

Section VII. Major Recommendations

A. Introduction

The following recommendations serve as a basis for the Implementation Strategy set forth in Step 3 of the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program. They are provided as an outgrowth of the detailed review of the priority sites presented in Section V of this report as well as the formulation of the General Land Use Plan presented in Section VI. In addition, recommendations are provided that provide direction towards managing and financing the redevelopment of the Brownfield Area.

B. Apply for Step 3: Implementation Strategy

The purpose of the Implementation Strategy is to detail the full range of procedures and activities that are necessary to redevelop the overall study area as well as priority sites targeted for more specific actions. An application for Step 3 should be submitted to the Department of State and Department of Environmental Conservation. This application should be jointly sponsored by the County, City of Binghamton, Village of Johnson City and the Town of Union to signify a concerted effort and commitment to the redevelopment of the E-J BOA.

C. Prepare an E-J BOA Master Plan to Guide Future Decision-making

A Master Plan for the BOA should be prepared building upon the General Land Use Plan. The plan should be adopted by the Village, City and Town and acknowledged through appropriate revisions to the respective zoning regulations. Private development projects and improvements to the public realm should compliment rather than compete with the concepts expressed in the Master Plan. Specifically, this Master Plan should advance the following goals, objectives and recommendations provided throughout this report, such as the following:

Update Local Land Use Plans and Zoning Regulations

Growth of complimentary land uses should be encouraged through a mix of zoning changes and incentives. For example, future hospital and related commercial expansions and relocations should be encouraged to occur east of the Wilson Hospital campus. Portions of the E-J BOA should be rezoned to align with the General Land Use Plan and an overlay zoning designation created to maintain the historic character of portions of the

EJBOA. Establishment of ‘build-to’ lines and location of parking areas to the backs of properties is also advised.

Improve Physical Connections to unify the E-J BOA

The integrity of gateways into the BOA should be strengthened and maintained and the pedestrian corridors between the EJBOA and surrounding neighborhoods should be highlighted. Specifically, the visual, physical and pedestrian connections to Wilson Hospital, Goodwill Theatre and the Village Government Center should be clearly identified and highlighted with unique signage and lighting.

Include a Streetscape Plan

Unify and enhance the public realm of the E-J BOA making it more attractive to new businesses looking to locate within the area. This streetscape plan should build on the features recently introduced on Main Street with a focus on improvements to:

- Curbs
- Street trees
- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Decorative Lighting

Streetscape improvements should be prioritized and construction phases identified accordingly. Lester Avenue, Corliss Avenue and Willow Street and Main Street should be the focus of the first phases.

Include a Signage Plan

Unique signage should be created that identifies the emerging Health and Cultural District, Goodwill Theatre, Wilson Hospital, Spool Art Gallery, CFJ Park and gateway/access points.

D. Advance the Emerging Goodwill Theatre District

Building on the recent improvements to the Fire House Theatre and associated structures, this district could become a regional draw for future cultural and recreational attractions. Complimentary businesses such as art galleries, studios, restaurants, and nightclubs should be encouraged to locate within the BOA and specifically within this district.

E. Prepare Priority Sites for Redevelopment

There is much work to be done to get the priority sites ready for redevelopment. These steps need to be itemized based on the current disposition of the individual building. To begin the redevelopment process, Phase I and, as appropriate, Phase II environmental assessments

should be completed for all priority sites to clearly understand the environmental concerns inherent in each property. Conceptual site plans should be prepared for use in a marketing plan explaining the virtues of each site. Eventually, updated architectural and engineering plans and cost pro formas will be required to show to potential developers. As discussed in Section V, it appears to be financially feasible to 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.

F. Strengthen Partnerships between the County, City, Town, Village and the Private Sector

Redeveloping the E-J BOA is largely dependant upon the collaboration of many public and private individuals and organizations including Wilson Hospital, private investors and the local community. These partnerships are critical in advancing the initiatives to be put forth in the Master Plan as well as redeveloping the priority sites. The Steering Committee created to oversee the preparation of this Nomination Study should convene throughout Step 3 of the BOA Program to continue the relationships built to date.

G. Aggressively continue to pursue brownfield funding and incentives for targeted sites

The E-J BOA contains priority sites that are ripe for funding through brownfield programs. Requests to State agencies should seek to target funding for the priority sites and overall redevelopment of the BOA. It is not feasible to expect public monies to solely finance the redevelopment of the BOA. The goal is for public funds to be used to create an environment where private developers will want to invest in a specific project that will provide a return on their investment. These projects will in turn spark other private sector interest and the tide will be turned.