City of Ogdensburg
New York

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT /
“MAIN STREET” REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

July 1, 2011

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To the City Manager and City Council:

As the policy advisor on matters affecting the physical and economic development of the City, I am happy to provide you with a Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy for the City of Ogdensburg.

The Strategy was put together to help implement the Strategic Management Plan, and to reflect what the Community’s citizens and business owners told us they wanted during the Community and Economic Development Summit. The Strategy is consistent with Ogdensburg’s stated economic development values to revitalize the downtown, redevelop the waterfront, and increase tourism, and it can help guide us as we work towards our Vision of becoming a vibrant and vital commerce center in the St. Lawrence Region.

This report was prepared by the City of Ogdensburg Department of Planning and Development with technical assistance from consultants Dadras Architects. In addition to providing a rough draft of the final report, which included an outline of the strategy recommendations and how to proceed, Dadras Architects prepared the Urban Plan drawings illustrating the location of the recommendations; 3D Urban Models Renderings displaying the recommended infill developments, streetscape, and facade improvements; and the facade guidelines in the appendices. I hope you find this document useful for continuing the City’s important revitalization work downtown as well as City-wide.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Justin Woods
Director of Planning & Development
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I. Introduction:

The Ogdensburg Downtown Improvement / Main Street Revitalization Strategy was prepared by the City of Ogdensburg for the purpose of developing and implementing a successful approach to the revitalization and redevelopment of Downtown Ogdensburg. Specifically the area centered at the intersection of Ford and State Streets, the heart of the City of Ogdensburg’s historic commercial, cultural, and civic center, located at the confluence of the St. Lawrence Rivers and Oswegatchie.

The foundation for this revitalization effort by the City of Ogdensburg was started in September, 2006 with the "Strategic Management Plan: 2007-2012", which established the City's Vision, Mission, Values, and Organizational Goals (See Appendix I).

In 2008, Dadras Architects was retained to prepare a Main Street Assessment, and following the recommendations contained in that effort, the City of Ogdensburg applied for and received a CDBG Community Planning Grant from the NYS Office of Community Renewal. The City then held a three day Community Planning and Economic Development Summit to engage the community residents and business community in the revitalization effort. This Report is a documentation of the information and ideas contained in that effort. The Strategy will serve as a useful guide for revitalization efforts and be a policy framework for planning and economic development efforts.

After a detailed review of the existing conditions, and relevant information, as well as several site visits, documentation, meetings and consultations/coordination with the City of Ogdensburg, Dadras Architects prepared a draft that included several ideas, urban models and renderings illustrating recommendations. This Strategy addresses existing issues, and proposes creative ideas and implementation strategies for immediate and long term actions that the City can take to make improvements to the Downtown /Main Street area.

This strategy can and should serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of the entire City, and more specifically as a framework for how to link the City’s downtown revitalization efforts with its larger planning, community and economic development, and waterfront redevelopment initiatives. Collectively, coordinated efforts will help achieve the City’s vision and strategic goals as outlined in the Strategic Management Plan.

In Summary, it is recommended that Ogdensburg focus on immediate steps (next 12 months), short-term steps (1-3 years) and longer-term steps (3-5 years) to implement improvements to the physical and economic state of Ogdensburg's Downtown. A sustained effort can begin to transform certain negatives attributes into a positive, beautiful and successful place. Ogdensburg can and should be a revitalized place with luring civic and cultural activities, vibrant business and recreational opportunities, not just for all the residents of the City, but for visitors from around the region and beyond.
The City of Ogdensburg has several existing and significant assets, including a unique and beautiful natural location and its status as the only City on the United States side of the St. Lawrence River. The City also has an historic physical and urban setting and infrastructure, capable of supporting new development. However, Ogdensburg is also at a crossroads. The Main Street Assessment and Community Planning and Economic Development Summit confirmed that there are many important issues and concerns that need to be addressed during the revitalization of the City of Ogdensburg (and specifically its Downtown) to insure the City’s future success.

There is no doubt that “change” in the form of revitalization, improvements, and future development is required and will be occurring throughout the City, including its Downtown / Main Street-district area. In fact, the current City government has been working on this effort for several years. The biggest issues are how to retain and attract businesses and investment? What shape and form (and uses) that new development will take? What type of physical environment it will preserve or create? How successful it will be? Specifically will development and investment be the type of place that Ogdensburg citizens and residents wish it to be?

The best way to ensure the future revitalization and development of Ogdensburg’s Downtown/Main Street is to have a coherent plan and vision for City's future development, and then coordinate public and private resources that take immediate, significant and longer term steps towards the implementation of that plan. The City’s historic downtown should be the center of all the City’s revitalization and redevelopment efforts. The historic downtown is in the critical location: it has existing infrastructure and can serve as the center for the revitalization not just of the downtown, but the waterfront as well. The demise (both physical and economic) of the Downtown area corresponds directly to the condition of the City’s appearance.

A revitalized Downtown / Main Street area can create the "sense of place" and functional center of the City’s comprehensive revitalization efforts. Increased Code Enforcement, accompanied by proper design and development guidelines (as specifically proposed in this Strategy) will help transform the negative image of the Downtown into a denser, more active, and vibrant urban "place".

The City needs to consider policies that will "embrace" the urban character that has been lost over the years. The density – both physical, and in urban activity, needs to be increased, in order to achieve successful revitalization. There needs to be direct connections, and interrelationships between the existing Downtown/"Main Street" commercial district and the City's waterfront. The traditional downtown, as shown above, is roughly three blocks in each direction centered on Ford and State Streets. However, the map also shows that downtown is located at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie Rivers, and there exists a real strategic opportunity to reconnect the downtown with the waterfront based on types of development the City encourages or permits. The Downtown needs to be physically rebuilt and improved with quality housing choices and job creation, and coordinating brownfield cleanup, BOA and LWRP processes with a downtown revitalization strategy is the key to success.

The Strategy contains specific ideas and recommendations for actions to be taken to help encourage as well as to guide the future revitalization and redevelopment of the downtown. It is critical to Ogdensburg’s success that these efforts be undertaken in a comprehensive manner. Individual strategies, while having merit, are intended to build upon each other and not to be considered in isolation. Section III of the Strategy includes recommendations on “How to Proceed” to getting the
process underway, as well as to maintain the momentum generated by the Summit, and more recently, the City Manager’s Community Partnership Initiative and to leverage investments from the forthcoming construction phases of the Main Street Grant Programs, Lake Street Bridge and Patterson Street projects.

The Strategy includes recommendations for suggested improvements to public (including existing parklands), as well as to and private properties. It should be made clear that it will take a public-sector-private sector cooperative effort to successfully revitalize Ogdensburg. Some of these ideas may, at first, appear quite ambitious, but “big ideas yield big results,” and the City of Ogdensburg must consider both large-scale “anchor” projects (to help attract people and investment) as well smaller-scale improvements. Some of these ideas and recommendations are intended to be fostered by the City, but others need to be fostered by the local business community, private developers, entrepreneurs, and others by community and not-for-profit organizations.

Ogdensburg's location on the St. Lawrence River provides a unique opportunity to attracts transient boaters and tourists. The Dobisly Visitor Center and plans to expand Marina facilities will further attract people to Ogdensburg supporting the downtown revitalization strategy and stimulating other economic activity.
Following is a list of revitalization Strategy Issues and Proposals that contains several ideas for realizing the City’s SMP Vision and implementing its Strategic Goals.

The Strategy Proposals can be described in three specific types, for the purpose of this specific revitalization effort:

**A – "Revitalize":** Strategy Proposals 1 to 4 relate to improvements and enhancements to existing assets and opportunities that currently exist, and should serve as a basis for revitalization.

**B – "Propose":** Strategy Proposals 5 to 8 relate to additional, new (and "bolder"/possibly more complex) developments connected to the existing urban structure, but requiring new and more significant efforts, for the revitalization.

**C – "Improve":** Strategy Proposals 9 to 12 relate to potential policy (including Government) decisions, required improvements, actions and initiatives, for the revitalization.

Following the list is a detailed description of each Strategy – Issue & Proposal, and a "How to Proceed" - Section III details the steps / courses of action that should be taken to begin the realization of this process.

It is worth noting that while this report has been in development, the City has been working to implement several projects consistent with the Strategy. Projects such as the Lake Street Bridge replacement and implementation of the New York Main Street Grant Programs are already underway. The point is that as with other successful and effective planning efforts, this strategy and report have been part of an evolutionary process and this strategy should continue to be a living document as these ideas are more fully developed, refined and implemented through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan and Brownfield Opportunity Area initiatives.

The fact that these funds and programs are in place will allow the City to more fully explore the feasibility, design and implementation of the types of bold ideas necessary to set Ogdensburg on a new path.
II. Strategy Issues and Proposals:

"Revitalize":

A. Revitalize the Downtown
B. Revitalize the Marina District
C. Revitalize the Downtown Waterfront District
D. Promote Historic/Cultural Draws

"Propose":

E. Waterfront Development
F. Downtown Conference Hotel
G. Conference/Convention Center

"Improve":

H. Improve Image/Re-Brand City
I. Improve Downtown Accessibility & Transportation.
J. Other Potential Improvements

3-D Rendered Views of the Revitalized Downtown
This model shows some of the proposed Revitalization Improvements to the Downtown District (Ford & State Streets). This model does focus on renovating historic structures with façade improvements and adaptive re-use/improved facilities including upper story apartments, lofts and live/work studios. Improved streetscape such as decorative lighting, patterned pavers for sidewalks and crosswalks, and street trees would all help improve the Downtown district. A renovated Theater building with a new marquis, and possible new technology could become a draw for downtown and allow for joint programming with the Remington or Fort Association. Additionally, reuse other existing buildings for uses that will draw people downtown (like retail, restaurants, etc.) and develop design guidelines for building renovations and signage that enhance the urban space and improve physical experience.

Sample Streetscape Improvements include trees, greenery and new fixtures.
II. STRATEGY ISSUES and PROPOSALS

This Section includes the following detailed descriptions of the Downtown Improvement – Main Street Revitalization Strategy – Issues and Proposals. These ideas are presented as a part of the revitalization process, following the City of Ogdensburg’s “Strategic Management Plan for 2007-2012”, dated September, 2006, and based upon the foundation (previous) work completed for the Main Street Assessment, and the Community Visioning process.

The Proposals should be reviewed by the Manager and Council as well as the Planning Board, Historic Commission and other advisory committees to set the City’s priorities and focus its resources on selected ideas in a coordinated, comprehensive manner. This will create a positive synergy for all the City’s revitalization efforts, and a successful integration with the LWRP and BOA efforts as well as the implementation strategies.
A) Revitalize the Downtown
The revitalization of the City of Ogdensburg’s historic downtown is important to the revitalization of the entire City. The historic downtown (centered on the main intersection of Ford and State Streets) has the historic building stock, the existing infrastructure, and the key location required to serve as the “hub” of all revitalization and re-development activities.

Over many years, the historic buildings, urban character, and density of the Downtown were lost due to urban renewal and other policies/developments. To revitalize and re-build the City of Ogdensburg needs to restore and re-build its urban character, by increasing the density and activity in the Downtown.

The Issues:
The following issues were outlined during the public visioning process, and the downtown assessment report:

1. **Retail shopping:** In the existing downtown/main street district, retail shopping is very limited and sparse. Very few restaurants/food establishments of any kind currently exist.

2. **Facades of buildings:** Facades of historic buildings throughout the city’s downtown/main street district (e.g.: “Blue Building” on Ford Street, etc.) are in need of restoration, as part of a coordinated façade improvement program (note: the City has received (2) separate NY Main Street Grant awards, which include funding for façade improvements –to be implemented).

3. **A depressed appearance:** There is a depressed appearance to much of the housing stock throughout the city. Many of these historic structures are in need of renovation, restoration, and/or rehabilitation.

4. **Perception of negativity:** While Ogdensburg, like other cities, has its share of drug and crime issues, Ogdensburg is relatively “safe” city. However, it has the perception of higher crime based in large part on a depressed physical environment and the “loitering-types” in the downtown area. Every effort should be made to enhance and protect this security issue and to counteract any perception of negativity. Particular challenges are caused by the concentration of social service providers in the mall and around the single room occupancy (SRO) facility at the corner of Ford and Patterson Streets.

Strategies to Revitalize Downtown:

1. **Restore building facades:** All of the existing historic buildings should be preserved and renovated/rehabilitated in order to retain the historic character of the city, and the effects of previous urban renewal efforts need to be mitigated. The City is currently operating NYS DHCR funded Main Street Programs in the marina district and downtown area. Building facades desperately need to be restored throughout the downtown. The City should continue to operate these types of programs, including funding local façade programs if possible. The City should also consider developing detailed program guidelines and historic restoration criteria. All of these efforts will help create a new feeling of a quality within the downtown and throughout the community.

Dillingham Insurance Building & Philips Diner on Ford/Caroline to be Renovated
2. **Renovate main street buildings with improved/modern facilities:** Modern infrastructure should include upper floors with elevators for accessibility, and new means of egress standards to meet the State building code. Develop larger possible floor templates for additional office and retail space and encourage energy efficient structures (grants are available), which will benefit both the environment and the community as well as help further a more positive image (green is not a fad, but the future, and communities committed to going green can better position themselves in the marketplace).

3. **Create enhanced urban spaces:** New urban & civic space needs to be created adjacent to mall buildings on Ford Street as well as, others throughout downtown area. The City’s civic spaces can be used for special community events and public gatherings, and must be landscaped and street-scaped. Additionally, new streetscape improvements should be developed throughout the entire downtown area and ultimately City-wide (see Appendix section, for suggested potential streetscape views and guidelines).

4. **Redesign & renovate existing mall buildings:** On the north side of Ford Street, consider adding upper floor office and residential spaces. Additionally, as the CRC lease is coming to an end, the City should look for a retail anchor to begin to draw people back into the mall area.

5. **Improve streetscape – throughout the Downtown district:** Defining the downtown/main street district can be achieved through an improved streetscape and beautified image. (*see Appendix section, for specific proposed streetscape improvement views*) From the existing center of Downtown -to the waterfront from the State and Ford Street intersection, improved streetscapes must be specifically defined.

6. **Redesign Theater with new technology such as 3D or IMAX:** In addition to the new theater lobby, marquee and façade that are being assisted through the Main Street Program, the installation of new theater projection equipment (3D or IMAX) would accommodate the emerging market of 3D movies. The addition of teleconferencing for potential seminars in newly created conference meeting space (and potential connection to a conference center) would also help potentially increase revenue for the theater. The new theater technology would appeal to both existing and new tourism businesses allowing for coordinated programing using up to date technologies. (e.g.: War of 1812/Fort La Presentation, Fredrick Remington, etc.)

New Façade and Blow-up of Marquee planned for the Cinema. Designed by Crawford & Stearns Preservation Architects in conjunction with the NYMS Grant Program being administered by the Ogdensburg Growth Fund Development Corporation.
7. **Create a Bed & Breakfast/small inn district:** A bed & breakfast/small inn district could be created adjacent to downtown. The City and Chamber should work with the St Lawrence Bed and Breakfast Association, the Small Business Development Center, Clarkson Entrepreneurship Center, the St. Lawrence County IDA/Economic Development Office and the Growth Fund to create a B&B program that contains technical assistance and grants to support people wishing to open new bed and breakfasts, small inns, or boutique hotels. Several historic buildings on State and Caroline Streets as well as in the City’s Crescent District would be excellent candidates for a program like this.

8. **Encourage new retail downtown:** New retail/restaurant businesses should be located in existing buildings and construction of new buildings along State Street and along the park leading to the waterfront should be built with appropriate urban density and form. One of the buildings could become the home of a retail incubator and second floors could be used for professional office incubators. Upper floors should become higher-end residential units to attract people with disposable income to locate downtown. Any new buildings and businesses should complement the historic architecture, and be accompanied with complimentary programming like the Farmers Market or seasonal park concerts to draw people to downtown.
**B) Revitalize the Marina District**

Revitalization of the historic marina district of the City of Ogdensburg can provide opportunities to extend the downtown area (direct pedestrian connection across the newly developed pedestrian bridge), expand the boating and waterfront opportunities, and also integrate the riverfront trails and open space with newly established business and residential opportunities.

**The Issues:**

The following issues were outlined during the public visioning process, and the downtown assessment report:

1. **No “anchor” businesses:** At the current time, there is not any real “anchor” business or attraction in the downtown/main street district, with the exception of the Remington Museum.

2. **The Maple City Trail:** The maple trail project extension is also a good example of a progressive project that appeals to both residents and tourists. It serves to connect the downtown with greater Ogdensburg area (see Appendix section, for detailed plan drawings). Although an excellent project, the maple trail in its current form does not attract/encourage the public to shop downtown.

3. **The marina district is currently blighted:** The marina district area of the city is currently blighted, with former warehouse sites in a dilapidated condition.

4. **The empty Ramada Inn:** The current condition of the empty Hotel site, including the former restaurant building (historic stone structure), and abandoned bridge is a hindrance to future development (note: funding is in place for a new pedestrian bridge that is designed and currently being permitted with work anticipated in 2011 and 2012).

5. **Marina facility:** The City is working with Mr. Hosmer to re-open a Marina on the Oswegatchie River (before photo to left and development plans on right). Additionally, plans to expand the City’s marina and add a marine a fueling station on the St. Lawrence River are partially funded and in the planning/design phase. Collectively, these projects will greatly enhance the use of one of the City’s greatest assets – the beautiful waterfront.
Strategies to Revitalize Marina District:

1. **Encourage more marina commerce:** The Marina District could benefit from a collection of water and boat related businesses which can include: boat sales, repairs and storage, fishing related stores/supplies, fishing related charter businesses, recreational boating charter businesses, jet ski and wet suite rentals, boating/water related supply businesses, and local fish restaurants (“Captain Starns, NJ- like” case study) as well as restaurants and pubs with food and fun entertainment that cater to casual boat traffic and vacationers.

2. **Maple City Trail enhancements:** Enhancements to the Maple City Trail (along the river) should include a new Trail-head facility/Comfort Interpretive center building with rest rooms. This building could include a solar roof. The MCT could adopt a theme of “green”/LEED design and other “green” themes. These themes could include wind energy and geothermal energy. Other similar ideas could be installed between the trail-head facility and hydro dam or at the historic pump house. Additionally, during the LWRP process, the City should look at better handicap accessibility along the Spring Street Access points, other potential expansions/connections, more walk/run programming and overall way-finding to improve the pedestrian and biker experience.

3. **New pedestrian bridge:** The replacement of deteriorated bridge structure will greatly improve the connection to downtown/main street district as well as the overall aesthetics. The new bridge will be a great asset for connecting, downtown to the marina district and the downtown and marina district to the maple trail.

4. **Restoration of the historic Boat Basin:** The restoration of the historic Boat Basin might include: a possible park site with interpretive history panels, with a botanical-type garden. The basin could also become a grass field for recreation. Ultimately the boat basin could be restored as a water element.
5. **Hydro Dam: Improve access and connections**: In order to improve access and connections to the Hydro Dam the City should implement a green energy trail tour which would include the hydro dam, the solar panels on the Lockwood Arena, the methane recapture system at the wastewater treatment plant as well as solar, wind, and geothermal energy projects that might be developed in the future.

6. **Revitalize the residential neighborhood**: During the restoration process of existing residences, it is vital to preserve historic residences by coordinating with the city’s housing program and plan. Guidelines need to be provided before the design and construction of new infill housing and for the rehabilitation of existing homes.

7. **Improve existing cheese factory**: As part of the improvement of the existing cheese factory some suggestions would include, a possible factory tour (Wisconsin examples, as case studies), a gourmet cheese factory store, and a potential for accessory to a small café. In addition to selling cheese on-site, cheese could also be sold locally (“Historic Ogdensburg Cheeses”, as an idea/theme). Other possible considerations could include an expansion from cheese into milk, yogurt or juice production.

8. **Develop the existing hotel building site**: The historic portions of the vacant hotel site should be preserved. The current conditions of the site, including the historic stone structures, are poor. The stone structures could be restored into a boutique hotel or long term efficiencies with a restaurant/pub and marina. The newer portion of the hotel should be assessed as to whether it can be renovated to accommodate a new hotel/convention center that hosts special events. If the newer portion of the hotel is beyond repair, it could be demolished to make way for mixed use development with densely built condos/townhouses or apartment blocks.

9. **Improve existing skating rink**: The existing Lockwood Arena could be improved as an attraction by creating a sports complex. The addition of interior and exterior winter sports facilities could be located adjacent to existing structure. Adjacent to the complex could be retail/rental stores to complement the existing skating rink. This new complex could be linked to other area sports facilities, in the area, to create a regional attraction.

Another idea worth considering if the City determines that it doesn’t need two ice rinks is to work with Fort La Presentation Association to renovate the arena into a museum/interpretive center for the Fort. This might allow for a swap of land to create a public beach or other compatible development around the fringes of the historic site.

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**3-D Urban Model – View of the Marina District**
This view shows the existing Marina district (in foreground), and its location/potential for re-development –adjacent to the Downtown district, and along the Riverfront/trails, etc.
C. Revitalize the Downtown Waterfront District:
The lasting effects of many years of urban renewal-type projects (which removed many historic buildings/blocks in the city center, and created “mall-like” projects) is still felt today, most obviously in the vacant sites, and decreased density of the Downtown and the Waterfront. These areas have been characterized by disinvestment and decay, and contributed to what is currently a negative image for the urban character of Ogdensburg. However, Ogdensburg’s downtown is on the waterfront, and its waterfront location is Ogdensburg’s greatest asset, and must be at the center of any, and all revitalization and redevelopment efforts.

The Issues:

The following issues were outlined during the public visioning process, and the downtown assessment report:

1. A physical “dis-connect”: There exists a real, and physical “dis-connect” between the areas of downtown, which are now separated by large open parking lots and empty buildings, as well as “suburban-type” (“sprawl-type, auto-oriented developments).

2. Limited access to the water: While there is a trail and two boat launches stretching the Greenbelt Park to Patterson Street, there remains limited public access to the water (both seaway and riverfront). Currently, the City does not have a public beach, although historically it did have one. All of these considerations need to be carefully examined in the ongoing update to the LWRP.

3. Limited connections: Currently, there are very limited connections between existing potential attractions (e.g.: seaway/riverfront-to-main street district; and visitor center-to-Remington Museum, etc.), and minimal way-finding (signage, etc.) in place throughout the city.

4. Capitalizing on existing assets: The City of Ogdensburg has several assets including the waterfront, the new visitors’ center, and the historic fort site. These assets are along the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie Rivers, and are directly adjacent to downtown Ogdensburg. These attributes must be capitalized upon as part of any revitalization effort. The new visitors’ center and the Fort project are excellent examples of positive development that accommodate local residents and visitors/tourists. They also begin to recognize and capitalize upon Ogdensburg’s most positive attributes - its location.

Strategies to Revitalize Greenbelt & Waterfront District:

1. Define and improve the downtown waterfront district: The new visitor’s center, the historic Customs House (potentially), and the Fort La Presentation master plans needs to be updated to greater define and enhance the downtown and waterfront districts. The historic lighthouse also has great potential for development as a waterfront attraction. Expanded programming activities that use of the Visitor Center and Marina as well as water-based recreational programming are also important.
2. **Improve connections—between Downtown, the Waterfront and Marina Districts:** Improved streetscape and public pedestrian space is the key to improving connections to a “newly revitalized” Ogdensburg downtown. There also needs to be a connection, both vehicular (including watercrafts) and pedestrian to “newly revitalized” marina district.

3. **Stand firm in requiring public access to all development as required by the LWRP and promote more water-related activities.** There needs to exist both public access to the waterfront, and also throughout all new developments. We recommend developing and promoting waterfront-related activities throughout public spaces, to help build the local economy, and emphasize the waterfront location image for Ogdensburg.

4. **Develop waterfront promenade/esplanade:** A public waterfront promenade is key to improving connections to all other areas including the Maple City Trail (and proposed trail-head facility), and the “newly revitalized” Downtown. An accessible waterfront would help connect all of the different development areas along the waterfront. This should include a connection to all public park areas (a "green belt"), as well as to a potential new publicly-accessible beach area (historic precedent).

5. **Develop potential new waterfront hotel and restaurant site:** A new hotel and restaurant (with views of marina) located on a waterfront property would be ideal to fully take advantage of the spectacular views of the St. Lawrence River/Seaway. This new waterfront hotel would need to have synergy with (an expanded) marina and strong pedestrian and visual connection to the existing downtown (*to be coordinated with the LWRP & BOA planning processes).*

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3-D Urban Model – Revitalized Downtown Waterfront District

This view shows the (partial) proposed Downtown Waterfront District, including its proximity/connections to the Downtown (and new/expanded developments shaded in brown; a potential new waterfront hotel and restaurant; and its location/potential for re-development –showing existing Marina, Visitors Center, Customs House, adjacency to Fort La Presentation site (and potential Lighthouse access), and waterfront esplanade/connection to River and trails/green spaces, etc..

Images of a waterfront cafe and waterfront hotel / apartments
D. Promote Historic & Cultural Destination Attractions:
The City of Ogdensburg currently has several excellent cultural attractions, as well as unique historical assets, that should be enhanced, expanded, and further developed as part of the revitalization effort. These cultural and historic assets should be a major part of the new image of the City.

The Issues:

The following issues were outlined during the public visioning process, and the downtown assessment report:

1. **Limited arts and entertainment offerings:** Currently, there are limited arts offerings in the City, with limited venues for the arts or live entertainment in the downtown / main street district.

2. **Remington Museum:** The wonderful Remington Museum appears to be somewhat “under-appreciated” and possibly “under-attended”. The Remington Museum complex is a first rate, major cultural attraction for the City and the region. It is underutilized and unincorporated in revitalization efforts, even though it is an internationally recognizable name (and “brand”) in the arts and related communities. Observations revealed that many out-of-town visitors to the museum are currently not spending the night in the area, limiting the economic impact of such a substantial cultural attraction/anchor, to the surrounding main street district.

3. **Fort La Presentation:** The Fort La Presentation district redevelopment project is an excellent example of “thinking big”.

4. **Historic buildings:** Historic buildings in the community create an important counterpoint to the modern structures built during urban renewal era; including the U.S. Customs House building, the Post Office building, City Hall, the historic state hospital buildings, and various stone structures throughout the community.

5. **Historic residential architecture is in need of restoration:** The historic architecture throughout the residential neighborhoods remains surprisingly intact, but is in need of restoration.

Strategy Recommendations:

1. **Develop additional cultural attractions:** Developing additional cultural amenities while enhancing existing cultural attractions and historical sites could benefit both residents and visitors. Updating the historic walking tours signage and brochures would be a good and easy step towards promoting these assets.

2. **Enhance/expand the Remington Museum:** Restoration and expansion of the Remington Museum with a potential expansion on State Street, including a possible new museum store and a museum cafe in the State Street storefronts, would be a major improvement for the City.
3. **Develop Fort La Presentation**: The Fort has a positive effect on Ogdensburg’s residents; building pride in the community through celebration of the City’s significance in American history. By enhancing this important cultural attraction, the positive effects on tourism are endless. The development of the proposed Fort La Presentation project should be designed with accommodation for and access to, the new waterfront promenade. The project should be coordinated and integrated with the proposed new waterfront & downtown developments and revitalization efforts. This project could nicely complement the existing Remington Museum and a possible international museum district marketed collectively with Canadian attractions.

4. The City should use the BOA and LWRP process (and some of the funds) to help the Fort Association update and begin to implement this plan. It’s worth considering the arena as a potential location, interim or otherwise, for the museum and visitors center. It’s also worth considering the benefits of trying to get the site into the National Park Service program.

5. **Create a new local history museum**: The creation of an Ogdensburg museum with a focus on local and regional history could be integrated into a Museum District with the Remington and Fort. It could contain tourism related offices (small - initially in storefront) and a community gathering space, which could be utilized as the location for the Chamber of Commerce offices.

6. **Renovate/expand the Ogdensburg Theater**: A rejuvenated Ogdensburg theater with a new marquee and refurbished public lobby has potential for a new IMAX or 3-D projectors and screens. This “unique feature” has the potential for a regional attraction.

7. **Develop a performing arts center**: The creation of a new Ogdensburg Performing Arts Center would greatly benefit the city, and should be coordinated with the existing performing arts organization(s) (including Ogdensburg Command Performances, etc.). Vacant, underutilized space in mall could accommodate theatrical performances and flexible space (similar to a ballroom) for large gatherings. The exterior could exhibit an impressive “art deco-type” marquee and street presence, and the interior could have a connection to conference/convention space. Phase two might include a theater with raked floor located adjacent to the flexible gathering space.

8. **Preserve and highlight the historic community**: The City of Ogdensburg currently contains the following historic assets which should be preserved and protected, as well as serve as a basis for revitalization efforts (“Historic Ogdensburg”): Historic residential neighborhoods, historic parks, historic government buildings (city hall, Customs House, post office, armory), historic marina district area, Fort La Presentation, historic lighthouse, Ogdensburg Library, and historic St. Lawrence Psychiatric Hospital Complex.

9. **Historic residential architecture is in need of restoration**: Historic architecture throughout the residential neighborhoods is in need of restoration, but remains/exists surprisingly intact. These homes provide an affordable alternative to the high prices typically seen in most cities and urban areas. Specific programs and/or plans should be put in place to encourage the effort of home renovation/restore. The city should identify historic buildings and ensure that they are registered, protected, and preserved. Expansion or creation of additional historic districts should be considered. Adopting and implementing the recommendations outlined in “The City of Ogdensburg Historic Preservation Report 2009-2010” is an excellent starting point.
"Proposed Development Ideas":

**E. Waterfront Development Ideas:**
The City of Ogdensburg contains several large-scale, vacant waterfront sites that were former industrial developments. These sites are included for detailed market studies and development planning in the Brownfield Opportunity Area program. These sites have outstanding waterfront locations and are within close proximity and walking distance to the downtown district. These brownfield sites provide an opportunity for new development specifically designed to enhance the future vision of the City of Ogdensburg.

The City needs to develop zoning and specific urban design guidelines, towards the goal of reinforcing "Smart Growth/Main Street Urbanism", for these important sites in Ogdensburg. All future development should reinforce these existing qualities of “walkability”, public access and connections to Downtown, parks/green spaces, and natural resources; and develop pedestrian pathways and bikeways throughout an integrated effort. Revised, city-wide zoning ordinances and specific design guidelines will be required to properly guide all anticipated future development in Ogdensburg.

**The Issues:**

The following issues were outlined during the public visioning process, and the downtown assessment report:

1. **Former industrial sites:** Former industrial sites such as the Diamond, Shade Roller and Augsbury sites are currently a major impediment to redeveloping the waterfront district and unleashing Ogdensburg’s potential.

2. **Shade roller mill buildings:** The former Standard Shade Roller buildings and potential contamination have complicated potential redevelopment of the Shade Roller and the adjacent Diamond sites.

3. **The Pedestrian City:** Advocate policies for pedestrian-scale development and increase the connections between urban form, perception and experience of the downtown and waterfront.
Recommendations to Develop Waterfront:

[*note: These recommendations must be reviewed and selected ideas more fully developed within the context of the BOA and LWRP planning initiatives]*

1. **New Waterfront Development should be located on former manufacturing sites:** There is a great opportunity to develop several of the former industrial sites on the waterfront and these development plans should focus on mixed use and dense housing to support the waterfront and downtown revitalization efforts.

2. **Develop a public and accessible waterfront with activities:** The waterfront promenade needs to connect to all of the different development areas as well as city parks and open spaces, and trails, along the waterfront including: the parks, Maple City Trail System and potentially a new public beach. Programming waterfront-related activities in these public spaces is important to their success, and proper use.

3. **Consider promoting development that is “upscale”:** There appears an opportunity to diversify development opportunities by targeting market-rate and “above-market rate” demographics. The BOA funding will enable the City to conduct a detailed market study that will be required to confirm the ability of the market to support upscale development. In the meantime, the City and Chamber should encourage residents to support downtown/main street businesses with incentives and a “Buy Ogdensburg” campaign.

The City should also work to improve the appearance of downtown and the entire City by increasing property maintenance code enforcement and developing design guidelines. These efforts would improve the overall quality in design necessary to attract an higher income demographic while simultaneously increasing local pride.

4. **Develop using Smart Growth/New Urban Planning Guidelines:** Smart Growth for Coastal Communities guidelines and “New Urbanist” development philosophy (also incorporated into new LEED-ND requirements) should be integrated into the City’s development guidelines. It should be safe and easy to navigate through new developments, sidewalks and promenades.

There should also be visual connections to the waterfront and the downtown to foster and encourage a strong sense of community and place. New development needs to be woven into the existing City fabric and recreate and urban pedestrian city (extension of existing streets and paths) so that it does not become an isolated / “divorced” or a gated community.
5. **Limit any new/additional commercial development in waterfront districts:** All new commercial development should be focused on the existing downtown area and in the Marina District. New commercial centers in these development areas will threaten the successful redevelopment of the downtown. Some small retail may be developed at historic sites/trail-heads/marinas; i.e., souvenir stands/shops, and small refreshment stands/cafés, but these should be niche markets and not competitive with downtown/main street businesses.

Creating development themes with ties to Ogdensburg’s history is a perfect example of how to remain on track. Themes should be inspired by the history of the sites (“industrial waterfront”) and its unique and special developments. For example, preserving the pulp rollers at the former Diamond Paper Mill was an excellent choice. Small reminders of the industrial history can inspire future planning and architecture. It is essential to coordinate with Smart Growth Development Guidelines (see Appendix section) and create strong development guidelines (for the planning and developer RFP process) based-upon the future vision and revitalization goals and strategy of the City.

6. **Preserve and promote / further develop Ogdensburg as a “walk-able city”:** Ogdensburg is a very “compact” (in size/scale) and walk-able city, with the residential neighborhoods in close proximity to the downtown/historic main street district, as well as the waterfront. Efforts should be made to encourage and protect this “walk-able city” scale, with pedestrian and bicycle connections planned throughout the City. Streetscape improvements must be incorporated into Downtown and considered as key linkages to the residential portion of City.

Images show appropriate types of waterfront commercial and integrate public access and walkability and connectivity between commercial areas and downtowns via trails, piers and boardwalks.
F. Proposed New Downtown Conference Hotel:
Development of a potential new downtown conference hotel can serve as an anchor, attracting additional people to the downtown, and complementing existing businesses. An anchor hotel would support people visiting the hospital and the region’s efforts to market Ogdensburg and St Lawrence as a fishing destination. A hotel could also help support the downtown businesses during the off-season and bring both visitors and new customers directly to the downtown area, which the City is working to revitalize. This type of development has worked in many different areas, and should be considered for Ogdensburg. Potential locations include infill of the City parking lot along Washington Street. Other possible locations include developing a portion of the Greenbelt Park or the former Augsbury site. Any of these locations would reinforce business growth in the downtown.

The Issues:

1. No significant amount of lodging: Aside from two small bed-and-breakfast establishments and the Wishing Well Motel, there is no lodging or hotel within the City limits.

Downtown Hotel Recommendations:

2. The hotel location: An anchor hotel could be located in the existing downtown parking lot site, behind the former outlet mall building, which affords views of both rivers. The minimum hotel size should be 100 rooms/suites and it should be a quality hotel, but have affordable/market price room rates (not to out-price the potential market – a detailed market study will be required).

3. Hotel chain: A major hotel chain should be the owner/operator; one that has a nationally or regionally recognizable name. The hotel should be able to host conferences and conventions, and offer "medium-priced"/affordable rates. This will help attract populations downtown that could support restaurants, retail, arts, and other cultural establishments.

4. Meeting rooms: The hotel needs to contain meeting rooms for small, medium, and large conferences. It should be flexible to accommodate varied requirements and have adjacent breakout space and conference registration areas, with multi-purpose rooms.

5. Catering facilities: The hotel should have kitchen and catering facilities to accommodate large groups, and ballroom spaces to accommodate multiple purposes.

6. Interior connections: Direct interior connections need to lead to both the ballrooms and the convention space.

7. Other interior connections: There needs to be a direct interior connection to the performing arts center as well as to Ford Street.

8. Secondary connections: Secondary connections to the renovated theater and to parts of the downtown, including State Street, will support business growth in the downtown.


10. A new sundries/souvenir shop: A new sundries/souvenir shop on Washington Street, with sidewalk retail displays.
3-D Urban Model of Proposed New Downtown Conference Hotel
Potential new Downtown Hotel and Conference Center, at existing mall parking lot
G. Proposed New Conference/Convention Center: Attracting more people to Ogdensburg's existing downtown, year-round, is one of the main objectives of this strategy as it will increase density, increase activity, and significantly improve the urban character of the Downtown. The proposed conference/convention center is a proven strategy to accomplish this goal.

The Issues:

1. No “anchor” businesses or attractions: Currently, the downtown does not have any real “anchor” business or attraction to encourage/invite residents and/or visitors to the downtown/main street district.

2. The Ogdensburg mall project has a negative image: The Ogdensburg mall has a poor appearance, and the original design/layout fosters a very negative image (and public perception) for the center of Ogdensburg’s Main Street District. The mall is in need of significant re-design and renovation.

3. The mall is not visitor friendly: Not all current uses within the mall are “visitor-friendly” or retail oriented. As mentioned previously, the City should encourage social service providers to disperse throughout the City to make room for retail, restaurants and other commercial uses on street level and upper story residences in the mall.

Recommendations for a Convention Center:

1. Location: Redesigned/renovate mall buildings and the building on North side of Ford Street for the location of a conference/convention center that could eventually include two additional partial floors of office space.

2. Conference center and hotel: The conference center should be connected to the hotel with easy access between them.

3. Flexible interior spaces: The conference/convention center should include a ballroom as well as flexible interior spaces for multiple purposes/activities. The flexible interior spaces will need to accommodate large gatherings including weddings and theatrical performances.

4. The conference center and the performing arts center: The conference center will need to connect (easy interior connection) to the performing arts center and contain flexible multi-purpose spaces for conference and convention use.

5. Access to public gathering spaces: Direct pedestrian access to new outdoor small public gathering spaces as well as easy access to other revitalized outdoor landscaped areas.

6. Pedestrian access: Easy pedestrian access to Ford Street, State Street, Washington Street, and downtown will need to be created. There is also a need for easy access to adjacent streets and convenient access to downtown/main street district.

7. Access to parking areas: All parking areas need to be fully accessible including: direct pedestrian access to parking areas, easy access to adjacent parking areas, and access to other existing downtown parking areas.
"Improve":

H. Improved Image – Perception & Re-Branding of the City:
The City’s ICMA award winning Strategic Management plan outlines a coherent “vision” for redevelopment of the city. However, most planning studies are at lease a decade old, and in some cases are no longer relevant. Several new initiatives, most particularly the LWRP update and BOA show great promise and potential, and therefore should be coordinated to effectively implement these plans.

The Issues:

1. **Previous identity:** Historically, Ogdensburg has been an industrial city and regional destination hub for the surrounding communities. “Mighty the Muskie” in particular is unique local icon that might be re-established/encouraged as part of the St Lawrence County Chambers FISHCAP initiative as it associates positive images on the City’s waterfront. Founders Day, Seaway Festival and River Shiver are all positive events for the City that should be fostered, expanded and similar events planned throughout the year.

2. **“Strengths” and “positive” attributes:** In any main street revitalization efforts, it is important to begin by identifying the existing “strength” and “positive” attributes of a city, so that those attributes can be built-upon. Of great importance is the City’s natural elements (geographic location, topography, etc.), as well as its historical attributes and proximity to major Canadian cities.

Re-Branding Recommendations:

1. **Coordinate with enhanced tourism effort:** The City and Chamber should coordinate tourism efforts with a re-branding of the City. Developing marketing materials are an eligible BOA expense and funding such an effort is worth considering as part of the BOA process.

   Ogdensburg City Seal with Maple Leaf as Ogdensburg’s historic nickname is “The Maple City.”

2. **New logo and branding:** The City and Chambers new websites and the City’s use of social media is a good start for communicating Ogdensburg’s new positive message. However, it is essential that a new logo and branding for Ogdensburg (*based upon new image / vision) be developed in conjunction with a professional, and quality (nationally-recognized) firm, that specializes in "small-city re-branding”.

3. **Advertising and promotion:** After the nationally-recognized firm completes their task, a local/regional advertising firm should be retained and all advertising and promotional efforts should incorporated the new logo/branded image for the city.
1. Improved Downtown Accessibility and Transportation:
The Prescott-Ogdensburg Bridge approach to Route 37 allows travelers to bypass the historic downtown. However, casual observations reveal numerous Canadian visitors in the shopping plazas off of Route 37. The City and Chamber need to develop strategies to attract Canadian shoppers crossing the bridge to come downtown to support the restaurants and retail establishments in the core of the City.

The Issues:
1. **The Gateways:** Entering the City’s downtown gateways drivers encounter a distressed appearance. Gateway/entryways are important as “markers” for entering a main street district and can present the perceived “image” of the City’s downtown (either positive or negative). The gateways and the appearance of entering the City must be improved.

2. **The Airport:** Cape Air’s regional airline service at the Ogdensburg Airport is another development that links Ogdensburg to Albany, Boston and beyond.

Strategy Recommendations:
1. **Improved accessibility and transportation to Canada:** Improved accessibility to information for Canadian tourists, including the possibility of information kiosk near the bridge. The new “Downtown District” directional signage the City is working with NYS DOT to install is a good start.

2. **Improvements to truck routes:** While it is critically important for trucks to access the Port of Ogdensburg, it is as critical to do so with sensitivity (including high quality transportation/traffic planning, guidelines, streetscape design, complete streets), to retain the historic character of Ogdensburg.

3. **Expanded cruise ship service:** In order to expand the cruise ship service, the City/Chamber should accommodate existing cruise ship service and encourage additional stops. Additional improvements such as bike rentals or other amenities should be considered to attract cruise ships.

4. **Develop and improve way-finding for visitors:** The existing signage and way-finding is inadequate and sometimes confusing. There needs to be easier access to the downtown area, as well as the waterfront. The journey/arrival to the downtown area should be made easy, clear, and "enjoyable". All cultural, historical, recreational, and government sites need to be included. Coordinate all new signage and graphics (by a specialist consultant) with the "re-branding" initiative.

5. **Develop and improve way-finding for trucks/deliveries:** Improvements should be made to truck routes including signage/way-finding upgrades, because the existing signage and way-finding is inadequate.

6. **Improve connections to existing Ogdensburg Airport:** Cape Air’s commitment to locate a ticket office in downtown is excellent. The City should also encourage them to look at shuttle options between the office and the airport, and should consider working to open a small rental car operation.
J. Other Potential Improvements:
The business community in the downtown/main street district does not seem to be working together in a unified effort. The City and Chamber should work to coordinate the business community in support of the revitalization strategy for the City’s downtown.

The Issues:

1. Chamber of Commerce: Impact of the existing Chamber of Commerce appears limited, despite relatively good efforts. The Chamber is an asset (with successes such as the summer farmers market and Beer and Wine Festival) but needs to focus on business development and should try to position itself in the business community as a leader and advocate. Good leadership from the Chamber can unite businesses in support of the downtown and city-wide revitalization efforts. The City needs to continue to focus on efforts to show that Ogdensburg is “business friendly” to counteract the opposite perception that appears inherited.

2. Organization: The City currently operates as a Council-Manager form of government. The Council and Manager appear motivated to revitalize the City in a positive and significant way, and these efforts should be continued and expanded however possible. Plans and new programs seem to be in place on many fronts, and these projects must be part of a unified and coordinated revitalization strategy in order to be optimized. As noted, the City’s Downtown Revitalization Strategy should be integrated with these efforts, and can serve as a lynchpin for all these efforts.

Strategy Recommendations:

1. Expanded role for the existing Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce: The Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce needs to involve all of the business community, as well as local merchants, in an engaged role around the revitalization effort.

2. Expanded role for the existing Ogdensburg Growth Fund Development Corporation (LDC): The Ogdensburg Growth Fund Development Corporation (LDC) needs to include an expanded role for planned development projects in leading the revitalization effort. After successfully restoring the historic Post Office and redeveloping 420 Ford St., the Growth Fund should continue with bold initiatives to redevelop housing and commercial space downtown. The former Desperados building and the CRC building are good candidates for future projects.

3. Existing Ogdensburg International Seaway Festival Committee: The committee is responsible for the success of the 49th annual seaway festival and moving forward should coordinate and integrate efforts with the Chamber and local business community with an enhanced emphasis on tourism. Perhaps consider a storefront presence in the downtown/main street district or in the Chamber Office.

4. Potential tax incentives targeted to encourage business: There are many tax incentives which can target/encourage new businesses and could address the business community’s prime request.
5. **Expand upon the City Manager’s Partnership Initiative:**

   Continue to encourage and expand upon the positive communication and cooperation between the City government, citizens, residents and business community of Ogdensburg. There exists an opportunity for the private-sector/private enterprise to become more invested partners as well as expanded roles for the institutional, educational, faith-based and non-profit partners to put some “skin in the game.”

6. The City of Ogdensburg’s Charter is based on the "Council-Manager" form of government, and this should be emphasized throughout the partnership efforts.

7. **Continue to explore opportunities to assist/target issues:** It is important to have a diverse community and explore opportunities to attract not only young professionals and retirees, but established professionals and families. Market-rate housing and job creation are integral to this revitalization strategy.
III. How to Proceed

The Strategy can be achieved by the consistent and coordinated implementation of the recommendations. These proposals should be implemented in a comprehensive and strategic manner. It is recommended that the City support the revitalization effort by implementing the Strategy with a timetable consisting of immediate, short and longer term steps, and consider the following implementation techniques and potential funding sources.

A. Immediate Steps: actions to be taken in the next 12 months

B. Short-Term Steps: actions to be taken in the next 1-3 years

C. Long-Term Steps: more complex actions/studies, 3-5 years

D. Implementation Techniques

E. Potential Funding sources

Please note that all of these recommendations should be started, in some form, at the beginning of this revitalization effort. The timetable suggests a realistic estimate for the realization of these efforts, but a more ambitious timetable is encouraged. It is imperative that a synergy is achieved between many of these recommendations within the same time frame.

A. Immediate Steps, next 12 months:

1. Adoption of the principles and recommendations of the “Strategy” by the Planning Board and City Council. The Chamber of Commerce should also review and consider adopting this Strategy.

2. Develop local partners’ capacity and commitment to be responsible for implementation of the Strategy with the City.

3. Complete the NYMS Grant Projects, which include significant restoration to the historic Dillingham Insurance Building and a new façade and marquee for the Cinema, and apply for additional funding to continue to assist other downtown properties in need of restoration and rehabilitation.

4. Complete LWRP Update and the BOA Nomination Study. Consider Commissioning a Parking Study as part of this effort. Management of existing parking, event parking and development of future parking needs will be integral to successful future development. Additionally, the study will likely reveal that there is too much parking around the mall, (making development and infill feasible) and could identify other locations that might need additional parking.

5. Secure project site control or partnership with private property owners or interested developers to move proposed projects forward.

6. In conjunction with the Lake Street Pedestrian Bridge develop way-finding and pedestrian guided signage linking the Marina District, Fort Site and Greenbelt Park to the main street district.

7. The City has an annual contract with the Chamber of Commerce to market the City. Collaboratively, the City and Chamber should conduct a detailed Market Study to identify the types of businesses the City should target and recruit to its downtown and begin the process of creating an Ogdensburg Business and Retail Marketing / Branding Strategy. The services of a marketing firm with experience promoting small cities to develop a new image and branding campaign should be utilized. This should include a new logo and branding, advertising and promotion campaign along with an expanded tourism effort.

8. Develop a detailed Streetscape Improvement Plan.
B. Short-Term Steps, 1-3 years:

1. Begin implementing streetscape improvements.

2. Develop a Historic Preservation Program to support the registration of Historic Buildings and consider expanding the Library Park Historic District or developing new historic districts throughout the City. The recently completed Historic Preservation Report 2009-2010 has several good recommendations that should be considered a solid companion document to the Downtown Revitalization Strategy.

3. With the Ogdensburg Post Office and the new Center for Sight projects the Ogdensburg Growth Fund Development Corporation has a successful track record of development in the downtown. The Growth Fund should consider developing new lending policies and pursue grant programs that result in investment in the downtown area, including funding programs for restaurants, pubs and other businesses that will draw people to the downtown area. Additionally, upon completion of the sale of 420 Ford Street, the City should consider working with the Growth Fund to develop the former Desperados Building, including the development of market rate apartments in the upper stories. It is essential that people reside downtown to support the businesses the City hopes to encourage there.

4. The City and the Ogdensburg Growth Fund Development Corporation should apply for and develop a micro-enterprise grant program to support new businesses and local entrepreneurs looking for funding for their business ideas. Priority and preference for all funding should be given in the downtown areas.

5. Create a Bed & Breakfast / small inn district, and coordinate grant and loan funds to support this initiative.

6. Encourage dense urban housing and marina commerce such as water/boat related businesses in the Marina District and mixed-use/dense housing east of the Greenbelt Park. Work with the current or future owner/developer of the existing hotel site to preserve stone buildings; and either rehabilitate hotel or demolish it for new development opportunities.

7. Improve connections between Downtown, Waterfront, and Marina Districts. Continue plans to expand Maple City Trail system and develop key enhancements such as way-finding, a trail head with information and restroom facilities, and improve handicap accessibility around the Spring Street access points.

8. Continue to require and enforce LWRP public access policies to the waterfront for all development activities. Expand the waterfront promenade/esplanade theme of the Greenbelt Park by adding compatible commercial uses that draw people to the waterfront and downtown.

9. Work with the Fort La Presentation Association to update and implement a new Master Plan for the site to potentially include a public beach.

C. Long-Term Steps, 3-5 years and beyond:

1. Continue and expand the process of creating an Ogdensburg Business and Retail Marketing / Branding Strategy.

2. Develop a more detailed downtown evolution plan including infill density targets and design guidelines to create better urban space. Consider addition rehabilitation strategies for remaining mall buildings (including possible upper story additions), and develop new retail buildings on Ford and State Street.
3. Proposed new waterfront development should be located on former manufacturing sites as developed in the BOA Plan. Promote mixed-income development that includes "upscale" offerings as well as market rate, affordable and workforce housing to offer diversity in housing choices.

4. Work to develop new hotel located in existing downtown parking lot. Hotel should be affiliated with major hotel chain as operator, and include a new restaurant and small retail storefront on Washington Street. In conjunction with the hotel, explore the feasibility of developing a small conference center in the parking lot area. The Conference center should be connected to proposed hotel and potentially to a small performing arts center.

5. Work with the OBPA to improve docking facilities and potentially add container supporting equipment to expand commercial opportunities at the port. Also, develop trail connections and buffer areas to existing residential areas.

6. Despite not working in the past, reconsider creating a local history museum to enhance and expand a potential museum/cultural/heritage tourism district with the Remington Museum, Fort, and Performing Arts Center all within walking distance of the bed and breakfast district.

7. Put together redevelopment plan for vacant buildings and land at the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center.

D. Implementation Techniques:

1. **Historic Preservation:** Consider Instituting a Historic Preservation Ordinance and becoming a certified local government.

2. **Zoning Ordinances:** Upon completion of the LWRP and BOA, comprehensive review, and revise as necessary, the existing Zoning Ordinances and City Codes with specific Design Guidelines and possibly architectural review for downtown and historic neighborhood infill development. Consider use of Incentive Zoning such as density bonuses, which can be a very effective tool to incentivize better development. For example, one incentive might be to give developers more density in exchange for community improvements or more flexible zoning for increasing density and adding affordable housing. An increase in density encourages higher density development supportive of compact development. In exchange, the developer would be encouraged to include some community improvements in their projects. Community improvements may include additional open space, affordable housing, special building features, or public art.

3. **Design Guidelines:** Adopt Architectural and Urban Design Guidelines – for infill site development, for Downtown/Main Street development, for all new development.

4. **Overlay District:** Create special Overlay Districts, as a tool for the application for any required special zoning or architectural/development guidelines.

5. **Development Rights:** Consider Transfer of Development Rights, where they might be most useful and applicable.

6. **Green Building LEED:** Consider requiring green building and LEED standards for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) as guidelines for new development.

7. Incorporate **Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities Guidelines** into LWRP and BOA Planning programs.
8. **Sustainable Sites Initiative:** Consider implementing a Sustainable Sites Initiative which seeks to apply sustainability principles to any site, with or without buildings, that will be protected, developed or redeveloped for public or private purposes. The Sustainable Sites Initiative Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks can apply to all landscapes including commercial and public sites, parks, campuses, roadsides, residential landscapes, recreation centers and utility corridors. Sustainable Sites are designed to:

   i. Elevate the value of landscapes by outlining the economic, environmental and human well-being benefits of sustainable sites;
   ii. Connect buildings and landscapes to contribute to environmental and community health;
   iii. Provide performance benchmarks for site sustainability;
   iv. Link research and practice associated with the most sustainable materials and techniques for site development, construction and maintenance;
   v. Provide recognition for high performance in sustainable site design, development and maintenance; and
   vi. Encourage innovation.

E. Potential Funding Sources:

1. **State & Federal Grants:** The City of Ogdensburg aggressively pursued and received funding from a variety of state and federal funding sources with particular success over the last three and half years. Completing written strategies and plans and completing open grants will further help the City secure additional funding for its revitalization plans and implementation projects.

2. **Tax-Increment Financing (TIF):** Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is a public financing method that has been used for redevelopment and community improvement projects in many countries including the United States for more than 50 years. With federal and state sources for redevelopment generally less available, TIF has become an often-used financing mechanism for municipalities. Similar or related approaches are used elsewhere in the world.

3. **Business Improvement Districts-related grants (BID):** A business improvement district (BID) is a public-private partnership in which businesses in a defined area pay an additional tax or fee in order to fund improvements within the district's boundaries. BIDs may go by other names, such as business improvement area, business revitalization zone, community improvement district, special services area, or special improvement district. BIDs provide services, such as cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, and marketing the area. The services provided by BIDs are supplemental to those already provided by the municipality.

4. **New Markets Tax credits:** The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program was established in 2000 as part of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000. The goal of the program is to spur revitalization efforts of low-income and impoverished communities across the United States and Territories. The NMTC Program provides tax credit incentives to investors for equity investments in certified Community Development Entities, which invest in low-income communities. The credit equals 39% of the investment paid out over seven years. A Community Development Entity must have a primary mission of investing in low-income communities and persons to participate in the New Markets Tax Credit Program. The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund in the Department of the Treasury is authorized to allocate up to $19.5 billion in tax credit authority to Community Development Entities (CDE). CDEs apply for tax credits on an annual basis.
5. **Special Service Area (SSA’s):** A Special Service Area (SSA) is a type of financing tool that can affect a community homeowner. An SSA is a way to finance continuing maintenance costs by allowing the area itself to pay for the costs instead of the City as a whole. The amount is added to each property’s tax bill and is only for the cost of the maintenance of the public service areas such as storm water basins, landscaping, etc. The cost to the individual is much less than a Special Assessment. It is not a fixed amount and cannot be paid off as the maintenance is a continuing cost.

Neighborhoods that have an SSA established to provide for maintenance of common storm water basin areas usually establish SSA’s for new neighborhoods by ordinance. Activation of an SSA will take place after the City is certain that the development will be ready in the next calendar year. Once accepted, the Developer discontinues maintenance and turns it over to the City. The City will then activate the Special Service Area and collect fees from residents on their tax bills. When an SSA is activated for a development, the tax the residents pay toward the SSA will only be used for that SSA and any surplus will be put in a reserve fund for future use for that neighborhood only.

6. **Special Assessment District:** A Special Assessment (SA) is a type of financing tool that can affect a community homeowner. A Special Assessment is similar to a second mortgage and is used to fund much of the costs of the public infrastructure construction costs such as lights, sidewalks and roads. They payments are usually much higher than an SSA and it can be paid off early. It has a predetermined amortization schedule with annual payments that increase in amount over a long period of time.

7. **Historic Preservation Tax Credits:** The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program that includes tax credits that began in 1976. Since that time, the National Park Service (NPS) has administered it in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs). To date tens of thousands of rehabilitation projects have been approved, representing billions of dollars in private investment.

One of the federal government’s most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs, the Preservation Tax Incentives reward private investment in rehabilitating historic properties such as offices, rental housing, and retail stores. Abandoned or under-used schools, warehouses, factories, churches, retail stores, apartments, hotels, houses, and offices in many cities have been restored to life in a manner that retains their historic character. The Preservation Tax Incentives have also helped to create moderate and low-income housing in historic buildings.

8. **National Trust Loan Fund (NTLF):** The National Trust Loan Fund has more than 35 years of experience in supporting preservation-based community development projects across the country. As a certified Community Development Financial Institution, it has a mission of providing financial and technical resources to organizations that use historic preservation to support the revitalization of underserved and distressed communities.

9. NTLF specializes in predevelopment, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge and rehabilitation loans for residential, commercial and public use projects. Eligible borrowers include not-for-profit organizations, revitalization organizations or real estate developers working in designated Main Street communities, local, state or regional governments, and for profit developers of older and/or historic buildings.

10. **Greenway Communities Council Grant Programs:** The Greenway Communities Council helps communities develop a vision for their future and provides tools to achieve it by balancing economic development and resource protection objectives.
Appendix I:

CITY OF OGDENSBURG

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

VISION STATEMENT:
The City of Ogdensburg is a vibrant and vital commerce center in the St. Lawrence Region, with clean, safe and beautiful neighborhoods, streets and parks.

MISSION STATEMENT:
The mission of the City of Ogdensburg is to provide quality public services and facilities to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents, businesses and visitors in a cost effective manner.

VALUES STATEMENT:
Ogdensburg is a place with strong values, traditions and heritage where people chose to live, work, socialize and recreate. Core priorities include:

Waterfront: clean, developed, mixed public/private use, psychiatric center, international use

Tax Base: expanded

Economic Development: port, downtown revitalization, plazas, jobs

Infrastructure: improved, support growth

Technology: expanded service, utilization of internet

Tourism: 4-land highway, cultural opportunities

Housing Stock: improved

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS:
1. FINANCIALLY SECURE CITY GOVERNMENT
2. SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY
3. BALANCED, SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY
4. REVITALIZED AGING NEIGHBORHOODS & COMMERCIAL AREAS
5. BEAUTIFUL CITY
Appendix II: Urban Design Drawings Set:

Proposals: Urban Plan Drawings 1 – 6

A. Revitalize the Downtown
B. Revitalize the Marina District
C. Revitalize the Downtown Waterfront District
D. Promote Historic/Cultural Destination Attractions
E. Waterfront Development
F. Downtown Conference Hotel

Analysis Drawings: Titled A-1 through A-15

A-1 Existing Map – Downtown and Waterfront
A-2 Streets and Parking Lots
A-3 Green Spaces
A-4 Main Street Target Area
A-5 Historic / Preservation
A-6 BOA Map
A-7 Existing Maple City Trail
A-8 Trail Linkage – Proposed
A-9 Existing Map with All Combined Overlays - A1-thru-A8
A-10 Existing Strengths – Analysis
A-11 Existing Weaknesses – Analysis
A-12 Main Street Strategy Proposals / Recommendations
A-13 Ogdensburg – Proposed Views of Recommendations
A-14 Ogdensburg – Proposed Views of Recommendations
A-15 Ogdensburg – Proposed Views of Recommendations
A. Revitalize the Downtown
B. Revitalize the Marina District

1. Encourage marina commerce
2. Maple trail enhancements
3. New pedestrian bridge
4. Restored the historic boat basin
5. Hydro Dam - improve access and connections
6. Revitalize the residential neighborhood
7. Improve existing cheese factory (Ahava Dairy)
8. Revitalized and renovated existing hotel building
9. Improve existing skating rink
C. Revitalize the Waterfront

1. Define and improve the downtown waterfront district
2. Improve connections
3. Require public access to all development and promote water-related activities
4. Develop waterfront promenade/esplanade
5. Develop potential new waterfront hotel and restaurant site
D. Promote Historic/Cultural Destination Attractions

1. Ogdensburg to offer additional cultural attractions
2. Restoration and expansion of the Remington Museum
3. Development of Fort La Presentation
4. Creation of a new Ogdensburg Museum
5. Creation of a new Ogdensburg Performing Arts Center
6. Rejuvenated Ogdensburg Theater
7. Preserve and highlight the historic community
E. Downtown Hotel

2. A major hotel chain, as operator
3. Hotel to contain meeting rooms
4. Hotel to have catering facilities
5. Direct interior connection to performing arts center
6. Direct interior connections to ballrooms and convention space
7. Secondary connection to renovated and revitalized existing theater
F. Convention Center

1. Located in redesigned/renovated mall buildings
2. Conference center to be connected to proposed hotel
3. Flexible interior spaces for multiple purposes/activities
4. Conference center connected to performing arts center
5. Direct access to new outdoor small public gathering spaces
6. Easy access to Ford Street, State Street, Washington Street, and downtown
7. Direct access to parking areas
Ogdensburg, New York:
Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy
Ogdensburg, New York: Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy

Legend
- Street
- Main Street Targeted Area
- BOA Area
- Trail Linkage
- Green Spaces
- Historic/ Worthy of Preservation
- Existing Maple City Trail
- Intersection of Ford St. and State St.

Ogdensburg, New York: Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy

DADRAS ARCHITECTS

Ogdensburg, New York: Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy
Main Street Strategy Proposal / Recommendations

- Expanded Marina, 16 D
- Connections to all other areas via a Waterfront Promenade, 4 A
- Possible waterfront Hotel and Restaurant site, 201
- Historic parks, 13 C
- Historic Ogdensburg Library, 13 L
- Remington Museum, 9 A
- Downtown Conference Hotel, 5
- Ogdensburg History Museum, 11
- Redeveloped Mall buildings (on north side) with two additional partial floors of office space (for existing tenants and new additional space for additional tenants), 1 E
- Restored Building Facades and Streetscape in Main Street District, 1 A
- Redeveloped theater with new from, Theater, 1 C
- Performing Arts Center, 10
- Conference Convention Center, 6
- Maple Trail, with new trail-head facility (with solar roof), 3 C
- Fort La Presentation Visitor Center, 9 B
- Redeveloped Marina District, 3
OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK: Downtown Improvement / “Main Street” Revitalization Strategy
Appendix III: Streetscape Improvements

The Strategy recommends developing a detailed Streetscape Improvement Plan. Following are 6 enhanced images showing the types of improvements recommended.

**Streetscape Enhancement View # 1:** View North on State Street towards waterfront*

*Typical improvements would also include street trees, but these first two images are meant to highlight the sidewalk and lighting improvements as well as the impact of a new marquee on the theater.

**Streetscape Enhancement View # 2:** West View of Ford/State street Intersection*
Streetscape Enhancement View # 3:

View North towards Waterfront Alley between mall parking and buildings.
Streetscape Enhancement View # 4: View East at Ford & State Streets
Proposed Streetscape Enhancement View # 5: West View towards City Hall along Ford Street.
Proposed Streetscape Enhancement View # 6:

East View on Ford Street
Appendix IV: Recommended Façade Guidelines

IMPROVING BUILDING FACADES and STOREFRONTS

The City should encourage property owners and merchants to enhance, the district’s historic character and identity. To assist businesses and property owners in improving their storefronts as a part of this revitalization process, it is recommended that the City formally adopt design guidelines. These guidelines are intended to provide general information to property owners about how to renovate historic buildings to develop a more coherent, creative and attractive appearance throughout the downtown.

In General:

1. All improvements must be compatible with applicable revised urban zoning codes, and satisfy permit requirements.

2. Facades should relate to their surroundings and provide a sense of cohesiveness within the District

3. If a building has historic or aesthetic merit, improvements should be designed to reveal the building’s original style, form and materials whenever possible.

4. A building’s distinguishing elements should be identified and preserved.

5. Colors of exterior materials, signs, window frames, storefronts and other building features should be coordinated.Choice of colors should be determined by the nature of buildings and guidelines outline by this manual.

6. The exterior colors of historic buildings should be chosen with their historic character in mind. More contemporary designs may allow for a larger range of color.
An example of the type of Façade Restoration Guidelines that should be developed, and implemented – for the Downtown Ogdensburg Main Street District.
7. High-quality materials should be used in order to convey substance and integrity.

8. The use of traditional building materials is encouraged. Whether using traditional or non-traditional materials, the quality of the design and durability of materials chosen will be factors in the consideration of all designs.

Signage:

1. Signage should provide information simply and legibly; displaying only the name and address of the business. The simpler the sign, the more attention it will likely get.

2. All signs should be made of durable materials.

3. Primary signage should not advertise national brands or logos.

4. Window signage should be limited to covering no more than 10 percent of available window space, or less.

5. In general, the number of signs per storefront should be kept to one. It is important to limit signage to the number necessary to effectively communicate the business message. Too many signs in one storefront can detract from the overall appearance.

6. Signs should be of a size, location and design that do not obscure the building’s important architectural details.

7. Temporary signs, such as banners and paper signs in windows, should be removed in a timely manner. The use of temporary signs that outlast the advertised sale or promotion, or that lasts more than 2 weeks, is discouraged.

Awnings:

1. Awnings define storefronts and establish the commercial street. They are attached to and supported solely by the building.

2. Awnings can add color and interest to building storefronts while protecting pedestrians and display windows from the sun and rain.

3. Lettering on awnings should be no higher than 12 inches and not cover more than 12 square feet in space; only the name and address of the business are permitted to be printed on the awning.

4. Corporate logos should be illegal, as they distract from the name of a business, affecting peoples' ability to remember.

5. Awnings should be consistent with local character and building type.

6. Awnings must be maintained. Ripped and shredded awnings send the message that the business does not care.

7. Important architectural details should not be concealed by awnings.

8. Businesses who are located on second stories should affix awnings to create a cleaner, simpler storefront. This type of signage is preferred and recommended for second story businesses.

Colors:

1. A smart use of color differentiates your business from the rest of the street and is one of the most cost-effective ways to dramatically improve the appearance of your storefront.

2. Always keep the architectural features of the façade in mind, as well as the character of the district when picking colors.
3. The colors recommended by the Ogdensburg Main Street Program include the Historic Colors palette (of Benjamin Moore, or other recognized paint mfg.)

**Windows:**

1. Whenever possible, a building’s original window pattern should be retained. Avoid blocking, reducing the size, or changing the design of the window. A minimum of 60 percent of a storefront, between 3 feet and 8 feet above grade should be transparent glass.

2. Windows should be used to display products and services, and maximize visibility into storefronts.

3. Paper signage in windows should be avoided. This obscures the business activity from inside and detracts from the overall appearance of the business. As stated previously in these guidelines, window signage should be limited to covering no more than 10 percent of available window space.

4. Retain or increase window transparency whenever possible. Replace reflective or dark tinted glass with clear glass. In general, dark glass alienates pedestrians from the business activity inside a store and reduces the impact of window display.

5. Avoid installing opaque panels, such as metal, wood and/or other materials, to replace clear glass windows.

6. Windows with multiple, small-paned windows should be avoided unless they are historically appropriate to the building style, or integrate into the overall building design.

7. Safety glass is required when windows are 18” or less from the ground.

8. Fix broken windows immediately. Broken or boarded windows negatively impact businesses and the district.

**Exterior Lighting:**

1. Inviting lighting can entice people down the street to your business.

2. Adequate lighting is a proven crime deterrent.

3. All exterior lighting must be properly installed by a licensed electrician.

4. Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself. Lighting that attracts attention to itself, such as neon tubing surrounding display windows, should be avoided.

5. In order to maintain an attractive image, exterior building lighting should be appropriate to the building’s architectural style.

6. Building lighting should provide an even illumination level. Avoid flashing, pulsating, or similar dynamic lighting that poses a hazard to motorist.

**Security Gates:**

1. Exterior roll-down security gates of any kind should not be allowed on the facades of any project.
TOP TEN STOREFRONT DESIGN TIPS

1. **Less is more.**
The simpler your design, the better. Too much visual clutter is difficult for the passer-by to see your individual business and take notice. One well-placed sign is often the most attention-grabbing.

2. **Choose good materials.**
Cheap materials break down quickly and need to be replaced or else your business begins to look shoddy, discouraging shoppers from entering.

3. **Remember that roll-down security gates, on façade exteriors, are not allowed.**
Allowing visibility into the store at night encourages nighttime window shopping (and therefore more daytime customers) and discourages graffiti. The street as a whole feels safer and your business looks better.

4. **Know Who You’re Hiring.**
Most work, including awnings and any signs larger than six square feet, requires a permit from the City of Ogdensburg & Department of Buildings. Choosing a reputable contractor and ensuring that they are aware of the zoning regulations will help you avoid unnecessary fines. Remember that just because someone else on your block has a particular awning or sign, doesn’t mean that it is legal.

5. **Proper maintenance goes a long way and in the end will help your bottom line.**
Keep your windows clean and your signs and awnings in good repair. A fresh coat of paint is a good investment.

6. **Keep in mind the fabric of your building and your neighborhood.**
Oftentimes, beautiful historic buildings are covered up by more modern materials. Sometimes simply stripping that covering away reveals beautiful detailing that will draw attention to your store.

7. **Think about what it is that makes our City unique.**
Complement our distinctive local character to create a sense of place that draws more people to Ogdensburg’s historic downtown area.

8. **Make it easy to see into your store.**
Let your merchandise speak for itself whenever possible. Too many signs in the window obstruct views that invite customers into stores and make for a more secure environment; 80% transparency is recommended.

9. **Include inviting lighting.**
Think about include inviting lighting when and where possible. It draws attention to your business and helps make the entire street more enticing.

10. **REMEMBER: KEEP IT SIMPLE!**