



TOWN AND VILLAGE OF PITTSFORD ERIE CANAL AREA MASTER PLAN

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BACKGROUND

The town and village have been working together for many years to help make the historic Erie Canal corridor an amenity for residents as well as visitors to community. This work has benefitted from the support of several partner agencies, including the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Services and the New York State Canal Corporation as well as many other agencies and organizations. Monroe County was a leader in creating the Erie Canal Heritage Trail along the former tow path, one of the early visionary actions that set the stage for continued enhancements. As a result of these and many other public and private investments, Pittsford's canal corridor is one of the jewels of the state canal system and has become an increasingly popular place for local residents to enjoy a wide variety of activities that are enhanced by the attractive canal-front setting.

The property addressed by the master plan offers tremendous potential to become an important amenity to the community. Though it has been largely ignored by the greater population, and has been abused in the past by indiscriminate filling and excavation which has disturbed natural drainage patterns, the property offers a large contiguous area of undeveloped acreage in the heart of the community with significant frontage along the Erie Canal.



The property fronts on the Erie Canal and Heritage Trail between the Monroe Avenue Bridge (shown) and the CSX Rail Bridge near North Main Street.

Several prior town and village planning studies and plans have established a clear need to create a more defined master plan for this area. Originally, the study area was zoned for commercial and light industrial uses, respectively, by the town and village. A number of years ago, the town modified the zoning for this part of Monroe Avenue to more office and light technology uses and more recently, the village created a special residential district for the area. The town and village collaborated about ten years ago to create the Erie Canal Corridor Plan, a local waterfront revitalization program approved by the New York State Secretary of State as part of the coastal zone management program. That plan recognized the potential of this area for a mixture of uses including recreational and residential uses. The Village of Pittsford Comprehensive Master Plan suggested this area be developed in a traditional neighborhood pattern. The town facilities committee recommended that part of this study area as a site

for a future community center. When the land became available for purchase, the town purchased approximately 18 acres of land. The town was awarded grants from the state to help with that purchase along with funding to support this master planning effort. Those 18 acres, along with the village property (including the public works garage) of 11-plus acres, comprise more than 30 acres of canal-front land in the heart of the community. An area of great opportunity for the town and village to create a master plan for the future.

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT AREA



A section of the project area

The project area is located at the northwestern edge of the Village of Pittsford along the Erie Canal, extending into adjacent sections of the town outside the village. The majority of this land, including a portion of the land owned by the Town of Pittsford, is within the village boundaries. The project area provides one of the largest publicly-owned open areas remaining in the north-west section of the town and village of Pittsford. Additionally, because of its location along two regionally utilized trails, the Erie Canal Heritage

Trail and the Auburn Trail; and along Monroe Avenue (NYS Route 31), a designated state bicycle route, the project area has the ability to attract residents from a wide swath of Pittsford and nearby communities traveling by foot or by bicycle. An inventory and analysis of the existing conditions and potential issues and opportunities related to the future use of the project area was completed in February 2010. The results of that study were used to create a conceptual master plan for the project area as discussed later in this document. The reader is referred to the Inventory and Analysis report for detailed site background information; however some of the important elements from the report are repeated here for ease of reference.

OWNERSHIP

The project area is comprised of approximately 32.3 acres on eight (8) parcels located within the Town and Village of Pittsford in eastern Monroe County. The Village of Pittsford owns a 11.3-acre tract at the eastern end of the project area (Tax ID # 151.18-1-1.1). To the west of this tract, the Town of Pittsford owns several parcels that encompass approximately 18.3 acres. Harris and Rainey Associates Inc. currently owns the remaining 2.7 acres of land that is located in the west central section of the project area. The Town of Pittsford has been in discussion with the owners regarding the possibility of acquiring these lands and therefore it is included as part of the project area. The map on the next page shows the project area boundaries in more detail and delineates the current ownership of the parcels that are part of the project area.

Table 1 and Figure 1: Current ownership of parcels in project area as of December 2009

OWNERSHIP	PARCEL ID	ACRES*	TOTAL ACRES*
Town of Pittsford (northern parcels - incl. Frog Ponds)	151.17-2-18.2	5.0	12.5
	151.18-1-55.2	7.3	
	151.17-2-18.3	0.2	
Harris and Rainey (middle parcels) (Town of Pittsford Plans to acquire)	151.18-1-54	2.3	2.7
	151.17-2-19.2 (town planning to acquire .4 acres of this parcel)	0.4	
Town of Pittsford (southern parcels)	151.18-1-52	4.7	5.8
	151.17-2-21	1.1	
Village of Pittsford	151.18-1-1.1	11.3	11.3
TOTAL			32.3

* Approximate acreage based on Town of Pittsford Tax Parcel data



Data Sources: Town of Pittsford, NYSGIS Clearinghouse

EXISTING CONDITIONS

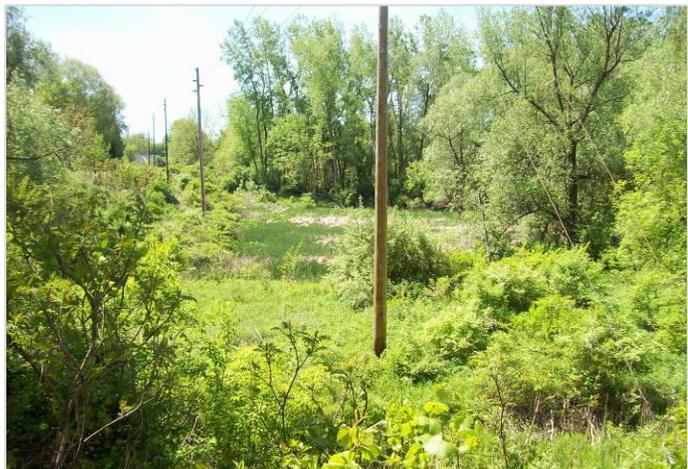
Most of the project area is undeveloped. There are several wooded areas within the project area, as well as some wetlands, streams and ponds. The eastern section of the project area is the location of the Village of Pittsford's public works department (DPW) facility, consisting of a vehicle garage, three sheds, and outdoor storage areas for construction stockpiles such as gravel, sand, and fill used for roadwork activities. A series of man-made ponds are located in the northwest corner of the project area and were reportedly used for the breeding of frogs for scientific uses by Wards Scientific, the former owners of the adjacent property to the west. An electrical utility corridor passes through the approximate center of the project area.

Along the northern border of the project area is the Auburn Trail, a town maintained trail along the former Auburn and Rochester rail line. To the immediate north of the Auburn Trail, there is a residential neighborhood consisting mostly of single-family homes, as well as the Pittsford Mini Self-Storage facility. Several office buildings are located immediately adjacent to the project area to the east. The western border of the project area consists of a number of office and industrial facilities, including a large mixed use (office, technology, town court and senior center) at 3750 Monroe Avenue, and a building comprising of a variety of office and light industrial uses that formerly housed Ward's Scientific (now Ward's Natural Science located in Henrietta). There is a garage and storage area for Sutherland Motors that is located adjacent to the southwest corner of the project area. The southern border of the project area is Monroe Avenue (NYS Route 31), the Erie Canal, which is used for a variety of water and recreational activities during the canal season (May through November), and a section of the Erie Canal Heritage Trail, which extends from Buffalo to Albany along lands that once served as the towpath for the canal. The section of the Erie Canal Heritage Trail located in Monroe



(Above) The Village of Pittsford Public Works facility is located at the eastern edge of the project area.

(Below) Electrical utility corridor passing through the project area.



County, including the area that is alongside the project site, is paved and has limited slopes, allowing for a wide variety of recreational uses, including in-line skating, walking, cross-country skiing, and bicycling.

HISTORIC RESOURCES AND FEATURES

The project area is part of the larger Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. The Erie Canalway corridor encompasses the communities that host the extensive Erie Canal system. The Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor is a special federal designation in recognition of the importance of the canal and the communities as part of the history of our nation. The heritage corridor offers a multi-regional approach to celebrate, interpret, manage and enhance the historic resources of the canal and the communities, which in turn, will strengthen both economic opportunities for heritage tourism and serve as an educational and cultural resource for the benefit of the residents and visitors to the region.

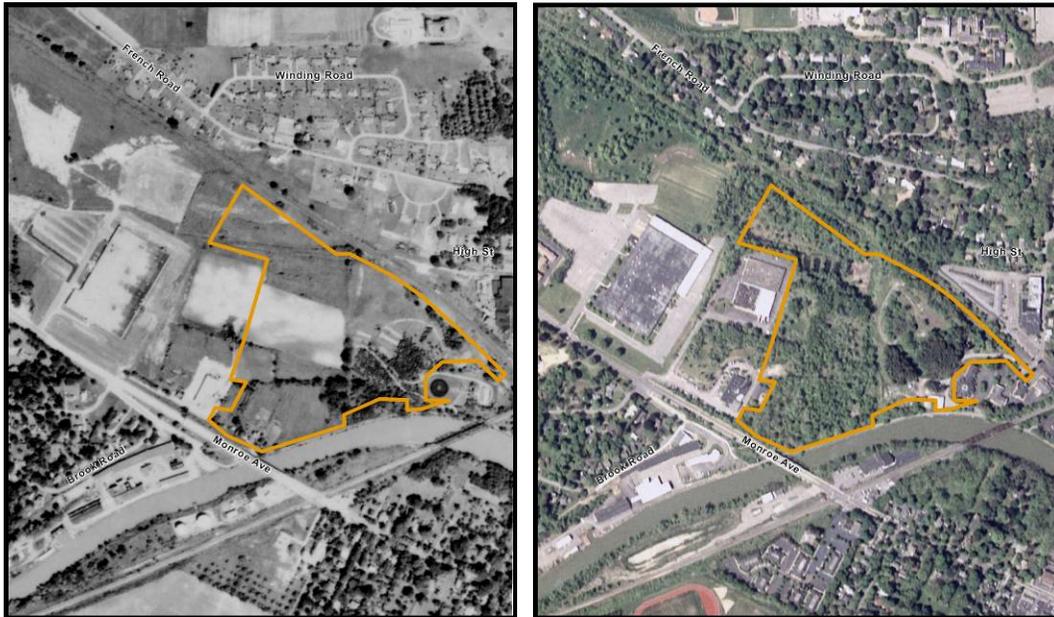


This retaining wall on the project site was originally constructed as part of a culvert for the Rochester and Eastern Rapid Railway (trolley) that connected Pittsford with Rochester to the west and Geneva on the south east.

In addition to the adjacent former Auburn and Rochester railway there are a variety of historic resources and features located in close proximity to the project area. (See the Town and Village of Pittsford LWRP for additional information on historic resources in and around this site.)

According to the Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment, based on maps of the project area and aerial photography of the site at various times, between at least 1872 and until sometime after 1958, there was likely a homestead with several buildings in the southwest corner of the site. Much of the remainder of the site was utilized for agricultural uses during this period. While no formal evidence of a homestead was found in the project area based on site reconnaissance, specific items were found in the project area, such as ornamental vegetation in areas proximate to the potential homestead site. Additionally, construction debris, including regionally manufactured brick materials identified as being from the period when a homestead may have been located on the site, were found in close vicinity to the areas identified on the pre-1958 maps.

Over time, large areas of the site had been disturbed by human activities. Much of the disturbances that have occurred on the site (earth removal, dumping yard debris, etc.) were associated with the public works activities. Additional disturbances to the project area include the small ponds dug in the wetland area which were reportedly used as breeding facilities for frogs used for scientific purposes. There are also smaller areas of disturbance associated with the former owner of what is currently the Sutherland Auto garage.



Comparison of site conditions in 1958 (left) and 2006 (right) – evidence of previous agricultural use(s) within and adjacent to the project area are visible in the 1958 image.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

From an ecological perspective, infrastructure placement (rail and trolley lines, highways and streets, the canal, electric transmission lines, etc) and land development (commercial, light industrial, processing and residential) has resulted in an isolated area without a major natural connection to larger habitats. Despite disturbance of the natural environment, however, there is a diversity of plant and wildlife habitats in the project area. The project area also contains small wetland areas, including an unnamed tributary of Allen's Creek, which traverses the northwestern section of the project area.



A wetland habitat at the northwestern corner of the project area

Based on the previously prepared wetlands analysis, the majority of the wetland areas present in the project area are a result of man-made actions, most notably the extensive development on parcels adjacent to the site both along Monroe Avenue and along French Road. Because of this development, areas that in previous decades had been viable for agricultural uses are now, in part, wetland areas. These poorly drained wetlands are not of the size or quality to be protected by the state regulations. The large wetland complex in the northwestern part of the study area has been identified through this master planning process as a locally-important wetland that should be preserved. Additionally, the wetland area located within the Allens Creek tributary has been altered by many of these activities, including the construction of an electrical transmission line within the wetland area. As a part of any development that might take place within the project area, efforts should be made to restore, enhance and/or enlarge the naturally occurring wetland area on the site in the northwest corner of the project area. Steps involved in this could involve the removal of non-native vegetation, working with local utilities to relocate the existing electrical transmission lines out of the wetland area, and to reshape the wetland areas in a way that provides a natural flow of water from the project area into Allens Creek and a natural dispersion of groundwater.

ACCESSIBILITY AND CIRCULATION



The Erie Canal and Erie Canalway Trail are located immediately to the south of the project area.

Because of the presence of trails flanking both the northern and southern boundaries of the project area, and the presence of sidewalks along Monroe Avenue, more than sufficient pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular access to the project area is present.

The Auburn Trail, a multi-use gravel trail located along the former Auburn and Rochester Railroad, is maintained by the town. The trail begins just east of the Brighton-Pittsford town line and ends at the northeastern end of the Project area. The

Erie Canal Heritage Trail, which extends through New York State along sections of the former towpath of the Erie Canal, passes through the southeastern end of the property, accessing the property from the west via an underpass at Monroe Avenue. Adjacent to the project area and through the town, the Canalway Trail is paved, allowing for a variety of recreational uses, including bicycling, jogging, walking, and in-line skating.

While non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the site can be reasonably addressed by improving current pathways that are present within the project area, one of the key concerns would be in addressing potential circulation patterns for vehicular travel. One concern is protecting the character of the surrounding neighborhood areas on either side of the project area. Additionally, the need to protect the wetland area at the northwestern end of the project area is an important factor in determining the potential vehicular circulation patterns inside the project area.



Because of the presence of the bridge and its associated ramp across the Erie Canal at the southeastern corner of the project area, the creation of a dedicated access point adjacent to the site from this section of Monroe Avenue would be difficult to achieve.

There appears to be one potential primary vehicular access point to the project area from Monroe Avenue at the traffic signal located at 3750 Monroe Avenue and a secondary minor or emergency access point from the village at Village Lane. In each case, efforts would need to be made to mitigate impacts to the neighboring roadways. The town recognizes the need to continue to work with existing property owners in the north side of the Monroe Avenue from the subject property to the existing signal at 3750 Monroe Avenue to secure easements for creating an access drive to the property. A traffic study is currently underway to address traffic and the potential access opportunities from Monroe Avenue. Continued involvement of the neighbors in the Grove Street area will also be important as the planning for this area evolves in the coming years.

VISION STATEMENT

Drawn from synthesizing the prior planning efforts, and from input received as part of this master planning project the following vision statement was developed to guide this initiative:

Take advantage of the Erie Canal setting and existing natural assets by developing a proactive plan that coordinates enhanced use of the waterfront, new recreational opportunities, and a residential neighborhood. Design improvements to be in harmony with the surrounding context, including the village, town center, and the Erie Canal.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The Inventory and Analysis for the property, completed at the end of 2009, concluded that there is ample opportunity to develop the property in a way that benefits local residents, while also maintaining the ecological and historic village waterfront. As such, a master plan for the property was developed. Drawing from prior adopted plans including the town and village waterfront plan, village comprehensive plan, among other town and village reports, there are four guiding principles that this master plan aimed to adhere to:

- Planning and design shall be compatible with the area's historic character and scale.
- Include project elements that expand the public's use, enjoyment, and appreciation of Pittsford's scenic Erie Canal corridor, including both outdoor and indoor facilities.
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle connections linking the site to existing trails, sidewalks, and neighborhoods.

- Provide a balanced blend of recreational and natural resource protection and include a residential component to bring vitality to the non-park area which would also serve as a sentinel on the adjacent park and natural area.

The map below illustrates the basic concept of a mix of natural environments, recreation and village-scale residential uses. The final master plan, as detailed on the following pages, built upon these three concept “bubbles” to create a balanced plan that the Town and Village of Pittsford will be proud and enthusiastic to implement.



CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

Canal Edge

First and foremost considerations in the design concept is a continuation of the vision for a ribbon of green along the canal, so the proposed park concept keeps frontage along the Erie Canal waterfront green and park-like, perhaps with some additional amenities, such as benches or picnic tables.



Auburn Trail Area

The existing vegetation proximate to the Auburn trail, on the north side of the property, is proposed to remain in order to maintain the natural feel of the Auburn Trail. This vegetation also serves as a buffer between the property and the residences to north. Additional formal connections to the Auburn Trail are also envisioned as part of the master plan.



“Core” Natural Area

A key element of the master plan is maintaining a large, mostly undisturbed natural area within the center and northern reaches of the property. The northwest portion of the property contains a moderate size wetlands, which while jurisdictional under NYS DEC regulations, it nonetheless has ecological value worth protecting and highlighting at a local level. A sensitively located series of trails around and through (likely to be on raised boardwalks) the wetland area is envisioned with interpretive signage. The “frog ponds” constructed by Ward’s Scientific would also be highlighted in similar way. An “outdoor classroom” could be constructed, if desired, which could be as simple as a clearing in the woods or perhaps as a deck overlooking the wetland complex.

In addition to the trails in the wetland area, it is envisioned that there would be trails throughout this central area of the property, connecting the various site elements to one another, and linking the Auburn Trail to the Erie Canal Trail. The majority of trails would be handicap accessible, with a mix of construction materials - wooden boardwalks and compacted stone dust and/or other pervious materials would likely be extensively used. Some paved multi-use trails may also be part of the internal trail network where necessary and appropriate. Some pavilions and shelters are also envisioned to complement the trail system.



The core natural areas of the property, including a moderate wetland area in the north, are envisioned to be retained and featured as part of the master plan.

Public Gathering Spaces

The southern portion of the property is envisioned to be focused on public gatherings - whether it be a small group of friends enjoying a picnic, or the greater Pittsford community taking in a performance. At the heart of this area would be an open-air amphitheater. It is envisioned that the amphitheatre would have a capacity of approximately 300-400 residents, and would host small concerts, stage productions and other artistic performances. The amphitheater would take advantage of the site's natural topography (some grading would be required) and the orientation of the seating would allow the audience to look out on the Erie Canal. The amphitheater is also envisioned to have "green seating" - a terraced hill side, rather than concrete or metal seats.

While the amphitheater would provide for entertainment at fixed times, there are many other elements of the design that residents will be able to enjoy throughout the season, such as a small pond and gazebo, trails, picnic and event pavilions, and a kayak and canoe launch. Winter activities could readily be supported. Ice skating on the canal, weather-permitting, may be possible and a cross-country ski trail loop would fit nicely around the site.

In addition, the concept incorporates an element that came from a suggestion made at the public meeting to include an arboretum. This element creates an



This concept for the amphitheater could be an alternative to the community center concept, or could be integrated or phased in with a community center project.



Examples of some of the elements envisioned for the southern portion of the property, including a pond (above) and an allée (below).



opportunity to link the park like features along the ribbon of green to the more architectural features of the site. A small building is included to house perhaps a meeting room, a nature center education area for local schools to visit, as well as to meet the needs of the arboretum and other maintenance functions. Outside this smaller building could be areas for more formal beds, sculpture gardens, or community gardens. This could also serve as a staging area for field trips to the more natural part of the site. If the small building is designed with care, it could become a rentable space for various functions including small weddings or other such activities. Overall this area would have a blend of formal and informal spaces.

The town's vision is to someday in the future locate a new community center on the site that can accommodate uses outlined in the feasibility study of 2002. That study described in detail the space needed for such a community center and arrived at a total of approximately 55,000 square feet. The spatial needs described in the study were considered so that a realistic footprint for the building on the site could be depicted in this master plan. Parking requirements were similarly analyzed to develop an area requirement for that use, and the parking would be located behind the building so it is screened from the more public spaces, the canal, and Monroe Avenue. The building is sited near the bridge and raised road or Monroe Avenue would face the amphitheater and canal with an attractive façade. A building as conceived here could include an entry space that was welcoming, from both the parking and drop-off area, as well as the canal and amphitheater side.



Concept showing community center adjacent to amphitheatre

The building is also envisioned as being broken into different sections to soften the visual impact. It is expected that portions of existing tree stands would be preserved along the arrival to buffer the large mass of the building, one wing of which is not visible upon arrival. Another existing stand of trees is preserved to the north to buffer the park and new building from the existing buildings, one of which has a large and very tall cell tower on it. Other elements included in the concept plan are an arrival drop off point near the building main entry and a connection from the parking area to the smaller building associated with the arboretum. Access to this part of the site would be from Monroe Avenue, which is currently being studied by a traffic engineer looking at current and future traffic volumes.

Village Residential Development

For the Village-owned portion of the property, there was a desire expressed to create (or offer) a new housing opportunity in the village, one that would be quite desirable in that location, near the future parkland and community center and on the canal. The concept plan for this neighborhood shows approximately 45 lots of varying size. It is expected the lots would be served by municipal water and sewer and would mimic existing conditions elsewhere in the village with a neighborhood made up of both small and moderate size lots allowing for a variety of house sizes and options for future residents.

There are two main roads in the street plan layout - one road coming in off Grove Street, and a loop road within the neighborhood - and two primary alleyways. Houses along the west side would face west, toward the park and the view from the road would be of front yards rather than rear yards. The streets and alleys are mostly perpendicular to the canal, affording a view to the canal and reinforcing the site's orientation to the canal.

A strong central pedestrian connection is made from the development to the Erie Canal Trail as well as the Auburn Trail and the new trails on the rest of the property. A small recreation area for the residents is located where the trail connects to the internal road. A shade pavilion and a play structure are



Examples of the form of housing envisioned for the new village neighborhood.

elements thought to be appropriate for that area. An area of open lawn would allow for informal ball games and other neighborhood gatherings.

It is envisioned that the entrance to this neighborhood would be from Village Lane, an existing village right of way. Concerns were expressed during the public meeting about traffic impacts of the development on the existing neighborhood. Should the housing element advance beyond this concept in the future, the village would work in cooperation with the neighborhood throughout the planning process. This would include but not be limited to consideration of improvements to the Grove Street area, including streetscape enhancements to slow down through traffic in the area. In addition a vehicular connection between Grove Street and Monroe Avenue was purposely kept out of the concept to eliminate the possibility of cut-through traffic.



Traditional village streetscape



ERIE CANAL AREA MASTER PLAN

PITTSFORD, NY

TOWN AND VILLAGE
OF PITTSFORD

June 2010



NOT TO SCALE

FOR CONCEPTUAL PLANNING
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Future Refinements to the Master Plan

It is important to recognize what the master plan is—and is not. The master plan provides a description in narrative and graphic form of a vision for the future for the area. The master plan graphic shows what the future use of the property may look like—i.e., a visual interpretation of the vision statement. Inherent within the plan are planning and design guidelines. For example, the massing of the larger building shown is broken up to provide a more compatible sense of place and scale for the setting. The residential neighborhood is depicted in a way to illustrate the desired character of the design concept. This should not be interpreted to mean that a future project needs to follow these exact designs. However, a future project should also respect the character and design intent so that the sense of scale and compatibility with the setting is achieved and that a balance is made between the built environment and the open space and natural areas preserved and enhanced on the property.

The input from the attendees garnered from the presentation of the master plan to the public in May 2010 was documented in the record. The ideas, suggestions, and concerns expressed should be considered and integrated as the plan is advanced, and prior to the implementation of any of the major aspects of the plan. For example, one of the comments related to the opportunity to offer better access to the canal for crew shells for special events. These comments and future community discussion would be used to guide the implementation of the plan including future refinements to the plan through the design development process.

Design Guidelines

As part of this master planning process, it was determined that the existing design guidelines in place in the town and village adequately addressed the requirements for this project and these guidelines were followed in the development of the conceptual design of the master plan. In the town and village Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, a series of design guidelines were established for any development that would take place on designated waterfront sites, including all lands within the project area and are attached hereto by reference. The following items were identified as the principles of the design guidelines:

- 1) Respecting scale, patterns, and details
- 2) Relate buildings and sites to the canal front
- 3) Creating a continuity of interest
- 4) Creating incentives for investment
- 5) Using good local examples of vernacular (See image to right)
- 6) Gaining ideas from other communities
- 7) Traffic calming



Recognize historic styles of larger canal-era structures

This master plan has appropriately considered each of these existing guidelines in the development of the plan. In addition, the village zoning ordinance has design guidelines which were used to develop the plan for the new residential neighborhood depicted in the master plan.

For the development envisioned as part of the conceptual master plan the LWRP design guidelines would apply, with the addition of the design concepts and recommendations provided in this report would be sufficient to direct future activities and the refinement and implementation of this master plan.

(See images on the page following that depict some treatments that would be appropriate depending upon the location and level of use anticipated.)



Rain gardens and other appropriate storm water management tools can help maintain the quality of surface water around the developed portions of the site.

Trail Design Considerations



Photo Courtesy EDR, PC.

Structural enhancement is needed to bridge wetlands



Unpaved trail for moderate use



Interpretive signage and outdoor education opportunities



Structures that fit the setting



Tree-canopied path



Paved trail for multi-use/heavy use

IMPLEMENTATION

It is recognized that there is no need for haste in implementation of any of the elements of this master plan. Given the challenging circumstance of the current regional and national economy, a conservative approach toward advancing the plan is well warranted. With those thoughts as a foundation, it is prudent nonetheless to consider how the master plan would best be adopted as a policy guide for the town and village. Further, this section of the report describes an approach to moving forward with key aspects of the master plan, for the time at which the town and village are ready to do so.

This master plan can be formally adopted by the town and village as an amendment to their respective comprehensive plans and/or as a refinement to their joint local waterfront revitalization program as a land and water use policy guide. Either of these more formal adoption processes would require some compliance with the state environmental quality review act in coordination with other required administrative processes for adoption of local plans pursuant to local and state laws. As an alternative to formal adoption (and a less formal process) the report could also be accepted by the respective town and village boards by resolution. In either case of formal adoption, or acceptance, it would be helpful to clarify how the town and village would continue to cooperate in the future aspects of the project.

In terms of advancing some of the recommended physical improvements, these would need to be further prioritized and designed to a more detailed level prior to construction. There are several activities that could potentially be carried out that would be less capital intensive and very little physical change to the area—yet could serve to make better use of the property for public benefit.

Maintaining and enhancing the canal edge is seen as a priority for implementation of the master plan. Working in continued cooperation with the NYS Canal Corporation, owners of the canal frontage, a design and installation for additional shade trees and other simple landscape enhancements would be enhance the linear park atmosphere. Some carefully-planned selective thinning of existing overgrowth in the woods would have a nice positive effect and would be very simple to achieve. As well, formalization (selective cutting, wood chip surfacing, etc.) of some of the internal trails on the property could also be done relatively easily.

For some of the site work needed to address the prior disturbed areas of the site, the inventory and analysis report also provided some initial recommendations for the process for the restoration of these areas. This work would be done following protocol that includes more refined evaluation and environmental engineering and, if required permitting (e.g, storm water pollution prevention if more than one acre of disturbance, etc.). Clean-up of

the disturbed areas and restoration of some of the natural drainage patterns would be important to carry-out, and potentially could be done on an incremental basis.

This master plan lends itself well to a phased implementation. Given that the site is accessible from two separate trail systems at this time, additional pedestrian-oriented trail and other enhancements could be accomplished at any time in the upland areas. At some time in the future, it would be good to create trail linking the Auburn Trail and Erie Canal Trail. Much of this trail would be in upland areas, though it may be necessary, and, in fact desirable, to introduce a wetland aspect of the trail for environmental education purposes.

If wetland crossings were involved, a permit may need to be secured from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In particular, if the amount of fill/disturbance exceeded the maximum threshold allowable under a nationwide permit per section 404 of the Clean Water Act. A step prior to permitting would be the submission of the wetland mapping report to secure an approved jurisdictional determination by the army corps as to the requirement of any permitting and any subsequent mitigation requirements. If a stream crossing was needed, a stream disturbance permit would need to be secured from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The educational aspects of the project area could include a historic information kiosk and tastefully designed interpretive signage along the trail system that would inform visitors about the natural and cultural history of the area, including Native American history, the development of the Erie Canal and later railroads and the trolley line and the role Pittsford and its citizens played in the development of the nation. Coordination with local and state historic preservation agencies would be recommended for advancing these aspects of the plan.

When the time is appropriate, it is logical that the town would take the lead in working out mutually-agreeable access arrangements with the abutting property owners along the frontage of Monroe Avenue. This could be accomplished as a stand-alone initiative by the town or could be associated with the review of development application/site plan review for expansion or changes to the use of any of the affected properties abutting the Monroe Avenue corridor. In addition to finding the most suitable alignment of the access drive, the design character of the drive would be established including lane width, sidewalk or bike path lane, lighting and landscaping enhancements. The final access plan would include a traffic analysis to ensure appropriate arrangements were made to accommodate any increase in local traffic.

Funding for improvements to the area will be important to secure. As grant programs become available in the future, such as the NYS Environmental Protection Fund and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, etc., the town and village would continue to work with their

funding partners to secure the financial resources toward with making improvements to the property.

Some of the lower-cost elements (design development, initial permitting, trail enhancements, etc.) could potentially be accommodated by the town and village, working within existing budget parameters, including the use of town/village public works staff, as has been done in other recreation projects. Larger, capital intensive projects are not envisioned for the immediate future. Should any of the larger elements of the master plan, such as the community center concept, become advanced at some point, there would be an extensive public involvement process prior to any decision-making. Given the current financial setting, there is no expectation that the community center element would be advanced in the near future.

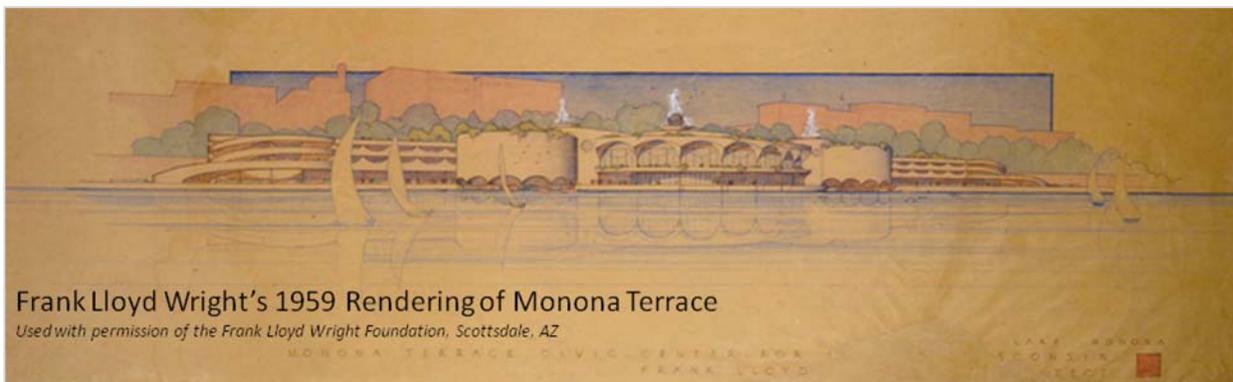
Community support is very important and securing private donor and foundation involvement is an avenue that can be explored by the town and village. The Pittsford and greater Rochester community have been very generous toward human development and recreation and community enhancement projects. It may be quite possible that interest in and financial support for one or more of the publicly-oriented elements of the master plan would emerge from private donors.

The village neighborhood element of the master plan will require flexibility to implement in terms of timing, phasing, and several other aspects of site development and control. Given the current real estate market at a ebb, this is not something is expected to be initiated immediately or even in the near future. When and if this part of the plan becomes an item that the village board finds, in the future, would be considered for advancement, a holistic look at all aspects of the endeavor would be appropriate at that time. This holistic perspective would include consideration of the project in context of the surrounding area and existing neighborhoods, any phasing of improvements, both on-site and off-site, and the creation of a strategy for the use of any potential net project revenue allocated for improvements to the nearby neighborhood and neighborhood streets, the proposed park and recreation area, and other needs of the area and the village as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The conceptual master plan has been many years in the making. The town and village recognize that implementing the master plan will result in significant change to the subject property; however these changes are all intended to improve the quality of life for residents. The core natural setting of the property will remain intact, and will be highlighted with formalized trails and interpretive signs. The public spaces will bring a park-like setting to the center of the community, and the new residential development will tie the property into the rest of the village and provide desirable home ownership opportunities.

While it may be many more years, perhaps decades before the major elements of the plan might be realized, it is essential that a master plan is in place upon which public action can be based. And, with the land set aside for the planned future uses, having that “land bank” will make what is envisioned, at some point, possible. As an example upon which to draw in terms of the importance of a setting and holding onto a vision is clearly illustrated in Madison, Wisconsin’s tenacity to hold onto its concept for a community and convention center on Monoma Lake for over half a century. And the Pittsford community, with its history of successful planning, will have an option for in place as future needs and opportunities unfold.



It is important to have this plan moving forward, for even if the elements of the plan are not constructed in the immediate future, the plan provides a vision for the future. An important example to look to is the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center which took nearly 40 years to come to fruition after Frank Lloyd Wright designed it back in 1959. (Images from Monoma Terrace Community and Convention Center, used with permission.)