96), State Street (NYS Route 31), and Mitchell Road.

West of Clover Street

With the exception of one residential street west of the turning basin, the majority of land on both shores of the canal in this area is state-owned. The north side is a park and the south side includes 25 to 30 acres of state-owned land which, with the exception of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) site, is primarily undeveloped. This area is being considered primarily for open space preservation, with some recreation use and small-scale supporting development.

Clover Street to Monroe Avenue

The predominant land use of the north shore beyond the trail is residential. There are two exceptions, the Lock 62 spur and the site where the NYSDOT/Canal Corporation and the town sewer district facilities are located. The state-owned land surrounding the stretch of trail leading to Lock 62 features a woodlot and wetlands. The eastern end of the property, near Monroe Avenue, houses the NYSDOT paint truck facility, the NYS Canal Corporation facility and boat lift and the Town of Pittsford sewer district service center. The south side of the canal in this stretch is almost entirely state-owned and includes a public boat ramp accessible from Clover Street and the Pittsford Crew rowing center. With the exception of these facilities, the remainder of the state lands is currently in a natural state. The former Monoco Oil Company property occupies the far eastern end directly across from the NYSDOT facility.

Monroe Avenue to North Main Street

This bridge represents the town/village border. The western half of the north shore here is approximately 20 acres of land owned by the Town of Pittsford. This area is undeveloped open space which offers many possibilities. The eastern half contains the Village of Pittsford Department of Public Works garage and other commercial developments such as the Grove Street office buildings, and the former Depot Inn which has been redeveloped as a hotel, restaurant,

and meeting center. There are two houses between the depot and the canal on North Main Street. One of these houses is a commercial establishment. The south shore has a few retail establishments at the west edge, but is otherwise privately-owned residential land.

North Main Street to State Street

The north shore of this section contains one of the key attractions of the area: Schoen Place and Northfield Common. This stretch of retail establishments, restaurants, historical structures and other canal side attractions draws many shoppers, diners, and recreational users. This area is a living example of the transitions canal communities have gone through. Pittsford's more industrial past is still evident in the rough hewn lumber yard buildings, bean and grain barns, and coal tower. The current use of these structures to house retail and eating establishments reflects the change in character that the area has undergone. The land immediately behind Schoen Place is privately-owned agricultural land, the majority of which will be permanently protected from development as part of Pittsford's Greenprint for the Future purchase of development rights program. The south shore here features the Port of Pittsford Park, which is located in the village but maintained by the town. Next to the park is a public parking lot and the town library. The rest of this side is privately owned by the commercial establishments along State Street.

State Street to Mitchell Road

This section is privately owned residential property on both shores. Most homes are screened from the canal by fences, trees or other plantings. The Bob Ford Field hosts two youth baseball fields on land owned by the New York State Canal Corporation. A very informal small boat launching site is adjacent to the ball fields.

Mitchell Road to the Town Line

There are a few residential structures immediately adjacent to Mitchell Road but the rest of the north shore is wooded all the way to the Town of Pittsford Great Embankment Park (maintained by the town but also owned by the New York State Canal Corporation). This park includes a car top boat launch and additional wooded land. The wooded area between Mitchell Road and the park surrounds the former path of the Auburn rail line and is now a Rochester Gas & Electric



The Colonial Belle

right of way. Jefferson Road (NYS route 96) runs along the south shore in this section, but a narrow strip with trees and picnic areas has been maintained between the road and the canal as an informal linear park. The support structures from the Auburn railroad canal crossing still exist and are considered a possible site for developing a pedestrian canal crossing. (See [Village](#) and [Town](#) Waterfront Land Use maps)

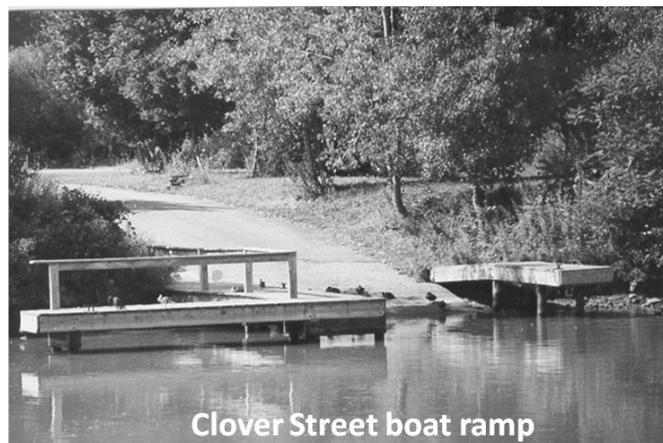
C Existing Water Use Patterns

The canal in this area is used for many different water related activities.

Canoeing and kayaking are very popular activities that are readily accessible to the general public. Relatively little expensive or specialized equipment is needed and such equipment may be rented at canalside water sport establishments. Many larger, privately owned water craft such as pontoon boats, power boats of all sizes, and sail boats (with the mast down) pass through on day trips, on longer vacations, or on their way through to the Atlantic or Lake Erie and other inland water ways.

Pittsford's two high schools have a combined crew team which practices, and sometimes competes on the canal.

There are several larger boats in or near the Pittsford area that offer sightseeing cruises on the canal, including lunch and dinner cruises. These boats include the Sam Patch which docks Town and in Pittsford part of the week, and the Colonial Belle and Fairport Lady, both out of Fairport. Pittsford also offers a white water training course on the spillway of Lock 32. Pittsford has an inadequate number of access points for launching boats. Car top boats can be launched from a dock in the park at Lock 32 or a dock in the Town of Pittsford Great Embankment Park. The only access for trailer boats in Pittsford is the ramp on the south shore, just east of Clover Street.



Docking is also an issue in Pittsford. There is a need for more transient docking as well as overnight facilities. Care must be taken to add tie-up points in places that do not conflict with the surrounding, existing uses. (See [Existing Water Use Map](#)).

D Natural Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Features

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as areas covered with shallow water permanently or for periods long enough to support aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation. Areas designated as wetlands may include bogs, swamps, marshes, wet meadows, flood plains, and water logged soils. The current national policy regarding wetlands is that there shall be no net loss. The State Department of Environmental Conservation regulates wetlands larger than 12.4 acres using the following designations:

1. Class I - wetlands designated as Class I shall not be disturbed for any reason unless “it is determined that the proposed activity satisfied a compelling economic or social need that clearly outweighs the loss of or detriment to the Class I wetland.”
2. Class II - disturbance is generally not allowed - “a permit shall be issued only if it is determined that the proposed activity satisfies a pressing economic or social need that clearly outweighs the loss of or detriment to the benefits of the Class II wetland”.
3. Class III & IV - less strictly regulated - there are few wetlands with these designations in Pittsford.

Wetlands smaller than 12.4 acres are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Town of Pittsford. Local policy regarding wetlands comes from the Wetlands Protection Law, Article XV of the Code of the Town of Pittsford, it states that it is “the public policy of the Town of Pittsford to preserve, protect and conserve freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived there from...”

Wetlands serve many important functions including: providing habitat for wildlife and plants, playing a role in storm water management and flood control, filtering pollutants, recharging groundwater, and providing passive recreational and educational opportunities.

There are several small wetland areas relevant to the canal greenway plan, and one area large enough to merit state regulation. This area, labeled PT-3 by the town, is north of the canal, between Clover Street and Monroe Avenue, along the trail extension to Lock 62. It is designated as a class II wetland by the state. Other relevant areas include an area south of the canal opposite the turning basin at the west end of Pittsford, the northern portion of the undeveloped parcel north of the canal between Monroe Avenue and North Main, and a small wetland on the north shore near Mitchell Road. (See [Ecological Resources Map](#))

Woodlots

Wooded areas provide habitats for varied flora and fauna. They also; protect watersheds and soils from flooding and erosion, act as storm buffers by slowing winds and moderating temperature extremes, and purify the air through removal of carbon dioxide and creation of oxygen. In addition wooded areas provide an important source of recreation and visual pleasure.

Pittsford has many woodlots including several in the canal area. The western edge of the town features woodlots on both the north and south shores in the proximity of the turning basin. As well as being the site of a state regulated wetland, the land surrounding the old canal bed extending to Lock 62 is heavily wooded. The south shore of the canal, east of Clover Street and west of the former Monoco property is mostly wooded as far as Jefferson Road and, in some areas, beyond. The canal is lined with trees and heavy undergrowth on both shores from Mitchell Road east to the Town of Pittsford Great Embankment Park. The woods on the north side are deeper, while the trees on the south simply line a narrow strip between the canal and Jefferson Road. The north side of the canal from the Great Embankment east to the town border is heavily wooded. The Great Embankment (See Appendix A) is where the land and canal bed were artificially built up to support the canal overpass over Irondequoit creek. The Irondequoit creek valley south of the canal is also lined with trees.



Landscape

Open spaces serve several important functions: they protect and buffer ecologically sensitive areas including wetlands, other water resources, important habitats and sensitive soils; they act as a recreational resource; they can support trail systems; they help shape the character of the community and they have aesthetic value.

Much of Pittsford's remaining open space is agricultural land which also serves many of the aforementioned functions. As it is directly behind Schoen Place, the Powers Farm is the most relevant agricultural open space to any canal projects. Pittsford established its Greenprint plan to protect approximately 2,000 acres of agricultural land from development.

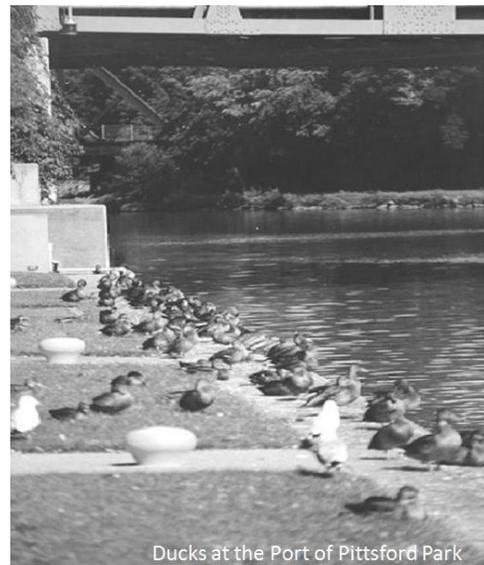
Steep slopes are susceptible to erosion and increased flooding. The only relevant area in which this issue must be addressed is the area near Irondequoit creek between East Street and Thornell Road, along NYS route 96. Development in this area should be avoided

Wildlife Issues and Habitat

Pittsford supports a year-round population of several types of ducks and geese at Schoen Place. Feeding these water fowl is a very popular pastime on the shores of Schoen Place. The canal also has several kinds of fish living in it including: small mouth bass, sunfish, sheepshead, carp, and suckers. While the canal is not a commercial fishery, many people do fish along the canal's shores for recreation.

The Pittsford Canal Corridor is home to a great blue heron population, as well as other wading birds, deer and other "suburban" animals such as raccoons, rabbits and squirrels. None of the species living in the Pittsford canal corridor are threatened or endangered.

The Pittsford Canal Corridor provides wildlife with added benefits by linking existing undeveloped areas, connecting them for animal movement, and preserving an important corridor for migratory birds.



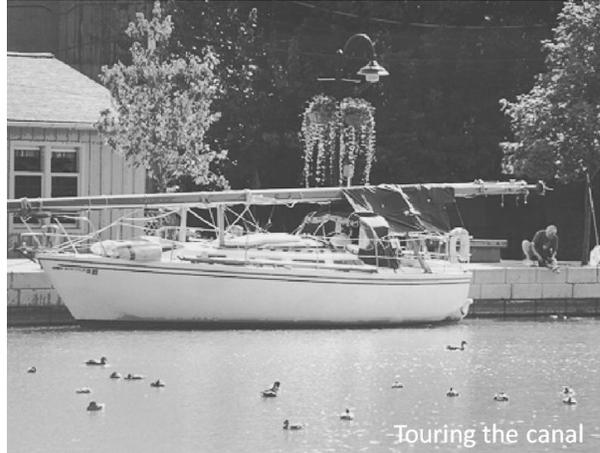
Hazardous Waste Areas

Known existing and former hazardous waste sites relevant to the canal include: the NYSDOT maintenance facility located on the canal near the Monroe Avenue Bridge, and the site of the former Pittsford town dump off Marsh Road. According to NYSDOT officials the maintenance facility site has been remediated, the offending materials removed, and monitoring completed. (Note: This description is not intended to serve to document the presence or absence of hazardous waste on any particular property or as an exhaustive list of such properties).

E Infrastructure

Existing Water Services

Pittsford's water supply comes via a franchise agreement and contract with the Monroe County Water Authority. Water mains that predate the agreement are owned by the town but maintained by the Water Authority through the contract. All mains built since the agreement belongs to the water authority. Plans for development along the canal corridor should not tax the overall capacity of the system. The Water Authority draws from Lakes Ontario, Hemlock and Canadice, with treatment done at the Shoremont water treatment facility in Greece.



Existing Sewer Services

The Town of Pittsford is part of the Monroe County Pure Waters sewer district and does not own or operate its own waste water treatment facility. The town does own and operate all its own lines leading to the Pure Waters trunk lines. The village operates its own system which is also connected to the Pure Waters trunk lines. The main trunk lines have been designed with adequate capacity to serve the study area.

Solid Waste

Solid household waste removal service is provided through private contract to property owners. The town and village provide removal services for bulk yard waste during scheduled periods.

F Transportation Systems

Water Transportation

The Erie Canal serves as a conduit creating easier access to the Great Lakes, the Hudson River, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the Atlantic Ocean. Utilizing the canal for transit eliminates the need to go all the way around Nova Scotia and then back down the St. Lawrence to get to the Great Lakes region from the Atlantic Ocean or Hudson River. The reverse is also true.

The canal system also provides greater accessibility to New York's inland bodies of water. Two of the Finger Lakes, Cayuga and Seneca can be reached through the Cayuga-Seneca canal. Onondaga Lake runs south, off of the canal, to

Syracuse and the canal goes through Oneida Lake, east of Syracuse. Going north from Troy, Lake Champlain can be reached via the Champlain Canal. From Lake Champlain in New York State, a traveler can continue north on the Chambly Canal in the Province of Quebec to the St. Lawrence River.

Roadways

Pittsford contains state, county, town and village highways. The state highways are the most relevant roads to the canal project and include; route 96, route 31, route 65, and route 252. State Routes 31 (Monroe Avenue and State Street) and 96 (Main Street) intersect at the four corners in the village center. Both roads cross the canal in the village, with 31 crossing twice due to a bend in the canal. Route 96 turns east and goes on to run parallel to the canal as Jefferson Road. Route 65 (Clover Street) crosses the canal in the western portion of the town. Route 252 (Jefferson Road) crosses 65 just south of the Lock 32 area and runs through an area with significant open space.

Schoen Place (formerly Schoen's Alley) is a village street that parallels the canal, connecting North Main Street to the west and State Street to the east. The stores, restaurants and promenade along this road and nearby Northfield Common are a major attraction. The width and layout of the road and lack of proper pedestrian walkways currently creates precarious situations for both pedestrians and motorists. The layout and streetscape of this road are areas in need of careful consideration. Several of the commercial establishments off State Street which abut the canal have taken advantage of the canalfront setting.

Public Mass Transit

The only public transportation available in Rochester is that provided by the Regional Transit Service, Inc. (RTS) bus system. Routes 7 and 17 service the Pittsford area. Both routes go from the village to downtown Rochester, one via Monroe Avenue (route 7) and the other via East Avenue (route 17)

Parking

Parking within the village is a major issue. A large portion of the available parking in the village is privately owned and limited to patrons of the owners' businesses. The current supply of public parking is less than adequate. One step that could be easily taken to help alleviate some of the crunch would be for the owners of private parking to allow increased use of their lots for public parking on weekends and other off peak hours. Two other related needs are that for more parking for employees of village businesses and a need for longer term parking lots. A parking management plan should be developed for the village that takes a quadrant by quadrant approach to evaluating and reworking existing parking.

G Topography and Geology

Pittsford lies 461 feet above sea level and is characterized by drumlins and other glacial formations. The majority of the area surrounding the canal in Pittsford is relatively flat. There are a few regions though, such as the area between Mitchell Road and the Town of Pittsford Park, where the land beyond the canal trail falls away fairly steeply.

Pittsford's topography and geology were significantly impacted by glaciations. Glacial till left behind has made for good agricultural soils, but these soils are particularly prone to erosion. Portions of the Erie canal in Pittsford contain a rare type of shale named for the town. This shale, found most predominantly near Lock 62, is loaded with specimens of *Hughmilleria Socialis*, a eurypterid. Another common fossil found in the Lock 62 area is *Eurypterus Pittsfordensis*.

H Water Quality

The quality of surface waters is rated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation according to their best potential use. The classifications range from AA and A, the highest quality, to D and N, the poorest quality. The canal in this region is given a rating of B. This means that its best usage is primary and secondary contact such as recreation and fishing. There are no point source emissions in the Pittsford region.

I Zoning

With the exception of the Monoco site, which is zoned commercial, all the waterfront land in the town outside of the village along the canal corridor is zoned residential. It should be noted that, along Monroe Avenue in the town, there are two business areas near the canal. The site of Central Music, located off Brook Road is zoned as commercial. On the opposite side of Monroe Avenue, the area in the vicinity of 3750 Monroe Avenue is zoned for business and light industrial uses. The town code includes provisions for floodplain protection, open space preservation (for the RRAA and SRAA zoning districts), and protection of designated historic landmarks. Both a site plan and architectural review process are required for commercial developments. An incentive zoning provision in town code offers an opportunity for the town to gain amenities such as open space preservation, new connecting walkways, among other potential benefits in exchange for modifications to the zoning requirements for a particular project. The use of incentive zoning is an option for applicants. Incentive zoning is a useful technique in appropriate instances to permit flexibility where a measurable community benefit is gained.

The corridor has a several different zoning types in the village which correspond generally to the historic use patterns. These including residential, general business, retail business, light-industrial, and special mixed use. The village code includes overlay districts for historic preservation and environmentally sensitive areas. A second review is required for any development in protected historic areas and any disturbance and/or development in environmentally sensitive areas must go through a special review procedure.

The area which encompasses Schoen Place and Northfield Common are currently zoned M-1, light industrial. While this designation made sense historically, it may not entirely reflect the community vision for the area and hence may no longer the most appropriate zoning designation. A zoning designation which is responsive to the historic canalfront setting that offers opportunities for new investment and the adaptive reuse of the grain mill and bean storage barns may be more appropriate. Incentive zoning can be used as a tool to secure public amenities as part of the development process.