

SCHUYLerville RENAISSANCE THREATENED BY PCB-POLLUTED CANAL

Village of Schuylerville, NY

June 15, 2018



Vision Statement for the PCB Decontamination, Restoration, and Revitalization of the Old Champlain Canal

The vision for Schuylerville is to develop a distinctive set of recreational and interpretive experiences around the historic Old Champlain Canal (Canal) between the Fish Creek Pedestrian Bridge and the Dix Bridge - a span of approximately 1.4 miles. This linear park is bookended by the following key project areas: Fort Hardy Park and the new Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center in the south, and Lock 5 Island/Hudson Crossing Park with the restored Dix Bridge in the north. The western boundary is Canal Street and the eastern boundary is the Hudson River. The Canal serves as the spine. The village's identity as "Old Saratoga on the Hudson" can be re-established by reconnecting land with the Canal Towpath and water in the Old Champlain Canal. This will result in a unique and attractive destination for residents and visitors.

The vision to open the Canal for recreation has been a consistent recommendation in local and regional planning initiatives for nearly 25 years. The first plan that recommended historic and recreation improvements in the "Schuylerville Node" was the *Eastern Gateway Canal Regional Plan* (1994). The two most recent initiatives that set the tone and tenor for this vision are *Old Saratoga on the Hudson Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP)* (2007) and the *Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan* (2011). With the goal to establish a world class destination for national and international visitors, the LWRP set forth a framework of strategies to implement a unified and sustainable economic development vision for the Towns of Saratoga and Northumberland, Villages of Schuylerville and Victory, and Towns of Easton and Greenwich in Washington County. *The Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan* suggests drawing heritage and recreational travelers to the corridor through the establishment of trails, linear parks, bike routes, and water trails that connect assets along the 71-mile linear corridor on the Hudson River from Waterford to Whitehall. This has now been designated as part of the Empire State Trail.

Crisis and Opportunity

The Canal is unattractive, unwelcoming, and non-functioning. The canal is contaminated with PCB's and impassible for even small boats due to obstruction from vegetation, sediments, and foul-smelling decay. In storm events the Canal overflows its banks, threatening the municipal water wells and recreational and residential properties on the east. Once these limitations have been addressed and removed, the Canal can be restored to a functioning and safe condition. Schuylerville will advance to revitalization through economic development spurred on by a clean and functional Canal.

The immediate goal is to mitigate the existing crisis by determining the level of contamination, removing the contamination, and fixing the Canal and Turning Basin through the cleanup, repair, replacement, and upgrading of various components. This will result in re-establishing the water's unobstructed flow from the Hudson River at Lock 5 to Fish Creek. This activity involves dredging the Canal prism to a depth of a minimum of four feet along the entire 1.5-mile stretch, which ranges from 28 to 40 feet wide.



Specific tasks related to completing the cleanup of and improvements to this area include the following:

- Complete PCB testing and assessment of the contamination in the Canal and Turning Basin;
- Remove PCB contaminants;
- Identify the bridge, lock, and earth work required to rebuild and repair the historic junction lock culverts and various crossings to allow for water to properly flow through the Canal;
- Permit planned construction activities;
- Prepare SEQRA Environmental Assessment Long Form;
- Engineer and complete construction work including cost-estimates and schedules; and
- Implement landscape restoration plan.

Resources, Opportunities and Threats

LOCAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCES	
New Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center	General Schuyler House
Existing Historic Towpath and Canal	Siege Trail
Turning Basin	Empire State Trail/ Champlain Canalway Trail
New Champlain Canalway Trail segments and trailhead	Victory Woods and Saratoga Monument
Historic Fort Hardy Park and Recreation Facility	Saratoga National Historical Park
New Hudson River waterfront restaurant	Stark's Knob & Marshall House
Active Lock 5 facility and public docks	Historic Hudson Hoosic Rivers Partnership
Hudson Crossing Park	Gerald B. Solomon National Veterans Cemetery
Restored Historic Dix Bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists	Saratoga Surrender Site
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
New destination for Saratoga Springs' visitors	PCB contamination throughout the Canal
Crossroads from Vermont	Numerous unmanaged stormwater outflows in Canal
Supports Lakes to Locks heritage planning initiatives	Sediment in canal causing flooding in Fort Hardy Park
Reopen Canal and Turning Basin to small boats	Restricted water flow in culvert under Lock 5 Island Road
Reinvestment by local business/property owners	Restricted water flow at Old Lock 5 Junction
Potential to spur more overnight accommodations	Restricted water flow in four culverts under Route 29
New and enhanced access to the Hudson River	Restricted water flow at Reds Street culvert
Multi-generational recreational opportunities	Strong foul smell in Canal
Potential new business development on Canal Street	Canal too shallow for any activity
Empire State Trail segment between Fish Creek Pedestrian Bridge and Towpath Road to be constructed	Need for Ferry Street pedestrian crossing and streetscape improvements
Part of approved local, county, regional and state plans	Lack of targeted marketing for downtown Schuylerville
Potential to coordinate with Town of Greenwich/Hudson Crossing Park on Hudson River waterfront plans	Lack of consistent and coordinated wayfinding and interpretive signage
Waypoint and Connection to the Empire State Trail	Unsupportive zoning for businesses on Canal Street

Project Summary

The vision for the **PCB Decontamination, Restoration, and Revitalization of the Old Champlain Canal** is a perfect "fit" into the wider goal established in the *Old Saratoga on the Hudson Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan*: to unite the communities along both sides of the Hudson River in one revolutionary, regional effort to protect the area's extraordinary beauty, history, and heritage while enhancing the quality of life and economic stability of the people who live here now and in the future. Projects, opportunities, and uses will be developed as the Canal is being restored to safe and attractive conditions. As a restored historic waterway, it will attract both new residents and visitors to Schuylerville and lead to the expansion of the local and regional economies.



***Restricted Canal Flow North of Fort Hardy Park
Looking West***



***Empire State Trail on Towpath Road
Looking North***



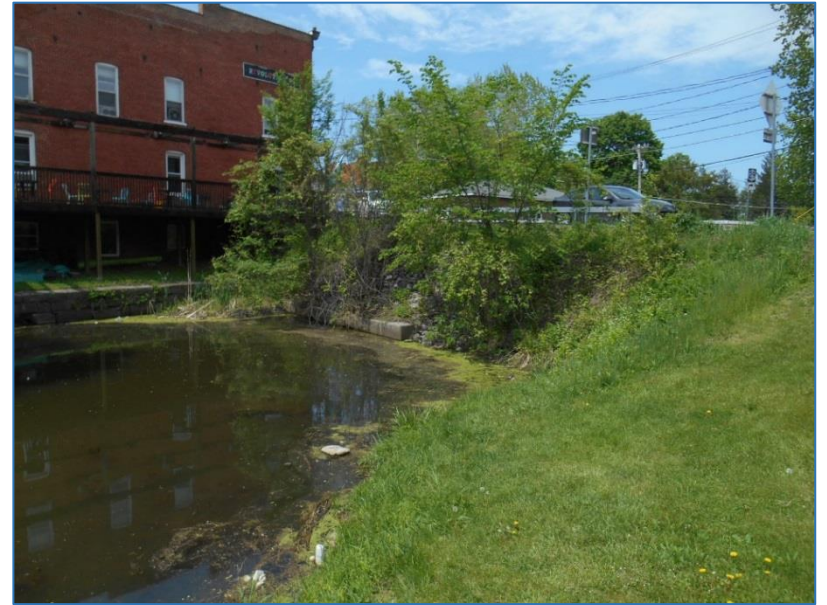
***Jersey Barriers above Reds Street Culvert
Looking North***



***Reds Street Culvert Obstructing Water Flow
Looking South***



***Culvert under Reds Street from Fort Hardy Park
Looking North***



***Sediment-Choked Culvert under Route 29/Ferry Street
Looking North***

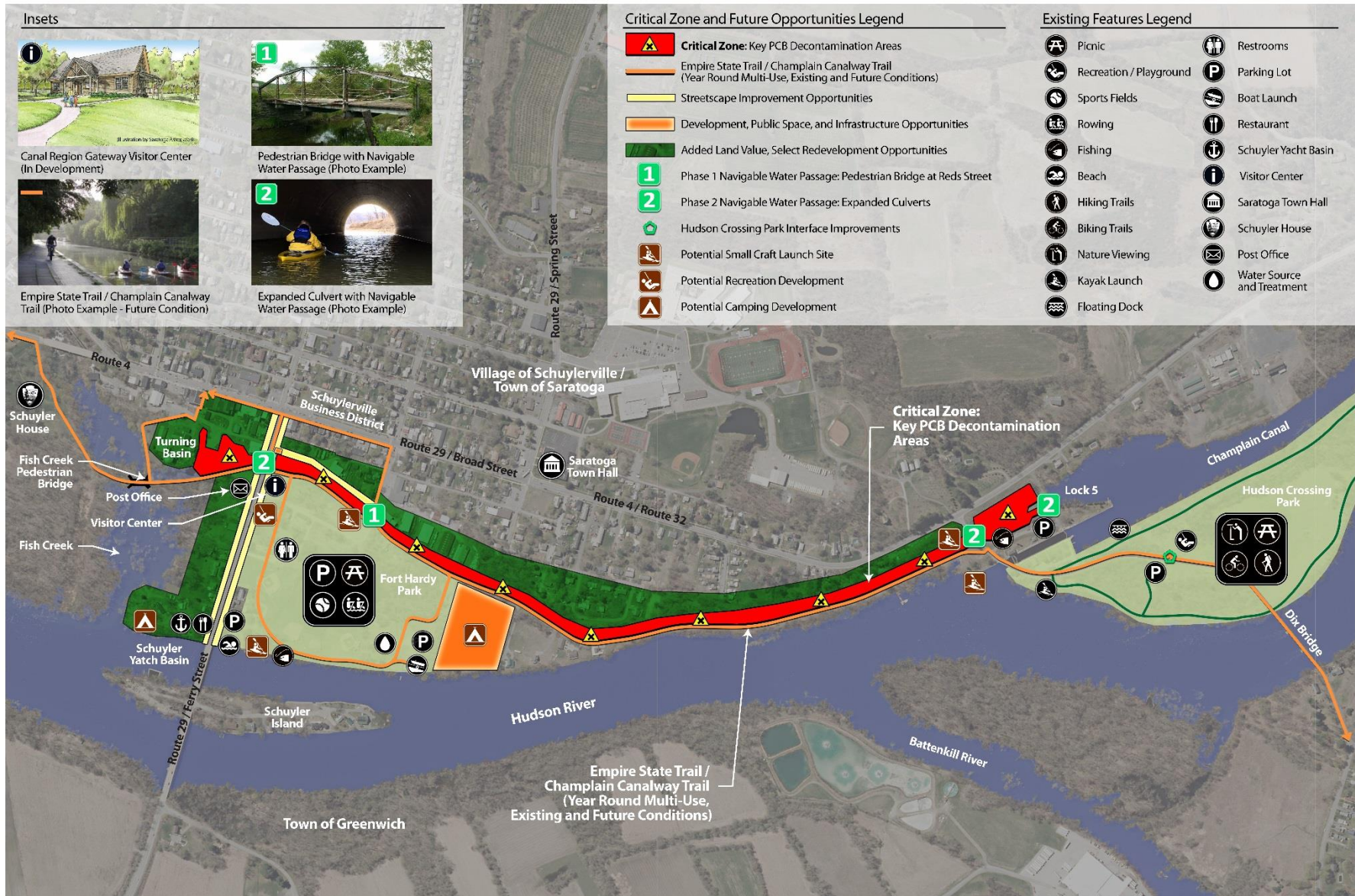


***Culvert along Canal Street
Looking West***



***Historic Junction Lock with Restricted Water Flow near Lock 5
Looking South***

Conceptual Drawing of the Critical Zone Project Area and Plan for the PCB Decontamination, Restoration, and Revitalization of the Old Champlain Canal in the Village of Schuylerville



Critical Zone Project Area Map

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