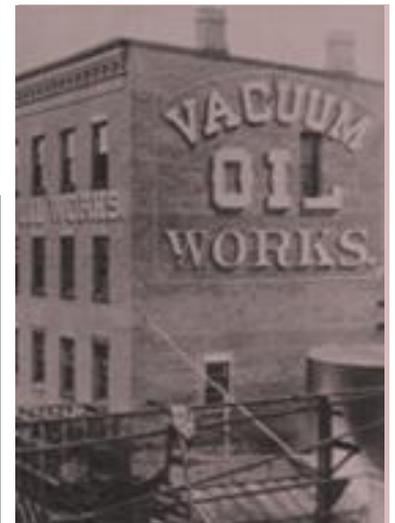


Draft Nomination Study

Vacuum Oil - South Genesee River Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area

A Revitalization Strategy for the South Plymouth
Neighborhood

Executive Summary
September 2013



City of Rochester
Thomas S. Richards, Mayor
30 Church Street
Rochester, NY 14614

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Executive Summary

The Vacuum Oil-South Genesee Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study provides City leadership, residents, investors and local businesses with a visionary framework for the revitalization of the Plymouth-Exchange (PLEX) Neighborhood within Rochester's Southwest Quadrant.

The strategy and recommendations for the Vacuum Oil BOA are the culmination of nearly 30 years of planning and revitalization efforts within one of Rochester's centrally located riverfront neighborhoods. Since the 1980s, the City has studied the revitalization of the key issues faced by PLEX, including the remediation of environmental contamination, the redevelopment of former industrial sites, improved connectivity through the neighborhood and with the Genesee River waterfront, and the rehabilitation and resurgence of neighborhood housing.

City of Rochester leadership recognized the economic and community development potential of the NYSDOS Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program, which was created to assist in the revitalization of communities adversely impacted by industrial and manufacturing activity. The three-step BOA program begins with a general evaluation of revitalization potential, and culminates in the identification of recommended investment projects and the formation of near-term and long-term implementation strategies. The PLEX neighborhood was targeted specifically based

on the inherent challenges and opportunities for revitalization. The industrial legacy of the former Vacuum Oil refinery has limited the potential of PLEX to utilize and leverage its waterfront location. Yet, the Genesee River waterfront provides the greatest source of opportunity and functions as the primary community-defining characteristic. The redevelopment of the Vacuum Oil site has been identified by the City as a catalyst for community renewal, and thus is the central component of the BOA Nomination Study. From 2006 to 2010, the City progressed from Step 1 to Step 2 of the BOA process and began development of the BOA Nomination Study and Master Plan. Through an extensive public participation and community involvement process a future vision of the PLEX neighborhood was identified and goals and objectives for its achievement were established.

The Master Plan is the culmination of these efforts and will be utilized by City and local leadership to guide public and private investment within the Study Area for the next 25 years, including the rehabilitation of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated sites, the enhancement of parkland, the revitalization of the South Plymouth Avenue corridor, housing regeneration and leveraging the Study Area's extensive Genesee River waterfront. The Master Plan is also a stepping stone to preference and priority for State economic development financing, including favorable tax and investment incentives for private development.

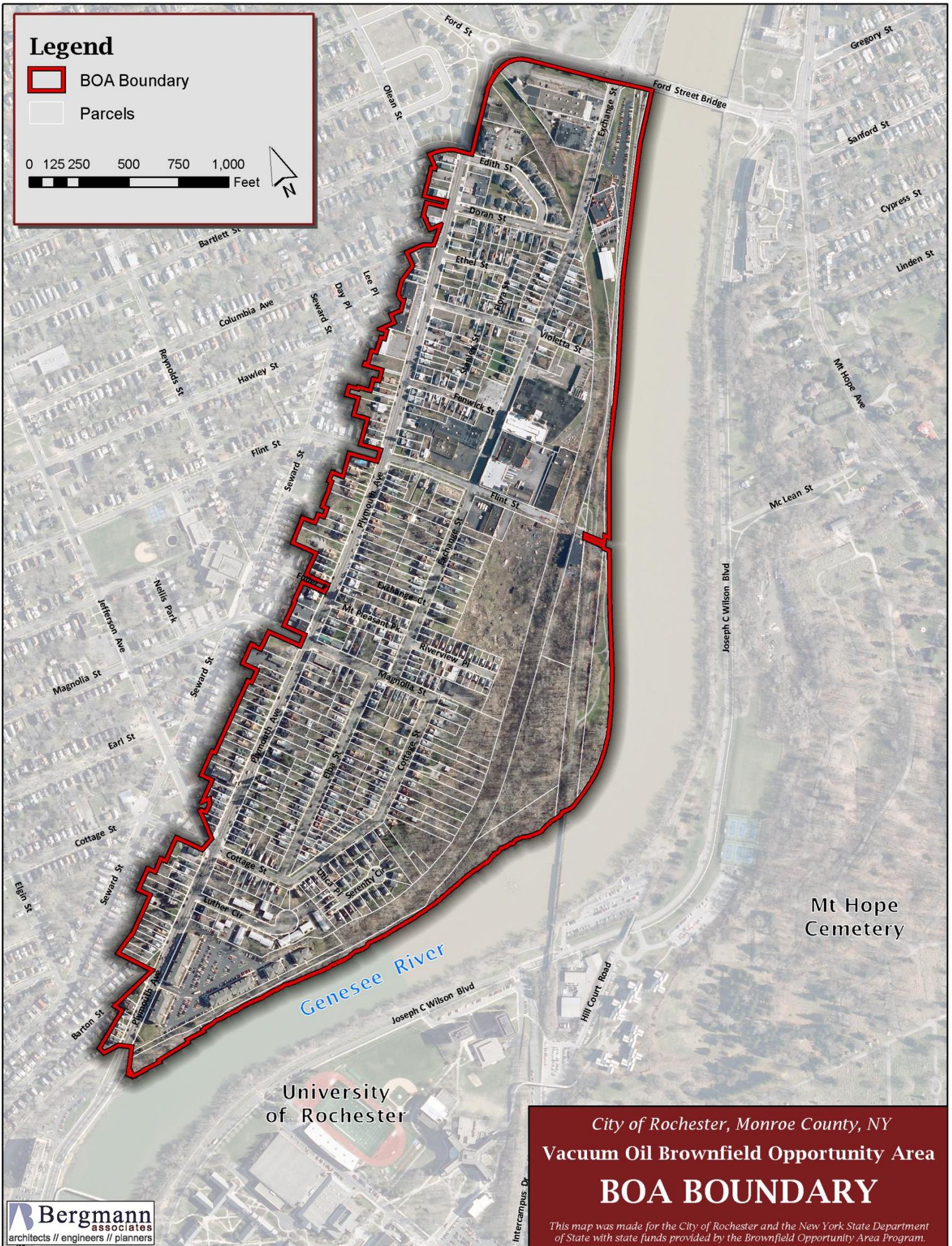


Downtown Rochester skyline as seen from the Vacuum Oil BOA waterfront.

Legend

-  BOA Boundary
-  Parcels

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet



City of Rochester, Monroe County, NY
Vacuum Oil Brownfield Opportunity Area
BOA BOUNDARY

This map was made for the City of Rochester and the New York State Department of State with state funds provided by the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.



Project Description and Redevelopment Potential

The Vacuum Oil - South Genesee River Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) is an approximately 148 acre area located along the Genesee River and Plymouth Avenue south of Corn Hill Landing and North of Brooks Landing (See Map). The Study Area includes a variety of industrial, commercial, retail and residential land uses, and has a rich historical and cultural legacy.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this area was dominated by the former Vacuum Oil Rochester Works facility, which refined, finished, canned, and distributed petroleum-based products throughout the United States and Europe. The Vacuum Oil Rochester Works site was serviced by the former Genesee Valley Canal, the Erie-Lackawanna Rail Road and the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railway; the remnants of this infrastructure shape the Study Area today. The surrounding neighborhood provides a diverse housing stock and is relatively stable in areas south of Flint Street. Yet, portions of the neighborhood directly adjacent to and north of the former refinery have struggled to maintain viability despite highly valuable proximity to the Genesee River and Center City Rochester.

The PLEX neighborhood has two significant advantages upon which to base revitalization efforts. First, the presence of vast amounts of vacant and underutilized land with good access to the City's Genesee River waterfront makes the neighborhood unique within the City. Additionally, PLEX is located between the resurgent Corn Hill/Center City districts to the north and the burgeoning University of Rochester campus to the south. These neighboring districts create opportunities for new jobs and generate demand for high quality housing, services and recreational opportunities.

As seen in Figure ES-1, three primary sites form the basis of redevelopment opportunities in the BOA: the former Vacuum Oil Main Plant site north of

Flint Street (A); the former Vacuum Oil Site south of Flint Street (B); and vacant land east of Magnolia Street and Riverview Place (C). In total, these three sites account for approximately 25 acres and have the potential to create the greatest catalytic impact to the surrounding neighborhood, spurring reinvestment in existing property and the redevelopment of adjacent vacant and underutilized sites as infill projects.



Figure ES-1: Primary Redevelopment Sites

THE CITY MUST FOCUS ON REBRANDING THE BOA STUDY AREA AS A WATERFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD BY RECONNECTING THE PLEX AND SOUTH WEST NEIGHBORHOODS TO THE GENESSEE RIVER. THIS EFFORT WILL SERVE TO BOLSTER RECENT INVESTMENTS ALONG THE GENESSEE RIVER AT BROOKS LANDING, CORN HILL LANDING, THE RIVERVIEW APARTMENTS AND OTHER PENDING PROJECTS. THE CONTINUED REVITALIZATION OF THE CITY'S WATERFRONT WILL ATTRACT FURTHER ATTENTION FROM INVESTORS, SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ULTIMATELY IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR AREA RESIDENTS.

Community Vision, Goals & Objectives

A Vision for the BOA in 2031 and Beyond

The City of Rochester has invested a significant amount of effort and money in preparation for revitalization. The Vacuum Oil BOA Nomination Study combines the energies put forth over the previous two-plus decades by both the City of Rochester and area residents towards the realization of a sustainable future for the Vacuum Oil site and the surrounding neighborhood. The following vision and goals form the basis for future investments and public and private activities presenting a unified approach to the revitalization of the Study Area.

A long term resident of the neighborhood describes the Vacuum Oil BOA neighborhood in 2031:

Just yesterday I was sitting on my front porch on Exchange Street with my good friend and neighbor talking about how things have changed over the past twenty years. It all started back in 2011 with an understanding between the City and our neighborhood that revitalization efforts would empower the people of this community and celebrate our unique culture and values. Standing shoulder to shoulder, we the residents and the leadership of Rochester held true to this simple tenant, built upon respect and trust.

Today, I watch children playing in the parks, people walking and riding their bicycles to the waterfront and not be concerned for their safety. I know that when my grandchildren come to visit, we can walk up to South Plymouth for lunch, go to church or get an ice cream and not pass derelict houses. I feel a sense of pride when I see the number of new families and owners who have moved into my neighborhood, renovating the old homes or building new ones on vacant lots. Many of these new homeowners were kids I watched grow up and reinvest in our neighborhood. Even more impressive, many of my neighbors work in the community and even own businesses that I shop in every day!

One of the greatest impacts to our neighborhood was the redevelopment of the former Vacuum Oil refinery property. For too many years that property dragged our neighborhood down. We were nervous at first when we heard someone was interested in redeveloping the property. However, the City kept us involved through the whole process, listening to our concerns and advocating for our recommendations. They even maintained the forested area and created enhanced open space areas so our residents and visitors can enjoy access to the river and wildlife that lives here year-round. Today, the redeveloped Vacuum Oil area has infused new investment in our community, providing needed jobs, housing opportunities and improved access to the Genesee River. What I like the most is how they tell the story of our history and culture in the design of the buildings, streets and landscaping.

I smile every time I think of the changes my neighborhood has experienced over the past twenty years. I am proud of the role I played in creating one of Rochester's most stable and sought after neighborhoods.

BOA Goals and Strategic Objectives

In support of the Vision Statement, the neighborhood identified a series of goals to help guide planning decisions and future recommendations. Each of the goals is supported by strategic objectives drawn from input generated by the public, steering committee, project stakeholders and City staff. The following statements were generated based on the results from the resident-driven visioning process, and represent key goals the community aspires to achieve through revitalization efforts.

GOAL 1: FACILITATING NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The PLEX neighborhood is beleaguered by disinvestment that has diminished the quality of its housing stock. Strong neighborhoods all have one thing in common: invested and engaged residents with a sense of ownership in both the problem and solution. The Vacuum Oil BOA program will serve as a catalyst for neighborhood stabilization by defining the common community values, identifying resident-led initiatives and providing focused assistance for implementation.

GOAL 2: ADVANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION

The community desires a shift away from industrial development within the Vacuum Oil BOA, requiring a mix of large and small scale redevelopment and reinvestment. It is essential to recognize that investment from outside the neighborhood will be required to advance the clean up and re-use of the former Vacuum Oil properties. However, this should not be the only focus for this study area; small scale and potentially resident-driven investment and risk-taking will be a critical component of sustainable economic development in the PLEX neighborhood.

GOAL 3: IMPROVING OUR WATERFRONT EXPERIENCE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The Vacuum Oil BOA study area includes over 6,000 linear feet of Genesee River waterfront, an ADA-compliant trail system, cross river linkages and a range of urban and natural experiences. Yet, the neighborhood is virtually isolated from the river. The formation of a recreational spine within the neighborhood will require improvements to safety, interpretation, accessibility and connectivity to and along the waterfront.

GOAL 4: CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE

The Vacuum Oil BOA study area's rich history and linkage to the Civil War and Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist movement is a significant asset for revitalization efforts. Redevelopment of the former Vacuum Oil properties and waterfront should include opportunities to celebrate the unique story of place.

GOAL 5: ENCOURAGING STEWARDSHIP OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

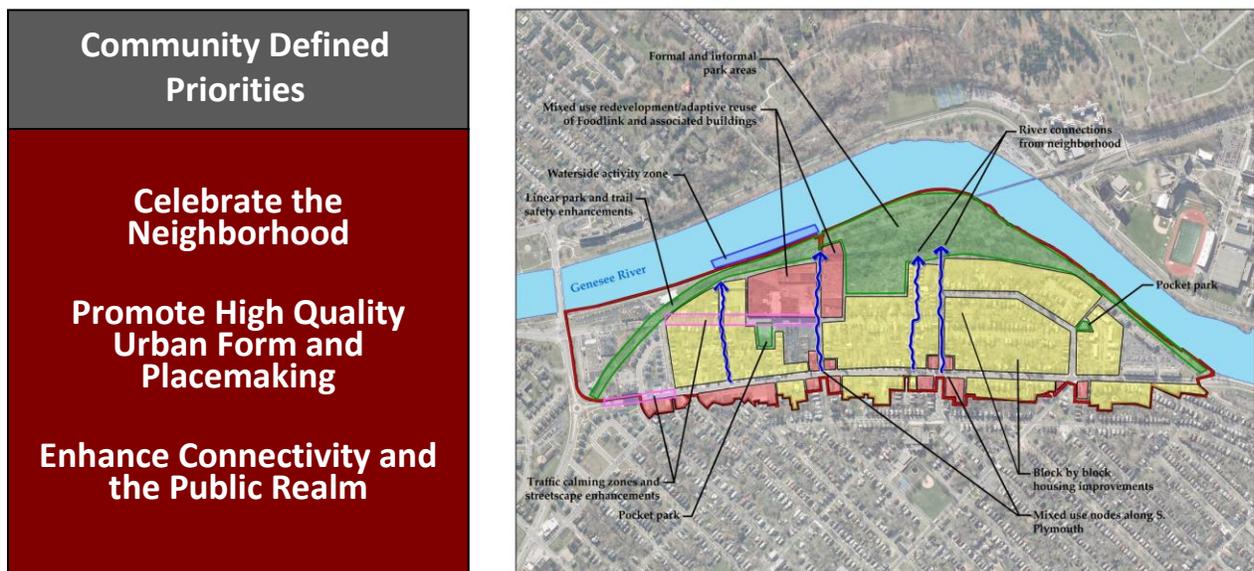
The Vacuum Oil BOA study area is unique in its urban setting, with extensive access to the waterfront, undeveloped lands and wildlife habitats. However, it has been impacted by decisions and practices that had an adverse impact on the environment. The BOA affords a means to recognize and learn from these decisions in order to leave this community a better place for future generations.

Community Involvement

The Vacuum Oil BOA Master Plan was conducted in parallel with the Southwest Rochester Riverfront Charrette, a community-driven public visioning process. The two initiatives provided joint public participation opportunities where possible to ensure collaboration and consistency in identifying needs and goals for revitalization. During the community involvement process several consistent themes were identified that formed a common thread on which the Master Plan was based. Three topic areas emerged as being priorities for the revitalization of the PLEX neighborhood:

1. **Celebrate and promote the history and significance of the neighborhood.**
2. **Promote high quality urban form during the revitalization of the Vacuum Oil site, South Plymouth Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods.**
3. **Connect the extensive waterfront to the neighborhood core through trails and gateways.**

Figure ES-2: Community Defined Priorities and Summary of Ideas Generated at the Public Design Workshop



Community Consultation Methods and Techniques

Project Oversight: A Project Advisory Committee comprised of public officials, government representatives, not-for-profit members, and private citizens met seven times to provide input, guidance and feedback throughout the nearly two-year planning process.

Public Meetings, Neighborhood Meetings and Workshops: A series of meetings and workshops were held to collect stakeholder, property owner and resident insight and brainstorm innovative solutions to the challenges faced by the Study Area. These meetings were used to help shape the analysis and develop a vision for the Study Area based on community priorities. Meetings were held in June 2011, October 2011, March 2012, November 2012 and September 2013, and included informational sessions and pencil-to-paper design roundtables with residents to identify future opportunities for revitalization.

Inventory and Analysis of the BOA

The BOA Nomination Study Process involves a rigorous inventory and analysis of existing socio-economic and environmental conditions within the Study Area, including a review of land use regulations and an analysis of market conditions. The following provides a brief summary and key findings from the inventory and analysis which were utilized during the development of recommendations for capital projects, land use pattern modifications and administrative initiatives.

Key Findings: Land Use & Zoning

Nearly half of the Study Area is dense residential development, indicating a high population density. Modest levels of vacant land present opportunities to increase the population further through mixed use development while adding to the diversity of residential alternatives in the neighborhood. The Genesee riverfront is largely underutilized, with expansive areas of under programmed space with few opportunities for access and enjoyment by residents. Industrial activity along Flint and Exchange Streets negatively impacts the perception of the Study Area.

Key Findings: Brownfield Sites

The remediation and redevelopment of known or suspected brownfield sites will be a priority component of implementation activities associated with the Vacuum Oil Nomination Study Master Plan. Of the 38 sites identified as having known or potential environmental impacts, four were identified as high priority revitalization sites within the Master Plan based on both the potential extent of contamination and the ability of the site to contribute to neighborhood revitalization. The largest is the former Vacuum Oil site, which contains numerous individual parcels potentially contaminated by previous activity. One adjacent site is suspected of being contaminated by the Vacuum Oil complex, while other sites include former dry cleaning establishments, hazardous waste generators or sites of significant underground spills. Additional remedial investigations will be required prior to future development, and should take place in the near-term to accelerate the inclusion of these sites as economic and community development catalysts in the PLEX neighborhood. See Table ES-1 for a brief summary of the four high priority sites. All brownfield properties located within the Vacuum Oil Study Area are illustrated on Map 6 of the Nomination Study and Site Profile Forms for priority sites within the BOA are included in Appendix D of the Nomination Study.

Table ES-1: Priority Brownfield Site Summary

Site Name	Site Address	Master Plan Location	Environmental Concern	Remediation Status	Recommendation
Former Vacuum Oil Site	Flint Street Exchange Street (Multiple)	9, 16-19, 21, 22, 24, 25	VOCs, SVOCs, BTEX, NAPL, PCBs	In NYSDEC Brownfield Cleanup Program	Phase II ESA
1 Cottage Street	Cottage Street (136.21-1-1)	11	Adjacent to Vacuum Oil site	None to date	Phase I and Phase II ESA
Whiz Cleaners	S. Plymouth Ave (121.61-2-4)	14	Adjacent to Vacuum Oil site	None to date	Phase I and Phase II ESA
Former Fire Hall	S. Plymouth Ave (121.61-2-27)	1	Potential fuel dispensing site	None to date	Phase I and Phase II ESA



Figure ES-3: Priority Brownfield Sites

Key Findings: Vacant & Underutilized Sites

Vacant and underutilized parcels account for 51 acres of the BOA Study Area, with the City of Rochester controlling over 50 percent of such property. Although the majority of vacant and underutilized parcels are small residential lots, a handful of properties larger than 1-acre remain undeveloped with no improvements. The largest of these is the privately-held 5.5-acre site at 15 Flint Street; this site has been identified for potentially catalytic redevelopment opportunities as part of the Master Plan. The sporadic location of many vacant lots within the residential neighborhoods of the Study Area presents an opportunity for multiple reuse strategies, including targeted infill development, lot expansions and off-street parking. If developed to the current neighborhood density (9.5 du/ac), existing vacant land could provide over 300 additional housing units pending sufficient market demand.

Key Findings: Parks & Open Space

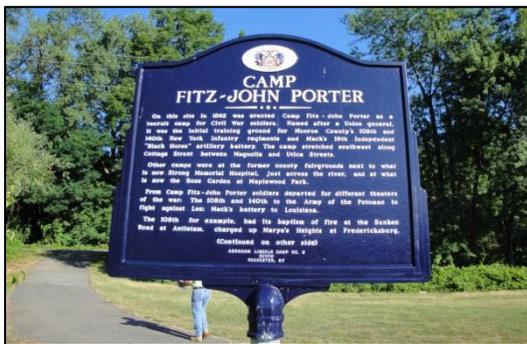
There are several parcels of land within the BOA representing public and private open space, much of which functions as informal, passive recreation space, including walking trails, a small playground, and the Genesee Riverway Trail. However, the BOA lacks formal, dedicated park space to meet the needs of the neighborhood. A neighborhood the population of PLEX, by national standards, requires an additional 2 acres of appropriately programmed park space. Access to the Genesee Riverway Trail is insufficient from area street and sidewalk networks, and trail safety continues to be an issue.



The Genesee Riverway Trail near the Flint Street trailhead.

Key Findings: Historic & Cultural Resources

The Study Area has a significant connection to people, events, locations and neighborhoods of historic significance in the City of Rochester. Much of this history is tied to the Genesee River, which provided the foundation for the City's industrial heritage and a source of economic strength and opportunity for adjacent neighborhoods. The Study Area should celebrate its industrial past by identifying opportunities for interpretive sites along the Genesee River to educate Genesee Riverway Trail users on the history of the Vacuum Oil Works, the Genesee Valley Canal and the railroads. The interpretation of the Study Area's role during the Abolition Movement as part of the Underground Railroad should be explored, and the neighborhood should identify additional sites of local significance in addition to the Camp Fitz-John Porter site.



Camp Fitz-John Porter Placard

Key Findings: Land Ownership

Public control of 90 percent of all vacant land within the BOA may speed redevelopment activities, including the remediation of publicly controlled brownfield sites. However, private interests maintain control over the majority of the former Vacuum Oil refinery site, which will require significant coordination between the City and ownership to realize the vision and Master Plan recommendations. The entire Genesee River corridor is bounded by lands under State control which may present significant opportunities for improved public access to the waterfront.

Key Findings: Transportation and Utility Infrastructure

The Study Area's transportation system provides excellent connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, destinations and the expanded long-range access via nearby Interstate 490. Generally, traffic flows are reasonable and speeds are low within the Study Area, however residents have expressed consistent concerns regarding speeding within the neighborhoods along Exchange Street and Magnolia Street.

On-street parking along South Plymouth provides a significant supply of spaces, and the neighborhood benefits from short walking distances which enhance walkability and connectivity to transit and services. A notable challenge is the limited connectivity to the Genesee River waterfront for both motorists and pedestrians.

In addition, transit stops are a significant distance from the Genesee River waterfront. Although transit service is well-connected, destinations for key services such as a supermarket are greater than one mile away, requiring extensive travel times which severely impact user efficiency and convenience.

The capacity of water and sewer service appears to be adequate to support additional growth and development. Yet the location of major water and sewer infrastructure near the terminus of Flint Street and along the former Genesee Valley Canal may present development obstacles and increased costs if these utilities require relocation.



South Plymouth Avenue corridor

Key Findings: Natural Resources

The Genesee River is a key natural resource, and future redevelopment should focus on adopting sustainable solutions to protect its environmental quality. The previously developed status of many sites within the Study Area presents few obstacles to site redevelopment. However, subsurface conditions within former developed sites, such as those associated with the Vacuum Oil refinery, are unknown and may contain unstable fill material. Proper soil and subsurface investigations will be required on targeted sites to ascertain redevelopment potential.

Groundwater resources within the study area have been impacted by heavy industrial uses both along the waterfront and further inland. As a result, redevelopment opportunities may be limited based on achievable remediation levels at certain sites. Additional investigations will be required to determine the severity and extent of groundwater impairments prior to site design or construction activities.

The 100-year floodplain extends inland from the Genesee River, impacting lands north of the Genesee Riverway Trail. Pre-development activities will likely require additional study to determine the local flood elevation and potential impact of the floodplain.

The City of Rochester has history of redefining itself as economic and social conditions have changed. The developable land available within the study area and the presence of the Genesee River once again present the City with the opportunity to redefine itself and capitalize on this natural resource.



In portions of the BOA, one would hardly realize they were surrounded by an urban environment.

Market and Economic Conditions

Regional Economic Outlook

The *health care and social assistance and government* industries are the largest employment sectors within the Rochester MSA and are projected to account for more than 10,000 new jobs by the year 2020, followed by 9,000 new jobs in the *professional, scientific and technical services industries*. These industries have high earnings per worker and should become a focus for attraction to the Study Area. Manufacturing will continue to experience a declining workforce, losing nearly 14,000 high earning jobs by 2020. An employment increase of 25,000 jobs is expected to occur in the Rochester MSA, though the overall rate of increase and wages are projected to lag behind statewide levels.

Retail Market Analysis

Several retail sectors within a 5-minute drive are experiencing significant sales leakage and there is demand for a variety of goods and services locally. The nearest supermarket is greater than 1.5 miles away, classifying the BOA as a Food Desert according to criteria established by the USDA. Based on an analysis of local trade area retail opportunities, the Study Area could potentially support full- and limited-service eating establishments, grocery and clothing stores. While there is demand for a large-scale standard grocery store, the Study Area does not have sufficient land in an appropriate location to ensure the success of this type of development. A smaller-sized grocery store could likely be supported along South Plymouth Avenue, and may be well suited for mixed use nodes adjacent to primary corridor intersections such as Flint Street, Magnolia Street or Cottage Street pending sufficient land availability.

Residential Market Analysis

Housing stock in the PLEX neighborhood is quite old and does not offer the products many new buyers are looking for. As a result, vacancy rates within the neighborhood are high; however, other Upstate New York Cities are facing similar trends. In light of a recent 125-bed housing development within the Study Area and the pending construction of an 11-story student housing complex at Brooks Landing, the University of Rochester's off-campus student housing needs are currently modest, and likely limited to opportunities within the private market place. Based on the Citywide housing study, there is demand for additional housing options within the \$150,000 to \$200,000 price range in the City. Efforts to revitalize the housing market will also need to include targeted rehabilitation and redevelopment activities at the lot and block level.

Office and Industrial Market Analysis

The current office market within the Rochester MSA is one of oversupply; however, over the next 10 years the real estate market for office space is projected to tighten, particularly for Class A office space. The Study Area's riverfront location and proximity to downtown, the University of Rochester and Interstate 490 make it a strong location for limited amounts of Class A space, potentially targeted at businesses requiring modest or flexible footprints. Like so many cities throughout the northeast, the overabundance of industrial properties within the region has flooded the industrial real estate market. Therefore, adaptive reuse of a portion of existing vacant or underutilize industrial space will be required as part of the overall revitalization strategy for the Vacuum Oil BOA.

The Vacuum Oil BOA Master Plan

The Vacuum Oil BOA Master Plan reflects the vision and goals of the local community, while also recognizing the realities of the site and economic conditions. The Master Plan balances the communities' goals of neighborhood stabilization, waterfront access, safety and quality-of-life improvements with redevelopment projects that can help to enhance the overall character and aesthetic of PLEX. Proposed development seeks to support neighborhood objectives of expanded job opportunities and improved access to goods and services that are needed in the neighborhood. At the same time, a critical mass of density is envisioned to create a special waterfront destination in the City and larger region. Building on the Design Principles and community feedback, the preferred master plan was prepared around a foundation of key land uses, programs and neighborhood enhancement projects.

Future Land Use within the BOA

Residential

The Master Plan includes residential-focused revitalization areas at both the northern and southern ends of the Study Area, as well as along the South Plymouth Avenue corridor. The northern area is focused on addressing disinvestment and distress between Doran and Violetta Streets, seeking to maintain the area as a single-family and two-family neighborhood, yet foster a similar character and development pattern found along other neighborhood streets, such as Elba or Cottage. The redevelopment of Luther Circle would meet the needs of the neighborhoods aging population while connecting currently isolated streets into the roadway and expanded pedestrian network of the Study Area. South Avenue should maintain its residential character and focus on providing higher density and alternative housing products.

Commercial Corridor

South Plymouth Avenue is envisioned to be maintained as a predominantly residential corridor, with modest pockets of mixed use infill development at key nodes that provide convenience retail, personal services and small office uses. The existing Martin Luther King Plaza is recommended to be redeveloped with a larger structure to contain multiple storefronts and a building presence at the streetline.

Mixed Use

The Master Plan provides a significant amount of mixed-use development located on the former Vacuum Oil refinery site east of Exchange Street adjacent to the Genesee River waterfront. Street level space would be reserved for public and quasi-public uses such as retail, restaurants and cultural facilities to encourage transparency, foot traffic and pedestrian activity within the public realm. Professional office space and other private uses including owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units would be reserved for upper stories.

Open Space, Recreation and Waterfront

The Master Plan envisions significant public activity/gathering spaces along the waterfront, including play areas, gathering spaces, cultural facilities and interpretive features. In addition, a centralized 3-acre passive park between Riverview Place and Flint Street is proposed to include picnic areas, a playground, passive recreation space and potentially community gardens. Waterfront uses within the Vacuum Oil BOA consist of residential and recreational offerings and opportunities for water access via canoes and kayak docks and moorings for boats. Programming and design of activity/gathering spaces along the waterfront will be anchored by a centralized plaza at the foot of Flint Street. Several new points of access are proposed from each street adjacent to the waterfront.

MASTER PLAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Master Plan for the Vacuum Oil BOA seeks to establish a unique recreational, social and economic destination centered on the Genesee River waterfront within the PLEX neighborhood. During the analysis portions of the Nomination Study and throughout the public involvement process three key principles were identified that served as the framework for the physical recommendations reflected in the Master Plan.



1. CELEBRATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD: The PLEX neighborhood is an affordable location to raise a family, achieve gainful employment and live in modest comfort. The continued stabilization and revitalization of the neighborhood establishes a unique brand identity that celebrates its location and heritage through high quality public spaces that also meet the recreational needs of the community. Private development along the waterfront includes thoughtfully designed public and quasi-public spaces that attract people and activity, both organized and impromptu. The cultural and industrial past of the neighborhood are exceptional assets from which to create compelling public spaces that celebrate and interpret the area’s historical significance within the City.



2. PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY URBAN FORM AND PLACEMAKING: New development must maintain and promote a high quality urban form to create walkable, pedestrian-scaled environments that foster vibrant streets and active public and quasi-spaces. Residential uses generate foot traffic necessary to support adjacent retail and personal services uses. Public and quasi-public spaces such as parks, plazas, promenades and outdoor dining areas provide a respite for residents, opportunities for people to interact with one another, and an enhanced public realm associated with private development. A high quality mixed use destination along the Genesee River waterfront is envisioned to become a catalyst for continued investment and revitalization throughout the PLEX neighborhood.



3. ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND THE PUBLIC REALM: Connectivity to access points is bolstered through improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns that avoid dead-end streets and pathways to support expanded economic development and investment within the BOA. Future development and investments in public and private infrastructure within the BOA must increase waterfront accessibility, enhance neighborhood connectivity, and create circulation patterns that are safe, efficient and enjoyable. The City and private landowners can leverage these connectivity benefits through promotion and marketing of the BOA for future development and investment opportunities.

Strategic Sites

The Vacuum Oil-South Genesee Brownfield Opportunity Area has several sites of strategic importance to the future revitalization of the PLEX neighborhood and the South Genesee River waterfront. A total of 17 strategic sites were identified that have the highest potential to act as catalysts for renewal and investment within the Study Area. These sites were the focus of physical improvements and investment within the Master Plan and play a primary role in the successful revitalization of the PLEX neighborhood.

- **Exchange Street Playground (public):** The City is actively pursuing funding for the design and construction of improvements to and an expansion of the existing park south to a terminus at Violetta Street and a connection to the Genesee River waterfront.
- **Doran Street, Flora Street, Violetta Street and Ethel Street residences (private):** The block between Doran Street and Violetta Street includes the BOA's most significant pocket of decline, covering 59 parcels on 5 acres. As part of BOA Step 3 activities, the City will formulate a Housing Reinvestment Strategy utilizing a series of land assembly tools for use by the City for the rehabilitation and redevelopment if targeted properties.
- **Martin Luther King Plaza:** This site includes public and private properties associated or adjacent to the existing strip plaza south of Columbia Avenue. In order to facilitate redevelopment, the City should consider property acquisition and assembly and then request proposals from developers and investors to construct the desired project.
- **950 and 965 Exchange Street (private):** The future redevelopment of these two properties will play a significant role in the character and urban form of the Study Area's central vehicular and wayfinding node. Coordination with existing land owners should begin in earnest to facilitate redevelopment .
- **Former Sears Warehouse (private) and 91 Violetta Street (public):** The 4-acre site represents a significant opportunity for redevelopment with excellent physical and visual access to the Genesee River waterfront. Next steps towards implementation include environmental investigations, acquisition, remediation, demolition and site preparation.
- **Former Foodlink Building (private):** The former Foodlink is envisioned for adaptive reuse as a mixed-use gateway to the Genesee River waterfront. Pre-development activities include the identification of a development partner, investment program, financial pro-forma analysis and environmental due diligence.
- **22 Flint Street (private):** Similar to the former Foodlink property, this site has the potential for a strong connection to the waterfront, yet will require extensive environmental due diligence and investment program analysis prior to development.
- **15 Flint Street (private):** This 5.5-acre property is the single largest contiguous parcel with redevelopment value within the BOA Study Area. Next steps associated with the redevelopment of this site include property owner coordination, environmental due diligence and development program analysis.
- **5 Flint Street (private):** The excellent views downstream towards downtown Rochester make this property highly valuable for adaptive reuse or redevelopment. Similar to adjacent strategic sites, implementation next steps include owner coordination, environmental investigations, targeted investment analysis and remediation activities.

Master Plan Phasing

The subdivision of the Master Plan into three phases identifies early catalytic projects from which future development and investment can be leveraged and spun off, building momentum overtime and providing the City of Rochester with a manageable implementation strategy. However, flexibility and adaptations in the phasing and implementation of the Master Plan should be anticipated and expected. During the course of the next 15 to 20 years available funding streams, property ownership, the marketplace and local economy will all likely change. In addition, the availability of information regarding site conditions will increase, and the feasibility of individual Master Plan components will be determined. Yet, success will continue to be achieved when the larger vision and desired outcomes of community revitalization are realized.

Phase 1: 0 to 7 Years

The first seven years of Master Plan implementation involve a significant level of public expenditure on environmental investigations, the acquisition of property, the demolition of substandard structures, and the installation of necessary infrastructure to support continued investments by private interests.



Preparing for Private Investment

Phase 2: 8 to 15 Years

Phase 2 development projects kick-off the building program and are anticipated to attract a critical mass of new residents to the neighborhood. Proposed development includes high-quality public realm improvements to enhance the quality of life for existing residents and attract on-going investment in complementary services to meet the needs of the expanded population such as retail, office, personal services and cultural facilities.



Establishing a Critical Mass of Activity

Phase 3: Beyond 15 Years

By the beginning of Phase 3, the neighborhood will be a desirable location for 'Living by the River' in Rochester, and a neighborhood of choice with a diversity of housing alternatives and convenient access to employment opportunities, recreation options, and retail and personal services establishments.



Creating a Waterfront Destination

Phase 1 - 0-7 Years

The early years of Master Plan implementation will concentrate on predevelopment activities that set the stage for private development to achieve the larger vision of the community. These projects involve a significant level of public expenditure on environmental investigations, the assembly and acquisition of property, the demolition of substandard structures, and the relocation of critical infrastructure to support continued investments by private interests. In addition, Phase 1 projects attempt to stabilize the existing residential neighborhoods through quality of life improvements, expanded services and enhanced housing alternatives. It is anticipated that significant coordination with regional, State and federal agencies will also be required for public realm, waterfront access and transportation system improvements. Phase 1 projects listed at right correspond to the Master Plan phasing as indicated on Map 17.



Waterfront access improvements, new senior-oriented housing, and new park land highlight Phase 1 public and quasi-public investments aimed at stabilizing the PLEX neighborhood and improving the quality of life for current residents.

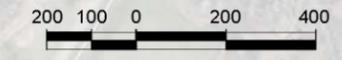


Phase 1 Projects

1. **Redevelopment of Former Fire Station**
2. **South Plymouth Avenue & Neighborhood Infill**
3. **South Plymouth Avenue Commercial Redevelopment**
4. **Flint Street Green Infrastructure Improvements**
5. **Multi-Family Housing and Roadway Connection**
6. **Waterfront Public Realm Enhancements**
7. **Car Top Launch / Water Access**
8. **Interim Parking**
9. **Parkland and Trail Development**
10. **Site Clearing and Redevelopment Preparations**
11. **New Road Construction**
12. **Exchange Street Gateway and Streetscape Improvements**
13. **Enhanced Trail Connection and Playground**

KEY

- 1. Commercial Redevelopment
- 2. Infill Development
- 3. Commercial Redevelopment
- 4. Flint Street Green Infrastructure Improvements
- 5. Multi-Family Housing and Roadway Connection
- 6. Trail Enhancements
 - Interpretation
 - Safety
 - Vegetation Clearing
- 7. Car Top Launch / Water Access
- 8. *Interim Parking Removed in 8-15 Year Plan*
- 9. Parkland and Trail Development
- 10. *Site Preparation Completed in 0-7 Year Plan*
- 11. New Road Construction
- 12. Exchange Street Gateway and Streetscape
- 13. Enhanced Trail Connection and Playground
- 14. Housing Redevelopment
- 15. Mixed Use Development
- 16. Foodlink Redevelopment
- 17. Mixed Use Development
- 18. Waterfront Mixed Use
 - Adaptive Reuse of 5 Flint Street
- 19. Waterfront Mixed Use with Structured Parking
- 20. Waterfront Amphitheater
- 21. Public Gathering / Event Space
- 22. Canal Interpretation / Water Feature
- 23. Wetland Interpretation and Nature Trail
- 24. Mixed Use Development with Structured Parking
- 25. Mixed Use Development



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Phase 2: 8-15 Years

After approximately eight years the City will be poised to leverage previous infrastructure improvements and catalytic development activities. Initial redevelopment focus will take place on 5 Flint Street and 15 Flint Street, as these properties are underutilized and represent a significant investment opportunity within Study Area. The proposed redevelopment of these sites should drastically alter the character of Flint Street east of Exchange Street to improve perceived and actual connections with the Genesee River waterfront. Initial investment activity should also emphasize a high-quality public realm environment through the development of signature gathering, cultural and historic interpretation features. Phase 2 projects listed at right correspond to the Master Plan phasing as indicated on Map 17.



Phase 2 Projects

14. Housing Redevelopment
15. Neighborhood Infill Development
16. Foodlink Redevelopment
17. Mixed Use Development
18. Adaptive Reuse of 5 Flint Street
19. Waterfront Mixed Use with Structured Parking
20. Waterfront Amphitheater
21. Signature Waterfront Public Gathering Space
22. Canal Interpretation / Water Feature
23. Wetland Interpretation and Nature Trail

Development should be at an appropriate scale for neighborhood infill to include first floor professional services such as a satellite physician's office. The waterfront plaza in Lonsdale Quay, North Vancouver, BC is very similar in size, scale and arrangement to that proposed for the terminus of Flint Street. As part of the design development process, the City should investigate other successful waterfront nodes located in urban neighborhoods.



Phase 3: Beyond 15 Years

By 2029, the private real estate and development marketplace should be capable of undertaking investment opportunities absent of public subsidies. Development within Phase 3 is concentrated on 22 Flint Street and 920 Exchange Street, with adjacent parcels included to complete the redevelopment of the block and rationalize the form, scale and massing of new development in relation to the surrounding neighborhood. Development character should be similar and complementary to Phase 2, with buildings ranging from two to four stories, a minimal amount of surface parking, a significant emphasis placed upon the quality and definition of public realm improvements, and the provision of ample open space for the use and enjoyment of the neighborhood. Phase 3 projects listed at right correspond to the Master Plan phasing as indicated on Map 17.

Phase 3 Projects

- 24. Mixed Use Development with Structured Parking
- 25. Mixed Use Development



Mixed use development in the final stages of the Master Plan should focus on increased density while providing high quality public spaces along the City's waterfront.

Administrative Recommendations

In addition to significant levels of capital investment within the BOA Study Area, there are a host of non-capital actions required to facilitate neighborhood stabilization and the revitalization of the former Vacuum Oil refinery site. Administrative actions include recommendations and activities organized into three broad categories:

- **Policy and regulatory recommendations;**
- **Economic development initiatives; and**
- **Public-private partnerships.**

These recommendations include predevelopment actions, public-private coordination efforts, and policy changes recommended to advance revitalization. Also included are administrative actions such as the utilization of site-selection databases, websites and the establishment of marketing/branding initiatives necessary to implement the BOA vision. These recommendations set the stage for BOA Step 3 Implementation activities, and represent near-term recommendations for the City to undertake in tandem with implementation of Phase 1 of the Master Plan.

Redevelopment Tools

As part of the BOA Step 3 Implementation Strategy, the City should investigate the establishment of Urban Renewal Districts and/or Municipal Redevelopment Project Areas within the BOA pursuant to General Municipal Law Articles 15 and 18-C, respectively. These enabling laws provide tools for the acquisition, assembly and redevelopment of blighted or deteriorating areas, and may be utilized in tandem to provide access to varying forms of local, state and federal funding.

Urban Renewal Districts

The designation of one or more urban renewal districts may be required to facilitate property assembly, construct necessary infrastructure improvements, and clear blighted or deteriorating areas for redevelopment in accordance with the BOA Master Plan. The formation of an Urban Renewal District also permits the City to establish a concentrated code enforcement program which could be utilized in residential or commercial areas. In addition, monies bonded via the City's urban renewal powers can be utilized for environmental remediation in preparation for development by private interests.

Municipal Redevelopment Area

The formation of a Municipal Redevelopment Project Area within the BOA would permit the establishment of a Tax (TIF) or PILOT (PIF) Increment Financing District to provide revenues for public improvements such as parks, public realm improvements, waterfront infrastructure and roadway extensions. NYS MRL provides the City of Rochester with an additional, flexible tool to organize, facilitate, finance and undertake the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the BOA Study Area. NYS MRL precludes the area-wide taking of property unless it requires alteration, improvement or rehabilitation, potentially limiting the use of this tool to targeted groupings of parcels rather than entire blocks of the Study Area.

Activities to Advance Revitalization

The City of Rochester has outlined a series of initial tasks associated with the Implementation Strategy (Step 3) of the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program. Tasks identified by the City are based on findings and recommendations included in the Nomination Study and have been divided into three distinct, yet flexible phases of complementary tasks that advance the implementation of the BOA vision and Master Plan.

Proposed Step 3 Implementation Strategy Activities

PHASE 1: Detailed Analysis and Pre-Development Activities

- Task 1.1: Geotechnical Investigations
- Task 1.2: Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments
- Task 1.3: Land Appraisals
- Task 1.4: Floodplain Engineering Assessment and Mitigation Planning
- Task 1.5: Wetlands and Invasive Species Assessment and Mitigation Planning
- Task 1.6: Building Condition and Structural Assessments
- Task 1.7: Building Asbestos Surveys
- Task 1.8: Neighborhood Park Site Selection and Conceptual Design
- Task 1.9: Civic Engagement & Neighborhood Branding Initiative
- Task 1.10: Developer Site Evaluation Reports and Pro-formas

PHASE 2: Infrastructure and Housing Planning and Analysis

- Task 2.1: Transportation and Infrastructure Feasibility Studies
- Task 2.2: Traffic and Parking Analysis
- Task 2.3: Riverwall Engineering Analysis and Preliminary Design
- Task 2.4: Exchange Street Streetscape and Traffic Calming
- Task 2.5: Housing Reinvestment Strategy

PHASE 3: Recreation Master Plan and Regulatory Updates

- Task 3.1: Waterfront Recreation and Public Realm Master Plan
- Task 3.2: Generic Environmental Impact Statement
- Task 3.3: Urban Renewal District
- Task 3.4: Zoning Updates and Design Standard for Development

Funding

Funding for BOA Master Plan initiatives will come from a host of public and private resources. The overwhelming majority of investment within the BOA will be provided by the private-sector. However, near-term public-sector involvement will be required to shoulder upfront risk, reduce liability and speed development timelines that facilitate private investment. **In addition, public-sector investments in major infrastructure or public-realm improvements will also be required to set the stage for viable private-sector opportunities.** The timing and extent of these investments will be predicated on numerous issues including the disposition of State and Federal budgets and the regional, State and national economic outlook.

The need for public-sector involvement and action to implement the Master Plan cannot be understated. The Master Plan includes several catalytic projects that can likely only be undertaken within the public realm, such as the development of the new City Street between Flint Street and Violetta Street, the 3-acre signature neighborhood park, and the historic interpretation of the Genesee Valley Canal. In addition, the City as a public entity has access to development and funding tools to effectuate large-scale projects, including mechanisms such as tax and/or PILOT increment financing, urban renewal area designation, and municipal redevelopment area designation. **The City will likely be required to employ available methods to plan for and assemble sufficient real estate to realize area-wide revitalization in strategic sites such as the Doran Street neighborhood.** However, the long-term sustainability and financial viability of development within the Vacuum Oil BOA will require projects to persist absent of public subsidies.

Next Steps

Maintaining momentum developed during the Nomination process is critical to ensuring that revitalization efforts take hold. Therefore, **the City should identify 'low-hanging fruit' - short-term projects and initiatives that can be accomplished with limited funding to provide maximum impact.** The implementation of a few highly visible quick-wins, such as the installation of gateway and wayfinding signage along Exchange Street or the improvement and expansion of the Exchange Street Playground, will signal commitment, activity and momentum that should translate into continued public support and private investment.