



# VILLAGE OF PHOENIX COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE DRAFT

Village of Phoenix, New York

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## **Village of Phoenix Comprehensive Plan Update**

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## **Section 1      Project Introduction and Background**

The Village of Phoenix was awarded a NYS Office of Community Renewal Grant to update the Village's 1994 Comprehensive Plan and incorporate the recommendations from the 2007 Strategic Plan for the Canal Waterfront District. In addition to further developing a strategy for implementing the previous Plan's recommendations; the primary goal for this update is to create a thriving canal community that provides a diverse mix of goods and services for Village residents, visitors and members of the surrounding community.

The 1994 Plan established goals for revitalizing the waterfront and historic downtown area. Many of these goals have not been accomplished, areas of downtown have not been revitalized and some blighted conditions continue to exist. For example, the facades of some buildings are in need of rehabilitation; several buildings are vacant and are deteriorating; the visual effect is not conducive to attracting new businesses and undermines the historic value of the waterfront and downtown. The Village administration is committed to revitalizing the downtown in order to enhance the vibrancy and quality of life for the residents.

The 2007 Plan was prepared to provide elected officials, residents, and business owners in the Village of Phoenix, with a framework from which they can work together in the coming years to guide future growth and enhancements of the Canal Waterfront District. The Strategic Plan includes a series of recommended projects and activities that address the need for increased boater services and accommodations; enhanced recreational opportunities, community development and restoration; additional marketing and community involvement; and changes to existing policy.

The updated Comprehensive plan will be the principle document outlining a community's direction, policy and action for the future and will provide a flexible framework for adapting to real conditions over time. This plan is developed with the general purpose of guiding and implementing the coordinated development of the community in accordance with existing and future needs, while best promoting the general welfare of the citizenry.

Properly used, a comprehensive plan is the basis for decision-making by the Village Council as well as the Planning and Zoning Board. The Plan will also guide the private sector toward sustainable and beneficial activities that help to improve the community for generations to come.

**The objectives of the Plan Update are as follows:**

- > Understand changing economic conditions, past and present;
- > Identify current economic conditions;
- > Identify community attitudes toward characteristics (vision);
- > Identify attainable goals and actions for a step-by-step process for improving economic conditions;
- > Identify and describe potential funding sources which may include a wide variety of state, federal, and private sources including state grants through the new Consolidated Funding Application Process which could include the Community Development Block Grant program, NY Main Street Program, Canal Way Grants Program and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program; and
- > Serve as the basis and foundation for selecting eligible projects for subsequent application to the funding sources identified by the planning process.

## **Section 2 Community Vision, Goals and Objectives**

### **Community Vision Statement**

The 1994 Village of Phoenix Comprehensive Plan did not contain a Community Vision. After the Existing Conditions analysis, the 1994 Plan provided a series of Goals, Objectives and Strategies. The 2007 Strategic Plan for the Canal Waterfront District did provide a Vision Statement.

#### *2007 Strategic Plan Vision Statement*

“The Village of Phoenix seeks to protect and develop its economic, historic, and natural resources; enhance its canal waterfront district; and expand year round cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities, while maintaining adequate and affordable community services and improving the quality of life.”

Using the 2007 Plan Vision Statement as a starting point, the Working Committee prepared the following Draft Community Vision Statement to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update:

#### *Draft 2013 Community Vision Statement*

(Note: This Vision Statement is written in future tense, that is, what the Village would look like in a 10-15 year time period.)

“The Village of Phoenix is a destination community that takes pride in and embraces our canal history through continued economic development initiatives and our commitment to compatible building and open space design. Our economy is thriving, sustainable and diverse, the nucleus of which is a vibrant and historic downtown along the Canal. Our businesses and setting attracts people from around the country to our distinctive canal-centered environment.

We live in a unique canal-oriented environment that is continually enhanced and preserved in a manner that ensures a healthy ecosystem and robust economy. Our citizens and visitors use and appreciate our water resources responsibly. Phoenix is a welcoming, friendly and affordable community that seeks to maintain its small-town character while nurturing continued growth and success.

Our local and regional schools; government and community institutions work collaboratively to provide valuable services and opportunities to all residents and visitors. There is a rich variety of social, cultural and recreational activities for citizens and visitors of all ages and we enjoy convenient access to major cities, attractions as well as educational and cultural opportunities. The Village of Phoenix is the pride of its citizens and the envy of visitors. It is a community that many of our children plan to make their home.”

### **Goals and Objectives**

The 1994 Plan provided a series of Goals, Objectives and Strategies for implementation, while the 2007 Plan provided detailed recommendations. Once the Draft Community Vision Statement was agreed upon, the Committee and Saratoga Associates next identified draft Goals and Recommendations to implement the Vision. The 1994 and 2007 Plans were used as the starting point in identifying the draft Goals and Objectives.

Based upon Committee input with assistance from Saratoga Associates, the following Goals and Objectives are proposed.

#### **Goal 1: Continue to recognize the Village’s waterfront as a primary asset and maximize its potential in playing a key role to community success.**

**Objective 1A:** Make additional improvements to Lock Island and North Island Parks to provide additional recreational amenities and more opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the resource; and to ultimately convert the island and adjacent downtown area into a premier destination along the Canal.

**Objective 1B:** Aggressively market and utilize the Canal system to enhance economic development and recreational opportunities in the Village.

#### **Goal 2: Actively support and participate in the revitalization and reinvestment of the Downtown Canal District**

**Objective 2A:** Actively encourage and provide assistance where practical for the revitalization and reuse of underutilized, unoccupied and vacant buildings.



**Objective 2B:** Actively encourage and provide assistance where practical to facilitate new economic development opportunities for local residents and improve the overall economic health of the Village.

**Objective 2C:** Improve the overall aesthetics of the Downtown Canal District including but not limited to building facades, streetscape infrastructure and pedestrian amenities.

**Objective 2D:** Improve physical and visual connections between State Street and Lock Island Park

**Goal 3: Create vibrant, attractive and resilient residential neighborhoods which provide homes for a healthy mix of homeowners, renters and families of all income levels.**

**Objective 3A:** Establish a comprehensive neighborhood improvement program for the Village's residential neighborhoods.

**Objective 3B:** Improve the quality and appearance of residential and non-residential structures in neighborhoods, both renter and owner-occupied.

**Objective 3C:** Encourage new single-family dwellings and subdivisions consistent with the existing Village pattern of development.

**Objective 3D:** Facilitate a healthy mix of single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings and apartments.

**Objective 3E:** Construct one or more pocket parks or small playgrounds within safe walking distance of the core residential neighborhoods.

**Goal 4: Protect and enhance the natural resources upon which the success of the Village depends.**

**Objective 4A:** Continue implementing various strategies to protect the Village's water supply.

**Objective 4B:** Ensure the Village's key environmental resources are protected as new development occurs.

**Objective 4C:** Consider creating an interpretive program focused on the Canal and Oswego River and on environmental stewardship of these and other resources.

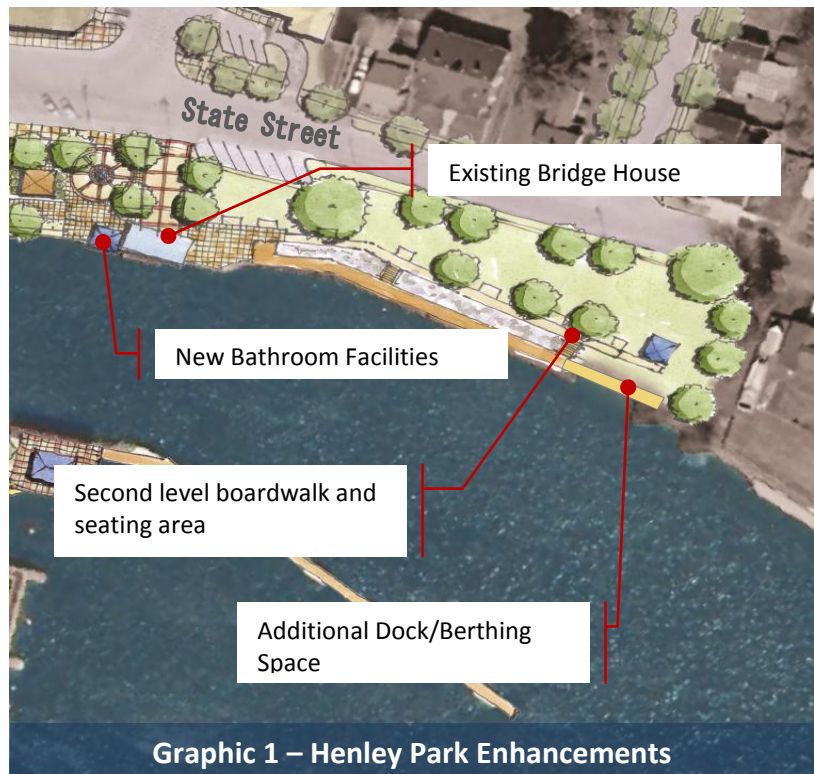
### Section 3 – Downtown Canal District Recommendations

This section provides a series of recommendations geared towards revitalizing the Downtown Canal District.

#### 3.1 Henley Park Enhancements (see Graphic 1)

##### a. Additional Dock/Berthing Space:

The primary improvement being considered is the construction of additional docking space along the Canal. There is currently approximately 200 linear feet of broadside berthing space at Henley Park. An additional 75 linear feet could be added. This will provide a total of approximately 275 feet of broadside berthing space for boaters to tie up before passing through Lock 1 and in turn may lead to additional customers for local businesses. In addition to the expanded berthing space, the expansion will provide more seating and picnic areas directly along the Canal.



##### b. Second Level Boardwalk and Seating Area

Currently, the landside/uphill portion of the park provides a few stone tables, benches and an open-maintained lawn for picnicking and enjoying Canal/River views. Some of the green space is uneven and often not fully utilized. It is recommended that a boardwalk be constructed parallel to the shoreline complete with seating and direct connections to the waterside dock

area. This improvement will provide additional fully accessible space with views of the Canal and River and would significantly enhance the utilization of this key community asset.

### c. New Bathroom Facilities

There are no public restrooms or shower facilities in the Downtown Canal District. The Village has proposed to construct bathroom and shower facilities adjacent to the Bridge House. This will provide an additional reason for boaters to stop and spend time in the Village. The Village has requested funding through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process to construct the facilities and is currently awaiting a decision.

## 3.2 Lock Island Park East Enhancements (see Graphic 2)

### a. New Docking Facilities and Walkway

There are several unused concrete pillars located parallel to the Village shoreline once used as part of a previous industrial facility. Using these structures, new docking space can be constructed along with a walkway to Lock Island Park. Close coordination with New York State is required to determine the feasibility and any potential conflicts with the operation of Lock 1. The addition of new docking facilities will increase the total number of possible boaters that could stop over in the Village and contribute to the local economy. This improvement will also improve the aesthetic conditions of this key water-based gateway into the Village.



### b. Internal Lock Island Park Improvements

Lock Island Park lacks organized programming with no clear delineation between public and Canal Corporation space. During the summer months, the Park can be an uninviting place with virtually no shade for Park users or facilities to allow visitors to get out of the sun or rain. Any permitted public parking spaces are not marked and Canal Corporation vehicles are sometimes parked in various locations including along the paved path leading to the pavilion. There is the potential for conflicts between park users and staff at Lock 1 as well as personal that need access to the grinder dam at the eastern point of the island.

Improvements could include the removal of the overgrown planters that appear not to be sufficiently maintained; the construction of clearly delineated public parking spaces; along with new walking paths surrounded by additional shade trees and small pavilions and outdoor grills for picnics and family gatherings. The addition of a small playground and delineated viewing and seating areas along Lock 1 is also recommended.

Finally, regular maintenance of these park facilities is critical to their success. It will be important for the Village and NYS to clarify who is ultimately responsible for current maintenance at the Park. As new improvements are planned and implemented, a clear understanding of maintenance responsibility and associated costs are necessary.

### c. Improve Safety of Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to Lock Island Park (See Graphic 3)

The current access route to Lock Island for pedestrians or bicyclists is via Culvert Street and over the lift bridge. The bridge provides an extremely narrow sidewalk on the south side. The sidewalk terminates at the end of the bridge forcing pedestrians long the edge of the road and driveway entering the Park. In addition, the speed of traffic heading into and out of the Village along this section of Culvert Street presents an unsafe environment. At certain



times, an “Employee Parking Only” sign is placed at the entrance to the park by the Canal Corporation, therefore limiting access to the Park by bike or foot only.

Pedestrians have been seen crossing over to Lock Island via the Canal lock gates, which is prohibited as indicated by signage. This access should be clearly prohibited. With improved safety along Culvert Street, more people may prefer accessing the Park via Culvert Street rather than trying to cross the Canal lock gates.

A long-term alternative may be the construction of a small pedestrian bridge from the Village pocket park along State Street to Lock Island. A pedestrian bridge would not only provide safer access, it could provide an additional viewing point of the Canal and passing boats. This could also become a significant attraction for the Downtown Canal District. This alternative, if desired, is clearly a long-term project requiring significant coordination with NYS and acquisition of sufficient funding.

### **3.3 North Island Park Enhancements (see Graphic 4)**

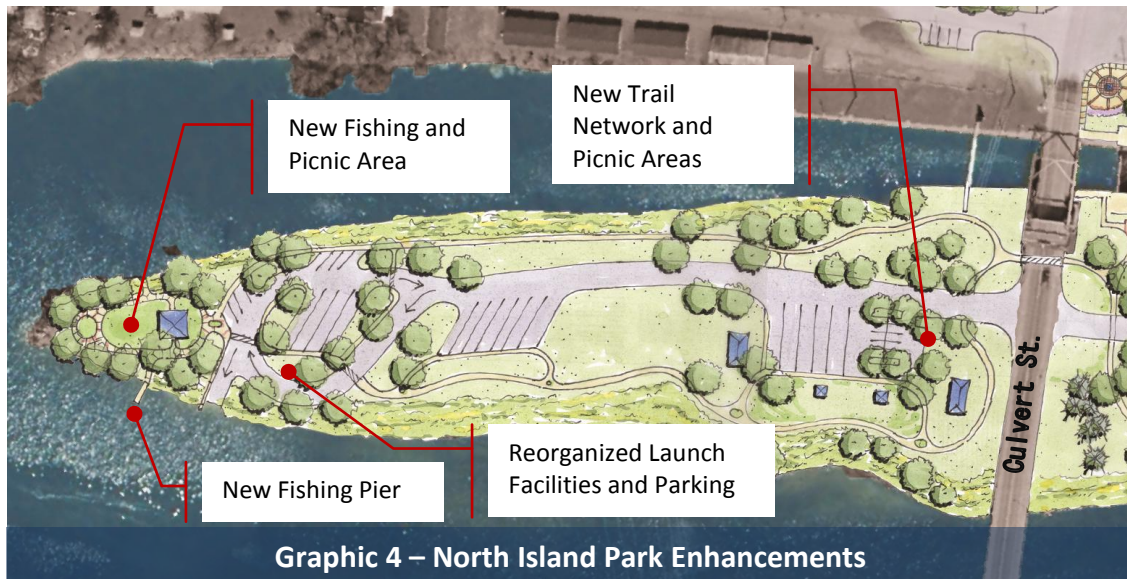
#### **a. Reconfigure Parking Lots and Boat Launch Areas**

The current parking lots and boat launch is unorganized and results in scattered parking, the potential for blocking of the launch and parking on unpaved surfaces, causing erosion. It is recommended that the boat launch and parking system be guided by a reorganization of the lot with one-way access to minimize conflicts. Striped parking stalls should also be considered with ones designated for vehicles pulling boat trailers and others without trailers. Overall improvements to North Island Park and the facilitation of increased use by boaters will have a positive economic impact on the Village through increased visitation to downtown businesses and other amenities throughout the community.

#### **b. Separate Boat Launch and Fishing Areas**

It has been reported that occasional conflicts exist between park users fishing and others launching and retrieving trailered boats, kayaks and canoes. To minimize future conflicts it is recommended that a designated fishing area be identified a sufficient distance from the hand carry and trailer launch site.





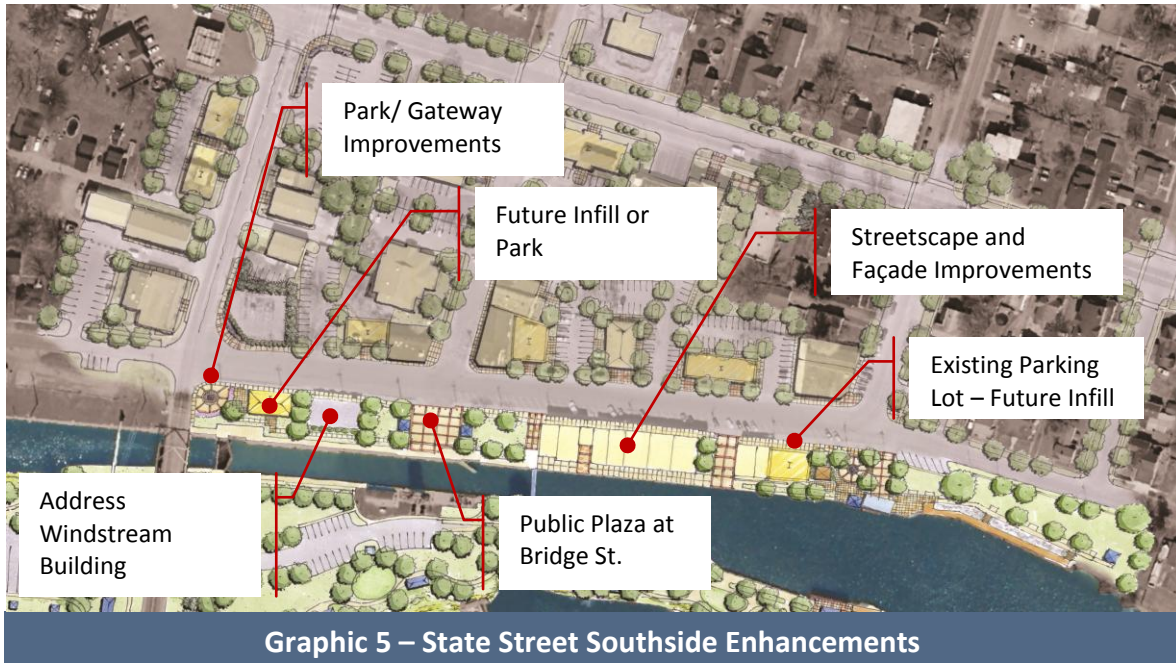
**c. Construct Small Pavilions, Designated Picnic Areas and Delineated Walking Paths**

To make this side of the island more attractive to visitors who may not be interested in fishing or boating, a new designated trail system could be constructed with small pavilions located in scenic spots. These pavilions and picnic areas would expand the types of recreational uses offered by the Park. As noted for Lock Island, regular maintenance of these facilities and allocation of proper funding is critical to the Park's long-term success.

**3.4 State Street – Southside Enhancements (see Graphic 5)**

**a. Pocket Park, Infill Development and Gateway Improvements at Corner of State and Culvert Streets**

In an effort to enhance this major gateway into the Village and the Downtown Canal District, it is recommended that the open space at the corner of Sate and Culvert Streets be made into a pocket park creating visual interest and an additional location for viewing Lock 1. Adjacent to the pocket park, the vacant property currently owned by the Village could be sold for future infill development. If conveying this property for future development is not feasible, officially integrating the area into the Canal-side park space is recommended.



#### b. Address Windstream Building’s Incompatible Architecture

The Windstream Communications building that houses switching equipment is out of character with the remainder of the Downtown Canal District. Two alternatives are recommended: Sufficiently screening the building from public view or relocating it to a more suitable location. The building is an inefficient use of valuable Downtown Canal District Property. The first step could be holding discussions with Windstream to determine the feasibility of relocating the building. If such a move is not feasible, the Village should identify the proper method to sufficiently screen the building.





### c. Create a Public Plaza at the End of Bridge Street

The end of Bridge Street at the edge of Lock 1 is an underutilized section of the waterfront. Maintaining access from Bridge Street to the island is important in case of an emergency. The construction of a public plaza is recommended at this section of Bridge Street complete with attractive concrete pavers and other decorative improvements at grade. This improvement will maintain existing access via the draw bridge while at the same time improve the aesthetics of the road through integration with the Canal-side park lands.



End of Bridge Street and Drawbridge

With these aesthetic improvements, the area becomes more visually connected with the downtown waterfront. In addition, the area could be incorporated into downtown festivals, farmers markets, and be use as a public gathering area to view the waterfront. No improvements are recommended that would interfere with future access to the island via the draw bridge.

### d. Identify Opportunities to Improve the Canal-Side Building Facades

The building facades facing the Canal exhibit very little architectural character. While not in poor or deteriorated condition, the blank walls detract from the waterfront character. The façades along the Canal serve primarily as ingress/egress points for building owners. Improvements to the facades would add additional character to the Village as seen from the Canal.



Canal-Side of State Street Buildings

Major renovations to the rear facades are not necessary to add value to the waterfront. The use of various colors and some minor architectural details would be a significant improvement and create a unique environment for boaters and other users of the waterfront.



**Graphic 6 – Façade Improvement Example**

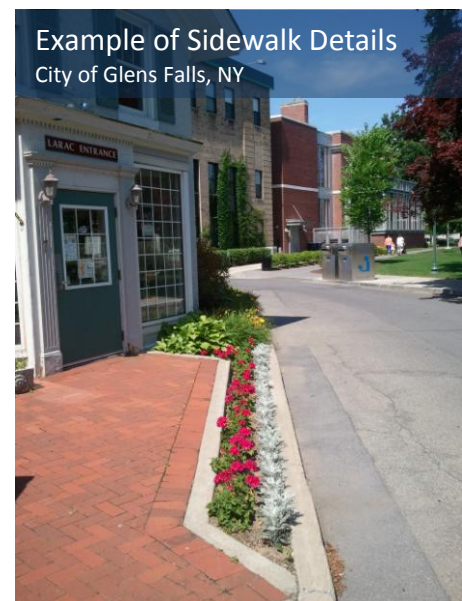
*Figure 6 – Façade Improvement Example*, is provided to depict how the buildings could be dramatically improved through the use of interesting colors and various levels of façade renovations. The Village applied for funds through the Consolidated Funding Application process for building owners to begin making aesthetic improvements.

#### **e. Future Infill Site Next to Henley Park**

The small parking lot across State Street from Lock 1 Restaurant is an incompatible use of waterfront property. While it does provide close parking to adjacent businesses, it is also valuable land that could be occupied by infill development as market conditions dictate. The removal of this lot would result in a net loss of 6 spaces as additional on-street parking could be provided.

#### **f. State Street Southside Streetscape Enhancements**

This side of State Street has a nice comfortable wide sidewalk with public benches and trash receptacles. What is detracting are the overhead electrical and telephone lines and poles. Burying the lines can be very expensive and



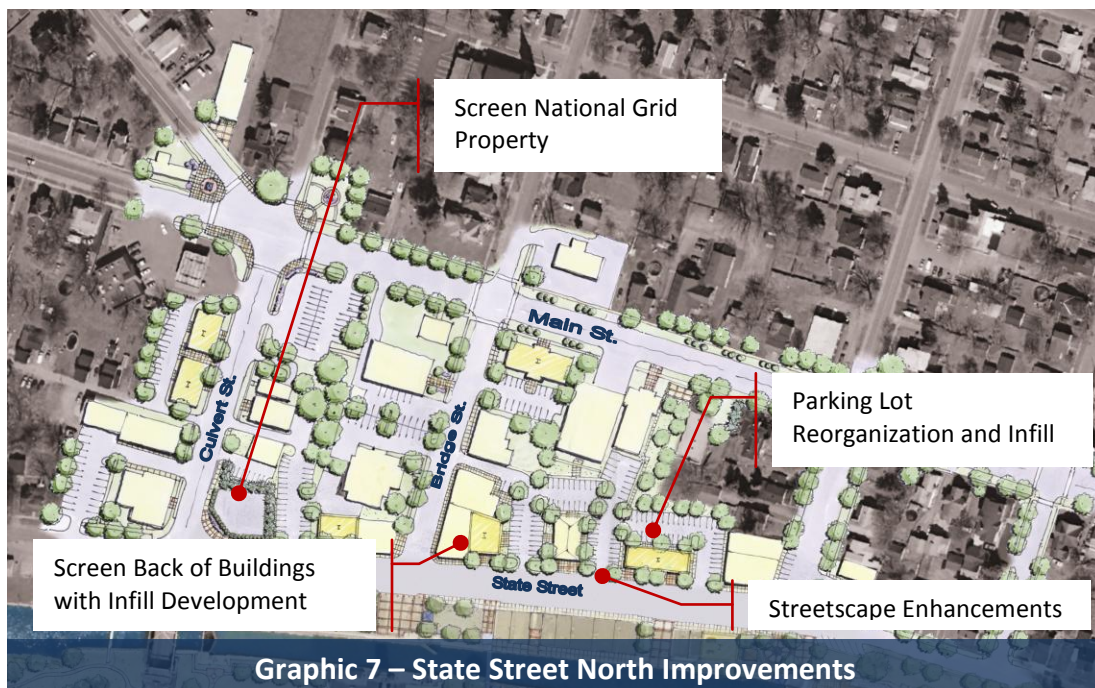


National Grid does not cover the associated costs. Therefore, the Village should aggressively seek the necessary funding to bury the lines during a complete streetscape improvement project which would include street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and sidewalk details to add additional character to the pedestrian environment.

### 3.5 State Street Northside Improvements (see Graphic 7)

#### a. Screen National Grid Property

At the corner of State and Culver Streets sits a National Grid facility surrounded by a chain linked fence topped with barbed wire. The facility is not screened and is very visible from surrounding streets, sidewalks and park area. Unfortunately, it is one of the first elements seen by someone traveling into the Village from across the Canal. It is imperative that the facility be screened and the Village should contact National Grid to identify feasible alternatives to address this issue.



**b. Reorganization of Public Parking Lots and Future Infil Sites**

The Village owns two large surface parking lots on the north side of State Street, between Bridge and Lock Streets and behind Village Hall and the fire station. As part of an overall parking strategy (to be discussed later) and if the opportunity arises under the optimum market conditions, future infill development on at least one of these lots would help create a clear building edge along State Street, and a more interesting pedestrian realm for visitors.

**c. Streetscape Enhancements**

While sidewalks along the northern side of State Street are wide and in good condition, the addition of planters, benches and additional pedestrian-scaled lighting would create a more welcoming environment for pedestrians. The removal of the overhead lines and telephone poles is also recommended as previously discussed.

**d. Screen Back of Buildings**

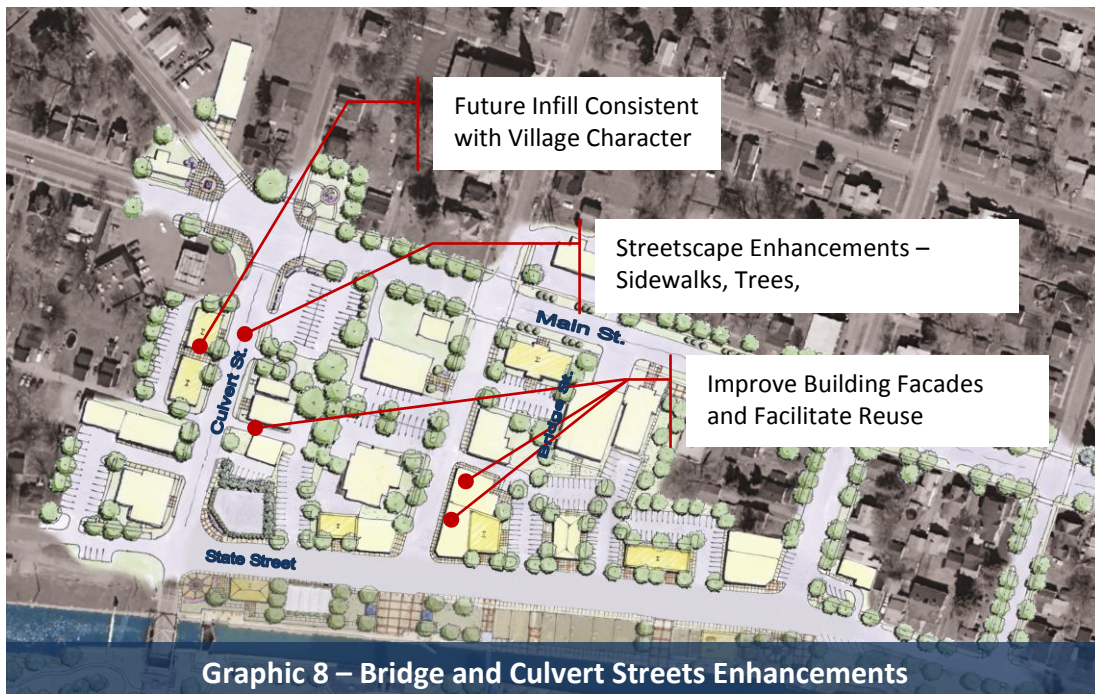
Due to the Village-owned public parking lot nearest Bridge Street, the rear facades of buildings are visible. One section is a two-story blank brick wall that detracts from the overall streetscape. The adjacent vegetation is overgrown and not well maintained. An interim solution may be the placement vegetation to screen a portion of the wall, combined with aesthetic improvements to the structures. A longer term solution would be the construction of an infill building to screen the structure.



### 3.6 Bridge and Culvert Street Enhancements (Graphic 8)

#### a. Improve Building Facades and Faciliate New Uses

The building at the corner of State and Bridge Street is in need of façade improvements and internal renovations. At the writing of this report, the Village is the existing owner. The Village is currently in negotiations with a potential new owner who would make necessary improvements and get the building back onto the assessment roles and contributing to the health of the local economy.





The next building up Bridge Street with the ground floor occupied by a new restaurant, formerly the River Rock Bar and Grill. The building is in good condition with some minor façade improvements necessary. The shorter building next to the restaurant appears to be vacant on the first floor with residential on the second. The building is in need of significant façade improvements as the front door appears to be blocked and various colored bricks and treatments not in character with the downtown have been used in previous renovations.



River Rock Bar and Grill



Underutilized Buildings – Culvert

The next set of buildings in need of improvements or replacement are located along Culvert Street just north of the National Grid facility. These buildings were once part of a service station and appear to be used for storage or some other commercial use. As such, these buildings are underutilized and out of character with the downtown. As market conditions allow, the complete renovation or removal

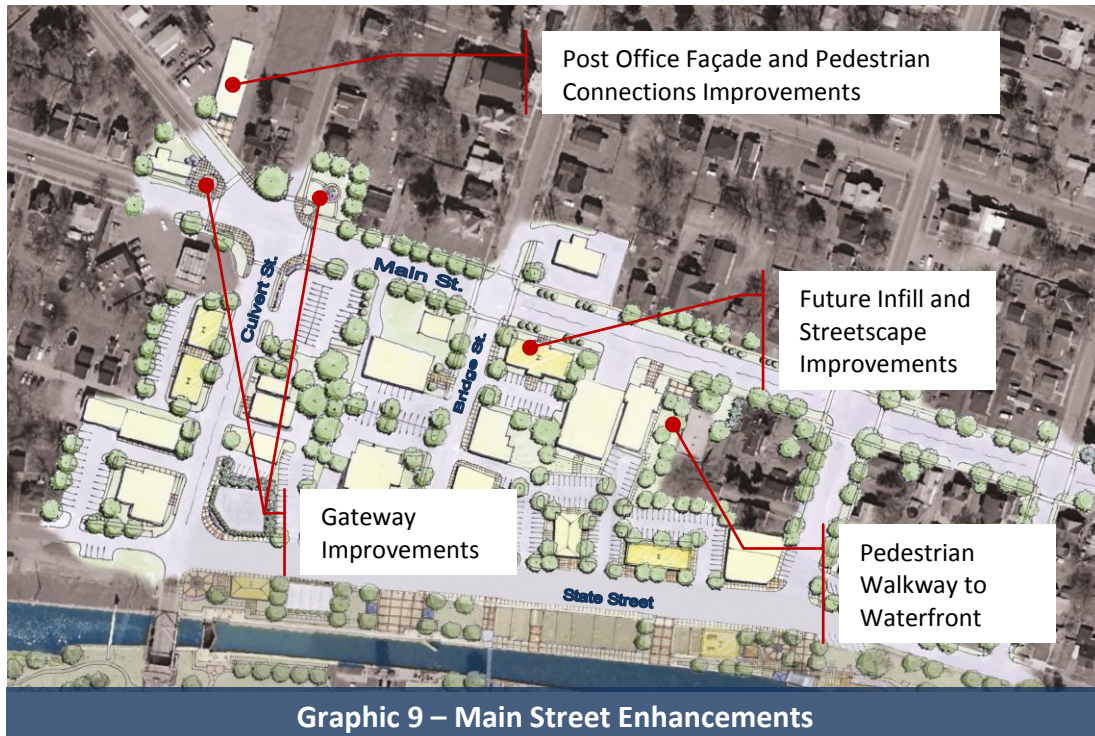
of the structures is recommended as the area is a prime section of the downtown and could be put to better use. Uses that draw foot traffic and customers to the area would be more compatible in the Downtown area.

Across Culvert Street from the former service station are two vacant properties currently owned by the owner of the adjacent Nice N Easy Grocery Store. Given the location and “shovel-ready” nature of the property, these sites should be targeted for compatible infill development which may in turn incentivize the redevelopment of the former service station properties across the street. Development that does occur on these sites should be consistent with the Village character.

### 3.7 Main Street Enhancements (Graphic 9)

#### a. Pedestrian Walkway to Waterfront

There is open space between the Village Hall and the Masonic Lodge that could be converted into a pleasant walkway from the public parking lots to Main Street with scenic views of the Canal and River.



#### b. Future Infill and Streetscape Improvements

The redemption center at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets is a prime location for a new mixed-use structure with commercial on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors. The current sidewalk is in poor shape and should be improved along with street trees consistent with the rest of Main Street.

#### c. Gateway Improvements

There are two highly visible properties that make up part of the gateway into the Village along Main Street: the triangle at the intersection of Main and Volney, and the property at the northeast corner of the Main and Culvert Street intersection. The triangle parcel in front of the Town of Schroepel Historical Society is currently cluttered with various street signs and



Town of Schroepel Historical Society

overhead power lines that detract from the assets of the historical building and prime gateway resource. This area should have limited signage with low flower beds, a seating area and other aesthetic improvements to frame this important architectural and gateway resource.

The second property, a vacant parcel at the northeast corner of Culvert and Main could be converted into an attractive pocket park or playground that adds additional character to this gateway and highly visible section of the Village.

#### d. Post Office Façade and Pedestrian Improvements

More consideration should be given to visually integrating the U.S. Post Office with the remainder of the Downtown. The Post Office is currently tucked away with no clear entrance point from Volney Street. The facades visible from Main and Volney Streets are stark and inconsistent with the Village character. Coordination with the Post Office should be considered to enhance the facades and seek to better integrate the structure from a pedestrian and aesthetic perspective.



U.S. Post Office



### 3.8 Village-Wide Waterfront Enhancements

#### a. Potential North Shore Marina and Residential Development

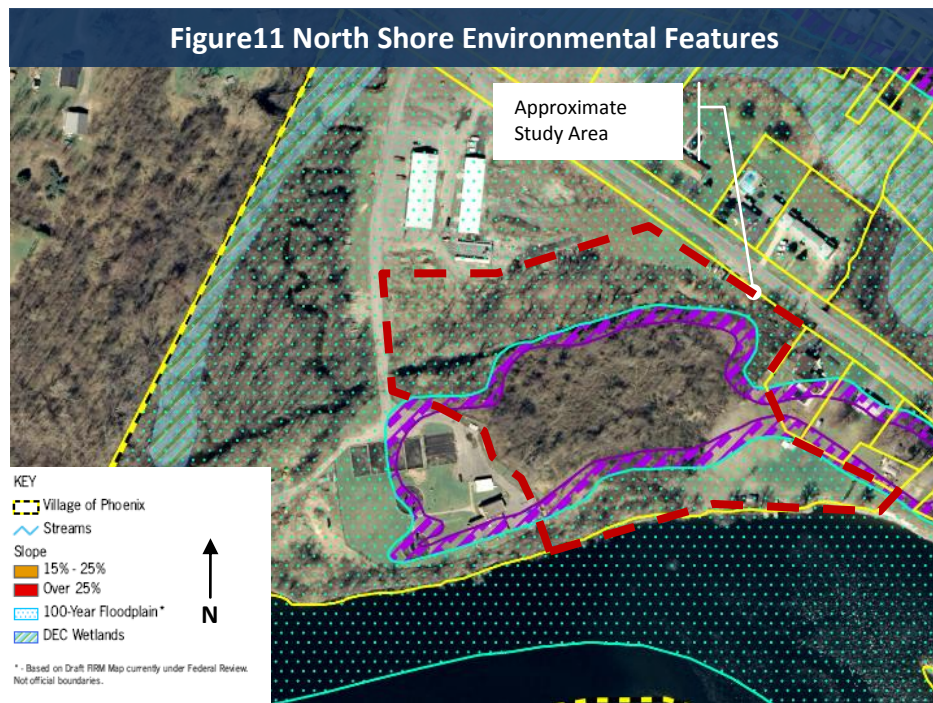
##### Existing Conditions

The Village of Phoenix would like to evaluate the feasibility of having a marina and residential development constructed on the Village-owned property east of the wastewater treatment facility – see *Figure 10 Approximate Boundary of Potential Development*. The intent of this project would be to provide an additional canal-based economic development resource for the community. A marina and residential development is being considered to increase the attractiveness of the Village and to provide additional opportunities for boaters to stop and stay in the Village for longer periods of time.



The implementation of this project will have some challenges. As depicted on *Figure 11 – North Shore Environmental Features*, a large section of the property appears to be within the 100-year floodplain, including along the shoreline and north of the stream. These features are likely to limit the potential area for development south of the stream. Wetlands subject to the jurisdiction of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation are located north of the stream in the northwest section of the Village property. Given the extent of the 100 year floodplain, there is the potential for these wetlands to exist elsewhere on the property, in or

near the proposed area of development. As discussed below, a detailed analysis of the environmental conditions on the property will be required.



There are also single family residential structures located along State Street that abut the Village property and the area being considered for development. The potential impacts on these properties will need to be taken into consideration.

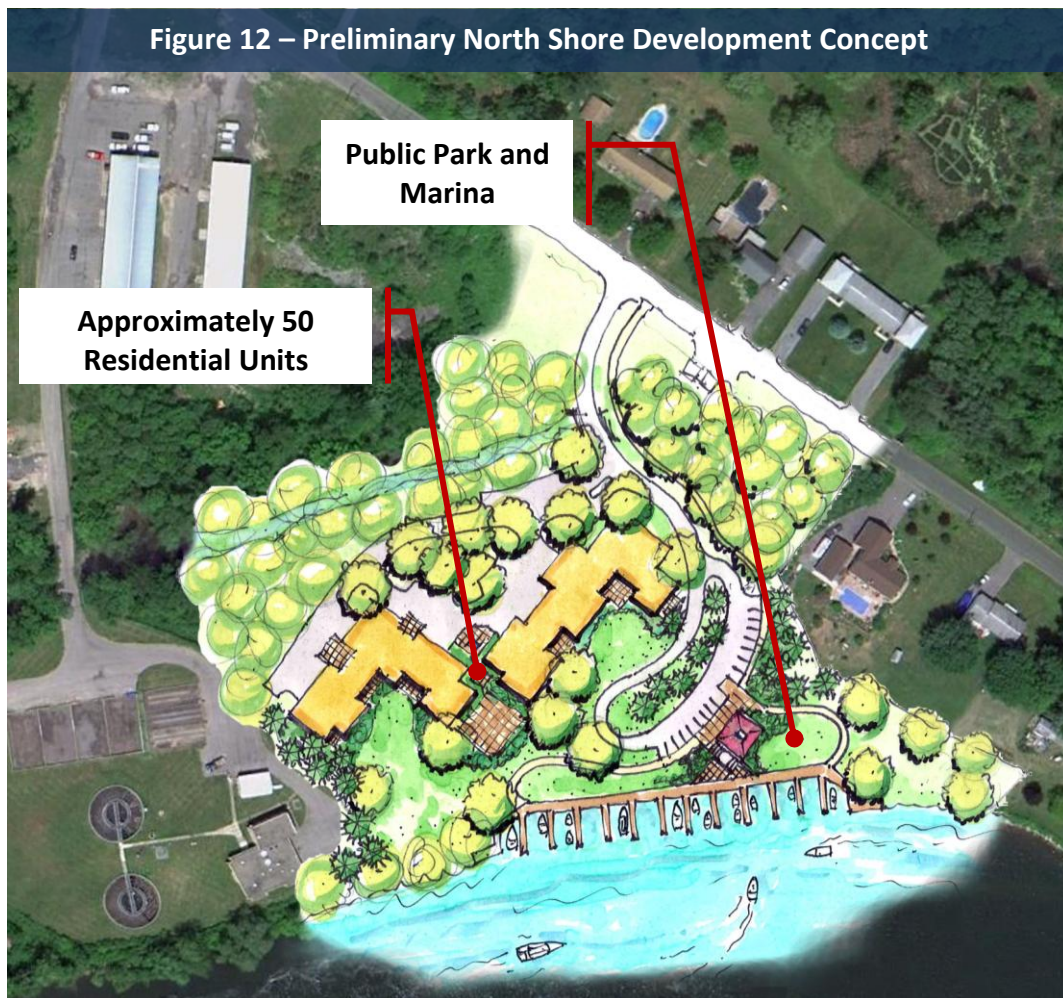
The Village wastewater treatment plant would be located adjacent to the development. Recent upgrades to the plant have diminished the potential for offensive odors. The visibility of the plant from the development will need to be taken into consideration and appropriate screening put in place.

The Village's highway garage and related facilities are located at the northwest corner of property. If these buildings were to be relocated, it could increase the total area upon which new development could be located. This area also appears to be located within the 100 year floodplain and therefore, may add to the challenge of developing the site.

The preliminary concept plan, as shown on *Figure 12 – Preliminary North Shore Development Concept*, depicts a marina, with approximately 60,000 square feet of residential space and a public park. Given the available space for development, it is estimated that about 50 residential units at 1,200 SF each could be provided. There is the flexibility to provide for larger unit sizes



and therefore decreasing the total unit count. It will be a function of the type of units a developer would like to provide.



It is important to note that this is a preliminary concept and additional analyses will be required by the Village and other involved parties to clearly identify the feasibility of this project. The details of land transfer to a private developer, financing, and the process of securing a developer have yet to be finalized and the concept remains at a very preliminary stage. As directed by the Village, Saratoga Associates has prepared this preliminary build-out concept to identify the approximate land area available for development and a general understanding of the total square footage of new development that could be accommodated.

The following is an initial set of recommendations for the Village to begin the process of evaluating the feasibility of the project.

### **Recommendations on Proceeding**

Given the complexity of such a project, it is recommended that an initial feasibility study be conducted. The first element to address would be the locations of wetlands and the 100 year flood plain. To minimize initial costs, the NYSDEC may agree to flag the boundaries of the wetlands. The wetland flagging would need to be recorded by a licensed surveyor. Initial coordination with NYSDEC on the potential need for wetlands permits and permits for work within the River would be a critical first step. Coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is also recommended given the possibility of their jurisdiction. Further, coordination with the Canal Corporation should begin at the same time to determine any potential concerns from their end.

Upon clarification of the need for regulatory approvals and any development limitations due to wetlands and/or flood plains, the Village should consider preparing a market feasibility study to determine the potential market for the project, preliminary costs estimates, financing, funding options and land transfer alternatives.

It is currently recommended that a new overlay zoning district be established for this property which may include a Planned Unit Development (PUD). A PUD law for this site would allow the Village to craft the overall parameters of the development – what the Village would like to see and what should be prohibited. The overall residential density and other permitted uses could be established. Architectural style, height and other site layout elements can also identified in the law. Lastly, by establishing a PUD, it could make the property and project more appealing to potential developers and investors by demonstrating that the Village has taken several proactive steps to position the property for future use including a streamlined review process.

#### **b. Pursue Additional Funding Through the Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program**

The Village of Phoenix is eligible for funding under the Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) for waterfront planning, design and construction activities in accordance with the grant requirements.

Recently, the Village was included in the *Town of Hastings Public Waterfront Access Study* that was funded by a grant under the LWRP process. The Report, which was completed in April 2012 and approved by the NYS Department of State, evaluated 55 publicly-owned waterfront parcels within several Towns including the Town of Schroepfel. Data on each parcel was collected for

the purposes of evaluating the adequacy of existing public access and conditions that restrict access. The report then identified general opportunities for improving access.

The Publicly-owned lands along the Village's waterfront were included in the study and evaluated at a preliminary level. According to the Study, North Island Park was rated as having "High Potential" for public access improvements given the existing conditions and available land.

Having property previously involved in a LWRP funded study places the Village in an attractive position to leverage additional funding through this program. It is recommended that the Village pursue additional funding to improve public access at North Island Park and throughout the Downtown Canal District. The program may be able to provide funding assistance for the construction of recommended improvements at North Island as described in this Plan Update.

### **Brief Summary of the Program**

The Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act offers local governments the opportunity to participate in the State's Coastal Management Program (CMP), on a voluntary basis, by preparing and adopting local waterfront revitalization programs (LWRP) providing more detailed implementation of the State's CMP through use of existing broad powers such as zoning and site plan review. When a LWRP is approved by the New York State Secretary of State, State agencies' actions must be consistent with the approved LWRP to the maximum extent practicable. In addition, by having an approved LWRP, additional funding opportunities become available to the involved community.

### **Benefits of a LWRP**

An adopted and approved LWRP provides the following benefits to communities who choose to become involved:

- > Clear direction – A LWRP reflects community consensus. As such, it can significantly increase a community's ability to attract appropriate development that will respect its unique cultural and natural characteristics.
- > Financial assistance – A LWRP presents a unified vision; it therefore, increases a community's chances to obtain public and private funding for projects. Funding for both the development and implementation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs is

available through grants from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF LWRP), among other sources.

- > Technical assistance – A LWRP establishes a long-term partnership among local government, community based organizations, and the State, providing a source of technical assistance to prepare and implement a Local Program.
- > State and federal consistency – State permitting, funding, and direct actions must be consistent with an approved LWRP. This “consistency” provision is a strong tool that helps ensure all government levels work in unison to build a stronger economy and a healthier environment.

### 3.9 Comprehensive Parking Strategy for Downtown Canal District

It is recommended that the Village prepare a long-term parking strategy. While there may be sufficient parking available at the present time, if the Village is encouraging new development, additional parking may be needed in the future. New locations for public parking should be identified within the Downtown Canal District and within reasonable walking distances of businesses.

While many communities have sufficient parking available, it is sometimes not sufficiently signed to guide visitors. It will be important for the Village to construct highly visible public parking signs in and around the Downtown Canal District to ensure visitors are able to easily locate the public lots.



The second important element is the need for a reevaluation of the Village’s parking requirements, as they currently require new uses in the Downtown Canal District to provide off-street parking. Given the limited amount of space in this area, these regulations could prohibit new development. It is recommended that the Village consider enacting a “parking waiver” program that exempts new businesses from having to provide off-street parking. Instead, a reasonable fee would be charged to the owner in lieu of providing off-street parking. Funds collected would assist the Village in maintaining the current lots and build new ones as necessary. This approach would need to be considered as part of an overall parking strategy to ensure sufficient Village-owned parking space exists in order to offer such exemptions.



### 3.10 Village-Wide Park and Recreation Improvements

#### a. Evaluate Opportunities to Construct One or More Neighborhood Parks

The Village currently owns a small property located at the corner of Jefferson and Culvert Streets. Due to the fact that there are no neighborhood parks in the Village, it is recommended that one or more parks be constructed in strategic locations.



The Village-owned property at the corner of Jefferson and Culvert Streets is an ideal location for a neighborhood park. Since it is owned by the Village, the normally difficult task of acquiring useable property has been accomplished. In addition, the property is in a centrally located area northwest of Lock Street and just behind the U.S. Post Office.

A second neighborhood park should be constructed in an equally ideal spot south of Lock Street to serve that section of the Village. Providing small neighborhood parks within safe walking and biking distances is a key element to a successful family-friendly community.

#### b. Consider a Nature Trail/Park at Davis and State Streets

The Village also owns a parcel located between Davis, State, Culvert and Main Street. There is road frontage for potential access points along Davis and State Streets. A small stream runs through the center of property. The vegetation on the site could be cleaned up and walking trails constructed to take advantage of the stream with picnicking and other seating areas provided. One or more pavilions could be constructed as well to provide shelter

A portion of the site contains wetlands under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The site is also appears to be within the 100 year floodplain. Based upon these conditions, future improvements to the property will require coordination with NYS and construction must take into consideration the flooding potential.

Finally, no adverse environmental impacts should occur if the property were to be improved for passive recreation use.

While wetlands may complicate development in certain areas, their existence on this property should be turned into an asset and used for educational and interpretive purposes. One or more boardwalks with interpretive overlooks and seating areas could be constructed which provide information about the benefits of wetlands, floodplains and the stream.



Any future use of the property must also take into consideration the potential for adverse impacts on adjoining property owners. All efforts should be utilized to prohibit trespassing and other negative impacts from occurring on neighboring lands.



## **Section 4 Neighborhood Revitalization**

As indicated in the Community Profile and Inventory, approximately 42% of all housing units in Phoenix are multi-family structures (2 or more units). In addition, approximately 43% of all housing units are renter occupied – a relatively high percentage when compared to surrounding communities. In general, rental units are not as well maintained as owner-occupied units, and a community with a high percentage of rental units is likely to have more property maintenance issues than communities with a lower percentage.

Phoenix is unfortunately not immune to this situation. There are numerous rentals as well as owner-occupied housing units in need of improvements which are currently detracting from the overall community character of the Village.

Communities can use a variety of tools and techniques to address this situation, including enhanced code enforcement, new property maintenance laws, grants and loan programs for improvements, zoning and the facilitation of multi-family structure conversions to single-family homes.

It is recommended that the Village of Phoenix aggressively address the declining neighborhood conditions through a coordinated strategy. Based upon the inventory and analysis and input from the Working Committee, the following Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Goals have been identified:

### **Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Goals**

1. Attract more market rate, owner-occupied housing construction.
2. Stabilize the housing stock of marginal – “borderline” structures.
3. Reduce blight and disinvestment in declining neighborhoods.
4. Ensure municipal services support and complement the Village’s housing-related initiatives.

### **Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Recommendations**

The following is a list of initial recommendations for the Village’s consideration to begin addressing neighborhood issues.

1. Evaluate and consider revising land use laws addressing the type and location of residential dwellings. It is recommended that the zoning regulations be revised to decrease the area within the Village where multi-family dwelling units are permitted. The Village should emphasize “one-home on one lot” zoning wherever possible to encourage construction of owner-occupied homes rather than rental units.
2. Consider establishing a “Multi-Family Deconversion” program that provides financial incentive to property owners to remodel a two-family dwelling back into a single-family dwelling. A potential funding source could be Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies as well as other state and federal funds. The first step would be to evaluate similar successful programs in other communities and establish a draft program outline. Coordination with public and private funding sources should be undertaken at the same time. The program should include the opportunity for partial upfront payments to increase the attractiveness of the program. This would require the utilization of additional funding sources as the CDBG program generally provides funding as a reimbursement for work completed.
3. Develop and implement a façade improvement program (FIP) and secure funding in part through the CDBG program to incentivize property owners in making aesthetic improvements to residential and non-residential structures. Additional funding streams will need to be identified for the FIP to be successful. Historically, FIP funding through the normal channels including CDBG has diminished their effectiveness in other communities due to the need for participants to cover 100% of the costs and seek reimbursements upon project completion. It is recommended that the Village identify more than one source of funding which may allow for partial upfront payments.
4. Conduct a Village-wide housing condition analysis. This analysis is recommended to confirm the types of housing that currently exist, (single, two-family, multi-family, and owner vs. renter occupied); the condition of the housing stock; housing values and prevailing rents; the types of housing in demand, and if there is a lack of certain housing types including housing considered affordable. The results of this analysis will help guide the Village in developing a façade improvement program, a multi-family deconversion program and additional programs and initiatives targeting building and dwelling condition improvements and the overall enhancement of the neighborhoods.

5. Given the high percentage of renter-occupied buildings in the Village, it is recommended that a landlord registry program be implemented that requires all landlords to register with the Village. Similar programs in other communities have been successful in limiting negative issues associated with “absentee landlords.”
6. An efficient way to enhance neighborhood revitalization efforts is to conduct, facilitate and encourage several special events, block parties, neighborhood watch programs and other volunteer activities to increase residents’ community spirit and sense of neighborhood unity.
7. When feasible, it can be more efficient to cluster capital projects such as park renovations, street reconstruction, repaving and other infrastructure improvements in specific target neighborhoods to heighten the impact of the Village’s investment. This may also include burying overhead power lines in the Downtown Canal District when streets and water and sewer infrastructure is being repaired or replaced – funded dependent.
8. Continue the Village’s stepped-up emphasis on code enforcement. Early intervention is a key element in preventing and correcting neighborhood blight.
9. Use public outreach and marketing efforts as part of an overall approach to encouraging home rehabilitation.
10. Consider a targeted marketing program of vacant/abandoned homes and vacant lots to moderate/middle income homebuyers to facilitate a mixed income within the Village neighborhoods.

## Section 5 Implementation Strategy

The Village of Phoenix Comprehensive Plan Update challenges the community to extend public, private and institutional coordination through partnerships and the pursuit of grants from federal and state government and private and community foundations.

In order for many for projects and programs outlined in this Plan Update to occur, the Village will look to a variety of funding sources and creative partnerships. The resources outlined in this report provide basic information about potential partnerships as well as suggested funding sources. While the matrix below outlines potential Federal and State resources, these will not be the only sources for investment in the Village; creative partnerships must be aggressively pursued. In addition, the availability of State and Federal monies through a variety of grant programs is always changing and continues to be a competitive environment. The new Consolidated Funding Application program has streamlined the process for communities and the Village should be prepared to submit for funding during each round of applications.

Whenever possible, the Village will look to engage regional partners in projects. Further, investments made as part of the Plan Update will aim to develop opportunities for public/private resources while leveraging complementary investments by other public entities and/or non-profits and institutions.

Various State and Federally funded grant programs are being recommended to assist with the implementation of the Plan's recommendations. They are as follows:

- 1. Homes and Community Renewal – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).** The NYS CDBG funds provide small communities and counties with a great opportunity to undertake activities that focus on community development needs such as creating or expanding job opportunities, providing safe affordable housing, and/or addressing local public infrastructure and public facilities issues. The primary objective of the CDBG program is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment by expanding economic development opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income.
- 2. New York Main Street Program (NYMS).** The NYMS program seeks to stimulate reinvestment in properties located within mixed-use commercial districts and adjacent neighborhoods by providing resources with the goal of establishing sustainable

downtown and neighborhood revitalization and investing in projects that provide economic development and housing opportunities.

3. **Rural Area Revitalization Projects (RARP).** The purpose of the RARP program is to provide financial/technical resources to New York Communities for the restoration and improvement of housing, commercial areas and public/community facilities in rural areas of the state. This program will provide grants to not-for profit community based organization and charitable organizations that have a direct interest in improving the health, safety and economic viability of a rural area or other aspects of the area environment that are related to community preservation or renewal activities. RARP applications offer flexibility to determine the exact nature of their revitalization efforts and project priorities.
4. **Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) – Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Municipal Grant Program.** Funding is available under the OPRHP-EPF Municipal Grant Program for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas. Municipalities and not-for-profit organizations with an ownership interest in the property are eligible to apply.
5. **New York Department of State – Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).** The LWRP provides matching grants on a competitive basis to revitalize communities and waterfronts. Funding is available for program planning, feasibility, design, or marketing of specific projects, and construction projects, to advance any of the following grant categories:
  - a. Preparing or Implementing Regional and Local Strategies for Community and Waterfront Revitalization;
  - b. Redeveloping Hamlets, Downtown and Urban Waterfronts;
  - c. Planning or Constructing Land and Water based Trails; and
  - d. Preparing or implementing a Watershed Management Plan.
6. **Canalway Grants Program.** Under the Canalway Grants Program, projects are intended to meet the objectives of the Regional Economic Development Councils Strategic Plans and the NYS Canal Recreational Plan. Projects should preserve and rehabilitate canal infrastructure, enhance recreational opportunities for water-based and land-side users, promote tourism, economic development, and revitalization of the canal corridor. Funding can be used to expand public access, increase recreational use, improve services for motorized and non-motorized boaters, increase tourism, and stimulate private investment along the canal.

The following table outlines the draft recommended implementation process.

ID	Recommendation	Time Frame	Funding Sources	Notes
<b>Henley Park Enhancements</b>				
3.1.a	Additional Dock/Berthing Space	1-3 Years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.1.b	Second Level Boardwalk and Seating Area	1-3 Years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.1.c	New Bathroom Facilities	1-3 Years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	Funding request submitted June 2012
<b>Lock Island Park Enhancements</b>				
3.2.a	New Docking Facilities and Walkway	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.2.b	Internal Lock Island Park Improvements	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.2.c	Improve Safety of Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections to Lock Island Park	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	

North Island Park Enhancements				
3.3.a	Reconfigure Parking Lots and Boat Launch Area	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.3.b	Separate Boat Launch and Fishing Areas	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
3.3.c	Construct Small Pavilions, Designated Picnic Areas and Delineated Walking Paths	3-5 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, Canalway Grants Program	
State Street – Southside Enhancements				
3.4.a	Pocket Park and Infill Development at Corner of State and Culvert Streets	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.4.b	Address Windstream Building's Incompatible Architecture	1-3 years	Windstream, CDBG, NYMS	
3.4.c	Create a Public Plaza at the End of Bridge Street	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, NYMS, CDBG,	
3.4.d	Identify Opportunities to Improve the Canal-Side Building Facades	1-3 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG,	Funding was recently requested.
3.4.e	Future Infill Site Next to Henley Park	5-10 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG,	
3.4.f	State Street Southside Streetscape Enhancements	3-5 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG,	
State Street Northside Improvements				
3.5.a	Screen National Grid Property	1-3 years	National Grid	

3.5.b	Reorganization of Public Parking Lots and Future Infill Sites	5-10 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.5.c	Streetscape Enhancements	3-5 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.5.d	Screen Backs of Buildings	5-10 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
<b>Bridge and Culvert Street Enhancements</b>				
3.6.a	Improve Building Facades and Facilitate New Uses	3-5 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
<b>Main Street Enhancements</b>				
3.7.a	Pedestrian Walkway to Waterfront	3-5 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.7.b	Future Infill and Streetscape Improvements	5-10 years	LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.7.c	Gateway Improvements	3-5 years	OPRHP-EPF, LWRP, NYMS, CDBG	
3.7.d	Post Office Façade and Pedestrian Improvements	5-10 years	U.S. Post Office, NYMS, CDBG	
<b>Village-Wide Waterfront Enhancements</b>				
3.8.a	North Shore Marina and Residential Concept	1-3 years	LWRP, OPRHP-EPF, Canalway Programs	Funding may be available for initial feasibility planning and construction of related public facilities.



3.8.b	Pursue Funding Through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program	1-3 years	LWRP	
<b>Downtown Parking Improvements</b>				
3.9	Prepare a Comprehensive Downtown Parking Strategy	3-5 years	LWRP, NYMS	
<b>Village-Wide Park and Recreational Improvements</b>				
3.10.a	Evaluate Opportunities to Construct Neighborhood Parks	1-3 years	OPRHP-EPF	
3.11.b	Consider Constructing a Nature Trail Park	3-5 years	OPRHP-EPF	

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