

Section VII - Local Commitment and Consultation

7.1. Local Commitment

In the spring 2002, the City of Binghamton established a Steering Committee to oversee the development of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The Steering Committee, and project responsibility, was largely undertaken through the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development. Representatives from the Department served as the primary contacts during the project development and played an integral leadership role, including the organization of the Steering Committee. The selected Steering Committee membership reflects a range of expertise, interests and experience, including transportation, history, economic development and the local business community.

With respect to preparation of the draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, the Steering Committee met on a regular basis with the designated consultant to review the various sections of the LWRP and offer comments and suggestions. On average, Steering Committee meetings were held approximately every six (6) weeks during the seven (7) month planning process. The City offered the financial resources needed to secure the consultant selected to complete the LWRP, as well as provided considerable time for the review of the document and attendance at Steering Committee meetings, focus group sessions and public open houses and staff resources were utilized to provide all necessary information needed for the document. In addition to the regular Committee meetings, the City maintained contact with their designated representative from the NYS Department of State throughout the planning process, in order to maintain open communications regarding the progress of the draft document. Three (3) focus group sessions and two (2) public open houses were also hosted by the City at various times during the process to provide the general public with the opportunity to share their insights and review the information developed as part of the program

The City is dedicated to the development and improvement of their waterfront and is currently involved in enhancement efforts in addition to the LWRP. Recent efforts undertaken within the City include the renovation and development of Confluence Park. Improvements at this location include benches, a fishing overlook, trails and green space. The City is also expanding a waterfront promenade along the eastern side of the Chenango River, adding pedestrian amenities such as multi-use trails, lighting, benches, landscaping and connecting the various waterfront components. Neighborhood groups also have played a vital role in redevelopment efforts in the City. The North Side is currently working with the City and Cornell University to determine

a future vision for the northern neighborhoods, including Binghamton Plaza. This is a unique community run process.

Designated a Quality Community by the New York State Department of State, the City is undertaking a number of revitalization projects in areas directly affecting the waterfront and the Central Business District. These projects are further identified in Section 4.0 - Proposed Projects of this LWRP, and include infrastructure improvements, safety and accessibility and the general aesthetic character of the City.

7.2. Consultation with Federal, State and Local Agencies

On-going consultation with various government entities, local agencies, stakeholders and private individuals was an integral part of preparing the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the City of Binghamton. Throughout the planning process, local and state government agencies were contacted for the purposes of obtaining necessary information and coordinating actions.

Consultation during the preparation of the draft LWRP involved correspondence, telephone contacts and meetings. The agencies and groups listed below provided essential background information and data pertinent to the preparation of the LWRP.

Federal Agencies

Army Corps of Engineers
Department of the Housing and Urban Development National Park Service

State Agencies

Department of Environmental Conservation Department of State
Department of Transportation
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Local Agencies, Groups and Organizations

City of Binghamton
Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development
Department of Economic Development Engineering Department
Mayor's Office
Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study Broome County Environmental
Management Broome County Soil and Water
Susquehanna Heritage Area

7.3. Consultation with Local Officials

The City of Binghamton Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Steering Committee was made up of representatives from various City and County agencies and

organizations, as well as local stakeholders form the business community. The Steering Committee met on a regular basis throughout the planning process to review draft sections of the LWRP. The Steering Committee was responsible for providing pertinent information and comments on the draft LWRP and served as a reviewing mechanism for the development of the plan.

The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- City of Binghamton-
 - Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development
 - Department of Engineering
 - Mayor's Office
 - Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study
 - Broome County Environmental Management Council
 - Broome County Soil and Water
 - New York State Department of Transportation, Region 9
 - National Park Service, Rivers and Trails
 - Susquehanna Heritage Area
 - Holiday Inn, City of Binghamton
 - Security Mutual, City of Binghamton

7.4. Public Outreach

In order to ensure the needs and desires of the community were reflected in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, a public outreach program was undertaken which provided opportunities for members of the community to discuss their ideas and learn more about the LWRP process. Included in the public outreach program were three (3) focus group sessions and two (2) public open houses detailed below:

7.4.1. Focus Groups

In order to obtain public input regarding the existing conditions, opportunities, constraints and visions for the potential of the waterfront revitalization area, three (3) focus group sessions were held at the beginning of the planning process. The focus group sessions were two (2) hour discussions with special interest groups, identified as having a relevant interest or association with the development of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the City of Binghamton. Potential participants received invitations to take part in the session via standard mail. Those who did not reply to the initial invitation were telephoned and personally invited to contribute to the session. A summary of their input is included in the Appendix of this document.

The focus group sessions were held on Friday, May 3rd with representatives from the following special interest groups and organizations: economic development, recreation and environment and tourism. A list of attendees for each session is provided below:

Economic Development

Lisa Brown, Crowley Foods
Bernadette Blaisure, New York State Electric and Gas Daniel Lord, BBPA
Nikki Lord, BBPA
Sally Robb, M & T Bank
William Von Iderstein, New York State Electric and Gas A. Ferrara, Binghamton University
Diran Kradjian, Kradjian Enterprises
Chris Papastrat, Park Diner
Sherry Eaton, Gorgeous Washington
Carin Webb, City of Binghamton
Carolyn Price, Binghamton Schools
George Akel, Akel / Lane Development
Gary Leats, Binghamton Plaza
Recreation and Environment
Anna Kinney, Finch Hollow Nature Center
Susan Cowing, League of Women Voters
Larry Reistetter, Broome County Parks and Recreation Tom Carter, Triple Cities Runners Club
Jo Malin, West Side Neighborhood Association David Ligeikis, NYS Department of Transportation Kristin Schafer, Triple Cities Hiking Club

Tourism

Betty Casey, Roberson Museum
Judi Hess, Broome County Chamber
Steve Contento, Ross Park Zoo
Dick Jacobs, CEO, American Automobile Association

7.4.2 Public Presentations

Two (2), well-publicized public open houses were held during the LWRP planning process to solicit comments and generate interest in the plan. The public presentations allowed the general community to identify their concerns and desires for the development of the Binghamton waterfront, while simultaneously learning about the LWRP planning and development process. Local media reported on the

development of the LWRP and provided the public with important information regarding progress and meeting dates.

The first public meeting was held on August 1, 2002 at 7:00 PM in the Decker Community Room at the main branch of the Broome County Library, located on Court Street within the City. Invitations to the public open house were sent to over one hundred local business owners and focus group attendees, as well as advertised in the local newspaper. Approximately thirty (30) members of the community came to the first public open house, where they were given information regarding the LWRP process and the benefits of having an approved LWRP. Participants were asked to take part in an information gathering session, which was facilitated by the consultant through the use of a slide presentation and workbooks. The questions posed to the community covered a range of topics relevant to the LWRP, including waterfront programming, access and connections, community pride, tourism, regional cooperation, environment, education and economic development. The results of the community input are summarized in the Appendix of this document.

The second public open house was held on September 26, 2002 at 7:00 PM in the Decker Community Room at the Broome County Library. At this meeting the general public was presented information from the final draft plan, including an overview of the LWRP process, goals and objectives, inventory, recommendations, concept plans, trail designs, implementation techniques and a proposed management plan.