

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The New York State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is designed to give coastal communities an opportunity to analyze their shoreline areas, establish policies to guide development, and implement appropriate waterfront land uses and projects. A LWRP is a planning framework for future public and private development activities or actions within the waterfront revitalization area. Approval of a LWRP also makes municipalities eligible for state financial assistance to implement proposed projects.

According to *New York State Coastal Program Report*, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program is:

*“a voluntary New York State program that allows community’s to implement a clear overall concept of how a community’s waterfront should be used. This is often the most effective action a municipality can take to encourage private development that is consistent with community objectives.”*

The city’s existing LWRP was prepared by the City Bureau of Planning and approved on September 13, 1990 by the Rochester City Council, on November 26, 1990, by the New York State Secretary of State, and on January 28, 1991 by the U.S. Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. The purpose of the city’s LWRP was to recommend how the Genesee River and Lake Ontario could be protected as a unique and unified resource and developed to enhance Rochester's quality of life and stimulate economic growth. The boundaries of plan included the city’s lakefront (including Durand-Eastman Park) and the city’s river front from the Port of Rochester south to the Lower Falls.

The Port Site and River Street area were both included in the original concept plan presented in the 1990 LWRP. The combined concept plan for that area came out of a consultant study known as the *River Harbor Design/Feasibility Study*. The city completed a draft update of the LWRP in 1996 and submitted it to the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) for review. The city completed the port ferry terminal and other port infrastructure improvements in 2001-2002 to coincide with the development and arrival of a fast ferry service between Rochester and Toronto. Sasaki Associates were hired to prepare the Port of Rochester Master Plan in 2006. In 2008, the Abonmarche/Passero/ Edgewater waterfront design team was hired by the city to complete a more detailed marina engineering report and feasibility study for the Port Site.

This document is an AMENDMENT to the existing 1990 LWRP and integrates recent design and engineering studies and recommendations for the Port Site and proposes new LWRP goals, policies and implementing techniques, development objectives, recommended land uses and a conceptual development plan for that site based on those studies. The amendment applies to the Port Site only and replaces certain sections of the city’s 1990 LWRP as noted on page 2. All remaining sections of the 1990 LWRP continue in effect as adopted.

The amendment establishes a broad and flexible development and design framework to guide future land use, zoning and funding decisions at the Port Site in a way that addresses LWRP goals and policies, preserves and protects significant environment features and adequately responds to future market conditions. Residents of the Charlotte community along with developers, business owners and other community stakeholders were actively involved in the development of the conceptual land use plan and the goals, policies and objectives that form the development framework described in this amendment.

The amendment will be submitted to Rochester City Council and the New York State Department of State for review and approval. Following approval by NYSDOS, the amendment will be submitted to the US Department of Commerce / NOAA, Office of Oceanic and Coastal Resource Management for federal concurrence. Completion of this review process will allow additional design/engineering studies and permit applications for the construction of the marina basin to proceed.

## Overview

The City of Rochester's LWRP is divided into eight sections and two appendices.

- Section I provides a narrative description of the LWRP boundary;
- Section II provides an inventory and analysis of the natural and man-made resources within the LWRP;
- Section III describes the policies governing the LWRP;
- Section IV details proposed land uses and projects within the LWRP;
- Section V summarizes the techniques to be used for implementing the LWRP;
- Section VI describes the state and federal programs likely to affect implementation of the LWRP;
- Section VII provides a summary of the city's consultations with other affected municipalities and government agencies;
- Section VIII describes the methodology for obtaining local commitment and citizen input.
- Appendix A Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats
- Appendix B Supporting Local Legislation

## Summary of the City of Rochester LWRP

### Section I: Waterfront Revitalization Area Boundary

The city's LWRP boundary is based on the coastal boundary determined for Rochester by the New York State Department of State. The "spine" of the boundary follows the Genesee River within the city from the Middle Falls near Ravine Avenue, north to the river's mouth at Lake Ontario. The boundary includes part of the northern-most section of the city and contains portions of the Maplewood and Charlotte neighborhoods, as well as Seneca Park, Maplewood Park and Turning Point Park. The LWRP boundary also covers the city's Lake Ontario shoreline including Ontario Beach and Durand-Eastman Park. A small portion of Tryon Park, which borders Irondequoit Creek just south of Irondequoit Bay, is also included in the city's LWRP boundary. See LWRP Boundary on [Map I-1a](#) and [Map I-1b](#).

## **Section II: Inventory and Analysis**

Water has been extremely important to the economic development of Rochester. The Genesee River falls and rapids have provided cheap, accessible power throughout the history of the city. The river and lake have been central in establishing shipping as an important industry in the area. The early settlements which were the forerunners of the city began because of proximity to the river and Lake Ontario.

In recent years, the river and lake have been rediscovered by city residents and visitors. Because of stricter environmental controls, the efforts of private industry and the completion of several major public works projects, water quality of the river and lake has improved significantly. As a result, the Genesee River and Lake Ontario can once again be enjoyed and appreciated as unique areas for hiking, sightseeing, fishing, swimming, and boating. The increased use of waterfront recreational facilities is creating additional demand for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses such as boat slips and pedestrian trails within the LWRP boundary.

The city's LWRP contains a wealth of natural and man-made resources. Marinas, boat slips and docks, public parks, beaches, historic sites, scenic views and vistas, and wetland areas are just a few of the many water-oriented resources or land uses that currently exist within the LWRP boundary. Additionally, the New York State Department of State has designated approximately six and one-half miles of the lower Genesee River as a coastal fish and wildlife habitat of statewide significance.

There are several obstacles to development that exist within the LWRP boundary. The most critical obstacle is wave surge action in the river caused by northeastern storms. Other obstacles include the steep slopes of the river gorge and the relative inaccessibility of the river in many locations. These constraints limit development in a substantial portion of the LWRP boundary. There are, however, several sites that have significant development potential within the LWRP boundary. The most important of these are the River Street area (including the former Conrail switching yards on the river, near the historic Genesee Lighthouse) and the former Port of Rochester site. Neither of these parcels has significant infrastructure problems, although each has its own unique set of development problems and constraints.

## **Section III: Policies**

The most pertinent state policies that impact the city's LWRP are listed below.

- (1) Restore, revitalize and redevelop deteriorated and underutilized waterfront areas for commercial, industrial, cultural, recreational and other compatible uses.
- (2) Significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats shall be protected, preserved, and, where practical, restored so as to maintain their viability as habitats.
- (3) Expand recreational use of fish and wildlife resources in coastal areas by increasing access to existing resources, supplementing existing stocks and developing new resources. Such efforts shall be made in a manner which ensures the protection of renewable fish and wildlife resources and considers other activities dependent on them.

- (4) Activities or development in the coastal areas will be undertaken so as to minimize damage to natural resources and property from flooding and erosion by protecting natural protective features including beaches, dunes, barrier islands and bluffs.
- (5) Protect, maintain and increase the levels and types of access to public water-related recreation resources and facilities so that these resources and facilities may be fully utilized by the public in accordance with reasonably anticipated public recreation needs and the protection of historic and natural resources.
- (6) Protect, enhance and restore structures, districts, areas or sites that are of significance in the history, architecture, archaeology or culture of the state, its communities or the nation.

**Section IV: LWRP Uses and Projects**

The policies of the city's LWRP outlined in Section III were translated, with input from a citizen's advisory committee, into a conceptual development plan for the city's waterfront areas. This was accomplished by identifying appropriate land uses and projects for the following subareas within the LWRP boundary:

- Subarea A - Durand-Eastman Park
- Subarea B - Open Space I Critical Environmental Areas
- Subarea C1 - Developed portion of the Upland Area
- Subarea C2 - Buildable portion of the Upland Area
- Subarea D - River Harbor Zone and Lakefront Area
- Subarea E - Industrial Areas

The following generalized land uses are recommended for each LWRP subarea:

Subarea	Recommended Land Uses
<b>(A) Durand-Eastman Park</b>	Public walkways, fishing areas, swimming areas, picnicking areas, parking, cartop boat access, spectator site for off-shore events, treatment facilities, filed sports, and outdoor entertainment.
<b>(B) Open Space / Critical Environmental Areas</b>	Public walkways, fishing areas, picnicking areas, parking areas, cartop boat access, swimming, outdoor entertainment, museum, and zoo.
<b>(C1) Developed Portion of the Upland Area</b>	Public walkway, marine-related support facilities, hotel, general retail facilities including restaurants, office research facilities, parking, and housing.
<b>(C2) Buildable Portion Of The Upland Area</b>	Public walkway, housing, parking, office research facilities, and manufacturing facilities.
<b>(D) River Harbor Zone and Lakefront Area</b>	Public walkway, swimming areas, fishing areas, picnicking areas, outdoor entertainment, festival sites, field sports, marinas, marine-related support facilities, parking areas, cartop boat access, retail facilities including restaurants, hotel/boatel or bed and breakfast inn, and housing.
<b>(E) Industrial Areas</b>	Public walkways, fishing areas, parking, manufacturing facilities, power generating facilities, office research facilities, water treatment facilities, shipping, water-related retail support facilities, hotel or bed and breakfast inn, and housing.

### **Section V: Implementation Techniques**

Changes to the City of Rochester Zoning Ordinance were adopted in order to implement many of the state coastal policies applicable to the LWRP. Some of the major changes are listed below.

- (1) Modification of the city's River Harbor (RH) Zoning District to permit such uses as housing, hotels, motels and boatels, multiple uses, and to allow certain uses subject to special permit.
- (2) Modification of the RH Zoning District to include: a purpose statement with references to the preservation and enhancement of the recreational character and visual quality of the river harbor area, the preservation and promotion of public access to the shoreline and the encouragement of tourism in the area; and a new use list which will permit such facilities as marinas, boat launches and docks, and public walkways.
- (3) Adoption of the Harbor Town Design Overlay District which will require a certificate of design compliance for certain types of new development in the shore zone, to be granted after a review process based on design guidelines for landscaping, signage, visual compatibility, site development, etc.

### **Section VI: State and Federal Programs Likely to Affect Implementation**

A wide variety of federal and state programs and actions are likely to impact or be affected by the city's LWRP. The general program categories involved are listed below.

- Economic Development Policies and Programs
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Programs
- Flood Control Projects
- Navigation Projects
- Community Development Block Grants / Entitlement Grants
- Fish and Wildlife Restoration and Research Projects
- Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Programs
- Department of Transportation Programs
- Air Pollution / Water Pollution Control Programs and Grants
- Environmental Protection Programs and Grants
- Environmental Conservation Programs and Policies
- Division of Housing and Community Renewal Programs and Policies

### **Section VII: City's Consultations with Affected Agencies**

As part of the preparation of the LWRP, the city consulted with numerous county, state and federal agencies, as well as with neighboring municipalities. Included in these consultations were the New York State Departments of State, Environmental Conservation, and Transportation, the Monroe County Planning Department and Parks Department, as well as the Towns of Irondequoit and Greece.

### **Section VIII: Local Commitment**

The City of Rochester established a citizen's advisory committee to assist in the overall planning process and the development of specific LWRP recommendations, as well as to ensure public support and commitment for implementation of the LWRP. Organizations represented on the advisory committee

included neighborhood and business groups within or adjacent to the study area, the County Planning and Parks Departments, the City Planning Commission and Environmental Commission, and groups with maritime interests such as New York State Sea Grant, the Monroe County Fishery Advisory Board, a yacht club, a marina owner, and a real estate brokerage firm.

Support for the LWRP was also sought through meetings with the agencies and organizations which could be affected by implementation of the LWRP. Policy and project coordination also occurred between the city and adjacent towns who were preparing LWRP's. Further public participation in LWRP development occurred through the implementation requirements of the plan as well as through the LWRP adoption process.

### **Additional Information**

Questions, comments or requests for additional information concerning the City of Rochester's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program should be directed to:

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