

MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Fulton BOA Steering Committee

FROM: Laberge Group

DATE: October 27, 2008

RE: **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS
SUMMARY RESULTS FROM THE FIRST COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**

This report summarizes the findings of the first community workshop held at the Fulton Municipal Building on October 23rd, 2008. A group of approximately 15 citizens and stakeholders attended the session, worked in three small groups, and provided insights and perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the community.

Workshop Results

Participants were broken into three small groups of approximately five persons. Each group contained a diverse range of residents, property owners and stakeholders. Groups created lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the City of Fulton. The groups then placed markers next to the issue(s) that were most important to each individual, thus creating a ranking based on level of importance.

Table #1

Strengths

- Gateway to Lake Ontario – 2
- Lake Neatahwanta – 2
- Gateway to Syracuse
- Good Highway Access
- Good Rail Access
- Good Water Access
- Commercially Zoned
- Good East/West Access
- Riverfront
- Canal/Locks
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Health Care
- Tourism
- Snow
- Port of Oswego

Weaknesses

- High Taxes (City and School) – 2

- Old Infrastructure – 1
- Competitive Telecommunications – 1
- Negative Attitude
- Lack of Employment
- No Class A or Class B Office Space
- Low Income Government Assistance
- Too Many Rentals
- Empty Storefronts
- High Utilities
- Need More Destinations/Attractions
- Lack of Historical Assets
- Snow
- Distance from I-90
- No Shopping

Opportunities

- Many Buildings to Develop – 1
- Develop Marina (Waterfront Development) – 1
- Workforce (Good and Reasonable Labor Qualifications) – 1
- Water – 1
- Develop Terminal for Port Expansion
- Develop Terminal for Chocolate Expansion
- College
- BOCES
- Low Cost Power Jobs
- Hometown Feel
- Schools

Threats

- Poor Quality of Life – 2
- Losing Hospital – 1
- Losing Children to Other Areas For Lack of Opportunity – 1
- Higher State Taxes
- Rising Costs for Individuals and Businesses
- Poor Quality/Lack of Cultural Offerings (Theater)
- Poor Quality/Lack of Gathering Places
- Poor Quality/Lack of Family Oriented Events
- Competition with Other Areas
- Lake Pollution
- Water Chestnuts
- Too Many Brownfields

Table #2

Strengths

- The River (White Water and Deep Water) – 2
- Natural Landscape (Views Along Bridges and Waterfront) – 2
- I-481 Corridor (High Volume of Traffic) and Rte. 3
- Large Size Lots
- Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Boat Ramp and Boat Dock (Marina Near Lock)
- Indian Park Picnic Area
- Trail Along Waterfront
- Retail/Restaurants
- Hospital
- Canal and Locks History
- Industries (Hatamaki, Black Clawson)
- Motel
- Post Office
- Municipal Building
- Library
- Historical Homes
- K-Mart Plaza
- Board of Education Building
- Parks (Van Buren, Eastside Park)
- Island without Access (Potential Strength if Utilized)
- Fishing
- Fall Utilities
- Vacant Industrial Buildings (Infrastructure for Large Businesses)
- Parking Areas (Nestles)
- Community/Neighborhood Grocery Stores (Mirabitos)
- Schools

Weaknesses

- Parking Lot Landscaping and Design – 1
- New Development Lacks Aesthetic Appeal – 1
- May Lose Hospital – 1
- Nestles Building (Needs Reuse)
- Snow
- Not Enough Sit Down Restaurants
- Fulton Terminals (Close to Resolving)
- Soft Co. Site
- Industrial Along River
- Streetscape Along I-481 (Needs Landscaping and Improvements)
- Housing Rehabilitation Needed
- Sidewalks Along Busy Streets
- STP Odor (Sometimes Really Strong)
- 6th Ward Housing Disrepair
- Flood Plains (Potential for Flooding)
- Vacant Retail Restaurants and Car Dealerships
- Tree Growth (Appearance)
- Too Many Drug/Pharmacy Stores (Big Box Retail)

- Signage Control (Too Large, Too Many, Lack Design, Lack Code, etc.)
- Too Many Car Lots
- Lack of Youth Activities
- Lack of Physical Activity in Winter Months

Opportunities

- (See Strengths)
- The River (Access, Views, Walkways, Fishing, Boating, etc.) – 2
- Trail Along River – 2
- Boating Services
- Hotel Capacity
- Waterfront Businesses
- LWRP/Comprehensive Plan Opportunities Identified
- Railroad on Eastside of I-481 (Rail to Trail can Connect to Linear Waterfront Trail)
- Fulton Builders (Adaptive Reuse)
- Junior High School (Adaptive Reuse)
- Pool Repairs
- History of Chocolate (Tourist Attraction)
- Passenger Train Service to Syracuse and Oswego

Threats

- Decreasing Employment Opportunities – 1
- No Hospital –1
- Traffic Threat to Those Walking (All Ages) – 1
- Physical Activities Limited in Winter Leading to Long Term Health Issues – 1
- Decreasing Population
- Weather
- Youth Need Activities
- Sidewalk Access in Winter Time is Limited
- Loss of Representation in Government Process (Legislature)
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety
- By-Pass Route, City of Fulton
- Wal-Mart in Town (Loss of Tax Revenue)
- Loss of Government Money if City Status is Lost
- Increased Gas and Heating Costs
- Money Going Out of Community and Loss of Living Wage Jobs

Table #3

Strengths

- The River – 4
- The Lake
- Small-Town Community
- Recreational Activities
- Relatively Safe
- Community College

Weaknesses

- Population is Highly Dependant on Public Services – 3
- Medium Income is Low – 1
- Empty Buildings
- 48% of Housing Stock is Rental Housing
- Tax Exempt Property
- Absentee Landlords
- High Senior Population
- Lack of Retail/Manufacturing

Opportunities

- Marketing of Lake and River – 4
- Pathfinding Trail
- Boaters
- Unique Island Features
- Take Advantage of Hydro Power
- Mass Transit by Rail
- Improvement of Hotel/Motel Accommodations
- Up-Scale Dining

Threats

- Growing Apathy (Lack of Pride) – 2
- Decreasing Property Value – 1
- General Appearance of City Entrances – 1
- Power Plant Affecting Housing