

# MASSENA BOA

## Brownfield Opportunity Area Revitalization Plan

# Executive Summary Report



**DRAFT**  
**June 2017**

# CONTENTS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - P. 1

SITE PROFILE - P. 3

REVITALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES - P. 5

BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY - P. 6

TOURISM - P. 7

MIXED-USE - P. 8

SCENARIO EVALUATION - P. 9

ACTION PLAN - P. 10

### BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA (BOA) PROGRAM

Prepared for St. Lawrence County by Skeo Solutions, with funding provided by the New York State Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program.

The BOA program provides resources for New York communities to establish effective revitalization strategies that return dormant and blighted parcels into productive properties and that help to revitalize communities.

## Acknowledgments

The organizations and entities below contributed to the Massena Brownfield Opportunity Area Revitalization Plan and the findings presented in this executive summary.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

- St. Lawrence County
- St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency
- Town of Massena
- Greater Massena Business Development Corporation
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office of Economic Development
- Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response Trust

### REGIONAL PARTNERS

- Village of Massena
- Empire State Development, North Country Region
- Development Authority of the North Country
- Workforce Development Institute
- New York Power Authority
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Planning and Infrastructure Division
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Environmental Division
- Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Economic Development
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. General Services Administration



## Background

The GM Massena Superfund site, formerly the GM Powertrain plant, is the primary strategic site and focus of the Massena BOA. EPA is overseeing remediation of the GM Massena site to address polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminants in soil, sediments and groundwater.

In 2007, General Motors announced plans to close its Massena Powertrain plant. In response, representatives from municipal and tribal governments, federal and state agencies and economic development organizations formed the North Country Redevelopment Task Force to track cleanup efforts, evaluate and promote redevelopment options for the 217-acre GM Massena site.

Since the closure of the GM Powertrain Plant in 2009, the Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response Trust (RACER Trust) assumed ownership of the property through a 2011 bankruptcy settlement and is performing the site's cleanup under EPA's oversight.

EPA's required remedial activities are expected to be complete in 2018. Project partners are eager to return the site to an appropriate and productive use.

With funding from the New York State Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) grant program, St. Lawrence County has developed a revitalization plan for a 415-acre Study Area in the Town of Massena, New York.

## Study Area

The Massena BOA Study Area is situated in a strategic location along the St. Lawrence River and at the foot of the St. Lawrence Seaway International Bridge connecting Massena and Cornwall, Ontario, Canada.

The Study Area encompasses the former GM Massena property, related infrastructure corridors, the U.S. Border Station and Massena Land Port of Entry facility, and vacant areas. The Study Area borders the St. Lawrence and Raquette rivers, the Akwesasne territory of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and an inactive aluminum smelting facility.

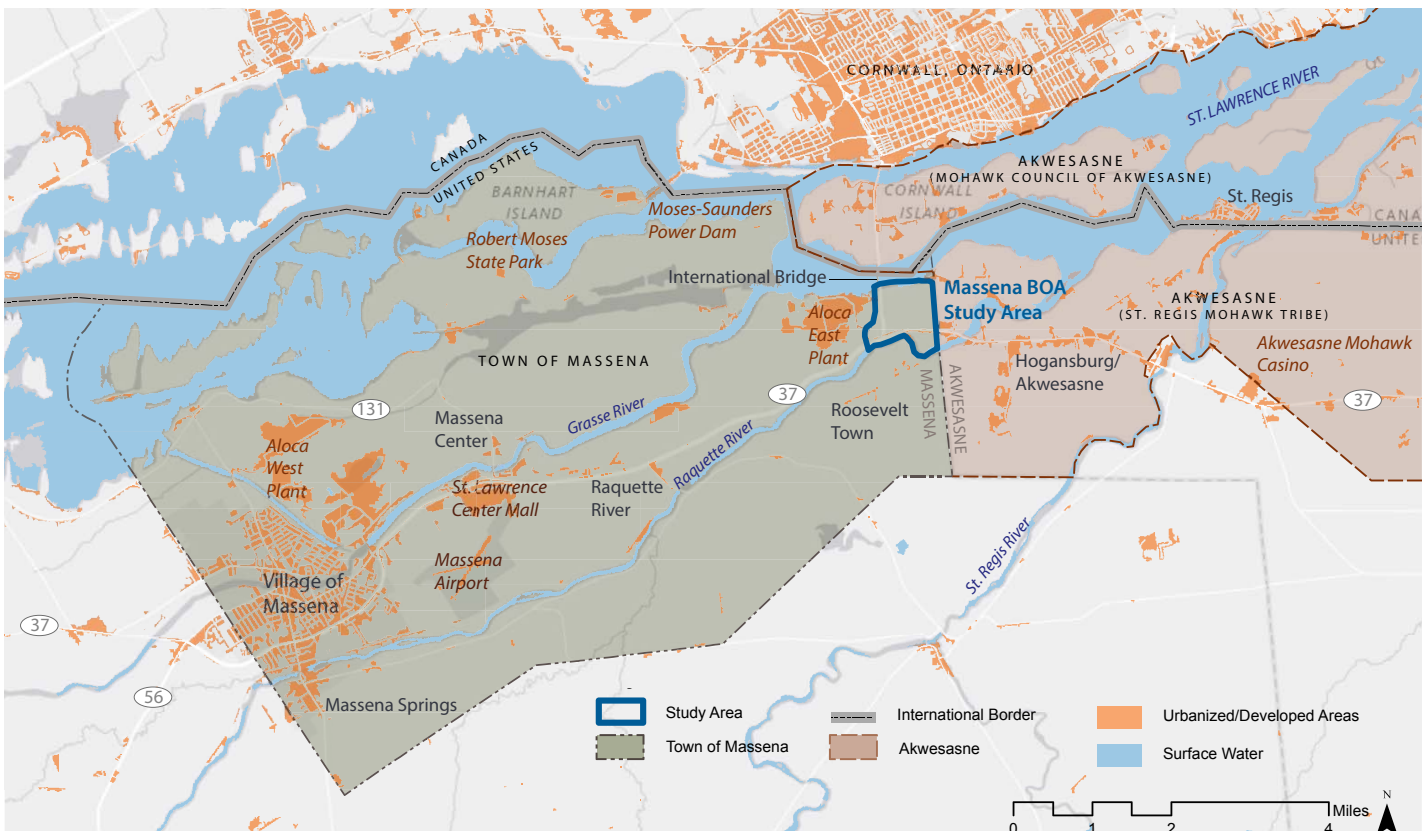


Figure 1. Study Area Context



# PROCESS

This revitalization plan was developed by the Massena BOA Steering Committee. As listed below, the Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the North Country Redevelopment Task Force's primary municipal and tribal governments, economic development organizations, as well as the majority property owners in the Study Area.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

- St. Lawrence County
- Town of Massena
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Economic Development Office (SRMT)
- St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)
- Greater Massena Business Development Corporation (BDC)
- RACER Trust

## REVITALIZATION GOALS

- Leverage site assets.
- Create jobs and contribute to the local tax-base.
- Balance environment and economy.
- Maintain flexibility to accommodate multiple use or one single use.
- Pursue a phased approach to allow for redevelopment over time.
- Establish partnerships to support a unified vision.



International Bridge and the St. Lawrence River.

## Community Vision

*The vision of the Massena BOA is a productive use that provides employment and tax revenue that contributes to the economic health of the region, while also improving environmental and human health conditions of those living, working or recreating proximate to the site.*

## Revitalization Plan Process

The Massena BOA Steering Committee developed the revitalization plan through the 2-year process highlighted below.

### VISION + OPPORTUNITIES (2015)

- Existing conditions.
- Massena and Akwesasne community forums identified vision, assets and opportunities.
- Market and economic sector trends study.
- Infrastructure and redevelopment feasibility studies.

### COALITION BUILDING + STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT (2016)

- Revitalization case studies.
- Partnership building for redevelopment concepts.
- Job and tax generation benefits for concepts.
- November regional partners and community forums held to vet concepts.

### PRIORITY ACTIONS (2017)

- Prioritized near-term actions to advance range of revitalization opportunities.
- Coalition and partnership building among regional partners for revitalization strategy.

## Location

The Study Area is strategically located at the foot of the St. Lawrence Seaway International Bridge providing access to nearby Canadian population centers.

## DISTANCE FROM CANADIAN CITIES

- Cornwall, ON (pop. 46,340)  
3 mi/5 km
- Ottawa, ON (pop. 883,391)  
75 mi/120 km
- Montreal, QC (pop. 1,649,519)  
87 mi/140 km

## Land Uses

Uses and features in the Study Area include the U.S. Border Station, vacant industrial land, transportation/utility corridors and sparsely forested areas.

## NEARBY USES & FEATURES

- Alcoa - East Plant (inactive aluminum smelter).
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe land (mixed commercial/rural residential).
- St. Lawrence River and Raquette River.

## Assets

The Study Area offers several key assets to support revitalization.

- High quality, skilled labor force.
- Akwesasne cultural heritage.
- Access to St. Lawrence and Raquette river corridors.
- Proximity to St. Lawrence County's university-based innovation centers.
- Access to low cost power, natural gas, fiber optic lines.
- Access to International Bridge and CSX rail line.

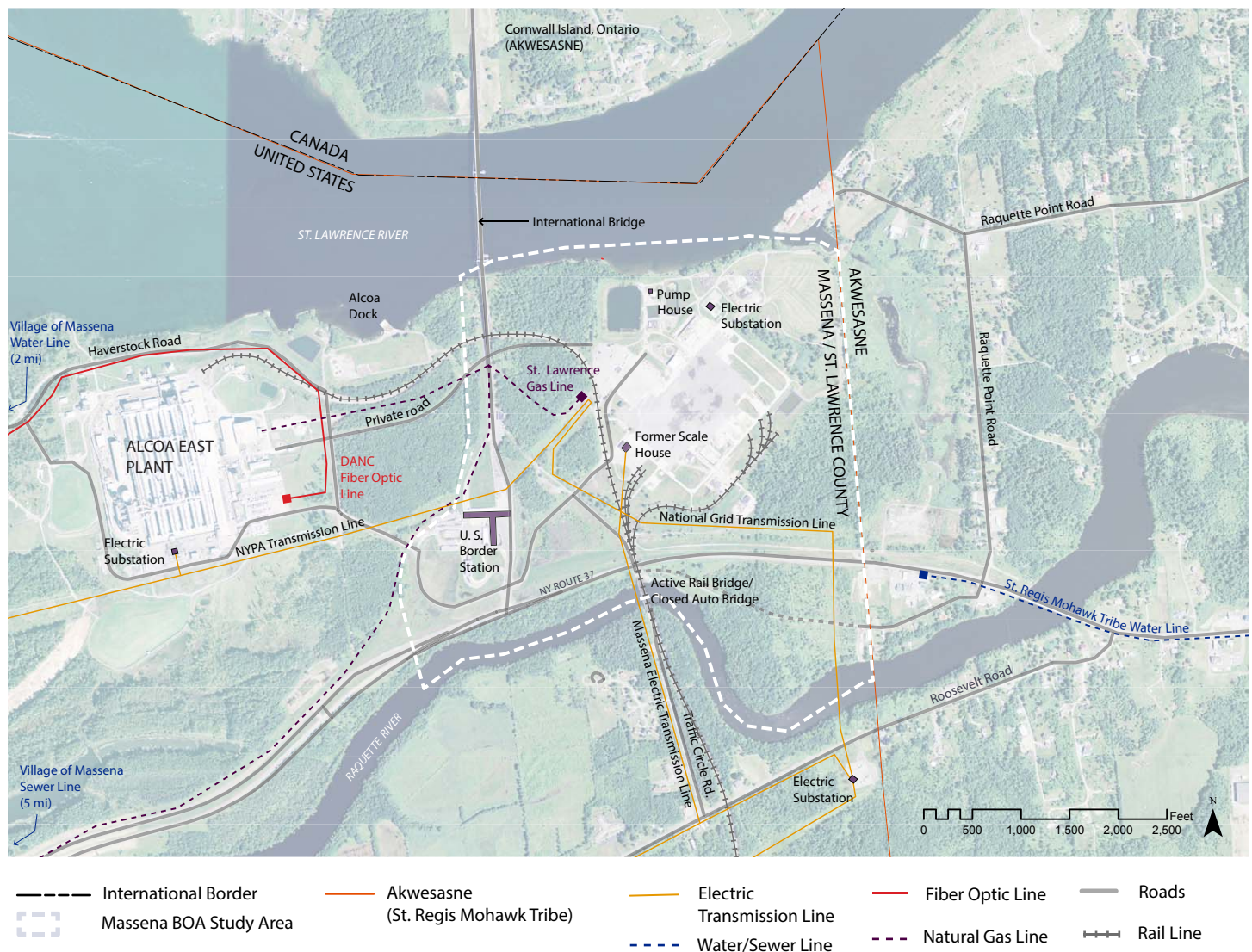


Figure 2. Study Area and Assets



# REUSE SUITABILITY

## Strategic Sites

Based on an evaluation of existing conditions in the Study Area, sites with the greatest reuse potential have been identified in a set of zones. Figure 3 outlines reuse suitability zones based on environmental cleanup, current use, and ownership factors.

### A. COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL & TOURISM

Zone A-1 includes approximately 86 acres of available land owned by RACER Trust, where cleanup actions are complete. Zones A-2 and A-3, totaling 76 acres, include RACER parcels in the southern portions of the GM Massena site outside of areas historically used for industrial operations.

### B. OPEN SPACE & UTILITY CORRIDORS

Zone B includes 48 acres owned by Alcoa between the GM Massena site and International Bridge. The area includes private access roads, a rail line and utility corridors (electric, gas). These areas are not currently available for new development but will continue to provide a buffer for the U.S. Border Station and serve as utility and transportation corridors.

### C. CONTINUED USE

Zone C includes 75-acres encompassing the U.S. Border Station and the International Bridge approach. These public service uses serve vital national security and transportation functions. No changes in current use are anticipated; few development opportunities exist within this area.

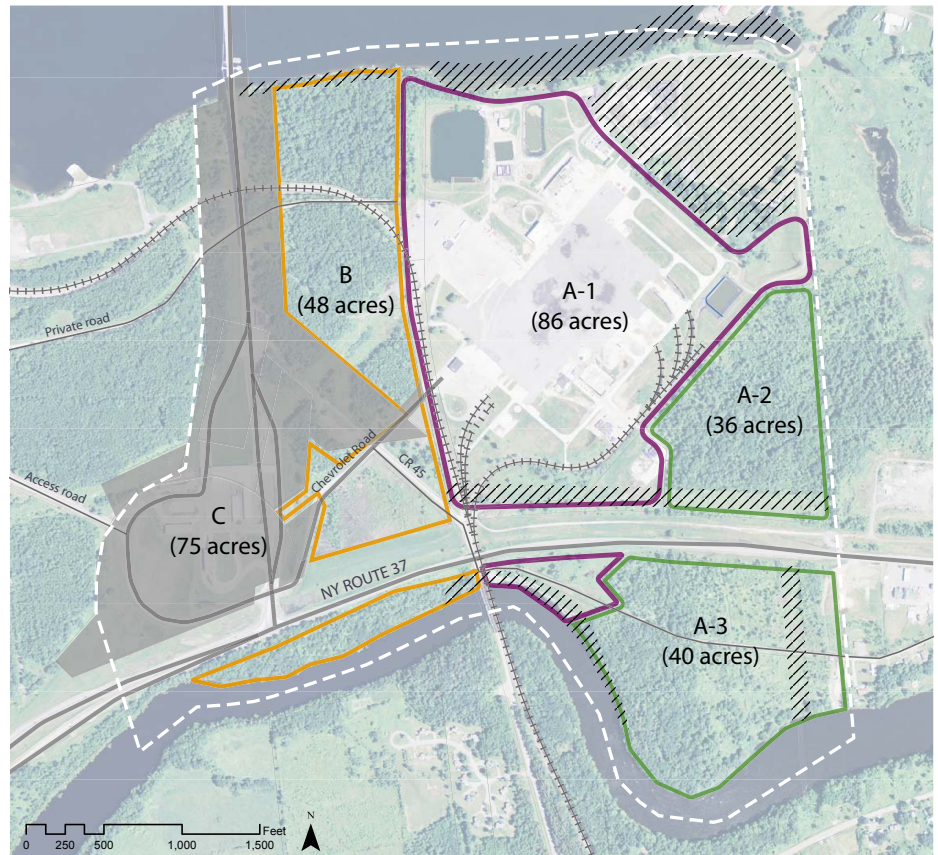


Figure 3. Reuse Suitability Zones

## DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS

Utility easements, steep slopes and environmental land use restrictions limit certain uses in non-contiguous portions of the Study Area.

EPA requires land use restrictions as part of the GM Massena cleanup plan to protect the landfill and sediment caps.

These restrictions will limit development and direct access within approximately 25 acres in the northeast corner of the Study Area, and across approximately 7 acres along the St. Lawrence River shoreline (underwater sediments).

In addition, groundwater use restrictions due to PCB and VOC contamination prevent groundwater extraction and use.

### Reuse Suitability Zones

- A Commercial/Industrial/Tourism**
  - Cleanup complete
  - Final stormwater management grading layer planned for 2017
- A Commercial/Industrial/Tourism**
  - Areas outside former facility operations
  - No further cleanup planned
- B Open Space/Utility Corridor**
  - Alcoa property
  - Potential commercial/industrial
- C Continued Use**
  - U.S. Border Station/Customs
  - International Bridge Approach
- Development Limitations**
  - Site Remedy Operation & Maintenance
  - Transmission easements
  - Steep slopes

### Other Features

- BOA Study Area
- Roads
- +++++ Rail Line (CSX)/Rail Spur (RACER)

# REVITALIZATION SCENARIOS



Figure 4. Aerial view of Study Area (2013)

Based on the BOA analysis, including community vision and goals, the site profile and market opportunities, this section outlines a range of potential scenarios, including:

- A. Business Park
- B. Technology Park
- C. Tourism Center
- D. Regional Tourism/Sports Complex
- E. Mixed-Use Tech & Tourism
- F. Mixed-Use Business Park & Waterfront Flex Space

More detail for each scenario is provided on the following pages including sectors, site configurations, phasing and strategic value.

## MARKET OPPORTUNITIES & ECONOMIC SECTORS

Based on a detailed market and sector trends analysis (Revitalization Plan Section 4 and Appendix A), the following strategic economic opportunities are identified for the Massena BOA.

### TOURISM

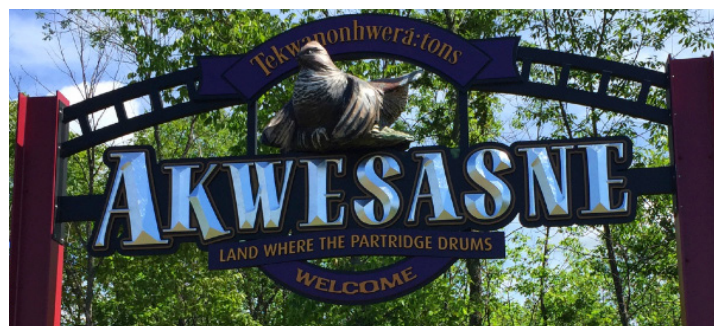
- Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Center.
- Multi-sport complex.
- Regional destination facility.

### LIGHT MANUFACTURING

- Light manufacturing (advanced materials, aluminum and glass).
- Value-added forest products and wood processing.

### TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

- Space for start-up businesses growing out of research, innovation centers at nearby universities.
- Office space or flex space for Canadian companies seeking a U.S. presence.





# BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

## Business Park

85-acre light industrial flex space.  
150,000 - 300,000 s.f. occupied by one or two users.

Rail and truck access, storage, parking, space for moderate expansion and surface water management.

Potential for co-locating Environmental Center of Excellence.

## Technology Park

Advanced materials, emerging technologies cluster.  
40-60 acres.

Phased construction  
200,000-400,000 s.f.

Flex space for R&D, office, lab, light manufacturing, indoor recreation, waterfront amenities.

Potential for co-location with a 40 or 60-acre rail-accessible business park.



Figure 5. Business Park/Technology Park Concept

## A. Business Park

**OPPORTUNITY:** The Massena BOA offers available acreage, rail, power and transportation access that make the site a desirable location for a rail-accessible business park.

Focuses on 86-acres within Zone A-1 and makes efficient use of the existing internal road and rail spurs for strategic opportunities around forest products, biomass and value-added wood processing; light manufacturing; dairy or food processing; and logistics and warehousing sectors.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Light industrial park leverages existing power, rail and proximity to bridge with the potential to generate manufacturing jobs utilizing locally-available inputs (bulk milk, agriculture products, timber, wood chips, aluminum). This concept relies on generating products that can be sold in external markets, sustaining jobs and bringing revenues into the community.

## B. Technology Park

**OPPORTUNITY:** Emerging start-up businesses are growing out of St. Lawrence County's universities (Clarkson, St. Lawrence, SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam, Wanakena Ranger School). Spurred by engineering, applied research and a small business incubator at Clarkson, new enterprises in materials science, technology and manufacturing are defining a new regional economic sector with potential for growth in the North Country.

Offers flexible office and light industrial space (office, lab, light manufacturing, flex space) located in Zone A-1 for new businesses that have outgrown incubator space at Clarkson University.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Provides a flexible space to retain and expand the emerging businesses growing out of the County's universities, research and innovation centers. Leverages proximity to Canadian innovation centers providing space for businesses seeking a U.S. presence.



### Cultural Center

Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Center + North Country Regional Welcome Center.

25 acres.

10,000-20,000 s.f. facility.

Akwesasne cultural museum, archive facility, gallery, art market-space, event space, artist business incubator space, café.

Massena/St. Lawrence County/ North Country Region Welcome Center.

### Regional Destination

Water park or sports complex.

100+ acres.

Indoor water park (120,000 s.f.)

Hotel (50,000 s.f.),

Retail amenities (100,000 s.f.).

Indoor sports complex (120,000 s.f.)

Multi-field tournament venue + parking (40-80 acres)



Figure 6. Tourism Concept

## C. Tourism Center

**OPPORTUNITY:** The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan identifies the need for a strategically located cultural tourism attraction on the U.S. side of the border. The concept envisions a multi-function facility that celebrates Akwesasne culture and connects visitors with local businesses and the history of Akwesasne, and a North Country Welcome Center.

Zone A-3 located south of Route 37, along the Raquette River, offers an ideal location for a tourism center with the potential to capture cross border traffic from Canada and support the envisioned Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Center, as well as a North Country Welcome Center.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Builds awareness of the area, expands tourism infrastructure and volume. The concept is in direct alignment with the SRMT Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan and offers potential to generate shared benefits for the North Country.

## D. Regional Tourism/Sports Complex

**OPPORTUNITY:** The Town of Massena and Village of Massena are working to diversify the local economy through tourism investments.

The Town of Massena funded a tourism marketing study and recommendations, provided by Venue Strategies in 2015, identified an opportunity to locate a regional tourism destination in the Town of Massena centered around a water park, hotel and retail amenities.

Stakeholders identified that a sports-oriented tourism concept aligned well with local priorities in Massena and Akwesasne. A year-round multi-sport complex could accommodate lacrosse, soccer and field- and ice hockey in an indoor facility with outdoor multi-sport fields for tournaments and competitions.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Tourism concepts offer potential to expand visitor spending, create new jobs and build on shared local priorities, sports and cultural identity.



# MIXED-USE

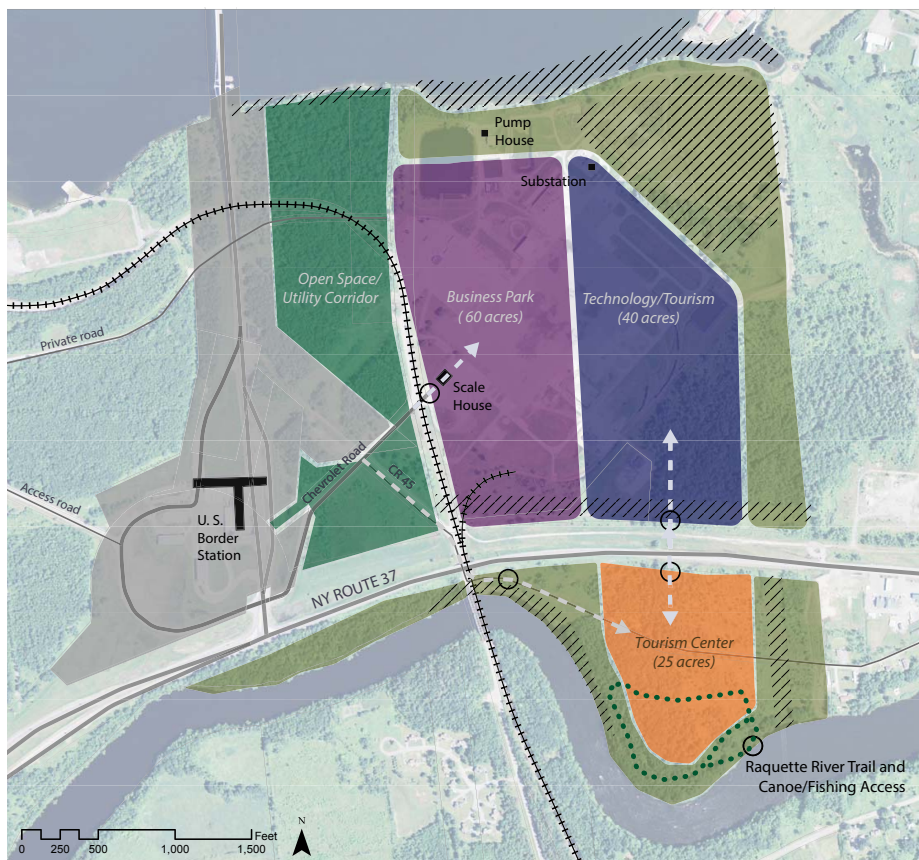


Figure 7. Mixed-Use Business Park + Technology/Tourism Concept

The Study Area provides significant acreage that can accommodate multiple land uses and user needs. The business park, technology park and tourism concepts could be scaled, implemented in phases and combined together using a range of configurations.

## E. Business Park + Technology/Tourism

**OPPORTUNITY:** Figure 7 offers a mixed-use configuration that combines a smaller footprint business park with a technology park, or tourism facility.

Leverages rail access with a smaller footprint, and maintains potential for technology or tourism uses.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Compatible with range of economic sectors and multiple stakeholder interests.

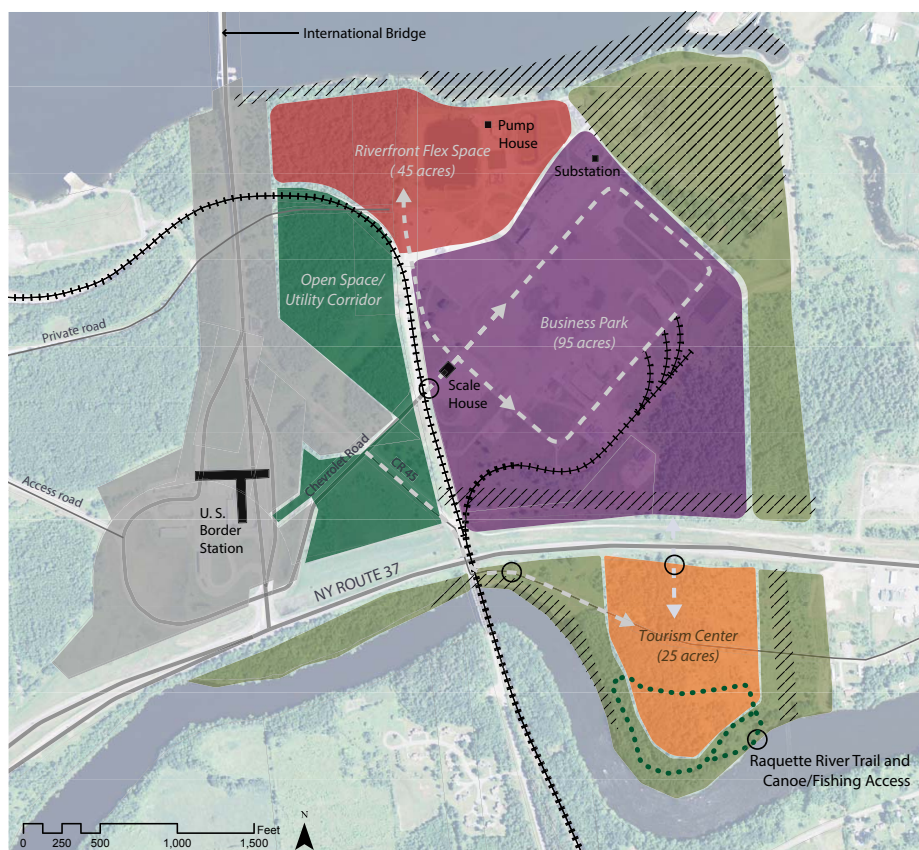


Figure 8. Mixed-Use Business Park + Waterfront Flex Space Concept

## F. Business Park + Riverfront Flex Space

**OPPORTUNITY:** Figure 8 offers an alternate configuration of business park and tourism or technology sector opportunities.

Maintains full 75-acre business park with three rail spurs to accommodate larger foot print uses, along with flexible technology or tourism and event space along the St. Lawrence River waterfront.

**STRATEGIC VALUE:** Leverages existing infrastructure assets and creates attractive waterfront campus for tourism or technology uses. Compatible with a range of economic sectors and stakeholder interests.



# SECTOR EVALUATION



## FEASIBILITY FACTORS

Table 1 presents a comparison of the benefits and feasibility considerations for each opportunity, including: potential for job creation and revenue generation; infrastructure requirements and investments; market feasibility; and compatibility with stakeholder goals and interests.

CONCEPT	JOB POTENTIAL	TAX REVENUE POTENTIAL	UTILITY NEEDS	MARKET FEASIBILITY	STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS
Business Park	250-300 (moderate)	Moderate to high	Low to high (water/waste water varies depending on industry)	Faces competition from shovel-ready sites with interstate access	Industrial user needs and community vision require careful consideration
Technology Park	760-850 (moderate-high)	Moderate to high; potential sales tax	Moderate	Isolation from innovation centers; limited local amenities to support startups	Offers flexibility to meet range of stakeholder interests
Cultural Tourism Center/ Welcome Center	15-25 (low-moderate range; many part-time)	Low to Moderate; potential sales tax	Low	Builds on culture of Akwesasne, Massena and North Country; tourism visits bring awareness of the area to attract new businesses	Requires commitment and collaboration from SRMT, Town of Massena, St. Lawrence County
Tourism Destination	255-280 (low-mid range; many part-time)	Moderate; potential sales tax	High (based on water park demand for water and wastewater)	Lack of tourism infrastructure and interstate access	Collaboration needed among developers, local and tribal governments and tourism organizations
Sports Complex	15-20 (mid-range; many part time)	Low to moderate; potential indirect sales tax	Low	Builds on strong Mohawk brand in lacrosse and growth of the sport.	Requires commitment from SRMT and collaboration with U.S. and Canadian lacrosse associations

Table 1. Reuse Concept Evaluation Summary

# ACTION PLAN

The following pages outline a set of near-term actions and steps that could be taken to advance a range of opportunities for the study area.

## Priorities

Based on the opportunities evaluation, the following concepts and sectors stand out as priorities.

### PRIORITY CONCEPTS

- The Business Park, Technology Park and Cultural Tourism/Welcome Center each have the potential to balance economic benefits with infrastructure investments, market realities and stakeholder interests.
- These concepts could be pursued in parallel or in sequential phases.

### ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Due to greater uncertainty, further collaboration and evaluation are needed to determine viability for the concepts below.

- The Regional Tourism Destination and Sports Complex opportunities rely heavily on participation and investment from a specific set of developers or partners whose interests and buy-in are currently uncertain.
- Further coordination among regional tourism destination partners and Akwesasne's LAX360 initiative is warranted to determine interests and potential commitments.



Areas south of Route 37 need road and access improvements.

## Infrastructure

Each of the reuse concepts requires new water and wastewater service, along with certain vehicular access improvements. The following infrastructure studies and coordination activities are needed to advance a range of revitalization opportunities for the study area.

### WATER SUPPLY

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is planning to extend a Village of Massena waterline along Haverstock Road to the U.S. Border Station in 2018. The Route 37 corridor is a preferred route for the waterline extension but is currently not feasible due to NYSDOT right-of-way access limitations. An additional waterline extension is needed to connect the available study area properties to the U.S. Border Station planned waterline connection.

- Support GSA efforts to negotiate right-of-way access with NYSDOT to extend waterline along Route 37 to U.S. Border Station.
- Extend waterline from US Border Station connection to Zones A-1 and A-3. Funding estimated at:

### WASTEWATER SERVICE

The RACER Trust properties and the nearby Alcoa East facility both require new wastewater treatment facilities.

- Evaluate design, permitting, cost and feasibility options for prepackaged wastewater treatment systems with potential for phased expansion.
- Coordinate wastewater system feasibility studies for Zones A-1 and A-3 with ongoing marketing efforts.

### VEHICULAR ACCESS

Zone A-3 lacks adequate road access to support a Tourism Center over the long-term.

- Conduct road improvement study for access to Zone A-3 via County Route 45 and Indian Road.
- Negotiate with NYSDOT for direct access to Route 37 from Zone A-3.



## Marketing

The near-term actions outlined below focus on coordinating local priorities and initiatives with business attraction strategies, as RACER Trust continues to market available property in the Study Area.

### COORDINATION + PARTNERSHIPS

- Support RACER Trust in continued marketing efforts to a range of potential users as identified in the Business Park, Technology Park and Tourism Center concepts.
- Pursue a mixed-use strategy that builds on the cultural heritage of Akwesasne and Massena, and the location's assets—power, rail, gas, access to Canada, and riverfront property.
- Coordinate business attraction strategies for the RACER Trust and Alcoa East properties through regional economic development organizations; consider redevelopment potential of both facilities.
- Coordinate near-term opportunities with potential tourism center tenants, including SRMT Office of Economic Development, Town of Massena, local governments and North Country tourism partners.
- As remediation is completed at the GM Massena site, additional evaluation of environmental conditions in Zones A-1, A-2 and A-3 is needed. Soil cleanup levels and allowable land uses designated by NYSDEC and the SRMT Environment Division need to be considered in marketing and future development approvals.
- The Study Area is zoned for Industrial Manufacturing—a designation that does not allow for tourism, research and development, or office uses. Evaluation of Town of Massena zoning ordinance is needed to identify zoning options with greater flexibility to accommodate a range of opportunities for the Study Area.

## Ownership and Management

RACER Trust is a qualified settlement trust created to remediate properties with oversight from federal, state and tribal agencies. It is not a commercial business; however, part of RACER's mission is to market the properties for development once they are cleaned up.

In coordination with marketing efforts and the RACER Trust, an ownership or management entity needs to be identified that can raise funding, finance improvements and implement redevelopment. Several ownership and management options are outlined below.

**DIRECT SALE:** Direct sale to one or two businesses seeking long-term ownership of real estate assets could eliminate the need for an intermediate ownership or management entity.

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:** Smaller businesses typically need to lease land, buildings or space in a business or technology park built and managed by a local development corporation, or a private developer.

**MASTER DEVELOPER:** Strategies with multiple development programs, such as the regional tourism destination, require a private-sector master developer that oversees financing and construction, then either sells or manages the property.

### RACER TRUST SALES CRITERIA

RACER Trust considers the six criteria listed below for marketing properties and for evaluating purchase offers and development proposals.

1. The sufficiency of the purchase price.
2. The potential for job creation in the affected community, state.
3. Other benefits to the affected communities, state and Tribe, such as increasing tax revenue, generating economic activity, reducing blight, and providing a sense of renewal.
4. Avoidance of interference with the environmental cleanup or an increase in the cost of the work.
5. The views of the affected communities, the Tribe, and the state.
6. The reputation and credibility of prospective buyer.