



**Pyrites Brownfield Opportunity Area**  
**Step One: Pre-Nomination Study**  
*Town of Canton, St. Lawrence County*

*Submitted by the Town of Canton*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Pyrites Brownfield Opportunity Area is located in the hamlet of Pyrites, a small residential community nestled on the Grasse River in the southern corner of the Town of Canton. Pyrites, a once thriving and self sustaining community has suffered dramatically from the paper mill closing in the 1930s. The hamlet's location, presents challenges for any significant business development due to its relative remoteness. However, its picturesque setting on the Grasse River and recreational assets create an opportunity for housing development. Additional families could result in enough population to support local convenience retail and services in the future.

The BOA boundary area covers a 266 plus acre area that is focused on three large vacant parcels in Pyrites along the Grasse River and much of the surrounding hamlet area including the main intersection in the hamlet of Canton Pyrites Road/Churchill Street and Pink School House Road/Bridge Street. The Grasse River is an important natural feature meandering through the BOA from south to north. The River is utilized for small water craft recreational uses such as canoeing, kayaking and fishing. It is the focal point of the Pyrites area making the surrounding properties key to enhancing this area. The three main target parcels are privately owned and cover 188 of the 266 acres within the BOA. There are five community services parcels within the BOA, including St. Paul's Catholic Church, the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Department and three other Fire Department owned parcels. Public Services located within the BOA are the lands owned by Pyrites Associates which is a hydro-electric generation facility located on both banks of the Grasse River, and another key vacant parcel owned by National Grid.

Underutilized, abandoned and blighted sites are affecting the economic climate of Pyrites. Many of these sites have potential as they are located on the Grasse River waterfront. With proper remediation and improvement, these sites could be utilized to their greater potential creating new housing options for existing and prospective residents, recreation areas and convenience retail and services for local residents.

Current land uses and likely uses going forward are permitted within the Town's zoning. The Waterfront Revitalization Plan recommends that the Town's zoning be updated to better protect the Grasse River from development impacts, incorporate public access into future waterfront development and encourage the use of conservation design subdivision in housing developments.

Currently there is no formal public access (boat launch, park or trails) on the Grasse River in Pyrites. One of the obstacles to such development is that nearly the entire waterfront is privately owned. Therefore, partnering with private property owners or acquiring lands for public use will be necessary to create public access to the Grasse River.

Based upon the vision workshops held and input from the committee and community members, the following vision and goals have been established for the Pyrites BOA:

*Vision Statement*

*Pyrites is a picturesque, vibrant hamlet nestled on the banks of the Grasse River. It is a mix of homes, community services and locally supported small businesses. The Grasse River is a richly diverse, healthy ecosystem that winds its way through the hamlet providing natural beauty and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. The river's power continues to be a renewable source of energy.*

**Goals and Preliminary Recommendations**

Based on the preliminary analysis of existing conditions within the BOA, the surrounding community and the Town of Canton, the following are preliminary recommendations for furthering development and revitalization in Pyrites:

**Goal 1: Create new housing opportunities and revitalize and improve the existing housing stock.**

**Recommendations:**

- Undertake an in-depth housing analysis to gain a greater understanding of current market potential for new housing development on portions of the three large vacant parcels owned by Pyrites Associates and National Grid.
- Based on findings of a housing market study, commission a housing development plan for a target area in Pyrites to market to real estate developers.
- Identify strategies to work with property owners to improve residential properties including obtaining grants for housing rehabilitation and sponsoring a manufactured home replacement program.
- Develop a strategy to utilize funds previously received from a NYS Department of Housing and Community Renewal HOME grant to improve and upgrade the existing housing stock through window replacement, lead paint removal, etc.

**Goal 2: Maximize public access and enjoyment of the Grasse River through park, boat launch and trail development in Pyrites.**

**Recommendations:**

- Develop a Waterfront Recreation Access Plan to further the Grasse River Waterfront Plan “blueway trail” concept establishing waterfront recreational opportunities which may include a waterfront park or boat launch area (see below) and a waterfront trail.
- Partner with Pyrites Associates (Site #2) to secure formal public access to the River and Pyrites Gorge. This site is presently used informally by the public as canoe launch site.

**Goal 3: Protect the shoreline and the natural resources that comprise the Grasse River and its eco-system.**

**Recommendation:**

- Identify land management tools to protect and maintain the natural beauty of the Grasse River shoreline as an important viewshed from the vantage point of the Grasse River.

**Goal 4: Revitalize and strengthen the local economy by encouraging the development and redevelopment of underutilized and brownfield properties into an appropriate mix of uses including housing and convenience businesses for local residents.**

**Recommendations:**

- Partner with Pyrites Associates and National Grid to conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments on suspected brownfield sites.
- Identify a potential use for the vacant Town-owned parcel on the River.
- Identify possible infill sites for future commercial development.

**Goal 5: Enhance community development thorough more community identity, organization and interaction.**

**Recommendation:**

- Meet with local community members and organizations such as the Fire Department to identify community-related activities, programs and potential places to gather. The Fire Department is currently the focal community organization and the owner of several parcels within the boundary. As such, the Fire Department would be a starting place for additional community development from a programmatic stand point and also physical gathering spaces.

**Goal 6: Initiate streetscape improvements including lighting, signage and sidewalks to promote a sense of place, increase safety and improve the appearance of the hamlet.**

**Recommendation:**

- Develop a Streetscape Master Plan that addresses pedestrian amenities and hamlet character enhancements such as sidewalks, lighting and signage.

**SECTION I:  
PROPOSED PROJECT, BOUNDARY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

## **A. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

### **REGIONAL SETTINGS**

The Pyrites Brownfield Opportunity Area is located in the hamlet of Pyrites, a small residential community nestled on the Grasse River in the southern corner of the Town of Canton. The Town of Canton encompasses 105.89 square miles in the center of St. Lawrence County in the Adirondack foothills, twenty miles from the Canadian border, and nineteen miles to the St. Lawrence River (see Map #1, Community Context). The Town also includes the Villages of Canton and Rensselaer Falls and Hamlet of Morley. The Grasse River winds its way from south to north through the Town connecting by water the Hamlets of Morley and Pyrites and Village of Canton. The Village of Canton, located 6 miles north of Pyrites, is the center of activity for the Town and has been the county seat since 1830. As such, many of the County's government operations and services are located in Canton. The Village is also home to St. Lawrence University and the State University of New York-Canton.

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.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Historically, the Town of Canton was an important location for farming and a prosperous mill town utilizing the power of the Grasse River and Oswegatchie River to power lumber and grist mills. Daniel Harrington of Connecticut established Canton's first settlement along the Grasse River. Stillman Foote, an emigrant from Middlebury, Vermont, built the first gristmill on the Grasse River. In 1801, he purchased a one-square mile area on the Grasse River which is now the Village of Canton. The Town was incorporated in 1805 as St. Lawrence County's sixth town.

Canton developed as a north-country industrial center in the early to mid-nineteenth century due to the abundant power of the Grasse River at Falls Island (as it's known today) which attracted numerous mills; and the road network from Canton to the St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg which then provided access to important shipping routes via the Black River Canal at Watertown. The dense settlement of downtown Canton, still prevalent in the Village today, is attributed to several factors including the location of grist mills and saw mills established on both sides of the River as well as other industries such as J. Henry Rushton's boat building; the construction of Main Street (NYS Route 11) in the late 1840s; and the selection of Canton as the County seat in 1830 bringing government offices, services and jobs.

In the early 1890's, as described in *Images of America: Canton*, the Hamlet of Pyrites, approximately 6 miles upstream from the Village of Canton, developed rapidly due to a successful pulp making industry. Iron pyrite, found in abundance in the region, was used in pulp-

making. The success of the Pyrites Paper Mill led to the establishment of other related businesses, stores, hotels and schools. At its peak, the population exceeded 1,500 residents. The DeGrasse Paper Company and later the International Paper Company employed 500 workers and made 200 tons of newsprint daily. The paper mill was forced to close for financial reasons after the stock market crash of 1929 with no new industry taking its place thereafter. Today, the commercial enterprises other than the Pyrites Hydro-electric generation facility are gone, the school is closed and Pyrites is essentially a residential hamlet.

While industries dependent on the power of the Rivers dominated, the educational industry became more prominent with the founding of St. Lawrence University in 1856 and the Agricultural School at St. Lawrence University in 1906, a state sponsored school which became independent from the University in 1925. Canton's focus on the educational industry came with the expansion of the State Agricultural and Technical College (now SUNY Canton) on the west side of the Grasse River and St. Lawrence University's expansion on the east side.

Today, St. Lawrence University, a private liberal arts school of 2,100 students, and the State University of New York-Canton, a four-year school with some graduate offerings and 3,000 students with a curriculum that focuses on the opportunities and challenges of technology, are the major employers in the community.

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 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 throughout the Town.

## **COMMUNITY LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

The settlement and development of the Town of Canton is historically centered on the Grasse River which served as a source of power for mills in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and a source of water for agriculture. The hamlet of Pyrites, as described in the historical background, was once a thriving, self-sustaining mill community nestled on the Grasse River with residences, businesses and community services. Today, the mills and businesses that were supported by the mill are gone and Pyrites is a small residential hamlet completely surrounded by rural wooded and open space landscapes. There are approximately 100 residential properties of varying age, condition and size including some blight. The Fire Department is the sole community service but has a very strong presence in the Community. The only commercial enterprise is the hydro-electric dam. The Village of Canton is the focal point of activity in the Town with many retail and service establishments and other businesses and community and county services. Pyrites residents must travel to the Village of Canton or elsewhere to shop for day to day necessities.



## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

The US Census is used to analyze and characterize a community's socio-economic conditions. There is no "census tract" or "block group" data that isolates Pyrites, however, use of Town-wide data is not necessarily representative of Pyrites as the Village of Canton is included in that data. As such, the following analysis of US Census data utilizes information for the Town of Canton as a whole and the "Town outside of the Village of Canton" to describe socio-economic conditions. The "Town outside of the Village of Canton" data includes the hamlet of Pyrites.

### ***Demographics***

In 2010, the Town of Canton had a population of 10,995 according to the 2010 Census. This is a healthy 6.4% increase from 2000 to 2010. The Town outside the Village's population grew to 4,681 which was a 5.1% increase. The Village of Canton's population increase – which impacted the overall Town population – increased 7.3%. This increase is largely attributed to a change in the 2010 Census of counting college students toward the community in which the college is located. In contrast, the overall St. Lawrence County population has remained flat with an increase of just 13 residents over the 10 year span despite the fact that the student population of four universities is now counted in the St. Lawrence County population.

<b>Table 1. Age Characteristics 2000-2010</b>									
	<b>St. Lawrence County</b>			<b>Town of Canton</b>			<b>Town Outside the Village</b>		
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% change</b>
Under 5 years	6,065	6,574	8.4%	443	493	10.1%	267	281	5.2%
5 to 17 years	20,156	17,231	-14.5%	1,508	1,307	-13.3%	962	842	-12.4%
18 to 22 years	12,725	13,735	7.9%	2,838	3,304	16.4%	274	276	.73%
23 to 44 years	33,354	28,836	-13.5%	2,467	2,367	-4.2%	1,357	1,209	-10.9%
45 to 64 years	25,088	30,015	19.6%	1,902	2,266	19.1%	1,102	1,345	22%
65 years and older	14,543	15,553	6.9%	1,176	1,258	7.0%	490	728	48.6%
Total	111,931	111,944	0.0%	10,334	10,995	6.4%	4,452	4,681	5.1%

*Source: US Census Bureau (2000 and 2010).*

The age characteristics of residents can impact many aspects of a community including demand for services for youth and seniors, education, housing type and tenure; and the local economy. Table 2 denotes the Town's population by age as a percentage of the overall Town and the Town outside the Village.

Between 2000 and 2010 all age groups in the Town of Canton experienced growth in population. Adults (45 to 64 years) experienced the greatest population increase between 2000 and 2010 for the Town of Canton and St. Lawrence County as a whole. There was also a large increase (22%) in this age group for the Town outside the Village. This age group is considered a person's "peak earning years." This particular population concentration is an important characteristic of labor force availability and is a positive factor for the Town and County.

Seniors (65 years and older) also increased by 7.0% in the Town and 6.9% in St. Lawrence County. This age group increased by an astounding 48.6% for the Town outside the Village. Although, it is important to point out that this age group only makes up 15.6% of the population in the Town outside the Village. The growth in senior population will have an impact on the availability of senior services including health care and housing for seniors including assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Outside of the Village of Canton, these services and housing options do not exist.

<b>Table 2. Age Characteristics as Percentage of Population</b>				
	<b>Town of Canton</b>		<b>Town outside the Village</b>	
	<b>2010</b>	<b>% of Town</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% of Town</b>
Under 5 years	493	4.5%	281	6%
5 to 17 years	1,307	11.9%	842	18%
18 to 22 years	3,304	30.1%	276	5.9%
23 to 44 years	2,367	21.5%	1,209	25.8%
45 to 64 years	2,266	20.6%	1,345	28.7%
65 years and older	1,258	11.4%	728	15.6%
Total	10,995	100.0%	4,681	100.0%

*Source: US Census Bureau (2000 and 2010).*

The number of pre-school children increased 10.1% town-wide, 5.3% in Town outside the Village and 8.4% in the County. School-age children (5 to 20 years) also increased during the period by just 1.7% for the Town yet declined for the Town outside the Village 11.9% and County 7.6%. Significant decline in the number of children could have impacts on the school district, after-school services and child care.

## ***Housing***

According to 2010 Census, the Town of Canton has 3,657 housing units. Of the total housing units counted, 3,402 or 93% were occupied. Owners make up 63.3% of the occupied housing in the Town and renters 36.7%. Since 2000 the number of housing units in the Town has increased 4.1%. The number of people has increased greater than the number of housing units.

In looking at housing for the Town outside the Village, according to the 2010 Census, there were 1,849 housing units of which 92.4% were occupied. Owners made up 82% of the occupied housing and renters 18%. Since 2000 the housing units in the Town outside the Village has remained relatively unchanged with an increase of only 14 units.

One factor in assessing general housing needs within a community is the availability of housing choice. A healthy housing market should provide sufficient opportunities to its residents to secure good quality units that address their particular needs in terms of number of bedrooms, location, price and other considerations. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. Vacancy rates for rental housing (2010 Census) in the Town of Canton were in the normal range with 3.7%. The homeowner vacancy rates were almost within

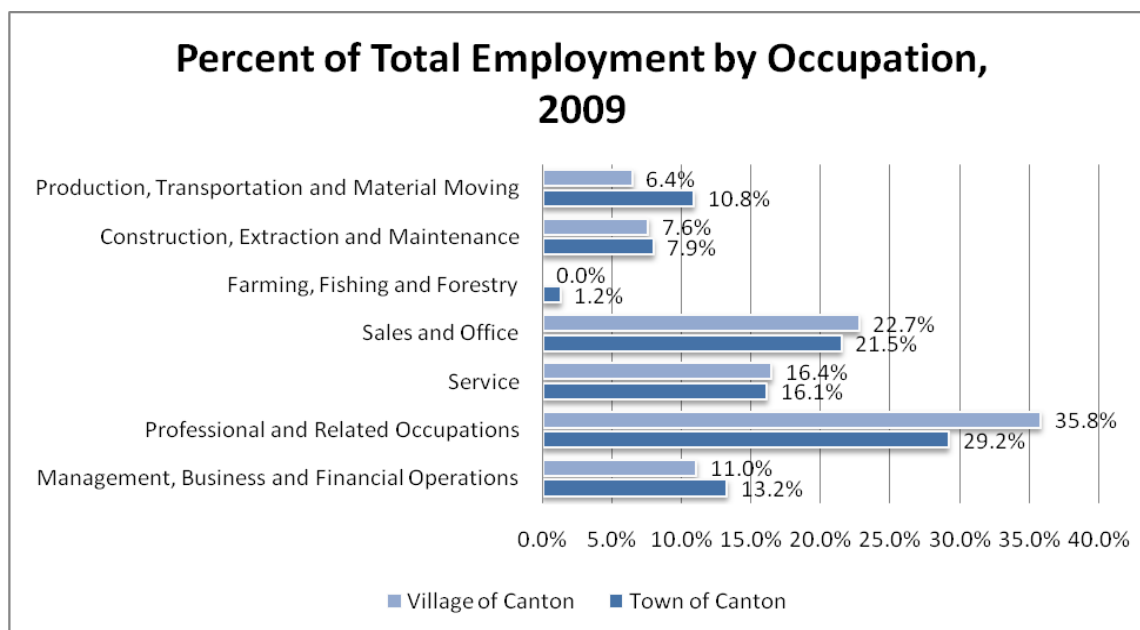
the norm at 1.5% for the Town. These are healthy housing market statistics suggesting that there are preliminary indicators that there is a market for new housing in the Town of Canton. A housing market study would be necessary to confirm this.

### ***Employment***

*Note: At the writing of this Study, 2010 US Census data was not yet available for some data analysis related to employment. Estimates from Claritas Inc.<sup>1</sup> were used in these circumstances.*

The civilian labor force consists of residents (aged 16 and older) who are employed or who are actively seeking employment, excluding those enrolled in the armed forces. According to the Claritas estimates, 60.48% of the Town of Canton's working age population participated in the civilian labor force in 2009. By comparison, 51.1% of St Lawrence County's population participated in the civilian labor force in 2009. Claritas also reports that unemployment in the Town was 8.4% and 4.72% in the County in 2009. The most recent statistics from the New York State Department of Labor indicate that St. Lawrence County had an unemployment rate of 9.3% for the month of November 2011. New York State had an unemployment rate of 7.9% for the same period. Unemployment data for the Town is not available.

As the chart below illustrates, the majority of Town residents worked in professional and related occupations (29.2%) and "sales and office" occupations (21.5%). Similarly, these were also the most common occupations in the Village of Canton. For the County, "sales and office" jobs made up 23% of occupations, "service" made up 20.9% and "professional and related occupations" made up 19.9%.



Source: Claritas Inc. (2009)

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<sup>1</sup> Claritas develops population estimates based on the most recent estimates produced by the Census Bureau at the national, state, and county levels. Population growth is then projected using forecasts provided by WEFA, an econometric forecasting firm. At smaller geographic levels, a variety of other sources, such as estimates from local agencies, household and consumer marketing databases, and other proprietary sources may also be used. While the estimates are useful for projections, it should be noted that the margin for error for small areas like small cities and census tracts is larger than for a state or region.

## ***Income***

*Note: At the writing of this Study, 2010 US Census data was not yet available for some data analysis related to income. Estimates from Claritas Inc. were used in these circumstances.*

Personal income is one of the most important indicators of the economy and one of the most important variables in creating a vibrant community for the future. Understanding the income characteristics of the community is also important in determining the community's wealth as well as the ability of residents to maintain housing, contribute to the local tax base, and participate in the economy.

According to 2009 Claritas estimates, median household income for the Town of Canton was \$43,627. By comparison, St. Lawrence County has a median household income of \$39,876. Approximately 45.8% of residents in the Town of Canton are considered to have low or moderate incomes (households with incomes less than 80% of the St. Lawrence County median income as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Further, 27.1% of Town residents are very low income (incomes below 50% of the County median income). Additionally, 10.3% of the Town's families are estimated to be living below the poverty level. In the County, 12.46% of families are estimated to be living below the poverty level.

## ***Transportation***

U.S. Route 11 is Canton's most significant roadway and is the major east-west route through St. Lawrence County. In Canton Route 11 dips south, west of the Village of Canton. As such, Pyrites connects with Route 11 just 2.5 miles west via Eddy Pyrites Road. The main roadways within the Pyrites BOA boundary are County Routes 21 (Hermon Pyrites Road) and Canton Pyrites Road, Pink School House Road, Northwoods Road, Pyrites Russell Road and Bridge Street. Traffic counts for the area's local collector roadways are provided in the Table below. The Annual Daily Traffic counts for the roadways listed below fall well within the recommended volume ranges for the road types, and therefore any additional traffic volume generated by new businesses on these roadways can be supported by the existing road infrastructure in terms of volume. However, these roads are, for the most part local roads winding through a residential neighborhood and are not conducive to heavy traffic or truck traffic. In addition, the Bridge Street bridge crossing the Grasse River is one lane with a maximum total vehicle weight of 3 tons and vertical clearance of 7 feet.

Pedestrian streetscape amenities such as sidewalks and lighting do not exist in the hamlet creating a less than favorable pedestrian atmosphere despite the hamlet scale of the area.

**Table 3: Traffic Counts for Major Roadways**

<b>Road/Highway</b>	<b>Annual Average Daily Traffic</b>	<b>Count Year</b>
Bridge St from Northwoods to Canton Pyrites Road (CR21A)	153	2008
Eddy Pyrites Rd from CR21 to US11	365	2008
Edwards-Hermon Rd from Eddy Pyrites to Pyrites Spur	763	2008

*Source: NYS DOT Traffic Volume Report*

Through the Village of Canton, CSX Transportation operated freight service traveling to Massena, Gouverneur, Potsdam and Norwood. Ogdensburg can be reached through St. Lawrence Railroad. The rail stop in Canton is presently closed.

Greyhound, Adirondack Trailways, Thousand Island Bus lines, St Lawrence County Public Transportation and Birnie Bus tours provide bus service to and from Canton via the Village of Canton. Service is provided to Massena, Ogdensburg, Potsdam, Gouverneur, Watertown, Syracuse, Plattsburgh, Utica, Rochester, Albany, New York City, Buffalo, Burlington and Montreal.

### ***Community Infrastructure***

AT&T is the primary provider of phone and high speed internet service to the Town of Canton. Cable television and internet service is offered through the Time Warner Cable Company. St. Lawrence Internet Connection (SLIC) received a grant to provide internet services to underserved rural areas through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Broadband Initiatives Program. This is expected to cover any areas of Canton currently without access. Cell phone service is intermittent in the Pyrites area. A new tower is being constructed which should improve cell service in Pyrites and surrounding areas.

### ***Water Supply and Sewage Disposal***

The majority of the Town, including Pyrites, is served by wells for its water supply and septic systems for sewage disposal.

## **RECENT PLANNING INITIATIVES AND STUDIES**

*Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan.* The Town and Village of Canton developed an intermunicipal Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Grasse River which runs 19 miles through the Town from south to north and through the Village Canton. The majority of the BOA boundary is within the boundary of the waterfront revitalization area in this Plan. The Waterfront Revitalization Plan addresses the following issues: enhancing opportunities for public access to water-based recreation on the waterways; revitalizing Main Street and Riverside Drive and underutilized waterfront commercial properties; developing efficient, pedestrian and bicycle friendly transportation access; protecting sensitive waterfront resources, open space and scenic resources; preservation of historic resources and enhanced opportunities for heritage tourism; and growth management and protection of community character and quality of life. The Plan

was adopted by both the Town and Village in early 2010. The project was funded by an Environmental Protection Fund grant from the NYS Department of State Division of Coastal Resources Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

Several initiatives in the Waterfront Revitalization Plan are relevant to the entire waterfront, including that of Pyrites:

- Identify and work toward the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites on the waterfront by investigating known or potentially contaminated sites.
- Protect important viewsheds and their vantage points.
- Promote sound land management practices that preserve farms, rural character, conserve open space and protect natural resources.
- Update the Town and Village Zoning Regulations to include land management techniques that support the protection of the Grasse River Waterfront.
- Develop land management tools that encourage the clustering of new residential development to maximize the efficiency of land use and protection of natural and scenic resources.
- Protect water resources by adopting land management practices that minimize impacts on waterways, wetlands and riparian areas.
- Enhance boater safety on the Grasse River.
- Expand the land trail network throughout the waterfront corridor.
- Enhance and promote local and regional cycling opportunities.

Specific actions related recommended for Pyrites include:

- Identify and develop new public access boat launches including the informal boat launch in Pyrites on the Pyrites Associates property.
- Improve approach to and create a passive park at the Pyrites Gorge.
- Improve and reopen the playground in Pyrites.

*The Canton Community Action Plan (CCAP) Plan Update (DRAFT).* The Town and Village are just completing CCAP which is an update to the 1998 CCAP. The update is a comprehensive multi-year plan for economic and community development. It identifies twelve distinct objectives, with recommended actions to be accomplished. The Action Plan is intended to serve as a guide to economic and community development activities and to the grant writing and fundraising to be done to accomplish those activities.

*Other Existing Plans*

The Town of Canton has conducted a number of planning and economic development initiatives over the last decade; however, the Town has not developed a new Comprehensive Plan since 1968. The following is a summary of planning initiatives since the first Master Plan.

- Town and Village of Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan (2009) – This 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. This plan is designed to be used in conjunction with an established management program, in hopes of significantly increasing Canton’s ability to attract development activities that will best take advantage of the unique cultural and natural characteristics of their waterfront. This plan also serves to enhance the conservation and protection of natural resources.
- Business Guide and Community Profile for Canton New York: A Historic Community with a Promising Future (2007) – This plan provides a community profile which includes demographics and employer information, discusses the retail market and business climate, provides information on available properties and business resources as well as provides information on the history of Canton and its quality of life.
- Town of Canton: Strategic Planning Initiative (2004) – This plan consolidated and prioritized recommendations from previous studies for the Town and Village of Canton from the previous 40 years. A summary policy matrix includes potential partners, funding sources, and implementation steps.
- Forging Our Future: A Six-year Economic Development Initiative for the Town and Village of Canton (2001) –This report discussed the development climate, described existing economic development initiatives, and provided specific projects for the future.
- Canton Community Action Plan (1998) – This plan identified barriers to community development, suggested strategies to address those barriers, and identified fifty recommendations. The plan is in the process of being updated by the Canton Economic Development Steering Committee.
- Economic Development Planning Report (1993) – This report included a needs assessment survey and identified potential economic development initiatives for the Canton Local Development Corporation.
- Town of Canton Plan (1982) – This plan addressed housing, community facilities, businesses, energy transmission lines, and soils as well as offered a series of goals and planning objectives.
- Canton Town and Village: A Summary of Township Planning and Village Design Report (1976) –This plan summarized a series of five community workshops on population and economics, housing analysis, planning factors in rural Canton, urban design factors in the Village, and Town and Village implementation. Following this plan, a new zoning ordinance was created for the Town.
- The Master Plan – Canton Town and Village (1968) – This plan summarized Canton’s community character, population trends, land use and housing characteristics and provided a capital program for Canton.

## **B. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

Pyrites, a once thriving and self sustaining community has suffered dramatically from the paper mill closing in the 1930s. The hamlet's location, presents challenges for any significant business development due to its relative remoteness. However, its picturesque setting on the Grasse River and recreational assets create an opportunity for housing development. Additional families could result in enough population to support local convenience retail and services in the future.

Blighted properties within the hamlet are impacting its aesthetic appeal. Many of these parcels are located along the Grasse River in what should be a prime real estate location that could yield potential housing and business development. The three largest tracts of land in the hamlet (totaling more than 188 acres) are essentially vacant although one may have some environmental contamination resulting from former mill operations. In addition, there are several smaller vacant parcels that are considered underutilized, some of which could be transformed into infill housing or businesses, ball fields, parks, or other recreational uses. Development potential of these sites, regardless of the brownfield, would likely be hampered by the current appearance of the hamlet.

## **C. BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION & JUSTIFICATION**

The BOA boundary area, as depicted on Map #3, Boundary Map, covers a 266 plus acre area that is focused on three large vacant parcels in Pyrites along the Grasse River and much of the surrounding hamlet area. The Grasse River is an important natural feature meandering through the BOA from south to north. It is the focal point of the Pyrites area making the surrounding properties key to enhancing this area.

There are two main roads that intersect Pyrites, Canton Pyrites Road/Churchill Street and Pink School House Road/Bridge Street. Canton Pyrites Road connects to the hamlet from the north and is comprised of the Pyrites Hydro parcel which commands much of the west side of the road along with several small residential properties. The east side of Canton Pyrites Road is largely comprised of three large properties including the National Grid wooded lots until it intersects with Pink School House Road where several smaller residential parcels exist.

Pink School House Road has many small residential parcels on either side along with several vacant Fire Department owned parcels, St. Paul's Catholic Church and also part of the National Grid parcel. Churchill Street is again a mix of residential properties and vacant wooded parcels. As stated previously, the Fire Department is physically located at the center of the Hamlet and is also the center of community events in the Hamlet.

### **BOA Boundary**

Beginning where County Route 21 (Hermon-Pyrites Road) crosses over the Grasse River, the boundary runs southerly along the west bank of the Grasse River to Bridge Street. At Bridge Street the boundary crosses the Grasse River and continues southerly down the east bank of the



River. The boundary turns easterly at a select property boundary until it reaches Churchill Street. The boundary follows the centerline of Churchill Street to the intersection of Pyrites Russell Road at which point the boundary turns northerly along the centerline of Pyrites Russell Road, then easterly along the centerline of Pink School House Road. At the southeast corner of the National Grid parcel on Pink School House Road, the boundary turns northerly along that parcel property line and the next contiguous parcel's eastern property line until it connects and crosses over Canton Pyrites Road, and reconnecting back with Route 21.

#### **D. VISION STATEMENT, PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS**

The BOA is located partially within the Waterfront Revitalization area boundary of the Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan adopted by the Town and Village in 2010. It is, therefore, important that the vision, planning principals and goals of the Waterfront Plan be reflected in the development of this BOA.

To engage the community in the Town's BOA projects, the Town of Canton held a community workshop on the Village and Pyrites BOAs in June 2010 that, among other topics, discussed the Vision for the Brownfield Opportunity Area. At this meeting, workshop participants confirmed that the Vision Statement and Planning Principles from the Waterfront Revitalization Plan should be applied to the BOA. In addition, the Town Board held its monthly meeting in Pyrites (normally held in the Village of Canton) to discuss the Pyrites BOA and gauge community interest in the project. The following is the "vision" and a set of goals for the BOA based on public input from these public meetings and the Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

##### *Vision Statement*

*Pyrites is a picturesque, vibrant hamlet nestled on the banks of the Grasse River. It is a mix of homes, community services and locally supported small businesses. The Grasse River is a richly diverse, healthy ecosystem that winds its way through the hamlet providing natural beauty and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. The river's power continues to be a renewable source of energy.*

##### *Goals*

The Town of Canton considers its BOA Program to be critically important in meeting the community's vision for the future. The goals of the Pyrites BOA include the following:

- *Create new housing opportunities and revitalize and improve the existing housing stock;*
- *Initiate streetscape improvements including lighting, signage and sidewalks to promote a sense of place, increase safety and improve the appearance of the hamlet;*
- *Revitalize and strengthen the local economy by encouraging the development and redevelopment of underutilized and brownfield properties into an appropriate mix of uses including housing and convenience businesses for local residents;*

- *Protect the shoreline and the natural resources that comprise the Grasse River and its eco-system;*
- *Maximize public access and enjoyment of the Grasse River through park, boat launch and trail development;*
- *Increase the value of the shoreline properties, thereby encouraging economic growth and development;*
- *Enhance community development thorough more community identity, organization and interaction; and*
- *Celebrate the rich history of Pyrites through interpretation and preservation.*

## **E. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES AND PROCESS**

Community participation in developing the BOA began during the development of the Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan adopted by both the Town and Village in early 2010. As stated previously, the BOA is located partially within the boundary of the Waterfront Plan. As part of developing that plan, a visioning workshop was held which introduced both the Waterfront Plan and the BOA projects and included a highly interactive discussion about the desired future for the Grasse River waterfront. Following that workshop there were two sets of focus group discussions held on different topics relevant to both the Waterfront Plan and the BOA including economic development and tourism, open space and natural resource protection, recreation and historic preservation. A survey was mailed to all property owners on the Grasse River to gain information regarding their future plans and input on some of the possible projects and strategies for the waterfront going forward. Finally, there was a public meeting to present and discuss the draft Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

In order to ensure that the vision, planning principles and goals of the Waterfront Revitalization Plan were in concert with the vision and goals for the Pyrites BOA, as previously described, a town-wide community workshop was held by the BOA Advisory Committee at Town Hall (located in the Village) to inform residents about the BOA and as a follow-up, the Town held its monthly Town Board meeting in Pyrites (usually held in the Village of Canton) with a presentation and discussion of the proposed Pyrites BOA Program. The project concept was received with enthusiastic and positive.

Following the development of the Draft Pre-Nomination Study by the BOA Advisory Committee, the Town once again held its Town Board meeting (March 12, 2012) in Pyrites with a presentation of the draft Pre-Nomination Study to the community and Town Board. The Study and its preliminary recommendations were well-received.

**SECTION II:  
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY  
AREA**

## **A. EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING**

### *Land Use*

As illustrated on Map #4, Land Use, in this study, the hamlet of Pyrites is located in the southern portion of the Town along the Grasse River. There is a mix of mostly residential uses and vacant land intermingled throughout the study area. Residential uses are dispersed throughout the BOA, with the majority being concentrated along Canton Pyrites Road, Pink School House Road and Churchill Street.

There are five community services parcels within the BOA, St. Paul's Catholic Church on Pink School House Road, the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Department located at the corner of Bridge Street and Churchill Street and three other Fire Department owned parcels on Pink School House Road.

Public Services located within the BOA are the lands owned by Pyrites Associates which is a hydro-electric generation facility located on both banks of the Grasse River, abutting Canton Pyrites Road and another key vacant parcel on Canton Pyrites Road, owned by National Grid.

The Pyrites Associates (Pyrites Hydro) property described above is currently being used as an informal boat launch available to the public as permitted by the owners. The launch is located on County Route 21 at the bridge crossing the River. This is presently the only boat access to the River in the hamlet.

Vacant parcels are scattered throughout the BOA with the largest parcel owned by National Grid located on either side of Pink School House Road at the corner of Pyrites Russell Road and continuing northerly on the east side of Canton Pyrites Road. There is a cluster of parcels located between the east side of the Grasse River and west side of Churchill Street, as well as another cluster owned by the Fire Department on the south side of Pink School House Road.

Below is a summary of the acreage within the Brownfield Opportunity Area for each of the land use categories depicted on the Land Use Map.

<b>Table 4: Land Use Distribution in Brownfield Opportunity Area</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>% of BOA Land Area</b>
<b>Community</b>	1.69	.6%
<b>Public Services</b>	86	32.3%
<b>Residential</b>	20.52	7.7%
<b>Vacant Land</b>	158.02	59.3%
<b>Total Land</b>	266.23	100%

*Source: St. Lawrence County Office of Real Property & Tax Services*

### ***Zoning and other Land Use Regulations***

The Town of Canton has zoning and other land management tools. The Zoning Law can be found in Chapter 70 of the Town Code and was last updated in 2006. The Pyrites Brownfield Opportunity Area is predominantly zoned “Hamlet” with a small area zoned “Rural” as illustrated on Map #5, Zoning Map, included in this Study. The Hamlet District allows for a mix of homes and small business in the crossroads hamlet area. Permitted uses include one and two family dwellings and mobile homes by right and a number of commercial and additional residential uses by special permit such as multiple family dwellings, mobile home parks, camping, agricultural structures/uses, retail, restaurant and services uses. The minimum lot size is one-half acre. This zoning designation as presently classified would likely allow for the mix of uses ideally envisioned for the hamlet.

The Rural District is intended to delineate agricultural, rural, and open space areas and to provide for compatible growth while maintaining the rural character of the area. Permitted uses include agricultural and agri-business, one and two family dwellings and mobile homes by right. By special permit, the uses permitted are home occupations, airports, camping, small rural businesses, mobile home parks, multiple family dwellings, kennels and animal hospitals, institutional and recreation facilities, transfer stations and junkyards. The minimum lot size is one acre for the area.

In addition to these zoning parameters, the Town requires Site Plan approval for nonresidential development. The subdivision of land is regulated in Chapter 56 of the Town Code and floodplain management is provided in Chapter 29.

The Canton Grasse River Waterfront Revitalization Plan recommended that the Town update its zoning to include a Waterfront Development Overlay District that would include the Pyrites waterfront to encourage river access and trail development as part of new development and protection of the Grasse River from adverse development impacts. Furthermore, it was recommended that the Town update its subdivision regulations to incorporate the promotion of Conservation Design Subdivisions which allow for more flexible subdivision development when land is conserved and developable lots are clustered.

## **B. BROWNFIELD, ABANDONED AND UNDERUTILIZED SITES**

The study area contains many sites that if enhanced or developed to their greater potential, would help revitalize Pyrites. However, three key sites, comprising more than 188 acres, are considered critical to revitalization. All three are vacant and brownfields. The following is a general description of the sites in each category.

<b>Table 5: Brownfield, Abandoned and Underutilized Sites</b>				
<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Parcels</b>		<b>Acres</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Brownfield	3	20%	188.3	77.2%
Vacant or Underutilized	11	80%	55.56	22.8%
Totals	14		243.86 Acres	

### **Brownfield Sites Vacant or Underutilized Sites**

As stated previously there are three rather large sites within the BOA boundary that are considered brownfield, vacant or underutilized.

- The Pyrites Associates site is an 80 acre parcel located along the Grasse River that is currently a public service use. This parcel is mainly a wooded vacant lot with the Pyrites dam located at the southern end of the parcel. This parcel was once the site of a paper mill, and as such there are abandoned foundations dispersed throughout the site that may have some environmental contamination. At the northern end of the property, is an informal boat launch where the public is permitted to put in and head down river. It is a beautiful location for a boat launch, however, there is currently no place to park and only an informal path to the River.
- The two National Grid sites total 108 acres and are vacant, wooded parcels with multiple foundations nested in the woods. These parcels may have some environmental contamination as they too were once the site of the paper mills. The larger lot is split by Pink School House Road. The section of the parcel located on the south side of Pink School House Road contains a gravel pit and is otherwise a wooded vacant lot. As observed on the USGS slope map, the terrain on this large parcel varies from rather flat to that of relatively steep slope.

**Table 6: Brownfield and Underutilized Sites Summary Descriptions**

Number on map	Location	Owner	Lot Size in acres	Land Use	Property Description
<b>1</b>	Cr 21	David White	36.9	Res Vacant Land	Vacant wooded lot, located on a main road (Route 21A).
<b>2</b>	120 Cr 21	Pyrites Associates	80.3	Electric Power Generation Facility - Hydro	Former mill site, mostly vacant lot with old foundations. Entire length of the parcel borders the Grasse River. Currently used as a hydroelectric power plant.
<b>3</b>	Cr 21	Niagara Mohawk Power Corp	5.7	Electric Transmission Improvement	Vacant wooded lot located across Route 21A from the Pyrites Associates parcel.
<b>4 &amp; 5</b>	Cr 21	Niagara Mohawk Power Corp	102.3	Public Utility Vacant Land	Undeveloped wooded lot.
<b>6</b>	Pink School House Rd	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	1.1	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Undeveloped wooded lot.
<b>7</b>	Churchill St	Joseph Coffey	1	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Vacant wooded lot bordered by the Grasse River on the west side of the parcel.
<b>8</b>	Churchill St	Joseph Coffey	8.55	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Vacant wooded lot bordered by the Grasse River on the west side of the parcel.
<b>9</b>	Off Russell Rd	Pyrites Timothy Coffey	3.7	Residential Land Including Small Improvement	Vacant wooded lot.
<b>10</b>	Pink School House Rd	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	.5	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Undeveloped wooded lot.
<b>11</b>	Pink School House Rd	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	.31	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Undeveloped wooded lot.
<b>12</b>	Pink School House Rd	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	.34	Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Undeveloped wooded lot.
<b>13</b>	23 Churchill St	Lee Matthews	2.7	One Family Residential	Single-family two-story home on a stone foundation with a covered porch and vinyl exterior siding and drywall interior walls. In addition, there are two sheds and a garage, totaling 192 square feet on the property.
<b>14</b>	Cr 21	Town of Canton	.46	314 Rural Vacant Lots of 10 Acres or less	Vacant wooded lot located on the Grasse River at the intersection of Pink School House Road and Churchill Street.

## **C. LAND OWNERSHIP**

Within the BOA boundary area there are both private and publically owned properties, although all but three acres of the 266 acres of land are privately owned, of which parcel #7 and #8 have the same owner. Much of the privately owned acreage within the boundary is land owned by either National Grid (108 acres) or Pyrites Associates (80 acres). There are 6 parcels that are publically owned, one by the Town of Canton and the other five by the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept, although those five parcels make up less than 3 acres of the land within the BOA boundary.

<b>Table 7: Land Ownership</b>	
<b>Land Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Total Public Land	3
Town and Village of Canton or Other	3
St Lawrence County	0
Federal	0
Total Private land	266
Publicly owned sites within the boundary	6 sites
Privately owned sites within the boundary	57 sites
Roadways and right-of-ways	9.7

## **D. NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Grasse River Runs through the Hamlet of Pyrites and subsequently through the Brownfield Opportunity Area. Approximately 19 miles of the Grasse River is located in the Town of Canton. At its highest point in the Adirondacks, it is 2,350 feet above sea level. The River originates in St. Lawrence County and flows from the Town of Russell to Pyrites, and through the Village of Canton past the Hamlet of Morley, into the Town of Madrid and then on to Massena where the Grasse flows into the St. Lawrence River. One of the River's two dams is located in Pyrites, within the BOA study area. The other dam is in Madrid. The Grasse River is fairly shallow – anywhere from 3 to 12 feet deep – and is especially shallow in the summer months when passage by kayak can be nearly impossible. The Little River is a tributary of the Grasse River located just to the west of the BOA boundary.

The Grasse River is utilized for small water craft recreational uses such as canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Fishing is a prevalent activity on the River. Anglers can find muskies, small mouth bass and walleyes among other fish species (see below section on NYS significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat). Anglers fish by floating with the current or wading in shallow areas, particularly below dams and falls.

Regarding water quality of the Grasse River, the NYS DEC classifies the quality of New York State streams using a New York State Stream Classification and Usage System. DEC has classified the waters of the Grasse River in from the southern boundary of the Town of Canton to Miner Street (the Pyrites BOA segment) as Class B. It turns to Class A from Miner Street to US



Route 11 and then returns to Class B from Route 11 to the Town's northern border. Class A waters can be a source of water supply for drinking, culinary and food processing purposes and are suitable for primary contact (swimming, diving etc), secondary contact (boating and fishing and fish propagation and survival. It should be noted that this classification may be given to waters which are treated to meet New York State Department of Health drinking water standards. Class B waters are suitable for primary and secondary contact and fish propagation and survival. NYS DEC is in the process of updating the water classification of the Grasse River based on recent testing. According to the St. Lawrence County Department of Soil and Water Conservation, the current classifications are not expected to change.

It should be noted that upstream, from Madrid to Massena, the Grasse River has been listed on the NYS DEC Priority Waterbodies List (Water Index No. SL-2 (portion 2) as potentially experiencing "minor impacts" from "nutrients" that could be derived from the Village of Canton Waste Water Treatment Plant, amongst other contributors, such as agricultural runoff from dairy farms and failing and/or inadequate on-site septic systems.

### **NYS Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

The wildlife and fish species found in and along the Grasse River are some of the greatest natural assets of the Grasse River and must be protected from any future redevelopment impacts. The Grasse River supports cool and warm water fish populations including Bullhead, Lake Sturgeon, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge and Northern Pike.

According to the New York Natural Heritage Program database from DEC, there are no endangered plant species within the vicinity of the BOA, however, downstream closer to the Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area in Canton there is one endangered animal species, two threatened plant species and three threatened animal species in the Grasse River corridor.

### **Wetlands**

There are known federally designated wetlands on sites 4, 5, 8 and 13. There are no New York State designated wetlands.

### **Topography and Geology**

The topography and geology of St. Lawrence County is largely derived from glaciation which ended with the Wisconsin Glaciation only 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. According to the Soil Survey for St. Lawrence County<sup>2</sup>, the Wisconsin Glacier scoured and abraded the terrain and then deposited various thicknesses of till directly from the ice and stratified materials from the associated meltwater. The glacier significantly modified the surface expression of the County. St. Lawrence County is comprised of two geographic regions, the northern three-fifths of the County (including Canton) is in the St. Lawrence Lowlands and the southern two-fifths, in the Adirondack Mountains. There are four major river systems that drain the County including the

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<sup>2</sup> The Soil Survey of St. Lawrence County, New York (2005) by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with Cornell University.

Oswegatchie, Grasse, Racquette and St. Regis Rivers. All four rivers flow to the St. Lawrence River.

### *Surface Geology*

A Surficial Geology Map included in the study indicates the sediment deposits for Canton in the BOA. Within the BOA, and particularly the Grasse River and its banks, the sediment that has accumulated is largely comprised of alluvium. Alluvium is soil or sediments deposited by a river and are typically made up of a variety of materials including fine particles of silt and clay and larger particles of sand and gravel; undifferentiated marine and lacustrine silt and clay deposits which contain marine shells, whale and seal fossils (deposited by the Atlantic Ocean which flooded the St. Lawrence Lowlands as the Champlain Sea) and lacustrine silt and clay (deposits created by a lake which covered the region after the ice melt); till, which are glacial sediments varying from clays to mixtures of clay, sand, gravel and boulders; and lacustrine delta which is an accumulation of alluvium laid down where rivers flow into lakes and the water movement slows and with it the water's capacity to carry sediments and the sediments are deposited. Alluvial soils tend to be more compact, and therefore have a higher bearing capacity for building than some other soils. However, these soils tend to be high in water content, and need to be treated in order to prevent sliding from occurring. These soils are used more for gardening than development and construction.

### *Soils*

In general terms, the soils within the BOA boundary may have some limitations for development due to low moisture holding capacity. This must be taken into account when considering certain areas/parcels for future development.

Within the BOA study area there is one general soil map unit, the Adams-Croghan series.<sup>3</sup> This series is comprised of very deep, excessively drained to moderately well drained, sandy soils formed in deltaic deposits on sand plains. These soils are poorly suited to cultivated crops or hay because of low moisture holding capacity and droughtiness, therefore more suitable for trees. If these soils are on a site for community development, caving in is possible and therefore before any major excavation, cutbacks need to be shored up and buttressed to prevent cave-ins.

### *Steep Slopes*

Within the BOA there are areas with slopes of 15% or more directly adjacent to the Grasse River in several locations. These areas are located all along the east bank of the Grasse River, excluding the southern tip of the BOA area. There are also steep slope areas on either side of Canton Pyrites Road and north of Pink School House Road in the vacant National Grid parcel. See the USGS Geological Survey Map in this study for exact elevations and locations.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## **Flooding and Erosion**

The National Flood Insurance Program Flood Insurance Rate Maps, provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency indicate that the Grasse River channel and floodway is a special flood hazard (Zone A and AE). See Map #8 Floodplain Map in this document for floodplain delineation.

Zone A and AE is defined as areas that will be inundated by the one percent annual chance flood (the one hundred year floodplain). Zone A indicates that no base flood elevation have been determined (the water surface is the base flood elevation). Zone AE indicates that there is a measurable base flood elevation. Zones A and AE require mandatory flood insurance. As Map #8 illustrates, several properties on Churchill Street and Pink School House Road are in the one hundred year floodplain.

Natural erosion on the banks of the Grasse River exists, however, the St. Lawrence County Department of Soil and Water Conservation, which regularly monitors the Grasse River, has identified no areas of particular concern.

## **E. SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Underutilized, abandoned and blighted sites are affecting the economic climate of Pyrites. Many of these sites have potential as they are located on the Grasse River waterfront. With proper remediation and improvement, these sites could be utilized to their greater potential creating new housing options for existing and prospective residents, recreation areas and convenience retail and services for local residents.

Pyrites relies on septic systems and wells for sewer and water which must be factored into development considerations. Roadways are generally in good condition with low traffic volumes. Pedestrian streetscape amenities such as sidewalks and lighting do not exist in the hamlet creating a less than favorable pedestrian atmosphere despite the hamlet scale of the area.

Current land uses and likely uses going forward are permitted within the Town's zoning. The Waterfront Revitalization Plan recommends that the Town's zoning be updated to better protect the Grasse River from development impacts, incorporate public access into future waterfront development and encourage the use of conservation design subdivision in housing developments.

Currently there is no formal public access (boat launch, park or trails) on the Grasse River in Pyrites. One of the obstacles to such development is that nearly the entire waterfront is privately owned. Therefore, partnering with private property owners or acquiring lands for public use will be necessary to create public access to the Grasse River.

## **Preliminary Recommendations**

Based on the preliminary analysis of existing conditions within the BOA, the surrounding community and the Town of Canton, the following are preliminary recommendations for furthering development and revitalization in Pyrites:

**Goal 1: Create new housing opportunities and revitalize and improve the existing housing stock.**

Recommendation: Undertake an in-depth housing analysis to gain a greater understanding of current market potential for new housing development on portions of the three large vacant parcels owned by Pyrites Associates and National Grid.

Recommendation: Based on findings of a housing market study, commission a housing development plan for a target area in Pyrites to market to real estate developers.

Recommendation: Identify strategies to work with property owners to improve residential properties including obtaining grants for housing rehabilitation and sponsoring a manufactured home replacement program.

Recommendation: Develop a strategy to utilize funds previously received from a NYS Department of Housing and Community Renewal HOME grant to improve and upgrade the existing housing stock through window replacement, lead paint removal, etc.

**Goal 2: Maximize public access and enjoyment of the Grasse River through park, boat launch and trail development in Pyrites.**

Recommendation: Develop a Waterfront Recreation Access Plan to further the Grasse River Waterfront Plan “blueway trail” concept establishing waterfront recreational opportunities which may include a waterfront park or boat launch area (see below) and a waterfront trail.

Recommendation: Partner with Pyrites Associates (Site #2) to secure formal public access to the River and Pyrites Gorge. This site is presently used informally by the public as canoe launch site.

**Goal 3: Protect the shoreline and the natural resources that comprise the Grasse River and its eco-system.**

Recommendation: Identify land management tools to protect and maintain the natural beauty of the Grasse River shoreline as an important viewshed from the vantage point of the Grasse River.

**Goal 4: Revitalize and strengthen the local economy by encouraging the development and redevelopment of underutilized and brownfield properties into an appropriate mix of uses including housing and convenience businesses for local residents.**

Recommendation: Partner with Pyrites Associates and National Grid to conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments on suspected brownfield sites.

Recommendation: Identify a potential use for the vacant Town-owned parcel on the River.

Recommendation: Identify possible infill sites for future commercial development.

**Goal 5: Enhance community development thorough more community identity, organization and interaction.**

Recommendation: Meet with local community members and organizations such as the Fire Department to identify community-related activities, programs and potential places to gather. The Fire Department is currently the focal community organization and the owner of several parcels within the boundary. As such, the Fire Department would be a starting place for additional community development from a programmatic stand point and also physical gathering spaces.

**Goal 6: Initiate streetscape improvements including lighting, signage and sidewalks to promote a sense of place, increase safety and improve the appearance of the hamlet.**

Recommendation: Develop a Streetscape Master Plan that addresses pedestrian amenities and hamlet character enhancements such as sidewalks, lighting and signage.

**SECTION III:  
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION SHEETS**

**Town of Canton - Pyrites BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 4& 5

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.002-1-1.1	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	Foundations only
<b>Owner</b>	Niagara Mohawk Power Corp	<b>Property Class</b>	Public Utility Vacant Land
<b>Property Address</b>	Cr 21	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet and Rural
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	102.6
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Vacant

**Property Description:** Vacant wooded lot with industrial foundations and concrete staircase to foundations.

**Environmental History:** A portion of this site was the paper mill – an industrial use which may have contamination.

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No  
Hazardous waste generating databases? No  
NYSDEC Spill event site? No  
Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? Assumed as former industrial site.  
Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No  
Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No  
Help implement BOA vision? Yes  
Strategic or high profile location? Yes  
Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes  
Condition of existing structures: N/A  
Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 2

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.002-1-1.21	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	Foundation only
<b>Owner</b>	Pyrites Associates	<b>Property Class</b>	Electric Power Generation Facility - Hydro
<b>Property Address</b>	120 CR 21	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	80.3
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Vacant

**Property Description:** Vacant wooded lot located along the Grasse River

**Environmental History:** Electric generating plants often contain hazardous materials such as asbestos insulation and toxic chemicals used in the normal operation of plants.

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? Yes, within WRP boundary

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? Yes

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No





**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 1

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	102.004-1-25.111	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	David White	<b>Property Class</b>	Residential Vacant Land
<b>Property Address</b>	CR 21	<b>Zoning</b>	Rural
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	36.9
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Vacant lot

**Property Description:** vacant wooded lot with 15 acres of pasture land and 21.9 acres of wasteland.

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? No

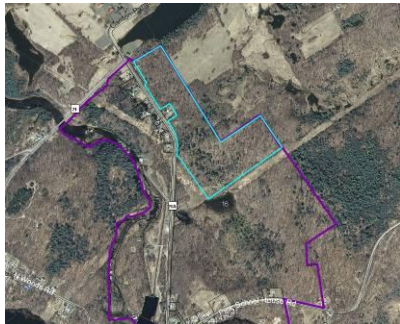
Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 3

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	102.004-1-25.2	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	Foundations only
<b>Owner</b>	Niagara Mohawk Power Corp	<b>Property Class</b>	Electric Transmission Improvement
<b>Property Address</b>	Cr 21	<b>Zoning</b>	Rural
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	5.7
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Undeveloped land

**Property Description:** Vacant wooded lot with foundation remains from paper mill facilities.

**Environmental History:** This site was the former location of some of the paper mill facilities.

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? Assumed as a former industrial site.

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location?

Waterfront access? No

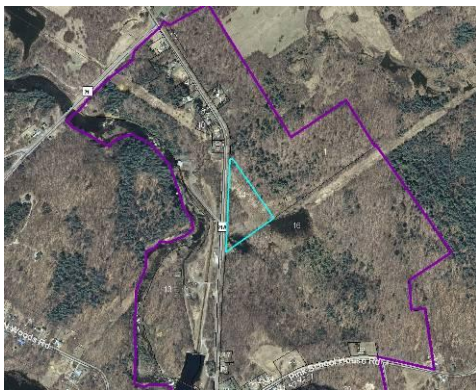
Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 6

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-2-8	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Pink School House Rd	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	1.1
<b>Ownership</b>	Public	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Undeveloped land

**Property Description:** Vacant wooded lot

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location?

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



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Parcel # 7

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-3-20	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Joseph Coffey	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Churchill St	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	1
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Undeveloped land

**Property Description:** Vacant wooded lot bordering the Grasse River on the west side of the property.

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? Yes, within WRP Boundary

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? Yes

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No





**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 8

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.033-2-18	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Joseph Coffey	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural Vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Churchill St	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	8.55
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Undeveloped pasture land

**Property Description:** Wooded lot bordering the Grasse River on the west side of the property.

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? Yes, within WRP Boundary

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? Yes

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



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Parcel # 9

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.002-1-3	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	Yes – storage structure
<b>Owner</b>	Timothy Coffey	<b>Property Class</b>	Residential land including small improvement
<b>Property Address</b>	Off Pyrites Russell Rd	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	3.7
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Unused wooded lot with a structure

**Property Description:** Property consists of vacant wasteland

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? No

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: No

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



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Parcel # 10

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-2-9	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Pink School House Rd	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	.5
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Wooded lot

**Property Description:** Wooded lot owned by the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Department

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 11

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-2-10	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Pink School House Rd	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	.31
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Wooded lot

**Property Description:** Wooded lot owned by the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Department

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No





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Parcel # 12

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-2-11	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	None
<b>Owner</b>	Pyrites Volunteer Fire Dept	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Pink School House Rd	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	.34
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	N/A	<b>Square Footage</b>	N/A

**Use Status:** Wooded lot

**Property Description:** Wooded lot owned by the Pyrites Volunteer Fire Department

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 13

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-2-19	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	2 Story
<b>Owner</b>	Lee Matthews	<b>Property Class</b>	One Family Residential
<b>Property Address</b>	23 Churchill St	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	2.7
<b>Ownership</b>	Private	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>	1900	<b>Square Footage</b>	1440, 192

**Use Status:** Single family (for sale)

**Property Description:** This is a 2.7 acre lot that contains a two-story stone foundation house with a covered porch with vinyl exterior siding and drywall interior walls. In addition, there are two sheds and a garage, totaling 192 square feet on the property.

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? No

Help implement BOA vision? No

Strategic or high profile location? No

Waterfront access? No

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: Fair

Existence of sewer and water: No



**Town and Village of Canton BOA Pre-Nomination Study**

Parcel # 14

**Descriptive Profile of Brownfield and Underutilized Properties**

<b>Tax Map Information</b>	117.025-3-19	<b>Existing Buildings</b>	
<b>Owner</b>	Town of Canton	<b>Property Class</b>	Rural vacant lots of 10 acres or less
<b>Property Address</b>	Cr 21	<b>Zoning</b>	Hamlet
<b>Municipality</b>	Canton	<b>Acres</b>	.46
<b>Ownership</b>	Public	<b>Site Visit</b>	11/29/11
<b>Foreclosure List</b>		<b>Historic District</b>	No
<b>Year Built</b>		<b>Square Footage</b>	

**Use Status:** Vacant parcel potential

**Property Description:** Small vacant parcel located on the Grasse River at the intersection of Churchill St and Pink School House Rd.

**Environmental History:** None

**Priority Ranking Criteria:**

**Land Use History**

Registered PBS facility? No

Hazardous waste generating databases? No

NYSDEC Spill event site? No

Historic/Anecdotal evidence of waste, tanks, contamination? No

Dry cleaner, gas or service station? No

Previous environmental investigations? No

**Planning Criteria**

Priority in a plan? Yes

Help implement BOA vision? Yes

Strategic or high profile location? Yes

Waterfront access? Yes

Impact on surroundings: None

**Infrastructure Criteria**

Road Accessibility: Yes

Condition of existing structures: N/A

Existence of sewer and water: No



## **MAPS**

Map 1 - Community Context Map  
Map 2 - Study Area Context Map  
Map 3 - Boundary Map  
Map 4 - Land Use Map  
Map 5 - Zoning Map  
Map 6 - Brownfield, Vacant, Underutilized Map  
Map 7 - Land Ownership Map  
Map 8 - Floodzones Map  
Map 9 - Surface Geology Map  
Map 10 - USGS Geological Survey Map