

## CITY OF BINGHAMTON

# *The First Ward Redevelopment Plan*

Part of the New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area Program



## Step 1 – Draft Pre-Nomination Study November 2009

Submitted By:  
City of Binghamton, New York  
Department of Community Development

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# Table of Contents

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## The First Ward Redevelopment Plan City of Binghamton Brownfield Opportunity Area

SECTION 1.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BOUNDARY .....	1
1.1    Introduction to the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program .....	1
What is a Brownfield? .....	1
Purpose of the BOA Program.....	1
1.2    Community Overview.....	2
Introduction .....	2
Historical Overview .....	4
Summary: Community Overview .....	6
Demographic Characteristics .....	7
Housing Characteristics .....	11
Transportation Network .....	13
Economic Setting.....	15
Planning Efforts Related to the First Ward Redevelopment Plan.....	17
1.3    Study Area Context.....	21
Introduction .....	21
Community Assets.....	21
Description of the First Ward Study Area.....	24
1.4    Brownfield Opportunity Area Boundary Description and Justification.....	25
Boundary Summary .....	25
Boundary Description and Justification .....	25
1.5    Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives .....	27
Community Vision Statement .....	27
Community Goals and Objectives .....	27
1.6    Community Participation .....	32
Introduction .....	32
Meeting Summaries .....	32

SECTION 2.0: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE BOA .....	35
2.1 Existing Land Use .....	35
Introduction .....	35
Overview of Land Use Categories .....	35
2.2 Zoning .....	39
Existing Zoning .....	39
Summary Zoning Analysis .....	40
2.3 Brownfield, Vacant and Underutilized Sites .....	42
Introduction .....	42
Methodology .....	42
2.4 Land Ownership .....	47
Introduction .....	47
Public Property Ownership .....	47
Private Property Ownership .....	47
2.5 Natural Resources and Environmental Features .....	50
Water Resources .....	50
Wetlands .....	54
Open Space .....	54
Topography .....	54
2.6 Summary of Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations for the BOA .....	55
Summary Analysis and Key Opportunities .....	55
Preliminary Recommendations .....	59
Further Study and Analysis .....	63
ENDNOTES .....	64

# Table of Contents

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## The First Ward Redevelopment Plan City of Binghamton Brownfield Opportunity Area

### MAPS

Map 1	Regional Context	Page 3
Map 2	Community Context	Page 22
Map 3	BOA Site Boundary	Page 26
Map 4	Existing Land Use	Page 38
Map 5	Existing Zoning	Page 41
Map 6	Brownfields, Vacant and Underutilized Sites	Page 45
Map 7	Strategic Sites	Page 46
Map 8	Property Ownership	Page 48
Map 9	Natural Resources	Page 52
Map 10	Topography	Page 53
Map 11	Actions for Revitalization	Page 58

### FIGURES

Figure 1	Historic Population Changes	Page 8
Figure 2	First Ancestry Reported	Page 10
Figure 3	Percent Total Employment by Occupation	Page 16
Figure 4	Distribution of Income	Page 17

### TABLES

Table 1	Broome County Population by Age	Page 7
Table 2	Population by Age	Page 9
Table 3	Plan Inventory and Analysis	Page 17
Table 4	First Ward Land Uses	Page 35
Table 5	Existing Zoning Designations	Page 39
Table 6	Property Ownership by Land Use	Page 47
Table 7	Major Waters – Susquehanna Watershed	Page 50

### APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Community Participation Plan
APPENDIX B	Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
APPENDIX C	Neighborhood Assembly/Public Meeting Minutes
APPENDIX D	Stakeholder Meeting Minutes
APPENDIX E	Environmental Site Profile Forms
APPENDIX F	Acronyms



## SECTION 1.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BOUNDARY

### 1.1 Introduction to the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program is administered by the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The program provides community-based organizations (CBO) and municipalities with the tools necessary to develop and implement revitalization strategies for areas impacted by the presence of brownfields.

#### **What is a Brownfield?**

As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a brownfield is “any property whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”<sup>i</sup> Similarly, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) defines a brownfield as “any real property where development or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous waste, petroleum, pollutant, or contaminant.” Brownfields are typically properties that were historically used for industrial or commercial operations, which may have resulted in environmental impairment. The presence of brownfields may discourage investment in surrounding properties and as a result can facilitate neighborhood blight.

#### **Purpose of the BOA Program**

The BOA program is intended to assist communities with the development and implementation of area-wide revitalization plans for areas impacted by multiple brownfield properties. The program is structured to be a community-led process thereby resulting in a revitalization strategy that reflects the vision and goals of community members.

The BOA program is a three-step process that includes a pre-nomination study, a nomination study, and an implementation strategy. The core components of each phase of the process, as defined by the NYSDOS, are described below:

##### *Phase 1: Pre-nomination Study*

- Preliminary analysis of the community and potential brownfield sites
- Identification of a manageable study area
- Establishment of partnerships with key stakeholders and initiation of public participation process
- Initial identification and summarization of opportunities for renewal

##### *Phase 2: Nomination Study*

- Comprehensive analysis of the study area and individual brownfield sites
- Analysis of economic and market trends to assist in strategy development

- Development of recommendations for the revitalization of strategic sites

*Phase 3: Implementation Strategy*

- Individual site assessments, as required, to determine remediation strategies and needs
- Creation of a detailed reuse and redevelopment strategy for strategic sites
- Development of a marketing strategy for individual redevelopment sites

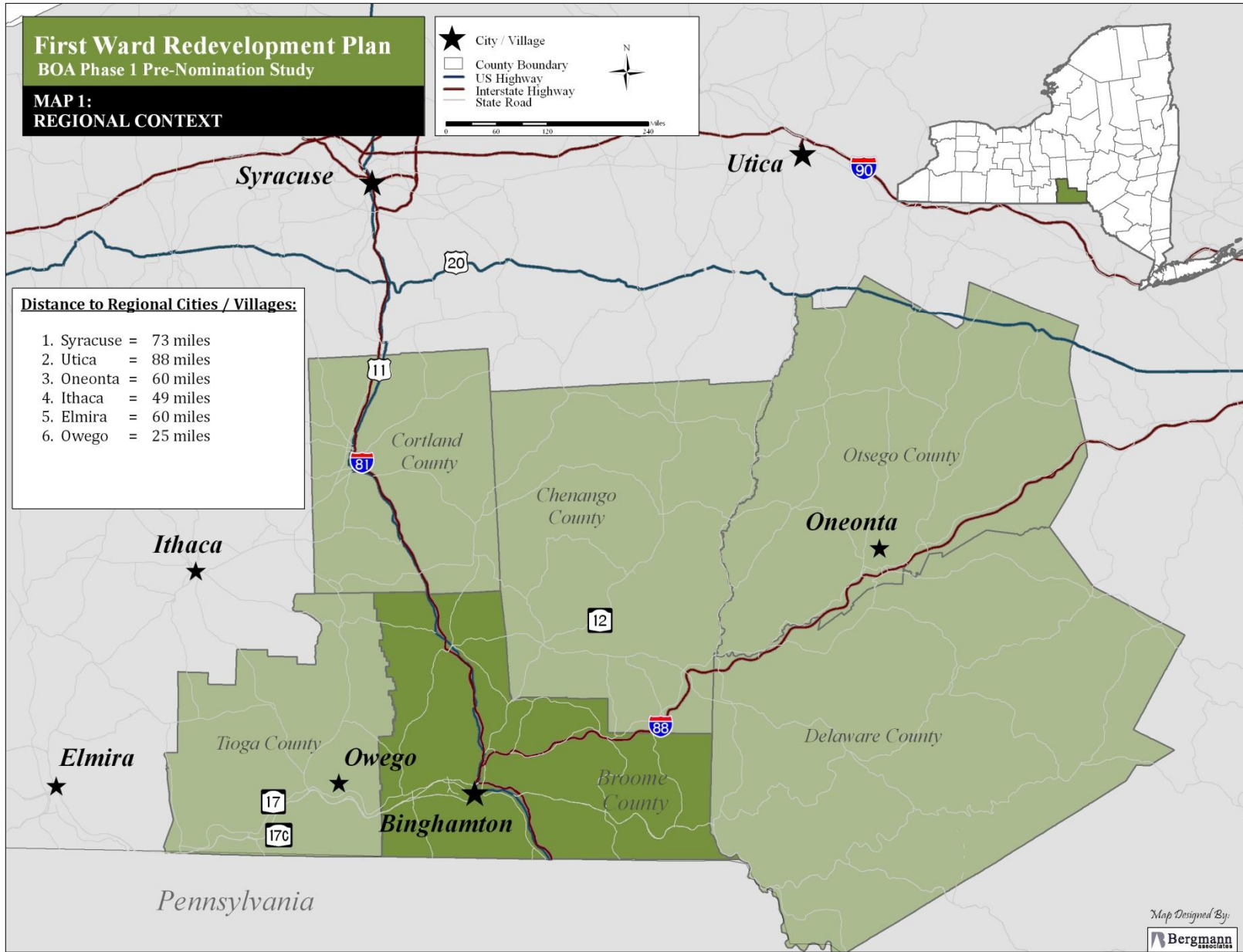
## 1.2 Community Overview

### Introduction

The Community Overview provides a broad understanding and context for the First Ward BOA as it relates to its location within the City of Binghamton and Broome County. The community overview includes a summary of demographic, social, and economic characteristics, as well as a discussion of key community features and historical trends relevant to the BOA planning process. An understanding of existing conditions and trends in the study area will inform the planning process and can assist community leaders in making decisions regarding the future of their neighborhood.

The City of Binghamton is nestled between the confluence of the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers and as a result was originally known as Chenango Point. The City is located in the south-central region of New York State, commonly referred to as the Leatherstocking Region, near the Pennsylvania border. Binghamton is located within a one-hour drive of the City of Elmira; the Village of Owego; the City of Corning; and the City of Syracuse (see Map 1). In addition, Binghamton is only a three to four hour drive from major northeast cities including Buffalo, NY (3.5 hours); New York, NY (3 hours.); and Philadelphia, PA (3 hours). Binghamton is conveniently located in proximity to three major highways including NYS Route 17 (future I-86), I-88, and I-81 making the City accessible by automobile.





## Methodology

Data and information used to prepare the Community Overview was obtained from several sources including: the United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Broome County and the City of Binghamton. Recent data was analyzed to the greatest extent possible, based on the availability of data. Due to the limited geographic scope of the American Community Survey, some data was obtained from the 2000 Decennial Census and as a result may not present a fully accurate picture of existing demographic and economic conditions. The City should review and update the analysis in subsequent BOA project phases once the 2010 Decennial Census is published.

Additionally, the study area boundary does not align perfectly with the U.S. Census tract boundaries. The study area includes all or portions of block groups 1, 2 and 3 of census tract 2, and all or portions of block groups 2, 3 and 4 of Census tract 3. Whenever possible, data was pulled at the block group level to ensure accuracy. However, some data was available only at the Census tract level due to the sensitivity of information (i.e. income). In such cases, data was evaluated at the census tract level and therefore includes portions of census tracts 2 and 3 that lie outside of the BOA boundary.

## Historical Overview

The City of Binghamton was named for William Bingham, a wealthy Philadelphia banker who commissioned local merchant John Whitney to carry out his vision for creating a village between the Chenango & Susquehanna Rivers. John Whitney was responsible for Binghamton's first street plan, and was dedicated to attracting new visitors and residents to the area. In 1806 the area separated from Tioga County to form Broome County, named after Revolutionary War Veteran Lieutenant-Governor John Broome.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the City attempted to capitalize on the opening of the Erie Canal by constructing the Chenango Canal. The 97-mile canal, which was completed in 1837, connected Binghamton to both Utica and the Erie Canal. The opening of the Chenango Canal helped to direct new development to the City. Mills were constructed at the southern end of the canal, spurring additional commercial development and hotels.

The construction of the Erie Railroad in 1848 helped further development in the region. By the mid-1800s, Binghamton had transformed into a transportation hub, with the canal and extensive railroad networks. The mid-1800's were noted for the flurry of railroad construction throughout the nation, which, due to its efficiency, rapidly became the preferred method of transporting goods. In 1874, the Chenango Canal closed, a victim of the efficiencies associated with rail transport.

The onset of the Civil War gave the area the opportunity to capitalize on the need for weapons and war-related products, resulting in the introduction of assembly-line factory. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the City was again welcoming new industries as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The lucrative Endicott Johnson Shoe Company located one of its factories in Binghamton, leaving its mark on the city through its progressive approach to worker welfare. Many of the parks, theaters, and carousels that were provided by Endicott Johnson to benefit the workers and community remain intact today. Additionally, the lumber industry progressed to specialize in large furniture and wagon making. The cigar making industry,

however, had the most profound impact on the area, employing 5,000 people and attracting immigrants from Eastern Europe. During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City attracted major corporations, including IBM, General Electric Universal, and Link, which encouraged rapid population growth until the 1950's. Following the cold war, many major industries that had grown to rely on the defense business witnessed the dissolution of their markets and, as a result, the City began to experience economic decline and the loss of its population base.

The growing popularity of the automobile and availability of affordable land on the outskirts of Binghamton encouraged the relocation of businesses and residents outside the center City. During the 1960's, demand for the automobile led to growth in transportation networks nationwide. In Binghamton, this resulted in the construction of New York State Route 17 and Interstate 81 through the City's core, which dissected neighborhoods rich in history. Urban renewal efforts in the 1960s led to the demolition of buildings that were determined to be in poor condition. The lack of public money and private investment resulted in vacant lots and storefronts throughout the center city. The decision of the University of Binghamton to locate outside the City in nearby Vestal further slowed inner city redevelopment and revitalization efforts by focusing commercial development in the suburbs.

Since the 1960's, the City has experienced some economic growth due to its diversity of businesses that it hopes will ultimately translate into population growth.<sup>ii</sup> The City has actively pursued revitalization efforts over the past two decades and small successes have been realized. Historic district designations have resulted in the preservation of important community resources, and urban parks and the River Trail have improved the pedestrian downtown experience. In addition, the arts and cultural scene has thrived resulting in special events, such as the very successful First Fridays. The First Friday event is presented by the Gorgeous Washington Association. Held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the first Friday of every month, the event features over forty sites in the downtown. Area galleries, restaurants, museums, theatres, bars, and small businesses extend their hours and Broome County Transit offers free trolley rides and guided tours of the downtown. Streetscape improvements have improved the aesthetic character of downtown. New businesses have been choosing to locate in the City and students have also been integrating themselves into the City resulting in a more active downtown with an expanding restaurant and specialty store inventory.

Over the past century, the First Ward neighborhood has transitioned similarly to the City of Binghamton. Anitec Corporation's location within the neighborhood, created a "walk-to-work" neighborhood similar to that located to the west created by the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company. The presence of the corporation within the neighborhood attracted bars and pubs along Clinton Street, which later become known as the "bar-mile." Clinton Street long became the social corridor for residents living within the First Ward, until economic decline contributed to business closing during the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The First Ward neighborhood is located less than two-miles from NYS Route 17, I-88 and I-81. The neighborhood's accessibility to major transportation routes makes it an attractive location for business development. Today, the Charles Street Business Park is in the early stages of redevelopment. Emerson Network Power currently serves as the anchor business for the business park, following remediation of the former Anitec site, and is already positioned to attract additional people and businesses to the First

Ward. Furthering development within the Charles Street Business Park will provide the opportunity to re-identify the First Ward as Binghamton's "downtown west."

### Summary: Community Overview

In recent years, the First Ward has seen a notable level of increased interest and investment in the neighborhood. Buildings have been rehabilitated for commercial, residential, and mixed uses. Prominent community organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club, have chosen to locate new facilities in the neighborhood. As of 2008, the First Ward became home to an international business with Emerson Network Power constructing its 40,000 square foot headquarters on five acres of available land in the Charles Street Business Park.

While many positive activities and investment efforts have been recently made, and there are still many opportunities to capitalize on, the First Ward still faces challenges. Data identifies a number of trends that are important to future planning for the neighborhood, including an increasing population of school-aged children and residents aging in place, low owner occupied housing levels, relatively low income levels, and limited employment opportunities locally available for area residents. However, the neighborhood also boasts low commercial rental rates for storefronts, low rental rates for residential units, low housing costs, and proximity to major regional transportation routes. Understanding both the opportunities and constraints associated with investment and revitalization is critical to identifying a path forward for the First Ward.

Over the past decade, the population of school aged children within the First Ward has grown to be the largest population group within the neighborhood. In addition, there is a growing population of elderly residents, indicating that provisions for aging in place may be an important community consideration in the near future. Both age groups comprise almost half of the study area population, and are typically characterized by lower mobility, not having access to motor vehicle. Planning efforts will need to ensure that both population groups have ready access to goods and services in the neighborhood needed for their welfare, without reliance on an automobile.

Over the past several years, there has been little demand for new housing within the City of Binghamton. Few housing permits have been issued over the past decade, and the housing market consists primarily of houses constructed prior to 1939. Likewise, the First Ward neighborhood consists mainly of houses constructed prior to 1939. The housing values within the First Ward are lower than those throughout the City of Binghamton and Broome County. While the presence of historic homes and affordable housing costs are an asset within the neighborhood, older homes can also be more costly to maintain, which may be one of the factors currently discouraging home ownership within the neighborhood.

The City of Binghamton continues to transition from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy. Binghamton is striving to become an information center and capitalize on its wealth of human capital, its affordable cost of living, its proximity to other major cities in Upstate New York, and its access to a strong transportation network. By capitalizing on and marketing its many strengths, the City hopes to attract new businesses and foster entrepreneurial spirit. The First Ward is known for its contributions to Binghamton's manufacturing economy. The worker houses throughout the neighborhood remain as a testament to its blue-collar legacy. Today, residents indicate a desire to see the return of light

industry and manufacturing in the Charles Street Business Park, re-establishing the First Ward as a “walk-to-work” neighborhood that provides a full range of services.

### Demographic Characteristics

Demographic information, including population change, age distribution, housing characteristics, and educational attainment, are important factors that can guide policies, land use decisions, and revitalization strategies. Trends and existing conditions of these social indicators for Broome County, the City of Binghamton, and the First Ward BOA study area are presented below. Population trends help to identify and understand the make-up of a community and what impacts the population may have on future development scenarios.

#### *Broome County*

From 2000 to 2007, the population of Broome County decreased from 200,299 to 195,477 people, resulting in a 2.5 percent loss. During this period, the number of current and future school-aged children and the number of people in their prime earning years (35 to 54) experienced the most significant losses. Population increases were seen in the 20 to 34 year old age group and the over 55 age group. Table 1 summarizes the population change by age group from 2000 to 2007 in Broome County.

**TABLE 1: BROOME COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE: 2000 to 2007**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007 (estimate)</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Under 5 years	11,271	9,947	-11.7%
5-19 years	42,463	37,859	-10.8%
20-34 years	37,256	40,912	9.8%
35-54 years	57,971	52,516	-9.4%
55-74 years	34,817	36,992	6.2%
75 years and over	16,758	17,251	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200,536</b>	<b>195,477</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>

*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

Key observations associated with population shifts in Broome County are summarized below:

- The number of school-aged children (children under 19 years) decreased by approximately 22 percent between 2000 and 2007. The change in population for this age group could impact existing academic institutions within the region and indicates the number of families in the region is declining.
- The number of individuals in their prime earning and child raising years (35 to 54 years) decreased by approximately 9.4 percent. The loss of this population segment impacts the regions available skilled workforce and attributes to the decrease in the number of school-aged children.
- The number of young, working professionals increased by approximately 9.8 percent. This age group represents a crucial portion of the consumer population, at the point of major consumer

milestones (i.e. purchasing a home). The increase in young, working professionals is most likely attributed to the neighborhoods proximity to Binghamton University.

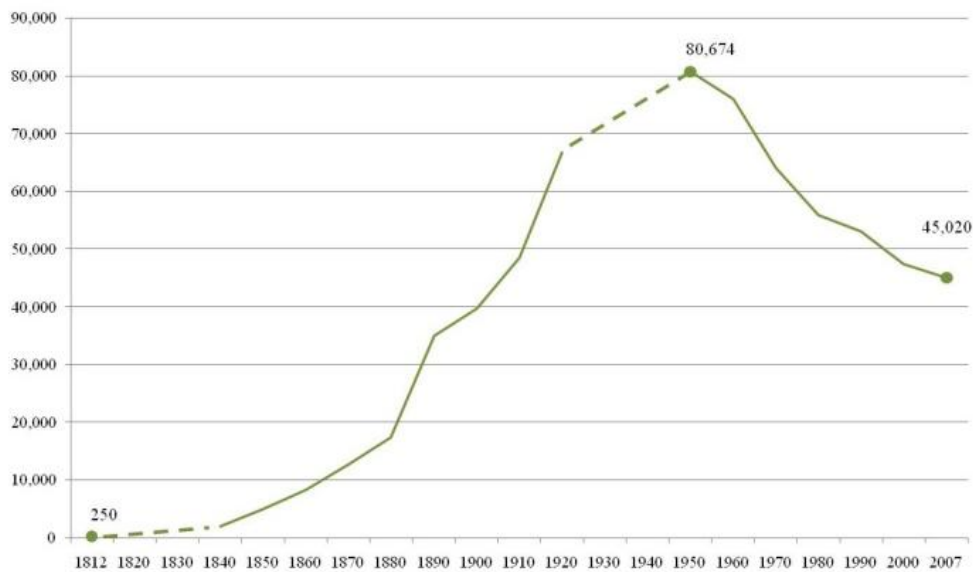
- The number of people who are aging in place is growing, as evidenced by the increase in residents 55 years and older. These residents may require support services that may include health, social and transportation assistance.

*City of Binghamton*

In the late 1800s, the City of Binghamton’s location on the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers enabled the City to connect to key trade hubs, such as Utica, and also connected the City via the Chenango Canal to the newly opened Erie Canal. When the Chenango Canal opened in 1848, it brought new settlers and merchandise into Binghamton, and the City began a period of rapid growth, nearly doubling its population every ten to fifteen years.

**FIGURE 1: HISTORIC POPULATION CHANGES, 1812-2007**

*City of Binghamton, Broome County*



Note: Line is dashed where data is inferred.  
Data Sources: Broome County Historical Society, U.S. Census Bureau.

By the mid-1950’s, the City population peaked at 80,674 but has since been declining. From 2000 to 2007 the City’s population decreased by 4.7 percent which is comparable to population loss in other cities in the Southern Tier region, which is made up of counties bordering Pennsylvania and located to the west of New York’s Catskill Mountains. The Southern Tier generally includes Delaware, Broome, Tioga, Chemung, Steuben, Allegany, and Cattaraugus counties. In 2007, the City of Binghamton was home to approximately 45,020 residents, accounting for 23 percent of Broome County’s total population. The historic changes in population in the City of Binghamton are illustrated in Figure 1.

Continued population loss within the City threatens the vitality of the urban core and supporting neighborhoods. Businesses may choose to locate in areas with a greater number of available workers and consumers.

*First Ward BOA Study Area*

Population Characteristics

According to the 2000 Census, the First Ward neighborhood comprises 13.4 percent of the City of Binghamton’s total population. A summary of population shifts within the First Ward are summarized below:

- Between 1990 and 2000, the number of school-aged children increased by approximately three percent, becoming the largest population group within the First Ward study area (28.4 percent). This cohort exceeds the proportion of school-aged individuals within the City of Binghamton. Families with young children benefit from access to resources including parks and recreation, educational support services (i.e. libraries), medical facilities, and nutritional foods.
- Together, individuals under 19 years of age and over 65 years of age comprise almost half (49.2 percent) of the First Ward population. These two age groups are important because they are typically characterized by lower mobility and may not have access or the ability to use an automobile. According to the 2000 Census, approximately one out of every four residents within the First Ward does not have access to a vehicle. As a result, public transportation options, proximity to daily goods and services, and safe walking routes become important community features.

Table 2 summarizes the City and First Ward’s population by age group as a percentage of the total population of the City and the First Ward.

**TABLE 2: POPULATION BY AGE, 2000**

Age Group	City of Binghamton		First Ward BOA	
	Population	% City	Population	% Study Area
Under 5	2,882	6.1%	475	7.5%
5-19	8,486	17.9%	1,323	20.9%
20-34	11,248	23.7%	1,288	20.3%
35-54	12,405	26.2%	1,652	26.1%
55-74	7,647	16.1%	960	15.1%
75 and over	4,712	9.9%	640	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,380</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>6,338</b>	<b>--</b>

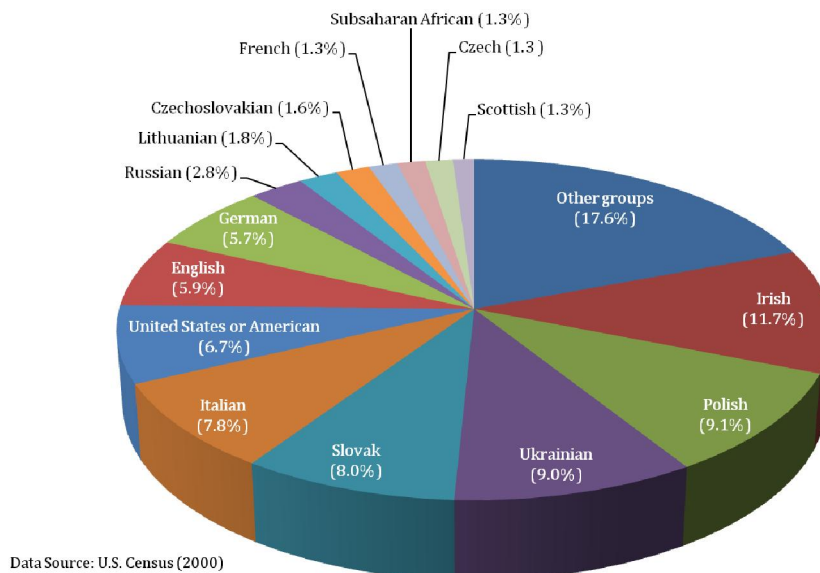
*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

**Racial and Ethnic Composition of the First Ward**

The First Ward neighborhood is known regionally for its legacy of attracting immigrants. Much of the population of the neighborhood historically came from Eastern Europe, attracted by plentiful factory work and the promise of a better quality of life. The First Ward offered the opportunity for immigrants to start over in a neighborhood where they could walk-to-work and have access to goods, services, and recreational opportunities. As of the 2000 Census, only five percent of First Ward residents indicated being born abroad. Of those who reported their ancestry, however, 69.4 percent indicated a single ancestry, compared with 30.6 percent who reported multiple ancestries. The majority of residents within the First Ward are no longer immigrants, however their reported ancestries indicate that many may be first, second, or third generation immigrants, primarily from Eastern Europe (30.5 percent). Many of the residents who reported single ancestry indicated ancestry from Eastern Europe. Dominant ethnicities include Irish, Polish, Ukranian, and Slovaks. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of single ancestry residents within the First Ward.<sup>iii</sup>

The large presence of Eastern European roots implies that many residents may be descendents of original immigrants. Eastern Europeans generally have strong family ties, and first or second generation immigrants may have a strong sense of their culture, to which they still relate. Undoubtedly the ancestries helped to shape the character of the neighborhood, and effort should be made to preserve strong heritage ties throughout the planning process.

**FIGURE 2: FIRST ANCESTRY REPORTED (2000)**  
*First Ward Neighborhood*





## Housing Characteristics

An analysis of housing characteristics in the region and study area, including housing stock, owner occupancy, and housing values, contributes to a better understanding of social and economic conditions in the First Ward BOA. The following section identifies the key housing characteristics for the City and the First Ward neighborhood.

### *Housing Stock*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 13.3 percent of all housing units within the City of Binghamton are located within the First Ward study area. The housing vacancy rate in the study area was approximately 13.4 percent in 2000, which is slightly higher than the vacancy rate for the city as a whole (12 percent). By comparison, the vacancy rates for Broome County and New York State were 9 and 8 percent, respectively.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units within the First Ward decreased by approximately four percent. By comparison, the City of Binghamton's housing stock decreased by 2.7 percent during the same period. The number of housing units in Broome County, however, increased modestly (one percent) from 1990 to 2000.

Between 2000 and 2007, only 31 new housing permits were issued in the City of Binghamton indicating that demand for new housing was slow. The number of housing permits granted in the City during this timeframe, however, constituted only six percent of all housing permits granted within Broome County.

### *Occupancy*

The First Ward study area has a higher proportion of owner occupied housing units compared to the City of Binghamton as a whole, though owner occupancy rates are significantly lower than the County rate. Within the city, approximately 57 percent of residents rent housing, which is partially attributable to the transient student population associated with the presence of Binghamton University. However, the off-campus

## KEY FINDINGS: HOUSING IN THE FIRST WARD

- High vacancy rates, as are present in the First Ward, can have a number of negative implications on a neighborhood, including property maintenance issues that can result in poor aesthetics, reduced property values and increased criminal activity.
- The decrease in the number of housing units in the city and the increase in the number of housing units in the county suggest that suburban development has occurred outside the city over the course of the past decade.
- The higher demand for new housing permits within Broome County, as compared to the City, suggests that new housing development was concentrated in the more suburbanized communities.
- While the presence of rental properties can be beneficial for attracting transient populations, such as university students, there is less incentive to maintain these properties. This is particularly problematic in the First Ward, where most homes were built prior to 1939 and consequently require more maintenance.
- First Ward housing values relative to the City and the County indicate that the neighborhood is an affordable location within the City and the County.<sup>1</sup>
- Apartments in the First Ward are an affordable housing choice for budget-conscious graduate students or young professionals. In addition, they may serve as transitional housing for senior residents who are no longer able to maintain a single-family property, but wish to maintain their independence.

student population is less than 20 percent of the City, indicating that the majority of rentals are attributed to the City's low-income levels. By comparison, 51.9 percent of First Ward residents rent. In the County, rental units account for a notably lower percentage of overall housing, at only 34.9 percent.

The City of Binghamton has a high proportion of rental units that are primarily rented to students. By comparison, the majority of renters within the First Ward neighborhood are not local students, which is supported by the fact that approximately one out of every three residents (ages 25 and older) had less than a high school education as of the 2000 Census. In addition, First Ward residents enrolled in college comprised only five percent of the area's total population.

### *Housing Values*

The median housing value in the First Ward neighborhood (\$70,400) is approximately 83 percent of the median housing value in the City of Binghamton (\$85,117), and 78 percent of the median housing value within Broome County (\$90,162).



*View of residential street in the First Ward neighborhood.*

### *Rental Rates*

Over the past several years, the First Ward has become attractive to outside investors who have successfully revitalized some of the neighborhood's rental properties. Approximately 50 percent of rental units are occupied by tenured tenants who may pay \$375 to \$425 per month for a one bedroom, depending on whether or not utilities are included. Young professionals and graduate students are increasingly occupying the apartments along Front Street due to the ease at which they are able to access the downtown core. Tenants of shorter term apartments may pay rents between \$525 and \$575 for a one bedroom unit.

### Transportation Network

Mass transportation was introduced to Broome County in 1868 when the Binghamton and Port Dickinson Railroad Company introduced the first street rail service. The earliest vehicles were wagons on rail pulled by horses. Broome County later became known for operation of the first electric trolley in New York State (1887). In 1932, Triple Cities Traction rendered the street car obsolete and became the first organization to exclusively use buses as a means of mass transit. Today's mass transit network in Binghamton is primarily maintained by the Broome County Department of Public Transportation, which formed in 1968.



*Images of trolley system from Binghamton, NY.*

### Road Network

The First Ward is located in close proximity to major area roadways. Route I-17 is located north of the study area and connects many cities in the Southern Tier from east to west. As part of the I-86 expansion project, an egress will be developed from the highway into the First Ward neighborhood, improving accessibility to the Charles Street Business Park. In addition, the study area is located in close proximity to Interstate I-81, which provides access from the City of Binghamton north to Syracuse, New York. Route I-88 extends from the City of Binghamton to the northeast, connecting to the capital region. The network of highways and interstates in the City provides access to many major cities in New York State.

### Bus Service

The First Ward neighborhood is well connected to the mass transit service provided by Broome County Transit. Bus lines 7, 8, and 17 run through the neighborhood providing numerous stops along Front Street, Clinton Street, and Glenwood Avenue. Regular fare is \$1.25 per ride, although a special fare of \$0.60 per ride is available for seniors (65 years or older). Buses stop approximately every 30 minutes throughout the study area.

*Rail Service*

Binghamton is served by four rail lines: the Norfolk Southern Railway; the Canadian Pacific Railway; the New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway; and the Central New York Railway. Although well connected to industrial rail lines, Binghamton does not currently have any passenger rail lines. The last passenger rail through the area was provided by the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, and was discontinued in 1970 to further automobile and aviation use. The nearest passenger rails are available in Albany, Utica, Poughkeepsie, and New York City through Amtrak.

## Economic Setting

The national economy is transitioning from one based heavily on manufacturing and industry to one based on human knowledge and capabilities. Over the past several decades, the number of jobs available for college graduates has been rapidly increasing though current economic conditions have slowed, and in some instances, eliminated employment opportunities. Evaluating the income characteristics and the employment base for the City of Binghamton lends insights into the area's economic well-being and ability to compete in emerging markets.

## Employment

Between 2000 and 2008, employment within the City of Binghamton grew 4.3 percent to include 112,300 employees. In addition to increasing the employment base, several core industry sectors have begun to emerge in the City. The largest growth in employment was in the area of Architecture and Engineering (82.1 percent), followed by Community and Social Services (37.3 percent), and Business and Financial Operations (35.6 percent).

Growth in the area of Architecture and Engineering is significant in that it indicates the region's role in the New Knowledge Economy, which is based on the premise that concentrations of highly-specialized skills and knowledge will encourage long-term economic growth. Regions that are able to gain a foothold in this economy are characterized by their ability to adapt to an unpredictable, dynamic market. The core driver of the New Knowledge Economy is not capital, but rather human knowledge and capabilities, which support innovation.

Not surprisingly, the city's greatest employment losses were in the areas of Farming (30 percent), Production Occupations (17.7 percent) and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (12.6 percent). The changing employment base of the City suggests that Binghamton is poised to compete in global markets.

Although positive employment growth has been occurring over the past several years, occupations held by residents of the First Ward study area do not represent those same patterns. As of the 2000 U.S. Census, the largest sectors of employment within the First Ward were in sales and office occupations and service occupations. The majority of employees in sales and office occupations work in administrative roles, and one-third of all service industry employees

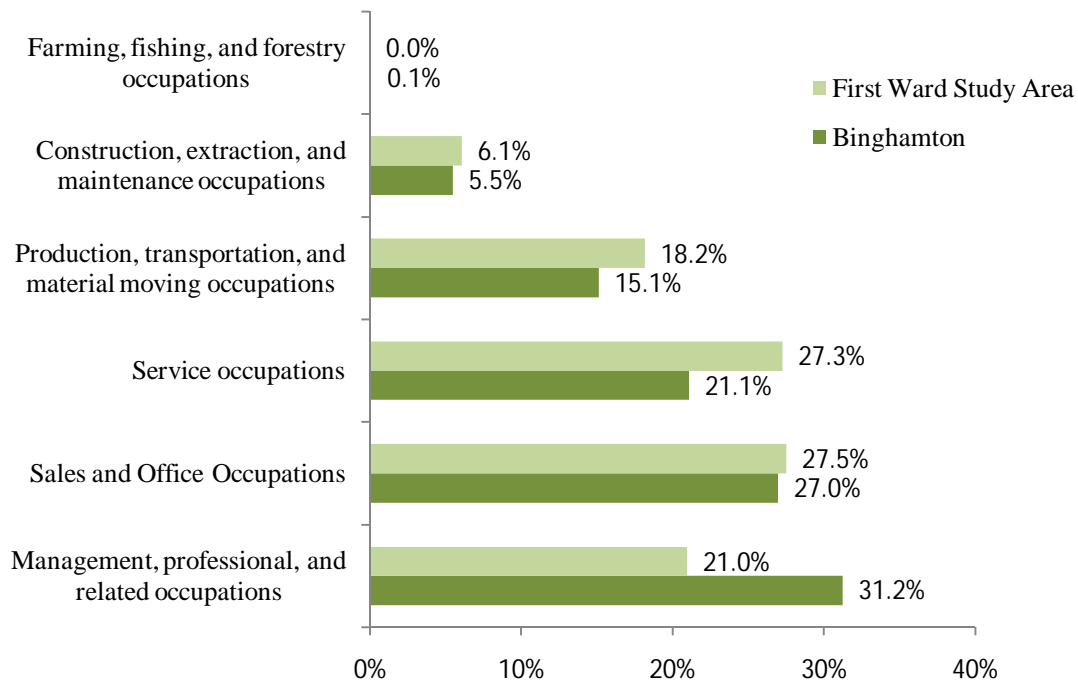
## KEY FINDINGS: ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- High poverty rates, as are present in the City and First Ward neighborhood, can be indicative of a population that may struggle to meet their daily needs and may lack the capacity to heavily invest in their surrounding community.
- High concentrations of low-income may deter business development and consequently create obstacles for residents to access of needed resources.
- Losses in the areas of Farming, Production Occupations and Transportation and Material moving Occupations illustrate the area's transition from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy, which mirrors the trend in other cities throughout the northeast.
- According to data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, occupations held by First Ward residents are typically lower paying jobs.

work in food preparation or serving occupations. Furthermore, the study area has a lower percentage of residents holding jobs in management or professional occupations than the City of Binghamton. Figure 3 illustrates employment in occupations as a percent of total employment for both the City of Binghamton and the First Ward.

**FIGURE 3: PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**

*City of Binghamton & First Ward Study Area, 2000*



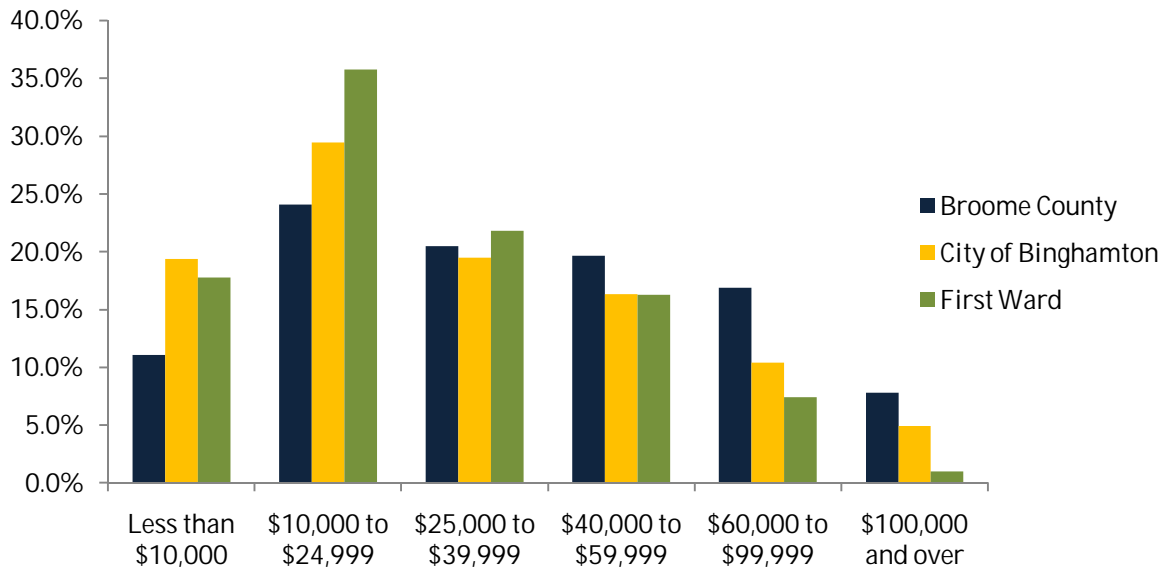
*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

*Income*

As of the 2000 U.S. Census, the mean household income in the First Ward (\$36,352) was 74 percent of the average household income in the City of Binghamton (\$49,155). More than half (53.5 percent) of First Ward residents earned less than \$31,998 at that time.<sup>v</sup> Approximately 24 percent of residents in the First Ward were living below the poverty line in 2000, which is comparable to the rest of the city which had 23.4 percent of residents living below poverty. The portion of residents living below poverty in the city and the study area, however, is nearly twice the national level (12.4 percent), and significantly higher than the state level (14.6 percent). Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of income within Broome County, the City of Binghamton, and the First Ward.

**FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME, 2000**

Broome County, City of Binghamton, and the First Ward



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Planning Efforts Related to the First Ward Redevelopment Plan

The BOA pre-nomination study, as well as subsequent BOA phases, will consider and incorporate recent, current, and future planning efforts completed throughout the region. Many of these plans directly or indirectly affect the First Ward Study Area and its revitalization efforts. Examining existing plans and understanding on-going efforts provides a framework to guide the recommendations for the First Ward BOA. These ongoing efforts are summarized in Table 3 and discussed in greater detail below.

**TABLE 3: PLAN INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

	Target Area				Plan Focus					Type	
	Broome County	City of Binghamton	Specific Neighborhood(s)	First Ward Study Area	Transportation and Parking	Parks and Recreation	Economic Revitalization	Environmental Stewardship	Historic Preservation	Policy Based	Physical Projects
Front Street Gateway Plan (2008)		•		•	•				•	•	•
City of Binghamton LWRP (2005)		•		•	•	•				•	•
City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan (2003)		•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•
Binghamton Metropolitan Greenway Study		•		•	•	•				•	•
EJ Industrial Spine BOA Nomination Study	•		•	•			•	•		•	•
Route 17 expansion Project		•		•	•						•
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

### *Completed Planning Efforts*

The following planning studies have been completed and reviewed to determine their applicability to the First Ward BOA.

#### Front Street Gateway Plan (2008)

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS) Long Range Plan lists the Front Street Gateway Plan as high priority. Front Street serves as the eastern boundary of the First Ward study area, and directly links the neighborhood to the Central Business District. The plan focuses on transforming Front Street into a premier gateway to the center city. The vision of the plan is to establish high density residential housing along Front Street that is attractive to students affiliated with Broome Community College or Binghamton University. Additionally, the plan envisions enhancing public access to the waterfront, and creating a corridor with the capacity to sustain neighborhood businesses, providing access to goods and services for First Ward residents. Short-term improvements listed in the study include routine maintenance, such as sidewalk repairs, and rigorously enforcing code violations along Front Street, which is currently mostly renter-occupied. Improving the aesthetics along Front Street is the first step towards attracting visitors, residents and new businesses to the area.

#### City of Binghamton LWRP (2005)

The City of Binghamton's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program is a plan that intends to help Binghamton foster sustainable development along its waterfront. Using the catch phrase "Two Rivers, One Future," the plan focuses on policies that will help Binghamton to embrace its waterfront while preserving the environmental integrity of its natural resources. Additionally, the plan suggests the City preserve its water dependent uses and encourages proper siting of future water dependent uses. Design is also addressed, including automobile and pedestrian circulation, and specific design principles proposed for the city's gateways, plazas, and parks. Twenty-one projects are proposed within the plan including streetscape enhancements, trailway development, transportation issues, wayfinding and branding, and the redevelopment of underutilized properties. Binghamton's waterfront adjoins the First Ward study area along Front Street, indicating that the proposed improvements would spillover to have a positive impact on the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

#### City of Binghamton Comprehensive Plan (2003)

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared to provide a framework for guiding Binghamton as the city adapts to a changing global economy. The goal of the Plan is for Binghamton to secure a place in the information economy by encouraging entrepreneurial spirit and providing a high quality of life to its residents. The Plan suggests that this be accomplished through incrementally revitalizing its seven neighborhood centers, which include: First Ward Neighborhood Center District, Westside Riverfront District, North Riverfront District, Downtown/In-Town District, South Bridge District, Robinson Street District, and the Conklin/Tompkins Street Neighborhood Center District. Focus was placed on these neighborhoods because of their potential to serve as catalysts for city-wide revitalization.

The portion of the Plan that specifically addresses the First Ward Neighborhood Center District emphasizes consideration of its multicultural composition and aging population. The Plan focuses



attention on the central portion of the study area surrounding the Charles Street Business Park. Specific action items include developing a gateway to Clinton Street, which is re-identifying itself as Antiques Row, a concentration of antique businesses that have historically seen great success as a catalyst for visitation to the City. The vision for the gateway includes a neighborhood square that can accommodate festivals to celebrate the neighborhood's rich Eastern European roots.

A second goal outlined in the Plan is to redevelop the Charles Street Business Park into a commercial park that will accommodate information technology businesses, back door office operations, and green space amenities for future employees. One of the main recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan is to integrate the Charles Street Business Park into the community by improving vehicular and pedestrian connections. The BOA process is the next step in achieving the long-term vision for the site. In concert with site redevelopment is the goal to increase its marketability and visibility through enhanced access and streetscape improvements along Charles Street, which is currently the only access point to the site. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of the study area's natural assets, such as the First Ward Park, with plans for its expansion and reprogramming.

#### Binghamton Metropolitan Greenway Study (2000)

The Binghamton Metropolitan Greenway Study was commissioned by the BMTS to determine the feasibility for developing trails based on access, existing land uses, cost, and engineering considerations. The Greenway Study proposes phased implementation of a regional trail system, composed of a network of bicycle paths and pedestrian trails. The trail system would provide recreational access to regional natural assets that include the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers. The Study proposes a bike trail that would extend down Upper Front Street and connect with the Front Street Gateway. When implemented, the Plan would increase the accessibility of First Ward residents to recreational opportunities.

*Current and Ongoing Efforts and Initiatives*

The following planning studies are currently underway and should be coordinated with the First Ward BOA planning process to the extent feasible.

EJ Industrial Spine BOA Nomination Study

The EJ Industrial Spine BOA is located adjacent to the First Ward study area, sharing the First Ward's western Glenwood Avenue boundary. The neighborhood was once home to the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company, a successful shoe manufacturer that experienced regional success until the 1950s. The existing neighborhood is characterized by a deteriorating housing stock and amenities that were once intended to be accessible to Endicott-Johnson employees. The Nomination Study outlines several goals to be achieved throughout the BOA process that are similar to the First Ward, including: creating a mixed-use corridor along Main Street, expanding existing recreational opportunities, and capitalizing on the neighborhood's walkability, historic urban structures, and premier health care and performing arts establishments.

The EJ BOA Nomination provides an opportunity for the First Ward to link its own efforts for revitalization to the EJ BOA and take advantage of its momentum during the early stages of the process. Planning in coordination with the EJ BOA could serve to create a seamless transition between the two neighborhoods, and foster a strong relationship with Johnson City.

Interstate 81 Reconfiguration Project

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has provided the City with preliminary designs that may be implemented in association with the Interstate 81 reconfiguration project. One of the design proposals includes the construction of ingress access points from Prospect Street within the study area. This proposed project would support recommendations made in the City's Comprehensive Plan to improve accessibility to the Charles Street Business Park. As part of the reconfiguration, a multi-purpose trail is proposed that will extend along the western bank of the Chenango River to Prospect Street, located in the First Ward. Although the majority of the project is located outside of the study area, it will provide First Ward residents with trail access and support the continuation of the trail as part of the Front Street Gateway.

### **1.3 Study Area Context**

#### *Introduction*

The project overview is intended to provide context of the BOA study area (see Map 2) by evaluating existing land use patterns and abandoned, vacant, or underutilized properties within the study area. In addition, consideration is given to the area's potential for new development, expanding business opportunities, improving housing, creating new employment opportunities, generating revenues, constructing public amenities and/or recreational opportunities, and improving environmental quality.

#### *Community Assets*

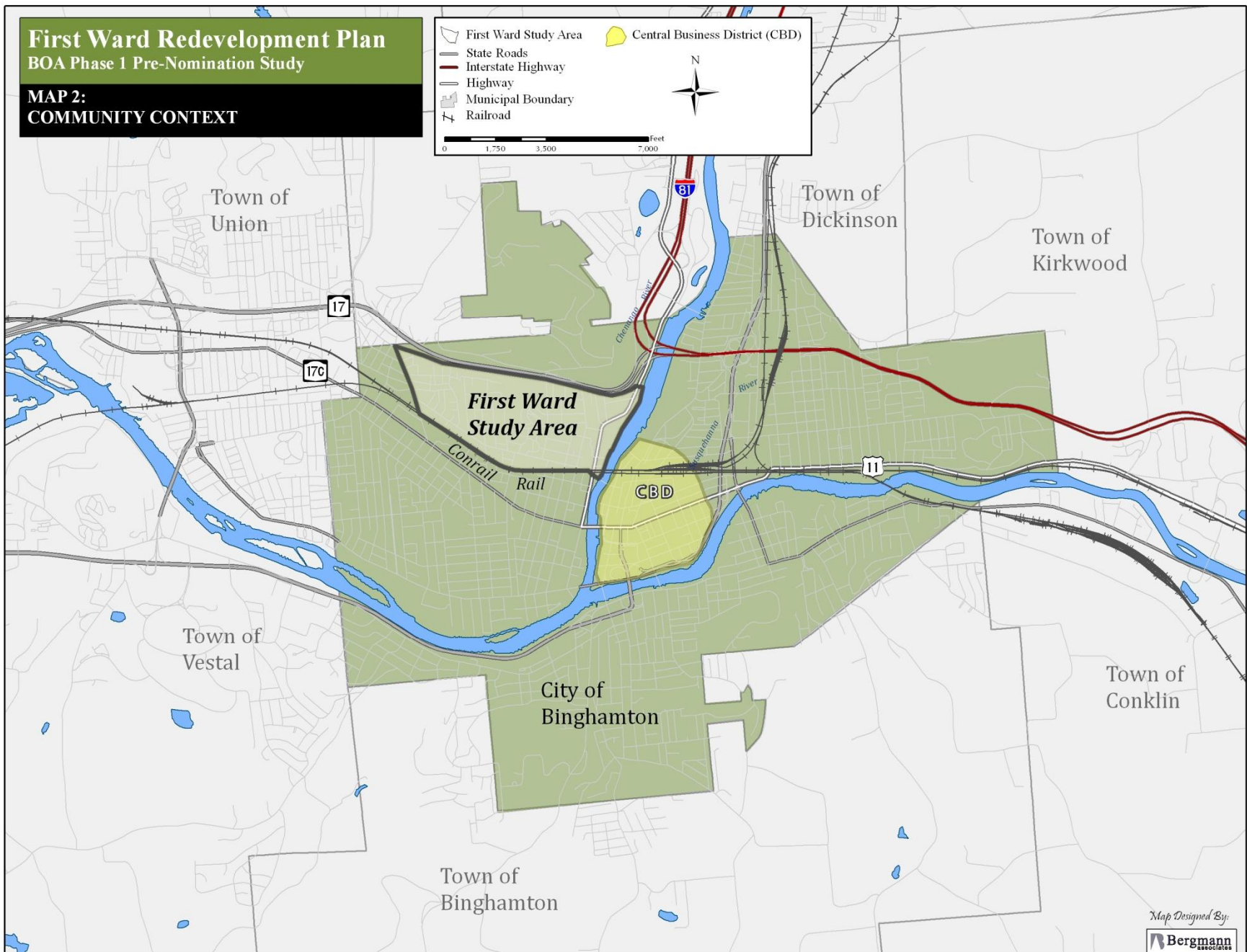
The First Ward neighborhood benefits from a number of community assets that can be enhanced and capitalized upon as part of the First Ward Redevelopment Plan.

#### *Organizations*

The First Ward neighborhood is noted for its legacy of grassroots civic involvement. The residents have historically taken pride in their neighborhood and actively participate in its revitalization. The City of Binghamton benefits from a strong resident and community-based approach to government decision making in the form of Neighborhood Assemblies. Launched in 2007, the Assemblies provide forums for city residents and business owners to share their ideas about issues, opportunities, and what they need from the City in order to improve their quality-of-life. The Neighborhood Assemblies work with city government and other partners to identify strategies for implementing projects and programs that have a positive impact on the City. The Neighborhood Assemblies were established in each of Binghamton's seven neighborhoods, including the First Ward neighborhood. The goal for developing the Neighborhood Assemblies was to not only improve communication between residents and city officials but to also encourage greater and more active community involvement at the neighborhood level.

The First Ward Neighborhood Assembly is actively involved in efforts to restore pride in the neighborhood through the implementation of special programs, such as annual festivals, and outreach and assistance to business owners and residents. Coordination and on-going collaboration with the First Ward Neighborhood Assembly is an important part of the BOA planning process.

Founded in 1982, the First Ward Action Council, Inc. is a local organization whose mission is to improve the neighborhood through advocacy, housing rehabilitation, housing development, and preservation. The First Ward Action Council additionally strives to provide affordable housing to area residents. The organization actively buys and renovates historic buildings throughout the First Ward. Most recently, the council was noted for its successes associated with the "New Dightsville" project, which renovated eight abandoned Victorian homes. Its efforts won the organization the acclaim of Victorian Homes magazine. To date, the First Ward Action Council has renovated more than 20 historic homes. Its efforts have served to maintain the historic charm of the First Ward while aggressively updating older homes and providing affordable housing for area residents.



*Parks and Open Space*

The neighborhood is home to open space and recreational opportunities which include the First Ward Pool, First Ward Park, Valley Street Park and the Spring Forest Cemetery. The First Ward Park is located adjacent to the historic First Ward Pool, which is still utilized by residents. In addition to a baseball diamond, Valley Street Park also has basketball and tennis courts.

More formally established recreational opportunities are available through the Boys and Girls Club which is scheduled to open in October 2009 on Clinton Street. Aside from formally established recreation areas, the First Ward also abuts the Chenango River, though physical and visual access is limited from the First Ward due to the presence of a retaining wall.

*Community Organizations and Cultural Sites*

The First Ward also has several religious and cultural facilities in place which provide programming, special events, and other services to local residents. Religious institutions located along Clinton Street include, but are not limited to, St. Michael's Greek-Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit Byzantine Church, and Ascension Lutheran Church. In addition, the neighborhood is home to the Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church and the Iglesia Vide Nueva En Cristo, the presence of which may be indicative of emerging diversity in the First Ward population.

The Tri-Cities Opera is also located on Clinton Street. Founded in 1949, the Tri-Cities Opera has been devoted to training young singers and producing high quality entertainment to serve as a regional attraction.



*Tri-Cities Opera is an important cultural asset within the First Ward neighborhood.*

Performances debut at either the Clinton Street Opera Center, located in the First Ward, or at the Forum Theater, which is located on Washington Street in downtown Binghamton.

*Developable Land*

Following city-wide deindustrialization during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the First Ward neighborhood began to experience deterioration along its edges, with the hardest hit in 1998 from the loss of Anitec, a leading employer centrally located within the neighborhood. However, the loss of Anitec and the remediation of the site has resulted in a significant asset and opportunity for the First Ward in the form of a 32-acre vacant site that is ready for development.

## Description of the First Ward Study Area

### *Land Use*

The First Ward BOA encompasses approximately 472 acres on the west side of the Chenango River, west of the City’s central business district. The area is bound by Prospect Street to the north, the Conrail Rail line to the south, Glenwood Avenue to the west, and the Chenango River to the east. Based on available data from 2008, there are approximately 1,654 parcels located within the study area, 109 of which are considered vacant properties (6.6 percent). Vacant properties occupy 55 acres of land within the study area (11.9 percent of total land area) and are scattered throughout the neighborhood, with the largest vacant property being portions of the Charles Street Business Park. This site consists of 32.9 acres of industrial land located along Charles Street and is currently being redeveloped. One site on the parcel has been improved with a 38,000 square foot industrial use owned by Emerson Network Power. The remainder of the site remains vacant and has the potential to accommodate at least four to five similar light industrial or warehouse uses.

*The presence of large amounts of vacant land within the First Ward provides the area with an opportunity for significant redevelopment that could bolster the local economy, provide future employment opportunities for residents, provide opportunities for new small business development and housing, and offer additional locations for green space, parks, and walking trails.*

While 11.9 percent of the study area is considered vacant, by comparison, vacant parcels occupy only approximately three percent of total land area within the City. Almost half of all vacant parcels within the City are located within the First Ward study area. Vacant parcels of land have historically been the byproduct of suburbanization or deindustrialization. The presence of vacant properties can be problematic to communities, lowering tax revenues and often having significant economic, environmental and health consequences, regardless of how they are manifested.

### *Potential Brownfields and Underutilized Sites*

The First Ward has 136 potential brownfields, underutilized, and vacant sites that comprise 22 percent of the study area. Approximately 32 sites have been identified as existing or potential brownfield properties to be assessed within the First Ward study area. Properties were determined based on historical use of the sites as well as concerns about possible environmental degradation within the area. Additional information on brownfield, underutilized, and vacant sites is included in Section 2.3 of the Pre-Nomination Study and in Appendix E – Site Profiles.

### *Neighborhood Gateways*

The First Ward has four primary gateways that connect it to the Binghamton CBD, Johnson City, NYS Route 17, and I-81. Two primary gateways are located along Front Street, providing easy access to the CBD and to areas north of the First Ward. The gateway located at the intersection of Front Street and Clinton Street is the focal point for people entering the First Ward commercial core and could be enhanced to help welcome people to businesses and restaurants located along both corridors. In addition to the study area’s eastern gateways, two gateways exist along the western boundary of the study area. Both are important as they provide visitors’ first impressions of the First Ward neighborhood.

## 1.4 Brownfield Opportunity Area Boundary Description and Justification

### Boundary Summary

The proposed study area boundary encompasses most of the First Ward neighborhood, which is important from the perspective of unifying the neighborhood through the planning process. The boundaries capitalize on the natural features of the study area and take into consideration the physical barriers that exist around the neighborhood. The study area boundary also seeks to connect the neighborhood to regional planning initiatives, aligning planning efforts to the greatest extent possible. This comprehensive approach gives the area potential to serve as a foundation for city-wide revitalization strategies.

### Boundary Description and Justification

The First Ward BOA is located to the west of the Chenango River and Binghamton's central business district. The study area is bound to the north by Prospect Street, and to the south by the Conrail Rail line. Glenwood Avenue serves as the area's western boundary and the Chenango River forms a natural boundary on the eastern edge of the study area. Map 3 depicts the study area's boundaries as described above. Rationale for each selected boundary is discussed further below.

#### *Northern Boundary*

Route 17 creates a natural boundary along the northern edge of the First Ward neighborhood. The roadway is a primary transportation route and gateway into the center city, and connects to Interstate I-81 in the east. This transportation corridor separates the First Ward neighborhood from areas to the north.

#### *Southern Boundary*

The Conrail Railway was historically used for industrial operations and creates the study area's southernmost edge. The presence of the railway creates a clear delineation between the First Ward and areas to the south including existing parks and recreational facilities. The rail line, which connects Binghamton to Vestal, was abandoned in 1995. The closing of the line impacted adjacent development, essentially halting further industrial growth on the lands north of the line after the mid-1990's.<sup>vi</sup>

#### *Eastern Boundary*

The Chenango River creates a natural boundary along the study area's eastern edge. Inclusion of areas up to the river provides the opportunity for waterfront redevelopment and an opportunity to link the First Ward neighborhood to Front Street and the central business district.

#### *Western Boundary*

Glenwood Avenue stretches north to south, connecting Main Street (Route 17C) with Route 17 to the north. The western edge of the study area abutting Glenwood Avenue is currently being studied as part of the Endicott-Johnson Industrial Spine BOA project. Incorporating areas to the east of Glenwood Avenue will help create a seamless transition of planning efforts and eliminates the threat of neglecting areas from being part of any revitalization efforts.





## 1.5 Community Visions, Goals, and Objectives

### Community Vision Statement

A direction and vision for the First Ward neighborhood was first explored during the City’s 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update process. The Comprehensive Plan discusses the need for enhanced gateways, the development of the Charles Street Business Park, increased amounts of green and open space, and expanded resources for the greater community. These ideas, as well as others, have been reiterated and identified by the First Ward community as part of the Redevelopment Plan process. Preliminary recommendations and action items to support the vision, goals, and objectives are presented in Section 2.6 of the First Ward Redevelopment Plan.

### **FIRST WARD VISION**

The First Ward Neighborhood Brownfield Opportunity Area is a vital and attractive mixed-use neighborhood that provides residents with access to a full range of goods and services. Clinton Street is a vibrant commercial corridor with engaging storefronts, attractive landscaping, and ample pedestrian amenities to welcome visitors. The Charles Street Business Park is the source of job creation and economic development and is seamlessly integrated into the surrounding residential neighborhoods with open space, trails, and sidewalk connections. Community resources and transportation alternatives are available to all and contribute to a high quality-of-life for area residents.

### Community Goals and Objectives

Priority goals associated with revitalizing and transforming the First Ward BOA study area are identified on the following pages. The goals and objectives will be further refined in Phase 2 – Nomination Study of the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

*GOAL #1: Economic Revitalization*

A strong economic presence that provides jobs and opportunities to surrounding neighborhoods is critical to the long-term success of the First Ward neighborhood. Improving the aesthetic character of key business areas, such as Clinton Street and Front Street, to make it a more inviting destination for neighborhood residents and for people throughout the City and adjacent communities is a primary goal of the Redevelopment Plan.

**Objectives:**

- To fill remaining storefronts and attract new businesses and retail uses.
- To provide a wide range of retail and service uses that support the daily needs of local residents.
- To improve the appearance of existing and future businesses.
- To identify a niche market for Clinton Street.
- To capitalize on the location and accessibility to and from major roadways.
- To remediate remaining brownfield, vacant, and underutilized sites along commercial corridors and identify appropriate, viable new uses for these properties.



*Images from Clinton Street streetscape as it exists today.*

*GOAL #2: Business Development and Job Creation*

The remediation and availability of the former Anitec site, now known as the Charles Street Business Park, is a brownfield success story for the City of Binghamton. Full build out of the Charles Street Business Park will have significant positive impacts on both the First Ward neighborhood and the City of Binghamton.

**Objectives:**

- To create a strong employment center node within the First Ward neighborhood, re-establishing neighborhood as a walk-to-work community.
- To establish a concentration of employment opportunities for First Ward residents and customers to support neighborhood shops and restaurants.
- To promote the success of the City of Binghamton and Broome County Industrial Development Agency as leaders in promoting and fostering new business development in the City.
- To create attractive and sustainable development in the First Ward that considers the importance of open space, architectural design principles, and connections in its layout.
- To increase the City's tax base with new light industrial and business park development.
- To create a business center that is attractive to knowledge-based and professional businesses.



*Emerson's new headquarters should serve as a catalyst for further investment and redevelopment in the First Ward neighborhood.*

*GOAL #3: Smart Growth and Sustainability*

Smart growth and sustainable development principles ensure a community is capitalizing on its existing resources and assets, while promoting a healthy and active environment for residents and workers. Incorporating these ideas into the First Ward Redevelopment Plan will ensure the long-term health and viability of the community as a great place to live, work, and play.

**Objectives:**

- To create a varied network of opportunities for residents to meet their full range of daily needs within the First Ward neighborhood.
- To limit further suburban-oriented development in outlying areas.
- To create new opportunities for living, working, and relaxing that are unique to the region.
- To encourage the reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure.
- To create walkable, pedestrian oriented neighborhoods.
- To create access to and encourage use of public transportation and alternate methods of transportation.
- To create access to locally grown produce.
- To encourage incorporation of LEED design principles into building and site design, such as porous pavement, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs, and native landscaping.
- To support city-wide efforts to create a continuous greenway network through the City and its core neighborhoods.

*GOAL #4: Quality of Life*

Retaining the unique assets and character-defining features of the First Ward neighborhood is critical to enhancing and improving the quality of life for First Ward residents. Historic buildings, parklands and open space, access to transportation, and community and social services all play in an important role in defining the quality of life that a person experiences.

- To rebuild and strengthen residential neighborhoods.
- To support local efforts to rehabilitate and/or adaptively reuse existing historic building stock.
- To preserve the existing scale, character, and integrity of the streetscape.
- To increase the levels of home ownership and owner occupancy in the neighborhood.
- To provide opportunities for people to age in place.
- To provide access to a variety of transportation options for all age groups and social classes.
- To provide programs for all age groups that meet the economic, social, and recreational needs of the community.
- To incorporate the rich history of the neighborhood into everyday experiences that will promote pride and a sense of community.
- To facilitate the clean-up of brownfields and environmentally impacted sites in order to foster opportunities for new investment and redevelopment.
- To improve access to quality health care.
- To improve the quality, availability and access to area parks and recreation.



*Cleaning up existing brownfield, underutilized, and vacant sites within the BOA will help to create new opportunities, improve the character of the neighborhood, and enhance quality of life for residents.*

## 1.6 Community Participation

### Introduction

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) for the City of Binghamton's First Ward Redevelopment Plan describes the manner in which the planning process sought to engage and involve local community members, project partners, and stakeholders. The full CPP, included in Appendix A, details three types of community outreach efforts that were utilized during the development of the Pre-Nomination Study including 1) steering committee meetings, 2) neighborhood assembly and public meetings, and 3) outreach to other key stakeholders.

### Meeting Summaries

Outcomes of the community involvement efforts associated with the planning process are summarized below.

#### *Steering Committee Meetings*

At the onset of the planning process, a committee was formed representing a wide range of interests associated with the First Ward Redevelopment Plan. The Steering Committee consists of City representatives, County representatives, representatives from the First Ward Neighborhood Assembly, First Ward business owners, and First Ward residents. The Steering Committee was formed to provide local knowledge and guidance throughout the planning process. Meeting minutes from each of the Steering Committee Meetings are provided in Appendix B, with meetings summarized below.

#### Meeting #1- May 8, 2009

The first Steering Committee meeting focused on project start-up efforts including an overview of the project scope and information gathering about the First Ward study area. The consultant team presented the Pre-Nomination Work Plan and discussed the development of vision and goals for the study area, SEQR requirements, and the project timeline. The boundary of the BOA site and the community participation plan were also discussed, the results of which are included in the meeting minutes located in Appendix B. Additionally, the Steering Committee participated in a visioning exercise, which sought to identify a framework for the development of preliminary vision and goals for the neighborhood. The results from the visioning exercise are also described in the meeting minutes.

#### Meeting #2- July 13, 2009

Additional opportunities for community outreach were discussed during the second Steering Committee meeting. Specifically, the NYS DOS stressed the importance of having targeted stakeholder meetings that focus on representatives associated with economic development opportunities. These meetings might possibly be held in place of senior focus groups or student outreach, as previously proposed. In addition, the consultant team presented an overview of the project status and distributed draft copies of the Community Overview and Project Overview sections of the Pre-Nomination Study.

Meeting #3- October 15, 2009

The consultant team presented the Steering Committee with the draft vision, goals, inventory and analysis, and preliminary recommendations for the First Ward Brownfield Opportunity Area. In addition, meeting attendees discussed the need to identify strategic sites based on community factors, in addition to environmental factors. The NYSDOS suggested that the City, with the help of the consultant team, consider submitting the application for Step 2 funding prior to the final 2009 BOA grant cycle. Finally, next steps in the process were discussed.

Meeting #4- December 7, 2009

To be completed.

Meeting #5- TBD

To be completed.

*Neighborhood Assembly/Public Meetings*

Public Meetings were held at the Neighborhood Assembly meetings to encourage public input for the goals and vision of their neighborhood. In addition, community members provide important local knowledge to the consultant team, which was used throughout the planning process. Meeting minutes from each of the Neighborhood Assembly/Public Meetings are provided in Appendix C and are summarized below.

Meeting #1- July 14, 2009

Initial public outreach efforts for the project were held in conjunction with the First Ward Neighborhood Assembly in an effort to recognize and capitalize on the strong relationship between the local community and the Neighborhood Assembly. The first public meeting associated with the project was held on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the First Ward Senior Center during a regularly scheduled Assembly meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to kick-off the project; familiarize residents with the BOA process, purpose, and positive outcomes that can result from the planning effort; and to solicit feedback and input from local stakeholder about the opportunities and constraints facing the First Ward neighborhood. Attendees participated in a visioning exercise that identified aspects of the neighborhood that should remain the same, as well as aspects of the neighborhood that should change.

Meeting #2- October 15, 2009

The focus of the second public meeting was to present the key findings developed from preparation of the First Ward Redevelopment Plan. In addition, the consultant team presented preliminary opportunities for redevelopment of the First Ward. Key recommendations that had been developed were presented to the public for feedback in an interactive forum. All but two of the recommendations were unanimously agreed upon by members of the public. In addition, the community expressed the desire to see a farmers market and community gardens locate near the neighborhood, and to encourage efforts for the adaptive reuse of historic structures and existing lots.

Meeting #3- TBD

To be completed.

*Stakeholder Outreach Efforts*

A series of three stakeholder meetings were held on September 16, 2009 with representatives of the local business community, community and social service providers, and city leaders and agencies. Summaries of each of the discussions associated with the stakeholder meetings are included in Appendix D.



## SECTION 2.0: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE BOA

### 2.1 Existing Land Use

#### Introduction

According to 2008 parcel data obtained from Broome County, the First Ward study area consists of 1,657 parcels covering approximately 367 acres of land. Parcel area does not include land areas such as transportation rights-of-way, and is therefore a smaller portion of the study area’s total land area (474 acres). Land use classifications are determined by the county assessor according to a system established by the New York State Office of Real Property Services (NYSORPS). NYSORPS uses nine categories to classify land based on the primary use of each parcel. Within the First Ward neighborhood, seven of the nine land uses used by NYSORPS are present. Three parcels, located on Prospect Street and Julian Street, did not have NYSORPS data and are therefore excluded from analysis. Based on their size and location, it is probable that these parcels are either residential or vacant properties. The breakdown of land uses within the BOA study area is provided in Table 4, and illustrated on Map 4.

TABLE 4: FIRST WARD LAND USES, 2008

Class Code	Property Type	Parcels	Acreage	% Composition
100	Agricultural	0	0.0	0.0%
200	Residential	1,272	167.0	45.5%
300	Vacant Land	109	55.3	15.1%
400	Commercial	221	67.2	18.3%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	5	11.0	3.0%
600	Community Services	32	57.6	15.7%
700	Industrial	11	8.9	2.4%
800	Public Services	4	0.3	0.1%
900	Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands & Public Parks	0	0.0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,654</b>	<b>367.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Data Source: Broome County

#### Overview of Land Use Categories

Each of the land uses present in the study area are described in greater detail below:

##### *Residential*

The First Ward study area’s primary land use is residential, which occupies a total of 167 acres. There are 1,272 residential parcels within the study area, the majority of which are single family homes (63 percent). It should be noted that multi-family residences are identified by the NYSORPS as commercial, and therefore residential properties are slightly underrepresented. The average residential parcel size is

one-tenth of an acre, which is typical for a center city residential area. Residential parcels make up 76.9 percent of all parcels within the study area, but are typically smaller than parcel areas for other land uses. Even though residential properties are the dominant land use within the study area when considering the number of parcels, they account for only 45.5 percent of all parcel land area.

### *Vacant*

A significant portion of land, including 109 parcels or 15 percent of the land area, within the First Ward is vacant land. According to the NYSORPS, vacant land is any property “that is not in use, is in temporary use, or that lacks permanent improvement.” Most notable, approximately 50 percent of all vacant properties within the entire City are located within the First Ward study area. Clusters of vacant commercial and industrial properties are located on primary roadways along Clinton Street and Charles Street. Large clusters of vacant residential property exist along Seymour and Prospect Streets, and additional vacant residential properties are scattered throughout the study area. This abundance of vacant property affects First Ward residents, lowering the tax base and area property values, and imposing environmental and health threats. Its presence also provides a significant opportunity, being the largest concentration of developable land within the City boundary.

### *Commercial*

There are 221 parcels designated as commercial, making commercial the second largest land use within the BOA boundary. Commercial properties occupy a total of 67.15 acres of land, or 18.3 percent of the total land area. Commercial properties include multi-family residential properties, as identified by the NYSOPRS. The largest commercial parcel is 4.8 acres in size, located on the First Ward’s east side along Front Street. Commercial parcel sizes range from less than an acre to 4.8 acres with an average commercial parcel size of one-third of an acre. The majority of commercial properties are located along the western, southern, and eastern boundaries of the study area on primary roadways.

### *Recreation & Entertainment*

Five parcels are designated for recreation and entertainment. According to the NYSORPS, these properties are “used by groups for recreation, amusement or entertainment.” These parcels are scattered throughout the study area and comprise a total of 11 acres within the boundary (3 percent). The majority of land area designated as recreation and entertainment are occupied by parks. The First Ward Pool and the First Ward Park occupy two contiguous parcels in the northern portion of the study area, and Valley Street Park is located to the east, abutting Front Street. A small playground occupies one-third of an acre along Murray Street. The remaining parcel accommodates the administrative offices of the Tri-Cities Opera House. The average parcel size for recreation & entertainment is 2.2 acres.

### *Community Service*

Community service parcels are parcels that are designated for use towards the “well-being of the community.” Land uses of this type consume 57.55 acres within the study area (15.7 percent) and constitute the third largest land use. Of the 31 parcels with this designation, the largest is the Spring Forest Cemetery, which is 39.7 acres of land adjacent to the Charles Street Business Park. In addition to the cemetery, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School occupies approximately four acres of land on Prospect Street. The remaining parcels include religious institutions, the First Ward Action Council, and

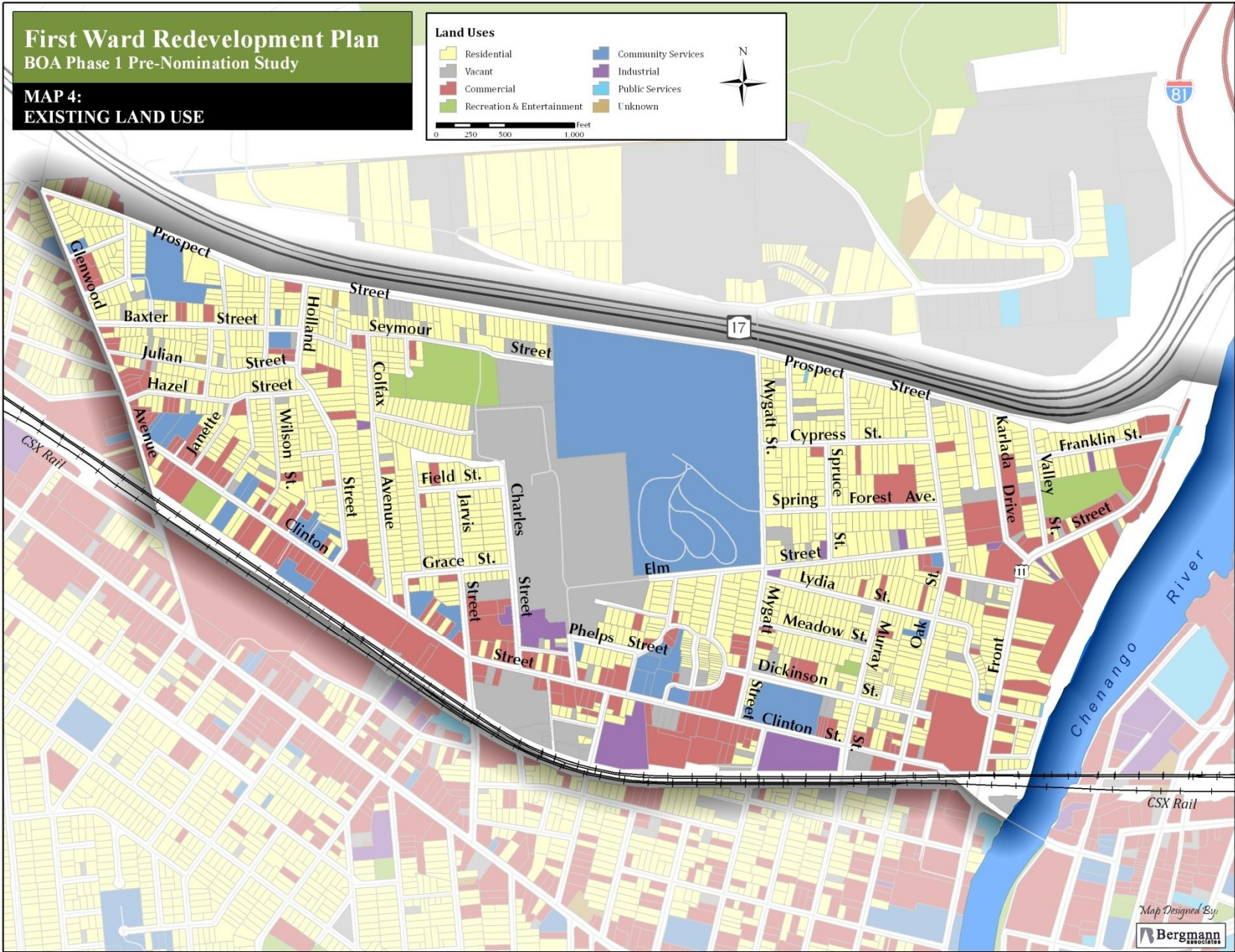
the Boys and Girls Club of Binghamton. The average parcel size is 1.8 acres, with the smallest parcel occupying only one-tenth of an acre.

*Industrial*

There are 11 parcels in the study area that have industrial uses. These parcels occupy a total of 8.9 acres, which is only 2.4 percent of the study area's parcel land area. The largest industrial parcel is 2.97 acres, while the average parcel size for this land use is 0.8 acres. Although some development has been occurring in the Charles Street Business Park, 2008 parcel data obtained from Broome County recognize the 32.9 acre site as a vacant property. The majority of industrial parcels are located along Clinton Street, Charles Street and Elm Street including the now abandoned E.H. Titchener property (3.2 acres), which was used to produce metal products.

*Public Service*

Properties that are designated as public service by the NYSORPS are those intended to "provide services to the general public." This land use represents the smallest use within the study area, with only 4 parcels designated as public service. Two of these parcels are owned by the New York State Electric and Gas Company to provide utility service to area residents. The remaining two parcels are owned by the City of Binghamton. Together the parcels occupy less than one acre of land, representing 0.1 percent of all land area in the study area.



2.2 Zoning

Existing Zoning

The City of Binghamton last revised their zoning code in July 2006, following the 2003 revision of its Comprehensive Plan. The existing zoning code establishes 12 total zoning districts including three residential districts, six commercial districts and three industrial districts throughout the City. In the First Ward, six of the 12 designations are present, including two residential districts, two commercial districts, and two industrial districts. Understanding the existing zoning within the study area will assist with encouraging land development and revitalization efforts that cooperate with the City’s vision for the area. The zoning districts present in the First Ward are summarized in Table 5 and depicted on Map 5.

**TABLE 5: EXISTING ZONING DESIGNATIONS**

Zoning Designation	Name	# Parcels	Acreage	Portion of Study Area (Acreage)
<b>Residential</b>	R-1 Residential Single Unit Dwelling District	0	--	--
	R-2 Residential One and Two Unit Dwelling District	1,305	223.0	60.7%
	R-3 Residential Multi-Unit Dwelling District	46	8.1	2.2%
<b>Totals</b>		1,351	231.1	62.9%
<b>Commercial</b>	C-1 Service Commercial District	49	22.7	6.2%
	C-2 Downtown Business District	0	--	--
	C-3 Medical District	0	--	--
	C-4 Neighborhood Commercial District	209	44.9	12.2%
	C-5 Neighborhood office District	0	--	--
	C-6 Limited Neighborhood Commercial District	0	--	--
<b>Totals</b>		258	67.6	18.4%
<b>Industrial</b>	I-1 Urban Business Park District	12	40.9	11.1%
	I-2 Light and Medium Industrial District	36	27.8	7.6%
	I-3 Heavy Industrial District	0	--	--
<b>Totals</b>		48	68.7	18.7%
<b>Study Area Total</b>		1,657	367.4	100%

*Residential*

Properties that are zoned residential make up the largest portion of the study area, accounting for 62.9 percent of land area. Two residential zoning designations are present within the First Ward: the R-2 district and the R-3 district. The R-2 zoning district is intended to designate areas appropriate for a mix of one-unit and multi-unit dwellings that allow low to moderate density development. The R-2 designation is the largest zoning designation within the First Ward, occupying 223 acres or approximately 60.7 percent of the parcel area.

The R-3 district is intended to identify areas where high density development exists or should be encouraged. Within the First Ward, 46 parcels are zoned for R-3 development, occupying 2.2 percent

the total parcel area. The R-3 district is located on the eastern portion of the study area, surrounding the gateway from the center city and a portion of the Front Street corridor.

### *Commercial*

Commercial areas are broken down into six districts. The Service Commercial District (C-1) and the Neighborhood Commercial District (C-4) are the only two commercial designations within the study area. The C-1 district is intended to designate areas where commercial, light industrial and storage activities should be concentrated. The C-1 district is the smaller of the two commercial designations, making up 22.7 acres or 6.2 percent of the First Ward's parcel area. Parcels with this designation are concentrated along the Front Street corridor, north of the area's existing gateway.

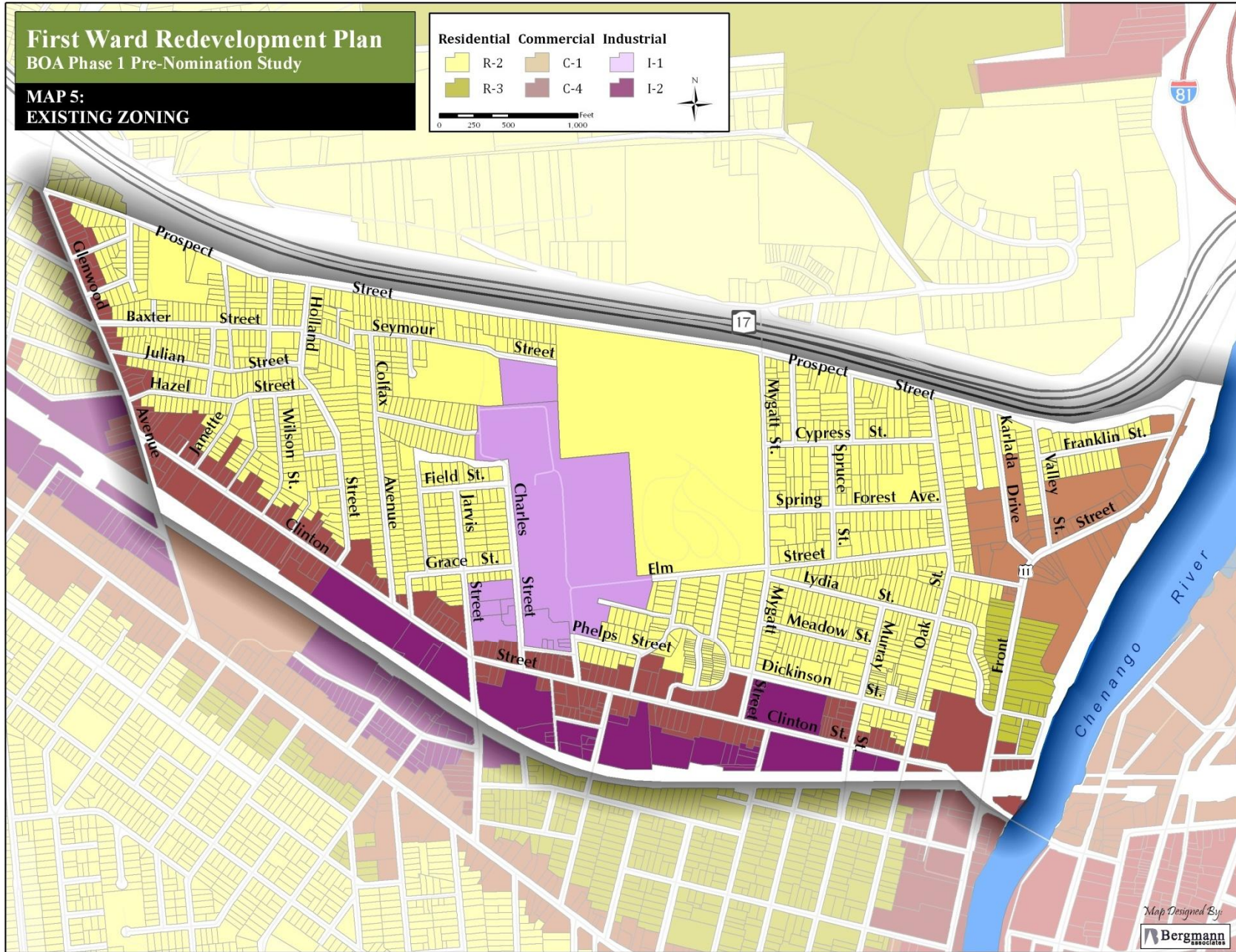
The C-4 commercial district identifies areas where general retail, service and office activities should exist to serve adjacent neighborhoods. Approximately 12.2 percent of the First Ward parcel area is designated as a Neighborhood Commercial District. Parcels located within the C-4 zoning district are concentrated along Clinton Street and north along Glenwood Avenue. There are 258 commercially zoned parcels that make up 18.4 percent (68 acres) of the First Ward's parcel area.

### *Industrial*

Two of the three industrial zones are present in the First Ward: the Urban Business Park District (I-1) and the Light and Medium Industrial District (I-2). The I-1 District is intended to designate areas that are appropriate for technology-based business and industrial uses. The district is located in and around the Charles Street Business Park and occupies 41 acres (11.1 percent) of the First Ward's parcel area. The I-2 district is intended to accommodate light and medium density industrial development and to restrict uses that are incompatible with such development. This zoning area is located on along Clinton Street, adjacent to the existing CONRAIL rail line. The I-2 zoning designation comprises 27.8 acres, or 7.6 percent of the study area.

## Summary Zoning Analysis

Understanding the existing land uses and zoning districts in the First Ward BOA facilitates an understanding of where and how future development and investment may occur. Additionally, knowledge of how land is being used within the existing zoning provides a framework for recommendations for revitalization. The majority of property within the study area is zoned and used as residential property. Lands zoned for residential use primarily incorporate residential and community service uses, and are located north of the Clinton Street corridor. These areas include the study area's parks and open space, cultural facilities, and residential properties. Commercial and Industrial zoning designations and uses are clustered along the Clinton Street spine, and consist primarily of commercial and industrial uses. In addition, many parcels zoned for industrial uses are currently vacant, which provides the opportunity to attract businesses and create an identity for this main thoroughfare.



## **2.3 Brownfield, Vacant and Underutilized Sites**

### **Introduction**

The presence of brownfields, abandoned or vacant sites provides the First Ward with opportunities and limitations for redevelopment. Brownfields located within the study area were identified based on the current and/or historic use of each site as well as known environmental or health concerns. Brownfield sites within the BOA include abandoned or underutilized industrial or manufacturing properties, active petroleum spill event sites, former gasoline stations, and vacant properties with past spill events, underground storage tanks, or undetermined previous development. A total of 136 properties were identified as brownfields, potential brownfields, or vacant sites. Of the 136, 32 sites were identified for further investigation based on their status as a brownfield or potential brownfield. Three of these 32 properties are publicly owned, and 29 are privately owned.

### **Methodology**

A preliminary environmental site assessment (ESA) was conducted for each of the existing or potential brownfield sites to gain a better understanding of the existing conditions. Information collected during the ESA's was downloaded to a database designed specifically for the project. Each property was ranked according to environmental priority, which was determined based on present and past use of the premises. Consideration was given to whether or not known environmental contamination had occurred, and to the media impacted (i.e. soil or groundwater). Community significance or redevelopment potential of properties related to other planning factors, such as location and ownership, were not included as part of the environmental ranking. The community will have the opportunity to further refine and identify strategic sites above and beyond those discussed for environmental reasons.

An interactive Site Profile Form was generated for each brownfield or vacant parcel, which links to an electronic database. The electronic database will help the City to streamline reviews of specific property information. Site Profile Forms for each of the 136 properties are included in Appendix E. Map 6 illustrates all 136 sites of interest by their environmental ranking and vacancy status.

### ***Environmental Ranking – Low***

Properties were classified as Low Importance if they were vacant, but had no history of spill events, were not listed in any environmental database, and had no prior use of petroleum or chemical tanks. Parcels classified as Low Importance are scattered throughout the First Ward neighborhood and comprise 76.5 percent of all parcels evaluated (104 parcels). Together these parcels make up 14.7 acres of land. The majority of parcels ranked as Low Importance are vacant residential parcels (73 parcels), followed by 27 vacant commercial parcels and only three vacant industrial parcels. Parcels that are of Low Importance are depicted on Map 6.



*Environmental Ranking – Moderate*

Properties were classified as Moderate Importance if the site's prior use is unknown; the site had spill events which have subsequently been closed; abandoned drums, surface staining, debris piles or fill is observed; or the site is listed in an environmental database. Of the 136 sites, 18 classify as parcels of Moderate Importance, all of which are in active use. The majority of sites of Moderate Importance have had prior spill events. The NYSDEC coordinates a Spill Response program that includes maintaining a database of Spill Incident Reports. The reports include information on spills that have occurred throughout New York State, as well as the status of each spill event. The NYSDEC may close a spill event once it determines that necessary cleanup and removal actions have been achieved and that no further remedial action is necessary, or for administrative purposes (i.e. multiple reporting of a singular event). Of the 18 sites, 11 have history of spill events that impacted existing soil. All spill event sites ranked as Moderate Importance have been closed. The remaining parcels are categorized as Moderate Importance due to their listing as small hazardous waste generators.

*Environmental Ranking – High*

Properties were ranked as being of High Importance based on a number of factors that include if the prior site use was dry-cleaning or a service garage, if the site was listed as a large quantity hazardous waste generator, if it was listed in environmental databases with remedial actions required, if unregistered or abandoned tanks were observed, if the site is an active NYSDEC spill site or has had spill events that impacted groundwater, or if the site is an existing brownfield. A total of 14 sites are listed as High Importance and include properties located along Clinton Street as well as properties located around Front Street.

Of the 14 sites, nine have a history of spill events. Only one site remains an active spill site, located along Front Street in the eastern portion of the study area. The site is an active gasoline station that became a spill event on July 1, 2009 resulting from the spill of an unknown amount of gasoline that impacted both soil and groundwater.

Two of the sites listed as high importance were part of the NYS Superfund program and are located in the Charles Street Business Park. The NYS Superfund program is the State's mechanism for identifying, investigating, and remediating sites where significant amounts of hazardous waste may exist. The former Anitec site was characterized as a Superfund site due to the presence of unknown quantities of chemicals used for the manufacturing of photographic film. Today, the site has been remediated and no longer poses a threat to environmental or public health. The parcel located behind the former Anitec site was the GAF dump, which received waste from Anitec as well as laboratory research waste. A preliminary site assessment also indicated heightened levels of PCBs in the soil. The site has since been adequately remediated and affected soils transported off-site for disposal.

The three remaining sites include the E.H. Titchener property, the Binghamton Power Plant, and a site located on Clinton Street, southwest of the Charles Street Business Park.

- The E.H. Titchener property is identified by the city as an existing brownfield, and was therefore given a ranking of High Importance. Based on curbside assessments completed in August 2009,

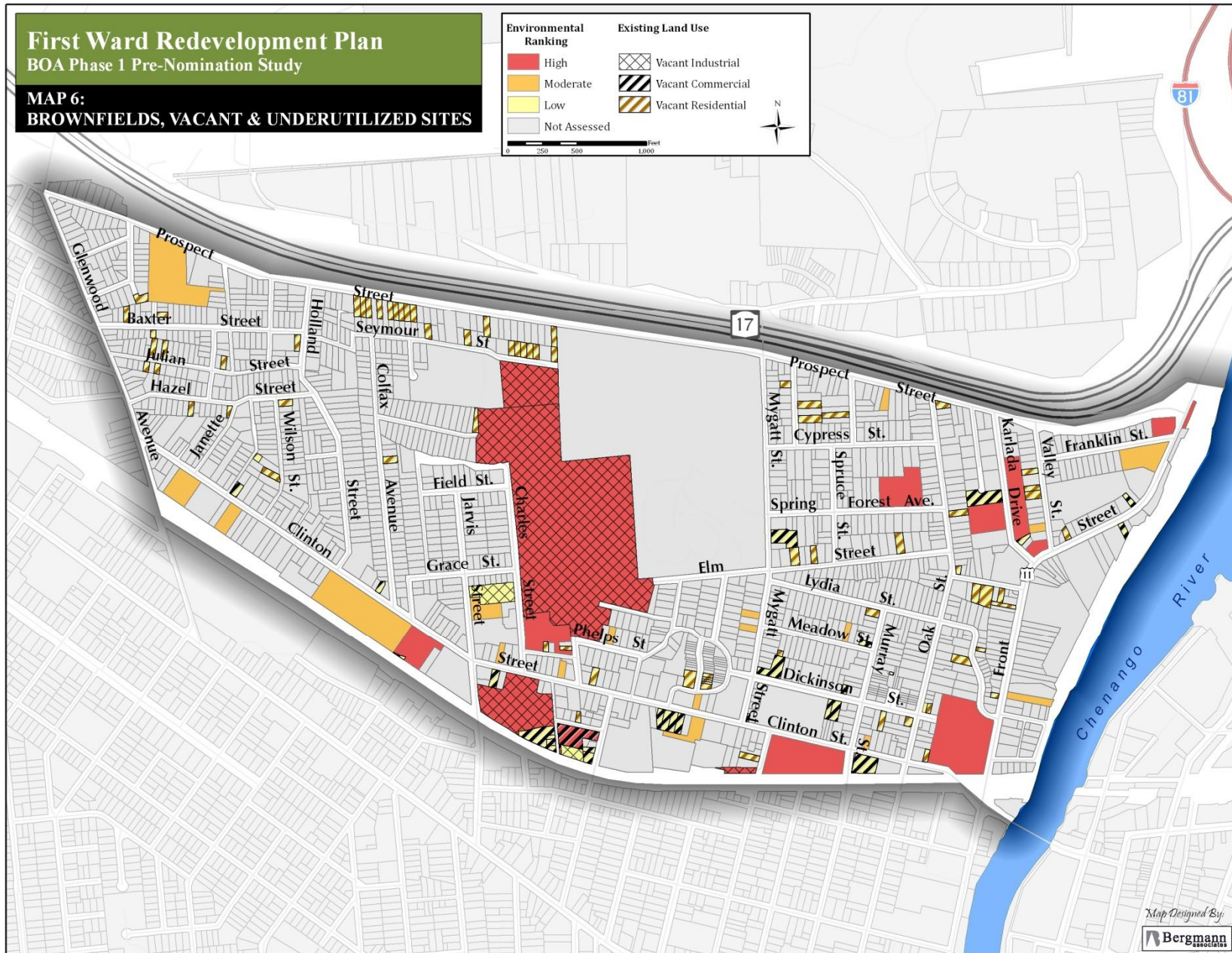
the site had warning labels present, indicating that it is a current hazard. The E.H. Titchener property is the only site within the study area that the County could foreclose on because of back taxes.

- The Binghamton Power Plant is currently in operation, but the site has monitoring wells visibly located throughout the property, indicating potentially impacted groundwater. In addition, there is a large tank stored on site.
- 219 Charles Street is listed as a large hazardous waste generator, which qualifies it as a property of high environmental importance.

### *Strategic Sites*

The identification of environmentally sensitive sites is the first step in identifying potential catalytic sites in the study area that have the greatest potential for remediation, redevelopment, and/or investment. In addition to considering environmental conditions and current vacancy, status planning level criteria can be used to identify those sites that may have exceptional potential to serve as a catalyst for revitalization and redevelopment. Planning level criteria includes, but is not limited to: location; land use; ownership; community profile; size; and accessibility. These criteria were applied to all parcels in the BOA boundary and additional strategic sites were defined, even though they may not have an environmental concern associated with them.

Map 7 identifies the preliminary strategic sites within the First Ward BOA that have been identified based on high environmental concern, vacancy status, and/or potential to serve as a catalyst for overall revitalization efforts in the First Ward neighborhood.



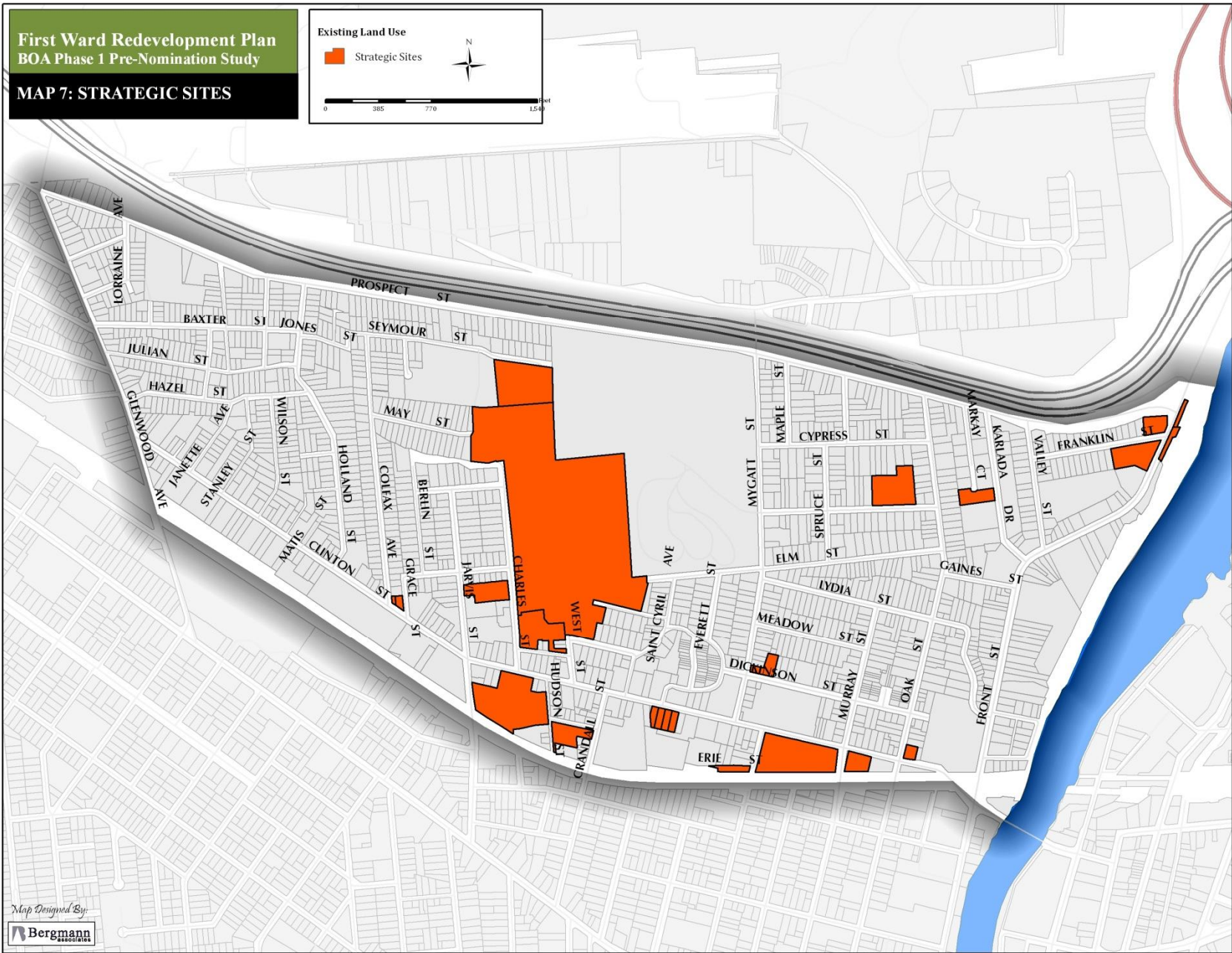
First Ward Redevelopment Plan  
BOA Phase 1 Pre-Nomination Study

MAP 7: STRATEGIC SITES

Existing Land Use

Strategic Sites

0 385 770 1540



Map Designed By  
Bergmann  
INCORPORATED

## **2.4 Land Ownership**

### Introduction

Evaluating existing land ownership is a key component of a comprehensive land use analysis. Public properties are those properties that are owned by a municipality or other public agency or entity, as opposed to those owned by one or more private individuals.

Land ownership is an important consideration because it identifies where the greatest opportunities for redevelopment may exist. When property is publicly owned there is greater potential for achieving the desired vision for that parcel. Private property owners cannot be required to conform to a specific land use vision unless it is regulated through the City's zoning code and regulations. Even if zoning updates were made that defined new allowable land uses for a given parcel, the property owner would not be required to conform until they desired to change or alter the use of the property. One of the objectives of the City as it relates to the Redevelopment Plan effort is to reach out to property owners and build consensus on the future of the First Ward so they can be part of the implementation of the plan on their individual properties. Buy-in and support from local property owners is imperative to the successful realization of the Redevelopment Plan.

The majority of parcels and land area within the BOA are privately owned properties. The breakdown of ownership by land use type is discussed further in the following sections and illustrated on Map 8.

### Public Property Ownership

Of the 1,657 parcels within the BOA, 46 are currently publicly owned, comprising 5.8 percent of the study area's total parcel land area. Publicly owned properties include representation from each of the seven land uses identified within the BOA boundary. Recreation and entertainment parcels occupy the most land area, primarily attributed to the parks and playgrounds that are present within the BOA boundaries. Properties used for community services occupy the second most acreage, and include two parcels associated with the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. Vacant parcels that are publicly owned occupy 2.59 acres of land area, and are scattered along Clinton Street and Charles Street. Residential and vacant properties make up the largest number of publicly owned parcels, but each consume less than one acre of land total. Public owners within the BOA include the City of Binghamton, Broome County, and various New York State departments. Broome County owns the majority of parcels (52.2 percent) followed by the City of Binghamton (41.3 percent).

### Private Property Ownership

Properties that are privately owned occupy 94.2 percent of all land area within the BOA and include 1,608 parcels. Six of the seven land uses identified within the BOA are privately owned. There are no privately owned parcels currently used for public services. Most parcels are used for residential land uses, which also occupy 45 percent of total BOA land area. Privately owned commercial properties are the next largest land use within the BOA comprising 18 percent of total parcel area, followed by privately owned vacant properties which make up 14.3 percent of parcel area. Table 6 summarizes land uses within the BOA by type of ownership and land area.

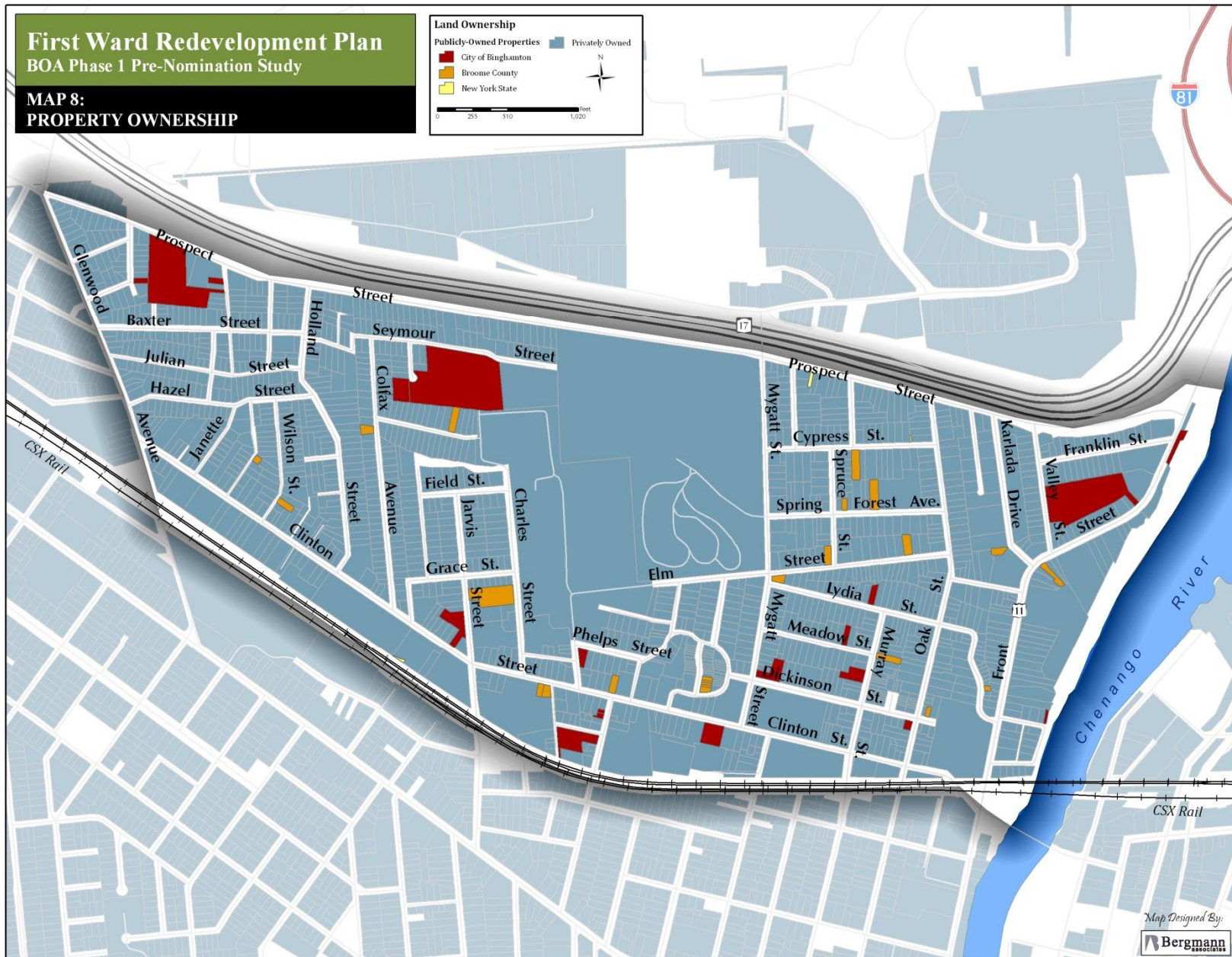


TABLE 6: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP BY LAND USE

Land Use	Number of Parcels	Acreage	Proportion of BOA
<i>Public Ownership</i>			
Residential	12	1.74	0.5%
Commercial	4	0.86	0.2%
Vacant	12	2.59	0.7%
Industrial	6	0.92	0.3%
Public Services	4	0.32	0.1%
Community Services	4	4.85	1.3%
Recreation and Entertainment	4	9.95	2.7%
<i>Totals</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>21.23</i>	<i>5.8%</i>
<i>Private Ownership</i>			
Residential	1,260	165.25	45.0%
Commercial	217	66.29	18.0%
Vacant	97	52.7	14.3%
Industrial	5	7.98	2.2%
Public Services	0	--	--
Community Services	28	52.7	14.3%
Recreation and Entertainment	1	1.05	0.3%
<i>Totals</i>	<i>1,608</i>	<i>345.97</i>	<i>94.2%</i>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.22</i>	<i>0.1%</i>
<b>BOA Totals</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data Source: Broome County (2008)

## 2.5 Natural Resources and Environmental Features

Environmental factors identify development opportunities and limitations. Protected wetlands, steep slopes, and major waterbodies may define areas where future development should be avoided. Planning for land use in concert with existing environmental conditions promotes the protection of valuable natural resources. Map 9 illustrates the study area's natural features including water resources, wetlands, and open spaces.

### Water Resources

Following nationwide deindustrialization, many waterfronts were left vacant and unattended, with only remnants of long industrial pasts. Many communities have begun to capitalize on their waterfronts as natural assets and desirable redevelopment locations. Water resources are equally important from a water quality and quantity perspective. Development often determines the amount of impervious surface that is created and non-porous surfaces contribute to runoff which can impact the integrity of open waterbodies. Polluted waterways are also a less valuable commodity for recreation and tourism. Consideration of water quality is also important because it determines whether potable water is available to serve existing and future residential, commercial, or industrial development. Developing an understanding of an area's water resources can help communities to adopt sustainable practices.

### *Susquehanna River Watershed*

A watershed is an area of land that drains into the same waterbody, or an area of land bounded by a single hydrologic system. All activities that take place within a watershed, including construction, recreation, and industry, can impact the environmental integrity of the watershed. Additionally, impacts to watersheds or surrounding waterbodies do not remain local, often impacting areas more significantly upstream or downstream. The First Ward study area is located within the Susquehanna River Watershed, which occupies 4,520 square miles of land area and drains into the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna River connects to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, which stretches across 64,000 square miles and encompasses portions of six states. Major tributaries located within the watershed include the Chenango, Tioughnioga, Unadilla and Owego Rivers. The watershed also has 130 freshwater lakes, ponds and reservoirs that together occupy 16,521 acres of land area. According to the DEC's 2003 Waterbody Inventory/Priority Waterbody List for the Susquehanna River Watershed, a small stretch of the Susquehanna River near Binghamton, New York was slightly impaired. The River otherwise exhibited improved health from prior sampling periods.

Table 7 summarizes the major tributaries and waterbodies located within the Susquehanna Watershed.



TABLE 7: MAJOR WATERS - SUSQUEHANNA WATERSHED

Waterbody	Segment Length / Area
<i>Major Tributaries &amp; Streams</i>	
	<i>Miles</i>
Chenango River	2,796
Tioughnioga River	1,293
Unadilla River	935
Owego River	766
<i>Lakes / Ponds / Reservoirs</i>	
	<i>Acres</i>
Otsego Lake	4,083
Canadarago Lake	1,882
Whitney Point Lake / Reservoir	1,235

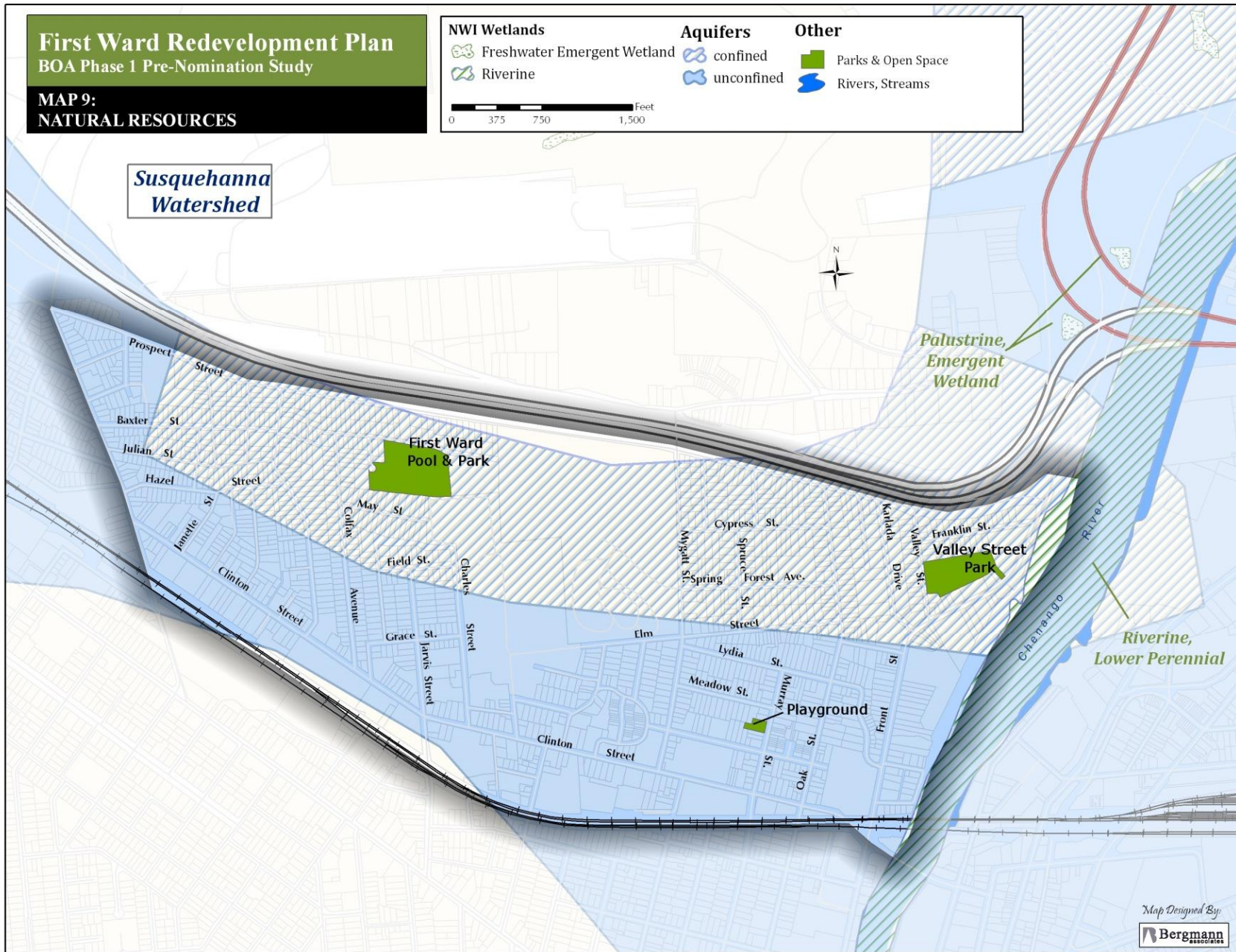
*Note:* As reported by the DEC, segment lengths for major tributaries include minor streams and creeks that feed into the main waterbody. As a result, reported lengths may seem significantly longer than the actual tributary.  
 Data Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

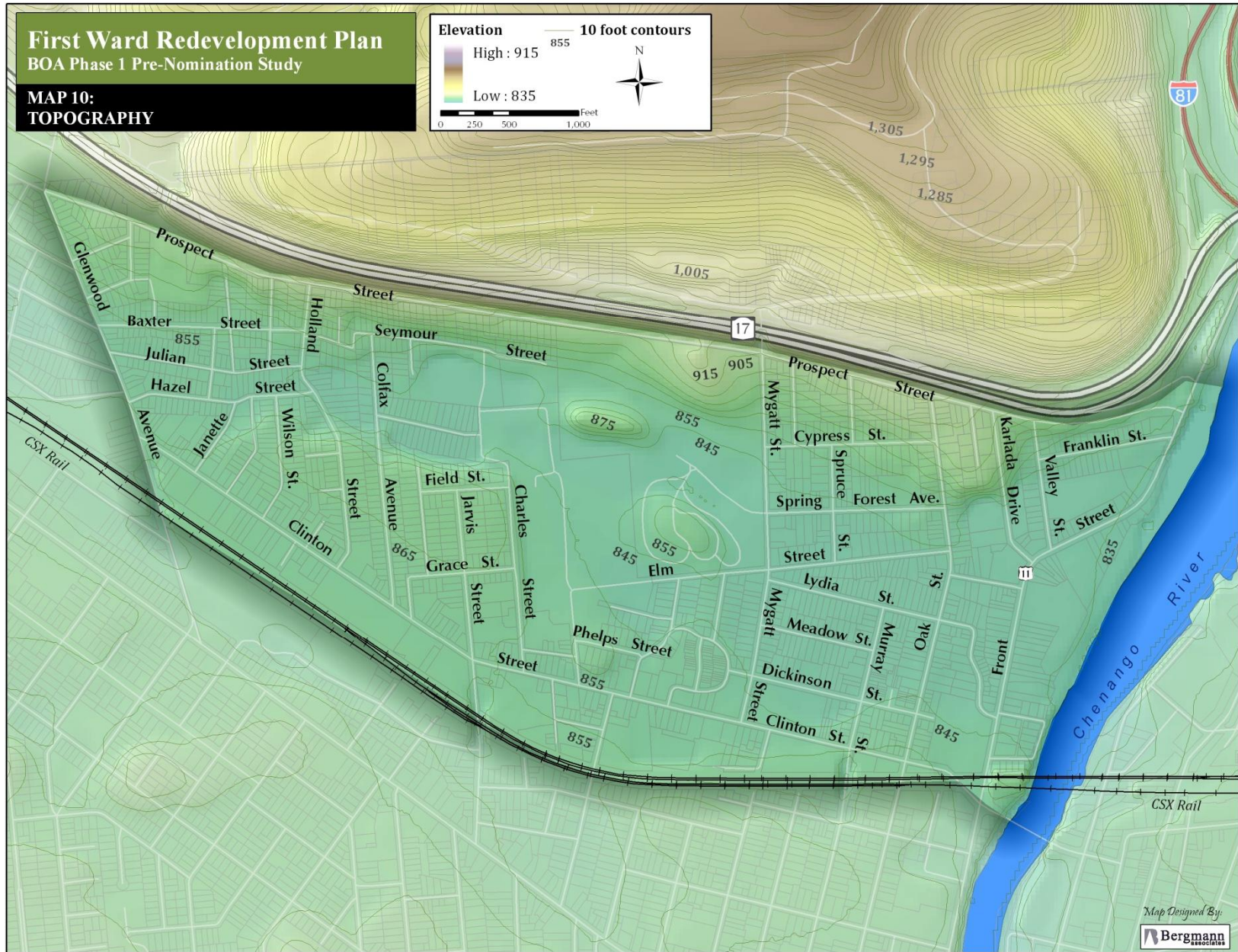
The First Ward study area is intersected by the boundary of two sub-watersheds: the Chenango Watershed, and the Owego-Wappasening Watershed. The Chenango Watershed drains into the Chenango River, which flows in a southwesterly direction and forms the eastern boundary of the study area. As of 2008, three waters were listed as impaired within the Chenango Watershed including the Upper Little York Lakes, Tully Lake, and the Whitney Point Lake and Reservoir. All three waterbodies are located north of the study area outside of the City of Binghamton. The primary causes of impairment are organic enrichment /oxygen depletion and phosphorous, which is often used for fertilization. The Owego-Wappasening watershed was last assessed in 2004; the only impaired waterbody located within this watershed is located south in Pennsylvania.

The location of the study area in proximity to two sub-watersheds indicates that future development will need to occur with an understanding of the surrounding water resources. Map 8 illustrates the Susquehanna Watershed and its associated sub-watersheds with respect to the study area.

*Rivers*

The study area’s eastern boundary is located along the Chenango River, which is a tributary of the Susquehanna River. The Chenango River is approximately 90 miles long, stretching from Madison, New York (located approximately 20 miles southwest of Utica) southeast where it picks up the Tioughnioga River before joining the Susquehanna River in the City of Binghamton. In 1837 the Chenango Canal was constructed and prospered through trade, connecting the Erie Canal in Utica to the Susquehanna River in Binghamton before nationwide construction of railroads rendered the canal obsolete in the 1870’s. Historically, the Susquehanna River has been of regional importance, being named for an Indian Tribe that settled along its banks prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Susquehanna is the longest river in the American northeast, reaching 444 miles from Otsego Lake in Cooperstown, NY to the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The location of the study area adjacent to the Chenango River provides the opportunity for waterfront redevelopment along Front Street, and for recreational opportunities.





### Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that are saturated with water. Although not wholly aqueous or dryland, wetlands serve as important transition areas that provide habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna. In addition to being environmentally sensitive areas, wetlands are important natural infrastructure that serve to slow drainage from developed properties, filtering contamination from entering nearby waterways. Consequently, wetlands provide a natural means of protecting water quality and the integrity of stream beds by slowing runoff velocities, therefore reducing erosion. Wetlands have become widely acknowledged as high priorities for conservation, and areas where development should be restricted.

NYSDEC identifies and regulates all freshwater wetlands greater than 12.4 acres in size. There are no state regulated wetlands in or around the study area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also maps wetland areas, regardless of size and regulatory status, through the National Wetland Inventory (NWI).

The NWI classifies wetlands based on five defined systems that include Marine, Estuarine, Riverine, Lacustrine, and Palustrine. The First Ward study area abuts a Riverine wetland that overlaps the banks of the Chenango River. In addition, slightly north of the study area are two Palustrine wetlands. It is not anticipated that existing wetlands will inhibit future redevelopment efforts in the First Ward neighborhood. The Riverine wetland and the two Palustrine Emergent wetlands that are present outside of the study area are depicted on Map 9.

### Open Space

There are two main recreational spaces within the First Ward neighborhood: the First Ward Park, located in the northwest, and Valley Street Park, located in the northeast portion of the study area. Both parks have baseball diamonds available for recreational use. A small pocket park is located along Mygatt Street, among clusters of residential properties. Aside from formally established parks, Spring Forest Cemetery is located centrally within the neighborhood, providing approximately 40 acres of open space. Additionally, land located along the Chenango River provides the opportunity for waterfront redevelopment initiatives and the formation of green linkages. The majority of land located along the river is used as privately owned commercial or residential properties.

### Topography

The majority of the First Ward study area is characterized by relatively flat surfaces. Significant changes in elevation can be observed along the northern portion of the study area, which changes in elevation from 845 feet above mean sea level, to 915 feet over the distance of less than a mile. The highest land area is located off Prospect Street just west of Mygatt Street, at an elevation of 915 feet. The remaining land within the study area mostly fluctuates between 845 feet and 855 feet above sea level, dropping to 835 feet along the banks of the Chenango River. The consistent elevation levels within the study area indicate that topography should not be a primary consideration associated with future development. Map 10 illustrates the study area's topography using ten-foot contour lines.

## 2.6 Summary of Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations for the BOA

Redevelopment within the First Ward should be based on the needs of its residents, market and economic realities, existing natural and environmental features, and desired land use patterns. This analysis summarizes why revitalization strategies are needed within the First Ward BOA. The success of such strategies, however, will be contingent on community support and activism at the neighborhood level, as well as support at all levels of government.

### Summary Analysis and Key Opportunities

While the First Ward BOA has faced challenges in recent years as the City of Binghamton has seen its population drop and many key industries and employers leave the region, there are a significant number of opportunities that the neighborhood can build upon as it looks into the future and defines a path for its revitalization. The First Ward neighborhood must embrace its unique assets in order to capitalize on its strengths, such as available land, existing building stock, existing infrastructure, and the on-going planning efforts being undertaken throughout the region.

The key opportunities associated with the First Ward BOA are summarized below and graphically illustrated on Map 11: Actions for Revitalization.

#### *Location, Location, Location*

The First Ward neighborhood is strategically located as one of the gateway neighborhoods into the city, with a significant portion of traffic from State Route 17 and I-86 entering the city along Front Street within the BOA boundaries. Easy access to these major transportation routes, direct access to the Chenango River and a western boundary linking the neighborhood to adjacent communities are important characteristics to consider when developing a plan for revitalization of the First Ward.

#### *Availability of Land*

The First Ward contains a significant portion of the vacant, developable land within the City of Binghamton. According to 2008 parcel data obtained from Broome County, approximately half of all of the vacant land within the City is located in this historic neighborhood, making the area a prime location for City-wide revitalization strategies. The availability of developable land is a major asset within the First Ward neighborhood, though its recognized that a significant percentage of the land is privately owned. The neighborhood has untapped potential that could serve as a catalyst for city-wide revitalization strategies. The ability of the neighborhood to attract new businesses could serve to provide employment opportunities for residents. New development will also increase the tax base within the neighborhood, and link the core of the neighborhood to redevelopment initiatives on Front Street and Clinton Street.

#### *Clinton Street and Small Business Development*

Clinton Street has struggled in recent years to find its own identity. Land uses range from industrial to commercial to residential to churches, making it difficult to define what Clinton Street is, or should be. Historically known as Antiques Row, Clinton Street has been identified as a prime location within the region for antique and collectible shopping and once boasted a large concentration of these specialty businesses. While a number of antique/collectible businesses still exist, the concentration of these

businesses has slowly dwindled. However, there is a great opportunity to reinvigorate Clinton Street as a vibrant concentration of small scale businesses, retail establishments, and restaurants, including antique stores and collectibles. Affordable rental rates along Clinton Street will facilitate reinvestment opportunities. While further market analysis is required and can be completed in later phases of the BOA process, reinvigorating Clinton Street as a corridor of complementary retail uses and specialty eateries and bars would provide the neighborhood with an economic boost as well as provide needed goods and services within walking distance. The opportunity exists for a façade improvement program to improve business connectivity and unify this strategic corridor.

The First Ward is also located within an Empire Zone and should market this designation. Empire Zones were initiated by the State of New York to stimulate economic development in New York through the provision of tax incentives. The incentives were devised to attract businesses to the state and enable existing businesses to grow, thus encouraging job creation. Potential investors in small businesses may benefit from associated financial packages and incentives.

### *Light Industrial Development*

The Charles Street Business Park, once a brownfield that is now shovel ready for development, is a significant opportunity for the neighborhood. The site is already home to one new development project for the Emerson Network Power Company. Further light industrial and manufacturing development, when developed in a context sensitive to the neighborhood, has the opportunity to:

- Provide a needed economic impetus into the local economy by creating spin-off business opportunities (i.e. stores and restaurants for workers, supporting industrial businesses);
- Provide a steady level of higher income jobs for local workers;
- Increase the number of owner occupied units in the neighborhood as employees of new industrial businesses choose to live where they work; and
- Improve the aesthetic character of the neighborhood through the incorporation of planned industrial park improvements that include green space and linkages.

As identified above, portions of the First Ward are located within an Empire Zone and should market this designation. New businesses may benefit from associated financial packages and incentives.

### *Sustainable Development and Smart Growth*

Sustainable development came onto the radar following several decades of environmental movements occurring at the international level. The Earth Summit in Brazil (1992) specifically brought focus to the issue by urging countries to establish national sustainability goals. The idea of sustainable development refers to the ability of communities to meet the needs of current residents without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept intersects the notions of environmental, economic, and social progress towards equity. In the First Ward, the implementation of sustainable development and smart growth design principles can enhance the revitalization of underutilized urban lands and limit further sprawl in outlying areas. Sustainable development and smart growth opportunities in the First Ward have the opportunity to have many positive impacts on the local community, including:

- Increasing residents' accessibility to goods and services;



- Increasing employment opportunities by encouraging the development of new businesses on available land;
- Improving the walkability of the neighborhoods to provide opportunities for those without access to vehicles;
- Re-using existing structures; and
- Encouraging development that utilizes existing infrastructure.

Opportunities for green building and the incorporation of LEED standards into new building and site design also pose opportunities for sustainable development in the First Ward.

### *Green Infrastructure*

As aging infrastructure in the First Ward neighborhood becomes in need of repair and upgrades, there may be opportunities for furthering local goals of sustainable development by incorporating green infrastructure elements, such as porous pavement, street trees, rain gardens, green roofs, swales, and native landscaping.

### *Open Space and Greenways*

Protecting, encouraging, and expanding open space, greenways, and linkages within the First Ward is an opportunity that can be further explored as part of the BOA program. A comprehensive greenway network is directly linked to the concepts of sustainable development and smart growth and will help improve the character of the First Ward, increase accessibility for local residents, and improve the health and general wellbeing of users from throughout the city. Existing planning efforts in and around the First Ward BOA study area have emphasized creating recreational corridors along the waterfront in concert with the redevelopment of Front Street as a gateway to the city. The First Ward is well-positioned to connect to, and tie into, other trail and greenway initiatives proposed throughout the city.

### *Housing Rehabilitation*

With an aging housing stock, low housing costs, and high renter occupancy, there are a number of opportunities for residents, investors, and not-for-profit organizations to invest in the rehabilitation of the First Ward housing stock. The types of residential units vary in the neighborhood from modest mid-20<sup>th</sup> century worker homes to more elaborate and architecturally defined 19<sup>th</sup> century residences. In some instances, such as along Front Street or Clinton Street, there are opportunities for the adaptive reuse of former residential buildings to be converted to commercial uses, office space or mixed use structures. A number of local groups and individual developers have begun to undertake initiatives to clean up and improve the existing housing stock. These efforts should be applauded and continued as additional initiatives are put into place.

### *Historic Preservation*

The architectural character and legacy of the First Ward neighborhood is an important part of its identity. Maintaining the historic character and details of existing residences and commercial structures is an opportunity to preserve and protect the legacy of the neighborhood and sustain a unique and appealing location within the City and region.



### Preliminary Recommendations

Preliminary recommendations for the First Ward BOA have been organized to coincide with the Goal categories identified in this Redevelopment Plan and build on the opportunities identified for the First Ward neighborhood.

#### *Economic Revitalization*

Economic revitalization recommendations for the First Ward neighborhood will strive to identify realistic business development opportunities that are based on market realities. Phase 2 of the BOA process will incorporate an Economic and Market Analysis that will identify the market potentials, gaps, and opportunities for the study area. It is recognized that future small business opportunities presented for the First Ward may be different than what has historically been located on Clinton Street.

Further studies of potential brownfield, vacant, and underutilized sites should be developed to determine specific strategies for moving forward, with the final objective to make sites ready for redevelopment.

Economic revitalization of commercial areas could be further enhanced and enabled with targeted streetscape improvement and enhancement projects, such as additional street lighting to promote safety, pedestrian crosswalks and pavement treatments to slow traffic, and landscaping to improve the overall aesthetic character of the neighborhood.

### **PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION**

- Based on market analysis, identify an appropriate niche market for the First Ward and pursue appropriate small businesses through incentive programs and marketing strategies.
- Implement a Façade Improvement Program to improve the storefronts and building facades along Clinton and Front Streets.
- Develop design guidelines for new development that retains the scale, character, and desirable attributes of the neighborhood and is consistent with the gateway design standards to be developed by the Planning Commission.
- Promote waterfront redevelopment along Front Street.
- Create strong gateways into the First Ward from areas to the north, south, east, and west.
- Establish a strong physical connection from the City’s central business district into the First Ward, which could be marketed as “downtown west.”
- Implement recommendations for Front Street as identified in the 2008 Gateway Plan.

*Business Development and Job Creation*

Recommendations associated with business development and job creation will help to re-establish the First Ward neighborhood as a desirable location for businesses because of the opportunities and unique assets located within the neighborhood.

The Charles Street Business Park is the centerpiece for new light industrial and business park style development and has the potential to create hundreds of new jobs in the community. The Business Park is a “clean slate,” ready for development that offers a campus like setting, residential opportunities within walking distance, access to major transportation routes, and a variety of goods and services. The Broome County Industrial Development Agency should be supported in their efforts to further promote and market the Business Park as an advantageous place to locate a business. Build-out of the Business Park would once again offer the First Ward neighborhood “walk to work” employment opportunities, improving the stability of surrounding neighborhoods and furthering the objectives of the community to identify sustainable and long-term planning solutions.

**PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND JOB CREATION**

- Promote the redevelopment of the Charles Street Business Park as a campus-like setting, creating linkages that connect the campus to the surrounding neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Promote the establishment of support services for neighborhood employers and employees, including day care, healthcare, and restaurants.
- Identify potential sites for light industrial or similar businesses on sites other than in the Charles Street Business Park.

*Smart Growth and Sustainability*

Smart growth and sustainable development principles will help ensure the First Ward Redevelopment Plan addresses the need to create a long-term and feasible plan for the revitalization of the First Ward neighborhood. Recommendations will focus on the incorporation of sustainable design principles into both physical aspects of planning, such as buildings and sites, and non-physical elements, such as economic development and health.

The First Ward should build on the area’s existing recreation and open space to provide recreational connectivity to other parts of the city. Greening efforts will additionally serve to provide visual relief and environmental benefits to area residents. The marketing of rehabilitation, redevelopment, and infill development opportunities in the neighborhood should highlight potential costs savings associated with existing infrastructure, proximity of strong neighborhoods and residential core, and access to goods and services.

In addition, the area should maintain support for the conversion of the existing power plant located within the neighborhood into a cogeneration facility. A cogeneration plant uses a single thermodynamic process to simultaneously produce both electricity and heat. Because of system efficiencies, electricity and heat produced by such a facility can be delivered at greatly reduced costs. Although hurdles regarding the feasibility of a cogeneration facility in the First Ward exist, emerging technologies and policy shifts make this a possibility in the near future. The availability of energy at a reduced cost would further increase the competitiveness of the Charles Street Business Park in attracting new industries.

**PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:  
SUSTAINABILITY**

- Create linkages to trail and greenway connections being developed in adjacent areas of the City and surrounding communities.
- Increase the tree canopy along commercial corridors to improve aesthetics and encourage pedestrian traffic.
- Promote alternative development projects that meet the needs of changing demographic groups.
- Implement recommendations identified in the Broome County Greenway Plan.
- Integrate recommendations for planning in the First Ward as presented in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Increase accessibility to local food by establishing local community gardens and/or farmers markets.
- Preserve the environmental integrity of the existing aquifer and investigate options for sustainable use.
- Continue to advocate for the development and implementation of a “smart grid,” and smaller point-of-origin energy sources to increase viability of a cogeneration plant within the First Ward.

### *Quality of Life*

Quality of life recommendations for the First Ward will seek to make the First Ward neighborhood a sought-after place to live, visit, recreate, and do business in the City of Binghamton. Incorporation of urban design and place-making elements, such as gateway features, wayfinding signage, lighting, landscaping, and other streetscape treatments will help to improve the aesthetic character of the neighborhood. Providing residents a full range of goods and services, access to parks and open space, and a full range of transportation alternatives all contribute to overall quality of life experiences.

Residents of the First Ward share a common sense of pride and loyalty associated with their neighborhood while also recognizing the need for a more stable residential base. Absentee landlords and the conversion of single family homes to multi-family units has had a substantial impact on the local community and should be addressed through zoning modifications and special programs that offer incentives to current and future residents. Incentives can encourage home ownership and preservation of existing housing stock. Such incentives may include private partnerships to create Employer Assisted Housing programs.

Local groups and organizations are actively working together to help and rebuild and promote the neighborhood and to foster support and cooperation between existing residents, as well as business owners. These efforts should be recognized and supported by leaders within the City so they can be continued for the betterment of the entire community. Local organizations that provide community-based services and programs to members of the community should also be supported as their efforts are important to the stability and quality of life of First Ward residents.

## **PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITY OF LIFE**

- Capitalize on the area's rich social history through programming that explores the areas' Eastern European roots and further its sense of community.
- Adopt housing initiatives to preserve the historic housing stock and encourage ownership, owner-occupancy and reinvestment within the neighborhood.
- Identify a program to combat issues associated with absentee landlords, including code enforcement, penalties, and potential revisions to regulatory and zoning codes to help address problems.
- Implement and promote home buyer assistance programs.
- Establish a Community Beautification program that involves area youth and other interested residents and business owners in projects that enhance and beautify public streetscapes, parks, and open spaces.
- Institute a Neighborhood Watch program to provide residents with a sense of safety and security.
- Maintain open dialogue with local and regional transportation providers to ensure the transportation needs of the community are addressed.

### Further Study and Analysis

Based on the results of the Pre-Nomination Study, an initial list of suggested follow-up planning, design, and implementation efforts has been generated which will help refine the vision and recommendations for the First Ward BOA neighborhood.

- **Demographic Analysis** to generate an updated understanding of who is living in and around the BOA, based on updated 2010 census information, to better define recent trends, opportunities and emerging markets.
- **Parking Study and Analysis** to assess parking availability, issues, and opportunities along Clinton and Front Streets.
- **Streetscape and Pedestrian Facility Plan** to identify needed improvements and enhancements to study area streetscapes, including conceptual designs for improving the aesthetics and walkability of the neighborhood. This plan could also identify and conceptually depict traffic calming measures that could be introduced.
- **Gateway and Wayfinding Plan** to develop concepts for improving key entryways and gateways into the neighborhood and strengthen the sense of identity of the First Ward through a cohesive wayfinding program.
- **Market Analysis** to identify target retail and business markets for commercial areas within the study area and assess the appropriate mix and range of uses for the neighborhood.
- **Small Business Support Programs** to identify the needs of small businesses and identify potential incentive packages to encourage further small business development based on outcomes of the Market Analysis.
- **Historic Building Survey** to identify and document historic structures in the neighborhood to ensure they are preserved and protected as character-defining resources.
- **Concept Plan** specific to the study area that provides direction for future land uses and schematic redevelopment options for priority catalyst sites.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment Feasibility Studies** to determine redevelopment options for strategic brownfield sites.
- **Environmental Site Assessments** for eligible brownfield properties.
- **Marketing Strategy** to promote and highlight opportunities to potential investors and developers.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (2009). Brownfields Mission. In Brownfields and Land Revitalization. Retrieved June 2009 from <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/mission.htm>.

<sup>ii</sup> City of Binghamton (2006). Binghamton, New York – A Brief History. In Binghamton, New York. Retrieved June 2009 from [www.cityofbinghamton.com/history.asp](http://www.cityofbinghamton.com/history.asp).

<sup>iii</sup> Only ancestries that comprise one percent of the population or greater are illustrated. These ancestries comprise 91.3 percent of the total population who reported single ancestry in 2000.

<sup>v</sup> Dollar values are adjusted for inflation and represent 2009 dollar values.

<sup>vi</sup> Western New York Railroad Archive (2008). Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad. In Western New York Railroad Archive. Retrieved June 2009 from [http://wnyrails.org/railroads/dlw/dlw\\_stns\\_mainline.htm](http://wnyrails.org/railroads/dlw/dlw_stns_mainline.htm).