

**NYS BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA PROGRAM**  
**VILLAGE OF CANTON - STEP 2: NOMINATION APPLICATION**  
**APPLICATION DEADLINE APRIL 7, 2017**

Comments in writing will be received by the Town Supervisor's office (60 Main Street, Canton, NY 13617) until March 22, 2017.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Department of State is soliciting applications through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) from eligible municipalities, community-based not-for profit organizations, and New York City Community Boards to complete Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nominations for neighborhoods, downtowns, or other defined areas which were the subject of a previous BOA Pre-Nomination or Nomination grant.

It is expected that Nominations developed through this program will be submitted to the Secretary of State in support of a request for BOA Designation. A BOA Designation conveys certain benefits to the area that promote redevelopment consistent with the vision, goals and objectives outlined in the BOA Nomination. Through the BOA Program, communities are empowered to:

- Address a range of problems posed by multiple brownfield sites;
- Build community consensus on the future uses for the area with an emphasis on strategic brownfield sites;
- Establish sustainable goals and objectives for area-wide revitalization and for redevelopment of strategic sites;
- Identify and establish the multi-agency and private-sector partnerships necessary to leverage assistance and investments to revitalize downtowns, neighborhoods, and communities; and
- Address environmental justice concerns and promote environmental equity in areas that may be burdened by negative environmental consequences.

**SUMMARY**

The Town of Canton, in partnership with the Village of Canton, intends to complete a Nomination for an approximate 73 acre area characterized with 36 potential brownfield, underutilized or vacant sites that are located along the Grasse River and/or historic village downtown. The primary community revitalization objectives to be achieved by this project include the revitalization of the Grasse River shoreline and the historic village downtown by facilitating investigation and cleanup efforts on critical properties, and providing community and

site specific economic and market assessments which will assist in the redevelopment of brownfield, vacant and underutilized properties. Anticipated community benefits resulting from this project include ecological enhancement of the Grasse River, a cleaner environment, investment in the local economy and community as a whole, and neighborhood stabilization.

## **DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Town and Village of Canton are located in St. Lawrence County in New York State. Once a mill town and agricultural community, today Canton's largest industries are education and government although agriculture continues to play a significant role in Canton's local economy and rural character.

As with most college towns, particularly small ones, the local economy has become dependent on universities as both employers and consumers (students, visitors, etc.). It is the desire of the Town and Village to continue to meet the needs of the universities and enhance the partnerships and physical connections between the campuses and the community, while seeking new opportunities to grow and diversify the local economy.

Brownfield problem areas are affecting the economic climate of the business sector in Canton. These areas are located along prime real estate sectors that could yield interesting and profitable development potential in the coming years if these areas were remediated and utilized to promote greater access to the Grasse River shoreline and economic stability for the village's downtown. Residents and property owners are impacted by this unaddressed problem.

Previous investigation of a site in the proposed corridor revealed that soil contamination had migrated along existing water and sewer lines, raising concerns among adjacent property owners. Devaluation of such properties not responsible for possible contamination, and the cost to remediate them, poses a major threat to the viability of businesses located on these sites. This scenario, replicated numerous times within the proposed project corridor of Riverside Drive and Gouverneur Street, could have a devastating impact on the economic growth of Canton.

The BOA boundary identified in the Pre-Nomination Study encompasses all of the brownfield, abandoned and underutilized sites where industry was historically located in the Village of Canton along the Grasse River. The boundary also includes areas within downtown Canton that are potentially influenced or affected by the current conditions and perceptions of these underutilized properties including some residential neighborhoods and recreational areas. Subareas within the BOA have been created to distinguish neighborhoods and commercial corridors as each area has its own character and historical development patterns affecting its future. Of particular note are three subareas with implementation projects in the Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan that would directly benefit from the assessment to be conducted as part of the Nomination Study.

Within the BOA there are 36 brownfield, abandoned or underutilized sites identified totaling approximately 73 acres. The brownfield sites are widely dispersed throughout the BOA on 27

parcels totaling 65 acres. Most of the brownfield sites are suspected, rather than known to be contaminated, due to either prior or current use of the site or adjacent sites. The abandoned or underutilized sites are equally dispersed throughout the BOA on 9 sites totaling 7.72 acres and represent everything from parking lots and vacant strip mall storefronts to the underutilized Kraft Foods plant and a former co-generation facility.

The Vision developed in the Pre-Nomination Study for the Canton Village Brownfield Opportunity Area is as follows:

*Downtown Canton is attractive, walkable and culturally vibrant, benefitting from and enhancing the quality of life inherent in a small college town. The Grasse River is a richly diverse and healthy ecosystem with easy public access and an abundance of recreational opportunities. The diverse local economy positively impacts surrounding neighborhoods. New development protects and complements the riverfront and is consistent with the village's architecture and character.*

The Town and Village of Canton consider its BOA Program to be critically important in meeting the community's vision for the future and the Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan. The goals and objectives of the BOA Program include the following:

- *Protect the shoreline and the natural resources that comprise the Grasse River and its ecosystem;*
- *Revitalize and strengthen the local economy by encouraging the development and redevelopment of underutilized and brownfield properties into an appropriate mix of uses that are compatible with the Grasse River waterfront and the historic Village of Canton;*
- *Increase the public/private partnerships that already exist between the Town and Village of Canton, the two local universities, the local business leaders and the citizens within the community;*
- *Increase the value of the shoreline properties, thereby encouraging economic growth and development;*
- *Maximize public access and enjoyment of the Grasse River; and*
- *Expand and enhance the land trails network and pedestrian and pedestrian linkages within and to the waterfront area.*

Based on the activities of Step 1, including the established Vision and Goals, analysis of existing conditions within the BOA boundary and the preliminary study of the brownfield, vacant and underutilized sites, several additional areas of investigation were identified as activities for Step 2 in the Nomination. These activities include the following as broken down by BOA-wide or Sub-area.

## BOA-Wide

- Conduct a market analysis by business sector to identify potential business types that, if located in Canton, could fill a local or regional gap.
- Analyze current programs and incentives offered by the Town and Village available to prospective and existing land owners and developers to identify any missed opportunities for providing assistance.
- Undertake a zoning and other land regulation analysis to determine if the current Village Zoning is adequate for each subarea based on the preferred future land uses identified in this Study, the Waterfront Revitalization Plan and other relevant Plans and make recommendations for changes.

## Riverside Area (Subarea A)

- Prepare a market analysis for the Riverside Drive and Main Street target sites to determine possible redevelopment scenarios which may include site assemblage.
- Conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments on select high priority sites. Note that new information learned since the approval of the Pre-Nomination Study regarding one of these sites, suggests that a Phase I-a, and possibly Phase I-b Archeology Study may be needed.
- Conduct a transportation/access management study to identify options for improving pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist mobility at the Main Street (Route 11) and Miner Street intersection. (See also Jubilee Area Recommendations)

## Jubilee Area (Subarea B)

- Conduct a market analysis and determine the redevelopment feasibility of the vacant storefronts in the Jubilee Plaza site to improve the utilization of this property while maintaining current tenancy.

## County Highway Department Area (Subarea C)

- Conduct a Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments on the County Highway Department land.

## Bend in the River Area (Subarea D)

- Conduct a redevelopment feasibility study of the former co-generation facility to identify potential future land uses based on market, land characteristics and redevelopment costs.
- Undertake an in-depth housing analysis to gain a greater understanding of current conditions and the impact of future residential development on the west side of Stevens Street.
- Investigate opportunities for access along and to the Grasse River waterfront as stated in the Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

## Gouverneur Area (Subarea E)

- Identify strategies to work with property owners to mitigate blight.

- Investigate opportunities for public access along and to the Grasse River waterfront as stated in the Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

## **COMPLEMENTARY PROJECTS**

The Town and Village are collaborating to address declining commercial development along the shoreline of the Grasse River. The Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan was adopted in 2010, and is in the process of being updated. This Plan was developed in partnership with the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources and funding from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program through the Environmental Protection Fund as well as GIS mapping services from St. Lawrence University. The Plan is a comprehensive land and water use plan for the Grasse River Waterfront. The plan identifies long-term uses along the waterfront and specific projects for implementation. A majority of the BOA boundary is located within the boundary of this Plan. The Town also completed a Step 1: Pre-Nomination Study in the hamlet of Pyrites within the Town of Canton that focuses on the Grasse River shoreline. The proposed Pyrites BOA is also within the Waterfront Revitalization Plan boundary.

A grant was secured from the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources with funding from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program to perform feasibility studies for pedestrian walkways in Canton. Completed studies include: Pedestrian Pathway - Willow Island and Heritage Waterfront Parks; and Bend in the river Park Feasibility Study. In addition, the Town partnered with the Village of Potsdam and Town of Colton (Potsdam being the lead) to study the feasibility of developing a white water recreation park destination with locations in each of the three participating municipalities.

The Town has secured three additional grants from the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources and funding from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The first of these supports: creation of a boat launch in Pyrites; development of a Grasse River Blueway Plan; and development of a Master Trail Plan. The second supports: creation of a comprehensive plan for the Town of Canton, Village of Canton and Village of Rensselaer Falls; development of a Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Oswegatchie River; and the creation of marketing materials for the Grasse River Blueway. The third includes funds to support: design and engineering for a proposed whitewater park; construction of the Willow Island and Heritage Waterfront Park pedestrian pathway; and demolition of a vacant building upon acquisition of a prime site within the proposed Village of Canton BOA.

The Village has secured several grants that will aid in revitalization of both the shoreline, and downtown. The New York Main Street Grant will renovate approximately seven historic structures within the proposed BOA and create several new residential spaces in 2017. Funds from the Northern Border Regional Commission and St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment

Agency will aid the expansion of municipal water and sewer infrastructure to the Maple Hill Subdivision on the banks of the Grasse River. This will facilitate both residential and commercial development, and preserve 88 jobs at one of our largest private employers, Community Bank, N.A.. A CDBG Microenterprise grant will stimulate the creation and expansion of microenterprise businesses, focusing on filling vacant storefronts in downtown Canton. A State and Municipal Facilities Grant will assist with upgrades to the Bend in the River Park, including repaving of the pathway, new roof for picnic pavilion, installation of new benches, tables and BBQ grills, and the construction of a public restroom facility.

## **PROJECT SCOPE of WORK and SCHEDULE**

The Town and Village of Canton will be working on the Step 2: Nomination of the Brownfield Opportunity Area encompassing the shoreline of the Grasse River and historic village downtown. It is anticipated that the existing Waterfront Advisory Committee established by for Step 1: Pre-Nomination Study will continue to steer this Nomination process. This Committee has remained active with oversight of other grants related to the waterfront in Canton.

**Task 1- Secure Consultant Services:** The Town and Village will seek the professional services of consultants to perform all of the investigations and analyses anticipated for this project as well as assist in the overall Nomination development including the public participation process. The Town will secure a consultant team that will include all necessary disciplines to complete Step 2. It is assumed that one consulting firm will lead the team and contract with the Town of Canton and other necessary professionals will be subcontractors to that consultant.

### **Task 2-Develop Nomination Study:**

The primary tasks for this project will include:

- Education of the citizens about the project and the importance of participation with up to three public meetings;
- Building on the Pre-Nomination Study, we will complete a Nomination Study that will include components included in the Executive Summary, Project Description and Boundary, Public Participation Plan and Techniques to Enlist Partners, and Analysis of the Brownfield Opportunity Area.
- Meeting with property owners and other stakeholders regarding identified potential priority sites;
- Within the components of the Analysis of the Brownfield Opportunity area, in particular the Nomination Study will include Phase I Environmental Site Assessments for up to six (6) potential strategic sites; a Phase I-a and possibly 1-b archeology study and Phase II for at least one potentially historically significant site. As part of the economic and market trends

analysis, micro- and macro-economic assessment, including Canadian influence, will be conducted as Canton's opportunities are more regional than local for many industry sectors, and a housing market analysis will be conducted as some vacant lands within the BOA may represent the last opportunity for some form of new housing development within the village. In addition, a zoning and other land regulation analysis will be conducted to determine if current zoning is adequate for each subarea. A streetscape enhancement plan will also be developed for the Gouverneur Street subarea.

- Building on the information described in the bullet above, conduct redevelopment analysis and feasibility for up to three (3) sites or assemblage of sites.

*The proposed schedule for completion of these tasks is included below.*

<b>SCHEDULE FOR PROJECT COMPLETION</b>																									
<b>Task</b>	<b>Month</b>																								
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Task 1:Secure Consultant</b>	X	X	X																						
<b>Task 2:Nomination</b>																									
Executive Summary																			X						
Section 1				X	X	X																			
Section 2 Public Participation Plan/ Techniques Property Owner Meeting Public Meetings						X	X	X																	
Section 3								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Finalize Document																								X	X

**APPLICANT SHARE**

The Town of Canton will provide the appropriate match of approximately 10% for this project, however historically these projects have realized significantly greater amounts of in-kind contributions for the program, among the volunteer Waterfront Advisory Committee and administrative services provided through the Office of Economic Development. The grant administration component typically will require: preparation of copies for committee meetings; posting of news articles and press releases; legal and public notices submitted to local newspapers; web postings of information pertaining to meetings and their outcomes; creation of meeting notes and information packets; and, in the case of this project in the Village of Canton, there may be property owner interviews at the regional and state level, as some of the largest property owners in the village are currently located in other parts of the state and in the nation.

Additionally, the Town will rely on their legal counsel to provide guidance with meeting outreach requirements and the completion of the necessary SEQR documents to be in compliance with state environmental law.

## PROJECT BUDGET

The Town and Village have reached out to consultants for budgetary guidance for each element of the Nomination Study. It is anticipated that professional consultants in the form of planners, economists, archeologists and environmental scientist will be needed to assist Canton in completing the investigations and economic assessments proposed for the Nomination. We have used that to help develop our budget for this Step 2 Nomination Study. Project costs are outlined below:

	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Area-Wide Activities:</b>		<b>\$26,500</b>
Demographic Trends and general market analysis.	\$12,000	
Town and Village-wide housing market analysis.	\$11,000	
Land use planning and zoning review and coordination.	\$3,500	
<b>Subarea or Site-Specific Activities:</b>		<b>\$102,000</b>
Up to six (6) Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments.	\$15,000	
Up to three (3) site(s) specific redevelopment scenarios.	\$20,000	
Up to three (3) site(s) specific feasibility analysis for catalyst sites.	\$27,000	
Up to one each (1) Phase 1-A and Phase 1-B Archeology Studies and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.	\$25,000	
Feasibility study for relocation of the County Highway Department building.	\$15,000	
<b>Stakeholder support and revitalization plan development Activities:</b>		<b>\$47,500</b>
Project Coordination	\$16,000	
Community Engagement	\$21,000	
BOA Revitalization Plan/Nomination Study Development	\$10,500	
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>		<b>\$21,250</b>
Administration	\$15,750	
Training/Travel	\$2,000	
Legal	\$3,500	

<b>Total Project Costs</b>		<b>\$197,250</b>
<b>Local Match (10.77%)</b>	<b>\$21,250</b>	
<b>BOA Grant Request</b>	<b>\$176,000</b>	