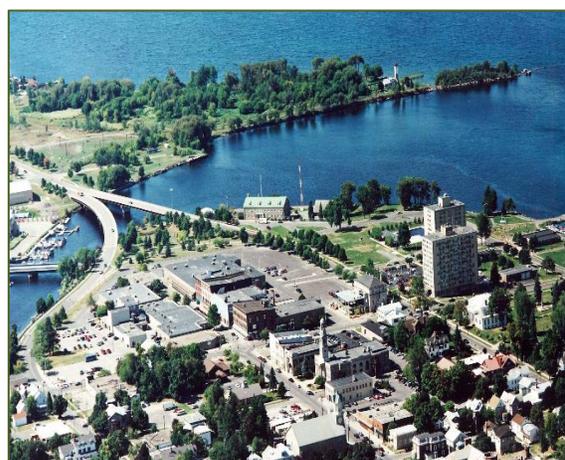


# City of Ogdensburg LWRP Monitoring Report June 2012

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## Community Background:

The City of Ogdensburg is located at the mouth of the Oswegatchie River on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River, in Saint Lawrence County, at the northern border of New York State and United States with Canada. The City's coastal area covers approximately 2.26 square miles with 8.3 miles of shoreline, 6.8 miles of shoreline along St. Lawrence River and 1.5 miles of shoreline along Oswegatchie River. Chartered as a city on April 27, 1868, Ogdensburg remains one of St. Lawrence County's five urban centers and the county's only city. In 2000, there were 12,364 people residing in the City; the City's 2010 population was 11,128.



Confluence of Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence Rivers

Ogdensburg uses its main water resources, the St. Lawrence and the Oswegatchie Rivers, for water supply, scenic activities, recreational purposes including boating, fishing and swimming activities, and port-related and industrial activities. Sport fishermen from the area and from elsewhere in New York State and Canada are attracted to the lower Oswegatchie and this stretch of the St. Lawrence River.



Port of Ogdensburg

Muskellunge fishing in the St. Lawrence River is touted as the best in the nation. Shore fishing is popular at various points along the waterfront, including the municipal docks.

The City's portion of the St. Lawrence River shelters the Port of Ogdensburg, the only U.S. port on the St. Lawrence Seaway, which provides a major basis for economic activity in the City and the region. The Oswegatchie River, which crosses the western side of the City before flowing into St. Lawrence River, also shaped the development of the City with its potential for hydroelectric power generation, its State-

designated significant fish and wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and recreational value. The City's third and less significant flowing waterbody, the Tibbits Creek, drains a large area of low-lying lands in the eastern and southern parts of Ogdensburg, and empties into the St. Lawrence River along the City's easternmost shoreline.



**Abandoned pier**

The historically industrial uses supported by the proximity of the two rivers left four large brownfields dominating the western side of the City’s coastal area, currently in different phases of readiness for redevelopment. The City is concentrating most of its current planning efforts on the redevelopment and reuse of those brownfields, with the complete and enthusiastic involvement of its residents and stakeholders.

The eastern side of the City’s coastal area shelters two industrial parks owned and managed by the Ogdensburg Port and Bridge Authority and two correctional facilities, Riverview and Ogdensburg, managed by the New York State Department of Correctional Service. In the same area of the coast, the construction of the Ogdensburg–Prescott International Bridge that links the United States and Canada, northeast of the City, and the opening of the Ogdensburg International Airport transformed the City into a potential regional transportation node. Regional and State efforts are being done to use this industrial area to its full potential and transform the City in a major regional and State transportation node.

The cultural attractions of the City’s coastal area are the Frederic Remington Art Museum, which offers visitors a significant collection of paintings of the American West created by Frederic Remington, and two major seasonal events featuring a variety of season specific activities, the International Seaway Festival that reenacts the French and Indian War and the winter battle reenactment commemorating the Battle of Ogdensburg of the War of 1812.

### **Collaborations with Department of State:**

Since completion of the City of Ogdensburg Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in 1987, the City has worked to advance its implementation. The focus of these efforts has involved reuse of underutilized lands and brownfields and the expansion of public access to the waterfront.



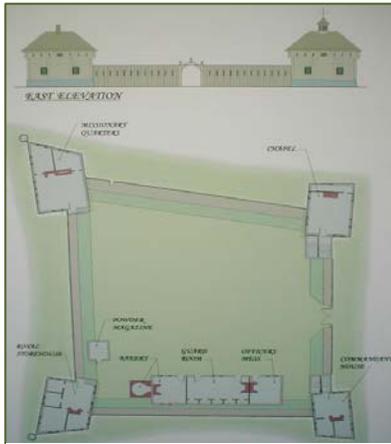
**Dobisky Visitors Center and Marina**

Since 1994, the City of Ogdensburg was awarded five Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP) grants for constructing a visitor information center along the St. Lawrence River and trail improvements along the Oswegatchie River, for preparing a study assessing the feasibility of reconstructing Fort La Presentation, and for updating the City’s approved LWRP.

The Dobisky Visitors Center hosts interpretive panels presenting the history of Ogdensburg and is currently used for public meetings and events. For visitors and transient boaters, the Center offers a

lounge, kitchen, and hot shower facilities that complement the amenities offered by the adjacent municipal marina.

The improvements to the Maple City Trail, which starts in Greenbelt Park on the St. Lawrence and stretches along the Oswegatchie River for a distance of about 2.2 miles, offers numerous points of interest, benches and lookouts along the way.



The reconstruction of the Fort La Presentation is the goal of the Fort La Presentation Association, a nonprofit organization, which owns the land at Lighthouse Point where the reenactment of the French and Indian War is conducted each year and where the fort originally stood.

Currently, the City is working on an LWRP amendment which proposes an expanded coastal boundary, conceptual designs for the redevelopment of its waterfront brownfields, and city-wide changes in the existing land and water uses.

(See the attached chart: Grants Awarded - Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, City of Ogdensburg.)

**Proposed Fort Reconstruction**

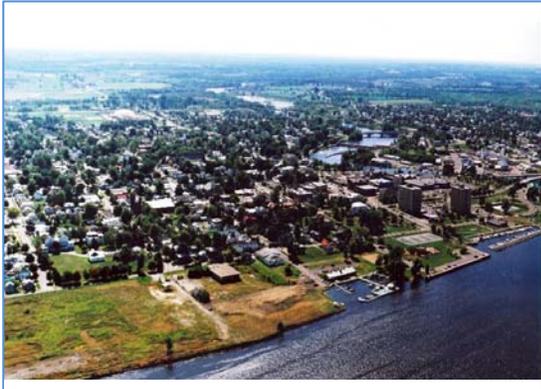
### **LWRP Monitoring Process:**

The goal of the monitoring process is for the Department of State (DOS) to assess the consistency of community's activities and decision-making procedures with its approved LWRP. Additionally, this process provides a forum for a community to highlight successes and request technical and financial assistance for program implementation.

DOS began the City of Ogdensburg LWRP monitoring with a phone call to the City's Department of Planning and a formal letter sent to the Mayor, asking the City to participate in the process and briefly describing what the monitoring process would involve; a list of survey questions was enclosed with the letter. The letter indicated that a conference call would take place between DOS representatives and municipal officials or their designated representatives who would respond to the survey questions; a follow-up dialogue and site visit would be arranged to review the responses provided in the survey and visit areas where projects proposed in the LWRP had been developed, and areas where future projects are proposed; and, that following the site visit, DOS would prepare a written assessment of findings to identify areas of improvement, training, or need for LWRP amendments.

The conference call to discuss the City's answers to the survey questions was informative and provided much of the details necessary for the DOS to make its assessment. The City described the relevancy of its LWRP, its use, and the associated local consistency review process. Participants were Andrea Smith and John Buckholz, both planners with the City.

As a follow-up to the call, DOS staff traveled to Ogdensburg to meet with City staff. This meeting focused on visiting the sites of LWRP projects, providing local, State and federal consistency review



**Aerial view of the shoreline**

process training to the City personnel, and discussing future opportunities of collaboration with DOS. The visit provided DOS with an opportunity to see the progress made by the City in cleaning and preparing its coastal brownfields for redevelopment, and to learn about the City's most recent success projects such as the restoration of a private marina, renovation of an adjacent building which will host associated retail uses, and the replacement of a pedestrian and utilities bridge over Oswegatchie River. The DOS staff provided technical assistance regarding potential improvements to the erosion protection structure (seawall) supporting

the shoreline that is also the edge of the Maple City Trail along Oswegatchie River and to a small park on the opposite side of the river, near the Oswegatchie Dam. DOS staff also had the opportunity to meet with other employees of the City, including the City Manager and the Building Code Enforcement Officer, to discuss the requirements and implementation of local, State and federal consistency review processes. Guidance was offered on how to best communicate the City's priorities through their local consistency laws and the need for specificity for those activities that will be subject to local consistency review.

## **DOS Findings:**

### **Overview**

The City of Ogdensburg Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), approved by the New York State Secretary of State in 1987, is the guiding document for the City's waterfront revitalization projects, such as the construction of a visitors' center and improvements to the municipal marina on the St. Lawrence River, the cleaning and reuse of four former industrial sites adjacent to the waters of St. Lawrence River, and the construction of a city-wide mixed-use trail. The decades of planning efforts and moderate investment in the revitalization of the City's waterfront is clearly discernible, but more work is needed to transform the current waterfront brownfields into mixed-use redevelopment including recreation, retail, and residential uses. The approved LWRP has also helped the City to secure funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop Brownfield Area-Wide Plans, to partner with the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Division of the New York State Department of State (DOS), and to assist in the reconstruction of a private marina and marina shop on the Oswegatchie River.

### **LWRP Implementation**

Ogdensburg's LWRP includes a dated inventory and analysis of the natural and cultural resources of the City's coastal area; it also provides guidelines for improving or preserving these resources consistent with the New York State Coastal Management Program and its implementation law, Article 42 of the Executive Law. The LWRP has provided the City with a programmatic vehicle for focusing on its waterfront resources and planning for development.



Municipal docks

Docking Facilities

The City’s approved LWRP identifies the need to expand docking facilities to support the local tourism economy by attracting visitors to its waterfront and downtown. The City has worked on expanding its docking facilities, which currently consist of a municipal marina and a nearby docking area on the St. Lawrence River, and a recently renovated and reopened private marina on the Oswegatchie River.



Fort LaPresentation

La Présentation, located at the top of the last rapids on the St. Lawrence River, was the transshipment point for supplies, soldiers, explorers and missionaries heading into the interior of North America from French settlements along the lower St. Lawrence River<sup>1</sup>. The mission of Fort La Présentation Association is to sponsor or benefit the historically accurate reconstruction of Fort la Présentation in close proximity to the original site, and to administer an ongoing presence. The Fort La Présentation Association has acquired approximately 21 acres that makes up a significant portion of the original site of the Fort, for which a conceptual redevelopment plan was created. In 1998, DOS awarded an EFP grant for the preparation of a feasibility study for the reconstruction of Fort La Presentation.



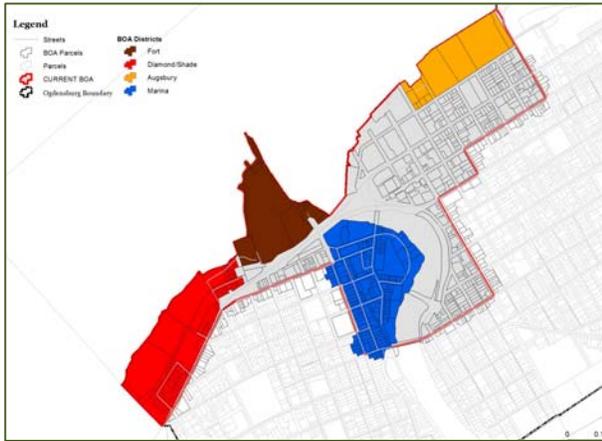
Dobisky Visitors' Center

Dobisky Visitor's Center

The Dobisky Visitors' Center is located on Riverside Avenue on the banks of the St. Lawrence River. The Center’s lounge, kitchen and hot showers are used by the resident and visitors, including the boaters using the City’s transient slips of the adjacent marina on the St. Lawrence River. The interpretive panels found inside the visitor’s center tell of the colorful history of Ogdensburg from the rum-running days, to one of its most famous sons, artist and sculptor Frederic Remington. The design and construction of the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fort1749.org/>

visitors' center, now a city landmark, was funded through an EPF grant awarded by DOS in 2003.



**Brownfields location**

### Redevelopment of underutilized former industrial sites

Capitalizing on its location at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie Rivers, the City has been a seaport since the early 19th Century. The completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 opened the area to a new wave of industrial expansion. Unfortunately, the City experienced economic decline during the 1970s and 1980s which resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs and left several industrial waterfront sites abandoned, vacant or otherwise underutilized. Today, these

sites represent a significant development opportunity for the City of Ogdensburg. The undevelopable brownfields comprise approximately 330 acres encompassing at least 13 identified contaminated brownfield sites and many vacant sites suspected of contamination, of which 70 acres are located along the St. Lawrence River shoreline and have the potential to become prime real estate. Currently, EPA and DOS funding is helping the City's cleaning efforts and the planning for redevelopment.



**Maple City Trail**

### Maple City Trail

This Maple City Trail provides off-street trail access for pedestrians and cyclists across the City. The trail begins next to the Luksich Pool, at the intersection of State Street and Riverside Drive. The route extends through Crescent Park to and past the Spring Street Bridge. The trail continues along the banks of the Oswegatchie River through designated wetland ending at a bend in the river directly opposite St. Mary's Cemetery, about three-quarters of a mile

south of NY-812. The City intends to extend this trail and improve its directional signage. The construction of the trailhead improvements along the Oswegatchie River was funded through an EPF grant awarded by DOS in 1996.

### LWRP Amendment

The City adopted its LWRP in 1986. Over the years, the need to update the LWRP has become apparent to clarify the community vision to reflect changes in the community, identify land and water use changes and the next generation of waterfront revitalization projects. The LWRP update will reflect major projects completed since 1987, like the Visitor Center and the improved municipal marina, and update the City's policies that guide how the waterfront should be developed. The work on the amendment is partially funded by an EPF grant awarded by DOS in 2007.

### **LWRP Document Accessibility**

The copies of the 1987 LWRP are currently located in the City's planning and clerk offices, and in the public library. The public has access to the documents during the office hours and library hours. An electronic copy of the LWRP is available on the DOS website. Following approval of the LWRP amendment, it will become available in electronic format on both the City and DOS websites.

### **Local Consistency Review**

The City of Ogdensburg LWRP Consistency Law was adopted on January 26, 1987 to provide for the protection and beneficial use of the natural and man-made resources within the City's waterfront area by ensuring that actions classified as Type I or unlisted under Part 617 of Title 6 of NYCRR to be undertaken, approved or funded by local agencies will be undertaken in a manner consistent with the policies and purposes of the adopted LWRP.

The city planners are the point of contact for the review of projects proposed in the waterfront. Any proposed action located within the LWRP boundary is reviewed by the Planning Office, who evaluates the consistency of the proposed action with the policies of the LWRP and provides recommendations to the City Council, the Planning Board, or the Zoning Board of Appeals, depending on the type and nature of the proposed action. Based on the recommendations received, the relevant review agency approves or rejects the proposed action.

There are approximately three consistency decisions made per year. The consistency decisions are put in writing and kept on file at City Hall indefinitely. Recent improvements to the City's website have enabled the City to keep records of decisions online and make them available to the public.

Because of the ongoing updating of the LWRP document, most of the City officials are also familiar with the document. However, the consistency review process is based on a law with an obsolete format and content adopted almost three decades ago.

<b>Grants Awarded</b>			
<b>Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP)</b>			
<b>City of Ogdensburg</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
2007	\$35,000	<b>Ogdensburg LWRP Revision</b> - The City of Ogdensburg will update its Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the St. Lawrence River waterfront, originally approved in 1987. Work will include development of a Harbor Management Plan, integration of the City's Waterfront Redevelopment Plan into the LWRP, and inventory and assessment of waterfront brownfield sites proposed for redevelopment.	Underway
2003	\$250,000	<b>Construction of St. Lawrence River Visitor Information Center</b> - The City will construct a visitor information center in the Greenbelt Park, located immediately adjacent to the St. Lawrence River and municipal marina. The project involves completion of the design and bid specifications, demolition and removal of an existing building, and construction of a new 6,000 sq ft. building in its place. The project will provide a link between the waterfront and downtown business district.	Closed
1998	\$50,000	<b>Fort La Presentation Reconstruction Feasibility Study</b> - The City will prepare a feasibility study for re-construction of Fort La Presentation, originally constructed in 1749 at the confluence of the Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence Rivers. The City envisions the fort as a major tourism resource and the grant would be used to undertake an initial development plan and cost estimates.	Closed
1996	\$22,000	<b>Oswegatchie River Trail</b> - The project involves construction of trailhead improvements along the Oswegatchie River adjacent to the site of the proposed waterfront arena being developed by the City. The trailhead improvements will serve to complement the arena and enhance public use of the Maple City Trail system along the Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence Rivers. Included in the project will be construction of a parking lot at West River and Main Streets to serve trail users, construction of an approximately 1,500 linear foot long trail segment extending from the parking lot along the Oswegatchie River, installation of public docks, and landscaping.	Closed
1994	\$30,000	<b>LWRP Amendment</b> - This grant is for amendment of the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program to reflect current waterfront conditions and issues, as well as including a harbor management element. The harbor management element will address problems of conflict, congestion, and competition for space in the surface waters and underwater lands along the City's St. Lawrence River waterfront.	Closed