

A PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT ON THE YONKERS WATERFRONT

Any planning should begin with a focus on a community's strengths. What are some of the strengths of Yonkers?

1. Its waterfront location;
2. The diverse community with many community-run organizations;
3. Several historic community stores with locally owned businesses;
4. The intergenerational structure of the existing community; and
5. The community is located next to the train and water ferry systems which could assist with traffic concerns, and transportation needs.



The key features of the current process are the development of (1) the Alexander Street Master Plan, (2) an Urban Renewal Plan, (3) and a Brownfield Opportunity Area Plan. The whole process is hinged on completing the [SEQR](#) process (a state-mandated process of community involvement and environmental review – see the website overview section).

- (1) **What is a Master Plan?** A Master Plan is not a specific development plan, rather it provides a template or pattern for future development. Since the Master Plan is not a specific development proposal it would be up to the City of Yonkers to ensure that any actual development proposal follows the Master Plan. Overall the Yonkers Master Plan focuses effort towards economic renewal through improving the deteriorated waterfront area, transforming it from an

industrial wasteland to a residential, recreational and commercial zone. This transformation would be a gradual change currently anticipated to take up to ten years. Since there are no firm development plans included in the Master Plan the final product could be somewhat different than what is being discussed here.

- (2) **[What are Urban Renewal Plans \(URP\)?](#)** URPs are long-term blueprints for improving the economy and community of areas that meet certain defined requirements as “blighted areas” (deteriorated neighborhood) or areas that are underutilized.
- (3) **[What are Brownfield Opportunity Area Plans \(BOA\)?](#)** BOAs are state plans that focus on cleaning up and reusing sites with contamination from prior use. Many of the riverfront towns along the Hudson and America’s older rivers have Brownfield sites from their long industrial history.

YONKERS WATERFRONT - Describing the Site –



Alexander Smith Carpet Mills

Alexander Smith Carpet Mills were a large part of Yonkers industrial history, and lent their name to this waterfront development plan. (image from Yonkers village history website)

The **area** included in the Master Plan redevelopment, the Urban Renewal and the Brownfield Opportunity is **all the same**. It is approximately **112 acres of waterfront property** in general bounded by the Hudson River on the West, the Metro-North Railroad lines on the East, Wells Avenue and the Westchester County sewage pump station for the sewage treatment plant to the south, and JFK Memorial Drive to the north. There are two city-owned parks included in the project – the waterfront JFK Marina Park and the more inland Trevor Park, public open space areas such as a Westchester County park, the non-profit Beczak Environmental Education Center. In addition, the area includes the City of Yonkers Jail. There is also one section of property that extends inland two blocks between Warburton Avenue and the Metro-North Railroad. The main redevelopment area west of the Metro-North railroad tracks does not contain any residential uses or structures.

The majority of the redevelopment area is privately owned, with some portions owned by City of Yonkers agencies. **Much of the project area** is developed as commercial or industrial uses or **has been cleared of development and is idle** or used for surface parking and equipment storage.

THE PLAN SITE BY THE NUMBERS

- 153 acres of property in total but only 112 land acres with the balance of 41 acres being in the Hudson River underwater
- Area is a long skinny strip of land - 1.3 miles from end to end (North to South) and has a width of one-tenth to two – tenths of a mile
- Riverfront walkway ~ 1 mile along the entire Alexander Street waterfront connecting to an existing walkway to the north and south creating a Greenway
- Up to 4000 residential units (~3752 planned with up to 4000 allowed) - in 12 towers of varied height – 5 will be 16 to 30 stories high and the remainder will be less than 12 stories
- Expected ~9,000 new residents
- 210,000 square feet of neighborhood retail on street level
- 210,000 square feet of office buildings on second level
- 1.5 parking places per residential unit or 6,828 spaces

YONKERS MASTER PLAN

THE ALEXANDER STREET MASTER PLAN - A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE YONKERS WATERFRONT

The goal of the ‘Alexander Street Master Plan’ is to develop a plan to revitalize the Hudson River Waterfront, a deteriorated industrial district. Many communities develop Master Plans to serve as guiding documents, or blueprints, for future development in their community. The difference between a ‘Master Plan’ and an actual ‘Project Plan’ is that the Master Plan is just a guide or a vision for future building. A Master Plan lacks a specific developer with a specific development plan so much of the detail of development is not specified, although this can vary significantly according to the Master Plan. The actual development that occurs at a later date can very closely match the Master Plan, or it can be adjusted at the time of the project.

Some of the Stated Major Planning Objectives of the Yonkers Master Plan Include:

1. **Economic Development:** Encourage economic development that includes a mixed use of the existing waterfront – residential, commercial and recreational.
2. **Expand Housing Opportunities:** Add close to 4,000 residential housing units at various income levels.
3. **Improved Public Access to the Hudson River and Improved Internal Transportation:** Open the access to the waterfront for existing Yonkers residents, and improve movement between the newly developed waterfront and existing Yonkers communities.
4. **Focus on Regional Transportation:** Include existing train and ferry stops as part of the overall transportation program.
5. **Capitalize on important site features including protecting Heritage Buildings, and increase community parkland:** Where possible protect and reuse existing heritage buildings in the waterfront area. Create additional open space areas and enhance existing community parkland.

CURRENT LAND USE IN THIS AREA

Facility/Land Use	Acres	Percent
Parks	32.8	21.4
Vacant/Vehicle Storage	27.5	18.0
Transportation	26.9	17.6
Industrial/Commercial	19.7	12.9
Community Facility/public service	5.0	3.3
Residential	0.5	0.3
Water	40.6	26.5
TOTAL	153.0	100

THE HUDSON RIVER SHORELINE

Providing access to the Hudson River is an important community goal. As with many industrial waterfront communities, people in the community have been separated from the river by prior industrial land use, which has deteriorated into blighted and abandoned properties. Linking the community to the river through a stretch of public land that will run along the project area will benefit existing community residents as well as those who might move into the newly renovated community. Including active recreational plans as part of the development, such as boating, fishing piers and enhancements to the Beczak Environmental Center, as part of the proposed development will increase the overall use of the waterfront area and may lead to an increase in environmental knowledge and awareness.

PROJECT SPECIFICS

SPECIFIC STATED PROJECT GOALS INCLUDE:

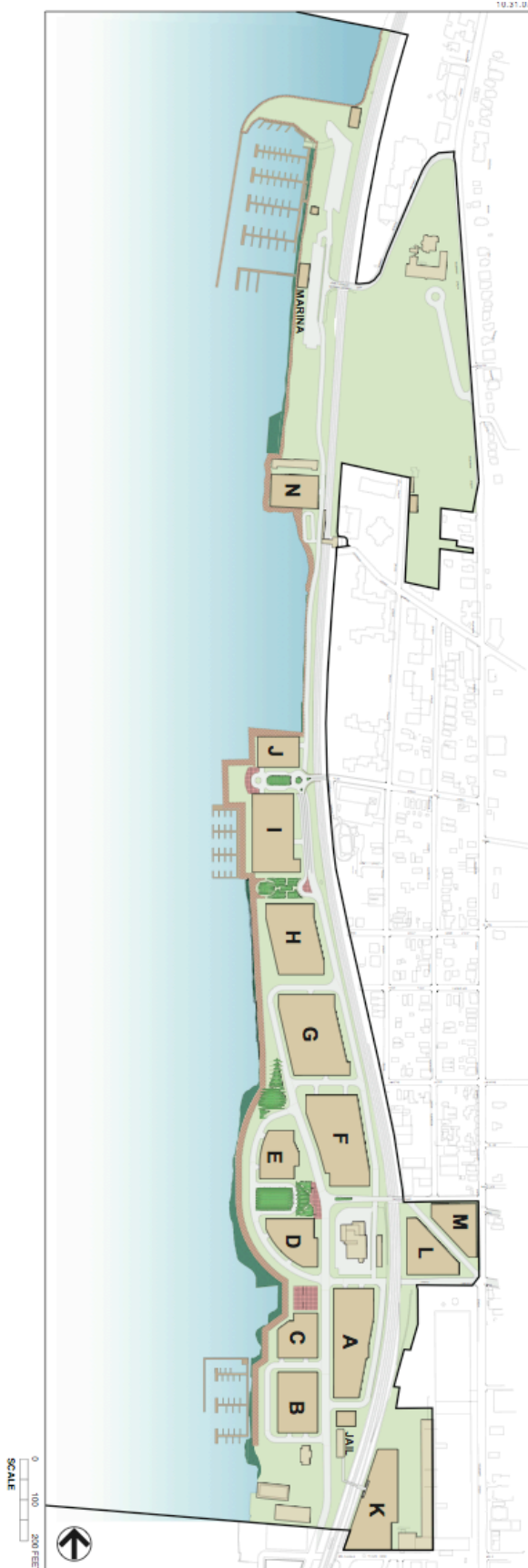
- Create a mixed-use, active waterfront neighborhood of residences, businesses, and open spaces;
- Improve public access to the Hudson River along the entire 1.3 mile waterfront of the proposed area;
- Improve and enhance existing City parks and amenities, including Trevor Park and JF Marina Park;
- Improve the connections between the redevelopment area and the surrounding community;
- Improve traffic with better access and circulation within the redevelopment area, and connections to the surrounding community;
- Promote a walkable/bikeable community;
- Improve access to JFK Marina Park and provide additional boating resources;
- As the level of development allows, focus on public views of the Hudson River;
- Provide a variety of housing with convenient access to goods and services, and public transit;
- Promote environmentally sensitive design through minimizing impervious surfaces and improving habitat function;
- When possible consider adaptive reuse of buildings with historic significance and/or unique features; and
- Provide adequate infrastructure support: for wastewater treatment, water supply, parking and roadway capacity.

HOW ARE THEY PLANNING TO ATTAIN THESE GOALS?

- An interconnected **public walkway** which is referred to here as an *esplanade* along the Yonkers shoreline for almost a mile of currently inaccessible shoreline. (An esplanade is a long, open, level area, usually next to a river or large body of water, where people may walk without actually walking on the beach or being affected by the tide.) The esplanade will vary in width but will be a minimum 12 ft. wide.
- **13 acres of newly accessible parks and plazas** and riverfront esplanade added to the 2.2 acre Habirshaw Park
- A **residential neighborhood** with connections to existing neighborhoods, the waterfront, and Yonkers' commercial district in order to strengthen the City's downtown area.
- **Off-street parking** for residences, employees, and commercial patrons and on-street parking for visitors.
- **Access to the water** for a variety of water-dependent and water-related recreational uses.
- **View corridors** from the upland community through the newly constructed buildings to the Hudson River and the Palisades – but the buildings will be up to 30 stories high – higher than is allowed under existing zoning so existing views will be significantly reduced.
- **Residential units close to existing train stations** for transportation.

URBAN RENEWAL PLAN: A Financial Tool

Urban Renewal Plans are long-term plans for improving the economy and community of areas that meet certain defined requirements as “blighted areas” (deteriorated neighborhoods) or underused areas. Urban renewal projects are undertaken as a way to eliminate the conditions of blight, often using **eminent domain** (see box below) as a way to do this. Since there is no specific development plan being proposed it is unclear if eminent domain will be involved in this project area, although the Urban Renewal Plan notes that none is contemplated. Eminent domain is an interesting tool that has developed over the years into a powerful mechanism for large-scale redevelopment plans to be successful.



RESIDENTIAL UNIT COUNT AND BUILDING HEIGHTS

Parcel Letter	Maximum Residential Building Height	Total Units
A	(2) 30 story Bldgs.	484
B	(2) 22 story Bldgs.	302
C	(1) 22 story Bldgs.	176
D	(1) 14 story Bldg.	105
E	(1) 14 story Bldg.	98
F	(2) 28 story Bldgs.	608
G	(2) 24 story Bldgs.	588
H	(2) 22 story Bldgs.	452
I	(2) Bldgs. 20/12 stories	328
J	(1) 12 story Bldg.	101
K	(1) 18 story Bldg.	251
L&M	Maximum 3 stories	25
N	(1) 18 story Bldg.	234
Jail	n/a	0
Marina	n/a	0
TOTAL		3752