

VILLAGE OF SARANAC LAKE LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Executive Summary

Introduction

In the summer of 2000, the Village of Saranac Lake set out on the process of developing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), a comprehensive plan for the appropriate development and preservation of the Village's waterfront areas. Following an award for a grant from the NYS Department of State, the Village Board established a LWRP Advisory Committee and appointed a group of volunteers to develop a plan for an LWRP for the Village. Together, the LWRP Advisory Committee worked since that time to develop and articulate a vision for the appropriate development and revitalization of the Village's waterfront areas.

The Committee's objective was to set forth a comprehensive plan that will achieve these ends and at the same time assure the protection and beneficial use of our waterfront area resources and preserve the essential character of Saranac Lake as a year-round active and growing community. The Committee's objective was also to ensure that the vision articulated in the LWRP is one that genuinely reflects the collective will of the community. To that end, the Committee endeavored to keep the public involved and aware of the status and progress of its work. It surveyed the views of the community with respect to the issues at stake and to incorporate those views in the recommendations that are being developed.

Purpose

The purpose of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is to promote economic development and revitalization of the Village's waterfront area while assuring the protection and beneficial use of waterfront resources. An approved LWRP can help attract public and private investment in waterfront projects since it demonstrates a community's commitment to economic development and resource protection and contains conceptual plans for projects that make the development process more predictable and efficient. These plans help to convince entities and private developers that the projects are realistic, have public support, and that money will be well spent and fits into a comprehensive plan that will ultimately protect the investment.

Legal Authority

LWRP's are authorized by the Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act (NYS Executive Law, Article 42) and the implementation of rules and regulations for the Act (Part 600 of Title 19, NYCRR) authorizing the preparation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs with financial and technical assistance from the NYS Department of State (DOS). The approach to managing waterfront areas taken by New York State is unique from the approach used in other states. While state government can promote development and provide for the protection of critical resources, it is recognized that municipalities are in the best position to determine their own waterfront objectives and to adapt statewide approaches to specific local needs. Accordingly, the Department of State has encouraged waterfront communities to prepare their own Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs.

Definition

An LWRP is a comprehensive plan that refines legislatively established waterfront policies by incorporating local circumstances and objectives. It is a grass roots effort that brings together local, state, and federal governments, environmental interests, commerce, private organizations and community citizens to assess the opportunities and constraints and to build a consensus on the desired future of the community's waterfront area. More important, the LWRP provides a strategy for achieving that vision.

Plan Layout

Section I of the LWRP identifies both the landward and waterside boundaries of the waterfront revitalization area.

Section II includes a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the Village. It begins with the natural resources, including water, land, vegetation, fish and wildlife, and scenic resources. Then it looks at community/cultural resources such as development, public access, recreation, historic and archaeological resources. Next, it discusses land and water uses and important economic activities within the waterfront revitalization area. An analysis follows which discusses the existing issues and future opportunities in the individual categories.

Section III formulates specific program goals and objectives and integrated their intent in the 13 LWRP Coastal and Inland DOS Policies. The Policies are comprehensive and reflect existing laws and authority regarding development and environmental protection. Taken together, these policies are used to determine the appropriate balance between economic development and preservation that will permit the beneficial use of and prevent adverse effects on Saranac Lake's waterfront resources. The policies allow the community to identify their own waterfront issues and utilize local approaches to address them. Once adopted by the DOS, the policies will guide any activity occurring within the LWRP boundary. Policies are organized under five headings: General Policies, Economic Development Policies, Waterfront Natural Resources Policies, Environmental Policies, Recreation and Cultural Policies.

Section IV identifies the proposed future land and water uses for the Village's waterfront revitalization area. This section details specific public and private projects that will enhance, encourage and contribute to the redevelopment of the entire Village. A summary of Section IV follows on the next page.

Section V describes the local laws and regulations, other public and private actions, management structures and financial resources necessary to actually implement the uses and projects identified.

Section VI and VII identify state and federal agencies that must act consistently with the Village of Saranac Lake's LWRP during the implementation phase.

Approval Process

The draft LWRP was submitted for approval to the NYS Department of State with a resolution from the Village Board declaring the document complete. The Department of State prepared a program summary and distributed copies of the summary and the draft LWRP to approximately 70 state and federal agencies for their review and comment during a 60-day review period. Coincident with this review period, the Village provided for local public review and comment on the draft. The Department of State a summary of comments that were incorporated in the final LWRP where appropriate. The Village adopted the Final LWRP in October 2003.

Saranac Lake LWRP Project Summary

Because water resources course through the center of the community and have a dramatic impact on downtown and fringe areas, the boundary of the waterfront revitalization area was established as the entire incorporated Village of Saranac Lake.

Goals for the waterfront revitalization area primarily focus on the following intentions:

- Increase and improve public access to water resources;
- Stimulate economic development in downtown Saranac Lake;
- Protect and enhance natural resources;
- Improve pedestrian safety to and from waterfront areas.

The Village is proposing individual, related projects that will enhance, encourage and contribute to the redevelopment of the entire Village. Priority areas for revitalization are lands along Lake Flower and lands along Lake Colby.



Riverside Park and Lake Flower Outlet

These projects are illustrated in the attached Figure IV-1, "Proposed Land & Water Uses Map." The written description of the proposed projects is as follows:

Lake Flower

Lake Flower is truly the centerpiece for the community. The lake is a jewel, marking the eastern gateway into the Village of Saranac Lake. Riverside Park, Prescott Park, the Lake Flower State Boat Launch, Mountain Mist Park and Baldwin Park are all public facilities located on the northern shoreline of Lake Flower.

The Lake Flower Trail

- Locate and construct a multi-use, all season recreational path that would originate at Riverside Park at the north end of Lake Flower proceeding in a southerly direction along Lake Flower terminating beyond the Village line where the proposed Lake Placid-Saranac Lake Trail intersects State Route 86 (at the railroad tracks).
- Develop traffic calming and other road improvements on River Street that address traffic, pedestrian and parking patterns and issues.
- Develop a landscape improvement plan to link the parklands together and generally make the area a more attractive place.
- Address the need for additional parking on or accessed by River Street.
- Address the point and non-point stormwater runoff problems through a mitigation plan.
- Develop a long-term strategy to monitor and control non-native aquatic vegetation.

Riverside Park Improvements

- Replace the Bandstand with a new facility complete with storage, power, equipment and additional seating capacity.
- Reconstruct the sea wall along the perimeter of Riverside Park to withstand the dock and other improvements planned for the waterfront in this area.
- Construct public docks to safely and attractively accommodate small to medium boats along the Park's edge facing south. One dock will be provided to accommodate a small commercial touring boat.
- Stabilize the banks along Lake Flower just east of Riverside Park to the existing green space. Mitigate unfiltered stormwater runoff from rainstorms and snowmelt in this area.

State Boat Launch Improvements

- Construct a year-round, handicapped-accessible facility with Adirondack style architecture.
- Assess parking alternatives including accommodations for handicapped people desiring to utilize surrounding parks.

Baldwin Park Improvements

- Provide a dedicated kayak/canoe launch area.
- Construct a public dock for water access to the tennis courts.
- Stabilize the shoreline embankments as needed.
- Develop an on-site parking lot adjacent to the courts.
- Provide picnic tables.
- A small fishing platform with handicapped access.

Lake Colby

Wallace Memorial Park

- Develop a four-season plan that includes year-round restrooms. Use guidelines for various winter events such as ice fishing, ice skating, ATV and snowmobile races.
- Provide new sand on the beach and in the immediate swimming area.
- Address the point and non-point stormwater runoff problems through a mitigation plan.
- Develop a strategy to address the long-term control of non-native aquatic vegetation in the swimming area at the beach.

Land on Moir Road

- Tear down the existing building on the Village-owned property adjacent to Wallace Memorial Park. Construct a large picnic pavilion in its place with a deck that provides handicapped fishing access.
- Dedicate an area for a launch site for canoes and kayaks.

Walkways to the Beach

- Address safety issues and enhance the sidewalk and trail from the Village to Lake Colby and Lake Flower.
- Provide a more visible pedestrian crossing from the hospital to the Village's Wallace Park.

Saranac River

- Plans for development are under the direction of the River Corridor Commission. Their plan is available in the Office of Community Development.