

Figure 16: Healthy Living Infrastructure in the City of Cohoes

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5 BOA Master Plan

5.1 Introduction

The vision of the City of Cohoes is to be the Capital District's premiere small-city, offering a vibrant downtown and world-class recreation and cultural amenities within the framework of a multi-modal and sustainable community. As the catalyst for the City's continued revitalization, the Cohoes Boulevard Brownfield Opportunity Area includes the community's central business district, primary transportation corridors, dense mixed-use neighborhoods, and the majority of the its developable waterfront. The significant growth Cohoes has experienced between 2000 and 2012 has in part been driven by its location within the Capital District's regional research and employment center. This growth has also been spurred by the inherent high quality of life provided by the City's walkability, affordability, and accessibility to recreational amenities such as trails and the Mohawk River and Hudson River waterfronts.

Master Plan Organization

The Cohoes Boulevard Master Plan has several critical layers which assure that the community vision, goals and objectives are achieved, while also identifying a clear path to move forward with implementation. The Master Plan begins with Section 5.2, Overview of the Master Plan. The preferred Master Plan (Map 15) is described and summarized, with a broad discussion of key highlights including strategic sites, build out implications, and general development patterns.

In order to achieve the preferred Master Plan, a series of actions and strategies will need to be implemented including phased capital projects, land use and regulatory changes, administrative recommendations, and short-term activities to better position the study area for investment.

Phasing and Capital Projects (Section 5.3)

The Master Plan graphically depicts public and private development activities to be conducted in three phases over the next 20 years. Each project is individually discussed with specific implementation strategies detailed in Tables 8, 9, and 10. At the conclusion of Section 5.3, a summary table (Table 11) reflects how each of the Capital Projects supports the project goals and objectives as identified by the local community.

Maintaining a sustainable and enjoyable urban environment will play a critical role in the attraction of future residents, business expansion and tourism spending. The Master Plan provides a framework to encourage sufficient densities, promote nodes of activity, and enhance the public realm to achieve the community's vision and make Cohoes a desirable place to live and invest.

Land Use & Regulatory Changes (Section 5.4)

This section provides guidance on the desired pattern of land uses and the visual characteristics of development within the Cohoes Boulevard BOA. Modest changes proposed to the land use patterns within the BOA are not anticipated to require significant changes to the existing zoning code. These recommendations are summarized in Table 12, and tied back to how each reflects specific goals and objectives which have guided the master planning process.

Administrative Recommendations (Section 5.5)

Administrative recommendations include local policy changes, pre-development activities and economic development initiatives. Administrative recommendations, and their relationship to project goals and objectives, are summarized in Table 13.

Activities to Advance Revitalization (Section 5.6)

Activities to Advance Revitalization represent the most time-sensitive and significant recommendations necessary to kick-start the revitalization process, and form the core components of the City's application for Project Advancement to Step 3 - Implementation Strategy of the BOA Program. Included are highly catalytic actions required to spur further investment such as site preparation activities, feasibility studies, environmental investigations and land assembly strategies.

5.2 Overview of the Master Plan

The BOA Master Plan builds upon 13 years of progressive planning, and concentrates on the transformation of the City into a unique destination within the Capital Region. The goals and objectives identified in Section 1.4.3 form the foundation of Master Plan recommendations, with leadership and direction provided by the public and local policymakers. The identification of strategic sites (Section 3.15) and the summary of design principles (Section 4.2) accomplished through the planning process provides necessary guidance for the physical Master Plan depicted on Map 15. In addition, several tools and techniques required for successful implementation were highlighted for use and/or exploration by the City.

Destination cities need destination neighborhoods; therefore the stabilization and revitalization of residential neighborhoods within the BOA will strongly correlate with the success of revitalization efforts.

The Master Plan focuses on the revitalization of the Central Business District and the gateway corridor along Cohoes Boulevard, including the City's vast Mohawk River waterfront. Recommended capital projects are intended to generate density, foot traffic and visitation in and effort to spur economic development. A significant portion of the Master Plan includes enhancements to the public realm, including parks, trails, streetscapes and the waterfront. The

development of this infrastructure and the provision of public access to recreational resources has a direct impact upon the quality of life within a community. Improvements to the motorized transportation system will also be necessary to change the perception and experience of residents and visitors to Cohoes. These public realm and infrastructure improvements will be paramount to re-frame the identity of the City as a community of choice within the Capital District.

Destination cities need destination neighborhoods; therefore the stabilization and revitalization of residential neighborhoods within the BOA will strongly correlate with the success of revitalization efforts. A diversity of high quality housing alternatives in strong neighborhoods within walking distance to Remsen Street and the waterfront will be attractive to new residents, including employees of companies considering Cohoes for expansion.



High quality, walkable neighborhoods will be important for the continued revitalization of the BOA.

Several sites of strategic importance (see Section 3.15) were identified during the planning process, including multiple vacant, underutilized and/or brownfield properties along the City's waterfront. Long term vacancy associated with environmental contamination adversely impacts surrounding land use values, often causing a progressive deterioration of the neighborhood or district over time. In response, the Master Plan provides guidance on how to return these lands to active and viable uses, bolstering the local economy, spurring development opportunities and making properties appealing to potential developers.

The rich industrial and manufacturing history of Cohoes has provided a wealth of historic structures and sites within the BOA. The Master Plan utilizes these assets as building blocks to establish a distinct identity and sense of place within downtown and along the waterfront that promote the City as a great place to live and a destination for visitors.

The Master Plan supports the City's development pattern by sustaining a dense and walkable urban environment capable of supporting multi-modal travel. The Master Plan strives to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, accessibility, and circulation while also encouraging transit based development within walking distance of the Central Business District.



The development of a bus rapid transit station within Cohoes as part of a larger regional system would expand employment and service accessibility for all residents of the City.

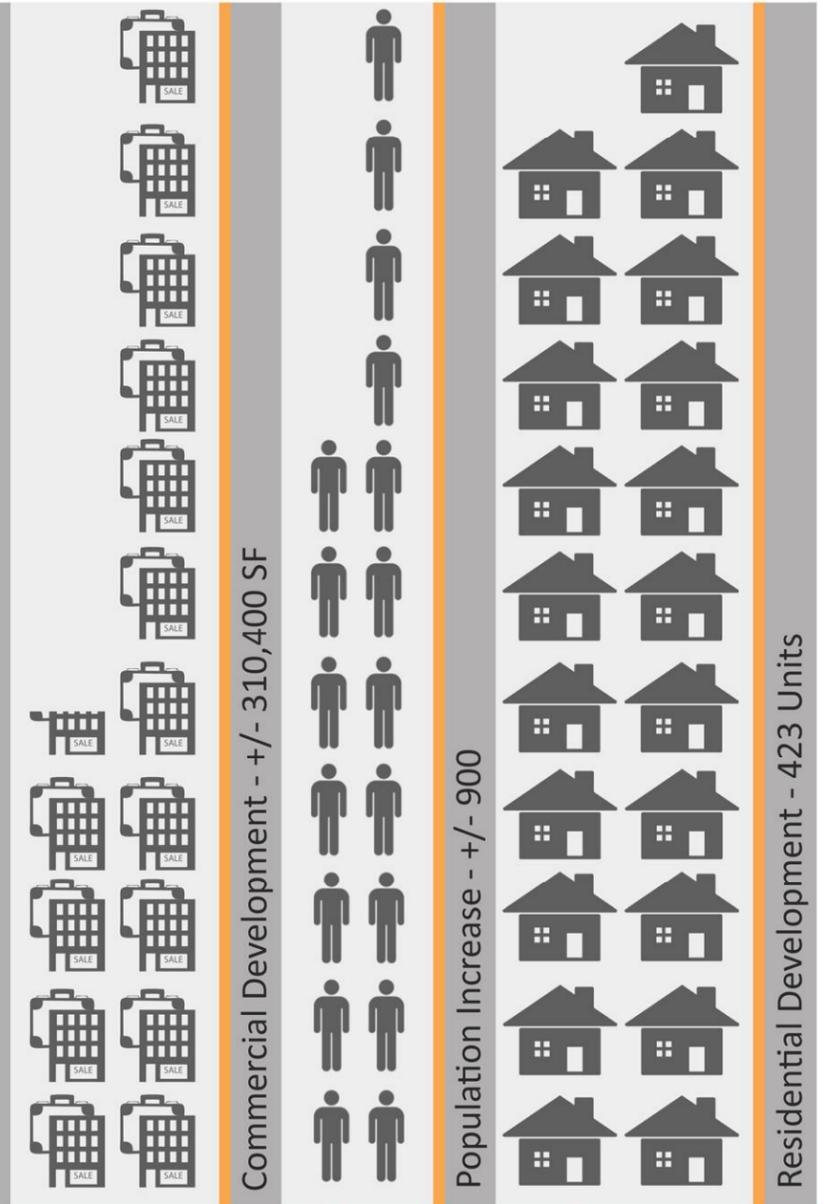
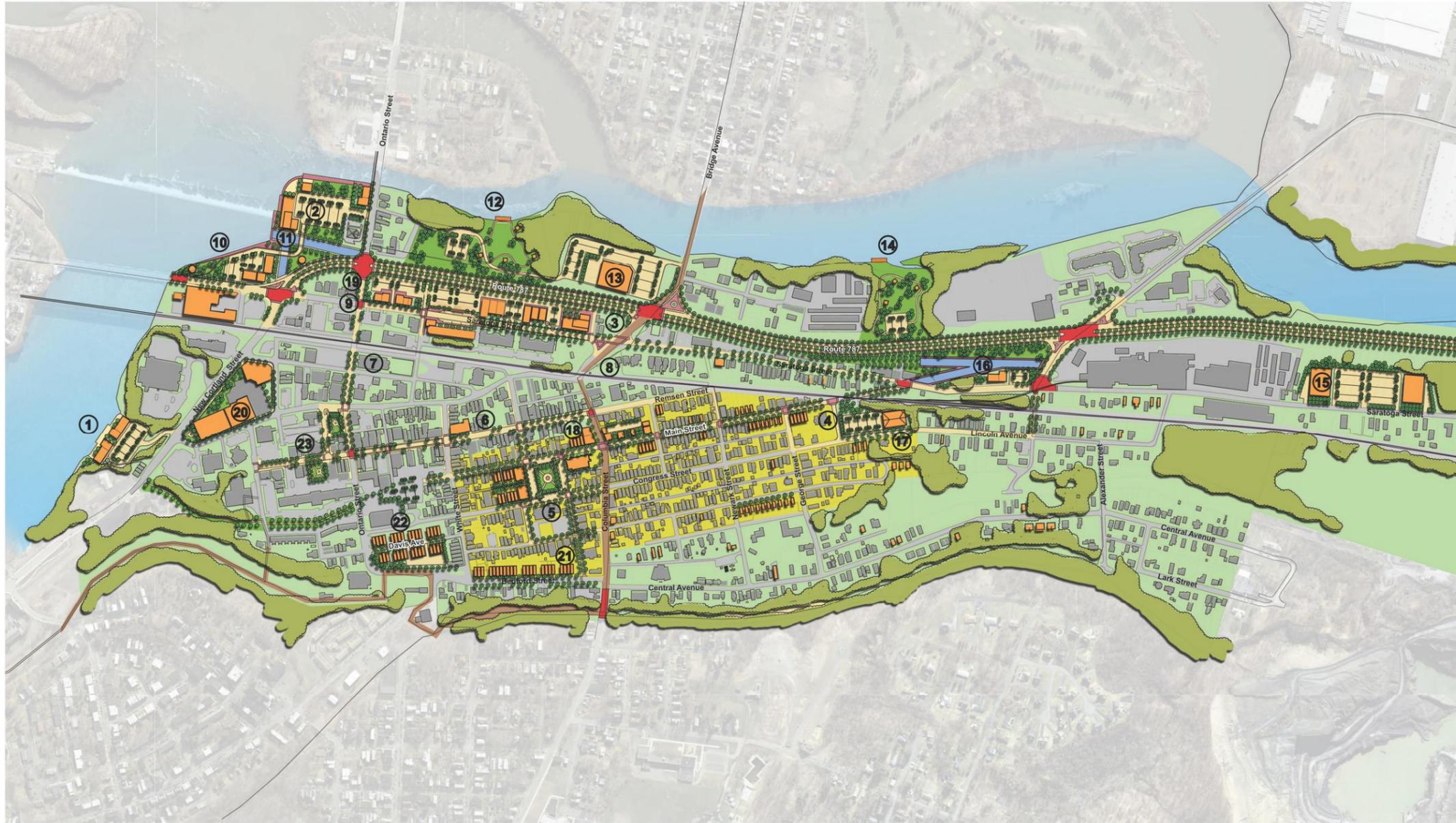
The Master Plan is both visionary and realistic, yet the recommendations identified in this plan will require focus and dedication. A 25-year implementation horizon is envisioned that simultaneously balances the desire to create a destination for small-city living within the confines of market and economic realities.

What significant changes can be expected in the 25-year timeframe? If development were to transpire as depicted on the preferred Master Plan, in 2037 the Cohoes Boulevard BOA would have an additional 310,400 square feet of

commercial development. Commercial development would provide jobs to local residents while also supporting resident and visitor needs and the City's tax base. In stand-alone buildings and as part of mixed use developments, proposed commercial uses would strengthen key corridors, support the revitalization of downtown, and draw people to the waterfront.

The 2037 Master Plan envisions 423 new housing units ranging from single family infill development to multi-family units integrated into larger mixed use projects. New housing units would support established residential neighborhoods while also providing a diversity of residential options that would appeal to a range of perspective buyers. The new housing units would be expected to attract up to 900 new residents into the study area to take advantage of the vibrant downtown, out-the-door recreational amenities, cultural attractions, and waterfront destinations.

Although all projects may not transpire exactly as depicted in the Master Plan, the vision set forth should guide decision making for future public and private investments within the study area.



Master Plan

2037 Full Build Out Development

KEY

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| 1. Mixed Use Waterfront Development | 14. Waterfront Park |
| 2. New Waterfront Mixed Use | 15. Commercial / Office Flex Space |
| 3. Saratoga Street Mixed Use / Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station | 16. The Erie Canal & Champlain Canal Juncta Interpretive Area |
| 4. New Residential Infill / Main Street Rehabilitation Area | 17. New Multi-Family Housing |
| 5. St. Joseph Park Neighborhood | 18. New Mixed Use Development at Main Street and Columbia Street |
| 6. Remsen Street at White Street Redevelopment | 19. Cohoes Boulevard (SR 787) Improvements |
| 7. Ontario Street (SR 470) Improvements | 20. Retail / Office Space |
| 8. Cohoes Heritage Trail Wayfinding Improvements | 21. Bedford Street Townhouse Development |
| 9. Gateway and Signage Improvements, Typ. | 22. George Davis Avenue Housing Development |
| 10. New Office Development | 23. Heritage & Arts District / Canal Square & Silliman Parks |
| 11. Champlain Canal Interpretive Center | |
| 12. Improved Public Park with Water Access | |
| 13. Potential Grocery Store | |


City of Cohoes
Cohoes Boulevard
Brownfield Opportunity Area

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5.3 Phasing and Capital Projects

Flexibility and adaptations in the phasing and implementation of the Master Plan should be anticipated and expected. During the course of the next 16 to 20 years available funding streams, property ownership, the marketplace and local economy will all likely change. In addition, the availability of information regarding site conditions will increase, and the feasibility of individual Master Plan components will be determined. As development variables change, the proposed land use patterns and the development potential of significant parcels may be altered. Therefore, the actual implementation of projects and the redevelopment of properties may differ than as presented in the Master Plan. However, success will continue to be achieved when the larger vision and desired outcomes of community revitalization are realized.

The Master Plan is graphically depicted on Maps 16 through 18. Table 8 correlate individual capital projects with the Goals and Objectives identified during the planning process. Tables 9 through 11 provide guidance on the implementation of each Capital Project, including estimated costs, potential funding sources and project phasing. A three-dimensional model of the BOA and recommended capital projects was also developed as part of the Master Plan development process. The design team utilized this tool to refine the Master Plan and capital project development process. Images taken from the model have been utilized, where appropriate, to provide a more realistic interpretation of the desired scale and extent of development as proposed in the Master Plan.

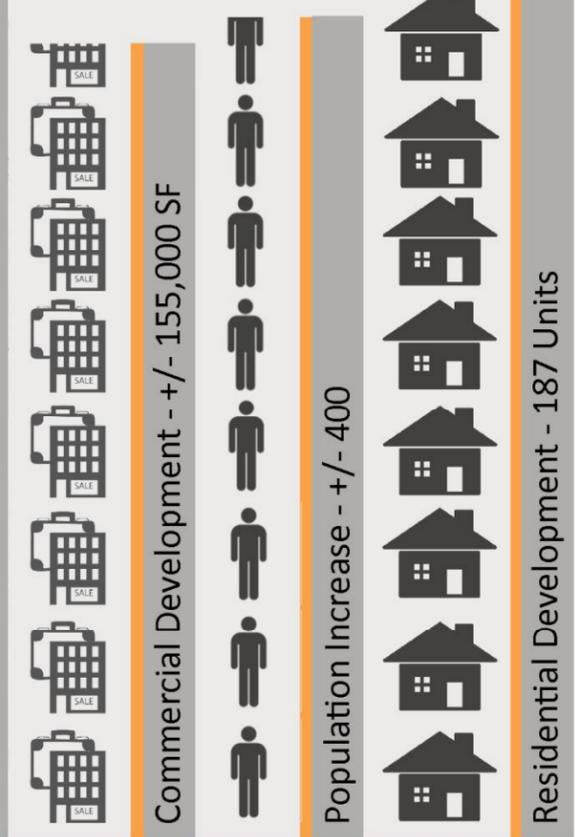


An example view of the model looking southwest towards the DPW site and downtown Cohoes.

Phasing

Map 15 identifies the Preferred Master Plan, which is divided into three development phases:

- Phase 1 projects represent initial and catalytic investments along the City's northern Mohawk River waterfront and within downtown over the next eight years that lay the groundwork for future projects and establish a benchmark for quality to be achieved or eclipsed by subsequent efforts (see Map 16 and Table 8).
- Phase 2 projects are anticipated to build upon the momentum and groundwork provided in Phase 1. These projects are expected to occur in years nine through 16, and should promote early signature projects enhancing the identity of the BOA Study Area (see Map 17 and Table 9).
- Phase 3 projects represent the culmination of 16 years of continued public and private investment. These projects are intended to maximize available density and development potential, while capitalizing upon the renewed identity of Cohoes as a viable, transit-oriented waterfront destination within the greater Capital Region (see Map 18 and Table 10).



Master Plan

KEY

- 1. Mixed Use Waterfront Development
- 2. New Waterfront Mixed Use
- 3. Saratoga Street Mixed Use / Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station
- 4. New Residential Infill / Main Street Rehabilitation Area
- 5. St. Joseph Park Neighborhood
- 6. Remsen Street at White Street Redevelopment
- 7. Ontario Street (SR 470) Improvements
- 8. Cohoes Heritage Trail Wayfinding Improvements
- 9. Gateway and Signage Improvements, Typ.



City of Cohoes
Cohoes Boulevard
Brownfield Opportunity Area

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Phase 1 - 0-8 Years

The first eight years of Master Plan implementation involve a significant level of public expenditure on environmental investigations, the assembly and acquisition of property, the demolition of substandard structures, and the relocation of critical infrastructure to support continued investments by private interests. Significant coordination with New York State and federal agencies will also be required for waterfront access improvements.

As indicated on Map 16 and Table 8, the following provides a detailed discussion of Phase 1 projects and required implementation activities associated with the Master Plan.

1. Mixed Use Waterfront Development

The property at 32 New Cortland Street is a 3-acre strategic site along the Mohawk River waterfront with significant views upriver to Cohoes Falls. The vacant site is proposed to be redeveloped with a mixed use structure consisting of first floor restaurant/dining space and upper story residential units. Public realm improvements along the waterfront should include expansive outdoor dining and plaza space which offers opportunities for viewsheds both up and down stream. The Master Plan proposes a 3 to 4 story structure with approximately 20,000 square feet of first floor Class A office space, restaurant or personal services such a fitness center in support of upper story residential units.



The proposed redevelopment should provide significant opportunities for public access and enjoyment of the waterfront, such as outdoor dining and public gathering spaces to afford views of the Cohoes Falls.

The BOA Study Area has numerous opportunities to fill a void in the marketplace through the development of outdoor dining establishments to take advantage of the City's expansive waterfront.

2. Waterfront Mixed Use

The current Department of Public Works facility on Ontario Street is proposed to be relocated and replaced with approximately 60,000 square feet of mixed use development. The redevelopment should include a signature structure located on the waterfront with upper story residential units to take advantage of high value views along the waterfront. Ground floor space would be occupied by water-enhanced uses such as restaurants. The perimeter of the site would include a waterfront promenade which links the Ontario Street Bridge along the Mohawk River shoreline to a future connection at the Champlain Canal Interpretive Center. An important component of this project will be the coordination of the removal of a non-functioning electrical transmission tower by the private utility. In addition, the City will also need to begin coordination and negotiations with the State Office of General Services Real Estate Planning and Development office for use and/or development of near-shore lands under State control for the construction of a proposed kayak launch.

Water-dependent uses are those that require access to water resources, such as a marina or a boat launch.

Water-enhanced uses are defined as those that do not directly require access to the waterfront, yet their operations and value are significantly enhanced by a waterfront location. These uses include restaurants, housing, and public open space.

The BOA offers significant opportunities for development of both water-dependent and water-enhanced uses.



View from 3D model looking southwest



The redevelopment of the DPW facility should include the City's signature waterfront public space, providing residents with encompassing views of the Mohawk River and Peebles Island.

3. Saratoga Street Mixed Use / Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station

The rapid growth of residential development within Cohoes over the past decade has increased population and housing densities to levels approaching those capable of supporting transit-oriented development. Further, the Capital District Transportation Authority recently completed a River Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Plan suggesting that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along the Hudson River corridor between Albany and Mechanicsville is a viable alternative, and that Cohoes is a logical location for a BRT station. The proposed BRT site on Saratoga Street has excellent access to SR 32, SR 787 and SR 470. In addition, the BRT site is at the hub of the larger regional trails system which converge at Cohoes, including the Champlain Canal Trail, the Cohoes Heritage Trail and the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail. The segment of Saratoga Street between Ontario Street and Columbia Avenue has already experienced an increase in new residential development, and the Master Plan propose additional development south of the BRT station to further increase the density of downtown Cohoes. The proposed BRT site would be within walking distance of Remsen Street and the adjacent North Columbia mixed use neighborhood. The maintenance of the Pine Street crossing of the Canadian Pacific Railway would be important to the provision of pedestrian access to the BRT station, and should be studied further as part of BOA Step 3 Implementation efforts.



The proposed BRT station is similar to a concept currently utilized in Charlottesville, NC, where the station is part of a larger transit-oriented section of the City.