

# DRAFT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

---



## ***Purpose of the Community Participation Plan***

---

A successful planning effort requires an inclusive public outreach process. The need for this is two fold: (1) it engages the community in the planning process; and (2) it ensures that the City's officials and the consultant team will have a clear understanding of those issues that are of concern to City's residents and stakeholders.

This document presents a plan to involve the City's stakeholders, residents and business owners in the formulation of the Fulton Nomination Study as part of the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program. The proposed plan is designed to engage the interest and participation of a broad cross-section of the community throughout the planning process. The resulting Nomination Study will suggest actions to be funded under a future grant application. This proposed plan is consistent with the requirements of the New York State Department of State (DOS) and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regarding public involvement in the planning process and environmental evaluation of the Study Area.

The necessary steps for a successful community outreach process are identified herein, and the Laberge Team will work to ensure that all

available public outreach methods are exercised as part of the Nomination Study. These steps, which are discussed in more detail, include: identifying and maintaining a community partners database, conducting interviews, public workshops and a strategic marketing effort to educate the public and partners of the BOA process and findings.

A successful Community Participation Plan will continue even after the BOA study is complete, as contacts and partnerships formed during the process will continue to carry out the goals and recommendations of the study.

The following elements comprise the Community Participation Plan for the City of Fulton BOA Nomination Study:

- Creation of the Fulton BOA Steering Committee;
- Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups;
- Stakeholder Seminars;
- Resident & Business Surveys;
- Interviews with Major Employers;
- Public Workshops;
- Public Hearings; and
- Marketing & Promotion.

## ***Objectives for Public Involvement***

The community participation plan is set forth with the following objectives:

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

### ***Fulton BOA Steering Committee***

An important element to the BOA Nomination Study is the Fulton BOA Steering Committee. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to represent a variety of community interests, as well as guide the preparation of the BOA Nomination Study. The Steering Committee will have clearly defined objectives and

responsibilities for each element of the community participation process.

The Fulton BOA Steering Committee consists of representatives from the County of Oswego, City of Fulton, and local Legislators. New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) will attend meetings and offer guidance to the Fulton BOA Steering Committee.

With assistance from the Steering Committee, a community contacts database will be developed consisting of all potential partners. Those identified may include property owners, local developers, major employers, business owners, residents, community groups and governmental agencies. The comprehensive contact database will include names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of each identified community partner. The database will be used to advance the recommendations of the Fulton BOA program. All contacts will be regularly updated of the process and any future meetings via email or best-determined method.

The Steering Committee's role is to be:

- **Informative:** The "Eyes & Ears" of the community and representatives of specific issues and constituencies in the City and County. The Fulton BOA Steering Committee will share their knowledge to ensure the Study and process reflects the community's needs. The Steering Committee will be the "Local Sounding Board" to build consensus and generate ideas.
- **Consultative:** Experienced in the community and knowledgeable about their particular area of expertise, each Committee member is well qualified to make informed recommendations to reflect the vision of the

community. The Committee will review and provide constructive input to build a plan reflective of the community's needs.

- **Cooperative:** The Committee will work to demystify the process and foster recommendations developed through cooperation. As such, members will set the stage for active implementation and cooperation. Successful BOA program implementation will be achieved through cooperative efforts of the Steering Committee with the identified partners to advance the revitalization efforts of the City's brownfield properties.

### ***Oswego County Community Brownfield Advisory Group***

The Community Brownfield Advisory Group (CBAG) will be overseeing multiple brownfield initiatives throughout the County. In addition, the CBAG will provide insight and assistance with securing strategic partnerships to advance the BOA process.

A liaison from the County's CBAG will serve on the Fulton BOA Steering Committee to ensure information sharing. This member will also update the CBAG as to the progress and findings of the Fulton BOA Steering Committee. CBAG shall be invited the Fulton BOA Steering Committee meetings and all public workshops.

### ***Community Participation & Outreach Strategy***

---

The consultant team will assist the Steering Committee with the related Nomination Study community meetings and will seek input from stakeholders as follows:

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

- Advertisement for local newsletters
- Invitations to major employers, neighbors, schools and/or stakeholders
- Announcement flyers
- Comment mailers
- Press releases
- Project website updates

The Laberge Team will conduct interviews with project area stakeholders. The Laberge Team will solicit the Steering Committee for a list of suggested individuals to be interviewed. The Laberge Team will distribute the list of questions to interviewees in advance of the interviews. This will give interviewees time to consider and refine their responses. A letter to the targeted individuals with both a pre-mailing and a follow-up courtesy phone call are suggested mediums. Potential questions include the following:

- What is your vision for revitalization of the study area?
- What opportunities for redevelopment do you see, and what will the benefits be?
- What infrastructure improvements (such as streets, sidewalks, utilities, etc...) are needed in your opinion to accommodate your role and the revitalization as a whole?
- What are the needs for and types of public/private partnerships to further remediation and redevelopment?
- What project or improvement will encourage you stay in the neighborhood, or will help you to grow and maintain your business?
- Do you see a need/opportunity for new housing projects?
- How do you feel the BOA project can best improve the economic state of the City of Fulton?
- Do you see a need/opportunity to improve recreational facilities/parks?

- What do you feel is lacking in the City and how would its presence serve as a benefit to the community?

The consultant team will assist the Steering Committee in hosting community meetings as follows:

- All meetings will be held in a public space, centrally located in the City of Fulton or the Study Area.
- The Laberge Team will provide (as may be appropriate) agendas, mapping, graphic pens, markers, note pads, tracing paper and a projector for use in the workshops. A PowerPoint presentation will be provided for each of the community workshops. All materials will be made available for posting as links on the County's webpage.
- Space rental, refreshments, and any supplemental transportation provided for the public workshops will be the responsibility of the County and/or City.
- In addition to formal public workshops, the public should be encouraged to attend the Steering Committee meetings. Attending public shall be permitted to provide comment during a designated time on topics related to the meetings discussion. Meeting notices and agendas will be provided to County for placement on the County's website.

The outreach effort for public workshops should include the following:

- Promote an understanding of the BOA program, provide information on the proposed project schedule, and promote upcoming community workshops. Coverage should include the County's contact information regarding participation (i.e., what can residents, businesses, and stakeholders do to participate).

- Coverage should also include the venues the public can utilize in order to stay informed of progress through:
  - Newspaper and web coverage
  - Libraries
  - Local businesses
  - Local organizations and community groups
  - County's website
  - Flyers posted in schools, churches, stores, etc...
- Web-based information will be a key component to public outreach. The Laberge Team will provide text and graphics for the County's use in establishing and updating the website.
- Long-term outreach can be initiated by generating a computerized mailing list to any organization within the project area (or regional organizations with an interest in the outcome). Organizations to be added to the list should include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Churches
  - Schools
  - Senior organizations
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Civic Groups
  - Local and Regional Community Development Groups
  - Educational School System
  - Banks and Financial Institutions
  - Major Employers
  - Real Estate Developers and Agents
  - Small Businesses
  - Youth Groups and Organizations
  - Professionals (Lawyers, Attorney's, Architects, etc.)
  - Other organizations identified by the Steering Committee.

- The list should include the name and address of every parcel owner within the BOA Study Area.
- Articles and editorials by local stakeholders should be encouraged in advance of each workshop. These articles should provide background on the issues being considered, outline opportunities for written and verbal participation, and indicate where technical and other background information can be viewed by the public.
- Public workshops should be promoted as community events and should be targeted for convenient evenings. If possible, workshops should not coincide with other events in the area.
- Each workshop must have clear objectives. Each workshop should begin with a 15-20 minute presentation, aided by PowerPoint slideshows, that explains the context of the area, provides information and planning trends that may serve as revitalization tools, and sets forth questions and issues. The presentation will be done through visual means and will include speakers, panel discussions, or some combination. Depending upon the level of attendance, break out sessions should be programmed with groups of 8-10 individuals in order to conduct dialogue, engage individuals, and develop consensus. Each group will have one member of the Steering Committee available to write down group priorities and identify points of disagreement to be addressed as the process continues.
- Workshop notes from flipcharts will be compiled and included in follow-up summaries prepared by the Laberge Team and will be available for public review and comment.

Upon completion of the participation plan outlined above, and preceding the official

Nomination Adoption Process, public displays for City Hall and the Fulton Public Library should be reproduced to explain the evolution of Study Area plans and the planning process. The intent is to clearly illustrate to the public that the revitalization strategy is grounded in public support, realistic, and marketable.

### ***Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups***

Key community stakeholders identified by the Fulton BOA Steering Committee and will be selected for individual interviews to further discuss the BOA Nomination Study. Stakeholder interviews will allow for consensus building on important topics and issues related to brownfields and redevelopment in the area.

Stakeholders with common interests, such as downtown business owners and community groups may alternatively be invited to a focus group roundtable. Roundtables allow an interactive group discussion on specific or focused topics.

Potential topics to be discussed with stakeholders include waterfront redevelopment, potential housing and mixed-use development, conversion of current sites to open space and recreational uses, and inhibitions related to redevelopment in the City of Fulton. These discussions will focus on identifying all positive and negative perceptions surrounding each topic and identifying ways to eliminate the negative perceptions.

### ***Stakeholder Seminars***

Utilization of New York State and federal brownfield redevelopment tools and the tasks associated with the development of the Nomination Study will require that the project stakeholders develop an intimate knowledge of the Study Area, an ability to identify and locate

necessary information and a keen awareness of the regulatory and legislative environment. Key community stakeholders and potential partners identified by the Fulton BOA Steering Committee will be solicited for participation in three interactive and educational stakeholder seminars. Examples of such stakeholders could include local, Oswego County, or State organizations, business owners, not-for-profit organizations, schools, and property owners.

These seminars will be used to gather the views and opinions of stakeholders to assist in identifying key development issues. In addition, these Stakeholder Seminars will serve to educate the stakeholders regarding the purpose and intent of the BOA program, the benefits afforded by the BOA designation, and the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the success and implementation of the BOA.

The sessions and topics to be addressed will correspond chronologically with the components of the Study where such information will be critical to completion of the various tasks. From project initiation to completion there will need to be many public/private partnerships fostered to facilitate funding, permitting, and remediation. All community stakeholders should be knowledgeable of the entire process and have the ability to coordinate resources when and where appropriate based upon project needs and timeline. These seminars will be used to inform and update all potential partners to advance the City of Fulton's BOA program.

### ***Resident and Business Surveys***

All residents and stakeholders will have an opportunity to have their voice heard as part of the process. Both a Resident and a Business Survey tool will be developed to specifically advance the BOA Nomination Study. Previous survey tools used by the City will be expanded

to build upon previous information received during the Comprehensive Planning process. The surveys will consist of several different types of questions intended to gain a broad understanding of community goals and recommendations.

Both the Resident and Business Survey will be available online as well as in written form. The online version will be available on Oswego County's website. Notification of both surveys will be distributed through the best method determined by the Steering Committee.

### ***Interviews with Major Employers***

The Community Participation Plan recognizes the importance of involvement of major employers in the outreach process. It is important to engage these critical employers in process to gather information on current economic conditions within the City of Fulton. This process will provide insight on current market conditions, workforce conditions, and the perception of Fulton within the business community.

These meetings will build upon the Business Surveys previously distributed throughout the community and will follow up on any initial findings. Understanding the current conditions of major employers in the area will be important when developing an action plan geared towards defining which types of businesses would be appropriate for the redeveloped brownfield sites.

### ***Interviews with Economic Development and Real Estate Professionals***

To better understand the current regional and local conditions in the real estate market, interviews with local and regional economic development agencies, real estate professionals, and developers will be conducted. Topics of

discussion will include types of development occurring in the region, vacancy rates, cost per square foot, and levels of inquiry from potential investors. All information gathered from the interviews, as well as, any related market reports or studies will be analyzed thoroughly and used to determine realistic alternative development recommendations for specific sites.



### **Public Workshops**

The Community Participation Plan outlines a series of public workshops designed to inform residents and business owners about the planning effort and solicit their opinions on redevelopment of specific brownfield sites. Three community workshops will be facilitated; each workshop will have a different purpose, but all will focus on the BOA Study Area. These workshops will include the following topics of discussion:

- **Workshop #1 – Opportunities & Constraints:** This workshop will be an opportunity to educate the public about the definition of a brownfield, and the purpose and benefit of the BOA Nomination Study, as well as gain an understanding of the public’s opinion on the BOA Study Area. Following a presentation the participants will use maps of the Study Area and properties to identify topics of concern and in what manner the sites can be best

redeveloped to increase the quality of life for City residents and businesses.

- **Workshop #2 – Visioning Workshop:** The second workshop will build upon the first workshop to create a unified vision for the BOA Study Area based on a list of preferred future scenarios outlined by the public. Participants will be able to create alternative redevelopment scenarios using maps and outlining where redevelopment is most preferred, and which areas are in most need of revitalization.
- **Workshop #3 – Target Area Walk & Talk:** During the third workshop, participants will be broken into small groups and guided through the BOA Study Area by foot. The purpose of the workshop is to understand the individual sites and the target area as a whole from the pedestrian viewpoint. The workshop will end with a presentation on proposed redevelopment scenarios developed according to good urban design principles, as well as incorporating the findings from previous public participation outreach.

### **Adoption Process – Public Hearings**

After the Draft BOA Nomination Study is complete, a series of public hearings will be facilitated that present the Study to the public. The public will have the opportunity to comment on draft renderings and concept plans for the target area and specific sites. Redevelopment scenarios will be discussed and the selected prioritized sites will be presented. Community feedback from the public hearings will be used to further refine the draft BOA Nomination Study and explore any alternative approaches to revitalization.