

## **Section I. Project Description**

### **A. Lead Project Sponsors**

Broome County serves as the sponsoring municipality for the Nomination Study, and the project has been managed through efforts of the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development.

Portions of the Endicott-Johnson Industrial Spine Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) are located in the City of Binghamton and the Village of Johnson City; representatives of these municipalities have participated as members of the project Steering Committee.

Other organizations identified as key stakeholders with Steering Committee representation are as follows: Broome County Industrial Development Agency, The Goodwill Theatre, United Health Services, the Village of Johnson City and the City of Binghamton.

Representatives from the NYS Department State and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation have participated to the Nomination Study in an advisory capacity, and have provided guidance throughout the process.

### **B. Project Overview and Description**

The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program is an interdisciplinary effort by the NYS Department of State and Department of Environmental Conservation, which provides municipalities and community based organizations with assistance to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for areas affected by brownfield sites. The BOA Program enables communities to put strategies in place to return dormant sites and areas back to productive use and simultaneously restore environmental quality.

By identifying the Endicott-Johnson (E-J) Industrial Spine as a Brownfield Opportunity Area, the Broome County community recognizes its potential to once again provide economic and cultural benefits to the region and beyond. This BOA Nomination Study report provides an in-depth description and analysis of existing conditions, opportunities, and redevelopment potential of properties located in the BOA, emphasizing the identification of strategic sites that may serve as catalysts for revitalization.

Following the conclusion of the Nomination Study process, an Implementation Strategy will be developed for the E-J BOA. This process will advance environmental assessment of the area and provide a detailed plan to implement improvements to the E-J BOA Study Area.

Figure I-1 E-J BOA Community Context Map shows the study area’s location relative to the surrounding community. The study area covers approximately 230 acres of land at the western boundary of the City of Binghamton, extending into the Village of Johnson City.

The BOA is approximately one mile west of Downtown Binghamton. The Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers are located to the east and south, respectively. State Highway 201 to the west, and State Highway 17 to the north, provide easy access to the Interstate Highway System. From State Highway 17, the study area is directly accessible via Exit 71 at the northern boundary of the study area near CFJ Park.

Many BOA properties house viable businesses and residential dwellings. However, deteriorating properties are widespread and detract from the area’s character.

A number of large-scale, underutilized properties suitable for major redevelopment are located in the study area. The Nomination Study will focus on Brownfield, abandoned, vacant, or otherwise underutilized properties because of their strategic importance to redevelopment efforts.

A list of brownfield, underutilized or vacant sites identified during the initial stages of the planning process is provided in *Table I-1 Brownfield, Abandoned or Vacant Sites*. These sites were further analyzed as part of this study.

Table I-1 Brownfield, Abandoned or Vacant Sites	
Property Address	Acreage
76 Arch Street	0.1
80 Arch Street	1.2
96 Corliss Avenue	5.6
42 Willow Street	0.2
48 Willow Street	0.3
135-139 Baldwin Street	2.4
147 Grand Avenue	1.5
48 Corliss Avenue	2.0
44 Corliss Avenue	1.3
46 Corliss Avenue	2.0
25 Ozalid Drive	1.9
19 Avenue B	1.0
59 Lester Avenue	4.1
101-105 Lester Avenue	2.8
99 Lester Avenue	7.4
2 Brown Street	0.9

Analyses of the BOA's physical and market conditions, as well as input gathered through meetings and interviews with Steering Committee members and the general public, have been used to help identify a promising course of redevelopment. As plans are implemented, new or expanded commercial activity, along with associated gains in employment, can be expected in the project area. New York State's Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program provides an excellent opportunity to eliminate possible environmental contamination from some of the area's derelict sites, and to attract productive uses to the area. Core institutions such as the area's health care and cultural facilities provide a solid foundation from which additional amenities will be able to expand, while ensuring that populations of residents, employees, and patrons will be available to enjoy benefits of the progress being made.

*The BC Plan* (2002) and the *City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan* (2002) – which have been adopted by Broome County and the City of Binghamton, respectively – include recommendations relevant to the BOA redevelopment process.

The *BC Plan* provides recommendations to help stimulate improvement of the regional economy, and has been referenced throughout the BOA planning process. The following land use actions are recommended in the Implementation Plan portion of *The BC Plan*.

***Implement corridor improvement plans.*** The Main Street corridor is key to the vitality of the BOA. Proposed redevelopment efforts will consider the implications of site accessibility via Main Street, as well as the implications site redevelopment will have upon the Main Street corridor.

***Aggressively continue to pursue brownfield funding and incentives for targeted sites.*** The BOA contains a number of sites that are presumably ripe for funding through brownfield programs. The Nomination Study will identify targeted sites based on their redevelopment potential, and marks an integral step in advancing this *BC Plan* recommendation.

The *City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan* outlines a set of policies and procedures required to achieve the City's vision for the future. The *Comprehensive Plan* applies to the southeastern portion of the study area, which is located in the City of Binghamton. Following are some selected mid-term land use actions recommended in the Citywide Policies and Projects to Enhance Binghamton's Regional Community Image portion of the *City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan*.

***Strengthen and maintain the integrity of gateways.*** The Main Street corridor provides a gateway linking the City of Binghamton to the Village of Johnson City within the BOA. The Nomination Study considers potential redevelopment sites at and near gateway locations, and considers the implications redevelopment initiatives will have upon gateways.

***Prepare sites for redevelopment.*** According to the *Comprehensive Plan*, the City “must be willing to engage in an aggressive proactive campaign to make properties available to meet the needs of today’s corporations.” The BOA Nomination Study will be used to identify strategic sites for redevelopment, and to identify and initiate the pursuit of promising funding sources. The process aims to enhance the development appeal of key BOA properties through financial incentives and marketing campaigns.

***Support the Broome County economic development strategy.*** The BOA crosses municipal boundaries, so the City of Binghamton, Village of Johnson City, and other regional municipalities are stakeholders in its planning and redevelopment. Its redevelopment should hold appeal and provide benefits on a regional scale. The Nomination Study process has been spearheaded by the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development, and involves a diverse group of representatives from Broome County organizations, as well as input from the general public. Regional planning documents such as the *BC Plan* have been consulted throughout the process for reference purposes and to ensure that proposed actions are in line with community visions.

## **C. Community Vision and Goals and Objectives**

The following vision statement was established through the planning process for redevelopment of the Endicott-Johnson Industrial Spine:

*The Endicott Johnson Brownfield Opportunity Area will continue to undergo an urban transformation, and will emerge from its current condition to become a highly functional, productive district. Redevelopment efforts will draw upon the area’s strength as a walkable historic district that includes some of the regions’ premier health care and performing arts establishments. The redeveloped Endicott Johnson Brownfield Opportunity Area will offer a host of cultural and other amenities that enhance the quality of life not only in the immediate neighborhood, but, throughout the broad metropolitan area and beyond.*

### **Goals and Objectives:**

#### **Goal #1: Direct development efforts to distressed properties while preserving viable sites and operations**

##### **Objectives:**

- Conduct a thorough market analysis ***done***
- Conduct background environmental reviews to provide a preliminary screening of environmental conditions ***done***
- Identify strategic sites to serve as the focal points for the redevelopment effort ***done***

**Goal #2: Ensure that the revitalization plan is well-grounded in current market conditions, reflective of the E-J BOA study area’s character, and realistically addresses environmental constraints**

Objectives:

- Solicit input from the general public, community organizations, and stakeholders affected by the redevelopment efforts throughout the planning process *ongoing*
- Prepare in-depth environmental assessments *done*
- Prepare in-depth site pro formas to assess market feasibility *done*

**Goal #3: To guide future development, create a General Land Use Plan that will serve as a basis for a Master Plan of the study area.**

Objectives:

- Develop an overlay zoning designation to maintain the historic character of portions of the EJBOA, including the establishment of ‘build-to’ lines and location of parking areas to the backs of properties *Step 3*
- Encourage future hospital and related commercial expansion/relocation occur east of the campus *Step 3*
- Rezone portions of the E-J BOA to align with the General Land Use Plan *Step 3*

**Goal #4: Use the existing character to provide recommendations specific to each BOA sub-area**

Objectives:

- Examine and describe the character of the sub-areas of the E-J BOA *done*
- Encourage growth of complimentary land uses through a mix of zoning changes and incentives *Step 3*
- Prepare a streetscaping plan for the E-J BOA *Step 3*

**Goal #5: Connect the BOA internally, to adjacent neighborhoods, and to the larger region**

Objectives:

- Improve Pedestrian Corridors between the EJBOA and the surrounding neighborhoods *Step 3*
- Improve visual, physical, and pedestrian connections to Wilson Hospital *Step 3*
- Improve visual, physical, and pedestrian connections to the Government Center *Step 3*

**Goal #6: Provide appealing, marketable opportunities for private investment**

Objectives:

- Prepare and execute a streetscaping plan including curbs, street trees, sidewalks and decorative lighting for the BOA *Step 3*
- Create character area plans for key sites/sub areas *Step 3*
- Require that large parking lots be landscaped with perimeter buffers and internal landscaped islands *Step 3*
- Offer incentives for façade improvements within the BOA. *Step 3*
- Develop, fund and implement a marketing plan for the BOA. *Step 3*

**Goal #7: Create the Willow Street Business Park**

Objectives:

- Create a business park setting with improved circulation, enhanced aesthetics, and signage, including improved connections with Main Street *Step 3*
- Develop a marketing plan for the Willow Street Business Park and fund its implementation *Step 3*

**Goal #8: Revitalize priority sites in a manner that is consistent with community plans, needs and vision**

Objectives:

- Compare redevelopment scenarios against adopted community plans *done*
- Pursue the renovation of the first-floor of the existing buildings at each priority site to current building standards, improving the building exteriors, and ‘mothballing’ upper stories for possible future use *Step 3*
- Prepare Phase I and, as appropriate, Phase II environmental assessments for priority sites *Step 3*
- Prepare in-depth architectural/engineering and cost pro formas for priority sites *Step 3*
- Prepare conceptual site plans for use in marketing sites *Step 3*

**Goal #9: Capitalize on the emerging Goodwill Theatre district by expanding cultural and recreational opportunities available to residents and employees**

Objectives:

- Continue upgrading buildings and surrounding uses to create a heritage and cultural attraction *Step 3*
- Prepare a signage plan for the EJBOA that identifies the emerging Health and Cultural District, Goodwill Theatre, Wilson Hospital, Spool Art Gallery, CFJ Park and gateway/access points *Step 3*

- Support complimentary businesses such as art galleries, studios, restaurants, and nightclubs  
*Step 3*

**Goal #10: To ensure the redevelopment process remains grounded and does not lose momentum; continue to foster partnerships with institutions and stakeholders**

Objectives:

- Review the steering committee membership to ensure it continues to reflect the BOA  
*Ongoing*
- Continue to conduct steering committee meetings throughout the Step 3 process *Step 3*

The visions and goals for the Broome County BOA have been developed through collaboration with steering committee members representing a wide range of parties interested in project outcomes. Existing planning documents, including the *BC Plan* and the *City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan*, have been referenced for accounts of community preferences related to development.

The Nomination Study is an integral step in the long-term process of revitalization of the E-J Industrial Spine. Recent efforts have led to grant funding that will be used to improve the area: Restore NY grant funding has been awarded to demolish the former Ozalid facility at 46 Corliss Avenue, and a Quality Communities grant that has been awarded to establish a health and cultural district located within the study area. The organizations and individuals responsible for these and other ongoing revitalization efforts have been involved throughout the planning process, in order to ensure cooperation and unity between all parties working to improve the area.

## **D. Description of Brownfield Opportunity Area Boundaries & Justification**

The Study Area boundaries were defined by the County prior to the Nomination Study, and contain a number of brownfield properties that are potentially suitable for large-scale redevelopment efforts. Boundaries have been refined through coordination with the project Steering Committee. The Study Area contains an area that approximately represents the historic E-J Industrial Spine, a once-thriving manufacturing district that was home to the E-J Shoe Company. The E-J Company, along with other manufacturers, ceased operations over the course of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and many former industrial properties now stand as a number of underutilized, vacant and abandoned sites.

Properties in the Study Area traditionally supported the area's industrial operations by providing housing for employees and complementary commercial uses that provided goods and services to local residents and businesses. Many properties have fallen into disrepair, and the concentrated nature of blighted properties in the Study Area impacts its viability to support residential and commercial uses, and stands as a barrier to improvement. Thus, the Study Area boundaries are

designed to include the abundant brownfield sites as well as other nearby properties most negatively affected by their presence.

The ***E-J BOA Study Area Boundaries Map*** (Figure I-2) shows the study area boundaries in detail. Glenwood Avenue serves as the eastern boundary; Main Street serves as a southern boundary across much of the area, and a portion of the southern bound is extended to include key Grand Avenue properties. Hudson Street marks the western boundary of the study area. CFJ Park is located in the northernmost part of the study area, and CFJ Boulevard serves as a northern boundary.

Wilson Hospital and related uses are located in the western portion of the study area. These healthcare uses heavily influence the character and potential of the BOA, and will be considered throughout planning efforts. Cultural resources, including the Goodwill Theatre, Firehouse Stage, and religious institutions, are located just east of the hospital. The BOA extends northward to include the CFJ Park and a large vacant property scheduled for development as a Wal-Mart Supercenter in the near future. The southeastern portion of the BOA contains the Main Street gateway corridor, which connects the City of Binghamton with the Village of Johnson City and provides access to locations throughout the study area.