

NEW YORK STATE



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREAS PROGRAM

DECEMBER 2009

Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program (BOA), communities across the State are laying the critically needed groundwork to revitalize their neighborhoods affected by brownfields. The BOA Program provides communities with expertise and financial assistance, up to 90 percent of the total eligible project costs, to complete redevelopment strategies to transform brownfields from liabilities to community assets.

*More than \$25 million invested in BOA communities ...
addressing over 50,000-acres impacted by more than 4,700 brownfield sites*

PROGRAM GRANTS

New York State has invested more than \$25 million for 127 BOA grant awards throughout the State. Communities are addressing over 50,000-acres impacted by more than 4,700 brownfield sites located in former industrial areas, downtowns, waterfronts, and commercial and residential areas. Grantees are using the BOA approach to reverse the cycle of disinvestment and decay to revitalize neighborhoods and communities so they are more livable.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Of the \$25,258,361 in funding awarded for 127 grants, municipalities have received 99 grants totaling \$17,491,045 representing 69% of funds awarded; and community organizations received 28 grants totaling \$7,767,316 representing 31% of funds awarded.

Of the 99 grants to municipalities, cities received 62 grants, towns received 21 grants, villages have received 9 grants, and county/regional organizations received 7 grants.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Brownfields Spotlight Communities Initiative - In November 2008, Governor David A. Paterson announced the Brownfields Spotlight Communities Initiative that established a forum for BOA communities to explore opportunities to partner with state and federal agencies that can support and complement local revitalization efforts. Three Spotlight Meetings were held on March 20, April 23, and November 19 in Buffalo, Wyandanch, and the South Bronx respectively, with participants from multiple local, state, and federal agencies.

Grant Funds - Starting in state fiscal year 2007-2008, the first appropriations not subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor and State Legislature were made enabling quicker release of funds.

Single Agency Administration - In April 2009, as a result of changes to the General Municipal Law, the program was transferred to the Department of State resulting in a more efficient contracting process.

New Payment Guidelines - In October 2009, the Department of State issued new, improved payment guidelines and forms to make it easier for grantees to apply for and receive reimbursement.

Training for Grantees - DOS launched the *Community Seminar Series* in September 2007 to provide training assistance for community leaders and others to successfully plan, design and implement projects funded through the BOA Program. From September 2007 to October 2008, twenty-four training sessions were delivered to BOA communities covering a range of ten topic areas.

Tax Credits - Properties accepted into the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) that are redeveloped in conformance with BOA plans may receive a two percent enhancement to the Tangible Property Credit pursuant to the Brownfield Reform Law of July 2008.

Open Enrollment - The program transitioned to open enrollment in October 2008 so applications are now accepted on a continuous basis throughout the year to provide convenience to applicants and to maintain project momentum as program participants progress through the program's steps. When requested by potential applicants, DOS staff consults with potential applicants prior to the submittal of their application to ensure that program resources fully meet their needs.

Program Workshops - In July 2009, the Department of State conducted 13 workshops across the state for prospective applicants that focused on the BOA Program and other DOS administered programs.

PREVIEW OF 2010 PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Regional Collaboration - Building on the Spotlight Communities Initiative, DOS will conduct similar Spotlight type community workshops over the next 2 years. DOS anticipates conducting 2 to 3 regional workshops each year involving multiple communities and focusing on feasible projects to achieve neighborhood revitalization. The Department of State seeks to conduct these workshops with federal partners through the Federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Updated Program Guidance - The Department of State is updating the BOA Program Guidance to more fully describe the full range of eligible activities that the program can fund. This updated guidance will be based in part on the program's experience and lessons learned from projects and grantees to date.

Training Program - The Department of State will develop six new, advanced level training modules for the Community Seminar Series. Planning is also underway to provide on-line access to the sessions in addition to in-person training. Six BOA seminars have already been studio produced and ready to be made available via "on demand" webcast, and provided to grant recipients on DVD.

Outreach Materials - The Department is embarking on a project to help further enhance delivery of the BOA Program through branding and the development of multi-faceted outreach materials. The goal is to enhance program information and delivery for BOA participants and stakeholders in a deliberate and coordinated fashion.

Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program Update

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Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program

OVERVIEW

The Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program provides municipalities and community organizations (community based organizations and community boards) with technical and financial assistance of up to 90 percent of the total eligible project costs, to complete area-wide planning approaches to brownfields redevelopment. The Department of State administers the BOA program in partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Through a community driven process, this program enables community leaders to establish a clear vision and implementation strategy to revitalize and improve areas so they become economically and environmentally sustainable. The BOA Program enables municipalities and community organizations to:

- *Address a range of problems posed by multiple brownfield sites;*
- *Establish sustainable development goals and objectives;*
- *Build consensus on the future uses for the area with an emphasis on redeveloping strategic brownfield sites;*
- *Establish the multi-agency and private-sector partnerships necessary to leverage assistance and investments to revitalize neighborhoods and communities;*
- *Address environmental justice concerns for communities which may be burdened by negative environmental consequences.*

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

A unique area-wide approach to brownfields redevelopment . . .

Area-Wide Approach to Brownfields - The BOA Program emphasizes an area-wide approach, rather than the traditional site by site approach, to brownfield assessment and redevelopment. The area-wide approach enables communities to: comprehensively assess existing economic and environmental conditions associated with brownfield blight and impacted areas; identify and prioritize community supported redevelopment opportunities; and to put in motion actions to advance and implement priority projects.

Flexible Planning Framework - The BOA planning framework is flexible and can be adjusted and tailored to meet specific community needs. Within this framework, the BOA Program enables municipalities and community organizations to prepare area-wide revitalization plans that include: community visioning; existing conditions analysis; economic and market studies to assist in determining the best use of brownfields and vacant sites; environmental investigations; site-specific redevelopment plans; environmental impact assessments and statements; marketing materials to attract developer interest; local law changes; and other actions to spur investment, clean-up and redevelopment of brownfield sites. These types of activities are permitted in three program steps:

- ***Pre-Nomination Study (Step 1)*** - This product enables a community to complete a preliminary analysis of issues and opportunities in the proposed BOA so communities can gain a basic assessment and understanding about existing conditions, brownfields and the area's potential for revitalization.

- **Nomination (Step 2)** - This product enables communities to conduct an in-depth assessment and evaluation of existing conditions and assets in the study area, including an economic and market trends analysis, to determine the best opportunities and reuse potential for strategic sites, and to identify actions for revitalization.
- **Implementation Strategy (Step 3)** - The Implementation Strategy provides funding for a range of techniques and actions to implement the area-wide plan, advance redevelopment on strategic sites, improve supporting infrastructure, and achieve revitalization objectives.

Designated Areas - Upon a grantee's completion of a BOA Plan (Nomination with Implementation Strategy) the Secretary of State will review and determine the consistency of the BOA Plan with the General Municipal Law (Section 970-r). If the BOA Plan is determined to be consistent with the provisions of the General Municipal Law, the Secretary shall designate the BOA. For implementation assistance, designated areas shall receive priority and preference from DEC's Environmental Restoration Program and the State's Environmental Protection Fund Programs. Designated areas may also receive priority and preference when considered for other local, state and federal programs.

Eligible Applicants - Funding is awarded on a competitive basis to New York State Municipalities, New York City Community Boards, and Community Based Organizations, (CBOs). CBOs are defined as not-for-profit corporations whose stated mission is to promote community revitalization within the geographic area in which the organization is located, and has 25 percent or more of its Board of Directors residing in the community of the such area.

Funding Preferences - Funding preferences are directed to areas having one or more of the following characteristics: a concentration of brownfield sites; areas showing indicators of economic distress; project partners and community support; and strategic opportunities to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. New York State will reimburse grantees for 90 percent of eligible project costs.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S ROLE IN THE BOA PROGRAM

The Department of State brings professional expertise, funding, training, and technical guidance to all our community partnerships, and is helping to bring projects that are transforming communities and improving the environment from concept to reality. The BOA Program has six full time staff providing outreach and technical assistance as well as contract monitoring. Staff are assigned to specific regions of the state and work closely with successful BOA applicants to advance and implement approved projects.

- **Initial organizer and catalyst** - DOS works in partnership with grantees to launch projects including: finalizing work plans and executing contracts, convening initial organization meetings; and overseeing consultant procurement.
- **Guidance and expertise** - BOA's professional staff provides hands-on guidance in all phases of plan development including land use, economic analysis, and implementation techniques.
- **Coordinating the review of revitalization strategies** - DOS coordinates the review of draft report products both within the DOS and with appropriate state agencies. Often DOS Counsel's Office serves as an advisor on the adequacy of proposed local laws for plan implementation.
- **Conduit to other agencies** - DOS, at the request of program participants, will be a liaison to a particular state agency representative or program, depending on need and circumstance, to assist with plan implementation.

In July 2009, the Department of State hosted 13 workshops across the state to promote the BOA Program, discuss opportunities for eligible applicants, and provide direction on completing grant applications.

**Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program
FUNDING AND GRANTS**

BOA PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS AND FUNDING

\$78,250,000 was appropriated for the BOA Program and other brownfield related purposes starting with state fiscal year 2003-2004 to and including state fiscal year 2009-2010.

- Of the \$78,250,000, \$60,000,000 was appropriated from state fiscal years 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and is subject to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) by the Governor and Legislative Leaders; and \$18,250,000 was appropriated from state fiscal years 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and is not subject to the MOU.
- Of the \$60,000,000 that was appropriated and subject to the MOU, \$14.8 million was announced for 103 BOA grants and close to \$11.2 million was allotted for other brownfield related purposes leaving a maximum appropriation available of close to \$34 million.
- Of the \$18,250,000 that was appropriated and not subject to the MOU, \$10.5 million was announced for 24 BOA grants leaving a maximum appropriation available of close to \$7.7 million.

BOA PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GRANTS

Since March 2005, as shown in the table below, three announcements have enabled the release of more than \$25 million for 127 BOA Program grants:

- March 2005 Memorandum of Understanding - The Governor and Legislative Leaders announced 53 grants totaling \$7,630,538. This announcement funded projects for applications received during the April to June 2004 solicitation period.
- March 2008 Memorandum of Understanding - The Governor and Legislative Leaders announced 50 grants totaling \$7,250,409. This announcement funded projects for BOA applications received during the April to June 2005 and April to June 2006 solicitation periods. No applications were solicited in 2007.
- October 2009 - Governor Paterson announced 24 grants totaling \$10,556,415 for applications received from October 2008 to September 2009.

BOA Program - Applications and Grant Awards								
Solicitation for Applications	June 2004		June 2005		June 2006		Open Enrollment 2008/09	
Program Step	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
Pre-Nomination	33	\$2,289,674	12	\$994,708	15	\$736,050	3	\$1,417,650
Nomination	16	\$4,248,864	9	\$2,101,699	12	\$2,966,152	19	\$6,196,747
Implementation	4	\$1,092,000	0	0	2	\$451,800	2	\$2,942,118
Total	53	\$7,630,538	21	\$3,096,407	29	\$4,154,002	24	\$10,556,415
Grant Funding Announced	\$7,630,538		\$7,250,409				\$10,556,415	
	March 22, 2005		March 7, 2008				October 7, 2009	

FUNDING PROVIDED TO GRANT RECIPIENTS

Eligible applicants in the BOA Program include: municipalities including cities, towns, villages, counties, regional planning boards, industrial development agencies and others. Community organizations include community based organizations (CBOs) and New York City Community Boards. In addition, municipalities and community organizations can apply jointly for funding under the program. As shown in the table below, lead applicants involving 99 municipalities received 69% and 28 community organizations received 31% of total funding awards.

Funding to Grant Recipients			
Applicant	Grants Received	Amount Awarded	% of Funding
Municipalities	99	\$17,491,045	69%
- Cities	62	\$12,036,417	48%
- Towns	21	\$3,659,752	14%
- Villages	9	\$799,717	3%
- County/Regional Organizations	7	\$995,159	4%
Community Organizations	28	\$7,767,316	31%
Totals	127	\$25,258,361	100%

Note: Included in the figures above are 21 applications (totaling \$6,830,985 representing 27 percent of total funds awarded) where an application is submitted jointly by a community organization and a municipality.

GRANTEES ADVANCING IN THE PROGRAM

As shown in the table below, communities are completing projects started with funding announced in 2005. The trend for program funding increases as communities progress further into the program. It is anticipated that, along with a continued demand for initial entry into the program, there will be an ever-increasing demand for funding to grantees to advance. As shown in the table below, 16 grantees have submitted applications to advance from Step 1 Pre-Nomination Studies to Step 2 Nominations and four grantees have advanced from Step 2 Nominations to Step 3 Implementation Strategies.

BOA Program - Grantees Advancing to the Next Program Step								
Solicitation Period for Applications	April to June 2004		April to June 2005		April to June 2006		Open Enrollment 2008 - 2009	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
New	53	\$7,630,538	19	\$2,652,907	24	\$2,932,447	11	\$4,737,772
Advancing from Step 1 to Step 2	0		2	\$443,500	3	\$769,754	11	\$2,876,525
Advancing from Step 2 to Step 3	0		0		2	\$451,800	2	\$2,942,118
Total	53	\$7,630,538	21	\$3,096,407	29	\$4,154,001	24	\$10,556,415
Date Announced	March 22, 2005		March 7, 2008			October 7, 2009		

REPORT PRODUCTS

Complete or near complete Pre-Nomination Study report products include:

Final

Town of Amherst – Sherman Drive Commercial District
Bronx Council on Environmental Quality – Harlem River
City of Cohoes – I-787 Corridor
City of Dunkirk – AL Tech Study Area
City of Glens Falls – South Street Area
Village of Hudson Falls – Hudson Falls Revitalization Opportunities Program
City of Jamestown – Chadokoin Riverfront
City of Lockport – Tourism Area
City of Norwich
City of Niagara Falls – Buffalo Avenue Corridor
City of Olean – Northeast Olean
Town of Oyster Bay – Hicksville Area
City of Rochester – Lyell-Lake-State Street
UPROSE – Sunset Park
Town and Village of Stillwater – Stillwater BOA
West Brighton Local Development Corporation - Richmond Terrace

Draft

City of Binghamton - First Ward Neighborhood Square
East Williamsburg Valley Industrial Development Corp. (EWVIDCO) - East Williamsburg
City of Elmira - South East Area
Town of Erwin - Town of Erwin/Villages of Painted Post and Riverside
Town of Fort Edward – Fort Edward Waterfront
City of Long Beach - Reynolds Channel
Monroe County - Airport/Buell Road Area
City of Poughkeepsie - East Side Poughkeepsie
City of Plattsburgh – Plattsburgh Downtown and Waterfront
City of Troy – North Central Troy
Village of Victory – Victory Mills

Complete or near complete Nomination report products include:

Final

Town of Babylon - Wyandanch Downtown

Draft

Broome County - EJ Industrial Spine
City of Buffalo - South Buffalo
Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
City of Kingston - Roundout Creek
SoBRO – Port Morris
City of Troy – South Troy Waterfront
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice - South Bronx River

BOA STUDY AREAS

The BOA Program has attracted interest from throughout the State and many study areas are located in former industrial centers, waterfronts, downtowns, and commercial areas. To date, the largest number of projects occur in the

Downstate and Western New York regions. However, significant demand exists from smaller cities, towns and villages with large, complex brownfield sites in Central and Northern regions upstate. Project descriptions submitted with grant applications indicate that the estimated geographic size of BOA study areas combined is over 50,000 acres and includes an estimated 4,726 brownfield sites.

SUMMARY OF BOA RECIPIENTS BY REGION AND COUNTY					
BOA Region	County	# of BOA Projects	# of acres in BOA study Areas*	# of Potential Brownfields in BOA Study Areas*	
Downstate	Bronx	4	4,547	350	
	Kings	11	3,807	644	
	Queens	2	60	32	
	Richmond	3	553	138	
	Dutchess	1	640	11	
	Nassau	7	1,947	167	
	Suffolk	2	745	253	
	Ulster	2	178	52	
	Westchester	3	500	50	
		Subtotal	36	12,977	1,697
Hudson	Albany	6	2,586	370	
	Columbia	1	320	15	
	Greene	1	108	7	
	Orange	1	370	140	
	Otsego	2	838	10	
	Putnam	1	n/a	n/a	
	Rensselaer	5	1,837	278	
	Schenectady	3	4,670	40	
		Subtotal	20	10,729	860
	Northern	Clinton	1	1,300	60
Franklin		1	300	30	
Fulton		1	500	24	
Jefferson		1	2,300	100	
Lewis		1	627	4	
Montgomery		2	735	25	
Oneida		3	2,892	190	
St. Lawrence		2	387	23	
Saratoga		3	1,828	41	
Warren		2	445	30	
Washington		3	1,428	21	
		Subtotal	20	12,742	548
Western/Central		Broome	3	736	24
	Cattaraugus	1	500	11	
	Chautauqua	3	1,200	64	
	Chemung	1	325	5	
	Chenango	1	800	6	
	Erie	6	6,388	1,489	
	Monroe	5	713	275	
	Niagara	4	6,763	100	
	Onondaga	2	536	110	
	Oswego	2	113	60	
	Steuben	1	495	26	
	Tioga	1	143	3	
	Wyoming	1	30	7	
		Subtotal	31	14,881	1,671
	Total All Regions	107	50,829	4,726	

Brownfield Opportunity Areas

PROGRAM IMPACT

Communities across New York are using the BOA approach to reverse the cycle of disinvestment and decay to create more livable neighborhoods and revitalized communities. BOA is bringing needed financing and technical expertise to support environmental remediation, community revitalization, job creation and the expansion of the tax base in neighborhoods that have been adversely affected by multiple brownfield sites or economic distress.

BOA is a multi-year planning effort, requiring committed partnerships among local government, community based organizations, community stakeholders, and New York State. Since the first grant awards in 2005:

- *More than \$25 million has been invested in BOA communities;*
- *Over 50,000-acres are located in BOA study areas, have been affected by brownfields or economic distress, and are targeted for revitalization;*
- *More than 4,700 brownfield sites are subject to redevelopment planning;*
- *27% of all BOA funding has been awarded for projects sponsored by partnerships involving community based organizations.*

*More than \$25 million invested in BOA communities . . .
addressing over 50,000-acres impacted by more than 4,700 brownfield sites*

Communities across our state and nation are faced with the challenge of redeveloping and improving areas affected by brownfields and other vacant or underutilized properties that contribute to the problem of decay and blight. The negative impacts and consequences often associated with brownfields are significant, ranging from health and safety issues to decreased economic activity, unemployment, visual blight, decreased property values, and urban sprawl. Left unchecked, these sites will continue to burden local economies by discouraging local growth and development.

Barriers to brownfield redevelopment are also significant. Factors that often discourage or impede the efforts of developers, lenders and investors to undertake brownfield redevelopment projects include: uncertainty relative to site contamination; liability for clean-up; lack of a community vision that articulates the preferred use for the site, antiquated zoning laws; and high costs for clean-up and redevelopment.

Compelling reasons to transform brownfields and other vacant and underutilized properties back to productive use and to capitalize on them as smart investment opportunities include:

- *Enhancing community revitalization*
- *Spurring private and public investment*
- *Utilizing existing public investments in infrastructure*
- *Increasing property values*
- *Generating employment and local revenue*
- *Accommodating growth without sprawl*

*BOA Program benefits and outcomes are clear,
tangible and of high value to program participants . . .*

By providing expertise and financing to program participants, the BOA Program enables communities to be proactive and catalysts for positive change so they can effectively address under-served areas that have been long ignored and affected by brownfields. Primary outcomes as a result of completed BOA Plans include:

- ***Effective area-wide and site specific redevelopment strategies to achieve revitalization*** - BOA Plans establish clear and community supported area-wide and site specific redevelopment strategies that specify how areas and sites can be cleaned-up, redeveloped and reused in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner. The BOA process provides a proactive and systematic way to address brownfields, return them to productive use, and in the process achieve community revitalization.
- ***Priorities for investment and redevelopment*** - Priorities for public and private investment leading to redevelopment and other actions for community renewal to improve quality of life for residents.
- ***Improved information to foster site clean-ups*** - By conducting site assessments to more fully understand potential contamination issues on strategic brownfield sites, communities can better understand options and costs for remediation and redevelopment.
- ***Shovel ready sites*** - A portfolio of sites that are shovel ready and ripe for redevelopment and investment for a range of identified uses that are supported by the community.
- ***Marketing to attract investors*** - A range of marketing materials such as site renderings to illustrate redevelopment potential, descriptive brochures, web displays, requests for proposals and other marketing techniques to attract public sector and private sector interest and investment.

The Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program ...

AT WORK IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS NEW YORK STATE

Three Communities ... One Mission of Community Revitalization and Renewal

Former Industrial Giant Plans to Reclaim a Position of Strength and Vitality ...

Spotlight on the South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan

Former industrial lands in South Buffalo are the focus of an ambitious redevelopment plan that reflects the community's desired future and provides a concrete strategy for getting there. With assistance from the Department of State, the City of Buffalo recently completed a BOA Nomination and Master Plan for a 1,900 acre area now known as the *South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area*. This expansive area of well serviced but mostly vacant and underutilized land is showing significant potential for redevelopment and return on investment. The area is poised to take advantage of its waterfront location, recent investments in the Outer Harbor and Buffalo River, access to major highways, a bi-national bridge, environmentally rich setting and proximity to railways. Properly strengthened and leveraged, the BOA can direct growth and diversification back to this area, providing a strong catalyst for economic renewal in Buffalo and the region.

The BOA Plan provides a framework for making future development decisions and is designed to achieve a broad mix of land uses that focuses on achieving:

- ***New Employment***
- ***New Housing Opportunities***
- ***Enhanced Network of Open Spaces***
- ***New Transportation Infrastructure***
- ***Restoration and Development along the Buffalo River***

A Downtown With Tremendous Potential for Growth and Improvement ...

Spotlight on the Wyandanch Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan

Opportunities for revitalization in the Town of Babylon Hamlet of Wyandanch show significant potential for a vibrant, mixed-use main street providing basic services to residents, anchored by a transit village that will capitalize on the existing Long Island Rail Road Station. The Wyandanch BOA study area encompasses 105 acres largely situated along *Straight Path*, the primary commercial corridor within the hamlet, the most economically distressed on Long Island. A major objective is to return over 200 properties identified as being contaminated, vacant, or underutilized back to active use for the benefit of community residents and visitors. Previous manufacturing, commercial and retail corridors are targeted for public and private investment, resulting in redevelopment and a source of new prosperity for the community.

With assistance from the Department of State, the community recently completed a BOA Nomination in concert with an urban renewal planning process. Key redevelopment objectives of the plan include:

- ***Main Street Revitalization***
- ***Pedestrian Improvement***
- ***Mixed-use Development***
- ***Transit Oriented Development***

Building a Foundation for Future Growth on the South Bronx Waterfront

Spotlight on the South Bronx Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan

A partnership of local organizations in the South Bronx and New York City are making future plans for a 3.3 square mile area located in the Soundview and Hunt's Point Peninsulas adjacent to the Bronx and East Rivers and densely populated with residents and businesses. With assistance from the Department of State, three community based organizations – Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, the Point Development Corporation, Sustainable South Bronx – are finalizing their BOA Nomination which focuses on achieving a balanced mix of uses that: fulfill community needs for open space, affordable housing, and living wage jobs; enhances the environmental and economic performance of the area's regionally significant industrial sectors; and reclaims the area's waterfront as a unique environmental and economic asset.

The South Bronx BOA is serving as a shining example of how community organizations can drive the process to achieve community revitalization. Key redevelopment objectives of the plan include:

- ***New Affordable Housing***
- ***Transit Oriented Development***
- ***Enhanced Parks and Open Space***
- ***Green Infrastructure***
- ***Retrofitting Existing Buildings for Energy Efficiency and New Mixed-Uses***

Spotlight Communities

Advancing to Implementation

Each of the communities above are progressing to the next step of the BOA Program, the Implementation Strategy. Each community will use the Implementation Strategy portion of the program to undertake actions to further advance their vision for the future and to advance key projects. The Implementation Strategy will set the stage to leverage private and public investment to advance and implement key projects relative to site redevelopment for a variety of community desired uses and businesses, supporting infrastructure and transportation projects, and public amenities, such as parks and community facilities.

Brownfield Opportunity Areas

AN EVOLVING AND IMPROVING PROGRAM

The Department of State strives to assist a broad range of communities throughout the State; target programs where they are needed; and deliver focused, high quality technical assistance and advice to our partners on the local level. The need to continually improve and evolve the BOA Program through various program changes is taken seriously and with the overarching goal of offering a flexible planning framework and a full suite of opportunities for communities to use in their revitalization strategies.

SINGLE AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

A Streamlined Contracting Process

On April 1, 2009, the Department of State assumed full responsibility for administering and managing the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program. In addition to DOS's role as community partners in planning for redevelopment, DOS is now responsible for issuing and managing all BOA contracts. The Department of Environmental Conservation will continue participating in the program as technical advisor on contaminated properties and site assessments. Moving from dual-agency program administration to single agency is resulting in a more efficient contracting process.

OTHER PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Easier Access, Simplified Payment Process, More Benefits

- **Funding Appropriations** - Starting in state fiscal year 2007-2008, the first appropriations not subject to the Memorandum of Understanding were made to enable quicker release of program funds.
- **Tax Credits** - In June 2008, pursuant to the Brownfield Reform Law, brownfield sites that are accepted into the State's Brownfield Clean-Up Program (BCP) are eligible for a two percent tax credit bonus if projects are built in conformance with a designated BOA. Sites that are redeveloped in conformance with BOA Plans (Nomination/Implementation Strategy) may receive a two percent enhancement to the BCP Tangible Property Credit. The BOA tax credit bonus is designed to align the BCP and BOA Programs to achieve redevelopment of brownfield properties participating in the BCP in accordance with the community's vision and plan as set out in a completed BOA Plan.
- **Open Enrollment** - In October 2008, the program transitioned to open enrollment so applications can be accepted on a continuous basis throughout the year to provide convenience to applicants and to maintain project momentum as program participants progress through the program's steps. When requested, DOS staff consults with potential applicants prior to the submittal of their application to ensure that program resources fully meets their needs.
- **New Payment Guidelines** - In October 2009, the Department of State issued new, improved payment guidelines and forms to make it easier for grantees to apply and receive reimbursement.
- **Updated Program Guidance** - In 2010, the Department of State will provide update BOA Program Guidance to more fully describe the range of eligible activities the program offers. This updated guidance will be based in part on the program's experience and lessons learned from projects and grantees over the past five years.

NEW INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY SEMINAR SERIES

A New Training Program for BOA Grantees

In 2007, the Department of State launched the *Community Seminar Series*, designed as a partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation and Center for Community Design Research at the SUNY College Environmental Science and Forestry. Seminars were developed to provide direction and professional assistance for community leaders and others to successfully plan, design and implement projects funded through the BOA Program. The seminars guide participants through contract activities and requirements, while helping to build skills and knowledge around certain topic areas such as approaches to community revitalization, organization of steering committees, vision planning, hiring and managing consultants, contract administration and project management.

Between September 2007 and October 2008, twenty-four training sessions were delivered to BOA communities covering a range of ten topic areas. Session participants were provided with notebooks for each seminar containing the presentations, summaries, supporting handouts, and activities.

Improving the training program through advanced modules and on-line delivery - Development of six new, advanced level training modules is planned for the near future. Planning is also underway to provide on-line access to the sessions in addition to in-person training. Six BOA seminars have already been produced in a studio and ready to be made available via “on demand” webcast, and provided to grant recipients on DVD.

BROWNFIELDS SMART GROWTH SPOTLIGHT WORKSHOPS

Linking BOA Communities to State and Federal Partners

To establish important partnerships in BOA communities to support community revitalization, this new initiative links communities participating in the BOA Program with the Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet to improve coordination with state and federal agencies to support timely implementation of BOA projects.

Three workshops were conducted in the City of Buffalo, Town of Babylon in the Wyandanch hamlet and in the Bronx. Each of the three BOA participants were nearing completion of their Nomination reports that highlighted opportunities for potential partnerships to advance a range of important revitalization projects. The workshops explored and commitments were made regarding how existing State and Federal programs can support and complement local efforts to advance key projects, redevelop brownfields and simultaneously achieve neighborhood revitalization and smart growth objectives.

Three Spotlight Community meetings were held in 2009:

- *Town of Babylon - Wyandanch BOA - Held on March 20, 2009*
- *City of Buffalo - South Buffalo BOA - Held on April 23, 2009*
- *Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, The Point Community-Development Corporation and Sustainable South - South Bronx BOA - Held on November 19, 2009*

Representatives from multiple state, federal, and local agencies attended the Spotlight Community workshops. To prepare agency participants, phone conferences were held with key agencies to discuss the intended purpose of each workshop and desired outcome.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Building on the Spotlight Communities Initiative, DOS will conduct similar Spotlight type community workshops over the next 2 years. DOS anticipates conducting two to three regional workshops each year involving multiple communities and focusing on feasible projects to achieve neighborhood revitalization. The Department of State seeks to conduct these workshops with federal partners through the Federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

PROGRAM OUTREACH

The Department regularly conducts workshops and participates in local and regional conferences and seminars, providing information and guidance on the BOA Program. In 2009, a series of 13 workshops were conducted throughout the State to focus on BOA and other DOS administered programs.

In 2010, the Department of State will further enhance delivery of the BOA Program through branding and the development of multi-faceted outreach materials. The goal is to enhance program information and delivery for BOA participants and project stakeholders in a deliberate and coordinated fashion. The purpose is to improve program understanding regarding how program resources can be used from project planning through implementation. Outreach materials will include a brochure, an adaptable information package, portable displays and a new BOA website.