

City of Rochester Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) Update

Project Description/ Background / Next Steps

DESCRIPTION OF THE LWRP UPDATE:

- * The City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is the official statement of land use and development policy for the city's waterfront areas (Genesee River, Lake Ontario and the Erie Canal).
- * The purpose of this project is to update the city's LWRP, which was originally adopted by City Council in 1990. The LWRP is listed as an "implementing strategy" for the city's Comprehensive Plan in Chapter 130 of the City Code. This update will expand the boundary of the plan to include all of the city's waterfront areas along Lake Ontario, the Genesee River and the Erie Canal. The update will also identify new waterfront policies, projects and priorities that will serve as a guide for future development and infrastructure improvements, and will help expand and leverage potential funding opportunities.
- * A consultant team has been hired by the city that will work with a Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) consisting of city staff, other governmental agencies, neighborhood residents, major institutions and property owners as well as other waterfront stakeholders to complete the project. It is anticipated that the LWRP Update will be completed by December, 2013.
- * Funding for this project is being provided by an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant from the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS). Authorization to apply for this grant was approved by City Council on December 18, 2007. The final grant agreement with NYSDOS was approved and executed in November, 2010. The NYSDOS grant will be used to reimburse consultant expenditures for work on the project as tasks are completed.

ADVANTAGES OF THE LWRP:

- * An LWRP provides a potential funding pipeline for state and federal planning and project implementation grants and funds (i.e., NYS Environmental Protection Fund / Consolidated Application Fund - CAF). Projects that have received state/federal funding as a direct result of being listed as prior LWRP recommendations include the Army Corps of Engineers Wave Surge Protection Structure at the mouth of the Genesee River, the new O'Rourke Bridge and the elevated river walk at Turning Point Park through the Turning Basin.
- * An LWRP establishes a consistency requirement for project approvals and permitting activities by local, state and federal agencies within the boundaries of the plan.
- * An LWRP provides a mechanism for coordination of land use, zoning and environmental decisions that may be adjacent to or that cross municipal boundaries.
- * An LWRP establishes a land use and planning framework for the city's waterfront areas that will guide and influence future decision-making at all levels of government (city, town, county, state and federal agencies).

BACKGROUND/CHRONOLOGY OF THE LWRP UPDATE:

- * **1972:** The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was passed by Congress in 1972 to create a planning and environmental protection framework for the nation's coastal areas. New York State implemented provisions of that act as the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) which establishes state coastal policies and land use planning and development guidelines for the coastal zone to be implemented by local municipalities.
- * **1990:** The city's original LWRP was prepared by the City Planning Bureau and adopted by City Council in 1990. Boundaries of plan included the city's lakefront (including Durand-Eastman Park) and the city's riverfront from the port south to the Lower Falls. A major inventory/analysis of the lakefront and river corridor was completed and 44 NYS coastal policies were also addressed in the plan. Recommendations included improvements to or redevelopment of underutilized waterfront land and development of new waterfront recreational opportunities. Major projects completed from the original plan include:
 - * Construction of the Genesee River Wave Surge Protection Structure
 - * Public improvements to Ontario Beach Park, Seneca Park, Maplewood Park, Durand-Eastman Park and Lower Falls Park
 - * Public infrastructure improvements at the Port Site and along River Street
 - * Completion of Genesee River Trail Segments
 - * Construction of new O'Rourke Bridge over the Genesee RiverA Draft and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) were also completed.
- * **1999:** The city completed a draft update of the LWRP in 1999 and submitted it to the NYS Department of State (NYSDOS) for preliminary review and approval. Final approval was never obtained due to concerns about the document's length and format and unresolved issues related to the Port Site, operations of the Fast Ferry and overall harbor management.
- * **2006:** Sasaki Associates completed the Port of Rochester Master Plan in 2006.
- * **2007:** The city applied for and received a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund to undertake an update to the city's 1990 LWRP. The purpose of the grant and update was to extend the current boundary of the program along the Genesee River Gorge from the Lower Falls south through downtown Rochester to the Erie Canal and to re-examine waterfront development issues and priorities.
- * **2009:** Consultants (Abonmarche) completed the Marina Engineering Report and Feasibility Study for the Port of Rochester site in 2009. Implementation of that study included amending the city's 1990 LWRP with appropriate land use, planning and marina design recommendations (LWRP Amendment).
- * **2010:** The LWRP Amendment was approved by City Council in 2010 and by the New York State Department of State in 2011.
- * **2012:** The city issued an RFP for the update of the 1990 LWRP in 2012. A consultant team was selected and hired and the 18-month project got underway in November, 2012.

NYSDOS INVOLVEMENT IN THE LWRP UPDATE:

- * The New York State Department of State will be directly involved in the completion of the city's LWRP Update through grant funding of consultant work and approval of reimbursable payment claims, participation in the city's LWRP Waterfront Advisory Committee and the review and approval of work products produced in each individual project task (document sections) as outlined in the contract scope of work. NYSDOS will also review and approve the Draft and Final LWRP Update documents as well as the various environmental analyses and determinations made about the project under SEQR.

NEXT STEPS:

- * The city issued an RFP in January of 2012 for consultant services to complete the LWRP Update and selected a consultant team (Ingalls Planning and Design) in the summer of 2012. The consultant contract has been signed and the project is underway. The city has formed a Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) to oversee the project and will also create ad-hoc focus groups to engage the public and waterfront stakeholders in the project and to solicit community input on and support for potential waterfront development recommendations. An LWRP Update web page will also be established on the city's web site to facilitate public understanding of the project and collect community input and feedback on waterfront issues and project recommendations. The project is expected to be completed by December, 2013.
- * The update project involves completion of 8 major document sections (tasks), a minimum of two public informational meetings, several stakeholder focus group meetings and an environmental review and analysis process (SEQR). A draft and final LWRP document will be completed which will be submitted to Rochester City Council and NYSDOS for review and approval. In addition, a public executive summary document will also be produced and will be distributed to interested citizens and stakeholders through the city's web site.