



- ① RIVERFRONT
- ② RIVER PARK



Tonawanda Opportunity Area

Draft Stakeholder Interview Summaries

Stakeholders met with the consultant team on April 7th and 8th, 2016 for informal dialogue sessions. The discussions provided an opportunity for the consultant team to introduce the TOA project objectives to participants, for the stakeholders to provide information based on a series of questions asked by the consultant team, and for the consultant team to understand the stakeholders' thoughts and opinions on:

- The Step 1 Plan;
- Assets in the area;
- Impediments to redevelopment;
- Opportunities/Vision for future redevelopment in the area;
- Potential projects in the area; and
- Needed amenities, improvements to infrastructure or circulation.

Stakeholders included an assortment of individuals and organizations representing businesses, property owners and public agencies that play a role in redevelopment within the Tonawanda Opportunity Area (TOA). Interviewed stakeholders included representatives of:

- United Refining;
- Tonawanda Coke;
- NOCO;
- TM Montante Development;
- Zaepfel Development Co.;
- Niagara Riverworld;
- NYSDOT; and
- Empire State Development.

The primary purposes of the interviews were to incorporate the stakeholders' input into the development of a community vision for the TOA (along with public and steering committee input) and to start developing partnerships to advance redevelopment in the TOA. This was done early in the TOA project to insure that the TOA project was informed by the stakeholder input and that stakeholder partners' projects were supported by TOA recommendations.

Stakeholder comments were divided into six categories:

- Current assets in the TOA;
- Impediments to redevelopment in the TOA;
- Future opportunities in the TOA;
- What areas should receive the highest priority;
- Uses that stakeholders would like to see more or less of; and
- Communities that have characteristics to emulate in the TOA.

As the stakeholder dialogues were informal some interview questions were not answered by some stakeholders. In addition, as noted by bold and underline text in the summaries below, some common themes were provided by multiple stakeholders. Confidential or proprietary information provided by stakeholders is not included in this summary.

Comments in **Bold** were provided by at least two stakeholders

Comments in **Bold** and **Underline** were provided by most stakeholders

CURRENT ASSETS IN THE TOA/TONAWANDA

- Riverview Solar Technology Park – environmentally cleaned up and vacant land
- Niagara Riverworld – environmentally cleaned up (industrial/commercial standards) and vacant land
- Existing trail network
- **Large parcels with road access**
- **Waterfront / Water access**
- Workforce
- River Road (access)
- Heavy industrial uses
- Rail access

IMPEDIMENTS TO REDEVELOPMENT IN THE TOA/TONAWANDA

- **Real and perceived environmental issues**
 - **How to attract new industries/businesses**
 - **How to attract the public**
- **Industrial history, contamination, and legacy issues**
 - Liability
 - Clean up
- Dust and particulate matter from the NRG Huntley Fly ash landfill
- Lack of cooperation from big industries
- Lack of high speed internet options
- **Traffic on River Road**
 - **Difficult to make left turns, especially for large trucks**
 - If there are issues on the Grand Island Bridge, people reroute down River Road, which should be considered in any future road modifications
- Stormwater issues along River Road
- Existing Two Mile Creek Road not suitable for truck traffic to North Youngmann Commerce Center
- The Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Process is very difficult to navigate and there is no coordination between parcels located within the same industrial park
- Funding and timing of funding for more immediate needs
- Air quality issues
- Getting I-190 toll removed
- High power rates
- Doing business in NYS is challenging and expensive

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TOA

- **The TOA is a thriving industrial area – be realistic about the uses that could be attracted here**
- Sustainability – “Living Laboratory for Solar Technology”
- Wetlands
- Cluster Development
- Access to public transit
- High speed internet options
- Power redundancy
- **Transportation improvements – Road diet & roundabout**
 - Funding opportunities: REDC? Niagara River Greenway Commission? DOS?
 - Partnership with DOT
- **Increased trails**
- **Coordinating with developers (at a national level) that have invested in these types of properties and are not as weary of working with brownfields**
- **Incentives for businesses/industry to locate here**
 - Low cost energy (solar, etc.)
 - BCP credits – need more education about these credits for businesses

WHAT AREA(S) SHOULD RECEIVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY?

- More industrial development
- Development along River Road
- **Implement road diet on River Road/Complete Streets**
- **Add to the trail network**, especially between Riverview Solar Park and Riverwalk
- Cherry Farm park concept
- **New Boulevard concept connecting River Road to North Youngmann Commerce Center** with a round-about
- Further infill development at Riverview Solar Technology Park
- **Addition of a stop light or round-about at intersection of River Road and Riverwalk Parkway**
- **Interior road connections from New Boulevard to Riverwalk Parkway** (but only after New Boulevard is installed – do not want the Solar Technology Park to become a pass-through)
- Any sort of development that adds new jobs and includes a training component
- NRG Fly Ash
- United Refining
- Huntley Power Generation Plant
- INS

ANY USES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE OF; LESS OF IN TOA**MORE OF:**

- **Industrial/Light industrial**
- Heavy Industry/Manufacturing
- **Office (in north half)**
- **Warehouse**
- **Trails** (but include protective signage – clash of trails crossing driveways used by large trucks)
- Uses that take advantage of the seawall (not public access though)
- Alternative energy/Solar farms

LESS OF:

- **Residential (use not appropriate)**
- Parks (if people stay in area they will start complaining about smell, sound, etc.)

USING ANOTHER COMMUNITY AS AN EXAMPLE, HOW WOULD YOU ENVISION THE TOA IN 20 YEARS?

- Lakeside Commerce Park
- Pittsburgh
- Toronto
- Urban Land Institute as a resource