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Protecting our Heritage: Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources



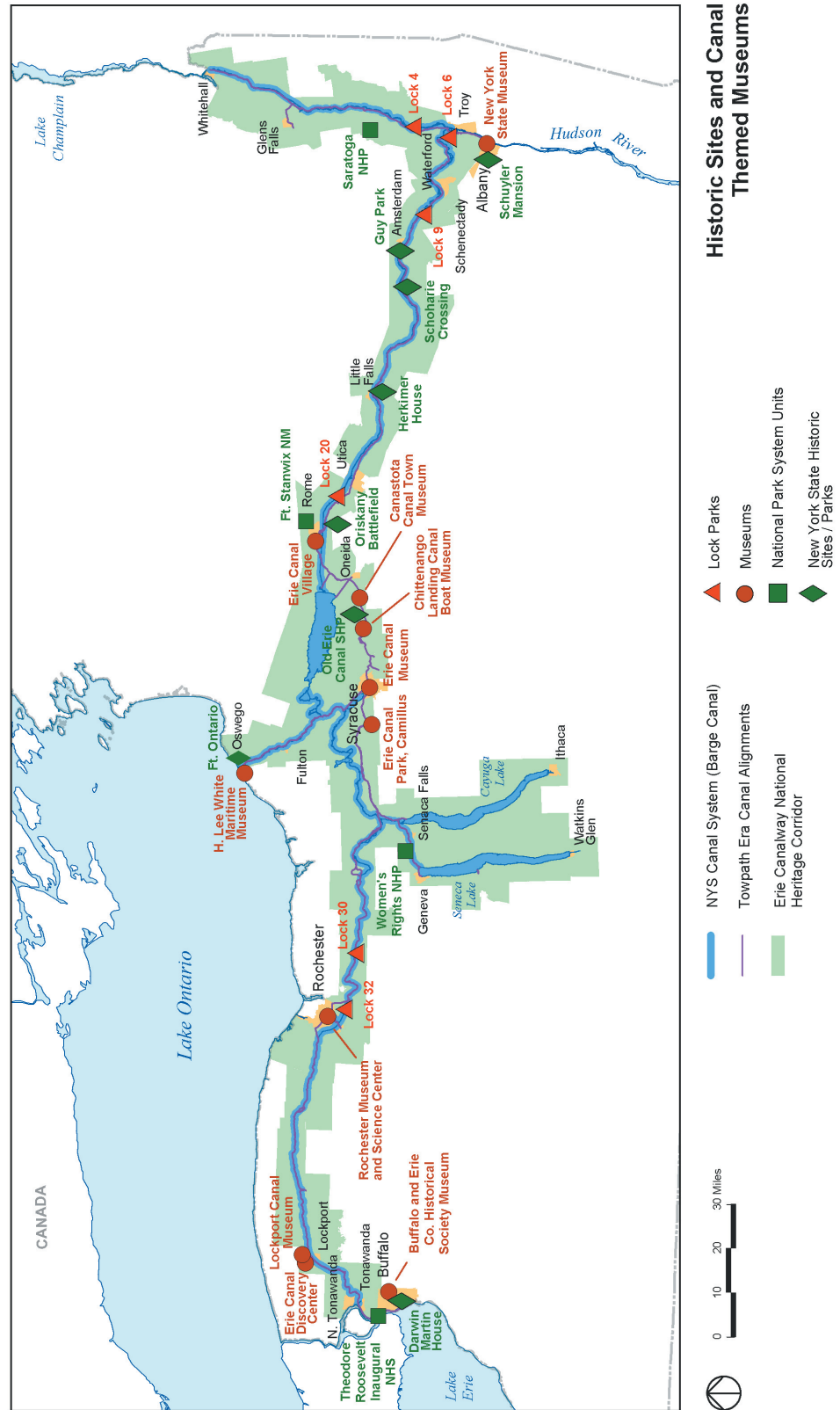
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Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct, Camillus

Erie Canalway
National Heritage Corridor
Preservation and Management Plan

OVERVIEW

The national significance of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor relies on the integrity and authenticity of its vast array of historic and cultural resources – the qualities that allow modern-day visitors to connect to the people, places and events that shaped the region, New York State, and the nation. Preservation is what protects the integrity and authenticity of physical elements, such as buildings, vessels, or the canals themselves, that can be toured and explained; of cultural expressions, such as oral histories, folkways, and art, that can be shared and absorbed; and of cultural landscapes, evolving places where the concrete and the ephemeral combine to resonate with the past and the present, that can only be appreciated through immersion and travel.

Increasingly, Congress, the National Park Service, preservationists, and other managers of cultural resources are recognizing the potential of heritage areas – regions with a compelling history of settlement, movement and change – as vehicles for managing living cultural landscapes where renewed stewardship of historic and natural resources is needed at the same time as economic revitalization. Successful heritage areas are regional partnerships that bring to the table the multiple “owners” of cultural landscapes, to set heritage development goals that balance preservation with economic growth, and to collaborate on strategies that optimize their resources. This chapter addresses the kinds of historic and cultural resources in the Corridor, describes the threats to their survival, and proposes guidelines for new and ongoing heritage development efforts by public and private actors.



The communities of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor currently benefit from extensive efforts to advance preservation goals by federal, state and municipal agencies, statewide and regional planning initiatives, nonprofit organizations, and countless individuals. In addition to protecting and enhancing historic and cultural resources throughout the Corridor, these efforts have heightened public awareness and wider recognition of the economic potential of heritage development. But much more work remains to be done, and while opportunities for new public and private partnerships abound, financial and management resources are limited. Numerous challenges face the movement to convert the Corridor's historic integrity into economic benefits.

Economic growth, which has helped support preservation efforts in the Corridor, is also, paradoxically, among the greatest threats to the Corridor's cultural landscapes. Formerly distinctive transitions from town to countryside are becoming blurred by greenfield development that homogenizes and erodes the Corridor's unique sense of place. For the most part, decisions about land use are made at the local level, where competition for new development can marginalize preservation and open space conservation efforts. Different issues challenge the preservation of discrete resources: historic vessels, never meant to last beyond their commercial usefulness, must find new uses that can pay for their upkeep; archeological sites have low visibility and, unless public funds or permits are involved, have no protections; collections of documents and artifacts are underutilized and suffer unexamined gaps; folkways, particularly oral histories and traditional crafts, are fading with the generation that witnessed the Barge Canal's heyday as a commercial shipping route and center of community life. And the canals themselves, cornerstones of the region's culture, require constant maintenance to preserve their historic integrity as well as their continued commercial and recreational utility.

Any actively engaged community that sees value in its history can find a successful path through these challenges. The heritage development guidelines at the end of this chapter are intended to help communities work with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission and its partners to protect the integrity and authenticity of historic and cultural resources in a way that heightens public engagement and enhances the climate for new investment. The guidelines explain how to dovetail resources and opportunities so that the preservation of each resource advances the economy of its community. They also suggest how to improve linkages of historic and cultural resources to interpretive themes and to each other, providing opportunities for exposure, discovery, and increased support.

GOALS

The preservation goal for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is that *the Corridor's historic and distinctive sense of place will be widely recognized and consistently protected*. Four objectives have been identified as milestones toward this goal:

Renewed stewardship of historic and natural resources is needed at the same time as economic revitalization.

Build public support for preservation and enhancement of critical historic and cultural resources

Without active and widespread public support, even the most basic strategies to preserve the Corridor's historic and cultural resources will not succeed. Heightening public interest and participation requires a concerted effort to shift perceptions of "old" as having little present or future economic value, and to demonstrate how historic structures and cultural resources can become strategic assets for vital communities.

Protect and enhance the authenticity and integrity of the Corridor's historic resources and canals, and the continued utility of the 20th century canal system

The Canalway Corridor will look different one hundred years from now, as well it should, but it should carry with it the essential elements – including an operating canal system – that reflect its past and present greatness. As change inevitably takes place in the Corridor, historic resources will require innovative preservation strategies to ensure that they contribute economically while providing a sense of continuity.

Sustainable new development that retains farming operations and open space will maximize the efficiency of municipal services, reduce environmental impacts, and preserve the distinction between town and country that makes the Corridor such an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Encourage investment in historic town centers, sustainable new development practices, and retention of farming and open space

Adaptive reuse and context-sensitive infill development are necessary to leverage the concentrations of historic resources in town centers into tangible economic benefits. Sustainable new development that retains farming operations and open space will maximize the efficiency of municipal services, reduce environmental impacts, and preserve the distinction between town and country that makes the Corridor such an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Help Corridor communities plan for protection of historic and cultural resources and future development

Fiscally challenged municipalities need new development and stronger tax bases, but many local governments have limited resources to develop and implement incentives and land use strategies that assure the protection of historic and cultural resources or guide future development in ways that reinforce local character rather than erode it. National Heritage Corridor designation provides an opportunity to enhance the coordination and capacity communities need to manage change.

CONTEXT

The state of preservation in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is at a crossroads. Anchored by the vision of the 1995 Recreationway Plan and subsequent improvements to the canal system and Canalway Trail, new efforts are underway to capitalize on the region's bounty of historic and cultural resources.

There are many outstanding and well-run historic sites, museums, and other interpretive facilities. Awakened to the potential of heritage development, municipalities, institutions and property owners are recognizing the value of the resources under their care, and the stories those resources convey. A number of Corridor communities have enacted preservation legislation and appointed preservation review commissions to qualify as Certified Local Governments, thereby becoming eligible for community preservation grants, technical preservation assistance, and training opportunities provided through the State Historic Preservation Office. There is a nascent but growing public awareness of the interconnectedness of historic resources, sustainable development, and quality of life.

Despite these positive signs, challenges remain. Many Corridor residents remain unaware of the presence and potential of their historic and cultural resources. Existing preservation efforts, competing for a limited pool of funding, often fail to capitalize on the benefits of partnership. Many stewards of historic sites struggle to keep their doors open to the public or are burdened by years of deferred maintenance. Worse, many resources, including cultural landscapes (see *Resource Analysis* section, page 3.12) that have no clear boundaries and span multiple jurisdictions, remain without formal protections or preservation strategies. Some kinds of new development, long awaited and much needed, are also eroding the characteristic sense of place that makes Corridor communities so attractive to employers and workers as well as visitors.

In this climate, the myriad successful efforts of preservationists in the Corridor should be recognized as nothing less than heroic. From librarians to lock-tenders to park managers, the stewards of the Corridor's historic and cultural resources have built a strong tradition of preservation practice rooted in community values. The National Heritage Corridor designation should be understood in part as an acknowledgment of their hard work. It is the ambition of this Preservation and Management Plan to increase the impact of their ongoing efforts. Key programs and initiatives underway include the following:

NEW YORK STATE CANAL CORPORATION

The most successful preservation story in the Corridor is the Barge Canal itself. In continuous operation since 1918, and retaining the vast majority of its original features and materials, the Barge Canal is a testament to New York State's vision, dedication, and effective management. Since it assumed responsibility for the Barge Canal in 1992, the Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York State Thruway Authority, has balanced the need to operate and update the system for commercial and recreational use while preserving and interpreting its historic elements. The Canal Corporation has worked to revitalize commercial shipping, a critical component of the Corridor's heritage, while it has made major investments to accommodate and promote recreation. Although the Barge Canal is a model for adaptive reuse, it remains an underutilized asset. Increased resources for planning, preservation, and improvements to Canal Corporation properties can help ensure that the canal system achieves its full potential as a heritage destination and anchor for community revitalization.

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NEW YORK STATE CANAL RECREATIONWAY COMMISSION

Comprised of state agencies, regional planning boards, and at-large members, the Canal Recreationway Commission was created to advise the Canal Corporation on actions needed to revitalize the canal system. The Recreationway Commission is guided by the 1995 Canal Recreationway Plan, which was developed as a framework for the adaptive reuse of the canal system as a recreational resource and underscored the relationship between historic resources and recreational tourism. Many of the plan's preservation-related recommendations have been implemented, including: the National Heritage Corridor designation; construction of new canal harbors and other recreational facilities consistent with the Recreationway Plan's suggested public space standards, and the Erie Canalway Trail, which when completed will connect historic and recreational resources along the length of the Erie Canal; development of an Interim Interpretive Plan by the Canal Corporation; and increased public interest in developing the region's historic and cultural resources as heritage development assets. Projects under the jurisdiction of the Canal Corporation, including infrastructural improvements and all types of development on Canal Corporation lands, are subject to review and approval under Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Law.

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION (OPRHP)

In addition to managing eight historic sites and two parks with historic resources within the Corridor, the OPRHP, along with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), administers the state's Open Space Conservation Plan, which guides local activities that help preserve the Corridor's historic cultural landscapes (see *Resource Analysis* section, page 3.12). A number of OPRHP programs support local preservation activities, including: the Historic Preservation Program, which provides matching grants for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of properties listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places through the Environmental Protection Fund; the Historic Barns Tax Credit, which assists with the rehabilitation of pre-1936 barns; and the Barns Restoration and Preservation Program, which provides matching grants for the preservation of historic agricultural buildings. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a component of the OPRHP, is the state's central source for preservation planning and technical assistance under the New York State Historic Preservation Act. In 1993, SHPO staff prepared a statement of significance finding elements of the New York State Canal System to be potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND (EPF)

Created in 1993 by the Environmental Protection Act, this fund provides mechanisms for open space conservation, land acquisition, waterfront revitalization, water quality projects, farmland protection, and special areas planning. EPF Title 3 provides funds for OPRHP to undertake open space land conservation projects in partnership with local governments and nonprofit organizations. Title 9 provides funds for OPRHP, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to purchase, preserve or improve park lands, historic resources, and state-

designated heritage areas and corridors. Title 11 provides funds for waterfront revitalization plans, watershed management plans, and coastal rehabilitation projects.

NEW YORK STATE HERITAGE AREA SYSTEM

The Heritage Area System (formerly known as the Urban Cultural Park System), administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is a state and local partnership established to preserve and develop areas that have special significance to New York State. Eight state heritage areas and two state heritage corridors lie within or overlap the boundaries of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Many of the heritage area management plans explicitly address preservation of canal-related resources, along with the overall goals of conservation, recreation, education and economic revitalization.

- *Mohawk Valley (State) Heritage Corridor*: The State Heritage Corridor's management plan supports a number of preservation-related actions, including: establishment of Main Streets programs; seed investment in renovation of historic buildings and restoration of select heritage resources; development of linkages between waterfronts, downtowns, and recreational resources; identification of priority resources; production of a best practices handbook; and encouragement of agricultural preservation. Initiatives so far have focused on education and awareness, including presentations on heritage development and several community planning workshops. Implementation of an interpretive plan and a coordinated marketing effort with heritage organizations in the neighboring Hudson and Champlain valleys, have improved the demand and environment for historic preservation and increased the level of regional cooperation.
- *Western Erie Canal (State) Heritage Corridor*: Preservation actions supported by the State Heritage Corridor's management plan include: promotion of public awareness about historic resources; coordination of regional preservation partners; documentation of historic buildings, cultural landscapes, and archeological resources; and voluntary municipal adoption of a "compact resolution" to prioritize connections to the canal, develop an ethic of stewardship, pursue education and interpretation, and strengthen historic downtowns.
- *Albany Heritage Area*: This heritage area focuses on the state's political and financial institutions, including the role they played in building the canal system.
- *Hudson-Mohawk Heritage Area (RiverSpark)*: This heritage area, serving seven communities at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, regularly sponsors research, festivals, tours and capital projects that interpret the development of the canals and preserve the region's many notable towpath-era and Barge Canal sites.
- *Whitehall Heritage Area*: This heritage area has been actively involved in the revitalization of the community's main street, harbor and canal, and rehabilitated a canal terminal building to serve as a visitor center.
- *Schenectady Heritage Area*: This heritage area's canal-related programs include historic district tours and downtown revitalization activities.
- *Syracuse Heritage Area*: With a visitor center hosted by the Erie Canal Museum, this heritage area focuses on canal history and helped make his-

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toric downtown Clinton Square, a former canalboat turning basin, a center of heritage interpretation.

- *Seneca Falls Heritage Area:* This heritage area's canal-related projects have focused on main street revitalization, historic preservation, and enhancement of the Cayuga-Seneca Canal waterfront.
- *Rochester High Falls Heritage Area:* This heritage area's canal-related programs highlight the canal-dependent power generation and mills that made Rochester the "Flour City."
- *Buffalo Heritage Area:* This heritage area, focusing on revitalization of the arts district and its architectural landmarks, celebrates the remarkable flowering of culture that occurred when Buffalo flourished as the western terminus of the Erie Canal.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)

The SHPO, a component of the OPRHP, oversees compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act within New York. Under the 2002-2006 State Historic Preservation Plan, the SHPO supports a wide array of activities in partnership with numerous individuals, organizations, agencies, and governments. Among other activities, the SHPO manages the State Register of Historic Places and forwards its listings to the National Register; reviews applications for the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit; administers historic preservation grants to municipalities and non-profits; assists in environmental reviews and archeological planning for projects under the State Environmental Quality Review Act; offers technical assistance and community preservation grants through the Certified Local Governments program; and promotes outreach and education. Targeted initiatives of value to the Corridor have included the Survey of Historic Resources Associated with African-Americans in New York State, the Barn Restoration and Preservation Program, and the Historic Bridges Inventory.

ERIE CANAL GREENWAY

A state agency task force is developing the concept for a legislatively designated state greenway along the Erie Canal, proposed by the Governor in 2005. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission was invited to participate as a member of the New York State Canal Corporation Interagency Task Force. The Commission will cooperate with the Canal Corporation and any entity created to help achieve compatible and complementary goals.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

In addition to managing four national historic sites in the Corridor, the National Park Service also works closely with the New York SHPO on implementation of the State Historic Preservation Plan, including: listing of sites in the National Register of Historic Places; approval of projects for the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit; and evaluation of local preservation legislation and review commissions for the Certified Local Government program, which provides technical assistance and funding to communities that meet federal preservation planning standards. The Maritime Heritage Program maintains inventories

of historic ships and wrecks and provides technical assistance in preservation planning. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program provides technical assistance to organizations attempting to identify, document, preserve and interpret sites and travel routes related to this important national and local story. Preservation initiatives by the NPS and other federal agencies are guided by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and related guidelines for historic buildings, cultural landscapes, and vessels.

The Erie Canalway: A Special Resource Study of the New York State Canal System, a 1998 report by the National Park Service, lays the groundwork for the creation of the Corridor and for major portions of this Preservation and Management Plan. It provides a concise and cogent analysis of the canal system's significance at both a regional and national level, and proposes a set of core interpretive themes that seek to place the stories of the canals within a broad historical context. The analysis and themes in the special resource study have been updated and expanded in this Plan (see Chapter 2, *National Significance*).

In addition to facilitating the management of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the NPS also operates four National Park System units within the Corridor:

- Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, in Buffalo, where the Vice President and former New York governor took the oath of office in 1901 following President William McKinley's death by an assassin's bullet
- Women's Rights National Historical Park, in Seneca Falls, where the first Women's Rights Convention was held in 1848, and where the participation of the convention's organizers in the abolitionist movement is also interpreted
- Fort Stanwix National Monument, in Rome, where the reconstructed battlements commemorate the Continental Army's defense of the Oneida Carry during the American Revolution, and where the controversial pattern of European-American Indian relations is also interpreted
- Saratoga National Historical Park, in Stillwater, where the American military won its first significant victory during the Revolution

The Kate Mullany National Historic Site, an affiliated area of the National Park System in Troy, is managed by the American Labor Studies Center.

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY / HUDSON RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

The Greenway Act of 1991 created two organizations to facilitate the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving the Hudson River Valley's scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making. The Greenway Council, a state agency, works with local and county governments to enhance local land use planning and create a voluntary regional planning compact for the Hudson River Valley. The Greenway Conservancy, a public benefit corporation, works with local governments, organizations, and individuals to establish a Hudson River Valley Trail system, promote the Hudson River Valley as a single tourism destination area,

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and assist in the preservation of agriculture, and, with the Council, works with communities to strengthen state agency cooperation with local governments. The Greenway is the management entity of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, designated in 1996 to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Valley for the benefit of the nation. The Greenway works in partnership with the National Park Service to promote the National Heritage Area management plan themes of Freedom & Dignity, Nature & Culture, and Corridor of Commerce.

LAKES TO LOCKS PASSAGE

Designated an All-American Road – among the best of the nation’s scenic byways – Lakes to Locks Passage was created by merging the Champlain Canal Byway and the Champlain Trail (along Lake Champlain) for community revitalization and tourism development. The Byway’s Corridor Management Plan, developed through a partnership of the public and private stewards of the historic, natural, cultural, recreational and working landscape resources along the Champlain Canal, Upper Hudson River, Lake George and Lake Champlain regions, provides a structure to unify the communities along the interconnected waterway. Current activities to preserve, protect, and celebrate historic and cultural resources include the development of a thematic trail linking the sites of the French and Indian War in commemoration of its 250th anniversary. Plans are underway for similar trails commemorating the War of 1812 and explorations of Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain.

QUALITY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Quality Communities Task Force, comprised of 25 state agencies and academic partners, was created by an executive order of the Governor in 2000 to assist New York communities in implementing effective land development, preservation and rehabilitation strategies that promote both economic growth and environmental protection. The Quality Communities Initiative focuses on revitalizing town centers, protecting open space, and improving the use of technology in ways that complement the priorities of individual communities. Preservation-oriented recommendations by the Task Force include: providing tax incentives for preservation of historic downtown architecture; funding open space and farmland protection; and supporting the continued vitality of New York agriculture. Twelve pilot communities across New York, including Rome and Lockport, have received focused financial and technical assistance from state agencies to help develop and implement revitalization strategies based on the Task Force recommendations.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE – DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES

The Division of Coastal Resources encourages communities to guide the beneficial use, revitalization, and protection of their waterfront resources and watersheds by preparing Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans or intermunicipal watershed protection plans. In partnership with the Division, a municipality or inter-municipal region develops community consensus and policies to address

issues including waterfront redevelopment; harbor management; public access; erosion hazards management; water quality protection; habitat restoration; and historic maritime resource protection. The resulting comprehensive framework must indicate what local implementation measures are needed, specific projects that will advance the program, and state and federal agency actions necessary for the program's success. Once approved by the New York Secretary of State, the framework serves to coordinate state actions needed to achieve the goals of the community or region. Over the past eight years, over 90 grants totaling more than \$6 million have been awarded to municipalities along the canal system, through Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund, for waterfront and watershed projects supported by the 1995 Recreationway Plan.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)

The Department, in addition to administering the Scenic Byways Program, administers transportation funds including the federally funded Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP), which supports the operation of the Barge Canal and funds other non-traditional transportation "enhancement" projects such as waterfront access and historic preservation. DOT also owns and maintains bridges crossing the canals, and in 2001 executed a Programmatic Agreement addressing the National Register eligibility and management of historic canal bridges, outlining the process DOT will follow to meet its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS

The Agricultural Districts Program, Farm Protection Planning, and Farmland Preservation Project assist local governments in the use of comprehensive planning, incentives, and the purchase of property interests to support the rural landscapes and active agricultural use that are vital to the Corridor's heritage. Programs under the Food and Agricultural Industry Development initiative assist in the marketing and promotion of New York agricultural products and the establishment of new farms.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - NYS MUSEUM, LIBRARY, AND ARCHIVES

The Education Department's Office of Cultural Education administers the State Museum, State Library, State Archives, and Educational TV/Public Broadcasting Program. The Museum collects, preserves, and interprets specimens, art, and artifacts relating to New York's natural and human history. In addition to permanent and temporary exhibits in Albany, the Museum organizes traveling exhibits, cultural and educational programs, and research activities throughout the state. The Museum performs cultural resource management services for other state agencies, issues permits for archeological research under water and on state lands, administers the state historic marker program, and offers education, training, and expertise to teachers and municipal historians. The New York State Archives, a program of the department, cares for and provides access to over 130 million state documents that tell the story of New York from the 17th century to the present, and administers statewide records management

programs that reach out to state agencies, local governments, and community organizations. Because almost all of New York's canals were built and operated by the state, the Archives contains the largest single body of documents, maps, and photographs of the system, particularly during the Barge Canal era. The Special Collections division of the New York State Library collects maps, published views, and business manuscripts throughout the state and has particularly rich holdings from communities within the National Heritage Corridor.

DIVISION OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL - MAIN STREETS

Founded in 2004, the New York Main Street Program was created to provide funding for Main Street and downtown revitalization efforts, help coordinate and guide efforts among state agencies, and to serve as a resource to communities looking for financial and technical assistance to revitalize their Main Street. Several state agencies including the Division of Housing and Community Renewal in partnership with the Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Department of State, Department of Transportation, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Governor's Office for Small Cities, and Empire State Development Corporation were brought together to create the New York Main Street Program. Collectively, these agencies offer a wide variety of programs and technical resources to assist Main Street revitalization efforts such as facade renovations, streetscape enhancements, and rehabilitation of important downtown business or cultural anchors.

STATEWIDE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Canal Society of New York State advocates for the protection and interpretation of historic and natural resources and publishes field guides that document the interaction of geology and canal engineering at locations throughout the Corridor. The Society also holds a substantial body of historic photographs and artifacts relating to the canal system and hosts the annual New York State Canal Conference. Parks & Trails NY provides advocacy and technical assistance for trail and park planning and management, and is a major supporter of the Canalway Trail. The Preservation League of New York State provides grant support, technical assistance and training, legal advice, advocacy, and public recognition for historic preservation activity throughout the state. The League provides a critical source of funding for cultural resource surveys, historic structure reports, and historic landscape reports. These three National Heritage Corridor partners are primary links to grassroots organizing for preservation, conservation, and interpretive and recreational development.

RESOURCE ANALYSIS

An accurate picture of the historic and cultural resources of the Corridor today is fundamental to proposing management strategies for its future. This section assesses the Corridor's cultural landscapes, historic properties and vessels, as well as archeological sites; documents, records, and artifacts; and arts and folkways. A general inventory of these resources is supplied in Appendix 2.

HERITAGE CORRIDOR CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals link a series of cultural landscapes – geographic areas, including cultural and natural resources, associated with specific events, activities, or people – that are unique to the region. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Historic Preservation* define four overlapping classifications of cultural landscape: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. Examples of all four classifications exist in abundance throughout the Corridor.

In the Corridor, the authenticity and integrity of each individual resource are valued not only because they protect the ability of the resource to convey meaning – a worthwhile goal – but also because they contribute to a *sense of place* that appeals to tourists and residents alike. In order to facilitate a cross-disciplinary approach to thinking about preservation in the context of interpretation and economic development, this Preservation and Management Plan identifies six types of *Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor cultural landscapes* based on the sense of place that they convey. Each may be considered analogous to a combination of the vernacular and ethnographic landscape classifications described by the Secretary’s Standards:

- Towpath-Era Canals
- 20th Century Barge Canal Land Cuts
- 20th Century Barge Canal Riverways
- Settlements – Hamlets, Villages, and Cities
- Industrial Landscapes
- Rural Landscapes

Cultural landscapes stretch across both time and narrow categorization, allowing for an understanding of how change occurs and how preserving the Corridor’s historic and cultural resources can enhance its economic development potential. To a large extent, interpretation of the Corridor’s history – through such themes as progress and power, connections and communications, invention and innovation, unity and diversity (see Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*) – depends on the integrity of its cultural landscapes. All of the Corridor’s cultural landscapes have evolved but retain elements specific to distinct historical periods – patterns of settlement, land use, and transportation, as well as individual structures, artifacts, and natural features, created or altered by human habitation – that continue to support the region’s unbroken living tradition of waterways.

PRE-CANAL HISTORY

New York’s lowland corridors and water courses, the products of dramatic episodes of geology and geomorphology, fostered and channeled human activity for thousands of years before Phillip Schuyler’s men cut the precursors to the Erie Canal in the late 18th century. The Hudson-Champlain, Mohawk, Oswego, Genesee, and Finger Lakes valleys supported settlement, migration, and trade for members of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy and the Archaic and Paleo-Indian hunters who came before. Similarly, the valleys provided

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routes for exploration, trade, and settlement by Europeans and Euro-Americans, starting with Samuel de Champlain and Henry Hudson in 1609. They were also the routes for imperial conquest and conflict – between Britain and Holland (1664), Britain and France (1754-63), Britain and the American colonies (1775-1783), and Britain and the United States (1812-1814).

Landmarks of these pre-canal occupancies and events survive throughout the Corridor, and many retain national and even international significance. Preservation issues and opportunities surrounding these resources differ little from those involving the later canal-era resources. The greater challenge is interpretive: how to acknowledge the events of the pre-canal period without diluting the central focus of the National Heritage Corridor designation – the Erie Canal and its role in shaping America. Nearly all of the significant historic and cultural resources described in this chapter impacted or were influenced by pre-canal events and cultures whose descendants continue to make major contributions to the region's economic, political and social character (see Chapter 2, *National Significance and Historical Context*). Interpretation of pre-canal history in the Corridor is discussed in Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*.

THE CONTINUING ROLE OF THE CANALS

The canals are the key to the Corridor's distinctive cultural landscapes. The Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals and related navigable lakes serve as the armature, or supporting framework, of the conceptual whole of the Canalway Corridor. Although the nature of commerce and culture along the Corridor has changed, the continuity of use of the canals remains the foundation of the entire region's historic authenticity and interpretive value. At the same time, the continuity of public investment and stewardship – of the canal system and the adjoining lands – is the cornerstone of the region's most significant efforts in preservation and conservation.

During the 19th century towpath era, the alignments of the original canal system and its enlargements followed routes, chosen by canal engineers and surveyors and dug by hand before the advent of steam-powered machinery, that avoided rivers, swamps and wetlands: all barriers to mule-drawn boats. Natural obstacles such as waterfalls and escarpments were also avoided to minimize the construction of locks, bridges, aqueducts, and other canal infrastructure. As these obstacles were overcome by improvements in engineering and, eventually, the motorization of canal vessels, each successive evolution of the canal system became shorter, with fewer locks.

Designed for motorized transportation, the 20th century canal system made use of natural waterways, resulting in a realignment and shortening of the central and eastern canal routes. Canalboats, no longer dependent on mules, traveled faster and stopped less often. The realignment of the central and eastern parts of the system into rivers and lakes removed canal traffic from many of the population centers that had grown up along the historic canal edge. These changes had lasting implications for the region's economy, natural resources, settlement patterns and land use.

Today, the canals remain essential infrastructure for the economy of upstate New York – as commercial transportation corridor, as recreational resource, as historical attraction, as focus for community revitalization, and as touchstone of the region’s cultural identity. The economic benefits of enhanced canal maintenance and preservation activity can be measured in terms of tourism dollars, national stature, and regional pride as well as in terms of direct revenues from permits and registrations.

For purposes of determining historic significance, it makes sense to divide the Corridor’s historic canal elements into the three major eras of development: the initial system, also known as Clinton’s Ditch; its enlargement, also known as the Enlarged Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals; and the 20th century Barge Canal (see Chapter 2, *National Significance and Historical Context*). However, for purposes of understanding and interpreting how the Corridor’s surviving canal elements contribute to the lives of today’s inhabitants, it makes sense to divide them into three thematic cultural landscapes: the towpath-era canals, the 20th century land cuts, and the 20th century riverways.

1. TOWPATH-ERA CANALS

New York State’s initial canal system, built from 1817 to 1828, and the enlarged system, undertaken from 1835 to 1862, represent the “towpath-era” canal experience before the mechanized improvements of the 20th century Barge Canal. Historic remnants of these canals, many of which are no longer owned by the New York State Canal Corporation, include the structures built by the state to operate the canal (locks, aqueducts, bridges, culverts, dams, feeders and reservoirs, stop gates, stream receivers, waste-weirs and spillways) and service canal traffic (weighlocks, drydocks, lockhouses, and locktenders’ houses), as well as the prism through which the water flowed and the private canalside commercial structures such as taverns, stores and warehouses.

The majority of the towpath-era canal landscape is found along the central and eastern sections of the Corridor, where the Barge Canal’s shift to natural waterways left these predecessor sections undisturbed. However, many towpath-era canal segments and structures, particularly the original prism of Clinton’s Ditch and features of the Northern Inland and Western Inland Navigation Company canals that preceded it, were abandoned for more than a century before the value of preservation and heritage development became clear. Long utilized as ad hoc landfills, some segments have been used as water, sewer, and utility corridors or filled to serve as street and highway rights of way.

The changes brought by the Barge Canal provide an important window into the life of the Corridor. The juxtaposition of towpath-era canal remnants with the Barge Canal, as at Lockport, Little Falls, Schuylerville, and Schoharie Crossing, illustrates the advancements in commerce and technology from the early 19th to the early 20th century and provides an unparalleled opportunity to make clear the relationships between Clinton’s Ditch, the enlarged system, and the Barge Canal. Opportunities also exist to make connections between the routes of the canals and successive modes of transportation, as at the Enlarged Erie locks at Port Byron, alongside the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90). The pres-

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ervation and interpretation of such sites are critical to the success of heritage development in the Corridor.

Among more isolated towpath-era resources, the priority should lie with sites where multiple components, and their relationships to one another, are still recognizable; where individual resources have particular significance or interpretive value; and where past examples of preservation may prove instructive to modern-day and future efforts. The abandoned canal prism itself presents a special challenge for preservation and interpretation (see *Guidelines for Heritage Development* section, page 3.31). How deteriorated or overgrown can these remnants become before they are no longer recognizable as elements of the canal system? To what condition must they be restored in order to preserve their contribution to the Corridor's cultural landscapes? Any evaluation of these resources must begin with their current condition: currently watered, reclaimed by wetlands, or lost to construction or vegetative growth.

Watered – The historic canal landscape is particularly evocative where water is combined with historic structures, as at the Glens Falls Feeder and the Old Erie Canal State Park. Watered canal segments that demonstrate engineering achievements, represent the connection from one town to the next across the state, or illustrate the historic relationship between the mule teams and canal-boats have the most to contribute to Corridor interpretation. Variations on this landscape type can be found at the Old Erie Canal Village in Rome, Chittenango Landing, Camillus, and along the Great Embankment in Pittsford. Many of these sites are already publicly accessible; walkers, runners, and bicyclists use the towpath for recreation. The priority for existing watered segments is continued maintenance and, where necessary, improved interpretive facilities.

Wetland – In some locations, due to the absence of the constant supply of water through the canal prism, wetlands have grown or reclaimed sections of the historic canal. The types of wetlands vary from forested swamps to marshes populated with sedges, rushes, and cattails. Although wetland vegetation has altered the appearance of the prism, the canal is still visible and identifiable, and its edges are most often defined with berms, retaining walls, bridge abutments, or other canal structures. Some of these landscapes are within public parks along a towpath, such as at the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site and a segment east of Nine Mile Creek aqueduct near Camillus. Due to the ecological and recreational value of wetlands, the priority for these landscapes is to improve interpretive opportunities and stabilize recognizable canal elements at the most publicly accessible sites. However, there may be some locations where the highest and best use of the prism is judged to be rewatering or some other intervention that is incompatible with the wetland.

Buried/Overgrown – Much of the towpath-era canal prism has been lost to development, road construction and lack of maintenance, and many of its associated structures are now unmarked. Their physical condition and interpretive value vary depending on ownership, maintenance, and integrity of the original structure. Some segments, such as those at Camillus and at Old Erie Canal Vil-

lage near Rome, have proven reclaimable. Other sites need to be identified and evaluated for integrity and accessibility; for segments with significant interpretive potential, the priority is recognition and protection by state and local heritage development partners. The priority for urban canal alignments filled in and renamed – as Erie Boulevards, Lock Streets, and the like – is preservation and commemoration of the canal route with appropriate landscape and urban design treatments, such as designed water features, and improved interpretive media that conceptually connect the canal to the urban form and architecture that survived it (see *Guidelines for Heritage Development* section, page 3.31).

2. 20TH CENTURY BARGE CANAL: LAND CUTS

The increasing sophistication of civil engineering and the motorization of canal vessels allowed for a realignment of New York's canal system into the rivers and lakes, where horsepower would have been inadequate to deal with the currents and towpaths would have been too far from deep water. However, no navigable riverways existed in the western part of the Erie Canal and in the northern section of the Champlain Canal. There, the existing land cuts were made deeper and wider to accommodate larger vessels, destroying much evidence of the towpath-era canals and adjoining structures. For this reason, preservation of surviving towpath-era canal structures is a special priority in the regions around the land-cut sections of the Barge Canal.

The alignments of these land-cut Barge Canal sections remained largely unchanged, so the surrounding cultural landscape was left substantially intact. The major exception was Buffalo, bypassed by the Barge Canal's new terminus at Tonawanda and North Tonawanda; the former gateway to the West filled in its canals and sealed them beneath streets and an elevated highway. Plans are currently underway to unearth and interpret Buffalo's original connection between the Erie Canal and Lake Erie. Elsewhere, in villages such as Medina, Fairport, and Lyons, the continuity of urban form, waterfront architecture, and orientation to the land-cut canal has favored adaptive reuse and smaller-scale retail-, tourism- and recreation-based development over wholesale urban and industrial redevelopment.

Unlike the Barge Canal riverways, the stone and concrete land-cut channels are generally characterized by a human-built homogeneity. Settlements, trees and landscape features face each other across the relatively narrow channel. The water is placid and sometimes warm, lacking the seasonal flooding that characterizes even the highly controlled flows of the riverways. Many of the bridges over the western Erie Canal are lower than those spanning the rest of the system's land cuts and riverways, limiting recreational and, particularly, commercial boat traffic. While some residents consider these features drawbacks, they contribute to a distinctly intimate setting, with an immediate connection between settlements and the Barge Canal. The priority for this cultural landscape is to encourage development that complements the character and continuity of this evolving waterfront setting.

In the western part of the Erie Canal and in the northern section of the Champlain Canal, the existing manmade channels were made deeper and wider to accommodate larger vessels, destroying much evidence of the towpath-era canals and adjoining structures. For this reason, preservation of surviving towpath-era canal structures is a special priority in the regions around the land-cut sections of the Barge Canal.

3. 20TH CENTURY BARGE CANAL: RIVERWAYS

The manipulation of river systems for use as canals greatly changed the Corridor's natural and altered landscapes as well as the experience and perception of the canals. The rivers themselves were canalized, with channels dredged to twelve feet deep and marked with navigation buoys. The motorization of canal traffic continues to affect the region's river and lake ecology and, through wake effects, unprotected shorelines.

Unlike historic canal edges, the edges of the Barge Canal riverways – the Mohawk and Seneca portions of the Erie Canal, the Hudson River portion of the Champlain Canal, and all of the Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca Canals, as well as Oneida and Onondaga Lakes – are hard to distinguish from natural banks and shores. In fact, many of the riverway edges have been modified extensively, with rip-rap and other reinforcing concealed by decades of vegetative growth. Trees and shrubs grow to the water's edge; rock outcroppings rise from the valleys. Other than entering and leaving locks, boat travel on most of the central and eastern Barge Canal feels like boat travel on a river. This serene setting contributes significantly to the system's attractiveness as a recreational resource.

At the same time, the river and lakefront sections of the canals are now valued as waterfront property, spurring suburban and retail development along the water's edge. Vegetation has been thinned or removed to create views from homes to the river, and docks have appeared for pleasure boats and other recreational watercraft. Restaurants and shopping outlets market the canal to attract visitors and provide some interpretive media. Some kinds of development can damage fragile ecosystems; aggravate flooding and erosion with rapid runoff and increasingly hardened water edges; and diminish the visual quality that makes this landscape so amenable to settlement in the first place.

Increased recognition of the waterways as part of the region's most significant historic and cultural resource – the canal system – would support efforts to limit the visual impacts of waterfront development and protect scenic value.

Residents of communities along Barge Canal riverways tend to identify the waterway as a river or lake; many are unaware of the historical significance of the Barge Canal and their proximity to it. In general, preservation and conservation efforts focused on the waterway as a river or lake rather than a part of the canal system have positively affected the canal's protection from pollution and erosion. However, increased recognition of the waterways as part of the region's most significant historic and cultural resource – the canal system – would support efforts to limit the visual impacts of waterfront development and protect scenic value. The priorities for protection of the riverways' historic settings are to increase public access at high-volume locations, as per the 1995 Recreationway Plan proposal for canal harbors, service ports and waterfront landings, and to develop standards and incentives for responsible development (see *Guidelines for Heritage Development* section, page 3.31).

BARGE CANAL STRUCTURES

Construction of the Barge Canal required new types of structures. Reinforced concrete locks were much larger and powered by electricity, resulting in shorter lock-through times and, today, the ability to accommodate numerous recreational vessels at once. Movable dams were built to limit the disruptions caused

by the natural river hydrology during flooding season. While these structures have been maintained as necessary for the continued operation of the Barge Canal, other structures that no longer serve their original function, such as terminal buildings and powerhouses, are vulnerable. Adaptive reuse to support Corridor interpretive, recreational, and visitor service needs may be a viable way to preserve these structures where such efforts can consciously contribute to the story of the canals' continued evolution.

Public ownership of the system's highly visible infrastructural elements provides the opportunity for actions to have broad impact; their proper treatment can provide an example and inspiration to smaller property holders. The New York State Canal Corporation, a division of the New York State Thruway Authority, is responsible for the operating canal system and its supportive infrastructure. The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for maintenance of most highway bridges over the canal system and shares responsibility with the Canal Corporation for maintenance of 16 lift bridges on the western portion of the Erie. The Canal Corporation's year-round maintenance program for locks, dams, bulkheads and other infrastructure requires considerable ingenuity and craftsmanship, including in-house manufacture of replacement parts that are no longer available from any other source. The DOT, under its 2001 Canal Bridge Programmatic Agreement, works to maintain the integrity and extend the useful life of historic bridges, replacing damaged sections "in-kind" where possible.

In general, rehabilitation and maintenance of the Barge Canal and associated structures has successfully preserved its historic character. The workers, repair shops, and craftsmanship involved in maintaining this "living treasure" are themselves worthy of documentation and interpretation. While the Canal Corporation has not specifically outlined procedures by which it will meet its responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act or state preservation law, it works closely with the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which reviews canal system capital projects. New Canal Corporation facilities, such as the Canal Harbors constructed under the Canal Revitalization Program, have generally followed the Recreationway Plan's suggested public space standards and should be considered models for future development that is in keeping with the Barge Canal's contemporary maritime character.

4. SETTLEMENTS – HAMLETS, VILLAGES, AND CITIES

A glance at a population map of New York reveals the direct connection between the historic canal alignment and the distribution of cities, villages and hamlets across the state. In addition to providing access to natural resources, the canals provided shipping capacity to transport goods and people across New York State. Roads and rail have supplanted the canals as the generally preferred transportation modes for both people and goods, but these overland routes, subject to many of the same geographic constraints as the canals, continue to access the population centers born during the towpath era.

Canal construction impacted the spatial organization of settlements at both macro and micro scales. On the macro scale, the canals had different influ-

Remnants of the historic canal alignment survive in prominent locations – often as a city street named Erie Boulevard, sometimes supplemented by a linear park or historic marker.

The focus of heritage development at these sites should be preservation and commemoration of the original canal route. Landscape and urban design treatments such as designed water features can conceptually connect the canal to the urban form and architecture that survived it.

ences on populations across the state. In the east, the canals connected existing settlements. In the middle, established settlements stretched or moved toward the commerce on the canals. In the west, where there were few pre-existing settlements, the canals brought a major increase in density. On the micro scale, canal traffic determined the rhythm of settlement patterns. Mules or horses pulling the canalboats needed to be rested every 10 to 15 miles, and at that interval general stores, boarding houses, churches, and other civic structures sprang up to serve the canal traffic. This pattern remains visible along the land-cut section of the western Erie Canal. Settlements also occurred at major road crossings and at junctures where canal traffic was forced to stop – at turning basins, locks, and aqueducts.

Many settlements became disconnected from the active waterways when the Barge Canal was constructed. In many places, particularly in the Mohawk River Valley and the Corridor's largest cities, the realignment "orphaned" streets, open spaces, and buildings that now seem misplaced; subsequent redevelopment has obscured the urban organization of these formerly canalside settlements. Still, remnants of the historic canal alignment survive in prominent locations, often as a city street named Erie Boulevard, sometimes supplemented by a linear park or historic marker. Along some Erie Boulevards the discerning eye can spot architectural features built in response to the historic canal, such as service doors designed to accommodate canal freight. The turning basin in Syracuse was filled in and turned into a plaza; in Frankfort, the canal prism became a linear greensward. The focus of heritage development at these sites should be preservation and commemoration of the original canal route. Landscape and urban design treatments, such as designed water features marking the canal route, and improved interpretive signage can conceptually connect the canal to the urban form and architecture that survived it.

There appear to be distinct canal town types, with characteristic form and structures, worth defining and interpreting. A major distinction between types can be found in the relationships of primary streets to the historic canal alignment – sometimes perpendicular, as in Fairport, sometimes parallel, as in Whitehall, but always indicating the focus of activity around the waterway. Town centers were built proximate to the canal, with churches, town hall, and post office at the four corners of town squares in villages such as Albion. The scale and density of the canal towns reflect an economy measured in boat- and cart-loads, and distances measured in a day's walk.

The benefits of adaptive reuse, infill and context-sensitive development, and Main Street revitalization need to be promoted, and incentives offered in areas with the most threatened assets, and the most disadvantaged economies.

While some villages and small cities retain these features, urban renewal activities and industrial development – especially in cities such as Buffalo and Rome – have altered the distinctive fabric of canalside settlement. In some cities, many buildings face away from the canal, creating a historic but unattractive panorama of blank walls and service alleys along the waterfront. Many communities are struggling with the effects of downtown abandonment exacerbated by suburban commercial and residential development. Despite the success of efforts to revitalize downtowns through adaptive reuse and improved connections to the canals and other recreational assets, the temptation to bring big-box stores, themed residential complexes, and large parking lots to waterfronts and downtowns remains strong.

Integrated with trails and public access points, the Corridor's historical built context – the buildings and structures that provide human scale to cultural landscapes – offer heritage development opportunities. Some historic properties relate to the use and personages associated with the canal, as at Lockport and Tonawanda; but many do not. Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse have examples of outstanding architecture that postdate the canal era. Most of these properties are privately owned. In the effort to make the most of these places, the benefits of adaptive reuse, infill, context-sensitive development, and Main Street revitalization need to be promoted, and incentives offered in areas with the most threatened assets, and the most disadvantaged economies.

5. INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES

Industry was often the hinge between communities and the canals. The Corridor's historic industrial landscape exists in two distinct forms: 19th century manufacturing districts where factories and mills were powered by water and steam; and 20th century complexes that stored grain, oil, and other products to be loaded aboard the Barge Canal's larger vessels for affordable bulk transport.

Power generation, either by naturally falling water or by redirected canal water, was instrumental in establishing population centers during the towpath era. In Rochester, Genesee River water powered flour mills that shipped their products on the canal. In Cohoes, narrow streets and dense residential development overlook former textile factories, power canals, and the still functioning hydroelectric plant at Cohoes Falls, a view that illustrates the impact of industrial activity on urban form. The adaptability of many towpath-era industrial buildings for modern uses, and the power of these settings to explain the historic relationships between commercial and community life, provide strong arguments for preservation and interpretation.

The Barge Canal significantly increased shipping capacity, and the new scale of industrial development redefined communities' relationship to the canals. Small warehouses connected by local streets to downtown businesses were supplanted – first by massive bulk cargo facilities, often located beyond city limits or isolated by rail yards, and later by parking lots for trucks and shipping containers. Massive grain elevators lined the Buffalo waterfront to receive shipments from the Great Lakes. In Utica, Rochester and Syracuse, tank farms of wide, squat silos stored enough petroleum to get through the winter months when the canal was closed.

Some of the larger complexes along the Barge Canal's waterfront do not convey the image of innovation and prosperity suggested by the old mill districts, and are not nearly as conducive to recreation and community life. However, canal-related industry is an important part of the Corridor's history and, in some locations, remains integral to the continuing traditions of life on the waterways. For historic as well as economic reasons, industrial use needs to be accommodated on the Barge Canal. Rezoning of industrial land or efforts to locate new industry away from the canal should focus on those canalside locations where industrial use presents a quality-of-life or environmental problem. Only those

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Only those industrial and large-scale commercial uses that adversely impact recreational facilities and historic downtowns should be shielded from the waterfront.

industrial and large-scale commercial uses that adversely impact recreational facilities and historic downtowns should be shielded from the waterfront. New water-dependent industrial uses should be sited so that they will least affect the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the Corridor's canals and historic downtowns.

Decaying or abandoned 20th century industrial areas and brownfields present a difficult challenge: to preserve the Corridor's industrial heritage and the continued viability of commercial traffic on the canals, while promoting the mixed-use redevelopment and environmental stewardship necessary to revitalize the Corridor as an economic engine. Some historic complexes, particularly older masonry buildings with open floorplates and extensive glazing designed for labor-intensive manufacturing, can be adapted for modern industrial, commercial or residential uses. Other historic industrial structures, such as processing and storage facilities, may be better suited for remediation and rehabilitation for non-intensive uses such as recreational facilities, or stabilized "ruins" in park-like settings that interpret or commemorate the Corridor's industrial history. For inactive landfills and other contaminated sites that do not contribute to the Corridor's historic industrial landscapes and spoil the visual experience, the priority is remediation and reuse.

6. RURAL LANDSCAPES

Rural settlements and the agricultural land surrounding them represent the first industry supported by boat traffic on the historic canals. Canals brought access to fertile lands and the ability to send products to regional and national markets. Canal waters were tapped by family farms and small-scale livestock or dairy operations, and even today are used to irrigate some crops.

Traditional settlement patterns, a defining characteristic of the Corridor, are in jeopardy as greenfield residential and retail projects – those built on agricultural lands and open space – erode the rural zones between towns, villages, and cities.

The rural settlements established along the towpath-era canal now exist mostly as isolated structures. Cider presses, cold storage warehouses and other agricultural processing facilities were built proximate to the canal to facilitate the loading and unloading of canalboats. Stores and boarding houses, such as those found at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site and Port Byron, supplied the boat traffic with goods and provided repairs and other services. A typical retail store or eating establishment had entrances both canalside and landside; the owner's family lived above, and in some cases, rooms were available for rent. The preservation of these and other historic remnants should be a priority where they can illustrate the continuity of agricultural use in the Corridor.

Today, agriculture, led by milk and fruit production, remains an important component of the Corridor's economy (see Chapter 7, *Economic Revitalization*). The focus on perishables, which have dominated New York agriculture since the canals facilitated grain shipments from the West, has helped many farmers stay in business by supplying local markets. Responding to the demands of the Corridor's urban grocery stores and restaurants – and an increasingly diverse population – many of the region's farmers are growing high-value spe-

cialty crops or produce for the small but growing organic and local food movements. Agritourism is another growing source of support for the farm economy, particularly for the vineyards of the Finger Lakes region. Large-scale poultry and livestock production and factory agriculture, which do not contribute to the historic rural landscape and present environmental concerns, have not been significant factors in the Corridor to date.

Over the past five years, the number of farms and acreage of farmland in the Corridor have been declining at rates equal to or below the national average. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has successfully slowed the loss of farmlands through programs that support new and existing agricultural enterprises and protect agricultural land from development. Other organizations providing support to agriculture in the Corridor include the Rural Development Council at the New York Department of State, the Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Growing New Farmers Project, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These efforts deserve continued support and promotion. However, agricultural land will continue to disappear at a significant rate unless there is stronger public support for more sustainable models of development (see *Guidelines for Heritage Development* section, page 3.31).

Suburban development and shifting market conditions threaten to change the extent and character of the Corridor's agricultural landscapes. Traditional settlement patterns, a defining characteristic of the Corridor, are in jeopardy as greenfield residential and retail projects – those built on agricultural lands and open space – erode the rural zones between towns, villages, and cities. Municipal services become increasingly inefficient as they are spread over a larger land area to serve widely dispersed residences, retail centers and office complexes. Such development also tends to place a heavy burden on the environment, which is impacted by the disruption or loss of habitat and increased runoff from streets, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces. In the Corridor, the preservation of farming and agricultural land is an important part of the effort to reduce suburban sprawl and its adverse effects.

While the historic connection between the canals and agricultural production has been supplanted by modern distribution methods, many people treasure the rural landscape that occupies much of the Corridor. Sweeping views of historic structures in rural settings and agricultural land interspersed with woodlots, hedgerows, and shelterbelts convey the pastoral, picturesque landscape captured in many early paintings and photographs of the Corridor. Over the last several decades, forests, the Corridor's principal pre-settlement ecology, have reclaimed some agricultural lands that have been removed from production. However, the subtle contribution of farmland and agricultural open space to the region's sense of cultural identity is not high in the public consciousness, and the strong association of certain crops and agriculturally-based industries with specific parts of the Corridor often escapes the attention of preservationists. More connections need to be made between agriculture and the preservation of the canal system's history and the Corridor's historic settings.

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OTHER RESOURCES

7. VESSELS

New York's canal system is the oldest continuously operated built transportation system in North America. Nowhere is the case for continuity of use stronger than for the waterborne activity that gave and still gives essential life to the canals. Whereas modern pleasure vessels may be the clearest indication of the system's continued utility, historic vessels may be the most telling evidence of changes in the canals' scale, use, and relationship to daily life. They include the state-owned floating plant; commercial vessels; and sunken and archeological remains of towpath-era vessels.

The state-owned floating plant continues the canal system's living traditions of boat-building and maintenance. The fleet includes an impressive stock of vessels painted in the Canal Corporation's characteristic blue and yellow, many of which have been in service since the Barge Canal opened: tugs, tenders, dredges, derrick boats, quarters boats, scows, buoy boats, and many more specialized vessels. The fleet flagship is the tugboat *Urger*, built in 1901 as a commercial fishing vessel, purchased in the 1920s to service the new Barge Canal, and recommissioned in 1991 as the focal point of a Canal Corporation educational program. The *Urger*, the first New York canal vessel to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, continues to ply the waters of the canal system on a regular basis from its home port in Waterford, with stopovers every year from Tonawanda to Whitehall to New York City.

Ongoing maintenance and the frequent need for repair or replacement may threaten the integrity and authenticity of state-owned vessels remaining in use, and currently there are no official preservation protocols in place. In addition to the *Urger*, the state's floating plant represents a tremendous opportunity for interpretation. Retired vessels including the historic tug *Buffalo* in Waterford, and the derrick boat *Lance Knapp*, beached at the H. Lee White Maritime Museum in Oswego, have been transferred from state ownership to municipal and non-profit organizations for preservation and stewardship. These vessels, many uniquely designed or adapted for use in the canals, demonstrate the ingenuity and sheer scope of work required to keep the canals operational. The opportunity for a unique interpretive experience is enhanced during the winter maintenance season, when the canals and some interpretive venues are closed to through traffic but the floating plant and the Canal Corporation drydocks, boatyards and repair shops remain hard at work.

Commercial vessels embody the very purpose of the canals. A side-by-side comparison of grain-carrying vehicles alone would graphically illustrate a century-long story of national progress: from the first mule-drawn wooden canal-boats, 60 feet long with a capacity of 30 tons, to the 256-foot-long, 1,600-ton self-propelled steel motorships that entered service on the Barge Canal in the 1920s. Barge Canal and towpath-era vessels offer different preservation opportunities. Towpath-era vessels survive only as underwater wrecks or museum reproductions. A few tugboats, built for the shallow draft and low clearances of canal operation, remain in service in rivers and harbors along the eastern sea-

board. Their numbers have declined significantly since the St. Lawrence Seaway opened a route for much larger ships between the Atlantic and the Great Lakes.

The peak years of the Barge Canal as a commercial thoroughfare are documented in a number of self-published books by tug captains, but most stories about the working canals remain undocumented (see *Arts and Folkways*, page 3.29). Commercial vessels that failed or could no longer be operated economically were often scrapped, scuttled or allowed to decay. A small number have been turned into museum exhibits by individuals and private organizations. The tug *Chancellor*, built for canal service in 1938 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is maintained by the Waterford Maritime Historical Society. In 2005, the New York State Museum, with assistance from the Canal Society of New York State, the New York State Canal Corporation, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, acquired the historic motorship *Day Peckinpaugh* and began its transformation into a floating museum and classroom that will educate the public about the history and heritage of the New York State Canal System. The *Day Peckinpaugh*, the first vessel designed specifically for the dimensions of the Barge Canal and the last of its kind remaining afloat, has been listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. The National Heritage Corridor will assist a multi-agency partnership in this major preservation, interpretation, and education effort.

Perhaps the best hope for preserving and interpreting the canal system's private commercial fleet is to encourage commercial traffic. The barging of great and unusual goods continues to draw residents and visitors alike to the canals and locks. Each year, the Waterford Tugboat Roundup attracts thousands of people to see working and restored canal tugs. There are signs of a resurgence in commercial shipping: from 2003 to 2004, the tonnage carried by cargo vessels on the canal system rose 38 percent, from 8,711 to 12,032 tons, and the numbers of vessels increased from 6,791 to 7,369. Oversized, overweight cargo that is difficult to transport by land constitutes the majority of items shipped and total value. Other factors associated with the rise include the high cost of fuel and increasing congestion along highways and railways. The Canal Corporation is working to take advantage of these factors and has joined Inland Rivers, Ports, and Terminals, a barge shipping group, to raise the profile of the New York State Canal System on the national waterways stage. The Canal Corporation has also discussed with the Army Corps of Engineers a potential feasibility study to investigate new commercial shipping initiatives.

In *A Canalboat Primer*, the staff of the Erie Canal Museum of Syracuse notes "It is hard to believe that the canalboats of the Erie Canal System, which numbered 4,350 in the 1880 census... would vanish from the scene with barely a trace remaining." In 1978 the museum launched the Canalboat Archeological Needs Assessment and Location Survey (CANALS) to document a number of complete canalboats of various designs that had been found preserved in the depths of Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Historical archival materials were also surveyed, and the *Primer* was published in 1981 with an annotated bibliography and blueprints for two canalboat types. Divers affiliated with the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum have documented several canalboats on the Vermont side of the lake, and the museum's *Lois McClure*, a reproduction of a sailing

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The repositioning of the canals as a recreational resource is well-established, but the history of pleasure boating in the system remains a largely untold story in need of documentation and interpretation.

canalboat based on information from wrecks that saw service on the Champlain Canal during the 1860s, has sailed to New York City with a typical historic cargo of Vermont marble and dairy products. In 1991, the New York State Museum built the *Discovery*, a replica 18th century Mohawk River bateau, for educational programming along the 20th century canal system.

While the canals were built for commercial traffic, recreational vessels have been the system's most constant presence for approximately half a century. The middle years of the 20th century saw an explosion of recreational cruising nationwide, when the canals teemed with boats now considered classics – runabouts, sedan cruisers, and the occasional oceangoing yacht on its way between the Atlantic coast and the Great Lakes. Today's boaters, whether kayakers out for a paddle or voyagers on a leg of the 6,000-mile "Great Loop" around the eastern United States, are participating in a longstanding tradition of enjoying life at under ten miles per hour. The repositioning of the canals as a recreational resource is well-established, but the history of pleasure boating in the system remains a largely untold story in need of documentation and interpretation.

Today, the Canalway Corridor hosts a variety of pleasure craft, from kayaks to luxury cruisers, and historic vessels that never passed through the canal system, such as the Navy tug *Nash* in Oswego, the destroyer escort *USS Slater* in Albany, and the destroyer *USS The Sullivans* and fireboat *Edward M. Cotter*, in Buffalo. With the help of the Canal Corporation and numerous public and private organizations, a number of sailing vessels, including historic tall ships over 100 feet in length such as the Freedom Schooner *Amistad*, have transited the canal system between Lake Ontario and the Hudson River after temporary removal of masts and rigging.

While nearly every vessel afloat in the canals contributes to maritime culture and builds the constituency for preserving waterfronts, heritage development in the Corridor would benefit from a more sustained effort to repopulate the canals with authentic vessels and reproductions open to the public. Numerous private pleasure craft and tour boats approximate the look of packet boats and other canal craft, but opportunities to experience towpath-era vessels are limited to replicas based on careful research. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's *Louis B. McClure* is the most thoroughly documented and historically accurate replica in the Corridor. Erie Canal Village operates *The Chief Engineer*, a horse-drawn canalboat based on 19th century packet boats, on a section of the Enlarged Erie near Rome. A full-sized non-floating interpretation of a line boat is housed at the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse. Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum interprets a set of drydocks and related structures and is building its own canalboat replica along another watered section of the Enlarged Erie.

In addition to the well-known variations on the line and packet boat types, the Canalboat Archeological Needs Assessment and Location Survey discovered information about circus boats, library boats, and other unusual models that could find a use on the canals today. Efforts to document or replicate historic vessels should be undertaken with the assistance of the Museum Small Craft Association, which publishes a *Manual of Documentation* for small craft; and the Maritime Heritage Program at the National Park Service, which maintains

inventories of historic ships and wrecks and provides technical assistance in preservation planning, including nomination to the National Register.

8. ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

As a natural transportation corridor defined by geography, the Corridor contains hundreds of known archeological sites and quite likely thousands more that are unreported. These sites encompass the entire 12,000-year span of human habitation in New York, extending from earliest Paleo-Indian to the mid-20th century.

Archeology is one of the chief methods for recording, studying, understanding, and interpreting pre-contact Native American sites, most of which are not visible aboveground. These require sensitive treatment, including repatriation of artifacts to the Indian nations. Also largely buried are the traces of canal engineering by the Western and Northern Inland Navigation Companies that pre-date Clinton's Ditch. In addition, more recent aboveground historical sites often have buried features and deposits. All of these remains provide a deeper level of understanding of historical site development, use, and evolution.

Archeological sites substantially broaden the cultural history available to the Corridor's residents and visitors. Archeology can be a tool for understanding the lives of social and economic groups whose members do not appear prominently in the historical record – soldiers, farmers, laborers, tradesmen, shopkeepers, craftsmen, factory workers, canal workers and boatmen, freedmen and slaves, women and children.

Because of the extent of past human activity in the Corridor, use and reuse of the land through time has resulted in the loss of many important archeological sites. At the same time, not every site merits a full-scale archeological investigation. Different levels of preservation may be appropriate for different kinds of sites, depending on their value to research and interpretation, their location, and the potential for public access.

State and federal laws and regulations provide some measure of protection, especially where new development is supported by public funds, or requires state or federal permits. The Anthropological Survey program of the New York State Museum assists state agencies in the identification, recording, and management of archeological resources impacted by projects on state-owned lands. Projects proposed under the controlling legislation of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) are subject to state government review. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is currently working on ways to promote the application of SEQRA at the municipal level, which has been hampered by a lack of access to information about sensitive areas and their value, varying levels of interest by Corridor communities, and the inefficiencies of evaluating projects with limited or no expected impacts.

Archeological sites on private lands are accorded no protection from development or destruction, unless the project utilizes state or federal funding or requires a government license or permit. Many as-yet-undocumented sites

Many as-yet-undocumented sites remain vulnerable to destruction or neglect due to a general lack of public understanding about the breadth and depth of the Corridor's archeological value and the potential contribution of these resources to research, education, interpretation, and heritage tourism.

remain vulnerable to destruction or neglect due to a general lack of public understanding about the breadth and depth of the Corridor's archeological value and the potential contribution of these resources to research, education, and interpretation.

Education and awareness are priorities for preserving the Corridor's archeological resources. Corridor residents should understand the contributions of archeological sites to education and heritage development. Municipalities and developers should understand SEQRA, learn to consider archeology part of the environmental review process for projects in the Corridor, and recognize the benefits of archeological findings at project sites, including the potential for funding interpretive development and inclusion in Corridor-wide heritage tourism promotions.

Sponsors of proposed development projects in sensitive areas throughout the Corridor should confer with the Field Services Bureau of the SHPO about the appropriate scope of archeological investigations and mitigation of potential impacts, and about procedures for contacting Native American groups to safeguard against the possibility of disturbing sacred places and archeological sites known only to them.

9. DOCUMENTS AND ARTIFACTS

Historical documents pertaining to the Corridor include manuscripts, rare books, maps, atlases, paintings, prints, photographs, audio recordings and ephemera. Significant artifacts include craft products (see *Arts and Folkways*, page 3.29), tools, household items and furniture, packaging and signage, keepsakes and commemorative items, and other material remnants of historic events and day-to-day life. In addition to providing insights into the lives of the Corridor's historic inhabitants, documents and artifacts are often the primary means of identifying or locating historic resources that otherwise exist only as archeological remains. Direct public contact with authentic documents and artifacts greatly enhances the effectiveness of historical and cultural interpretation as a tool for both education and inspiration. The value of these materials is enhanced by appropriate curation and handling and increased public access or awareness.

Proper protocols for handling, archiving, and curation, which are necessary to ensure protection of fragile papers, photographs, recordings, and artifacts, are not widely appreciated outside professional circles.

Whether collected from archeological sites or from collections that have remained indoors for decades, artifacts and records are often vulnerable to deterioration. Inappropriate repairs or partial material substitutions used to facilitate exhibition or to keep artifacts in use reduce historical authenticity. Documents and photographs are less likely to suffer such interventions but are even more susceptible to loss through accident or neglect. Careful records must be kept and maintained to establish provenance and allow for effective management and research if the Corridor's historic documents and artifacts are to contribute to enhanced interpretive and educational efforts.

It is impossible to know how many significant documents and artifacts exist outside management standards of the Corridor's many museums, colleges and universities, tribal museums and cultural centers, historical societies, archives,

and government institutions. An unknown number of private or family collections remain the primary source for new acquisitions by museums, public institutions, and databases. Proper protocols for handling, archiving, and curation, which are necessary to ensure protection of fragile papers, photographs, recordings, and artifacts, are not widely appreciated outside professional circles. Digital archiving is an evolving technology that may become a promising and cost-effective preservation method.

Databases particularly useful for the study of the Erie Canalway include the National Register of Historic Places; the Library of Congress website; databases sponsored by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; the Historic Documents Inventory at the New York State Museum, Library and Archives; the National Park Service Geographic Information System (GIS) database; and the Canal Corporation database. However, many kinds of information, particularly oral histories and recordings and documents related to the region's Native Americans, are not well represented in current general databases and finding aids. Documents and artifacts from the more recent past, such as shipping logs, bills of lading, photographs, and personal narratives relating to the commercial and recreational use of the 20th century Barge Canal, are not widely available to the public.

10. ARTS AND FOLKWAYS

In its heyday, the Erie Canal was vivid in the popular imagination. Images of the canal appeared in paintings, drawings, engravings, and dinnerware. Canal songs were staples in the folk repertoire. Today, arts, music, literature, theatre, and other cultural expressions offer local perspectives on the broad themes of interpretive efforts, emphasizing the contributions of individuals and the continuity of community life. They also reflect community change, including the displacement of a thriving pre-existing Native American population by canal-era settlement.

Arts and folkways also provide a means of understanding the significance of some resources – buildings, objects, practices, ideas – that otherwise have no pathway to preservation, such as the National Register of Historic Places. These include cultural landmarks: places associated with people, activities or events of a local nature, that may lack the historical features, authenticity or integrity to merit protection by the state or federal government. Many cultural landmarks are gathering places or symbols of community character. The process of cultural landmarking can be an informal way to solicit community interest in preservation and build commitment to more formal activities such as the establishment of local preservation ordinances. Models for cultural landmarking in the state include the Register of Very Special Places, a program administered by Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY), and Place Matters, a project of City Lore in New York City.

Unlike other historic and natural resources, which are permanently located and may be defined according to well-established preservation or conservation principles, many cultural expressions lack a clear definition or physical component. Thus the repositories of the Corridor's cultural expressions range

The process of cultural landmarking can be an informal way to solicit community interest in preservation and build commitment to more formal activities such as the establishment of local preservation ordinances.

Particularly vulnerable are the more ephemeral cultural expressions that illustrate the role of the canals in catalyzing cultural change and diversification within and beyond the Corridor.

from the tangible – several major institutions, including museums and universities, and scores of regional and community based arts organizations – to the intangible: stories, customs and crafts that sustain a sense of identity, pride and self-determination for the residents of Corridor communities. The New York Folklore Society is the leading organization for the preservation and presentation of cultural expressions in the Corridor and throughout the state, working closely with the Folk Arts program of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA).

Particularly vulnerable are the more ephemeral cultural expressions that illustrate the role of the canals in catalyzing cultural change and diversification within and beyond the Corridor. The canals often served as both subject and, as conduits of communication and demographic change, as transmitter of folklore, oral histories, craft and performing arts:

Folklore – From real-life folk heroes like the waterfall-jumping Sam Patch, to Joshua, the 100-year-old giant frog of Empeyville, tall tales and traditional stories have provided a rich counterpoint to the official histories of the Erie Canal. Some folklore has been well documented as a popular form that develops from the dissemination and alteration of original oral histories. Towpath-era folklore has been compiled in several articles and books, most of which can be located in Lionel D. Wyld's *The Erie Canal: A Bibliography* (1990). More endangered than the Corridor's folklore is the raw material from which future folklore is made: oral histories, particularly from those who worked and lived on the Barge Canal.

Oral Histories – Personal, family and community narratives have persisted in oral traditions for generations, from legends told in the Longhouses of the Iroquois Confederacy to the salty tales of Barge Canal tugboat captains. Some stories persist long enough to enter popular culture as folklore; others are documented in self-published books, or by folklorists doing fieldwork. While some organizations have revived the practice of reciting personal narratives at informal gatherings, most of these histories are likely to disappear unless a concerted documentation effort is undertaken.

The New York Folklore Society's Veterans History Project, supported by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, provides a useful model for the collection of the "extraordinary stories of ordinary people." The Folklore Society solicits participation through community outreach and trains partner organizations and individuals in the collection and archiving of oral and written histories. Another approach is taken by Traditional Arts of Upstate New York, which organizes community gatherings, often at cultural landmarks, and records the stories shared at these events.

Craft – Making art of necessity, craft ties traditional life directly to the waterways. Examples range from the construction of cobblestone houses using skills learned while building the canals, to local inventions like the fishing spoon, to the innovations of modern-day locktenders caring for equipment that is nearing a century of service. While canal-related crafts are on display in museums and demonstrations throughout the region, many artifacts are not preserved,

and many methods remain undocumented. The skills of the Canal Corporation's maintenance workers, from rebuilding lock gates to repairing the floating plant, are in particular need of documentation.

The Folk Arts program of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) funds presentations, exhibitions, and apprenticeships to organizations and individuals in support of the continuation and documentation of crafts and other folk arts. Documentation of crafts is also supported by the New York Folklore Society and the National Council for Traditional Arts, which also organizes cultural events such as the annual Lowell Folk Festival. In addition to public exposure and education, festivals can also broaden the market for retailable folk crafts. The Smithsonian Institution's annual Folklife Festival in Washington, DC is a national venue for showcasing local crafts.

Performing Arts – The Erie Canal music, songs, drama and literature that reverberated throughout American culture changed with American tastes: the show tune “Oh! Dat Low Bridge!” was transformed into the Tin Pan Alley hit “Low Bridge, Everybody Down;” the novel “Rome Haul” became the basis for the Hollywood star vehicle “The Farmer Takes a Wife.” The canal system's presence in American culture outlasted its commercial prominence – but it did not last forever. The audience for revivals and performances of classic Erie Canal folk tunes is kept alive by dozens of canal season festivals throughout the Corridor, by regional arts organizations such as TAUNY and the Crandall Public Library Center for Folklife in Glens Falls, and by the continued use of songs such as “15 Miles on the Erie Canal” to teach canal history in public schools nationwide.

The canals are rarely the subject of modern performing arts, despite the system's worldwide name recognition and the continuing impact of the canals on the day-to-day life of Corridor residents. Since the decline of commercial traffic on the Barge Canal, a new generation has grown up knowing the canal largely as a recreational resource, and new populations of immigrants have settled the Corridor. While these audiences may provide a market for the continued presentation of traditional performing arts, they are building a repertoire of their own, some of it related to the canals. With the assistance of local and regional arts and educational institutions, such as the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester, the Corridor's new cultural forms are finding pathways to increased participation and exposure.

While some organizations have revived the practice of reciting personal narratives at informal gatherings, most of these histories are likely to disappear unless a concerted documentation effort is undertaken.

GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is far too large, diverse, and complex to accommodate a single approach to preservation of its historic and cultural resources. It is possible, however, to provide a measure of philosophical consistency to the wide variety of preservation activities that must be considered, and to provide guidelines that will help promote and put into practice essential preservation values.

A philosophy of preservation for the Corridor must start by recognizing the historic and continuing roles of *change* in the region. For centuries, its inhab-

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itants have looked to the region's natural and artificial waterways as a means to renegotiate their relationships with the land, with each other, and with the rest of the world. The resulting cultural landscapes must continue to evolve in response to social, economic, and environmental imperatives. A "preserve in amber" approach is not an option for the Corridor. Change, and sometimes rapid change, is both necessary and widely desired.

What makes the Corridor nationally significant is that despite this history of change, it retains the essential elements that reflect its past and explain its evolution over time. These features have been identified in Chapter 2, *National Significance and Historical Context*. The preceding sections of Chapter 3 have described previous and ongoing efforts to preserve these resources, their current status and needs, and their potential future role in enhancing the Corridor's attractiveness as a place to live, work, visit and learn. What follows is a framework for helping the stewards of individual historic and cultural resources make the most of this potential. For each of the resource types described in the preceding Resource Analysis section of this chapter, recommended treatments are described, priority sites or elements are suggested, and considerations for interpretation and economic development are outlined.

THE SECRETARY'S STANDARDS

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards and providing advice on the preservation and protection of all cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* govern projects receiving federal grants-in-aid – including any projects that might be supported by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission with federal funds – and provide general guidance for work on any historic property. The *Standards* are a useful starting point for any evaluation of options for preserving historic buildings and infrastructure as well as cultural landscapes.

The *Standards* identify four degrees of intervention depending on existing condition and intended use. *Preservation* generally requires retention of the greatest possible amount of historic fabric, including form, features, materials and detailing. *Rehabilitation* allows for alterations or additions to a resource that meet continuing or new uses while retaining its historic character. *Restoration* calls for the accurate depiction of a resource at a particular time in its history, which may involve the removal of materials from subsequent periods. *Reconstruction* offers a limited framework for re-creating non-surviving resources with new materials, generally for interpretive purposes. Specific direction to assist in applying each of these standards is provided in the Secretary's *Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* and *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

Certain basic preservation values should remain paramount regardless of the application. Foremost are the protection of a resource's *authenticity* and *integrity*. Authenticity is simply the real thing. Integrity is the ability of a resource to communicate its meaning – to tell its part of the story – as conveyed through

its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Authenticity and integrity are at the heart of any meaningful encounter with a significant historic resource. Another basic value is attention to the core procedures of responsible preservation: *identification* of character-defining features; *evaluation* of the resource's condition; *stabilization* of deteriorated elements; *protection* and *maintenance* of original materials and features. Where necessary, these may be followed by *repair* and *limited replacement in kind*, or, where warranted by existing conditions and interpretive value, *reconstruction*.

The following guidelines indicate some situations in which reconstruction may be a viable option. However, because they are costly to build and maintain, and by definition are not authentic, reconstructions of lost structures and buildings are generally not an appropriate focus for preservation and interpretive efforts. Integrity cannot be regained once a resource is lost, and interpretation – when done well (see Chapter 6) – is almost always sufficient to impart an understanding and appreciation of history.

The *Standards* identify a number of factors to consider in choosing the most appropriate treatment for preservation of historic buildings, including relative significance in history; integrity and existing condition; proposed use; management and maintenance needs; archeological resources; and mandated codes or other modern requirements for safety and handicapped accessibility. Additional considerations for cultural landscapes include change and continuity, geographical context and natural systems. To these, an additional consideration may be added: interpretive and economic context within the Corridor. All efforts should be made to maximize the contribution of preservation activities to the identity of Corridor inhabitants, the education of Corridor visitors, the fabric of Corridor communities, and the strength of Corridor tourism, marketing and quality of life.

GUIDELINES FOR CORRIDOR RESOURCES

The 1995 Recreationway Plan recommended conceptual site design guidelines for both public and private improvements on land adjacent to the Barge Canal, with the intent of encouraging development that reinforces and enhances the canal experience. Those guidelines have been reproduced in Appendix 10. The additional guidelines provided in this section emphasize historic preservation and accommodate the unique characteristics of the Corridor's cultural landscapes.

While the preceding sections of Chapter 3 have identified six basic types of cultural landscapes central to the Corridor's historic significance, and evaluated their essential characteristics and integrity, closer study is needed to determine the specific elements contributing to cultural landscapes in individual locations. Thorough cultural landscape assessments in keeping with the *Secretary's Standards*, documenting the period of significance, character-defining and incompatible features, critical scenic views and interpretive features, and historic, current, and desired uses and patterns of activities, should be an important part of any preservation planning undertaken by or with the assistance of federal, state, regional, or municipal agencies in the Corridor. These efforts should

The 1995 Recreationway Plan recommended conceptual site design guidelines for both public and private improvements on land adjacent to the Barge Canal, with the intent of encouraging development that reinforces and enhances the canal experience.

seek to make use of the considerable capabilities of the planning, architecture, landscape, and environmental studies programs at the region's colleges and universities. Cultural landscape assessments should be undertaken with an eye toward the long-term goal of completing an inventory of the entirety of the Corridor's historic and cultural resources. Priorities for this effort are indicated throughout this section.

A new statement of significance, based on this Preservation and Management Plan and the Special Resource Study completed by the National Park Service in 1998, should be prepared and submitted as part of a new Multiple Resource Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Cultural landscape assessments should be an important part of any preservation planning undertaken by or with the assistance of federal, state, regional, or municipal agencies in the Corridor.

In 1993, staff at the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) prepared a statement of significance that found elements of the New York State Canal System and its towpath-era predecessors to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. All canal-related features of the system constructed between 1792 and a floating date 50 years before the present were considered to be potentially eligible. The Canal Corporation, Department of Transportation, and other state agencies have used the 1993 statement as the basis for preservation activities performed in compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Canal Corporation's current policy on capital projects is to rehabilitate and replace in-kind; all projects are reviewed by the SHPO.

A new statement of significance, based on this Preservation and Management Plan and the Special Resource Study completed by the National Park Service in 1998, should be prepared and submitted as part of a new Multiple Resource Nomination. This nomination should identify the types of features that contribute to the canal system's significance, establish minimum thresholds for historical integrity, and set criteria for evaluating the level of association between particular cultural landscapes and the theme or area of significance. Followup to the nomination would include a full inventory and condition assessment. Existing inventories of visible towpath-era canal features between Buffalo and Albany, and all Barge Canal features, are largely complete. Inventories of towpath-era elements of the Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals, and assessments of the Corridor's cultural landscapes, will require more work.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission recommends that a National Historic Landmark eligibility evaluation be undertaken for the New York State Canal System. If the system qualifies for and gains this heightened National Register status, the Commission will explore the potential for attaining World Heritage Site designation for the canal system under the United Nations' UNESCO program. In addition to the canals themselves, the tools and traditions of those who maintain them should also be recognized and documented. Wherever possible, interpretation of canal-related resources should make sure to explain the three primary phases of canal development.

1. GUIDELINES FOR TOWPATH-ERA CANAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

CANAL PRISM

The following guidelines for preservation of the towpath-era canals are organized according to the current or proposed condition of the prism, as described in the preceding Resource Analysis section of this chapter. The guidelines for buried or lost canal segments should be considered the default treatment for wetland or overgrown and watered or rewatered segments.

Buried / Lost

- **Overview:** Much of the towpath-era prism has been lost to road construction, development, and neglect. Marking the alignment, even where no traces remain, is an important step toward knitting together the story of the canals' evolution.
- **Priority resources:** Erie Boulevards and similarly named streets, linear parks or other features of settled areas that coincide with the original canal alignment; remnants of towpath-era canals near the Barge Canal, feeders and Thruway; canal prism and associated structures at the termini of the system (Albany and Buffalo).
- **Recommended treatment:** Preservation of surviving elements, including stone walls or other isolated elements in their original location, and features such as streets or viewsheds that indicate the original alignment. Many options are acceptable for marking the alignment, ranging from signage and lighting to special plantings and paving to commemorative landscaping and large-scale water features that convey a sense of the canal's physical presence. Markings that attempt to recreate the image and materials of the canal prism where there are no authentic remains, or that deviate from the original alignment for practical or interpretive reasons, are not recommended.
- **Additional preservation considerations:** The loss of the towpath-era canal prism is a part of the story of change in the Corridor. Archeological investigation may be appropriate in some locations, especially where it can support the interpretation of canal-related structures and buildings. In general, reconstruction and rewatering are recommended only under exceptional circumstances (see *Watered/Rewatering*, page 3.37).
- **Interpretation considerations:** At key locations and/or regular intervals, the distances to Buffalo and Albany should be indicated in order to help conceptually place these locations within the full breadth of the towpath-era canal system. Interpretation of Erie Boulevards and similar resources should connect the canal to the urban form and architecture that survived it.
- **Economic revitalization considerations:** Increased visibility for the towpath-era canals will help to connect isolated towpath-era resources and bring exposure to communities and former waterfronts "orphaned" by the Barge Canal realignment.

Models:

- **Syracuse:** Erie Boulevard is interpreted at the Erie Canal Museum alongside the former waterway and at the newly constructed water feature in Clinton Square, but the street itself could benefit from new streetscape elements, a continuous bicycle route, and interpretive signage to celebrate the canal's

Increased visibility for the towpath-era canals will help to connect isolated towpath-era resources and bring exposure to communities and former waterfronts "orphaned" by the Barge Canal realignment.

relationship to the city. Archeological investigations should determine whether enough original elements of the towpath-era canal prism remain to provide authenticity to a more dramatic water-based feature.

- Buffalo Erie Canal Harbor: Strong local leadership and public participation has guided this effort, which has been informed by *A Canal Conversation*, a conference and document produced by the Urban Design Project at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Plans to commemorate the western terminus of the towpath-era Erie include extensive interpretation of lost canal elements and appropriate treatment and interpretation of historic remnants, combined with mixed-income waterfront redevelopment and transit.
- Albany: See *Archeological Sites*, page 3.48.

Wetland / Overgrown

Wetland or overgrown canal sections provide an opportunity to interpret the ecological effects of the canals and their abandonment and contribute to recreation-based economic strategies.

- Overview: Canal segments that have been reclaimed by wetlands or vegetation now serve a dual function: as wildlife habitat and interpretive resource.
- Priority resources: Sections within parks or associated with other recreational resources; sections near the Barge Canal, feeders and Thruway.
- Recommended treatment: Preservation of surviving elements. As a rule, canal prisms that are overgrown or have reverted to wetlands should not be disturbed except for routine maintenance, such as trash and debris removal and possibly mowing the towpath. Repairs or interventions that postdate the abandonment of the canal, and do not contribute to interpretation, may be removed. Vegetation that impedes discernment of the canal prism or covers the towpath alignment should be examined for its current impacts: vegetation that negatively affects canal structures should be removed; vegetation that impedes interpretation should also be removed at strategic points to improve views and public access; vegetation that is valued as habitat or for aesthetic purposes, or assists in bank stabilization, should not be removed, unless it is an invasive species that presents an ecological threat.
- Additional preservation considerations: Removing or developing wetlands can trigger wetlands protection requirements and complicate permitting applications for needed preservation work. In general, reconstruction and rewatering are recommended only under exceptional circumstances (see *Watered/Rewatering*, page 3.37).
- Interpretation considerations: Wetland or overgrown canal sections provide an opportunity to interpret the ecological effects of the canals and their abandonment.
- Economic revitalization considerations: Wetlands have significant value for local and regional ecologies and contribute to recreation-based economic strategies.

Models:

- Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site: This well-managed site interprets multiple towpath-era remnants in a park-like setting, including the remains of an Enlarged Erie aqueduct and locks, the historic Putman's Lock Stand store, a towpath-era house, and a segment of Clinton's Ditch, each preserved with appropriate methods. The overgrown canal prism has been clarified and stabilized and the towpath trail restored for recreational use. Although the

site presents possible rewatering opportunities, the current juxtaposition of wetland vegetation and canal structures has significant scenic value.

- Vischers Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve: In this nature preserve and recreational resource maintained by the Town of Clifton Park, several miles of watered towpath-era canal prism provide a backdrop to historic structures including a dry dock, bridge foundations, and a restored 1840s canal bridge. The overgrown banks of the canal prism provide critical habitat for birds and other species. Human-powered boats can access the canal, and there are trails and access for hiking, fishing, and cross country skiing.
- Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park: See sidebar on this page.

Watered / Rewatering

- Overview: Watered segments of the Enlarged Erie exist between Dewitt and New London (Old Erie Canal State Park); near Camillus (Erie Canal Park); and near Vischers Ferry. Watered portions of the Enlarged Champlain Canal exist in Waterford, north of Fort Edward, and along the entire length of the Glens Falls Feeder Canal. Reconstruction and rewatering of buried, lost, wetland or overgrown segments is not currently a priority for the Corridor but must be allowed for. Rewatering can create new recreational opportunities, provide increased boater access to the region, and enhance connections between people and their heritage.
- Priority resources: Preservation of existing watered segments is a high priority for the Corridor. Reconstruction and rewatering may occur in situations of Corridor-wide significance, illustrating original canal engineering or historical events, and ideally in close proximity to intact towpath-era resources.
- Recommended treatment: Preservation of existing watered segments. As a rule, expansion of existing watered segments should use surviving or rehabilitated (rather than reconstructed) canal elements. Reconstruction and rewatering should only be considered if the following conditions are also met: original canal elements remain identifiable and are not adversely impacted; water can be maintained in the prism throughout the common canal season; the towpath alignment is also reconstructed and kept clear of vegetation that does not provide critical habitat or shade; the rewatering is ecologically and hydrologically sound; an archeological survey is completed and adequate steps taken to mitigate impacts to archeological resources; and the segment is long enough to convey the scope of the original canal.
- Additional preservation considerations: Reconstruction of canal-associated buildings in addition to the prism, and recreation of the canal setting beyond reconstruction of the towpath and associated vegetation, is generally not recommended (see *Towpath-Era Canal Structures*, page 3.38).
- Interpretation considerations: Interpretation of existing watered segments should address the reasons it survives. Connections to other towpath-era resources, as well as the relationship to the Barge Canal, should be emphasized. Interpretation of rewatered segments should explain their original significance. Documentation of both the original construction and the reconstruction should be part of the interpretation of any rewatered segment.
- Economic revitalization considerations: Existing watered segments should receive promotion as major heritage development resources. A cost/benefit study should be undertaken when considering reconstruction and rewatering.

Old Erie Canal Heritage Park

This innovative project, a partnership between Canal Society of New York State, Thruway Authority, Federal Highway Administration, State Historic Preservation Office, NYS Department of Transportation, and Cayuga County, will feature the only historic site in the nation with dedicated access from an interstate highway. With its own off-ramp, parking, visitor center, and return on-ramp, the site will be accessible to eastbound travelers on the New York State Thruway without additional toll. It will also be accessible to local traffic.

The project focuses on the restoration of an abandoned lock and prism of the Enlarged Erie Canal and an adjacent tavern and boarding house. The Erie House, built alongside the canal in 1895, catered to boatmen and immigrant workers passing through Lock 52, built in 1852. The restoration of the lock and prism, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will retain the existing meadow and wetland. Interpretive exhibits and signage at the site will describe the site's natural history, typical 19th century canal-side businesses, canal engineering and operation, and the story of immigrants such as Peter Van Detto, who built, operated, and lived at Erie House.

A visitor center at the site will feature exhibits on other Corridor heritage resources and attractions. Additional elements proposed for the project include the exhumation and restoration of a dry dock, restoration of a blacksmith shop and mule barn, construction of a canal boat replica, and conversion of a nearby trolley powerhouse into a Canal Museum and Research Library.

Reconstruction and rewatering should only be considered if the following conditions are also met:

- **original canal elements remain identifiable and are not adversely impacted;**
- **water can be maintained in the prism throughout the common canal season;**
- **the towpath alignment is also reconstructed and kept clear of vegetation that does not provide critical habitat or shade;**
- **the rewatering is ecologically and hydrologically sound;**
- **an archeological survey is completed and adequate steps taken to mitigate impacts to archeological resources; and**
- **the segment is long enough to convey the scope of the original canal.**

Models:

- **Old Erie Canal State Park:** A 36-mile watered segment of the Enlarged Erie Canal, which has been maintained as a feeder canal for the Barge Canal, is the centerpiece of this linear park and is an excellent resource for non-motorized boating. Many historic elements remain in context. State stewardship and recreational development, including a multi-use towpath trail, led to significant additional municipal, nonprofit, and private developments including Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum (see *Archeological Sites*, page 3.48) and Erie Canal Village, where it is possible to ride a reconstructed packet boat pulled by mules.
- **Erie Canal Park:** This seven-mile linear park, developed by the Town of Camillus and the Camillus Canal Society and operated by volunteers, has a multi-use towpath trail, boating opportunities, and both in-place and relocated towpath-era canal structures. Remnants of Clinton's Ditch and the Enlarged Erie are in close proximity at this largely wooded site. Despite vegetation, the 1825 prism remains visible. The proposed restoration of the Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct will join two one-mile watered segments of the Enlarged Erie Canal. A replica of the original Sims canal store now serves as a museum.

TOWPATH-ERA CANAL STRUCTURES AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS

- **Overview:** With greater visibility than the prism itself, towpath-era canal structures and associated buildings are the region's prime candidates for adaptive reuse, interpretation, and promotion of heritage development.
- **Priority resources:** Aqueducts; intact groupings of resources; resources adjacent to towpath-era canal remnants; resources with a visible relationship to canal engineering, commerce, or ways of life.
- **Recommended treatment:** Preservation and rehabilitation. Protection of associated landscapes, such as gardens or farmland, should also be considered. Restoration may be advisable for an individual structure that is significant for its role in a specific event or period in time, or has been altered beyond its ability to convey its significance to the towpath-era cultural landscape. For example, a restored and rewatered aqueduct – none currently exists – would tell an important story about the challenge of building the towpath-era canals, and create an unparalleled visual impact as well. Reconstruction should be considered only where a vanished structure significantly compromises the integrity of a grouping of surviving resources. "Ghosting" of building or structural footprints is a viable alternative to full reconstruction and should use materials and methods easily distinguished from those of authentic remnants.
- **Additional preservation considerations:** Sometimes, treatment of an entire structure may not be feasible. In these cases, exterior features and materials facing the towpath-era prism or the Barge Canal should be a priority. Where groups of buildings or original relationships between buildings and the canals remain intact, consideration should be given to mitigating the visual impact of modern infrastructure such as street lighting, parking, telephone wires, etc. in order to enhance the historic character of the setting.
- **Interpretation considerations:** The adaptive reuse of towpath-era structures and buildings, and the alterations and additions required to keep historic buildings useful, are an important part of the Corridor story. Adaptive reuse

opportunities that keep buildings open to the public – even part-time, or occasionally – are preferable to new uses that preclude public access.

- Economic revitalization considerations: The temptation to embellish an isolated resource – surrounding a country store with reproductions, or using a single historic building to anchor a historically themed district of modern vintage – should be resisted, as such enterprises compromise authenticity and obscure the true story of the Corridor’s evolution over time. If every municipality in the Corridor were to rehabilitate a single historic structure, the collective impact to the region’s culture, historic character, and economy would be far greater than that of several major historic “style” developments.

Models:

- Syracuse: The National Register listed Weighlock Building, now housing the Erie Canal Museum, is the last remaining of seven weighlock buildings that played a critical role in the management of the towpath-era canal system. Rehabilitated for educational use, with a canalboat replica in place and visible from Erie Boulevard, the building is an important reminder of canal history in a city where most traces of the waterway have disappeared.
- Lockport: The Flight of Five, a renowned towpath-era engineering feat, has been preserved in place as stormwater weirs alongside the similarly remarkable Barge Canal Locks 34 and 35. The city was awarded an Environmental Protection Fund grant to complete the development of the adjacent Canal Park project and canal museum. A grouping of historic industrial buildings near the site provides an opportunity for adaptive reuse.
- Watervliet: The foundations of the Weighlock Building, where canalboats were weighed and a toll collected based on the cargo weight, are preserved and identified at Colonie’s Weighlock Park.
- Palmyra: The Aldrich Change Bridge is a unique towpath-era remnant that was originally erected at the Rochester Weighlock in 1850s, relocated to a crossing over the Enlarged Erie Canal near Palmyra in 1880, and later moved to a creek crossing on private farmland after that portion of the Enlarged Erie was superseded by the Barge Canal in 1915. After the bridge collapsed it was rescued, restored, and relocated to a new interpretive setting by the Village of Palmyra and Town of Macedon, with assistance from Wayne County and many volunteers.
- Juncta: Markers commemorate the junction of the towpath-era Erie and Champlain Canals and the beginning of a flight of 16 locks needed to pass Cohoes Falls. The project was a partnership between the City of Cohoes, Spindle City Historical Society, and NYS Department of Transportation, which continues to maintain the site by clearing the historic lock structures of overgrowth.
- Rochester: See sidebar on this page.

2-3. 20TH CENTURY BARGE CANAL: LAND CUTS AND RIVERWAYS

- Overview: The 1995 Recreationway Plan recommended site design guidelines for both public and private improvements on land adjacent to the Barge Canal, with the intent of encouraging development that reinforces and enhances the canal experience. Some additional guidelines are suggested below to emphasize historic preservation and accommodate the unique characteristics of the

Adaptive Reuse of the Historic Rochester Aqueduct

This project proposes the construction of an enclosed passageway inside the historic Erie Canal aqueduct crossing over the Genesee River in central Rochester. The aqueduct, completed in 1842 to accommodate traffic on the Enlarged Erie, now serves as the foundation for the Broad Street Bridge, which opened to automotive traffic in 1924. Beneath the new roadway surface, the bed of the aqueduct was drained and tracks were laid for the Rochester Subway, which operated until 1956.

The new passageway will allow convenient all-weather pedestrian and bicycle traffic between two important public facilities, the Riverside Convention Center and the War Memorial Arena. Interpretive exhibits explaining the city’s relationship to the Erie Canal will be installed along the walkway on one side of the facility, which will offer views of the Genesee River and downtown Rochester through the arches supporting Broad Street. The other half of the facility will be reserved for a second phase of the project, which may include museum-quality exhibits, retail shops, or a new transit system.

Where traditional settlement patterns have persisted due to the continuity of the canal alignment, regional planning should seek to strengthen downtowns, encourage infill development and adaptive reuse, and preserve agricultural use and viewsheds.

Where the realignment of the canals and the long history of development have eroded traditional settlement patterns, regional planning should seek to preserve open space and viewsheds and increase density and water access at existing centers of development.

Barge Canal's two types of cultural landscapes. A separate set of guidelines addresses the Barge Canal's historic structures and associated buildings.

- **Priority resources:** Canal Corporation lands, especially in settled areas that have not taken advantage of their waterfronts, in rural areas and open spaces pressured by suburban development, and on the edges of habitat and recreation areas. The continuity of public land along the canals is a significant aspect of the region's history and of its potential for further recreational and interpretive development.
- **Recommended treatment:** Preservation and rehabilitation of historic waterfronts, including both infrastructure and buildings, require significant investment and should be a major focus of planning undertaken through the New York State Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Conservation of canalside farmland and rural land use should be a major focus of agricultural preservation efforts. Conservation of habitat and erosion-prevention efforts should be coordinated with the Canal Corporation's recreational development efforts, recreational use guidelines, and seasonal water management policies.
- **Additional preservation considerations:** Where traditional settlement patterns have persisted due to the continuity of the canal alignment, regional planning should seek to strengthen downtowns, encourage infill development and adaptive reuse (see *Settlements*, page 3.42), and preserve agricultural use (see *Agricultural Landscapes*, page 3.45) and viewsheds. For riverway sections, where the realignment of the canals and the long history of development altered traditional settlement patterns, regional planning should seek to preserve open space and viewsheds and increase density and water access at existing centers of development. In these sections additional priority should also be placed on erosion controls, preservation of open space, and encouragement of best practices for canalside landscaping and other private alterations and development.
- **Interpretation considerations:** In land cut sections, the continuity of settlement patterns provides stories that reinforce the imperatives of preservation. For riverway sections, the reorientation of settlements to the new canal alignment and the incorporation of natural systems into the canal environment are stories that support both preservation and conservation.
- **Economic revitalization considerations:** The Canal Corporation recently adopted a new land management policy which provides for review of proposed sales by the Canal Recreationway Commission and procedures for compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor should also be granted the opportunity to review and comment on proposed land management practices.

Models:

- Shrub and wooded embankments on the Western Erie and Champlain land cuts, and wetland or woodland vegetation on the natural banks of the canalized Oswego, Seneca, Mohawk, and Hudson Rivers, provide valuable habitat and a visual amenity for boaters.
- **Article 42:** This section of the New York State Executive Law, which directs statewide policies related to waterfront revitalization of coastal areas and inland waterways, outlines general guidelines to preserve natural and built

resources. By prioritizing nonstructural measures, including the management of development, to protect against flooding and erosion, Article 42 helps to protect the natural dynamics of changing shorelines from unnecessary or inappropriate interventions.

20TH CENTURY CANAL STRUCTURES AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS

- **Overview:** While noting that the Canal Corporation had successfully preserved the canal system's historic character, the 1995 Recreationway Plan recommended preparation of a comprehensive preservation plan by the Canal Corporation and suggested interim guidelines for the treatment of locks, dams, guard gates, bridges, and other structures, as well as the canal banks themselves. The purpose of such a plan would be to establish a "decision tree," a standard management device allowing for quick determination of the proper course of action for resources in need of repair or replacement. The Canal Corporation should also continue to pass on and preserve the specialized skills necessary to keep the original equipment operating.
- **Priority resources:** Lock districts; decommissioned structures, including powerhouses, wooden terminal buildings, and maintenance facilities. It is particularly important that the Canal Corporation continue to promote awareness, stewardship and investment in rehabilitation and seek to reuse decommissioned and deteriorating structures with historic significance as per the guidelines in the 1995 Recreationway Plan. If no suitable reuse can be found or there are compelling economic advantages to disposition, the sale of any such structure to a private party should be premised on a comprehensive preservation covenant whenever possible, binding the new owner to protect the structure's historic integrity.
- **Recommended treatment:** Rehabilitation. The Recreationway Plan guidelines note that some ancillary structures, fittings and signage added at lock sites since the Barge Canal's construction are not compatible with the historic structures, and recommend their eventual removal through normal life cycle replacement. While this is a desirable goal, the definition of "non-contributing elements" should allow for new or updated structures that demonstrate the changing nature of the canal system without compromising the integrity of its historic character.
- **Additional preservation considerations:** Disposition of Canal Corporation lands adjacent to locks and canal structures should include protective covenants providing the Canal Recreationway Commission with the opportunity to review and comment on the consistency of any new development with the canal system's historic character, commercial and recreational use. Guidelines for vehicular access and dropoff, buildings and other structures, parking, planting, lighting, site furnishings, and power lines should be consistent with the public space standards suggested by the Recreationway Plan.
- **Interpretation considerations:** Since most operating Barge Canal structures are in active use, decommissioned buildings, particularly highly visible ones such as lock powerhouses and locktenders' buildings, provide an important opportunity for interpretation and should be considered for adaptive reuse as public facilities before they are removed or tasked with non-critical functions such as storage.

Decommissioned buildings provide an important opportunity for interpretation and should be considered for adaptive reuse as public facilities before they are removed or tasked with non-critical functions such as storage.

- Economic revitalization considerations: Wherever possible, efforts should be made to preserve both the integrity and continued commercial use of shipping facilities along the Barge Canal. Decommissioned powerhouses may offer an opportunity for adaptive reuse to support Corridor interpretive, recreational, and visitor service needs. As popular places to watch boat traffic and witness canal engineering in action, locks located in settled areas have the potential to become centers of canal-related economic development – but only if they are sufficiently well connected with downtowns, parking, hospitality and retail uses, parks, and rental facilities for bicycles and small watercraft.

Models:

- Little Falls: The new Canal Harbor constructed by the Canal Corporation includes a rehabilitated wood-framed freight house. The harbor anchors an area of substantial private investment and adaptive reuse, including Canal Place. Little Falls takes advantage of its well-preserved canal town identity and organization retaining the clear relationship to canal and natural features.
- Schuylerville: Rehabilitated powerhouse; towpath trail connects to towpath-era canal and historic sites
- Phoenix Bridge House: This historic canal structure, typical of the Barge Canal era, is home to a canal museum and the Bridge House Brats, a volunteer visitor services program that recruits local teenagers to connect canal boaters to downtown retail stores and nearby interpretive opportunities.
- Lockport: The 1909 Day Road truss bridge over the Erie Canal was rehabilitated in 2003 by the Department of Transportation, with damaged sections of important bridge features replaced in-kind. The bridge is one of 180 canal bridges determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register as contributing elements of the historic canal system.

4. SETTLEMENTS – HAMLETS, VILLAGES, AND CITIES

Heritage development planning is intended to help decision makers embrace preservation as an economic development strategy. Settlements can capitalize on the amenities of the canal system and the Corridor's wealth of other historic resources and recreational facilities by planning for mixed uses and encouraging adaptive reuse, infill and context-sensitive development, and Main Street revitalization.

- Overview: The best way to counter suburban-style development in the Corridor is to strengthen the attractiveness of its long-settled hamlets, villages, and cities. The 1995 Recreationway Plan recommends site design principles for development in established communities. Models are described for cities, villages, and hamlets; see the Glossary for definitions of these jurisdictions.
- Priority resources: Settlements with the most threatened historic assets, and most disadvantaged economies; historic canal towns, including those no longer adjacent to a watered canal. Cultural landscape assessments (see *Guidelines for Corridor Resources*, page 3.33) should seek to delineate specific canal town typologies.
- Recommended treatment: Local heritage development planning should be considered as supplements to traditional historic preservation plans. Heritage development planning is intended to help decision makers embrace preservation as an economic development strategy. Settlements can capitalize on the amenities of the canal system and the Corridor's wealth of other historic resources and recreational facilities by planning for mixed uses and encouraging adaptive reuse, infill and context-sensitive development, and Main Street revitalization. Heritage development plans should also take into

account opportunities for interpretation and economic development that take advantage of local features and character, and encourage adaptive reuse and new residential, commercial, retail and recreational development that can serve local as well as visiting populations.

- Additional preservation considerations: Heritage development plans should consider the treatment of public space – roads, parks, and sightlines – as well as buildings. For canal towns in particular, the creative rehabilitation of public space and buildings along the waterfront can reinforce the relationship between the canals and urban form. New or renovated buildings that back onto the canal should minimize or mask the appearance of service facilities such as garbage receptacles and mechanical systems; if possible, new entrances or windows to the canal should be created. Street and pedestrian connections between downtowns or Main Streets and waterfronts or recreational features should be emphasized; in settlements along the towpath-era alignments, buried or lost canals should be addressed as per the guidelines for Towpath-Era Canals (see page 3.35). Regional patterns should be addressed as per the guidelines for Barge Canal landscapes (see page 3.39).
- Interpretation considerations: Settlements in the Corridor, which typically have numerous historic and cultural resources spread throughout their fabric – or can point to the historic urban fabric itself as a resource – should avoid creating visitor centers isolated from actual historic or cultural resources. The emphasis for all interpretive facilities and media should be to encourage visitors to experience the resources themselves. Solutions include the development of walking and driving trails, or mapping settlements into easily digested thematic neighborhoods.
- Economic revitalization considerations: Main Street revitalization and similar efforts should avoid creating a false or nostalgic historic quality that usurps the Corridor’s authentic historic character. New storefronts, paving, street furniture and landscaping should not seek to rebuild a “historic” setting that never existed. High-quality, contemporary materials and good design can provide the intimacy and comfort level that encourage mixed-use activity and busy sidewalks, without generating confusion between authentic and imitative historic settings.

Efforts should avoid creating a false or nostalgic historic quality that usurps the Corridor’s authentic historic character.

Models:

- Fairport: The compact downtown of Fairport has a strong canal identity based on its revitalized main street and canalside parks with connections to other destinations in the downtown. Extensive “in-town” dockage gives Fairport the ability to host tens of thousands of people at canal festivals.
- Oswego: This city, the major gateway to the canal system from the Great Lakes, is beginning to capitalize on multiple opportunities to redevelop its underutilized historic waterfront. New adaptive reuse projects are providing retail connections between downtown and the waterfront; plans are underway for a new maritime center that will interpret historic vessels alongside a modern drydock; and the city is considering the purchase and development of a small island in the canal as a public amenity for recreational fishing.
- Canastota: A well-preserved row of towpath-era commercial buildings lines a remnant of the Enlarged Erie Canal and a turning basin. The Canastota Canal Town museum is housed in one of the buildings. This unusual site, highly illustrative of towpath-era canal towns, was developed by the Canas-

tota Canal Town Corporation, a municipal entity established to promote community interest in preservation and recreational development.

- Vischers Ferry: This residential settlement, with numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, features an interpretive trail built by a partnership between the Canal Corporation and AmeriCorps.
- Waterford: The new visitor center and canal harbor at Waterford combine interpretation with dockside amenities and easy access to both Barge Canal and towpath-era locks. Situated on a highly visible raised canal bank, the visitor center creatively addresses handicapped accessibility issues and features a contemporary design that complements its historical context.
- Whitehall: The unusually intact historic downtown along the canal in Whitehall remained largely underutilized for many years. A strong canalside presence and local interpretation efforts, including an abandoned terminal building converted into a museum and a historic bridge converted into a theater, have helped to attract new investments in adaptive reuse.

5. INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES

For districts with continuing industrial use, commercial tenants should be offered incentives to undertake waterfront improvements and offer unused parcels for recreational use.

- Overview: Disused industrial and brownfield sites represent a significant opportunity for new industrial, commercial and residential development. Such development should be balanced with the need for new recreational and interpretive development that supports the heritage economy, sustains the Corridor's sense of place, and provides public access to the waterfront. New industrial uses that are environmentally sound continue to contribute to the Corridor's historic character and should not be rejected out of hand.
- Priority resources: Towpath-era power generation facilities and mill districts; Barge Canal ports and maritime districts; sites amenable to adaptive reuse.
- Recommended treatment: For districts with continuing industrial use, every effort should be made to survey and remediate past pollution. Waterfront infrastructure should be rehabilitated where conditions threaten water quality and ecology or detract from adjacent historic or recreational settings. Such rehabilitation may include rebuilding of bulkheads, removal of decayed infrastructure, relocation of dump sites, and installation of vegetative filter areas for treatment of runoff. For discontinued industrial sites, the recommended treatment is remediation and rehabilitation as required to prepare the site for adaptive reuse. Restoration may be advisable at some sites where more recent industrial development – generally, since the decline of commercial traffic on the Barge Canal, around 1970 – has compromised the integrity of a setting with a specific period of significance.
- Additional preservation considerations: Environmental remediation of some discontinued industrial sites may vary depending on the proposed use. All remediation, however, must minimize impacts to water quality in the canal system. Similarly, while the rehabilitation of disused industrial structures as ruins or shells for commemoration and interpretation may require different standards than more intensive uses, it should take long-term environmental impacts into account. In addition to preserving historic structures, adaptive reuse plans for industrial districts should also preserve the relationships of structures to the waterfront and, if applicable, railroads. Where industrial districts are to be reused as recreational sites, care should be taken to preserve the basic form and integrity of structures that must be “hollowed out”

or have machinery and other features removed for purposes of remediation and safety.

- Interpretation considerations: Industry and commercial shipping remain part of Corridor life and provide a link to the original physical and economic context of the Barge Canal. Interpretation of discontinued industrial sites offers opportunities to highlight the succession of land use in the Corridor, supported by historical or archeological evidence. The remediation process itself provides opportunities for public education about the relationship of artificial and natural systems in the Corridor.
- Economic revitalization considerations: For districts with continuing industrial use, commercial tenants should be offered incentives to undertake waterfront improvements and offer unused parcels for recreational use. For many Corridor cities, discontinued industrial sites offer major opportunities for new development adjacent to waterfronts and downtowns. New commercial and residential development should follow the recommendations for Settlements (see page 3.42) and the design guidelines in the 1995 Recreationway Plan.

Models:

- Buffalo: The Urban Design Project at the State University of New York is leading an effort to list Buffalo's historic grain elevators on the National Register, which would make them eligible for federal historic preservation tax credits. These impressive structures, arrayed along the Buffalo River with easy access to downtown and the proposed Buffalo Erie Canal Harbor, could be the centerpiece of a new historical park.
- Canajoharie: The Beechnut complex is a working industrial landscape set in the heart of downtown Canajoharie, a representative of many nationally known commercial brands that originated along the Erie Canal. Façade improvements would increase the contribution of these buildings to the historic downtown. Additional interpretation of this landscape should address how industry anchored the local economy while fostering arts and culture.
- Cohoes: Highly visible connections remain between the dramatic Cohoes Falls and the historic Harmony Mills, company-built worker housing, and power canals that once laced the city. However, many mill buildings are abandoned and vulnerable. Opportunities exist to connect this historic area with trails and interpretive signage to the visitors center at Peebles Island State Park and the nearby Matton Shipyard.

6. RURAL LANDSCAPES

- Overview: The Corridor's rural landscapes have accommodated significant changes in agricultural practice without losing their historic character. Where it is necessary, greenfield residential and commercial development should follow guidelines to complement that character.
- Priority resources: Historic agricultural structures; working farms; timberlands and open space. The continuity of Canal Corporation lands, some leased for farming purposes, provides a significant opportunity to maintain the open space rural character central to this cultural landscape.
- Recommended treatment: For historic agricultural structures, such as barns and farmhouses, the recommended treatment is rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. Reuse should maintain basic forms and features, such as rooflines and

For agricultural landscapes, the preservation of open space, timberlands, and traditional clustering of buildings are most important.

Greenmarkets help activate Corridor downtowns while providing a local outlet for perishable goods.

elevations, as well as historic contributing ancillary structures, such as silos and utility sheds. For working farms, preservation of agricultural activity is the priority and should seek to preserve historic buildings while allowing for alterations and additions as necessary for agricultural use. For discontinued agricultural land, preservation of open space, timberlands, and traditional clustering of buildings are most important. Easements and the purchase of development rights should be explored as alternative preservation methods where agricultural use is discontinued. Preservation of trees and diverse vegetation are especially important alongside the canals and the natural and constructed drainage systems that feed them. Where possible, native plants should be reintroduced to discontinued croplands.

- **Additional preservation considerations:** Development of agricultural land should occur where it incurs the lowest additional cost for infrastructure and the least visual impact to intact stretches of the rural landscape. The 1995 Recreationway Plan's recommended site design principles for development in agricultural or open space areas should be observed. In addition, siting of new non-farm development should provide some separation from remaining clusters of traditional buildings and preserve sightlines to those assemblies from the canals and designated scenic byways. New farm development should adopt the voluntary principles of the state's Agricultural Environmental Management program.
- **Interpretation considerations:** Historic agricultural structures and timberlands are particularly valuable for interpretation of Corridor history as they represent the primary industries for which the first canals were built. Given the diffuse nature of this landscape, other opportunities for interpretation are limited. Roadside farmstands may provide a seasonal opportunity for informal wayside exhibits or distribution of interpretive media such as brochures and route maps; roadside pullouts should be constructed for the enjoyment of scenic views alongside narrow rural highways.
- **Economic revitalization considerations:** Heritage development and preservation of agricultural use and rural land can be mutually reinforcing. The beauty of farmland and opportunity to stop at farmstands, greenhouses and wineries attracts automobile tourists who might otherwise choose to travel by limited-access highways. Rural open space and timberlands buffer recreation and protected wildlife areas from other land uses. Greenmarkets help activate Corridor downtowns while providing a local outlet for perishable goods.

Models:

- **Floating Farmer's Market:** This program, developed by the Lower Hudson-Long Island Resource Conservation and Development Council, operates an antique barge and tug to bring locally grown foods to Hudson River Valley communities, New York City, and Long Island. Opportunities exist to extend the program, which includes an educational component, to the canal system.
- **Finger Lakes region:** A variety of organizations in this region have worked to make the most of its scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and agritourism potential. Scenic byways, a system of "Wine Trail" signage, and numerous bicycle routes, established with assistance from the Department of Transportation, provide clear connections between farmers markets, shopping

districts, wineries, parks, art galleries, theaters, museums, and historic sites to create a strong sense of place and tourism draw. Opportunities exist to enhance interpretation of the region's relationship to the canal system.

- **Agricultural Industry Development, Enhancement, and Retention (AIDER):** This community-based program, supported by Cornell University, provides outreach and technical assistance to help integrate the agricultural sector into comprehensive economic development strategies at the local level.

7. VESSELS

- **Overview:** The preservation of vessels is not a natural activity; unlike buildings, vessels are not meant to last forever, and they are not as suitable for adaptive reuse once historic technologies become obsolescent. The preservation of the Barge Canal, however, has sustained the usefulness of the Canal Corporation's floating plant. The interpretive function of heritage development is emerging as an adaptive reuse option with benefits that exceed the costs of rehabilitation.
- **Priority resources:** Archeological remains of towpath-era vessels; Canal Corporation floating plant.
- **Recommended treatment:** The National Park Service Maritime Heritage Program provides guidelines for the protection of archeological remains and sunken wrecks. The Canal Corporation should develop a comprehensive preservation plan for its floating plant, with a focus on rehabilitation as the recommended treatment, as well as programs to document and teach maritime skills. The Department of the Interior's *Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation Projects* provides guidelines to protect the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship while allowing for necessary replacements and upgrades. Inventory and documentation of the floating plant should be undertaken with the assistance of the Historic American Engineering Record. For historically singular or exemplary vessels, necessary replacements or additions of features and materials should lend themselves to potential removal or reversal. Vessels being considered for decommissioning and "scrapping" or use for parts should first be evaluated for their historic significance and suitability for interpretive use.
- **Additional preservation considerations:** The preservation of vessels should not overlook the artifacts they carry. Private commercial fleets should be approached to discuss preservation and interpretation of historical records and photographs.
- **Interpretation considerations:** Archeological research into the remains of towpath-era vessels should be the basis for reproductions; modern materials should be avoided except where necessary to ensure safe operation. Because of their unparalleled ability to evoke the experience of the waterways, working historic vessels and replicas should be considered as centerpieces of major interpretive exhibits at waterfronts within and outside the Corridor.
- **Economic revitalization considerations:** The Canal Corporation should expand its practice of providing advance publicity for significant commercial lock-throughs, a good source of advertising for the system's continuing commercial potential and a great way to enhance local identification with the canals. An antique boat show and rally could boost interest in the history of recreational boating – a severely understudied part of the canal system story

The Canal Corporation should expand its practice of providing advance publicity for significant commercial lock-throughs.

– and help spur development of new boat tours, rentals, sales and related services throughout the Corridor.

Models:

- Canal Corporation Tugboat *Unger*: The tug represents an inspirational story of adaptive reuse – from fishing boat to tug to “traveling classroom.” Flagship for the Canal Corporation’s floating plant, the tug hosts interpretive programs throughout its yearly run from New York City to Tonawanda to Whitehall.
- Waterford Tug Boat Roundup: This annual event brings thousands to tour New York’s historic tugboats, including privately owned and rehabilitated vessels. The Town of Waterford has also purchased the historic tug *Buffalo* from the Canal Corporation, which will provide winter storage and technical guidance for repairs to be conducted by the Town under the terms of an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Canal Motorship *Day Peckinpaugh*: built in 1921 to carry grain from the upper Midwest, the *Peckinpaugh* was the first and now is the last surviving example of a class of self-propelled vessels designed to the maximum capacity of New York’s 20th century Barge Canal system. Saved from the scrappers by joint efforts of the New York State Museum, Canal Society of New York State, Canal Corporation, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the vessel has been brought back to New York waters, listed on the State and National Register, and returned to operating condition. Plans for future navigation seasons include installing exhibits in the ship’s massive open cargo hold and touring the system.

8. ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

- Overview: Archeological sites are by nature the least visible of the Corridor’s physical historic and cultural resources. Extensive education efforts are required to support the following guidelines.
- Priority resources: Native American sites; towpath-era canal prism and structures; submerged artifacts (see *Vessels*, above).
- Recommended treatment: Preservation in place, which can best serve protection of resources as well as the context for interpretation, is the preferred treatment for all archeological sites. However, most sites are uncovered in preparation for significant disturbance such as building foundations. All projects requiring government permitting must follow the review process mandated under State Environmental Quality Review Act. Registered archeological professionals should be contracted to perform all sensitivity assessments, field reconnaissance surveys, site evaluations, and mitigation plans with an eye toward artifact conservation and curation. Native American sites should be referred to the State Historic Preservation Office and tribal governments for guidance as per the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
- Additional preservation considerations: Especially sensitive sites may trigger regulations requiring extensive mitigation. For sites that do not meet this threshold, every effort should be made to preserve the context of the site as found, including topography and vegetation.

- Interpretation considerations: Sites that are covered or disturbed beyond their ability to convey contextual meaning should be marked with interpretive signage.

Models:

- Chittenango Landing: This interpretive site features the rehabilitation of archeological remains including a still-submerged canalboat; extensive educational programming. Includes dry docks, saw mill, blacksmith shop, wood-working shop, and interpretive center; connected to other sites via trails and boating opportunities along Old Erie Canal State Park.
- Albany Lock 1: Dogged investigation led to the rediscovery of original Lock 1 of the Enlarged Erie, and the search continues nearby for Lock 53 of the original Erie (Clinton's Ditch). While proposed waterfront development in the area could provide funds and significant exposure for these keystone sites, it could also threaten their authenticity and integrity. These important structures should be permitted to stand alone and tell their own story; they should not be incorporated into faux watercourses or other non-historical commemorative features that deviate from the locks' original setting.

9. DOCUMENTS AND ARTIFACTS

Improving outreach to private collectors and repositories, and increasing the visibility of documents, records, and artifacts through enhanced interpretive and educational efforts, are important preservation objectives for the Corridor. The New York State Museum and Archives administer statewide training, technical assistance, and grants for curators, educators, and archivists at state agencies, municipal governments, and community organizations. A major new permanent or traveling historical exhibit on canal-related themes, featuring recently discovered documents and artifacts as well as significant "classics" of the genre, could help raise interest in and support for further efforts to identify, preserve, and curate these resources. The scope and impact of the exhibit could be enhanced by partnership with a statewide or national repository such as the Smithsonian Institution, or a documentary production such as *Modern Marvels: The Erie Canal*, produced by the History Channel in 2000 using materials from the Archives (see Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*).

The unique challenges facing documents have been identified in the 1997 strategic plan for the State Historical Records Advisory Board, which provides planning and oversight for federal grants supporting New York State archival activities. *A Challenge for the People and Organizations of New York* sets priorities and goals to be addressed by user groups, records custodians, service providers, and professional organizations involved in the preservation and use of historical records in New York. The common themes emphasized in the report – collaboration and cooperation, inclusiveness and diversity in the documentary record, and effective use of current and emerging technology – are consistent with the vision of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

A goal for the Corridor should be the creation of a "virtual research collection" of canal-related historical images and documents on the internet, integrating the assets of major public and private collections and creating a publicly acces-

A goal for the Corridor should be the creation of a "virtual research collection" of canal-related historical images and documents on the internet.

sible educational resource greater than the sum of its parts. Steps to reach this goal include developing a comprehensive list of canal-related topics, evaluating the status of existing collections, and identifying partner organizations – municipalities, state agencies, museums, libraries, universities, and nonprofit “friends” organizations. Given the limited funding available for documentation of historical records and the low level of public awareness, the key priorities for this effort are educating the public about the values of historical records and methods of preserving them, fostering their use in Corridor interpretation, and incorporating them as primary source materials in public education curricula (see Chapter 6, *Interpretation and Orientation*). The New York State Archives’ “Erie Canal Time Machine” (www.archives.nysed.gov/projects/eriecanal/index.html) suggests the opportunities of these virtual research collections.

Many of the Corridor’s goals for enhancing the treatment and presentation of documents and artifacts are consistent with the 2004-2008 Strategic Plan adopted by the Upstate History Alliance, a nonprofit organization which provides support, advice, and training to historical societies, museums, historians, and others interested in history in upstate New York. The plan outlines strategies to promote best practices and performance standards for museums and historical societies, provide up-to-date training in collections care and management, and increase quality and consistency of interpretive efforts, including the use of traveling exhibits as tools for training as well as education. Similarly, outreach efforts and interpretive products supported by the Corridor should feature images of original historical documents and artifacts and provide a broad audience with information on how individual collections can contribute to the effort to preserve and celebrate the region’s cultural heritage.

10. ARTS AND FOLKWAYS

Because existing inventories of canal-related cultural landmarks, oral histories, crafts, performing arts, and other expressions are scattered and largely outdated, and available resources for such work are limited, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor should seek to promote cultural inventorying. The Corridor should work closely with the New York Folklore Society and local partners to identify qualified fieldworkers and outline model work scopes and best practices, in order to help the broader population of preservation and interpretation experts to identify, inventory, and record cultural expressions in association with major preservation and interpretation projects.

The collection of oral histories describing the impacts of the canal system on work and life in the region is a priority for the Corridor and requires a concerted effort. The Corridor can best support the work of local organizations and historians by helping to organize a statewide initiative providing coordination, guidelines, grantseeking and technical assistance for the collection and curation of oral histories related to the thematic framework described in Chapter 6 of this Plan. Traveling exhibitions and educational efforts, such as the Canal Corporation’s itinerant tugboat *Urger*, could contribute by promoting and hosting “oral history events” at ports-of-call to collect, edit, and retell new stories. The Corridor could also pursue a partnership with StoryCorps, a nonprofit organization

which has installed kiosks in locations around the country to record oral histories for rebroadcast on national and local public radio stations. Any such effort should make use of the *Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide*, published by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

To add interest and authentic cultural depth and diversity to interpretive efforts, and leverage the considerable talents of the region's artistic community, the Corridor should encourage the incorporation of performances and representations of Corridor arts and folkways alongside exhibits and displays of physical resources. In particular, the Corridor should seek to bring sometimes overlooked groups – such as the Canal Corporation's maintenance and operations workers, and the keepers of both historical and contemporary Native American culture – into Corridor interpretation through continued outreach and consultation efforts.

The most effective method to increase interest and participation in arts, literature, and folkways at the Corridor level is to make cultural expressions a more integral part of new and ongoing interpretation and education. New interpretive products described in Chapter 6 as worthy of Corridor support – a documentary, an orientation film, a comprehensive web-based guide, curriculum materials, exhibits – should incorporate cultural expressions to the greatest possible extent. Corridor support for new interpretive facilities should be contingent (in part) on the inclusion of a flexible performance and meeting space, displays on how individuals can contribute their own stories, crafts, and artistic expressions, and other physical design elements that would facilitate active community participation in the region's continuously changing arts and folkways.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Much of the support that will be provided to communities by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission and its partners over the coming years will be in the form of technical assistance: workshops, referrals, expert consultation, and other “how-to” help with the preparation of local and regional visions, plans, projects, and applications for grants and other financial assistance (see Chapter 9, *Implementation*). The demonstration projects serve as models for the Commission's future work among the 234 municipalities along the current and historic alignments of the New York State Canal System.

The historic preservation demonstration projects are intended to illustrate how the recommendations described in the preceding Heritage Development Guidelines section of this chapter could be applied, in two locations, to protect the authenticity and integrity of the resources that make the Corridor an attractive place to live, work, and explore while also accommodating growth and change. The City of Lockport and the City of Little Falls were selected in order to learn from the valuable resources and important stories they encompass; to address a variety of characteristics and geographic locations; and to acknowledge the high level of commitment and interest shown by the communities' responses to information surveys distributed by the Commission in 2004.

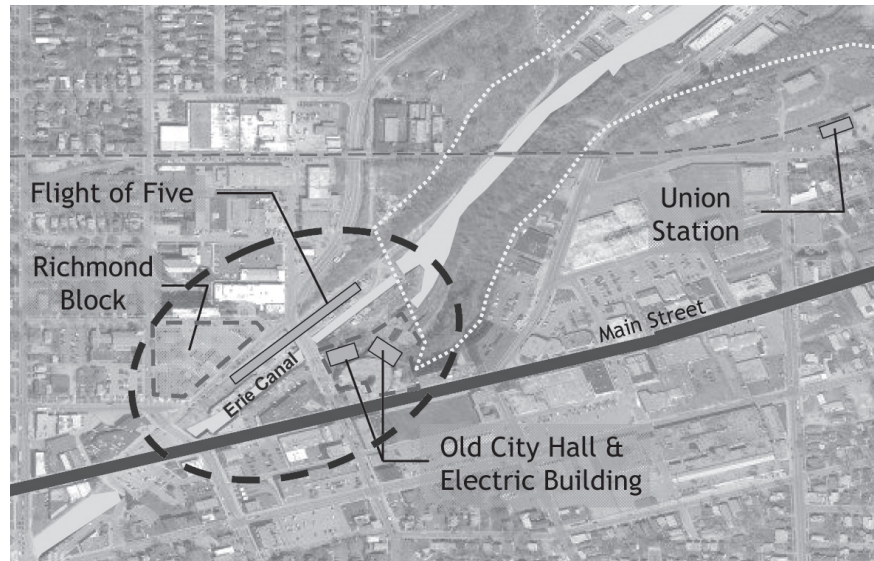


Diagram showing study area at intersection of Main Street and the Erie Canal

Each project was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the community identified and contacted key stakeholders, established a meeting location, gathered materials and information on local preservation conditions and priorities, and selected a particular site to be investigated. In the second phase, the community hosted a workshop, facilitated by the consultant team, to discuss challenges and opportunities, identify priorities, partnerships, and potential funding sources, and propose a framework for action. In the third phase, the consultants returned to the community to present their analysis and documentation of the workshop and recommended next steps. That analysis is presented here.

THE CITY OF LOCKPORT

The City of Lockport is situated along the Niagara Escarpment about 25 miles east of Buffalo. The Erie Canal originally ascended the escarpment at this point through a dual series of five locks, which were enlarged prior to 1862. The reuse of one set of the “Flight of Five” as a spillway for the newer tandem Barge Canal locks built in the 20th century helped to preserve one of the more spectacular landmarks from the towpath era.

The canal and the locks were at the center of an industrial area that developed along the slopes of the escarpment. Main Street, the traditional city center, was located along the top of the escarpment and intersected the Erie Canal just above the locks. Most of the significant historic structures in Lockport are located around this area. Unfortunately, the Erie Canal is not highly visible at this point, as Main Street is supported by a broad deck over the canal, which remains well below street level through most of the downtown. The canal is further separated from Main Street after its nearly 70-foot descent through the locks, creating an upper and lower district in the downtown. Because several city blocks were demolished during the 1970s, there remains little evidence of

how the city engaged the canal at Main Street, and those buildings that did survive are lost in a sea of pavement and parking lots.

Although Lockport's Main Street is undergoing a beautification program, there are no design guidelines in place for new construction, historic preservation, or signage. The lack of planning for Main Street has resulted in a collection of multiple building styles and shapes, and a wide range of signage quality. Many older buildings have been destroyed and new buildings are often out of character with their historic neighbors. Vacant parcels or parking lots frequently interrupt retail continuity along the street and some buildings harbor uses that do not generate pedestrian activity.

The Old City Hall block, the focus of this study, is at a strategic position between Main Street and the canal. There are two prominent historic buildings on the block: the Old City Hall, which is located immediately adjacent to the Flight of Five; and the Old Electric Building, which overlooks the canal. The top two floors of the Old Electric Building have been removed to create a scenic overlook that is directly accessible through a small park located on a former building site on Main Street. Because the viewing terrace is below street level and lies in the shadow of a large parking garage, it is isolated from the rest of the city and suffers from vandalism and a perceived lack of public safety; it does not appear to be part of the public realm. Both the Old City Hall and the Old Electric Building are currently unoccupied; however, the Old City Hall is in good condition and poised to be renovated and possibly converted into a restaurant. The Old Electric Building, however, is neglected and in a slow state of deterioration. There is not an evident use for this structure since it has no relationship to Main Street and poor access from the canal.



Sketch showing the Old City Hall next to the garage masked with interpretive facades.



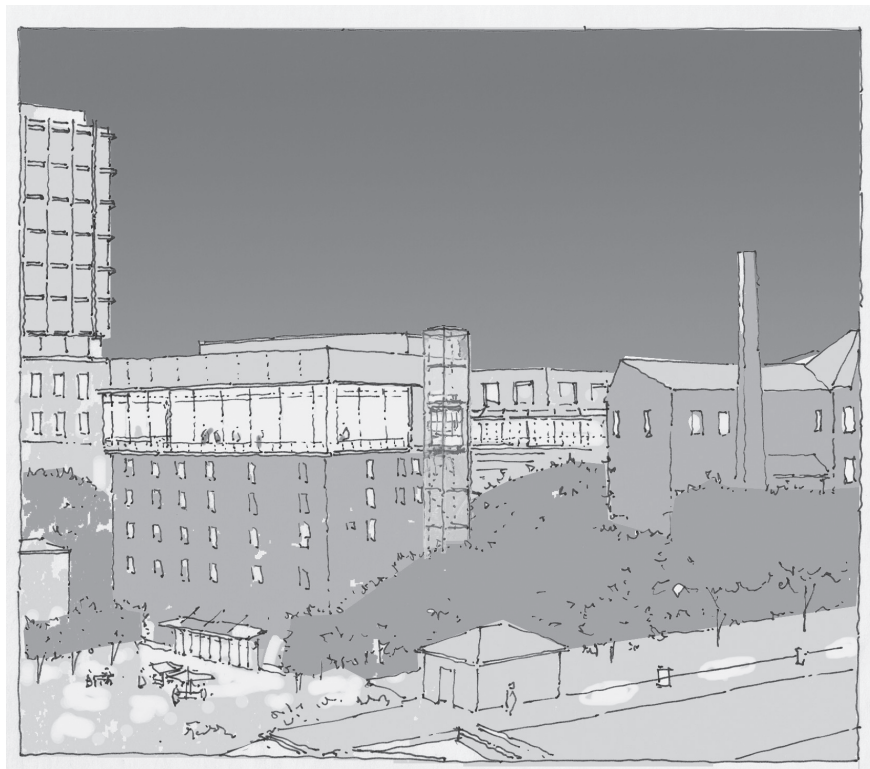
Existing view of Old City Hall



Existing view of Lockport Main Street



Sketch showing new buildings on Main Street and an interpretive reconstruction of historic facades concealing the existing garage



Sketch showing new community space atop the Old Electric Building connected to the Old City Hall (right), Main Street, and the lower level of the Erie Canal

There is an opportunity to resolve several urban design problems at this site through the rehabilitation and reuse of the historic buildings and the construction of key building elements. The objectives for any improvements to this block should include the following:

- Infill the empty parcels along Main Street and join the viewing terrace to this new development.
- Find a new use for the Old City Hall.
- Activate both Main Street and Pine Street by creating uses on the ground floors that generate pedestrian traffic.
- Camouflage the negative presence of the garage with facades that are more contextual with the architecture of Main Street.
- Stabilize the Old Electric Building and, if possible, determine a function for the lower levels of this structure.
- Provide a connection between the viewing terrace and the lower level of the canal.

Because some structures have a better relationship to the street, the successful restoration of the entire block will be improved if the uses in different buildings support one another. The park-like entrance to the viewing terrace should be considered a building parcel that includes the viewing terrace and the upper levels of the Old Electric Building. A new residential building or hotel on Main Street would fill this missing section of the street frontage, control access to the viewing terrace and hide the empty side wall of the neighboring residential building. In conjunction with this new building, the upper portion of the Old Electric Building should be reconstructed to enclose the viewing terrace for year-round use as a community space. Although the viewing terrace will be privately controlled, it will be more accessible to the public for special events and private functions throughout the year, will be maintained, and will be better maintained and substantially more secure. The ground floor use along Main Street should activate the street with retail or another street oriented activity. The possible reuse of the Old City Hall as a restaurant suggests it could have a supporting role for the community space atop the Old Electric Building. All of these buildings should be viewed as a single complex in which the uses interconnect and support one another. Ideally, this new complex should be connected to the lower level of the canal with an elevator that passes either through or to the side of the Old Electric Building.

In addition, there is an opportunity for an interpretive reconstruction of long-gone Main Street building facades to camouflage the existing helical parking garage, eliminate blind spaces that contribute to a diminished sense of safety, and suggest the former architectural character of the downtown. The ground level windows of these facades could also be used to display shop windows from an earlier era or other historic artifacts. Similarly, the lower levels of the Old Electric Building could be stabilized and used for the storage of canal related artifacts. At the same time, steps should be taken to ensure public safety within the garage itself. Alternatively, the garage could be replaced with a building that generates better street level activity and is more in character with the street. Parking would still need to be located nearby, but a relocated garage could be part of a long term plan to replace parking lots on Main Street with buildings.

It is highly recommended that the city consider establishing a special historic district that includes the remaining historic buildings and structures in the downtown. Historic districts can attract new investment by providing predictability to the approval process and the quality of the urban context. Furthermore, designation often changes the public perception of an area by connoting an official recognition of value.

The New York State historic preservation enabling legislation states that “. . . any county, city, town or village is empowered to provide by regulations, special conditions and restrictions for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value . . .” (New York State General Municipal Law Section 96-a).

The historic district should be protected with design guidelines and preservation standards. These can be enforced by establishing an architectural review commission to review new buildings and additions for compliance with established standards prior to issuing a construction permit. Design guidelines can be extended to include signage standards and landscaping for Main Street.

The current Main Street beautification effort should be applied to the connecting streets as well. Street landscaping can be used to unify a district and reduce the impact of empty lots or buildings that are out of character with the rest of the area.

THE CITY OF LITTLE FALLS

The City of Little Falls sits mid-way between Syracuse and Albany along the Mohawk River, at a point where the river makes a significant drop in elevation. Barge Canal Lock E17 at Little Falls controls the single largest elevation change within the entire canal system, with a lift of over 40.5 feet.

Because the Erie Canal was constructed on the south side of the Mohawk River opposite the city, a feeder canal was used to access the existing industrial areas on the north side of the river. The feeder canal, connected to the Erie by an aqueduct, also utilized portions of a canal built in 1795 by the Inland Lock Navigation Company. Remnants of the guard lock to this earlier canal still exist at its western terminus. The aqueduct has deteriorated, and the last standing arch recently collapsed. Several stone blocks from the aqueduct were recovered from the river and catalogued in the hope that portions of this structure could be restored in the future. The loss of this historic landmark highlights the danger of deferring the stabilization of important canal artifacts throughout the National Heritage Corridor.

Over time, Little Falls has grown up and away from the canal; it is now separated from the older city by a major highway and railroad. Several older mills and structures along the river, in an area called Canal Place, were recently renovated to accommodate residential, retail, and restaurant uses. In 2003 the Canal Corporation built a new harbor and renovated the old Terminal Building at Rotary Park, which is now used as a visitors center for transient boaters and

a public meeting space. This facility is located next to the recently completed segment of the Erie Canalway Trail along the opposite side of the canal. Individual efforts to restore the buildings around Canal Place have encouraged additional improvements to the area. Two smaller buildings at Benton's Landing, overlooking the Mohawk River, were recently purchased and will be restored. Although the area was specifically recognized in the city's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and some design guidelines were developed, there is not currently a mechanism in place to enforce standards for historic preservation or new construction.

Building upon the city's LWRP plan, it is recommended that Canal Place be designated a special historic district and that a mechanism be introduced to enforce design guidelines and preservation standards for this area. Modern structures of varying quality have already been added to several older buildings as part of their adaptive reuse. Guidelines for the new construction in the historic district should recognize that modern buildings can be sympathetically added without damaging the character and scale of the district. Additional guidelines and standards should be written to encourage land uses that generate pedestrian activity, such as residential, hotel, retail, and restaurants. The pair of buildings next to Benton's Landing, for example, will be more easily converted to residential uses if they are joined by a new structure that contains the required vertical circulation, fire exits and mechanical systems.

The community has expressed strong support for developing new pedestrian bridges and trails to encourage recreational use of the waterfront and create better connections to the rest of the city. To overcome the perceived separation of Canal Place from the downtown retail area, the existing 'subway' pedestrian underpass beneath the railroad should be replaced with a high profile pedestrian bridge. This is an opportunity to improve pedestrian access across the railway and State Route 167, and create a highly visible landmark for the city. Pedestrian bridges across the river and the canal can either utilize exist-

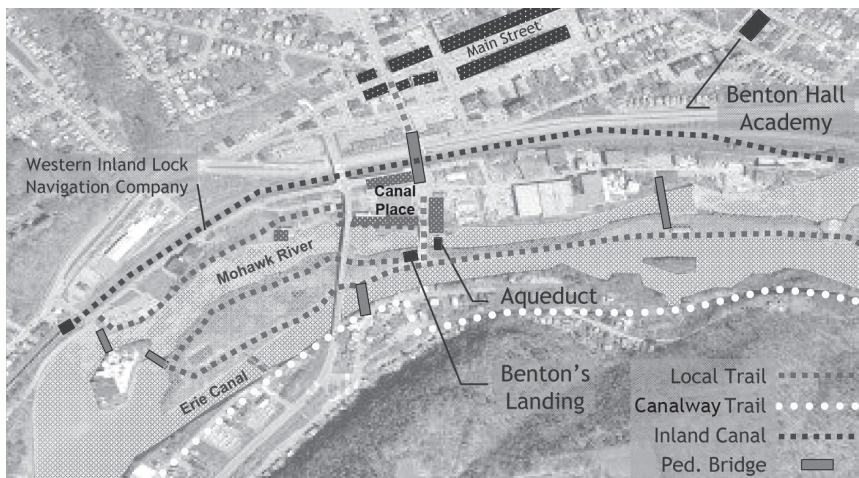


Diagram showing Canal Place connected to the surrounding neighborhoods by proposed pedestrian paths and bridges



Sketch of Benton's Landing buildings adaptively reused as residences and a restaurant., with a new connecting structure containing vertical circulation

ing structures (such as the abandoned South Williams Street Bridge) or be built anew (such as the proposed crossing next to the public moorings at Benton's Landing). The community should also consider developing a landscape plan for those places that link the area's individual historic sites, and an interpretive plan to mark historic canal alignments or structures.

Although much of the old aqueduct connecting the feeder canal to the Erie has been lost, it would be a great tragedy if the remaining portions were allowed to decay further. The standing portions of the aqueduct should be stabilized and perhaps the remnants of the archways reconstructed or built into an interpretive structure that illustrates the placement of the original stones. It is important that the aqueduct be reconstructed in a way that maintains a distinction between the original artifacts and the new construction. The story of the aqueduct includes its slow deterioration, and a reproduction will never elicit the same appreciation as the surviving remnants of the original.