



**NORTH TROY OPPORTUNITY
AREA STUDY
City of Troy, Rensselaer County, NY
Draft Citizen Participation and Outreach Strategy**

1.0 Introduction

This document presents a plan for stakeholder involvement in the City of Troy in the inventory, analysis, evaluation, and formulation of a Pre-Nomination Study for the North Central Troy Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) (hereinafter referred to as the North Troy Opportunity Area). The proposed plan is designed to engage the interest and participation of a broad cross-section of the community and surrounding neighborhoods throughout the planning process. The resulting planning study will suggest actions that will be implemented in a Nomination Study to be funded under a future grant application. This proposed plan is consistent with the requirements of the New York State Department of State (DOS) and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regarding public involvement in the planning process and an environmental evaluation of the Pre-Nomination Study Area.

When complete, it is recommended that the City of Troy adopt this plan as a guide for planning and zoning decisions in North Troy.

2.0 Considerations for Ongoing Discussions

In working toward a process for sound public participation, the following considerations should be discussed:

- The Technical and Steering Committees should have clearly defined objectives.
- The minimum that may be implemented and still achieve the stated objectives?
- The extent to which volunteers can be relied upon in carrying out public participation?
- The extent to which members of the project committees wish to involve themselves in public participation events outside of programmed meetings.
- The level of outreach solicited from volunteers and its anticipated benefits.

3.0 Organization Review and Finalization of the Public Participation Plan

During the project's startup phase to the consultant team will facilitate a meeting with the Technical Committee (TC). The purpose of this meeting is to refine and revise the identified objectives outlined in Section 4.0 for both the current process of developing and adopting the Pre-Nomination Study and for long-term revitalization and future marketability of the area. Following the TC review of the public participation plan, the preliminary draft will be revised and provided to the TC, DOS, DEC, and City of Troy.

4.0 Draft Objectives for Public Involvement

The following draft objectives are set forth by B&L's planning staff:

- The public should recognize the importance of the Pre-Nomination Study as a Revitalization Plan to guide future planning and zoning decisions in North Troy.
- The outreach effort should be designed to engage a full range of stakeholders in the community including residents, business owners and elected representatives.
- The public should have easy access to project technical information, maps, and analyses.
- All involved agencies, including the City, should serve as a conduit throughout the process of the analysis, evaluation, and Pre-Nomination process (including SEQRA).
- The TC and SC should strive to solicit input from the broadest possible range of perspectives and interests in the community.
- Input should be solicited through a variety of technical and non-technical means and should be carefully considered and responded to in a timely manner.
- The public participation process should be approached in a way that enfranchises local residents and strengthens the sense of community.
- Public participation should further the vision of the community; enhance civic pride, and encourage future participation in the long-range decision making process for each area.

5.0 Committee Involvement in Public Participation

In order to maximize the project budget and to provide for grass root support of the process, the TC and SC should maximize the amount of volunteerism available from

community groups and stakeholders in the study area. This is necessary to create a network of communication in order to engage the public in an objective manner and minimize biased or preconceived perceptions of the project. It will be important to provide these volunteers with a clear understanding of the purposes, goals and objectives of the project.

Initiation of the Pre-Nomination Study will be governed by a Technical Committee to include a Chairperson, city representatives, and representatives of the DOS Division of Coastal Resources and DEC. The Committee Chair will be the direct liaison to the planning consultant and will coordinate with the City and the SC. The project SC will be comprised of stakeholders in project area that will assist the TC and the planning consultant in enlisting community members and volunteers from local organizations. The intent is to put a grass roots face on all public outreach by enlisting local property owners to assist in securing cooperation of the media and newspapers (See Attachment A), and to put a neighborhood spin on press releases, newsletters, and workshops. The extent to which volunteer assistance will be solicited will be determined by the TC within the context of available resources, budget, and volunteer capacity.

An important component of the TC will be a Secretary to be appointed by the Chair. The Secretary will coordinate distribution of agenda, meeting minutes and transcripts. The role of the Secretary will be to develop a public record of the planning process and public sessions. Minutes will be provided to the consultant team for finalization, conversion to digital documents and provided to the city for inclusion on the project web site.

The consultant team will meet monthly with the TC during the project. Up to 6 four-hour meetings will be scheduled over the course of the project. A draft schedule will be established for review which will identify approximate timeframes for committee meetings. The consultant team will issue meeting agenda prior to each meeting.

During the initial TC meetings, the consultant team will assist in developing a list of potential SC members from the community. The consultant team will prepare and issue an invitation letter to the potential members identified by the TC. The consultant team will assist the TC with the preparation for and conduct of up to 3 four-hour meetings with the SC.

6.0 Community Participation and Outreach Strategy

The consultant team will assist the TC and SC with community meetings and will seek input from stakeholders as follows:

1. The consultant team will provide templates and draft documents to publicize the project and announce meetings both in paper and digital form that will include the following:
 - Advertisement for local newsletters

- Invitations
 - Announcement flyers
 - Comment mailers
 - Press releases
 - Project website updates
2. The consultant team will conduct interviews with project area stakeholders as follows:
- Two categories of questions will be prepared by the consultant team and submitted to the TC for review: (1) a set for residents and businesses located in the study area (perhaps as two (2) separate subsets); and (2) a set for those we wish to contact who are not residents in the study area i.e. developers; real estate brokers; City and County economic development and community housing officials; and tourism, parks and recreation officials, among others.
 - The consultant team will solicit the TC and SC for a list of suggested individuals to be interviewed. The consultant team will distribute the list of questions to interviewees in advance of the interviews. This will give interviewees time to consider and refine their responses. A letter to the targeted individuals with both a pre-mailing and a follow-up courtesy phone call are suggested mediums. Potential questions include the following:
 - What is your vision for revitalization of the study area?
 - What opportunities for redevelopment do you see, and what will the benefits be?
 - What infrastructure improvements (such as streets, sidewalks, utilities, etc...) are needed in your opinion to accommodate your role and the revitalization as a whole?
 - What are the needs for and types of public/ private partnerships to further remediation and redevelopment?
 - What project or improvement will encourage you stay in the neighborhood, or will help you to grow and maintain your business?
 - Do you see a need/opportunity for new housing projects?
 - How do you feel the BOA project can best improve the economic state of North Troy?
 - Do you see a need/opportunity to improve recreational facilities/parks?
 - What do you feel is lacking in the North Troy area and how would its presence serve as a benefit to the community?
3. The consultant team will assist the TC in hosting community meetings as follows:

- All meetings will be held in a public space, centrally located in North Troy. The North Police Station has been suggested as a preliminary site for the workshops. The consultant team will provide agendas, mapping, graphic pens, markers, note pads, tracing paper and a digital projector for use in the workshops. A powerpoint presentation will be provided for each of the community meetings/visioning sessions. Graphic products of workshops will be provided in digital form. All materials will be made available for posting as links on the project web page.
- A Public Information Meeting, to be held in late January, intended to introduce the project to the public and provide a brainstorming session to direct future meeting efforts.
- Two visioning sessions during which community stakeholders will participate in ‘hands-on’ development of revitalization strategies. The visioning sessions will be held a minimum of 2 weeks apart in February. Visioning Session 2 is intended to permit refinement and further development of ideas generated in the first Visioning Session.
- A follow-up Public Information Meeting to be held in April to provide for public review and comment on the draft Pre-Nomination Study.

*** ***Space rental, refreshments, and supplemental transportation for the public meetings/visioning sessions will be the responsibility of the City.***

4. In addition to formal public sessions, the public should be encouraged to attend regular meetings of the TC and SC and be permitted to provide comment during a designated time to be indicated in the meeting agenda. TC meeting notices will be placed on the project web site by the City.
5. The outreach effort for public workshops should include the following:
 - Coverage in the Troy Record should begin in mid-January. This effort should promote the understanding of the BOA program, provide information on the proposed project schedule, and promote upcoming community workshops. Coverage should include contact information for the TC and SC and information regarding participation (i.e., what can residents, businesses, and stakeholders do to participate). Coverage should also include venues the public can utilize in order to stay informed of progress through:

- Newspaper and web coverage
 - Libraries
 - Local businesses
 - Local organizations and community groups
 - City/B&L or organizational website
 - Flyers posted in schools, churches, stores, etc...
- Web-based information will be a key component to public outreach. The project website will be developed consistent with the City's established project web site format. The consultant team will provide text and graphics for City use in establishing and updating the project web site.
 - Long-term outreach can be initiated by generating a computerized mailing list to any organization within the project area (or regional organizations with an interest in the outcome). Organizations to be added to the list should include:
 - Churches
 - Schools
 - Senior organizations
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Other organizations identified by the TC and SC.
 - The list should include the name and address of every parcel owner within 500 feet of the BOA site. Key gathering locations should be identified for local postings. Mailings should be prepared prior to the initial media coverage and should follow the first article by three weeks time (following the initial January 2008 coverage).
 - Articles and editorials by local stakeholders should be encouraged in advance of each workshop. These articles should provide background on the issues being considered, outline opportunities for written and verbal participation, and indicate where technical and other background information can be viewed by the public.
 - Public service announcements prepared by the consultant team should be scheduled for both radio and television to highlight the public visioning sessions.
 - Public workshops should be promoted as community events and should be targeted for convenient evenings. Selected evenings should generally result in maximum attendance. These workshops should be carried out with enthusiasm and should be forward-looking and forward-thinking. If possible, workshops should not

coincide with other events in the area unless it can be held and sponsored by an appropriate group with a strong, unbiased local presence. Workshops should be held in a well known, locally significant venue.

- Planning for each workshop must have clear objectives and each session should be formatted to achieve stated objectives. Each workshop should begin with a 15-20 minute presentation, aided by powerpoint slideshows, that explains the context of the area, provides information and planning trends that may serve as revitalization tools, and sets forth questions and issues. The presentation will be done through visual means and will include speakers, panel discussions, or some combination. Depending upon the level of attendance, break out sessions should be programmed with groups of 8-10 individuals in order to conduct dialogue, engage individuals, and develop consensus. Each group will have one member of the TC or SC available to write down group priorities and identify points of disagreement to be addressed as the process continues.
- Workshop notes from flipcharts will be compiled and included in follow-up summaries prepared by the consultant team and to be available for public review and comment.

Upon completion of the participation plan outlined above, and preceding the official Pre-Nomination Adoption Process, public displays for City Hall, local libraries, and popular public spaces should be reproduced to explain the evolution of the sub-area plans and the planning process. The intent is to make clear to the public that the revitalization strategy is grounded in public support, realistic, and marketable.

7.0 The Adoption Process

The consultant team will prepare a draft Full Environmental Assessment Form as part of the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Act requirements. Since Pre-Nomination does not require invasive project work or remediation, the SEQR forms are expected to be prepared for the general area development and will provide a framework for individual project filings that may be required in the future. This process will identify significant threatened and endangered species, cultural resources and other significant environmental issues that will require additional evaluation during subsequent BOA phases.

The consultant team will review and incorporate comments received from the public, community stakeholders, the SC, and the TC for the draft study, and will prepare the Final Pre-Nomination Study for submittal.

The consultant team will submit the final Study to the City Council and the DOS and DEC for review. If requested, B&L will present the results of the Pre-Nomination Study to the City Council at a scheduled meeting.

Following acceptance of the Pre-Nomination Study by DOS and DEC, B&L will submit a request to the DOS to modify the State Assistance Contract and move onto Step 2 of the BOA nomination process.

8.0 Conclusion

This Public Participation Plan is in draft form for review by the City of Troy, New York State Department of State, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and members of the TC and SC. Following a review, this Public Participation Plan will be returned to the consultant team with review comments. The consultant team will revise and return the document to the City as a guide for the planning process and a methodology for maximizing public participation.

We recommend that the final document be distributed to the TC at the December monthly meeting to generate discussion and determine the number of designated members of each subcommittee interested in working on public outreach or participating in organizing public workshops.

We also recommend that during the January meeting, the group develop a consensus as to strategy and responsibility for the initial steps.

ATTACHMENT A

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA OUTLETS IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT AREA

Recommended AM radio media stations:

- WROW (590 AM; Albany, NY; www.wrow.com)
- WGY (810 AM; Albany, NY; www.wgy.com)
- WTMM (1300 AM; Rensselaer, NY; www.wtmm.com)

Recommended FM radio media stations:

- WRPI (91.5 FM; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute radio; www.wrpi.org)
- WFLY (92.3 FM; Albany, NY; www.fly92.com)
- WPYX (106.5 FM; Schenectady, NY; www.pyx106.com)
- WGNA (107.7 FM; Albany, NY; www.wgna.com)
- WTRY (98.3 FM; Albany, NY; www.wtry.com)
- WAJZ (96.3 FM; Albany, NY; www.jamz963.com)
- WQBK (103.5/103.9 FM; Latham, NY; www.wqbk.com)
- WABT (104.5 FM; Latham, NY; www.1045thebeat.com)
- WEQX (102.7 FM; Manchester, VT; www.weqx.com)

Recommended Cable/TV media stations:

- Capital News 9 (Albany, NY; Offers local news 24-hours a day; www.capitalnews9.com)
- WNYT 13 (Albany, NY; NBC affiliate for Albany, NY; www.wnyt.com)
- WRGB 6 (Schenectady, NY; CBS affiliate for Schenectady, NY; www.wrgb.com)
- WTEN 10 (Albany, NY; ABC affiliate for Albany, NY; www.wten.com)
- WXXA 23 – Albany, NY; Fox affiliate for Albany, NY; www.fox23news.com

Recommended Newspapers:

- THE TROY RECORD (Troy, NY; www.troyrecord.com)
- THE ALBANY TIMES UNION (Albany, NY; www.timesunion.com)

- THE SCHENECTADY GAZETTE (Schenectady, NY; www.dailygazette.com)
- METROLAND, (Albany, NY; www.metroland.net)

Note: If there are any media outlets or publications that City officials believe should be contacted please submit a list. Once the main outlets are determined a contact list will be generated.